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: Good morning everyone.

Hon. Members:  Good morning.

Madam Chairman:  I think we have all come here with a good, quiet, purposeful spirit. Okay, so the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee will resume. Good morning everyone. .


Madam Chairman:  I will now invite the Minister of National Security to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes.

Hon. Young:  Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Good morning colleagues. The Ministry of National Security is among the largest and most complex entities within the public sector. It is the arm of Government of Trinidad and Tobago with primary responsibility for ensuring and maintaining the safety and security of the public, as well as the sovereignty and security of the national sphere. In this regard, the Ministry of National Security is charged with an operational mandate that includes the maintenance of law and order, public safety, defence against aggression, management of disaster preparedness and relief, and monitoring and control of the flow of persons into and out of the country. National Security has
been operating very much so as a multi-agency Ministry and we have been working very hard to ensure that all of the arms and divisions of National Security are operating from the same hymn book and singing the same song, as we say. The Ministry has identified several initiatives for fiscal year 2019 to 2020 which are the refurbishment and construction of police and fire stations, acquisition of vessels, improvement buildings at the prisons, enhancing the capability of the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Services, especially in the area and other areas as well as the coastal upgrade that we will get into.

At this stage Madam Chair, through you, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the men and women who serve within the Ministry of National Security and particularly those who are in the Ministry itself, who help us to hold together all of the various divisions: The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the fire services, our prisons services, our lifeguards, our probation officers, immigration and all of the other areas, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force that fall under the sphere of National Security. At this stage we are ready to answer and deal with any questions my colleagues on the other side may have.

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

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of $2,768,983,354 for Head 22: Ministry of National Security is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*. We shall now proceed to consider the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*. We are at page 126, Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure. Item 001: General Administration. Member for Naparima, okay? Item 002: Fire Service, Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, Item 10: Remuneration to
Auxiliary Fire Unit, and there is an increase of $18.3 million. Could the Minister explain?

**Mr. Young:** Thank very you much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, what has taken place over the last year, is that we have had call out our auxiliary services. With the closure of Petrotrin, Petrotrin had approximately, if my memory serves me correctly about six sub-fire stations. With the closure of those stations, we immediately stepped into the breach, that is the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service and we have called out the auxiliaries to fill and to ensure that there is still that capacity until the decisions can be taken and there can be a proper facilitation of those facilities. And I would like to thank the auxiliary firefighters as well as the Chief Fire Officer and his staff for all that they have done.

**Mr. Charles:** I would join in your—

**Mr. Young:** Sure.

**Mr. Charles:**—thanking them for their services. But there have been concerns expressed by the auxiliary fire officers as something to do with the regularization. I think this has been one of the concerns of the representative body. Could you indicate if that is on schedule and if a budget has been in place for that?

**Mr. Young:** Yes, thank you very much, Madam Chair. What this is, is a bit of an unusual situation and a situation that is found with the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service. What the Member for Naparima has referred to, is that you have a number of auxiliary fire officers who have served over a long period of time in the auxiliary fire officers’ space, sometimes preforming the job and duty of regular fire officers who are part of the permanent staff at the Fire Service. It is something we have looked at, unfortunately when came in as an administration in 2015, nothing had been done about it. One of the areas that needs to be looked at very carefully
with respect to it, is the regularization of these officers and how it affects various persons in the permanent service as well as the auxiliary officers and then also the taxpayers from pensionable point of view and these types of areas. As I have told the Auxiliary Fire Service officers, we are looking at it and we have been looking at it at a Cabinet level and I am sure we will take a decision.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much, for the explanation. Item 01: Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance.

Mr. Young: You are going backwards?

Mr. Charles: Yeah, I am going backwards. Five million decrease, could you indicate why, please?

Mr. Young: Madam Chair, as persons may be aware, the budgeting exercise is really an estimation of two areas, revenue as well as expenditure. And as it is an estimation, if there is any shortfall during the course of the year, we will identify it, by the time the mid-year is here and we will either ask for virements of funds from other areas or ask for supplemental income. But it is not going to affect the Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance for our fire officers.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. But I see the $5 million decrease includes provision for vacant posts with incumbents. Could you indicate how many vacant posts are there in the Fire Service, first? And secondly, I understand that there are a number of acting positions, and could you indicate?

Mr. Young: Let me start with second question first. Yes there are a number of persons in acting positions. Personally as the Minister of National Security and as well as the representative of the Government and having conversation with the Chairman of the National Security Council, we find this to be unacceptable. It is something that unfortunately is taking place throughout the public service and as
you are aware, Member for Naparima, it is something completely out of our hands as the Government. All we can do is try use our persuasive conversations and try to persuade the Public Service Commission in this instance, to make the necessary appointments. I will say that the Public Service Commission and the Director of Personnel Administration have been working with the Government within recent times and we have been making the appointment. I will get you the vacant number—

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you.

**Mr. Young:**—of positions if you give me one second. Thank you very much. We have a total—the number of positions that exist, this is throughout the whole Fire Service, is 2,713. We currently have 2,402 filled, which leaves us with a vacancy of 311. Of course, if those vacancies were filled, there would be less need for the auxiliary fire officers. So that is also something that we are looking at.

**Mr. Charles:** So there is no—when do you intend to, at all, to fill these vacancies, you say it is dependent on the—

**Mr. Young:**—to an extent yes. We are working towards the filling of it, in National Security service with all of the various divisions, you have the abnormality, but you also have to do what you call batches. So there is training and passing out. And the truth is no matter how hard we are trying to fill these vacancies, we also have attrition, people leaving the service through retirement and other things. So they are always behind and it then does depend as well on some instances, on the Public Service Commission.

**Mr. Charles:** Would you be kind enough to provide information on acting appointments at the level of DO, ADFO, FSO and FSSO.

**Mr. Young:** You want DO, so Divisional—is it DFO, Divisional Fire Officers?
Mr. Charles: Yes.

Mr. Young: All right. So there are 12, six are filled, six vacancies. Do you want to know who is acting in what position?

Mr. Charles: No, I just want the number and how many are vacant. So that is DFO.

Mr. Young: Okay, so like Chief Fire Officer there is one position, it is currently vacant according to the establishment. But of course we have an Acting Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Marlon Smith who is here with us. And that is one of the abnormalities that I am trying to fix, by having the Public Service Commission—that is nowhere in our control whatsoever, having the Public Service Commission make the necessary appointment, as they recently did, after an extended period of time for example, in the prison service. So we can provide Assistant Chief Fire Officers, Deputy Chiefs Fire Officers, again one position, same thing and acting. Assistant Chief Fire Officer, four positions, one filled, three vacancies, so that means there will be three persons acting. Divisional Fire Officers, 12 positions, we are half, six filled, six vacancies, so there will be six acting. So I agree with you, Member for Naparima, and let us hope that the Public Service Commission is looking on and they will help us to make these persons—to fill the positions so to speak. What we have also done in the last year I will say, after quite a while is that we have provided for the Senior Fire Officers to go for training in the United Kingdom because that is part of the current regulated process. So we are doing what we have to do, at the Government level to ensure we can—

Mr. Charles: Could you just finally give the figure for FSOs, vacant positions, acting positions?

Mr. Young: We have 58 FSOs, Fire Station Officers, 58 positions. There are 23
filled and 35 vacancies. So you see some of the difficulties.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Chair, the question was asked by my colleague, the Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Young:** We have a batch passing out in December, so we are doing what we can to fill at the lower levels.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Question was answered, Madam Chair, by the Hon. Minister in relation to vacant positions.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 004: Prison Service. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you. Minister, Item 01: Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance. There is an increase of $11.3 million, could you indicate which positions are being filled or is this a retroactive payment or—

**Mr. Young:** Thank you very much, Member for Naparima. This increase is really to cater for the expected new recruits and also as you identified, the arrears, to pay some arrears for persons who have been acting in positions and their increments that they would have derived as a result of acting.

**Mr. Charles:** Right. Minister, Item 03: Overtime - Monthly Paid Officers. It seems to be significant, it is $60 million. Our estimate, $60 million. I understand that is about 80 per cent for the entire Ministry. Could you explain why the Prison Service is characterized by a significantly high overtime?

10.15 a.m.

**Hon. Young:** What it is, it is not only for this fiscal, but also for us to deal with previous years outstanding. There is an accounting process taking place that was inherited and sometimes it proves problematic because you have to audit the various hours being claimed and this type of thing. But I can assure that is taking place and we hope to pay up all of the outstanding periods in this fiscal.
Mr. Charles: Could you explain in the 60 million how much is outstanding and how much is allocated for fiscal 2020?

Hon. Young: Give me one second. At this stage, at the unaudited level, we estimate is about 25 million outstanding.

Mr. Charles: 25 million outstanding?

Hon. Young: That is the claim, so that is what we are in the process of auditing.

Mr. Charles: Okay. Minister, I look at 008: Vacant Posts, and no allocation, but it seems as if the overtime is significant. Is it that the Ministry has made a trade-off that they will not recruit staff, but they will utilize overtime to make up the shortfall in bodies?

Hon. Young: Absolutely not. We went through this last year as well, and I assume it will be a recurrent conversation again. Unfortunately whilst you are passing out batches there are just not sufficient persons coming forward to want to be prison officers, and I can say for the obvious reason. So there is always that dilemma that you are not taking in enough to catch up. So you have 4,218 on the establishment, in actuality we only have 3,022. So that is a vacancy of 1,196. A batch is normally about 100, 150, 250 at most, so we are not making that catch-up. But it is not by the Government. That is not a decision—if I could fill that all in the morning I would. Would you like to be a prison officer?

Mr. Charles: I am following you. So you are saying that the prison service is not an attractive place, and the problem may be recruitment?

Hon. Young: I am not saying it is not an attractive place; that is a subjective test. There is also not a problem with recruitment. You could try to recruit, for example, persons to a certain side and you would have great difficulty in getting people to come on a certain side, whereas on another side you would have a whole
long line of people lining up down in Tranquility to get into the Red House, the Balisier House. [Laughter]

Mr. Charles: The last question, going back to overtime again, 03. By comparison with the fire services—1.6. Overtime in the fire service is 1.6, and here it is, well, 60 million, and you say it is a difficulty—


Mr. Charles:—in recruitment and attracting—

Hon. Young: It is also a different circumstance. I mean when you are in prisons we have a shift system. So you have people who are in the prisons who are doing their 24/7, and then if on the next shift come over persons have not turned up, there is sickness, there is illness, they have to stay on, whereas with the fire service, there is a certain amount of more flexibility because you are not always out on call, so we could do some more juggling.

Mr. Charles: In respect of the prison service, Minister, when you put out advertisements, what is the proportion of those who apply as opposed to those who are actually recruited?

Hon. Young: We are able to fill the various batches. So as I said, you could have a batch of 250 passing out. It is always oversubscribed but not greatly oversubscribed.

Mr. Charles: So the problem is not the attractiveness of the prison service?

Hon. Young: Well, you cannot catch up as I said, so you are not going to be able, so to catch up to the 1,000 we need to have four batches a year.

Mr. Charles: Thank you.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Chair. On this very issue the Minister is right. This keeps recurring every year, people raising issues about the nature of
this job and to what extent persons will want to apply. It seems to me that the Minister suggests now that it is not really the issue of the number of people. You will get people interested, but is there some administrative capacity that you simply cannot have four batches per year, you do not have the administrative capacity to bring people on? And related to that, I remember a couple years ago in this very discussion we were talking about, you know, new strategies, new methodologies, new ways to approach this matter to get more and more of the “best people” interested in the job. If you would have some update on that, what is happening in that area?

Hon. Young: To answer the first question, the answer is no, it is not an administrative issue to get the four batches. When you run one batch of 250, and I think we do that twice a year, but it may overlap beyond the 12-month period, you are going to get, say, 300 people applying for the 250 positions. If you advertise for 1,000 positions for the year we are not going to get 1,000 people applying to fill those 1,000 vacancies. There is nothing really that you can do to attract persons to the prison service or to any other service, the fire service, the police service. That is really a calling, you find people applying for it. The defence force, that is something they want to do or they do not want to do, same thing like joining a union, OWTU, or your Ancil Roget and that lot.

Madam Chairman: Oropouche East, are you finished?

Hon. Young: He will enjoy seeing you in prison.

Dr. Moonilal: The question was asked.

Madam Chairman: Okay.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Minister, what is your annual attrition rate, or how many people leave annually in terms of retirement and so on?—if you could give us an average.
Hon. Young: Yes. They have passed to me the information, an attrition rate of 79 per cent differential. So what I assume that means is that we are meeting 79 per cent of the people who pass out. So one batch actually provides you with a replacement of 79 per cent, so that means we are missing on every attrition and batch almost 20 per cent.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So if your take of a batch is 2—

Hon. Young: 250, so 10, that is 25, 25, say about 50 to 55 a year.

Dr. Gopeesingh: You are losing two times per year? So you are losing about 110 around there per year.

Hon. Young: Close to 100.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is the Ministry of National Security adopting any outreach measures to go through various constituencies and parts of Trinidad and Tobago to encourage people to join the Ministry of National Security, whether it is fire or service or police?—because I remember once during Mr. Panday’s time, ’95 to 2000, there was an active interventional strategy to go and try and get people to come into the programme.

Hon. Young: For each of the services it would be different. So, for example, with the police service, the defence force, you have a much wider oversubscription. So perhaps that is something we can look at for the prison service as you say. I would not go to every constituency, but to go the various—

Dr. Gopeesingh: No.

Hon. Young:—places in Trinidad and Tobago—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Centres.

Hon. Young:—one in north, one in south, one in central, in Tobago, and just do, you know, like a day, and maybe even go to the schools and try to encourage
children. So, yes, we could look at that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I want to recommend it to you.

**Hon. Young:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 005: Regiment; Item 006: Coast Guard.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much. I am looking at Item 02: Wages and Cost of Living, including pay, and I see in 2018 the actual was 684 thereabouts, and the Estimate was 1.1 million. It increased by about 40 per cent but only 600,000 was spent according to what is in front of me, which is less than the actual for 2018. Does that mean that there was a reduction in the numbers? What explains that $600,000 expenditure when 1.1 million was allocated, given the increased pressures on the Coast Guard in the context of what we know is happening in the south-west peninsula?

**Hon. Young:** What has actually happened here is when these yellow books, as we call them, the books that are presented for the Budget, were printed it is information at a specific date. So what we have actually done at National Security is we have the most current information which is at the close of fiscal, 30th of September, and we have actually paid out the 1.147. So by the 30th of September it was paid, but when the book was printed there was that shortfall.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay. There is no consideration in terms of wages for increased personnel in the Coast Guard, again given the increased demands on the TTGS?

**Hon. Young:** TTGS? What is the TTGS?

**Mr. Charles:** The increased demand. So you are allocated a certain amount and you are paid a certain amount—

**Hon. Young:** TTCG.

**Mr. Charles:** TTTCG, yes, the Coast Guard. Is there any consideration for
increasing the establishment?

**Hon. Young:** There is actually consideration for increasing the establishment, because as you would be aware we have procured and we are waiting on the delivery of two Cape-class vessels that we intend to stay out, as we say, from shore for up to 28 days, and that will require additional Coast Guard staff. So we are doing it. So again what has happened here, as I explained earlier, this is the Budgets Divisions at the Ministry of Finance who give us these figures, and we will have to go back to them at mid-year for an increase in the amount for the establishment.

**Mr. Charles:** So we will expect to see an increase in fuel when we get down to that, for the Coast Guard?

**Hon. Young:** Well there will be more efficient boats as well.

**Mr. Charles:** Could you explain Item 23? What is “Direct Charges, Salaries”?

**Hon. Young:** The Coast Guard officers’ salary.

**Mr. Charles:** And in that context then could you explain the decrease of 5.6 million if it is the officers’ salary? Is it less officers or attrition? It cannot be reduced salary.

**Hon. Young:** Sorry, you are talking about 23 and the decrease?

**Mr. Charles:** Yes, the decrease, 5.6 million.

**Hon. Young:** Again, this decrease was done by the Budgets Division, so we actually are forecasting that we will either have to request a virement of funds, or to ask for an increase in the mid-year review because what happened in the last year is we also used some of the money allocated and released to pay arrears, and this is to the officers. So there may be a deficiency that we will have to seek, either through virement or an appropriation of funds or transfer at the necessary
Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, as you have been providing, could you give us an understanding of the establishment in terms of positions filled, and what is your establishment, how many filled, how many vacant as you are on that for both Coast Guard and the regiment?

Hon. Young: So you want the regiment and the coast guard?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, if you could provide it.

Hon. Young: All right. Well, there are currently 25 vacancies for officers in the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment—I will still provide it, Ma’am—and 454 for other ranks. And then for the Coast Guard, 24 officer positions vacant and 55 others.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And the establishment for the regiment is how much total?

Hon. Young: For the regiment, for the whole defence force, you have on the establishment 495 officers, 5,895 other ranks. Our current posted strength for officers is 294 and for other ranks, 5,022. So that leaves vacancies of 201 officers. Now this is for the whole defence force, and 873 for other ranks. For the Coast Guard the establishment is 143 officers; the other ranks, 1,465. Our current posted strength is 100 officers, and then 1,417 in other ranks. So you would see there is not much. So we 96.7 per cent filled in the Coast Guard amongst other ranks. In the regiment the establishment is 134 officers, other ranks, 2,947. Our current posted strength, officers 90, other ranks 2,493. So within the regiment we have an 85 per cent filled amongst the other ranks.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Madam Chairman: Immigration. 007: Immigration. Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Ma’am. Minister could we have some
appreciation of the complement of Immigration Officers at this time, and what might be vacant positions, but not just vacant positions, because vacant positions could also mean persons are in the position. What would be required in terms of the labour requirement for optimum performance? One has a feeling that there is some issue with Immigration in terms of the amount of people they have, and they may need further Immigration Officers, and other types of staff given some of the challenges that citizens face in this area of getting passports.

**Hon. Young:** I was actually expecting you to ask about Immigration, because I was wondering earlier this week how you seemed to have such great access to Immigration records.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Minister, concentrate on the documents on your desk.

**Hon. Young:** I am concentrating on it.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Try concentrating on National Security.

**Hon. Young:** You seem to get a little nervous, a little nervous.

**Dr. Moonilal:** We hear this OWTU, Balisier House. We have asked a question, please answer.

**Hon. Young:** Madam Chair, I was not aware—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Do not distract yourself.

**Hon. Young:**—that I was being forced to answer the question in a certain way.

**Madam Chairman:** Members.

**Hon. Young:** Member for Oropouche East seems a little nervous.

**Madam Chairman:** Members.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** You are accounting to the nation.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South, just like you are trying to get my attention—
Mr. Indarsingh: Yes.

Madam Chairman: I am trying to get yours.

Mr. Indarsingh: Always.

10 30 a.m.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni, I do not know, maybe it is something we have down there with respect to the mikes. That the mikes down there, maybe, you know—Member, I think the objection was already taken, okay? Let us move on.

Hon. Young: Thank you very much Madam Chair, the Immigration Division, the sanctioned strength for uniformed officers is 405, for civilians, 163. There are currently 373 uniformed officers, 137 civilians.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you Chair. Minister, the salaries and cost of living in terms of the allocation for 2020, $57,316,700, that figure is based on what year in terms of compensation, from a collective bargaining point of view?

Hon. Young: I am glad to turn around and see everybody is looking with the same level of perplexity that I am. I cannot understand that question. All of the technocrats sitting behind me.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chairman, I want to make an objection here. The Minister ought not to be treating technocrats as if they are politicians.

Hon. Young: But how am I treating them as politicians? You come here to make a political statement.

Dr. Moonilal: Do not bring the technocrats into your business. You telling us that they perplexed. I am looking in the back I want to see who perplexed. Who? Who? Who is that? I see one smiling. I see one sit— [Crosstalk]

Madam Chairman: Members, Members, we are not going to get anywhere at this rate. I think Member for Oropouche East what all of us see is sometimes very
objective. It is like you know, I might say today I find you have a really lovely tie. But other people may not see that. The question—can you please answer the question Minister? I think the question was what the salaries are based on—

**Hon. Young:** The last completed collective bargaining period? The last—for all public officers the last collective bargaining period is up to the end of 2013 I am told.

**Madam Chairman:** Couva South, do you have another question?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** 2013 is the last period? “Why the Member for Arouca/Maloney seem to be disgusted with the—”

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South, as I said, what we see might be very subjective, okay? What we see—so let us keep to what we are dealing with. I find you look great this morning, somebody might not agree. That is subjective, we are not here about that. Do you have a question based on our objective here?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you Madam Chair, I do not know if the Minister could—he said that all public officers and I will conclude law enforcement officers. Mr. Minister, without compromising the actual collective bargaining process, could you inform this meeting if there are current negotiations taking place and for what period?

**Hon. Young:** What line Item is that?

**Madam Chairman:** All right, okay. So I am not sure that this is a question for National Security. Do you have another question?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** No Ma’am all I want to say is that I am concerned about the state of collective bargaining for the law enforcement and public officers that is all. And I was simply trying to find out as I said, I do not want him to comment on the state I guess to say if it is in progress, if it has started and so on?

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Hon. Young: Ma’am, I have absolutely no hesitation in providing the answer for that. With respect to the various divisions that fall under National Security, only within the last month or so we have been working with the Ministry of Finance. Of course, all of these negotiations are conducted by the Chief Personnel Officer, so certain suggestions have been made, they are currently being studied with, for example, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service with the Commissioner and then in the other divisions. So we are currently looking at it.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Just to make the point that collective bargaining matters are within the remit of the Ministry of Finance and the CPO. So could we bear that in mind, please?

Mr. Charles: Thank you. Item 03: Overtime Monthly Paid Officers. I see a revised Estimate in 2019 of 13—[Crosstalk]

Hon. Young: Member for Naparima, what were you saying?

Mr. Charles: I am seeing a revised Estimate of 13.5 million.

Hon. Young: Which line Item?

Mr. Charles: Item 03, and I am asking, you were the Minister then, what were the policy considerations that informed that revised Estimate? There must have been a reason for—

Hon. Young: We are on the overtime and you are saying that you saw in 2019 a revised Estimate of 13.5?

Mr. Charles: Yes.

Hon. Young: Well during the last year, the last fiscal year, we had some abnormalities that took place for example, the Venezuelan registration process and we would have requested and I am grateful to the Immigration Officers who came out and worked in the overtime period to assist us with filling some of those
necessary interfaces, so that combined with the payment of arrears from before.

**Mr. Charles:** But Minister only 9 million was spent which indicates that—sorry, sorry, okay.

**Hon. Young:** It was 9 million and we ended up spending 13.5.

**Mr. Charles:** Right, okay, okay.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Hon. Minister with the introduction of the kiosks at the airport now, we are told that when you come into the country you no longer have to be in waiting lines and so on. How would this affect your complement of staff within the Immigration department?

**Hon. Young:** Ma’am the issue of the kiosk is currently an issue that was subject to investigation. A Cabinet-appointed investigator took a look at it, and that is currently being studied. There is no position on the Immigration Department that you do not have to continue to go through the Immigration lines, so right now you still have to do that, and there is some, how should I put it, we are not currently fully recognizing the use of the kiosk. So even when you go through the kiosk you still have to interface with an Immigration Officer, but we are looking at moving towards a biometric system, and it will not mean any reduction in personnel or jobs. Because you know there is that as you had asked the question or one of your colleagues, had asked the question there is still that number of vacancies. So we do not expect even when we get to the full biometrics, to have any reduction in persons in post.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I thank you for that, but that seems to be in contradiction to the Minister of Finance budget statement when he said that it is something of the past. Now when you come into the country—

**Hon. Young:** No, no, no what the Minister of Finance spoke about is us getting rid
of Immigration and Customs forms. That does not mean that you are not going to have Immigration Officers.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right, well thanks for the clarification.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much Ma’am. As we are on this matter just to ask the Minister to update us on what is the status of those machines in the airport. Are they all working, up and running?

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East, I really will not allow that under this fund that we have here, okay. So can we go on? Item 008: Probation Service.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, this increase here I just want to find out, does this—

Madam Chairman: Could you just tell us which line Item, please.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: 01, sorry, sorry, Salaries and Cost of Living, Probation.

Madam Chairman: 008, 01, we are at page 130.

Hon. Young: Probation Officers?

Madam Chairman: Yes, Probation Service.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Does this represent, Minister, any arrears, or does it represent persons being placed in vacant posts?

Madam Chairman: 01.

Hon. Young: 01, and the question Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: There is several questions, let me ask it in order. How many persons are currently employed in the Probation?

Hon. Young: Probation, the technical posts there are 52, 28 are filled and the number of vacant posts therefore is 24, and then under civilian staff/public servants the number of posts is 7.
Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And how many are filled? The posts of 7, how many?

Hon. Young: We just need to fill three.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: All right, okay. And this increase represents? Is it a—

Hon. Young: The increase is to process arrears of acting allowances and increments, and also we are hoping to fill those vacant posts over the next fiscal.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay, thank you.

Madam Chairman: Item 009: Forensic Science Centre.

Mr. Karim: Thank you Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, in like manner line Item 01, could you tell us what is the required complement, and how many vacancies there are? And when do you expect these to be filled for that increase of 1.7 million?

Hon. Young: All right, we are 67 posts, 43 are filled so there are 24 vacant posts. The number of vacant posts without bodies as we were having the conversation earlier, you have sometimes persons acting, is only 10. So that means some of the vacant posts because of acting positions et cetera, and the number of vacant posts with bodies is 14.

Mr. Karim: Madam Chair, can I ask a follow-up? With regard to forensic pathologists, what is the ideal complement, and how many do you have now, and how many you are short in?

Hon. Young: I am actually happy to say that for the first time in a very long time there are four positions on the establishment and all four are filled for forensic pathologists, and at this stage they fell that is sufficient. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Charles: Minister, you said there are four pathologists and that is the compliment.

Hon. Young: Correct.

Mr. Charles: But does the complement equate with what is necessary? Given the
increased activities, and the crime thrust, there will be increased demands for ballistic reports and what not.

**Hon. Young:** No, but the forensic pathologist is to provide autopsies. So yes, the answer is yes, there is sufficient.

**Mr. Charles:** Sufficient for what?

**Hon. Young:** For forensic pathologists, persons who are conducting the autopsies, yes. The answer is yes.

**Mr. Charles:** Could you give an idea of the benchmark times? How much time it takes to complete one autopsy? And is this consistent with what takes place in developed countries?

**Hon. Young:** Yes.

**Mr. Charles:** No, this has to do with the complement, I am asking.

**Hon. Young:** Ma’am I could answer. The answer is yes, the answer is yes, we are where we need to be, and they are conducting them within the acceptable time.

**Mr. Charles:** So therefore we should not be getting complaints from the Forensic Science Centre anymore, at all?

**Hon. Young:** We are also told that the work we have been working on for the last few years to get the UNDP to provide, we are also hoping to get an additional two volunteers so that would just help us to increase and go beyond where we need to be.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes, one quick question and a possible follow-up. How many forensic professionals you have at the centre that are related to work that supports the court system?

**Hon. Young:** All of the forensic work being conducted in the Forensic Science Centre would be work that potentially assists the court system, forensic examiners
who look at handwriting, for example, the ballistics, the gun powder and these types of things. So all of them. And there are 20 in particular who are specialists and qualified and can give that evidence.

**Dr. Tewarie:** And that is separate from the four pathologists, or you include that there?

**Hon. Young:** Yes, that is separate from the four pathologists, but of course, the pathology reports would also be used in court.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay, I do not need to follow-up.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, I have heard you in relation to the complement being brought up to the desired levels and so on. I would like you to take into consideration that we have a timely renewal of contracts and so on for pathologists, because we have seen in the past where contracts have expired, and families have to go through the pain, the suffering, the trauma of—

**Hon. Young:** The answer is—

10.45 a.m.

**Madam Chairman:** Just now. The intervention has been noted, but I do not know under what Head.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Well I am speaking, Madam Chair, in the context of salaries and cost of living and being told that there is an adequate complement of pathologists and so on.

**Madam Chairman:** Well I am not seeing—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Madam Chair—

**Madam Chairman:**—Contract Employment here.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** But in the context of salaries, because from time to time and so
on, pathologists’ contracts expire, and in my constituency, Madam Chair, there are people who have had to endure the pain, the suffering and the trauma. I am just pointing it out to the Minister—

**Madam Chairman:** And while I am not—

**Mr. Indarsingh:**—in the context of the operations of the forensic centre.

**Madam Chairman:** And, Member for Couva South, well I am not stopping you from, you know, advancing the situation of your constituents. [Crosstalk]

**Mr. Indarsingh:** [Inaudible] the ability to voice their concerns.

**Madam Chairman:** And, Member for Couva South, nobody is denying you that, but you will do it where it is relevant, in accordance with how we operate. There is a particular Sub-Item called “Contract Employment”, we have been doing this for the past four, five days, you know what.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Arouca/Maloney.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Madam Chair, I just wanted to indicate that Contract Employment comes under Goods and Services, so perhaps our friend could await that and we will deal it.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you so much for providing your friend with the necessary guidance.

**Hon. Young:** Madam Chair, with all the greatest of respect if you would permit me with the opportunity to very briefly intervene and not allow that to stand.

**Madam Chairman:** But, Minister, you will have an opportunity to answer that under Contract Employment. Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Hon. Minister, the four forensic pathologists, can you be assured that they are fully certified and accredited as forensic pathologists bearing in mind,
which you understand and know—

**Hon. Young:** The answer is, yes, Member for Caroni East, they are. For them to be able to be employed to fill the position, we ensured that they were properly qualified including the qualification to be able to give evidence in court.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Very good.

**Hon. Young:** So all four are qualified. The other two that we expect to get would also be qualified. We have the full complement, and we have done, because it is the first time in a very long time, in decades that all of the positions are filled and we are getting more.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Well there are more pathologists being qualified. And, Minister, could you, through you, Madam Chair, Minister, in cases of the court processes now requiring the evidence of forensic pathologists who are out of the country now, could you give some comment how you will be dealing with that?

**Hon. Young:** As part of your contractual arrangement, you accept as a condition that, after you have left the position you may be required to give evidence in court because, of course, that is see foreseeable potential, so we have provided for that. So those who have left, once they are alive, if they are required to come to court, we will bring them back and they have agreed to do so.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. The last question, Minister, through you, Madam Chair. The Forensic Science Centre, how many senior positions are there in terms of being able to—with the training and so on at the highest level, and how many are not filled? How many positions are there, executive and senior positions, and how many are not filled?

**Hon. Young:** First of all, all employed there would be fit for purpose. We have ensured that certainly under this tenure, that everyone who is employed fits the
necessary requirement and qualification. But what I understand you to be getting to, is like a mentorship, to know how many of the seniors would pass down their experience. The seniors are really the director and deputy director, right? So you have one director, one deputy director, and we have persons acting in those positions who are qualified and have the necessary experience, and they in turn are passing down their experience and working with those junior to them, including the scientific officers IIIIs, the scientific officers Is and scientific officers IIs.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And they come under the Public Service Commission?

Hon. Young: Yes. They do.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Minister, with respect to ballistic testing and so on, you have the desired complement at the Forensic Science Centre?

Hon. Young: According to the establishment, all positions are filled, but we are going beyond that. So what we are looking at is introducing via contract, and currently there are 10 persons in training to help to supplement that, because as you know there is an issue there, and we are trying to get it to move a lot quicker than it currently is.

Mr. Indarsingh: In terms of the ballistic testing—

Hon. Young: Correct.

Mr. Indarsingh:—of weapons and so on.

Hon. Young: Now, let me say something here eh. Outside of the Forensic Science Centre you also have the police armourers who are providing that, and they can provide the assistance for the courts, et cetera. We also then have a

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specialized unit called SERU where we have received very highly specialized training for officers, again, police officers and others from outside. So those two bodies are providing some supplementary assistance to the Forensic Science Centre, but we are going beyond that and looking now to recruit 10 additional officers to assist in the ballistics at the Forensic Science Centre.

Mr. Indarsingh: And I hope, I mean, that those who you are relying on from outside, whatever certification or support—

Hon. Young: Yes. They are all properly certified.

Mr. Indarsingh:—will be able to withstand the evidence in court and so on.

Hon. Young: The answer is, yes.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Item 012: Lifeguard Service. Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, I am looking at line Item 01/02, can you say how many you are short in terms of the complement required for lifeguards with respect to these allocations?

Hon. Young: You want know how many on the establishment?

Mr. Karim: And how many vacancies you are short by?—the manpower.

Hon. Young: All of the vacancies are filled on the establishment.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas East. Okay.

Hon. Young: Two hundred and fifty-nine—sorry, Ma’am, 259 positions are in all filled.

Madam Chairman: Item 015: Cadet Force. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. Minister, you know that we on this side believe that expenditures on the Cadet Force are well spent in terms of the crime
prevention and providing alternatives to what we call “at-risk youth”. In that context, in 001: Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, in 2019 close to $1 million was estimated with about half of that spent. And in the context of this thrust to give our young people discipline and inculcate them to a different set of values, could you explain that significant under-expenditure? And why—

**Hon. Young:** Well, may I answer that first. The good news is, the full 973,560 was expended by the 30\textsuperscript{th} September. So the same dichotomy we referred to earlier, that these books are printed at a specific period in time, by the end of fiscal all was spent, because you are right, it is an area that we are focusing on. Right now I have the Chief of Defence Staff looking at us, revamping the whole cadet service, and ensuring that we have the right people in posts to have a bigger outreach.

**Mr. Charles:** You understand the problem we face, we have to go with the data in front of us.

**Hon. Young:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay. In that context, looking at overtime, monthly paid, and I take it that this means the military officers, the overtime when they go to schools and whatnot. Is that correct?

**Hon. Young:** It is for staff. They are actually not military officers, eh, they are cadet officers, there is a difference.

**Mr. Charles:** Cadet officers. Right. But 100,000 and 10,000 alone was spent, could you provide the updated figures, please?

**Hon. Young:** There was just a shortfall of approximately $8,000.

**Mr. Charles:** 8,000?

**Hon. Young:** Yeah. So we have managed to—I mean, you do not have to utilize the full amount—
Mr. Charles: I know.

Hon. Young:—for overtime, but I would love to have to pay no overtime.

Mr. Charles: Right. It shows the determination to get the job done.

Hon. Young: Correct.

Mr. Charles: Could you indicate how—what are the target number of schools that ought to have, according to your plans, cadet forces? And how many we have operational at this time?

Hon. Young: Unfortunately, I do not have that information. That is exactly the question I asked of our Chief of Defence Staff and others. Okay. So I am being told that in the ideal world which is having it in every single secondary school that would be 127 schools covered, we are currently in 65. Of course, I have asked them to identify the number where we would want to increase, and to prioritize. So as you are suggesting, there are some areas we may want to prioritize getting the Cadet Force up and running a lot quicker than other areas.

Madam Chairman: Item 016: Air Guard. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Salaries, Estimate 2020 $51 million. Could you tell me how many assets the staff is responsible for?

Hon. Young: Air assets?

Mr. Charles: Air assets.

Hon. Young: So currently there are the two C-26 fixed-wing aircraft that are both operational and can continue to be in use. You then have the four rotary wing that were grounded, those are still in a state, three of them are in a state of preparedness, we have continued to maintain them until a decision. So one of the things I am looking at is an air unit that will be run by the air guard to provide services for both the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, as well as our
intelligence services, and the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force.

**Mr. Charles:** So essentially you are saying that two C-26 are the only operational military assets?

**Hon. Young:** Fixed-wing aircraft being utilized by the Air Guard.

**Mr. Charles:** Air guard.

**Hon. Young:** We have two other rotary wing assets that are utilized by National Security.

**Mr. Charles:** So, Minister, you are saying that we are spending $51 million in Salaries for essentially two fixed-wing air craft?

**Hon. Young:** But the Air Guard does not only fly air craft. The Air Guard also provides a number of other services. So, for example, as you are always hearing the call for joint patrols, we say joint police and army, but it is not only the army that provides that. So what we have begun doing is pulling into the complement the use of the Air Guard, the use of coast guard and other officers.

**Mr. Charles:** So you are saying that a significant bulk of this 51 million goes to paying officers to do support duties, other duties than dealing with the air assets, is what you are saying?

**Hon. Young:** The Air Guard officers who are paid by this $51 million are performing the duties assigned to them.

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

**Dr. Moonilal:** Ma’am, I am on Goods and Services, 09. Am I permitted to go there at this moment?

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

**Dr. Moonilal:** Sure.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Caroni East.
Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, how many pilots do you have within the establishment of the Air Guard?

Hon. Young: What type of pilots? You have two sets. You have the fixed-wing aircraft and you have the rotary aircraft.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Both, if you would be kind enough.

Hon. Young: Okay. Unfortunately, they do not have that information, so we will have to provide it.

Madam Chairman: Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: A quick question on this $51 million Estimate for Salaries- Direct Charges. How many salaries are we talking about there, Minister?

Hon. Young: Okay. So on the establishment of the Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard you have 94 officers, 372 other ranks. Currently, the posted strength of officers is 43 so that is a 45 per cent which, of course, is due to them not having as many operational air assets as they need, and then we have 75 per cent filled of other ranks which is 279 out 372.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Hon. Minister, I think my colleague asked about the complement, I do not know if you have that figure. But the question I want to ask—

Hon. Young: The complement of what?

Mr. Karim: Pilots.

Hon. Young: No. But I just told your colleague—

Mr. Karim: You told him that your colleague is going to get it.

Hon. Young: Yeah. I do not have that information.

Mr. Karim: I want to ask you to give us an additional information if you can, when you are getting. If you can tell us how many pilots are not really utilized as a
result of the grounding of the three AWS 139?

**Hon. Young:** The Augusta Westland 159s?

**Mr. Karim:** Yeah.

**Hon. Young:** What has happened is that there has been a migration of the pilots for the AWs because, of course, there is not there to fly so they have migrated to the other private entities that provide the service.

**Mr. Karim:** Okay, so the question—

**Hon. Young:** I will get the exact figure. I cannot remember how many, off the top of my head, have remained.

11.00 a.m.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so, Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services; Item 001: General Administration. Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Ma’am. On 09—I am there now—Rent, Lease, Vehicles and Equipment. We noticed the 2018 actual was 90 million more or less. The Ministry was able to convince the Ministry of Finance to move that to 236 million more or less, by 2019. It was revised dramatically to 235.7, it was revised in the fiscal 2019 to just 2 million and now shoot back up to 100 million. Clearly there is some explanation we would like to have here about some assets or the other that would have led to this situation. I remember it was part of, I think, a finance Bill some time.

**Hon. Young:** You remember when?

**Dr. Moonilal:** It was part of mid-year finance.

**Hon. Young:** Correct, it was. So what this is, is to do with the CCTV cameras and the whole dispute between ourselves and TSTT with respect to the CCTV cameras, and what happened is Cabinet, based on the advice of National Security, has made
a proposal for final settlement of the $200 million.

Dr. Moonilal:  Minister, I just want to raise a question. Now this is under the Air Guard, Rent, Lease, Vehicles and Equip—

Hon. Young:  No, it is not. It is Goods and Services.

Dr. Moonilal:  —please, could you allow me? It is under the Air Guard—

Hon. Young:  It is not under Air Guard.

Dr. Moonilal:  Rent, Lease, Vehicles and Equipment. Are you saying the CCTV cameras of the National Security Ministry are found in this budget?

Hon. Young:  Madam Chair, I understand that there is an attempt to mislead every opportunity, but this is not under the Air Guard. It is under Goods and Services, it is not under the Air Guard. You cannot lie to a document.

Dr. Gopeesingh:  Why are you misbehaving like that?

Hon. Young:  Misbehave? To mislead is to misbehave.

Madam Chairman:  Member for Naparima, you feel if you shout it will cancel out?

Hon. Young:  To tell the truth is to not misbehave. [Crosstalk]

Madam Chairman:  Could we all maintain the decorum? Member for Oropouche East, I called Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services; Item 001: General Administration. If you are under Air Guard then you are not—[Crosstalk]

Mr. Indarsingh:  But the Minister of Finance now arrive and insulting people.

Madam Chairman:  Member for Couva South, Member for Naparima, [Interruption] Minister of National Security. Okay? [Crosstalk]

Mr. Imbert:  Madam Chairman, “Dey did me dat yesterday”. I did not insult anyone. Take that back. [Crosstalk] I did not, you are doing that for the TV. [Crosstalk] Yes you are speaking untruths for the TV.
Madam Chairman: All right, so, Member for Oropouche East, it seems that you always create some excitement. So, I will just give us a little cooling period. But while I give us the cooling period, I would like you to find—[Crosstalk]. I am being, I am not hearing myself. Member for Oropouche East, while I give us a little cooling period, it also gives you an opportunity for you to get on the same page that we are, and once you are there, then I will allow your question. We are at Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services; Item 001: General Administration. I do appreciate that we have a lot of paper, that the writing is very fine, and sometimes we do get a bit off track. Okay, so when you are on track, I will let you. We still have the cooling period.

Dr. Moonilal: It is directly related to what I asked.

Madam Chairman: Well wait, wait, okay? So, you are at—I think you told me you are at 09?

Dr. Moonilal: Yes.

Madam Chairman: So, you are on page 132.

Dr. Moonilal: 132.

Madam Chairman: 00—02,001—

Dr. Moonilal: 02, 001, 09, and a simple question.

Madam Chairman: And the question is?

Dr. Moonilal: And the question is simply this: Could we get a status and update on this matter of the contract resolution on the CCTV camera?

Hon. Young: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The status is exactly as I had indicated previously, a decision was taken by the Cabinet that despite the claims being made by TSTT, which we do not accept, we have made them an offer, a full and final settlement to the tune of $200 million.
Dr. Moonilal: Could I also ask the Minister to indicate if he has the information, the percentage of CCTV cameras that are up now and not functional?

Hon. Young: Madam Chair, with the greatest of respect, that is a matter of national security that we will not provide that information, but the answer is, it does change every day, so as soon as we know a camera is down we will make attempts to get them back up. And it is a very high percentage of them that are working. Those who like the TV might be featuring on them.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas. Oropouche East are you finished? Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Under that same Head. I just want to go to two Items, line Items 16 and 17. Could you indicate to us hon. Minister, the increase of 7.7, Contract Employment, and how many persons will that engage?

Hon. Young: Just give me one second, Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Sure.

Hon. Young: Remembering of course, this is for the Ministry itself and all of our other administration. Right, first of all, the increase is to fill some strategic and vital positions that we had suppressed in 2019. The number of contract positions in the Ministry of National Security is 764, the current number of vacant posts is 393.

Mr. Karim: How many of those do you intend to fill with this allocation? Do you have an idea?

Hon. Young: It really depends. There are some specific areas that we are focusing on to provide the support services for law enforcement.

Mr. Karim: Okay, and there was a jump of 1.5 million in the training for persons in—
Hon. Young: Yes, so this training is for some specific areas that we want to boost the members of staff. If you would give me one second. All right, so for example in: Procurement procedures; leadership development; case management inventory; Cabinet Note writing; customer relations; records and vault management; disaster recovery plan; first aid; OSHA, persons within the Ministry to make sure that we continue to be OSHA compliant; ethics; report writing; inventory management. Those are some of the areas we want to focus on in this fiscal.

Mr. Karim: Okay thank you.

Ms. Ramdial: Thank you. Minister, line Item 96: Fuel and Lubricants. In the 2019 Estimate there was 440,000 allocated. The revised Estimate was 328,000. The 2020 Estimate is 500,000 with an increase by 171,000. Is that adequate for the fiscal year?

Hon. Young: We make do. As you know, this line Item is for the processing of fleet cards and oil and other servicing of vehicles—for the Ministry’s vehicles. We make do, and when we cannot, we ask to vire money and transfer money to keep them going. Thank you.

Dr. Tewarie: I Just want the Minister to indicate whether after this settlement with TSTT, does that mean that you no longer have a contract with them now? Is that finished?

Hon. Young: As I had indicated previously, we went out with a public procurement, a tender process to get a competitive price for the provision of CCTV cameras. I am also upgrading the CCTV camera system. So, whoever wins that, and it is not TSTT, will be providing that going forward.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay, and this new provider will look after all existing cameras plus installation? Is that correct?
Hon. Young: Yes.

Dr. Tewarie: And it will do it at a more competitive price that the existing contract, which is now canceled with TSTT?

Hon. Young: Absolutely, when I give those figures the country will be astounded.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I am wondering from the Minister whether the borrowing by TSTT of 2 billion on the international bond market recently, how does that affect your negotiation with TSTT in this matter, now that TSTT has borrowed 2 billion on the international bond market recently?

Madam Chairman: But this would not be under National Security.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yea, but I just wanted to see how it would impact on TSTT.

Madam Chairman: Yeah but—I understand the interest and the linkage but it is not under this. All right, Member for Fyzabad.


Hon. Young: This line Item, you would appreciate in National Security and in particular the law enforcement side and the intelligence side of national security providers, not the Ministry itself, they provide certain support services for covert operations and this type of thing.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to follow up on an issue that the Minister raised just now in response to a question. The Minister is giving an assurance to the national community that very soon another contract will be awarded for the provision of services, CCTV. It will not be TSTT that has a current month to month arrangement now. And the Minister indicated that this
would shock the country or something like that. Is the Minister aware that the fibre is owned by TSTT, and TSTT cost per camera relates to the technology that they own and the equipment that they own? And it will be very difficult to do that, and is the Minister suggesting that this may be another area of litigation that will arise by any a time to cancel or phase-out TSTT, without coming to some conclusion on the $600 million or so that is in dispute?

**Hon. Young:** I saw the Member reading from his phone, so he seems to be getting briefed. Ma’am, my job and the job of the— [Interruption] If I may be permitted to answer. My job and the job of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago under this administration—

**Madam Chairman:** Just now, just now, Member, I think you have a penchant for saying certain things sotto voce, but when you do that I will ask you to turn off the mike.

**Hon. Young:** Ma’am “I doh turn on de mike” It turns on for itself.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay?

**Hon. Young:** Noted.

**Madam Chairman:** So, thank you very much.

**Hon. Young:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The answer to that question is I am proud to be associated with a Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago that is always deciding and taking decisions to save the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago tremendous sums of money. We rejected outright the outrageous figures being asked for by TSTT. As I have said before they were charging between $11,000 and $14,000, for a camera under the former administration. This administration came in and there are other persons providing camera services for $3,000 a camera and as a result of that, I went to Cabinet and the Cabinet approved that we go for a new
service provider, and also someone that will provide value for taxpayer’s money. With respect to fibre, TSTT is not the only provider of fibre and internet fibre in Trinidad and Tobago. There are other providers and they have long since covered due to that very, very high contract. They have long since recovered whatever capital outlay they may have had.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam, just for the record, let me indicate to the Minister, he may not know that that contract with TSTT was negotiated under a former PNM regime, under Mr. Patrick Manning.

Hon. Young: That actual is quite untrue. And once again there is an untruth.

Dr. Moonilal: I will leave it right there.

Hon. Young: The camera was upgraded and the number of cameras upgraded during the 2011 to 2014 period of Trinidad and Tobago, and that is when the exorbitant, increased cost came into play and are currently the subject of a police investigation. [Crosstalk]

Madam Chairman: Okay, so Item 002: Fire Service. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Right. [Crosstalk]

Madam Chairman: Page 134.

Mr. Charles: Madam Chairman—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, I have a question on 02: Goods and Services, line Item 36, which is Extraordinary Expenditure which is 50 million—

Madam Chairman: You see what happens when we break up in some kind of chaos? Then I do not see, and I do not hear.

Dr. Gopeesingh: What! I am in no kiosk, I am in Parliament, Madam Speaker.

Madam Chairman: No, no, no, no, I am not referring to you. I am saying what you suffered just now is because we broke up in a little—not a “kiosk”, in “chaos”.

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Dr. Gopeesingh: All right.

Madam Chairman: Okay, Member for Caroni East.

11.15 a.m.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you. Getting out of the system now, I want to find out what this extraordinary expenditure is about that line Item 36, which was 70 million in 2019, spent 43 million.

Madam Chairman: You see again, Member for Caroni East, this is what I say about the, not the “kiosk”, the chaos.

Dr. Gopeesingh: The chaos.

Madam Chairman: That was—chaos, okay? I think some people in the country say “chah-os”.

Hon. Members: What! [Laughter]

Dr. Gopeesingh: I am engulfed by the chaos.

Madam Chairman: What I am saying is this—Member for Caroni East, that question was asked by the Member for Fyzabad about 15 minutes ago, and answered. Okay?

Dr. Gopeesingh: You see I am in the midst of the C-H-A-O-S, that is occurring here—[Laughter]

Madam Chairman: And that is what I told you a little earlier. I mentioned that there is something down there that, you know, apparently captures Members sitting down there, so I would ask you to help assist me in maintaining that, so you would not get caught up in it and we can flow easily. So we go on, Item 002: Fire Service, and I believe Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Right, and I have a couple of questions, Chair. The first is 03, Uniforms, an increase of $8 million when only two was spent in 2019. The
question is: Could you indicate who are the recipients of the contracts, the names of the firms for the uniforms, if any of all?

**Hon. Young:** So, what has happened here is we have gone out for tender for uniforms, so there has not been an award as yet. So of course you would put money in, so in the event that there is a successful award you would be able to pay for it.

**Mr. Charles:** Right. So in 2019, what I see here is 2 million, and you may have a different figure based on the latest information. Could you indicate the—

**Hon. Young:** Where?

**Mr. Charles:** To whom—Uniforms, 1.92 million. Could you indicate who received those contracts? Another question.

**Hon. Young:** INCOM—INDOCOM, and they leave out the “O”.

**Mr. Charles:** INDOCOM. Okay. Item 05, Telephones, and I see a remarkable and a commendable decrease in the Revised Estimates, 2.9 estimated, five, six, could you give the latest figures?

**Hon. Young:** We actually did expend the full 2.9 as at the 30th of September. And also that includes trying to clear some arrears.

**Mr. Charles:** Does the Ministry give, well, that is the Ministry of Finance, negotiate the bulk with the telephone providers to ensure a discount? Because they seem to be high, and I say so because if you look at Item 15—

**Hon. Young:** 15?

**Mr. Charles:** Yes, Repairs and Maintenance - Equipment, we have only 334—sorry, sorry, the Revised Estimate, and you said there is a—sorry, 334 which is actually less than Telephones. So it seems to me that—it means there seems to be a question of the prioritization of expenditure where Telephones could be three
times, based on what I have in front of me, maintenance of the equipment and appliances to perform the remit of the institution.

**Hon. Young:** I am not sure what the question is.

**Mr. Charles:** The question is: Why is repairs and maintenance so low in 15 compared to Telephones which is three times the expenditure of maintenance? I would have anticipated that maintenance would be a factor, four or five times more than Telephones.

**Hon. Young:** Well, not necessarily. Not necessarily four and five times more than Telephones, because, of course, it would be repair of hoses, ensuring that the breathing apparatuses are working, and these types of things. So they did expend the money that was provided. Now, you would also appreciate, as I have said on a number of times, that you may have money under a certain line Item, but if there becomes a need, for example, for us to repair certain equipment and we do not think there has been sufficient provided in this line Item we would then request of the Ministry of Finance the ability to vire and transfer money from another line Item, which is what we have done previously, and the Ministry of Finance had approved for us to deal with equipment.

**Mr. Charles:** But, given concerns expressed—on Power 102, I think there is a programme, and they said that many of the appliances are in need of repair, I just find that this figure—

**Hon. Young:** Yes, this would not fall under—the appliances and the tenders do not fall under equipment.

**Mr. Charles:** Under this Item?

**Hon. Young:** Yes, correct.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay. Could you then explain Item 13, Maintenance of Vehicles?
Tell me what that relates to, if it is not for appliances?

**Hon. Young:** No, but you were not just referring to Item 13.

**Mr. Charles:** No, I am now referring to it.

**Hon. Young:** So now this, yes. So this would include appliances and other vehicles.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay. So 10 million was estimated in 2019, and there must have been a reason for the service to provide that significant increase, but one tenth, 10 per cent was spent in the Revised Estimate.

**Hon. Young:** No, 7 million was actually spent.

**Mr. Charles:** Again, the figures that we have are not necessarily the correct figures.

**Hon. Young:** Well, no, those are the correct figures at a specific period in time. The figures I have come here with today are at the end of the fiscal, the 30th of September.

**Mr. Charles:** End of the fiscal. Is there some, Madam Chair, mechanism that we could get the latest figures so that our comments would be related to the updated figures. What we have in front of us is a couple of months dated.

**Hon. Young:** No, it is not a couple of months.

**Mr. Charles:** Is it not?

**Madam Chairman:** I think the mechanism allows that when you ask in accordance with the figures here the Minister who is subject to your question gives you the latest.

**Mr. Charles:** Yes. Okay. Item 17, Training, could the Minister give us the actual expenditure as of today? The figure here is—Item 17: Training, 732, when 5 million was allocated.
Hon. Young: 3.5.

Mr. Charles: 3.5 million.

Hon. Young: That would have captured what I did discuss before, the training with the United Kingdom and these types of things.

Mr. Charles: Okay. Minister, Housing Accommodation 100,000, what is that related to? That is Item 50.

Hon. Young: That is with respect to the administrative building down on Wrightson Road.

Mr. Charles: Oh, so it is not—okay. And Item 96: Fuel and Lubricants. Could you give me the updated figure please? This is 1.3 million, which is one-third the allocation approximately.

Hon. Young: Sorry, I was just—the Housing and Accommodation, that line Item is actually to process payments for accommodation for senior officers on transfer from Trinidad to Tobago.

Mr. Charles: Okay.

Hon. Young: I apologize.

Mr. Charles: Yeah, makes sense.

Hon. Young: You asked me now about Fuel and Lubricants.

Mr. Charles: Fuel and Lubricants.

Hon. Young: We spent the full amount.

Mr. Charles: You spent the full amount?

Hon. Young: Yes.

Mr. Charles: Because, when I was Marketing Manager of NP there used to be a significant accrued expenses to the organization.

Hon. Young: Correct. We spend the full amount, there may still be arrears.
Mr. Charles: Thank you.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, with respect to Uniforms, does that—

Hon. Young: Which line Item?

Mr. Indarsingh: Line Item 03, does that take into consideration the actual firefighting kits?

Hon. Young: So, yeah. What we call the fire retarding uniforms, yes. So, in this fiscal, at the end of last fiscal we went out for a tender for the uniforms and that is currently in process, the procurement of new fire uniforms.

Mr. Indarsingh: Okay. So, given with you are telling us, the fire officers when they go out there in actually firefighting scenes and so on, is there a shortage of these kits?

Hon. Young: I did not say that. We have taken a decision to get new fire retarding kits, because as you know there are new batches of fire officers coming in every year and I want all fire officers as at this period, under my tenure, to ensure that they each have their own personalized fire retardant kit.

Mr. Indarsingh: Okay, well, if you could probably do a check to see if there is an actual shortage in terms of—

Hon. Young: Okay, thanks.

Mr. Indarsingh:—to the manpower, and in addition, what is the lifespan of these kits?

Hon. Young: It would differ.

Mr. Indarsingh: It would differ.

Hon. Young: It would differ.

Mr. Indarsingh: Okay. And I heard you speak about line Item 17: Training, and
you earlier on said that fire officers are sent off for training—

**Hon. Young:** The senior ones.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** The senior ones. But we are changing as a society from the point of view of infrastructural development and so on, and I would suggest to recommend going forward, I do not know what is the level of training at the lower level in terms of meeting the changing needs of our society, and I would like you to focus—

**Hon. Young:** This is something that I have discussed. I am interpreting what you are saying to mean that now in this day and age you have higher storey buildings, and those are some of the buildings that we may be called out to service in a god forbidden occasion of a fire, so that is being dealt with.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** And industrial estates, plant and equipment.

**Hon. Young:** Well, we have always dealt with the industrial estates because of things like Point Lisas and Petrotrin and these types of things. But, yes, the fire services is very cognizant of the type of training that needs to be done to keep them current.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Hon. Minister, line Item, it would probably be under line Item 09 or 13, which is related to vehicles. There is a cry from the fire officers that they need to have some new tenders at fire service stations across the country, there is a shortage of them. What are your comments on that? How are you dealing with that?

**Hon. Young:** We did go out for a tender through the CTB for new fire tenders. Unfortunately, that had to be scrapped, so we are about to start a new process.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** For a new—

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Hon. Young: Yes, because we do recognize and we want to supplement by provision of new tenders.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So what value you think—I was looking under the Development Programme and I did not see anything for the fire service, I saw for the other areas, so what value are you looking at? What about Mayaro—thing, and how much—

Hon. Young: You would be happy to know that one of the specific stations that I am trying to get a new fire tender to have allocated is for the Mayaro fire station.

Dr. Gopeesingh: When was the CTB issue scrapped?

Hon. Young: Recently, within the last month.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And is there a particular reason that you would have—what happened there?

Hon. Young: It needed to be scrapped. [Laughter]

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. Young: You see, I am not going to award any contract, or oversee the award of any contract when there is any allegation whatsoever of something untoward, and as soon as that came to my ears by a whistle-blower the matter was scrapped.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, I am following up with a question from the Member for Naparima, line Item 13, Maintenance of Vehicles. I just need to know how many vehicles in the fleet, and how many are functional?

Hon. Young: Now, you recognize that the fire service has a variety of vehicles, so—

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: What we call the fire truck.

Hon. Young:—a pickup truck, a Prado—the fire tenders in particular?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Minister, well, Madam Chair—

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Hon. Young: Well, let me just answer that question. Actually as I—so we have ambulances, utilities which are pickups and vans, ceremonial vehicles, staff cars, command vehicles, hazmat tenders, water tenders, water tankers, emergency tenders, aerial platforms, wreckers, airport crash tenders, utility trucks, buses, commuter vans, motorbikes, Unimogs, trailer pumps, forklifts, hose retrievers, hose layers, troop carriers. We have 121 in service.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, I am just asking about, do you know when you have a fire and you have to go out with a truck? That is the truck I am asking about.

Hon. Young: You see, it is not as simple as that, Member for Oropouche West, because if you have a fire, depending on the type of fire you might have to send out a hazmat tender, you might have to send out a water tanker, you might have to send out a water tender.

Mr. Charles: She is only interested in trucks. [Laughter]

Hon. Young: But all of those are trucks.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Minister.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South. [Crosstalk] Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister, from time to time I listen to the Fire Services Association, they have a programme on 102.1—I see Arouca/Maloney is listening very attentively—and under line Item 15, Repairs and Maintenance - Equipment, I do not know if it may qualify there, but I listened, and where the Fire Services Association is very concerned about their Search and Rescue Unit, and in relation to certain events from a historical point of view we have seen what transpired at Greenvale and other areas in terms
of flooding—

**Hon. Member:** St. Helena.

**Mr. Indarsingh:**—and St. Helena and so on, my colleague is reminding me. Is this Search and Rescue Unit adequately staffed from the point of view of equipment and so on?

11.30 a.m.

**Hon. Young:** So you are asking me about the search and rescue under line Item 15?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Yes.

**Hon. Young:** All right. So what we have done is we have also obtained international assistance. So post the Greenvale and that flooding episode that we had in St. Helena, Kelly Village, Oropune, et cetera, we have obtained a number of what we called—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** The Kalpoo brothers could assist you.

**Hon. Young:** The flat bottom boats and these types of things, and we are supplementing. So it would not all be provided by the taxpayers. We have actually gotten donations of the flat bottom boats.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Okay. Thank you.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I am a little perplexed by your statement on this scrapping of the Central Tenders Board. Is it because a PNM candidate or PNM member did not get the contract?

**Hon. Member:** What!

**Hon. Young:** Absolutely not. The answer is no, I reject—that is not how we operate. So whereas they might have been picking and choosing in 2010 to 2015 for UNC financiers to get contracts and certain Members sending text messages as
to who to pay, who should not pay, certain contractors, developing the Cabinet Notes for certain Ministries and sending them in; that does not happen under us.

[Crosstalk]

**Madam Chairman:** Item 004: Prison Services.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much. [Crosstalk] Silence; thank you very much. Item 43, I see an increase in 11.1 million. Could you tell me what that expenditure relates to, Security Service? Is it justice on time?

**Hon. Young:** Sorry. Quite right. The Security Services under Prison Services is the justice on time. And it will be a good time to tell the country that what we did, is that we actually went out for a competitive tender for it and managed to negotiate the price downwards for the first time.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister, it does not bother you, I am talking here about Item 43, it does not bother you that the largest Item here is the Item to transport prisoners from the prisons to the courts? The largest Item, even above training, even above repairs to equipment, et cetera?

**Hon. Young:** The answer is yes. So what we have done as an administration is we are trying to get the videoconferencing court facilities up and running. When you do a tour of it, it is going to be nine courts, so you could deal with nine prisoners. That should greatly reduce any transport of prisoners. I have also just gotten, or about to get the Cabinet approval—no, we got the Cabinet approval to proceed with a special court, so I am going to build a special court just on the outside of the maximum security facility, but within the prison precincts. So again, certain prisoners can just be moved to be using of that special court.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister, I have been hearing that for the past three years—

**Hon. Young:** What have you been hearing for the past three years?
Mr. Charles: —and the difference is we perform. But the problem is, why if you talk all these things that are in train, you have estimated 11 million increase for the same facility? One would have expected that if you planned to have videoconferencing, you would have a requisite decrease, but we are seeing 11 million.

Hon. Young: This is actually an area where we will utilize that money and ask for transfers and virements because it is not an increase. We have actually reduced the contractual figure. This was done by the Budgets Division of the Ministry of Finance, we appreciate it, but after this was done we have reduced the figure tremendously.

Mr. Charles: Again, again—

Hon. Young: I wish I had the $80 million you all used on the fence that blocks nothing at the prison to spend for the prisons now.

Mr. Charles: Again, every time we bring a figure we are told that there is another figure, but okay. Item 17, it seems to me that—you indicated previously, perhaps challenges with recruitment in terms of the prison service. But it would seem that we need to train officers in the context of reducing recidivism rates, restorative justice and those sorts of things. Then why only 37,000 was spent for training out of a 1 million allocation?

Hon. Young: The 1 million was spent which you will also see that what we have done is that we have actually gotten an increase of $1.9 million for this fiscal year. This training is the training for the officers and not necessarily the type of training that you referred to which we are going to utilize NGOs and others to assist with the training of officers. We have also, I am happy to say, coming out of a visit I had to the United Kingdom in January of this year, we obtained assistance from the
Her Majesty’s Prison Service and that is currently ongoing with our prison service. And it also has included travel by our prison officers to United Kingdom at no cost to the Trinidad and Tobago taxpayer.

Mr. Charles: Minister lastly, and back on Item 43: Justice on Time. Could you give the national community an idea of when we would no longer need that service or it will be significantly curtailed, like two-year time frame, three-year time frame?

Hon. Young: It has already been significantly curtailed. As I said, we went out for a competitive tender the first time and even when the contract was awarded I then instructed that the contract been negotiated downwards and that has happened. So that contract is currently being executed.

Mr. Charles: But you are talking about reduced prices for existing service. And I am talking about—

Hon. Young: The existing service provider received it.

Mr. Charles:—reducing the service and terminated it altogether. Is there some time frame in the future?

Hon. Young: I do not know if it would ever be terminated altogether. But, yes, we are working towards a reduction and it has been reduced.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister with respect to line Items 13 and 15: Maintenance of Vehicles and so on. I do not know if you could tell us how aged the fleet of vehicles are at the prison service and whether they are OSHA compliant and they are actually inspected by officers from the Licensing Authority or is the inspection being done privately and the road worthiness of these vehicles are being compromised in anyway?

Hon. Young: This is an area that is getting my personal attention. I find it to be
unsatisfactory and it is something we are in the process of addressing.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** My sources tell me, Mr. Minister, that these vehicles of the prisons services are not properly inspected and certified and so on, and probably because of government to government arrangement, persons are turning a blind eye in terms of the road worthiness of these vehicle.

**Hon. Young:** I do not understand what you mean by government to government arrangement. I recently did a tour of the prison services. It is an area that the Prison Officers Association took me to see personally. Coming out of that, I went to my colleagues in Cabinet and the Minister of Finance gave me an increased allocation to deal with the vehicles at the prison service. I find it not to be satisfactory.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** And I would ask of you to keep your eyes in that direction.

**Hon. Young:** I will.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No.

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

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister I am just following up with a response for line Item 43: Security Services. I believe you said you will be doing a court close to the prisons.

**Hon. Young:** What was that? Sorry. I was just remarking at the amount of attention being paid to the transport of prisoners and wondering why. But go on.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Maybe you are expecting something on your side?

**Hon. Young:** They are going to be in the vans.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Hon. Young:** Sorry. I did not hear your question.
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Head 22: Ministry of National Security (cont’d)

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: You know you all always engaged in cognitive dissonance, you know. [Crosstalk] Hon. Minister, I am saying that I am asking a question in response to line Item 43: Security Services. You said that you are going to do a videoconferencing court. I am just simply asking is there a proposed commencement date because that would aid in—

Hon. Young: Correct. In the reduction.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Yes, and clogging of the judicial system at the time.

Hon. Young: Absolutely, and it is something that is being worked on. It has taken far too long. There was the termination of the contractor who was provided with the initial contract. We have taken a decision to now turn it over to the Judiciary because the shell is up. So it is the Judiciary to take on the finishing of it. I am certainly hopping they would get that up and running in this fiscal, because I agree with you.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you and that would save in time.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, to the Minister. Minister line Item 21: Repairs and Maintenance in terms of buildings. In terms of this particular expenditure, is it taking into consideration addressing a rat and pigeon infestation at the Remand Yard and the Golden Grove Prison and so on? I am being advised that there are persons who are suffering from leptospirosis and so on, who are currently incarcerated.

Hon. Young: The circumstances that you have just referred to are very serious circumstances that will need to be investigated. I do not think that will necessarily fall under this because this is of course dealing with recurrent expenditure. But that has to be addressed if that is the existence.

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Mr. Indarsingh: Well again Minister I will ask you to take note of what I have said and please pursue it with some haste.

Hon. Young: Absolutely.

Madam Chairman: Item 005: Regiment, page 136. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Item 40: Food at Institutions. Last year I raised the question of the rank and file of the regiment eating channa and bake instead of—and Her Excellency the President had to indicate her displeasure at the food her officers were getting and you subsequently took action. I am seeing here, and again I have to go with what is in front of me, you could provide the updated information, 20 million was allocated but only 7.8 spent in Revised Estimates. Could you give us the updated figure to see whether they eating better than bread and channa?

Hon. Young: 13 million.

Mr. Charles: 13 million out of 20.

Hon. Young: Yes, but remember that is how much was paid. So I know that there are a number of existing and outstanding invoices to be paid. But that is something that I have made it my business to continuously enquire about on a weekly—almost on a weekly basis when I meet with the CDS.

Mr. Charles: You are performing so well you could join our side, man.

Hon. Young: Well you are the person who said “Great is the PNM”. So I am already on the PNM side. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Charles: Is so much pressure that I could not talk—

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, Minister, Minister, if I could get your attention, please. Line Item 03: Uniforms. We appreciate that you might want to give 5.6 million for 2020 Estimates. Any comments on that?
Hon. Young: Sorry, what is the question?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Line item 03: Uniforms. For 2020 you have, well basically, and increase of nearly $5 million for uniforms.

Hon. Young: Correct. Now remember this would be based on the Revised Estimates that you see for 2019. We actually spent on uniforms before 4 million in the last fiscal.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No. Four hundred and sixteen thousand you spent.

Hon. Young: No, no, correct. So what I am seeing is that I have said, for the whole morning, that the figures that I have come with—yeah, correct.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right.

Hon. Young: So as at the 30th of September, because what you had is the payment of a number of invoices coming towards the end of the fiscal.

Dr. Gopeesingh: You explained it and I accept that. Line Item 60: Travelling - Direct Charges. That is a huge amount for travelling.

Hon. Young: Line Item—

Dr. Gopeesingh: 6-0: Travelling - Direct Charges, 10.5 million was spent last year. We can get an appreciation. I thought they travelled right here in Trinidad.

Hon. Young: So actually it was 12 million was spent. And what this would include is very often our officers are called upon to do training abroad. So it is the provision for that training abroad—[Crosstalk] Would you all—it is the provision for that training abroad, as well as some times like operation Tradewinds where we are doing joint exercises throughout the Caricom, you would have to send coast guards, two coast guard vessels or a coast guard vessel or some times when it is on the ground operation we also send. So it is covering the cost of travel for the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force Officers from the whole rank and file.
Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. Well you said training. Why the training aspect is not put under the line Item of Training?

Hon. Young: No but this is for travelling and direct. So the training comes free. So for example they will go to Fort Bragg to the Special Forces training, but we have to pay for them to get there, but also we still do pay them a per diem on occasions and those types of things.

Dr. Gopeesingh: You explained it. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Item 006: Coast Guard, Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much, two questions. The first is line 96, the last, Fuels and Lubricants. Because we had reports that the vessels are tied up and they could not, no fuel they could not come to help the Carli Bay fishermen, et cetera.

11.45 a.m.

And the understanding in the general public is that there is a problem with the fuels and lubricants for the vessels. I see 15 million estimated, only 9.7 spent. Could you give the latest figures, please?

Hon. Young: So we actually spent just about 15 million—over 14 million—and there was no point in time when the coastguard vessels were short of fuel or did not have fuel. Very often—[Interruption] People say all sorts of things. Very often, when you see the vessels docked at Staubles, what it is, is a change of crew. Those vessels are not long offshore vessels, so they can only spend a specific period of time out at waters. They have to come in; they have to change crew; they have to get more fuel; they have to get more supplies and stores on board. So I did enquire. During that period of time there was absolutely no vessel, including our C-26 planes, the fixed wing aircraft, that was short of fuel and did not perform the services. It is a vast expanse of water out there in the Gulf and it is literally

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impossible to cover every square mile of it via a vessel.

**Mr. Charles:** How much you said was spent, actually?

**Hon. Young:** 14.2—

**Mr. Charles:** 14.2—

**Hon. Young:** Million.

**Mr. Charles:** Now, if you do the calculation, the Actual in 2018 was 13.4.

**Hon. Young:** Correct.

**Mr. Charles:** And if you take the price increases—

**Hon. Young:** There were no price increases. That is a good try. So what it actually does is, it proves the point that we were utilizing the vessels more, and out there much more this year.

**Mr. Charles:** Are you satisfied that the 14 million is adequate to have our vessels constantly patrolling our shores?

**Hon. Young:** I can say this without fear of contradiction, every time that we need the releases from the Ministry of Finance, in particular in this area, they have assisted us and the amount provided is adequate. There has been no occasion where we have not had the fuels to utilize the vessels.

**Mr. Charles:** All right. Item 40, Food at Institutions. Again, could you give us the latest figure?

**Hon. Young:** Which one?

**Mr. Charles:** I “doh” know if they are out there with no rations.

**Madam Chairman:** 40.

**Mr. Charles:** Item 40, Food at Institutions. And one last question after that.

**Hon. Young:** All right. So we actually spent 11.1 million.

**Mr. Charles:** Well, that is good. So you actually spent more than you—
Item 13, repairs to vehicles. Does that include the coast guard vessels also, or only the—

**Hon. Young:** No.

**Madam Chairman:** 13?

**Hon. Young:** Yeah, 13.

**Mr. Charles:** That would be 15.

**Madam Chairman:** Repairs or Maintenance, which one?

**Mr. Charles:** Where in here do you have for the repairs to the vessels and maintenance of the assets?

**Hon. Young:** You are right. It does fall under the Maintenance of Vehicles.

**Mr. Charles:** Maintenance of Vehicles.

**Hon. Young:** So it would be maintenance of the vehicles and the vessels, yes.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister, do you feel that 5.7 million is adequate, given concerns expressed that the vessels were—and there are problems, schedule maintenance and breakdown maintenance?

**Hon. Young:** Correct. I mean, with the Damen vessels, for example, right now we have to send them to Curacao, or I think to Suriname as well, for the maintenance. But, again, once we require the funds to maintain the vessels and to send them, we are assisted by the Ministry of Finance in terms of if we need to vire and transfer money, we do do it. We actually spent $8 million in the last fiscal on the maintenance of vehicles. So that does indicate—because you would have seen we were provided with an estimate of 4, so it means that we did have to vire approximately another $4 million for the vessels.

**Mr. Charles:** But given that these vessels are sophisticated, the ones we left you, and there is scheduled maintenance—
Hon. Young: Including the fishing trawler.  

Mr. Charles:—are the maintenance schedules being maintained?  

Hon. Young: Yes, they are.  

Mr. Charles: So there is no reason fuel or maintenance of vehicles, that would indicate that we are not prepared with our naval assets to protect our coast.  

Hon. Young: Now, with all assets, including, in particular, your naval assets—because of the type of environment that they are subjected to out at sea—it will vary. So, for example, the CJ 60 which is the Chinese vessel, the fishing trawler that you all got for us, that, for example, you all entered into a contract, it can only be maintained by the Chinese. So recently you had, for example, a bilge pump go down and we have to wait for the part to get here from China and then they send the technicians to assist for the installation. So there may be circumstances like that, that a vessel will be down whilst it is awaiting certain repairs.  

Mr. Charles: I understand our plan was to have the Chinese set up that maintenance facility in Trinidad, so we will grow jobs. Training, Item 17, increase only by 553—[Crosstalk] Minister of Finance, please. I am on the floor. Minister of Finance. Training, Item 17. Is this 2.8 adequate given the new vessels that would be acquired from Australia, et cetera? My only concern in all of this is that we have an optimally functioning coast guard institution that would protect our—  

Hon. Young: Again, I am happy to say—and in particular the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago—what we negotiated with Austal in the figure that is being paid for those two Cape-class vessels, is the training. We actually currently have coast guard officers out there to supervise the construction. When it is completed, they have to provide our crews with the necessary training. So that will not fall under this line Item. That falls under the contract for the acquisition of those two
naval vessels.

Mr. Charles: So, Minister, given the training and the fuel and all the things that you have said, our borders—we can rest assured that our borders are locked down at this stage?

Hon. Young: You know, it is a misnomer to say that you have locked down marine borders. I recall a few months ago being in London in the United Kingdom with the hon. Prime Minister, and on the front of the Sunday Times was the British navy and their coast guard out—because it was a calm period across the English Channel—and they were out blocking scores of boats of immigrants trying to make it to the United Kingdom, and they do make it. You see the same thing happening in southern Florida; you see the same thing happening wherever there is a maritime border.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the men and women in the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, despite the unfair criticism, for working 24/7 and doing the best they can to ensure that our borders are secure.

Mr. Charles: May I assure you that we thank them too. Our only interest is to ensure that they get the assets to do their job, and training.

Hon. Members: Yeahhh.

Madam Chairman: All right. Member for Caroni Central.

Dr. Tewarie: Madam Chair, it was a question along the same lines, about the protection of the borders, but I will forego the question.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Just a small area, line Item 37, Minister, Janitorial Services, of $8.5 million for coast guard. I cannot understand that. What was necessary? Is that cleaning the boats or something? It might be.
Hon. Young: It would not be for the cleaning of the boats, but understand that there are a number of coast guard stations, substations, and that type of thing, and it is an MTS contract to provide janitorial services. So when you go down to, for example, Staubles, also when you go to Scarborough, when you go to Charlottesville, some of the other substations, it is for the provision of janitorial services.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And not that I am trying to be negative, but my experience when I was in Education, you have to look at the performance of MTS.

Hon. Young: That does not fall under me, but I am sure the Minister is listening.

Dr. Gopeesingh: They are not as efficient as they should be.


Mr. Charles: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Item 51: Relocation of Overseas Staff. Minister, given the reports we are hearing in Venezuela, why are you starving the immigration officer in Caracas? Why do you not either repatriate him or give him his allowances? I understood that you made a statement that he received all his allowances and there was a subsequent article in the Express which refuted your statement. So in the context of relocation of staff, the question arises.

Hon. Young: Firstly, to state the facts—and you may not be aware of the facts, so I will give you the benefit of the doubt—I never made any such statement. A statement had come out from another Ministry and I can tell the country that I, personally, visited this officer during the course of this week. But I do not need to make those things public and it is not done for PR purposes. I had a 45-minute meeting with the officer and the officer’s circumstances have now been alleviated.

Mr. Charles: Have now been?

Hon. Young: Yes. There was some concern and when I first heard of it via the
media, it was the first I was hearing of it. I immediately got on to both the Chief Immigration Officer as well as the Permanent Secretaries at the Ministry of National Security and ensured that the situation has been rectified. That particular outpost is a little bit difficult because of the US sanctions and the getting of money to the persons in Venezuela or who we have on the ground in Venezuela. But I had a discussion with him and now I am happy he has finally been paid the sums of money outstanding to him. And I thanked him for his service, because he is doing a lot down there in Venezuela with the visa system.

Mr. Charles: And I would like to thank the immigration officers. My wife had an issue in—

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Ay-ay. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Charles: And they acted efficiently.

Hon. Member: Let him give his thanks. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Charles: What is the problem? Item 17—

Madam Chairman: 70 or 17?

Mr. Charles: Item 1-7. Why, given all the new developments in the immigration department—and you have new kinds of passports, new kinds of systems that we see in Miami and whatnot, where you self-fill out the forms and whatnot, all that training is required—why only $62,000 was spent to train our Immigration Officers and have them up to First World standards like Singapore?

Hon. Young: First of all, I am not aware as to whether you possess dual nationality—

Mr. Charles: I do not.

Hon. Young: Okay. Well then, when you say “we”, “we” has nothing to do with Miami. We only have jurisdiction in—we, Immigration in Trinidad and Tobago,
only have jurisdiction in Trinidad—

**Mr. Charles:** That is not the point. What is the training?

**Hon. Young:** The machine-readable passports—and I also am not aware of when you would have gotten yours—have been around for—

**Mr. Charles:** A long time.

**Hon. Member:** Very long; very long time.

**Mr. Imbert:** Over 10 years.

**Hon. Young:** Since 2007, so that is 12 years. So there is nothing new with machine-readable passports that requires training.

**Mr. Charles:** So you are satisfied with $62,000 spent?

**Hon. Young:** Whatever training immigration requires will be covered. So, for example, we, meaning this administration, also negotiate, for example, with Canadian Bank Note, who provides the machine-readable passports; that part of the contractual arrangement is that they will provide the necessary training for Immigration Officers. At this stage, there is nothing new taking place in Immigration with respect to passports, et cetera, so there is no need for any new training.

**Mr. Charles:** But, clearly—

**Hon. Young:** If you would allow me to finish, Member for Naparima. I know the answer of competence does not make you feel happy. But they are being adequately covered, and if Immigration wants any specific and additional training, we will find a way to facilitate them.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister, as far as you are aware—and I am on Item 17—is there a strategic plan that informs their training, for example, the need to become bilingual, given the Venezuelan situation, et cetera? So the plethora of problems.
Hon. Young: The answer is yes.

Mr. Charles: Could you tell us—

Hon. Young: I trust the Chief Immigration Officer and her staff to be efficient and to take the necessary decisions, and if they need any assistance they know they can come to us at the Ministry of National Security.

Mr. Charles: Could you tell us any aspects of the policy that informs this training allocation? And while you are at it, 62,000, is this the latest figure?

Hon. Young: We spent 76,000 for the fiscal.

Mr. Charles: In NP we spent $2 million. But, okay. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Line Item 16, hon. Minister. You have an allocation of 8 million for Contract Employment, and now the general population is still experiencing difficulty in renewal of their passports, sometimes three months. Would that incorporate employment of personnel to help in expediting the processing of these passports? Or what is it for? What is the contract employment for, for Immigration Officers?

Hon. Young: Are you finished, Member for Caroni East?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, I asked the question.

Hon. Young: Okay. So the first thing I would like to put onto the record is, generally, we are able to turn around the application and the provision of a machine-readable passport within three weeks. There are occasions where it takes—this is the provisions. So when you have come and you have sat with the officers and gone through the process, not the provision of an appointment process, it is normally three weeks. There are some occasions where it takes longer, but that is because of the strenuous scrutiny that Immigration goes under. So there may be
some occasions where they find discrepancies, et cetera, and those need to be investigated. With respect to the Contract Employment, yes, we believe at this stage there is sufficient contract employment. Immigration Officers on the permanent establishment fall into the same difficulty we have discussed, so in the meantime we try to supplement with contract employment.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. But the time for getting the appointment, from the application to getting the appointment, is long and people have become frustrated. If you said that from the appointment time to the actual processing of it is three weeks, there is a prolonged delay between the application and the meeting of the Immigration Officers with the people to get their contracts. What is happening there?

**Hon. Young:** In particular with the issuance of passports and that whole process, the interface process, the checking, that is done by Immigration Officers, so you would not see contract workers performing. Contract workers are really providing the administrative, the back-room support and that type of thing.

**12.00 noon.**

So if we can get the Public Service to fill more of the Immigration positions, the permanent positions, they are the only ones who are authorised to deal with the passport side, the grant of passport applications and those types of things, it will assist.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Just like you brought people from abroad to become police officers in Trinidad to do investigations, can that training programme—

**Hon. Young:** Unfortunately, not here. The Commissioner of Police has a specific constitutional power and I will get to that in a short while, section 123A.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay, you made an attempt to answer it, but the population is
still a little uneasy about the length of time and I will ask you to consider looking into it very carefully.

Hon. Young: I have heard.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Other Contracted Services of 5 million, just briefly give us a little understanding and appreciation. In 2019, 6 million was allocated now it is 5 million, but only 2.4 was spent.

Hon. Young: Yes, those are contracts for like service providers, for example, Rentokil and others.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Okay. Fine. Good. Relocation of Overseas Staff, you have a big jump from 2.8 million spent last year to 8.2 this year for estimate for 2020.

Hon. Young: Again, that is just a budgeted figure. That is an estimate. I do not suspect we will utilize all under that line Item.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So when you move the staff from Trinidad to internationally, abroad—

Hon. Young: And then you have to bring them back.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So that is the cost of it.

Hon. Young: Correct.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. Okay.

Madam Chairman: Item 008: Probation Service. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very. Minister, Item 16: Contract Employment. A $3.3 million allocated in the estimates, could you give us an idea of the ratio between contract employees and permanent employees in the probation services?

Hon. Young: I had actually done that at the outset a little while ago. Sorry. Contract, there is room according to the contract by PMCD, et cetera, of a total 33
and we have 16 vacant. So we have to fill those 16; 14 are for the children probation officers, and I know we have gone out for recruitment there and they are being evaluated, and then one programme manager, and one BOA.

Mr. Charles: So the contract employment, how many?

Hon. Young: Thirty-three.

Mr. Charles: Thirty-three?

Hon. Young: Thirty-three in total.

Mr. Charles: And the permanent staff is? Permanent filled positions, not the establishment. How many are filled—

Hon. Young: Under contract?

Mr. Charles: —and operating—

Hon. Young: Well there are 16—

Mr. Charles: No, no, no. How many are operating on a contract you told me 33. Right?

Hon. Young: No, you have 33 contract positions approved.

Mr. Charles: Approved?

Hon. Young: There are 16 that are vacant.

Mr. Charles: So you have 16 vacancies in the contract—

Hon. Young: Positions.

Mr. Charles: —and how many vacancies in the permanent establishment?

Hon. Young: Twenty-four.

Mr. Charles: Twenty-four.

Hon. Young: So that is 40.

Mr. Charles: Because we get reports that—given your thrust in terms of crime and expediting matters before the courts and also at the suite of legislation, we are
getting information that at the courts sometimes there is a holdup because there is a delay there waiting on probation reports, are you satisfied that what we have here is adequate for this thrust that we are talking about?

**Hon. Young:** As I just said, we at National Security, we have gone out for, I think it is now on two occasions for the recruitment of persons. I want to fill those vacancies and I am hoping that those vacancies will be filled in the next fiscal, at least those under our—that we can.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister, Item 17: Training. Again, I see 270 was estimated in 2019, 0 spent. You care to give us the updated figures because there seems to be a—

**Hon. Young:** Ninety-five thousand.

**Mr. Charles:** Ninety-five thousand. Ninety-five thousand out of 270, there seems to be a challenge with that and I would ask you to look at Training given the human resource—

**Hon. Young:** Agreed. But I mean again remember with a budget these are just the estimated figures. It does not mean that you have to spend the full amount. If there is a need for training we will provide the training.

**Mr. Charles:** But when you look, for example, at telephones 540, and you look at, you said, 90,000 spent for training, you get a sense of the level of prioritization within the organization, and all we are asking if that you look at it. That is all. We move on.

**Hon. Young:** Understood.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 009: Forensic Science Centre. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Again, Madam Speaker, Item 17: Training, which is critical for the Forensic Science Centre to keep it updated and we see nothing spent in 2019, could
the Minister give us the updated figure please? Forensic Science Centre, 009, 17.

**Hon. Young:** About $15,000.

**Mr. Charles:** All right. Again the point is made.

**Hon. Young:** Understood.

**Mr. Charles:** I do not want to belabour it. So I move on. Repairs and Maintenance of the Building, 701,000 spent, and we keep hearing reports about broken down air condition units, et cetera.

**Hon. Young:** We actually ended up spending just short of a million.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Fyzabad.

**Hon. Young:** Sorry, 1.2.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, with regard to Item 12: Materials and Supplies, and in view of the recent legislation with DNA and so on, regulations, can you indicate whether that expenditure will include the purchases of DNA kits and so on?

**Hon. Young:** Correct. So we actually—with respect only to the DNA and the provisions of those DNA services, we actually spent 1,374,000 and that gave us 15,000 swabs, and then a number of testing kits, and then, of course, we have to pay the fees for the outstanding test to be performed, et cetera. Because it is both the custodial side and then the testing side.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Just a follow-up question. I know that crime detection and so on is moving apace with advancements and so on, are you satisfied that the 2 million estimated allocation is sufficient to have the centre in tune with modern techniques—

**Hon. Young:** This is under which line Item?
Dr. Bodee: Same line Item 12: Materials and Supplies.

Hon. Young: Well again, I mean if we have any shortfall I will be asking the Ministry of Finance to allow us to vire and transfer from other line Items where there has not been expenditure, as well as if necessary and something comes up that we need to do immediately, I will make the request at the mid-year.

Dr. Bodee: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche West.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, on line Item 16: Contract Employment, I am seeing there is an increase. Would more persons be employed in this department because you will have additional need to populate the databank because you need to have several thousand profiles for prisoners and deportees and so, would this include this, the increase?

Hon. Young: This is for the whole Forensic Science Centre, eh. This is not just the DNA custodian, but the answer is yes.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Another question. Are there any tenders out for equipment to outfit the DNA lab?

Hon. Young: What is that, sorry?

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Any tenders—are there any tenders out to get equipment to outfit the DNA lab?

Hon. Young: The contract was awarded.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: To whom?

Hon. Young: To NIPDEC.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Okay. Thanks.

Hon. Young: Sorry, by NIPDEC. They were the ones who—so what it is, is that the Ministry has retained NIPDEC to carry out that procurement process and it is

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currently are to. So I retract, but it has not been awarded as yet.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 21: Repairs and Maintenance to Buildings. You had announced some time ago that the Chinese Government was going to be donating or building a building, could you give us a status?

Hon. Young: Correct. So the latest update on that is the Chinese Government had agreed to build a state-of-the-art DNA lab as well as a new forensic science centre. That is still ongoing. We are working with them. We are in the process of retaining persons through the Chinese Government to do the necessary design, plans, and come up with the outfitting list, et cetera. So that is still an ongoing process.

Mr. Lee: Just a follow-up, Ma’am. Do you have designated location for that new building?

Hon. Young: Yes. My recollection it is around the Mount Hope area.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, Contract Employment. Would that include employees who would probably help in preventing us from having to go internationally for DNA analysis; and while we wait so long for the result and the transport of the DNA samples could be affected, you get bad results coming back, where can you use here to obviate that type of situation?

Hon. Young: That is something that I have asked the Ministry to look at carefully and to work on, and for us to be able to operationalize the current provision of DNA services under the custodian.
Dr. Gopeesingh: How long does it take for a sample sent abroad to be evaluated and—

Hon. Young: It will depend on where it is sent to, and then the turnaround by that lab, et cetera.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Well these labs are accredited, so—

Hon. Young: Well I would hope that the ones they are sending it to be properly accredited, and the answer I am being told is yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: It is critically important because—

Hon. Young: It absolutely is which is why I want to get our current DNA labs operational to that aspect. So right now we have the bank, we can hold the samples, we are taking samples from persons as they are held in the prison service, et cetera, but we need to get that side of it operationalized.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And while you are doing that could look at the method of collection for the analyses.

Hon. Young: I do not think there is a problem with the method of collection of the swabbing, et cetera. There is no problem with that. Right now we do not have the facility to be able—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Transport.

Hon. Young: No, not even the transport side. All of that is fine. We do not have the ability to test it ourselves and come up with the results, and that is something we need to do.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And last one, the Prime Minister went to Jamaica and saw something about two years ago and he said that this is something that we should encourage here and move towards, where are you with that?

Hon. Young: Correct. So we have done what needs be in terms of the legislation,
et cetera, that is the same conversation I was just having with Pointe-a-Pierre. I was with the Prime Minister on that trip. We saw what is being provided out of the Mona Campus, and that was built by the Chinese which is why we approached the Chinese and we are attempting to get the same thing done here.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** We need to expedite it.

**Hon. Young:** Absolutely. If I could do it tomorrow, I would.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 0105: Fire Service, Tobago; Item 011: Prison Service, Tobago. Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Mr. Minister, with respect to Repairs and Maintenance of Buildings, I do not know if you are aware—I am advised that the building in Tobago is falling into the sea, and if there any plans to deal with this particular scenario?

**Hon. Young:** So, Madam Chair, as I have said on a number of occasions now, I did a personal tour of that prison facility in Tobago. It is very inadequate. It is not falling into sea. It is actually on a cliff face and has been so for well over a century. We have identified an area to build a new correctional facility in Tobago. I was dissatisfied when they came with the draft Cabinet Note estimating the cost. I said there is no way I am burdening the taxpayer with that amount of money, well over $250 million. I asked for it to be reduced. They came back, I still was not satisfied. I have sent back them a third time to say that this is the amount that the taxpayer should properly pay. So I am hoping to get that done within a very short period of time at a proper value for money cost to the taxpayers.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** So you envisaged a date for sod turning and so on?

**Hon. Young:** I am not one who is particularly into the sod turning side. I just want to get the project done, but I hope they will be able to turn the sod very soon.
Mr. Indarsingh: So no ribbon cutting, and no shovel, and so on?

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Ms. Ramdial: Janitorial Services, Ma’am.

Madam Chairman: All right. So we move on. Item 012: Life Guard Service. Member for Couva North.

Ms. Ramdial: Thank you. Minister, line Item 37, Janitorial Services. There were no allocations for 2018, 2019, but I am seeing 400,000 allocated for 2020, can you clarify a bit?

Hon. Young: That may be to pay some of the arrears that may have come in this year, but there actually is a unit on the establishment to do the maintenance. So we are trying to move away from the contracted services.

Ms. Ramdial: Okay. Thanks.

Madam Chairman: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, just line Item 43 which is on page 143, Security Services, in respect to lifeguard. With respect to lifeguard, could you help me understand? Is this security service for their offices or—?

12.15 p.m.

Hon. Young: Okay, so we heard the cry for assistance and the plea of the lifeguards that in some instances they felt a little unsafe at their places of work so we decided, okay, well what we will do is we will provide private security services in those instances.

Mr. Lee: Could you just give me an example of where would those security services, like in Maracas Beach or some other?

Hon. Young: I am not sure exactly where it is. So I think what we decided is just to provide blanket security especially at the beaches and areas where they are
providing a more continuous service so there may be some like Vessigny Beach that is not 24/7 but Maracas Beach may be 24/7 so Maracas Beach may very well fall under there.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so we move on. Item 013: Immigration (Tobago); Item 014: Defence Force Headquarters. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much. Minister, Item 36: Extraordinary Expenditure, 500,000 allocated. Could you give us some idea of what?

**Hon. Young:** That is for things like the military funerals and certain other equipment.

**Mr. Charles:** Or, okay. Item 40: Food at Institutions. Could you give us the updated figure for 2019, Revised Estimate?

**Hon. Young:** Two point eight million. Now, this is for the headquarters.

**Mr. Charles:** I know.

**Hon. Young:** What I am going to do, Member for Naparima, I going to invite you to the Mess so you could have a meal with the officers if they will allow you.

[Laughter]

**Mr. Charles:** I have been there.

**Hon. Young:** Okay, good.

**Mr. Charles:** But the fundamental question is, as you know, 2.2 allocated, 2.8 spent but when we go down to the rank officers—the other ranks.

**Hon. Young:** No, but this is the headquarters eh.

**Mr. Charles:** Yes. So the headquarters provides for everybody?

**Hon. Young:** No, the headquarters is a specific building.

**Mr. Charles:** Well this is the point.

**Hon. Young:** So I do not understand your point.

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**Mr. Charles:** So the point is—

**Hon. Young:** Are you saying that the ranks at the headquarters are complaining about the food?

**Mr. Charles:** No.

**Hon. Young:** They are not. No one is complaining anymore.

**Mr. Charles:** I heard that you indicated that there was an allocation for the lower ranks and they spent less than the allocation. Unless you want to give us the figure again?

**Hon. Young:** I do not understand what you—let us proceed.

**Mr. Charles:** “How yuh mean yuh do not understand?”

**Hon. Young:** I do not understand what you are talking about.

**Mr. Charles:** Teteron, the allocation—

**Hon. Young:** This is not Teteron.

**Mr. Charles:** But you are not listening. At Teteron, the amount spent was less than the allocation, but at the headquarters, which we are dealing with now, the expenditure is above the allocation. That is the only point I am making.

**Hon. Young:** Okay, but again, proportionally, this is just $2 million for the headquarters for the space of a whole year. So is it that you are saying that you do not want the defence force officers at the headquarters to eat?

**Mr. Charles:** No.

**Hon. Young:** Okay.

**Mr. Charles:** I am saying that there should be a measure of.

**Hon. Young:** Okay, no but there is because the amount that would be spent at Teteron was in the tens of millions of dollars which is a lot more than 2 million.

**Mr. Charles:** We move on. Employee Assistance, Item 99, only 98 spent and it is

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a stressful environment I would imagine. Could you give us the updated figures, please?

**Hon. Young:** One hundred thousand was spent and we are looking at this area and I have actually met with a specialist. I want to increase the allocation to the programme and spread the cover of the programme but to make sure all of them are on the same programme and not different ones all over.

**Mr. Charles:** Right, and for particular reference, the prison officers also.

**Hon. Young:** Correct—well with the prison officers, although this is not a line Item, you know we got approval to hire 10 psychologists for the prisons alone.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Tabaquite.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Thank you. Hon. Minister, Item 50: Housing Accommodation. I noticed in 2019 you spent 1.2 million less than that was allocated. This housing accommodation, is it for rentals or is this allowances for housing?

**Hon. Young:** Okay. We actually spent 1.3 for the year and what this covers is a very small particular subset for example, our military attachés, as you know, we have a military attaché in Washington.

**Dr. Rambachan:** So this is overseas mainly?

**Hon. Young:** Correct.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Have you considered, Minister, purchasing properties overseas? In fact, you know when I was Foreign Minister, we did purchase a number of properties and today, they are valued three times what we bought them for that might in fact be a greater cost saving and provide a very good asset to the country.

**Hon. Young:** I have heard what you have said and I know as a member of Cabinet, we have had to deal with some of the difficulties, for example the one in
Miami and while you say it is valued at more, but I do not want to carry into that conversation now but I have heard what you have suggested.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: All right, so Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoe: Sorry, my question was answered already, Ma’am


Mr. Charles: Again, the question of the cadet service in the context of helping of at-risk youths. I have a fundamental belief so when I see uniforms 1.5 million estimate and only 174,000, I would be grateful for the updated figures please and that hopefully would indicate that the requisite attention being paid to our youth, males in particular.

Hon. Young: We actually spent double that figure, 310,000.

Mr. Charles: That is very good. Very good. Materials and Supplies, 339, only 103 spent. You could give us the updated figures because I am seeing a pattern here of, you know and I am glad that in the interest of our young people. 12.

Hon. Young: Correct and I think 443 spent.

Mr. Charles: Very good. Maintenance of Vehicles, I see 209 and only 19.

Hon. Young: Which line Item, Member?

Mr. Charles: Line Item 13, Maintenance of Vehicles, 209.

Hon. Young: Four hundred and forty-two spent.

Mr. Charles: Okay. Just now, shortly, again, okay, Food at Institutions, yeah, it is zero, 30,000 allocated, none spent.

Hon. Young: Correct because as you would be aware, I mean it is not an institution.

Mr. Charles: Agreed, agreed, agreed. Okay. Fuel and Lubricants, 70,000
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head 22: ministry of national security (cont’d)

allocated.

hon. young: Let me tell you how that was done eh, member, I mean just to digress. Recently, for example, I had approved a huge cadet camp for the same reasons as you are articulating in the sangre grande area and what we do is we send the defence force so the defence force will provide the food for cadets and that type of thing.

mr. charles: okay.

madam chairman: okay, so we move on. item 016: air guard. member for pointe-a-pierre.

mr. lee: thank you, madam chair. minister, air guard, 016, I am trying to tie in line item 13, the maintenance of vehicles. they had an increase of 9.4 for this year’s allocation and the insurance, 61, which also has an increase of 4.5. I am just trying to understand, firstly, the insurance aspect, is it that insurance is tied into the air guard equipment of the helicopters and so forth?

hon. young: correct. so the insurance would cover all of their assets so down to the fixed-wing aircraft, the c-26s, which are the majority, the bulk of it, would also cover the rotary-wing, the aws because those aws were actually purchased via loan financing and one of the requirements of the loan financing is you continue to have them insured even though we are not using them.

mr. lee: and would those air equipment fall under 13, line item, maintenance of vehicles?

hon. young: yes.

mr. lee: so you have just said you are not using them at the moment.

hon. young: no, but I said that we continue to maintain the rotary aircraft so out of the four aws, three are in a state—I cannot remember the technical term for the

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maintenance of them but all we have to do is literally give the go-ahead and they will be able to operationalize them within a matter of weeks or a month or two months but you have to keep them in that state. So you have to keep lubing them, you have to keep changing some of the parts on them, et cetera. So we are continuing to keep them in a state of maintenance, we are just not leaving them to rot.

Mr. Lee: Help me understand why is it not being utilized as part of the defence? Why your air equipment is not being utilized as part of your defence mechanism in fighting crime and so forth? I do not know, I am asking.

Hon. Young: No, but as I said, we also have in National Security. We have two other smaller rotary-wing aircraft that we are using, so it is not that we are without.

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Under Item 96, I notice you had a very substantial sum allocated under 2019, almost 8 million for Fuel and Lubricants but you just utilized 10 per cent of it.

Hon. Young: Sorry.

Dr. Rambachan: Well, I notice now that you are going up to 4.7 million increasing it by about 4 million. What is this for?

Hon. Young: It is a continuation of the conversation I was just having with the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre. Because you are not flying the helicopters, it requires less lubrication, less fuel—well no fuel so it is just maintenance on the ground. But we are expecting—and you were not here earlier, Tabaquite but what I had said is I am coming with an air unit to service both the—well not both, the defence force, the police service, and our intelligence services. So that is my projection in the next fiscal should I get the approval of Cabinet to bring back rotary-wing
a aircraft that will be utilized—the Air Guard will maintain it, the Air Guard pilots.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Right. So this new air unit you are talking about, will that unit consists of new equipment, new rotary equipment and so on? What will it consist of?

**Hon. Young:** Right now, we are in the process of working out what is best value for money and with respect to how can we utilize the taxpayers’ money best. We have those four rotary-wing aircraft, the four AWs that are on the ground. What do I do? Do I pass that over to NHSL, let them use it for commercial and then pay us a lease for it and we use that money to then get new—but it would not be brand new—helicopters to service the air unit, et cetera? So all of that is being worked out right now.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Would it be possible to utilize those helicopters, the expensive ones you are talking about, to provide a private transport service for people who might want to use it rather than the air bridge between Tobago and Trinidad?

**Hon. Young:** Via the National Helicopter Services, so right now, you can go to National Helicopter Services, Bristow, any PHI and I am sure you could rent a helicopter from Port of Spain to Siparia, from Port of Spain to Scarborough, anywhere.

**Dr. Rambachan:** But it is costing you to maintain it on the ground. Right? And I understand that.

**Hon. Young:** The cost is significantly less so like it is costing us a fraction of what it would cost if they were being utilized.

**Dr. Rambachan:** But might it not be better to earn money so that it can pay back itself?

**Hon. Young:** And those are things that they are working out. So for example, one
of the discussions that I am having with National Helicopter Services, take those aircraft yourself, operationalize them, get them down to Guyana and provide commercial services in the Guyana oil industry. So that is what I am asking them to look at.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Okay, thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Item 017: Immigration Detention Centre. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 22, in 2019, it was not budgeted but I see an expenditure of approximately 6 million as at a certain time so it might be higher. I am assuming it could be higher. It appears to be a one-off situation. Am I correct?

**Hon. Young:** Correct. So as you would be aware, in the year, the last fiscal, there was a lot more utilization of the IDC. In fact, I opened a second IDC in the last fiscal and what this is for is whilst we were recruiting longer term staff, we used short-term employment to be able to fill the various posts to make sure the IDCs were properly manned.

**Mr. Lee:** Could you just give us an example of what sort of—those posts?

**Hon. Young:** Officers. So for example, what we did is we had three-month contracts and short-term contracts for officers to serve at the IDCs whilst we went through a proper recruitment process for the three-year contract officers. So I am not expecting to have to do that next year because we would have completed our recruitment post and we are hiring persons into the positions.

**Mr. Lee:** Madam Chair, and line Item 16: Contract Employment, I see an increase of 5.9 for this year’s allocation.

**Hon. Young:** No, that is the increase eh

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Mr. Lee: So that have to do with the same short-term employment?

Hon. Young: Yes, correct. Yes, from short-term to a longer term contract, from the three months to the three years.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. Item 21: Repairs and Maintenance to Buildings. Ever so often, we see complaints on TV about inmates complaining about the conditions and whatnot. Is this allocation of 3.8—

Hon. Young: That is the increase eh.

Mr. Charles: That is the increase, sorry—of 4 million. Would that get the IDC up to speed in terms of what we consider humane?

Hon. Young: So actually over the last fiscal, a lot of improvements were made, all right, so I have toured it a number of times and all of the bathroom facilities were refurbished, the areas where they are fed and stuff, all of those areas were refurbished. So I want this over the next fiscal to work on some other security elements.

12.30 p.m.:

Mr. Charles: Very good, but only 116 was allocated, Sir, in the Revised Estimates, so it must be higher than that, significantly.

Hon. Young: It was almost 600,000 that was actually spent.

Mr. Charles: Okay. Minister, could you tell us how many inmates or persons are in the IDC right now?

Hon. Young: One hundred and thirty-five.

Mr. Charles: One hundred and thirty-five. And I am looking here at Item 40, again Food at Institutions. We are looking at $5 million to feed a hundred-and-whatever persons.
Hon. Young: No, but understand that it varies. So understand at certain times we had actually had up to 180 persons here. Understand that in the next year I am operationalizing a second IDC facility. So there will be an increase of provision if we have to put more persons in the IDC.

Mr. Charles: Minister, do you have an idea of the breakdown by nationality? Is that possible?

Hon. Young: I do not have that here. That can be provided.

Mr. Charles: Okay. I know.

Madam Chairman: That is not really question for here.

Hon. Young: That is for line Item—

Mr. Charles: Okay.

Madam Chairman: So can we go on to—Member for Tabaquite. You are under 017?

Dr. Rambachan: Yes, yes. Right, so I am looking under the Immigration Detention Centre, total figure 21,025,800, and if you have 135 persons there now, and you may, I am just averaging 150 persons, so it is costing us approximately 14,000 to maintain a person.

Hon. Young: Sorry, you cannot work the math like that. As I just said, it is really a rotational thing because we have deported persons. There were some months earlier in the year where it was overcrowded, but what this—you would see there is actually now an increase of 7.8 for this fiscal, as opposed to last. Right? You are seeing that in the furthest—and that is because, as I say, we are opening a second IDC, because I do not want to hear these complaints that I am overcrowding. I do not want to hear the complaints.

Dr. Rambachan: But is it that you want to create a second IDC and increase the
cost to the taxpayer, or is it that you want to improve your methodology, or your process, by which you get people back to their countries? And that means that you strengthen at the entry points, where people are coming in, and misusing visas, misusing things in the country which I have written you about in a particular instance.

**Hon. Young:** So, and you are obviously aware of it, and you would have been aware, maybe as Minister of Foreign Affairs, exactly as you have said, you have people who come in and these are the ones through the legal ports of entry, they were given a period of time, they overstay, et cetera. We have to enforce the laws. So certainly when we pick up people who have overstayed, the first place is the IDC, and we have been deporting people and we will continue to deport.

If, for example, you have to deport persons back to China, that is a lot of money a shot to get them back to China. But those are the types of things we are doing. I certainly, if I could have an empty IDC, I would be happy as a taxpayer.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Minister, I am very concerned, and that is why I ask this question, about people who are coming to this country and operating without any work permits as spiritualists all over the country, and they are being facilitated by local people also—

**Hon. Young:** Correct.

**Dr. Rambachan:**—and they are fraudulent and they are ripping people off money. I am wondering what kind of process takes place at the Immigration, when they come to the airport, that they are allowed into the country without proper examination of what they are about.

And further, are these people being picked up, given that there are full-page advertisements in the newspapers, as to what they are doing in the country, in my
view illegally?

**Hon. Young:** So the answer is, the immigration officers will continue to do their scrutiny. It is the same way how you go into the United States, I go into the United States, they do not know whether you are going to decide to overstay or not or work illegally or not when you enter and you have gotten past that point. You have written to both myself and I believe the Commission of Police—

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yes.

**Hon. Young:**—and we are actively looking at that. But I do want to say more than that.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Yes, sure. And the only reason I wrote to you is because people come to my office all the time—

**Hon. Young:** No, I have no problem with it.

**Dr. Rambachan:**—with evidence of them being fleeced.

**Hon. Young:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 018: Volunteer Defence Force (Reserves). Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases. Item 001: General Administration; Item 002: Fire Service; Item 004: Prison Service. We are page 149. Item 005: Regiment; Item 006: Coast Guard. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Again I have a question, vehicles, office equipment, furniture, other minor equipment, coast guard; nothing, no expenditure. And the same question will go for the Cadets.

**Hon. Young:** Well, I do not under the question.

**Mr. Charles:** The question is: Why—well, vehicles, why 1 million and nothing spent for the Coast Guard? I am trying to get at the performance of the coast guard.
Hon. Young: Okay. So those would have been purchase of new vehicles, meaning on land; so cars and motor vehicles. So the answer is no. They did not purchase. This attitude—

Mr. Charles: So—

Hon. Young: Just allow me to answer.

Mr. Charles: Yes.

Hon. Young: The attitude that you have to utilize money that has been put aside for vehicles, just spend it at the end of the year. So, for example, a Ministry buys new vehicles for a Minister to travel in, a new Prado, a new Porsche in agriculture, that is not going to be tolerated, certainly not at national security. So that has not been. If there is a shortage—and you have not heard of a shortage by the Coast Guard—of motor vehicles, so the answer is no. No money was spent by the Coast Guard to buy any new motor vehicles.

Mr. Charles: Agreed. So the question becomes: What is the process for this 1 million appearing in the Estimates? Do you not ask the Coast Guard to justify the vehicles, and upon this justification it comes here? And, therefore the question is: Why does the justification change subsequently?

Hon. Young: I understand your question Member for Naparima, because you never had to go through sitting in government, the process of the preparation of the budget, et cetera. Very often, what they do is they just continue with the figures. The Budget Division will look at it, et cetera. As I have said repeatedly, it does not mean you have to spend that money. So money may have very well been transferred and vired to pay for more fuel as we gathered just now.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.

Hon. Imbert: Madam Chairman, just let me come in here on this last point. The
Budget Division will put a provision in a line Item, based on projections and requests from a particular government department or agency. But during the year, other exigencies of the service may arise. They may need to transfer funds. They may deem it is not as high a priority as it was. They may not be able to procure the vehicle that they plan to procure, and so on. So for that reason, although you would see an allocation in the original, you may not see it in the final. And you also may see an increase as well. Okay? Things just change. It is merely a projection at the beginning of the year.

Mr. Charles: But you are given an assurance that a projection is based on some kind of empirical—

Hon. Imbert: It is based on request.

Mr. Charles:—only request?

Hon. Imbert: Just—the way the Budget Division operates is that there are a series of meetings between Budget Division officers and Ministries and departments and statutory authorities, and so on. This goes on for months. The Minister of Finance will do a Call Circular, usually around April in the fiscal year, for the next fiscal year. So there is a three to four-month period where there are meetings on a regular basis with each department. They are each asked to explain and justify and clarify their projections for the next year. Okay?

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, just to follow-up on the issue, through you to the very helpful Minister of Finance here. Now, in the process each year the Ministry, in this case National Security, will approach finance to convince the Ministry of Finance with some document or some policy that they intend to do something. “The reason we want the money is we intend to
appropriation (financial year 2020) bill, 2019
standing finance committee (cont’d)
head 22: ministry of national security (cont’d)

buy this or buy that, we need this.” Because, you cannot go to the ministry of finance and ask for money and clearly it is something you do not need, and so on. So you request and you argue to the ministry of finance, “we need this”. When you get it in the budget, it happens here now, and you see the revised estimate, you have a dash. It means that not a cent was spent, and then it comes as an increase.

Now, the minister is suggesting that when this happens it means that the money was vired into something else in the ministry. But it means that the ministry itself, and I am just using national security, it happens elsewhere, it means that what they had the money for, what they asked for the money for, they did not use it for. And does that speak to some other issue in planning, or that they failed for one reason or another, whether it is competency, whether it is time, whether you had to hire people, whether you had to tender, and so on, and you have failed to do what you convinced the ministry that you were going to do, and that is why you wanted the money under that line item.

Hon. imbert: That suggestion defeats the very concept of a virement or a transfer. The purpose of a virement or a transfer, which is a time-honoured practice in this country for over 40 years, is that things are not static, they are dynamic.

So as circumstances change, a ministry will reprioritize its expenditure. For example, in the particular case of a vehicle, a ministry may have decided that a vehicle is coming to the end of its useful life, it is 10 years old, as the case may be, and they may have decided that it is better to buy a new vehicle than continue to repair and maintain an older vehicle because of the maintenance cost.

However, during the year, the vehicle may perform adequately and the requirement to purchase the vehicle is no longer as much of a priority as it was

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before. And this happens throughout the government. It has happened for the last
40 years. A transfer and a virement is a very routine thing. It is not a sinister
thing. It is not as how you are making it out to be. It is actually an example of
efficiency and savings in money, where money is redirected to a better and more
pressing need. This in fact could be a very positive event, rather than a negative
event; that a Ministry has decided not to purchase a new vehicle and use what it
has and to do more with less, which is what this PNM Government is doing.

**Dr. Bodee:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister of Finance, [Crosstalk]
perhaps with reference to the accuracy of the Estimates, the Revised Estimates, we
are getting the impression from some of the answers that the figures here are being
updated. So I am just asking: Up to what point in time we can interpret these
figures whether it would be end of August, end of July?

**Hon. Imbert:** I will excuse the Member because he was not in a govern-
ment.

**Dr. Bodee:** No, but my interpretation is at the end of financial year. But we are
saying that figures are being updated.

**Hon. Imbert:** Let me speak generally.

**Dr. Bodee:** Sure.

**Hon. Imbert:** Some Ministries would be so up-to-date that they would have real-
time data to give to the Budget Division when the documents are sent for printing.
These documents are usually sent about seven days before they are finalized and
sent to the printer about seven days before. Some Ministries would be so efficient
that you have real-time data. It is actually on the 23rd of September. Others, not so
efficient. So it depends on the agency. It depends on the department.

**Dr. Bodee:** Yes.

**Hon. Imbert:** But I will allow the Minister to come in here, with respect to
Hon. Young: Thank you very much. Generally, the figures, by the end of July, but what I have done and in the interest of transparency and accountability, for the Ministry of National Security, I have made sure and I thank the members of staff at national security to provide me with the most up-to-date spend as at the 30th of September, 2019.

Dr. Bodee: Can I then make one further suggestion, Minister of Finance? For ease of interpretation and the discussion at this Standing Finance Committee stage, in those Ministries where the figures are not up-to-date, would it be useful, perhaps, to have an up-to-date document prior to discussion?

Hon. Imbert: May I also point out that if you look at the documents, again I would excuse you because you have not been in government, there are four columns: 2018 Actual, 2019 Estimates, 2019 Revised Estimates, 2020 Estimates. In every year, there is something called the closing of the accounts, which must take place before the end of December. And at that time, the final figures are produced by all the Ministries and the Budget Division. It is not possible, within the time frame of the budget exercise, to have real-time information up to the 30th of September. That is not possible, and it is not feasible either for a Minister to walk with that, unless you are a very efficient like my colleague behind me. It is not feasible because you have to rely on your public servants to give you the information. And that is why the closing of the accounts goes to the end of December, rather than the end of September. Okay?

Madam Chairman: All right? So, can we move on? Item 007: Immigration, page 150; Item 008: Probation Service; Item 009: Forensic Science Centre; Item 010: Fire Service (Tobago). We are at page 151. Item 012: Lifeguard Service;
Appropriation (Financial Year 2020) Bill, 2019
Standing Finance Committee (cont’d)
Head 22: Ministry of National Security (cont’d)

Item 014: Defence Force Headquarters; Item 015: Cadet Force. Member for Naparima.

12.45 p.m.

Mr. Charles: 015, Vehicles, 450, nothing spent; Office Equipment, nothing spent; Furniture, nothing spent; Minor Equipment 137,000. Could the Minister give us a reason why nothing was spent for vehicles in Cadet Force, when under the Air Guard below, where we have two planes that—helicopter not flying, he approved $1 million for vehicles. Could it not be a question of where you see the Cadet Force?

Hon. Young: Absolutely not. I strike that out of hand. The Cadet Force in the last obviously—because remember this is not for the cadets, this is for the administrative staff at the Cadet Headquarters —.

Mr. Charles: Yes they have to go out.

Hon. Young: Yes, but they did not need any new vehicle. You have not heard a single—allow me to answer, Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: But the budget is 450.

Mr. Imbert: Stop it.

Hon. Young: As you have just heard the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin North/East, the Minister of Finance tell you and I excuse you because you have never been in a government before.

Mr. Charles: In government like you.

Hon. Young: What you know—what happened here is there was no need for any new vehicle. The other areas of expenditure for the Cadet Force, Office Equipment they spent 5,600, under Furniture and Fittings, 44,000, under Minor Equipment, 137,000—

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Mr. Charles: I spend 20,000 on my home.

Hon. Young: Okay, and are making the point this Administration is not going to waste the taxpayers’ money unnecessarily. So the same way your administration awarded a contract for $170 million for the outfitting of One Alexandra Place and did nothing about—but pay the man the money.

Mr. Charles: “Doh call One Alexandra Place.”

Madam Chairman: Let us have one conversation, you are allowed another intervention. Let us all try and have one conversation. Any more questions Member for Naparima.

Hon. Young: And furthermore, he raised the Air Guard position of the $1 million. You cannot get a helicopter or a plane for a $1 million. So what that is, is the Air Guard were using that, they had need for a new vehicle.

Mr. Charles: And that is what I said vehicle, I did not say plane.

Hon. Young: But you were the one who just said plane. Anyway Ma’am let us mover on.

Madam Chairman: Item 017: Immigration Detention Centre; Item 018: Volunteer Defence Force (Reserves); Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 001: Regional Bodies. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Minister what is our annual subvention. Is this $13 million our annual subvention to IMPACS?

Hon. Young: Correct. You would see 05, line Item 05, is for IMPACS.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Right. Now this is Trinidad’s contribution.

Hon. Young: Correct. It could only be our contribution, yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Do you have an understanding of the rest of the Caribbean, what their contributions are in relation to?
Hon. Young: We—[Crosstalk]

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, I mean—the Minister will probably know.

Hon. Young: So like every Caricom body and as you know, IMPACS is part of a Caricom initiative every jurisdiction has a different contribution. I am not sure what the others are.

Dr. Gopeesingh: But our contribution is what? About 25/30 per cent of it?

Madam Chairman: Member.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, but no. This is the line—

Hon. Young: It is significant.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Chairman.

Madam Chairman: But you have asked the line Item—

Dr. Gopeesingh: I am asking about whether the $13 million for IMPACS is equivalent to about 25 or 30 per cent of the Caribbean contribution. That is the line Item—[Crosstalk]—very relevant.

Madam Chairman: Member.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I want to know whether the other Caribbean countries are contributing—[Crosstalk]

Madam Chairman: Yeah, but Member—[Continuous crosstalk] Minister of Finance, Member for Caroni East—Minister of Finance would you kindly control those type of comments.

Mr. Imbert: Daycare Centres—

Madam Chairman: We have an age—Member, Member, Minister of Finance there is a minimum age by which one qualifies to become a Member of Parliament.

Mr. Indarsingh: What kind of remark I have to hear from the Member for Moruga/Tableland?
Madam Chairman: You know, Member for Couva South, Member for Couva South, Member for Caroni East—

Dr. Gopeesingh: We are tired of these insults, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: And I had been trying to deal with the insult.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Do something about it.

Mr. Indarsingh: “It cah be one way inside here”.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Without any redress. Without any redress.

Madam Chairman: But Member for Caroni East—

Dr. Gopeesingh: I cannot sit here. I am here 20 years now in Parliament and I “cah” see these young fellas coming inside here and want to create distress for us all. [Crosstalk]

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance—[Continuous crosstalk]

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Madam Chairman, the Member for Moruga/Tableland he is rude and be must start to learn to tame his—[Crosstalk]

Madam Chairman: It must be that everybody is hungry. [Crosstalk] It must be that everybody is hungry. But all I am saying is this. We have work to do—[Continuous crosstalk] Member for Oropouche West, Member for Oropouche West.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Sorry, Ma’am, I am sorry.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East and Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: He insulted her.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, 17,000 people voted for me to be here and—[Crosstalk]

Mr. Imbert: What is going on here?

Dr. Gopeesingh: I asked a question.
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Head 22: Ministry of National Security (cont’d)

Madam Chairman:  Minister of Finance.

Dr. Gopreesingh:  I am bombarded by insults which is unacceptable.

Mr. Charles:  “Yuh all in charge now. Deal with it.”

Madam Chairman:  Member for Naparima—[Crosstalk]

Mr. Charles:  All right. I bow to you.

Madam Chairman:  No I “doh” want any bowing. Okay. So, now that I feel everybody had their recess, let us get back to work.

Dr. Gopreesingh:  I did not get an answer to the question.

Madam Chairman:  Well, Member for Caroni East, we are proceeding. I have—[Interruption]—I have ruled that that is not relevant. Member for St. Augustine.

Mr. Ramadhar:  Thank you very much. I think there is a more fundamental issue here, that I heard the Member for Moruga/Tableland say the most insultive thing to my learned friend and we carry on as if nothing has occurred, and that when others on this side remonstrate, you know, it is as if these are the troublemakers on this side when other get away with near murder in terms of the—

Madam Chairman:  I do not like—I take objection to that word.

Mr. Ramadhar:  Well I withdraw that, but when I hear other things like this and this other side is not entitled to rise it directly for it to be dealt with there is an inequity that is here. [Desk thumping]

Madam Chairman:  So Items 004: International Bodies, Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla is your hand up for 004?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:  My hand was up, Madam Chairman, for 04, 05. Can the hon. Minister indicate whether the increase of 99,000 is in fact an increase in our contribution to IMPACS or is it arrears?

Hon. Young:  I am not sure we are, you know, we are at page 154, Item.

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Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Madam Chairman, I had my hand up immediately after the—.

Hon. Young: The answer is, yes that will fulfill our requirements, our commitment. As you know with these international bodies and in particular with Caricom there is a specific formula for each of the Caricom bodies as to how much you must contribute. So this is in line with the formula and how much we are obliged to contribute towards IMPACS.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: So this is not arrears that you are incur?

Hon. Young: We, I think we have now covered all of the arrears for the previous period.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: So can we go on to Item 004: International Bodies? Item 005: Non-Profit Institutions. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. Item 02: Vision on Mission deals with the rehabilitation of prisoners and deals with crime prevention. I see based on what I have in front of me the Estimate 7.2 million and 3.6 spent. Could the Minister give us the latest figure of how much money was allocated?

Hon. Young: They were paid all of the money allocated to them before the end of the financial.

Mr. Charles: They have—

Hon. Young: They have been paid everything.

Mr. Charles: —been paid?

Hon. Young: Correct. The full 7.254.

Mr. Charles: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla, I believe you are here?

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Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East, did I see your hand?

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, not for this one.


Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, I would like to focus my question to the hon. Minister with respect to line Item 04 and 05. 04, first of all, can you tell us how many trainees this amount of money will be utilized for? How many members of staff? What is or are the locations for CCC? And what is the per capita cost of training? So I could go it in slowly.

Madam Chairman: Yes, we will take them one at a time.

Hon. Young: Number of trainees per cycle, 800. The stipend per trainee, $90 a day. The estimated cost per trainee based on the total expenditure of 2019 divided by 1600 trainees we did for the year is 19,815.

Mr. Karim: Nineteen thousand—

Hon. Young: Eight hundred and fifteen.

Mr. Karim: What is the duration? That is annually?

Hon. Young: Yeah. Per trainee.

Mr. Karim: Per trainee, per year?

Hon. Young: Yeah.

Mr. Karim: Right. And the—I asked about the locations, how many locations we have.

Hon. Young: I will have to provide that to you, because there is no one here from—

Mr. Karim: Can I go on to—

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Hon. Young: Eight regions and Tobago.

Mr. Karim: Eight regions and Tobago.

Hon. Young: So nine.

Mr. Karim: Might you be able to give us a little something in writing with respect to what you would have indicated? I would like to have it in writing.

Hon. Young: Yeah.

Mr. Karim: Can I go on to MiLAT?

Madam Chairman: Once you are within 007.

Mr. Karim: Yes. Now I am on 05, the other line Item, under 007. Is that all right? Okay.

Hon. Young: As you know with MiLAT is actually a two-year programme. All right? So MiLAT, this period of training could cover from October 2019 to September 2021. The number of cadets we are looking at is 200 with a stipend per day of $40 per day to per cadet. The estimated cost per cadet would be $60,000 based on the average total expenditure of 12 million divided by 200.

Mr. Karim: Sixty thousand per year?

Hon. Young: Correct. Now this figure, of course, the way they are estimating this is the overall cost of the programme “eh”. So that would include the payment of the staff and everything.

Mr. Karim: But what percentage of that overall goes to the members of staff like the commandants and so on?

Hon. Young: I will have to provide that.

Mr. Karim: If you could give me that, because you see when you talk about the per capita cost and you say that includes staffing plus materials for the trainees and stipends.

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Hon. Young: Well it is everything. I mean it is a bit of an unfair formula because you see—

Mr. Karim: If you could me some breakdown? The question is, however, how many locations do you have?

Hon. Young: MiLAT is one location.

Mr. Karim: Mausica?

Hon. Young: Yeah. It is one batch of—because remember this there also is a dormitory system and you are housing them over the two-year period.

Mr. Karim: I know where it is and I know what happens. But I want to ask the question in the context of the level of expenditure. Now if you could tell us so that people would be informed as to what is done or what are the subjects that are done, delivered based on the expenditure?

Hon. Young: A line Item in the budget?

Mr. Karim: Well you see it is in the budget in terms of what is being expended. If not and you could tell me, I can ask it at another time, but if you could give me the breakdown and the details.

Hon. Young: I will provide it.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister line Item 13: Criminal Injuries Compensation. Can the hon. Minister indicate how many persons successfully accessed compensation?

Hon. Young: That will be provided.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: What would be the amounts? And has anyone been denied compensation?

Hon. Young: The answer is yes. All of that is actually provided to the Parliament when we lay the reports on an annual basis for the Criminal Injuries Compensation
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Head 22: Ministry of National Security (cont’d)

Board. So I will get a copy of the report for you.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And line Item 14. How many persons were able to access this Emergency Cases Fund and what is the criteria for accessing this fund?

Hon. Young: Sorry. The answer to the first part is 62 persons were able to access. What was your second question?

Dr. Gopeesingh: How many people accessed—

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: No. How many—

Hon. Young: Sixty-two accessed it.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And they were all successful in—

Hon. Young: Sixty-two successfully accessed it.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay. And what is the criteria for accessing? No, no this is line 14, this is line 14. Is line 14 you are referring to with the 62, Sir?

1.00 p.m.

Hon. Young: Well, you are asking the question, Member. What are you asking me about now?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: No, when you told me that you will get the answer—

Madam Chairman: Line Item 14.

Hon. Young: The Emergency Cases Fund?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes.

Madam Chairman: You were distracted by somebody else, but you addressed the Minister and he answered you.

Hon. Young: So the objectives of the Emergency Cases Fund are helping to get probationers readmitted to school—encouraging probationers to seek educational or vocational training, helping to put young persons on an even keel by providing opportunities for rehabilitation, creating productive persons exhibition delinquent
behaviour, developing skills in young persons to encourage productivity, preventing reoffending and reducing crime, improving family relationships, restoration of self-esteem and giving hope to a better life for young people.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Sir.

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

Dr. Gopeesingh: Line Item 15, Minister, Comp. to the Estates of Members of the Protective Services. The 2019 Estimates was 5 million to give to members. What we see from the Revised Estimates, nothing was given.

Hon. Young: Actually that is incorrect. We were able to provide $3 million for persons who qualified under this unfortunate heading.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So that financial thing has not been recorded under Estimates for 2019?

Hon. Young: Correct. It was only done within the last—

Dr. Gopeesingh: How many are outstanding to be paid, if there is an answer to that?

Hon. Young: There are, I think, two of them being looked at currently to see whether they fall under that particular category and whether they qualify.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And you have allocated 5 million for this year?

Hon. Young: Correct. Well, I mean, as you know, I would hope not to spend any.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Right. Okay. I agree with you.

Madam Chairman: Item 009: Other Transfers. Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Item 10: Office of Disaster Preparedness, Item 19 and Item 22, I want to deal with whilst I have your ear, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Sure, please proceed.

Mr. Singh: Item 10: Office of Disaster Preparedness, I see there is an increase of
Appropriation (Financial Year 2020) Bill, 2019
Standing Finance Committee (cont’d)
Head 22: Ministry of National Security (cont’d)

$8.7 million. What is the nature for this? I know that the Office of Disaster Preparedness is under new management, and from my experience with them in the floods last year, they really required new management. So I would like to find out, what is the nature and purpose of this increase?

**Hon. Young:** All right. Well, this is for the whole ODPM. So, you would have seen that we are a lot more active with the ODPM within recent times, unfortunately, due to some of the natural disasters we have had to deal with. We actually expended 9 million in the last fiscal, and a lot of that would have been dealing with the unusual disaster flooding we experienced in October of last year. We are trying to be a lot more proactive in this fiscal. We had identified a lot of equipment that can be of use: pumps, flat bottom boats, other types of supplies, et cetera, going into disaster areas afterwards, post-disaster. So that is the increase in expenditure.

**Mr. Singh:** Minister, within the programme of the ODPM, is there significant community engagement, because you have some people who respond all the time within the communities to floods, and if they can be in some kind of honorary system, put in place with them or a stipend for them?

**Hon. Young:** Okay. The first responders, as you are aware, in those situations is really the regional corporations. So all of them have DMUs, Disaster Management Units. They have increased the level of volunteerism and training that has been taking place over the last nine months, and I applaud them for that. ODPM really is in a supervisory role and we are really supposed to be the persons that coordinate the type of response being provided. So we are working on those areas and, in particular, looking at the type of technology. I have heard what you have said about maybe an honorary system for volunteers, because you are right, when you

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have had these things, especially in reoccurring places, fortunately, there are some of our citizens who come forward time and time again to help.

Mr. Singh: Okay. Item 19: Information and Communication Technology Unit. I see that there is an increase of $3.3 million. What is the nature and purpose of this unit?

Hon. Young: This unit is actually the unit on the civilian side that assists with like E999 and the Rapid Response. So they are the ones providing, both the hardware for that, as well as we have civilians who will answer the phones and then direct it. So we are trying to ramp up. You would have heard the Commissioner of Police speak about this. That is one of the areas we are trying to place a lot more emphasis on.

Mr. Singh: Cybersecurity, Minister, I find that the allocation is—Hon. Young: Too small.

Mr. Singh:—is very small.

Hon. Young: I agree.

Mr. Singh: Because I know what is happening with cyberbullying out there and that therefore this allocation—

Hon. Young: This unit is actually not the main responder and provider. That would come under the Cybercrime Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, but it is an area I have asked national security to look at more closely, because we do need to increase our presence and also increase the support in that area, agreed.

Mr. Singh: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East? No? Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. Item 27: Migrant Registration Framework - Venezuela, 1.4 estimated. Minister, could you tell us how many of the 16,000 or

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so that presented themselves for registration have actually been processed and received their badge or whatever it is they are supposed to get?

**Hon. Young:** It is not a badge, it is a particular registration card with a lot of security items and features.

**Mr. Charles:** Right, registration.

**Hon. Young:** We have actually completed the due diligence process up to a couple of days ago of about—I have actually signed off on, after completion of the due diligence exercise, of just over 10,000 persons. Out of that, 8,000 cards have been prepared—just over 8,000 cards—for the persons who have qualified for collection. I do not have the exact number of how many have collected.

**Mr. Charles:** So, as of now, no one has received their registration cards.

**Hon. Young:** Absolutely, no, no. Thousands have received.

**Mr. Charles:** Have received?

**Hon. Young:** Have received, yes.

**Mr. Charles:** Could you give us that figure?

**Hon. Young:** We kicked off the provision of the registration card months ago, a few months ago. I had kicked that off. So they have, and it is an ongoing exercise on a daily basis. Persons are picking up and collecting their cards.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister, since we are dealing with the Estimates for next year, are there any plans for next year or—?

**Hon. Young:** So this Estimate for next year is actually a carryover from this year. There is no other registration process taking place. We have completed, as we said, that two-week registration that ended.

**Mr. Charles:** So out of the 16,000 who presented themselves—

**Hon. Young:** 16,523.
Mr. Charles:—16,000 already have their registration cards?

Hon. Young: No, as I have just told you, that process, 16,523 came forward to be registered. There is a due diligence exercise.

Mr. Charles: Agreed.

Hon. Young: Out of that due diligence exercise, we have now, at this stage, I have signed off on just over 10,000 persons, signed off meaning—

Mr. Charles:—10,000 have received.

Hon. Young:—that 10,000 are eligible to receive. As I have just said, in addition to that, 8,000-plus cards have been prepared. So it is a multi-stage process. So now those 8,000 are in the process of collecting their cards. This is ongoing.

Mr. Charles: Okay. In the fullness of time—

Madam Chairman: Just one minute. If you listen, one minute.

Hon. Young: So the answer is yes, in the fullness of time, when the whole process is completed, I will then come and say, out of the 16,523, X number of thousand fulfilled the due—but I can tell you out of that there was 123 so far that have not crossed that hurdle of being acceptable, and we are in the process of dealing with that.

Mr. Charles: In the fullness of time, when they would have—

Hon. Young: It is now 300.

Hon. Member: How much?

Hon. Young: It is now 300.

Mr. Charles: 300. In the fullness of time, when they would have all received their registration cards, those approved, it may almost be the time for phase 2.

Hon. Young: No.

Mr. Charles: Because this is for one year. So, therefore, I am just asking, is any
allocation being given in contemplation of a policy with respect to next year or we will deal with that when we get to it?

**Hon. Young:** At this stage, this administration has absolutely no intention of a second phase. But, as you will see here from the Estimate, there is the 1.4 million. So if there is going to be any continuation of it, for example, expenses associated, we will deal with it.

**Mr. Charles:** Or extension of the thing.

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

**Mr. Karim:** I thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, may I ask you to give us some explanations with respect to some increases with the following line Items: 16, 17 and 24? Transit Police Unit, 16, an increase of 2.7 million.

**Hon. Young:** Sorry, what is the question?

**Mr. Karim:** With respect to the Transit Police, the increase of 2.7, line Item 16. Is it—I mean, I do not want—

**Hon. Young:** All right. So what that is, as you would see here, we had provided, there was an estimate of 10.5 for the last fiscal. We spent 7.9, so we have gone back with the $250,000 more, 10.175, and that is because there is still a number of vacancies under the Transit Police. So if we manage to fill those vacancies in the next fiscal, then it would be this amount.

**Mr. Karim:** Okay, because there seems to be a scarcity in certain areas of congestion, especially, like in my constituency at Endeavour.

**Hon. Young:** That is an area the Ministry of Works and Transport, the Minister has spoken to me about. So we will see if we can do another recruitment exercise.

**Mr. Karim:** Okay. The Morvant/Laventille Initiative.

**Hon. Young:** Okay. So those are specific outreach programmes and social
intervention programmes in that community and we will continue to do it.

**Mr. Karim:** Can I ask—it might not be related, Madam Chair, but I mean, in terms of the expenditure, just for your consideration, if there will be a consideration for an Enterprise initiative in the context?

**Hon. Young:** As you are aware, we have focused a lot on the Enterprise area and the Enterprise area currently is getting a lot of attention, including the National Crime Prevention Programme.

**Mr. Karim:** Well, I was just going to indicate the increase in that, line Item 24.

**Hon. Young:** We are hoping, and I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of National Security, the hon. Member, Mrs. Glenda Jennings-Smith, because she has been spearheading and leading this initiative, and what we have taken a decision to do is to increase the outreach to go to more communities throughout Trinidad in the next year, through the social intervention programmes as well as other programmes.

**Mr. Karim:** Might you be able to say, in addition to the three areas that you focused—

**Hon. Young:** Yes, I think your area as well.

**Mr. Karim:** Ours is one, but do you have others in mind?

**Hon. Young:** I just said that. We are going to increase—

**Mr. Karim:** I know but you did not indicate which ones.

**Hon. Young:** That will be indicated at the appropriate time.

**Mr. Karim:** Okay. All right. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, some of my colleagues have already asked—just with the Migrant Registration Framework, 27, you
indicated that, if I heard correctly, 300 persons have found themselves afool of
probably the law, based on a law enforcement relationship with Interpol and so on. Right? Have they been repatriated, these 300-plus persons?

Hon. Young: Not yet.

Mr. Indarsingh: Not yet? But the Government is heading in that direction?

Hon. Young: Absolutely. I am on record saying time and time again, anyone
breaks the law, anyone who falls afool of the law, will be deported.

Mr. Indarsingh: You said that the Government is in the process, so could we
expect some kind of timeline when all will be repatriated?

Hon. Young: At this stage, I am not going to say anything further on it for
obvious reasons but, yes, I mean, once persons—and not only Venezuelans but
exactly as the Member for Tabaquite has alerted us to, and I thank him for that—if
we find any non-national flouting our laws in Trinidad and Tobago and, in
particular, the criminal laws, I have told our law enforcement, Immigration and
others, we have to find them and we have to deport them.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche West.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: I am good, thank you.

Madam Chairman: No longer? Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Line Item 02, Minister, Strategic Services Agency, which
includes the National Operations Centre and the National Security Training. Could
you give us an understanding of the expenditure of 198 million on it, how many?
Is that salaries, is that cost of operations, what?

Hon. Young: All of the above.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, but give us and idea about how many staff members, how
many members you have employed in the SSA or the NOC or NSDA.
Madam Chairman: Which item is SSA?

Hon. Young: Yes, I can. I will provide that information.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is there any other cost besides salaries that is associated?

Hon. Young: There are a number of costs, quite a number of costs that will be associated with the running of our intelligence services in Trinidad, apart from salaries. So, for example, included in here would have been the other two helicopters that I have referred to throughout the course of this morning. That falls under them when it was the NOC and they are now in charge of that.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Ma’am. On 05, Crime Stoppers Trinidad and Tobago Limited, I think one year ago there was an announcement in the budget of an initiative to support a reward for persons providing information on criminal elements and so on, $100,000, I believe. I just wanted to know if that programme has been implemented and to what extent it has been successful.

Hon. Young: That really—Crime Stoppers, as you know, Crime Stoppers is a private organization and this is just the Government’s contribution to it. So they did implement that specific programme, and they would have to provide the necessary information as to how that programme has worked.

1.15 p.m.

Dr. Moonilal: Could you confirm whether or not the Government provided the $2 million in support of that programme?

Hon Young: Yes.

Dr. Moonilal: Ok thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Dr. Rambachan: Thank you, Chair. Minister, under 27: Migrant Registration
Framework, now that visas have been implemented, what are we doing to ensure that people who come now with visas actually leave the country? And secondly, are you going to re-open, registration? Because I see here you have an allocation of 1.4 million.

**Madam Chairman:** So as far as the second question, I believe that was dealt with.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Sorry yes. That was dealt with.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Is the first question.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Is just that that number there gets me.

**Hon. Young:** The answer is that we will continue through the enforcement arm of immigration to do all that we can to ensure that anyone who is here illegally, which would include someone who have overstayed their visa, we find them and we deport them. It is a problem that is facing every single developed country and jurisdiction of the world. I mean, you saw recently in the United States what is going on there.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Right. Minister, you have said we registered about 17,000, 16,000.

**Hon. Young:** 16,523.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Right. Now I am of the belief that there are many more Venezuelans in Trinidad, given what I see, who are unregistered. What is being done? What is being done to actually pay visits to job sites, to warehouses where they are working all over and to see really whether these people have been registered and are truly accounted for in the process?

**Hon. Young:** We are doing all we can, in that instance I am using the
multi-agency approach, once again. So I am not only leaving Immigration on their own through their enforcement arm. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service as well as if necessary, supplement from the Defence Force are assisting, we also set up a multi-agency task. We are also using the Counter Trafficking unit at the Ministry of National Security.

Because, unfortunately, there are persons who may be taken advantage off, including by locals who—I am targeting those areas and in some of the institutions. I want those persons who are using those houses of ill-repute to be on the front of the newspapers, meaning the customers, and then I am going after the big fish at the top.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you Madam Chair. I just want to continue on 27, line Item 27, and then I would ask my substantive question on 01. Minister can you indicate if the figure represented here includes the costs of the rental of the properties where this registration process—

**Hon. Young:** Yes.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And that was at how many locations?

**Hon. Young:** It was at three locations, one in San Fernando, one in Port of Spain and one in Tobago.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And can the hon. Minister disaggregate the figures in terms of how many persons were registered in each at location?

**Hon. Young:** Ma'am, I had actually provided that before.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Okay, you provided it before, I know you gave a total figure.

**Hon. Young:** No, I mean in here, in Parliament.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** 01. Could the hon. Minister indicate how many persons are
currently on the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board?

**Hon. Young:** On the board itself?

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

**Hon. Young:** I believe we have the full complement now in accordance with the law.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** When was that—when was that—

**Hon. Young:** We had to—I took a note Cabinet within the last month, month and a half.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Month, month and a half. So before that was there quorum at all to be able to have any injuries—any persons come before the board?

**Hon. Young:** There might have been a little gap where there was a period where there was not a full quorum. But that has been rectified.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 011: Transfers to State Enterprises. Hon. Members we will now move to the *Draft Estimates of the Development Programme*. Sub-Head 09: Development Programme Consolidated Fund. We are at page 51, Item 004: Social Infrastructure. Members will note that Item 004 spans six pages, therefore I will announce the project groups. A. Coast Guard, B.—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes, Madam Chair.

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

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes. The Purchase of Vehicles and Equipment for the Coast Guard. Bearing in mind what the hon. Minister has been speaking about, where is it located here in terms of the financing for the vehicles and so on?

**Madam Chairman:** You under 014?

**Hon. Young:** Sorry what is—?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Where the proposed acquisition of Coast Guard vessels that we
have been made to have the knowledge of, is that located here at all or is that—

**Hon. Young:** You mean the Cape-class vessels?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Hon. Young:** Yes it is located here, but it is not under this heading. It is further down. You will see it under page 57 actually.

**Madam Chairman:** Right, so that under there.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right.

**Hon. Young:** Yes that is under there.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So what—Y-you have some—this is equipment basically that you might—

**Hon. Young:** Correct.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay.

**Hon. Young:** So specific equipment for the Coast Guard for example type of ballistic plate vest that they use, they have to have a floatation device on it as opposed to the land-based officers.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay.

**Mr. Singh:** I am on page 52, Ma'am.

**Madam Chairman:** All right, we at A. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, we are at A.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. 51, Page 51 sorry, Minister 050: Construction of Costal Erosion Protection of Galeota. In 2019 you had estimated $2 million for a certain type of project. Nothing happened I assume, because it is no longer there. Could you tell us why there is no longer a need, a use, and nothing has been done. Because you who have had a reason in 2019.

**Hon. Young:** What we have decided that the Ministry of Works and Transport has
a Coastal Erosion Programme and we think that they are better suited to carry out that work.

**Mr. Lee:** And, Madam Chair, one more question. 044: Purchase of Specialized Equipment for Coast Guard. You had estimated $2 million for a certain type of specialized equipment. I am assuming nothing has been utilized in that Vote and now you have increased it to $5 million. What type of specialized equipment you have identified this fiscal year for 5?

**Hon. Young:** As you all are aware, the Coast Guard is doing a lot more on the border of protection side now and therefore it is to provide them with certain specialized equipment, to perform their duties in that area. I really do not want to get into the type of specialized equipment. It will put them at a disadvantage.

**Madam Chairman:** B. Regiment. Yes Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Item 165: Base Infrastructure for Camps at La Romain (South), Felicity and Fores Park. I see there is an allocation $10 million. I am asking specifically, what is envisaged for the community of Felicity, on the basis of this allocation?

**Hon. Young:** Okay, so when I visited this particular camp, and I am sure you are aware of where it is, I found the base infrastructure to be needing supplementation. So what we are doing here, is we are now looking to spend the $10 million to provide better quarters for the men and women living there. So it will give us another forward operating base to launch operations down in that area.

**Mr. Singh:** Has there been any consultation with the community for this expansion?

**Hon. Young:** It is not going to be expanding outside of the community, so if you see where the La Romaine—you aware of where it is and you are familiar with it.
It is a massive amount of acreage and surrounded by nothing.

**Mr. Singh:** That is La Romaine. I am asking specifically about Felicity.

**Hon. Young:** I will have to ask them the specifics of that.

**Mr. Singh:** Yes, because you should do so. There is not anything existing right now. In fact it is occupied by potato farmers. One of your Members is a significant farmer in that area.

**Mr. Charles:** Item 177: Refurbishment of Waste Water Treatment Plant at Teteron. I see the project 2 million stop, but 2 million allocated. Is it that the—what is the status?

**Hon. Young:** Sometimes these things as you heard the Minister of Finance say earlier, the procurement process takes a lot longer than I would like. So that is where we are. You have to procure and then award the contact.

**Mr. Charles:** I was only concerned given the water quality in that area, the beach and so on.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Thank you Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, I am also asking about line 165, the infrastructure at La Romaine specifically. Are you—is there any intention really to build more quarters there?—because I know nothing is happening there at La Romaine.

**Hon. Young:** The answer is yes, I actually just said that. That is the intention.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Do you know how many?

**Hon. Young:** How many quarters?

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Yes. How many quarters?

**Hon. Young:** What you are doing, you are building accommodation for the officers who are down there, taking them out of the containerized system that currently exists.

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Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: And how many officers we have there?

Hon. Young: It varies depending on the operations we are running from there.

Madam Chairman: C. Air Guard, Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Chair. Just very quickly, hon. Minister line Item 028: Upgrade of Piarco Air Wing to Air Guard Base. Could you tell us what you intend to do there to upgrade what has been upgraded for the sum $1 million to the base?

Hon. Young: There is always a need for work at the Air Guard base. So for example, it is to make some of the accommodations, more accommodating. It is just really to upgrade the facilities that they have.

Mr. Karim: I like that to make the accommodation more accommodating.

Hon. Young: Well sometimes it is a little less than satisfactory.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much. And line Item 052: Upgrade of Fixed Wing. This is the C126 again?


Mr. Karim: The two of them?

Hon. Young: The two of them, correct.

Mr. Karim: Both of them working?

Hon. Young: Yes.

Mr. Karim: And the upgrade of the surveillance equipment is what? That is a lot of money in there. I know you might not want to say what it is.

Hon. Young: Sophisticated surveillance cost a lot of money but it is to give us more ability in particular in the nautical trafficking area.

Mr. Karim: I know this had come up before, but just as a little aside how old are these two fleets?

Hon. Young: The aircraft are well over 20 years old, but when we did a survey of
them recently, we were told by the experts, that because of the limited number of flying hours. As you would be aware, with aircraft you can have an aircraft for 10 years, but if you have only flown a thousand hours, compared to an aircraft two years old and has flown 5,000 hours. So they are still well within range. But we are looking at seeing if we can get newer fixed wing aircraft.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Point-a-Pierre. No? Okay can we go on D. Defence Force Headquarters; E. Defence Force Reserves; C. Prison Service.

Mr. Charles: Thank you, Item 008: Improvement Works to Prison Buildings, 3.8 million estimated. Does this include the Remand Yard?

Hon. Young: My recollection is the Remand Yard is under a different Item. So this would be the sort of day-to-day improvement of the various prison buildings, including like the admin. building.

Mr. Charles: At some stage we have seen or will see the Remand Yard?

Hon. Young: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas West.

Hon. Young: If you in particular will see the Remand Yard? It can be arranged.

[Laughter]

Mr. Charles: Me? Me?

Madam Chairman: Member for Naparima, just as you were offered a tour of Teteron, maybe that is what he meant, a tour.

Hon. Young: It is a tour I meant Ma'am. Ma'am it is a tour I meant. [Crosstalk]

Hon. Young: Which one Naparima? Naparima which one?

Mr. Charles: 032: Programme for Rehabilitation for Young Offenders. Only 40,000; you wish to give us the—
Hon. Young: What are the programmes?

Mr. Charles: Actual figures.

Hon. Young: No that is actually in this instance the correct figure.

Mr. Charles: So 40,000. And you see Minister, I am stating that when it comes to young offenders—

1.30 p.m.

Hon. Young: Correct, but the good news is when we say “young offenders” here, it is under the age of 18. So these are like at YTC, et cetera. So they are getting programmes, and it does not cost. It is schooling and that type of thing.

Mr. Singh: Item 033: Upgrade of Carrera Convict Prison: Installation of a Direct Water Supply and allocation of one million in 2020. The allocation of one million in 2019 was not utilized. What is this direct water supply? Currently they barge water.

Hon. Young: I would like to get a desalination facility there for them, so they could do it directly on island.

Mr. Singh: Whilst I have your ear, Madam Speaker, when you reach Fire Service I have a question on 190.

Madam Chairman: You are at F. right?

Hon. Young: Well, let us go straight there.

Madam Chairman: No, no, no, please. [Laughter] Thank you.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Hon. Minister, line Item 034. It is a new project I see. When do you hope to start on this project and where is it located?

Hon. Young: Okay, so what this is, as you see, this is a new project. So when I did a tour there was actually a building where the foundation was completed, the second storey was completed, the roof was built, and that was actually to be
utilized for dormitories and a nursery. And I said, “No, let us convert it now to a young offenders rehabilitation centre for females”. So I am hoping to get that done in this fiscal. You would notice the very small sum of 3.7 million, because we are going to be utilizing the prison service to do the construction and the work, and this type of thing. I want to get that done in this fiscal so our young female offenders would have a specific centre for them.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: I am assuming that this centre would also have some sort of rehabilitative process?

Hon. Young: Correct. All of these programmes have that element of rehabilitation. This is to build the physical centre for them. So you no longer have to rely on St. Jude’s Home for Girls, and this type of thing.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: But are we going to do away with the services of St. Jude’s?

Hon. Young: It is not a matter of do away. The church at St. Jude’s has said that they no longer would like to utilize their physical institution for those types of services. So we are trying to complete a state-run institution to take that over.

Dr. Bodoe: Minister, with regard to that same line Item, would you be in a position to give us a number with regard to the female offenders presently incarcerated in the main?

Hon. Young: You want to know how many female young offenders there are currently incarcerated.

Dr. Bodoe: Yes.

Hon. Young: Fifteen.

Dr. Bodoe: 1-5, thank you.

Madam Chairman: Caroni East, are you under the same one we are? Are you
Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, 031 and 014; 031, which is the Acquisition of Closed Circuit Television System. Hon. Minister, 8 million was allocated for expenditure in 2019, 674,000 was spent. Is it that you found difficulty in completing the project?

Hon. Young: Correct. So the same—I cannot remember, it might have been Chaguanas East—one of the issues that you face is the whole procurement issue and getting the RFP out, getting it evaluated and getting the contract awarded. So I am hoping to get all of that completed and the installation during this fiscal. But we have been doing the work.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Very early this year?

Hon. Young: I hope so.

Dr. Gopeesingh: What happened, why the Maximum Security Prison Complex—

Dr. Gopeesingh: What is that, sorry?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Line Item 014, you had some money allocated to it, but nothing was spent, according to this. I do not know if money was spent and the things have not come in yet.

Hon. Young: Sorry, what is your question, as to whether we spent any money?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Whether work was done on the Maximum Security Prison?

Hon. Young: Yes, the answer is yes.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And so some bills have to come in?

Hon. Young: We actually spent 267,000, but yes, because of the timing I expect more bills to come in, because this was utilized for some of the pump systems and these types of things.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So you continue to improve the environment there.
Hon. Young: Yes, absolutely, correct.

Dr. Rambachan: Minister, back to 031, I will be very sincere in saying that I find it difficult to understand. What is really taking so long to procure, to get and install this closed circuit television system? For example, do you feel that there is any deliberate attempt to block the installation of closed circuit television in the prison service?

Hon. Young: I have asked the same question, why is it taking so long. The answer is we have gotten some of it done, I intend to get all of it done. I am not going to opine as to whether there is any deliberate attempt or not.

Dr. Rambachan: But Mr. Minister you would agree with me that the lives of prisons officers are under threat, even within the walls of the prison service, and so many of them have been killed. For one reason or the other—

Hon. Young: Well, not so many of them. Let us not sensationalize it. I mean, there have been a number of officers killed—

Dr. Rambachan: Well, the loss of one life to me is important.

Hon. Young: Well, I agree.

Dr. Rambachan: So, you know, I would think that the service itself, or the people involved in this would have paid greater attention to getting this matter done. Twelve months elapsed—12 months—from the time the budget was passed, and I am sure this matter was going on before, and $674,000 has been spent. I would really like to get an understanding, even in writing, what was this $674,000 then spent on?

Hon. Young: It was spent on the procurement and installation of cameras in certain areas. I would like the whole of Maximum Security Prison, every single square inch covered, and that is what I am aiming to do.
Dr. Rambachan: I just find some of these things are taking just exceedingly long, and that is not fake news.

Mr. Lee: Minister, line Item 033, the direct water supply, which is a desal plant that you had mentioned that you would have liked to install in Carrera, and I stand to be corrected. Earlier on, your predecessor, Minister Dillon, in his tenure he had talked about the closure of Carrera. I stand to be corrected, or there was some discussion. Is there still any discussion?

Hon. Young: I am being reminded by Minister Dillon who was the previous Minister of National Security, that when we came in as an administration we found a policy decision by the previous administration to close down Carrera, and they claimed that is what the $80 million was spent for, to fence-off by the Maximum Security Prison, that there is absolutely nothing but grass within that area. We are not closing down Carrera.

Madam Chairman: Item E. Immigration. Item F. Fire Service. Member for Chaguanas West.

Hon. Young: “De hose man.”

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Item 190: Redevelopment of the Water Distribution System for Trinidad and Tobago, an allocation of $500,000. What is the nature and content of this water distribution system? Is this a study? Because currently I know that the salt water mains are not functioning, that with all these high-rise buildings in Port of Spain, if there is a fire there is total dependence upon the Water and Sewerage Authority to redeploy water into the area. Minister, that is a worrying problem for all of us who operate in high-rise buildings, in addition to being in Port of Spain. So the question is: Is this a study only, and what practical measures in the meantime can be taken, having regard to the anticipated very bad
dry season coming up in 2020?

**Hon. Young:** You working for the Met service? All right. So this is the start of the project, but this is something that we, meaning the Fire Service, has been working on. During this season I did have that conversation with the then Chief Fire Officer. A lot of the saltwater fire hydrants and systems are not working, however, there are the freshwater ones, as well as a certain ability to pump water. As you know, it would depend on the fire tenders and these types of things, as well as a requirement that some these high-rise buildings have their own systems in place. So fortunately—because as you know, fire services have to approve these buildings—a lot of these buildings have their own system already existing. So the fire services attending to a fire would be a sort of supplementary system. But it is something we are looking at, so this is really to get that going and moving. It is not sufficient as you recognize.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Item 156: Purchase of Vehicles and Equipment for the Fire Service. Mr. Minister, I notice that no money was spent in 2019, although five million was allocated. And yet on radio you have a programme that the Fire Services have on which they complain every week about “buss hose” and vehicles not operating, and they cannot get on the road as quickly as they can and so on. What is the problem? Who is responsible for making sure that this money was spent to redevelop and refurbish the vehicles and equipment? Is it the people in the fire services are negligent? Is it the Permanent Secretary? Where is the block in this, the mismanagement in this?

**Hon. Young:** You may have not been present when earlier I referred to that we had gone out—we meaning the Ministry of National Security. We have to engage the Central Tenders Board to go out to procure these things. We had gone out and
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there was a request for proposals. There were proposals put in, and that had to be squashed and cancelled unfortunately. So I guess that is the reason why there was not procurement of those new fire tenders in the last fiscal, but I have asked that it be recommenced and we get the fire tenders.

Dr. Rambachan: What there a specific reason, Minister, why it had to be scrapped?

Hon. Young: Allegations of corruption. I am not going to tolerate that.

Dr. Rambachan: I understand, but the problem is that in the meantime the country is being put at risk.

Hon. Young: Well, agreed. I mean, you would recall $6 million to tow a fire truck out of a drain. That is more than this five million. “Dat eh happening under me.”

Dr. Rambachan: So the refurbishment now. There is a virtual graveyard in Chaguanas of fire service vehicles—a virtual graveyard, just like there used to be in the days of PTSC in Wallerfield. You had $2 million, and some of those vehicles could be easily refurbished, from the information I have. Do we not have maintenance units and maintenance personnel in the fire services itself that are supposed to be doing preventative maintenance and management of these vehicles? Why is it the two million has not been spent to bring those vehicles up-to-date?

Hon. Young: This as you know is not something new. This did not happen under this Administration or your administration. In fact one of the problems I have as a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago and a taxpayer, is maintenance is not done in the public service across the board. From maintenance of a building, maintenance of water cooler, maintenance of facilities, including this type of equipment.

Dr. Rambachan: So, Mr. Minister, it begs the question, have you been examining
the performance management system in the fire services to see who these negligent people are, and how come they continue to get good performance appraisals, but yet nothing is being done to maintain these vehicles?

Hon. Young: I do not know who continues to get a good performance appraisal. That certainly does not fall under me, but I would be very shocked, surprised and disappointed if there is anyone who is not doing his or her job and they are getting a good performance appraisal.

Dr. Rambachan: I would like, if I was a member of a relevant JSC, to bring before the JSC exactly all those performance appraisals in terms of the files themselves, and to see, especially for the people who are supposed to be maintaining the equipment, what kind of appraisals they have been getting commensurate with the quality of the equipment as they are.

Hon. Young: And the only person who could appoint you to the JSC has been absent for the last few days, that is the Member for Siparia.

Dr. Rambachan: No, I have colleagues on the JSC.

Hon. Young: But I am sure if the Member for Siparia is spoken to, she would put you on the JSC so you could ask those questions.

Dr. Rambachan: But you understand my point, Minister?

Hon. Young: I do and I agree.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas East. G. Lifeguard Service, Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Very quickly, hon. Minister, line Item 001. Could you tell us where these facilities are earmarked for? Madam Chair, I will just have another question when we get to the next section, Multi-Sectoral.
Hon. Young: Maracas and Mayaro.

Mr. Karim: Okay. And again, if I may ask, we have the full complement of people for those, lifeguards?

Hon. Young: Yeah, we had said so.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Madam Chairman: We now go on to Item 005: Multi-Sectoral and Other Services. Hon. Members, you would observe that Item 005 spans two pages. Therefore, I will call them according to the project groups. A. Administrative Services. Is that where you are?

Mr. Karim: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: May I go to line Item 046? There is a 15 million allocation for the Upgrade of Machine Readable Passport to e-passport. If we could get a sense as to what this involves and when we can expect the issue?

Hon. Young: The international travel community is moving now away from the machine readable passports, to passports where there is actually a security chip in the passport that would carry your biometric data and this type of thing. So we are looking at the possibility of now, over a phased period, upgrading the passports. Fortunately there is no current international requirement that you have it. Some of our smaller Caricom islands where it might be 10,000 passports, 12,000, they have moved in that direction. So I am looking at the possibility of introducing these types of passports and beginning a phased implementation.

Mr. Karim: So that would be within the existing machine readable passports?

Hon. Young: Yes, correct. Machine readable passports still are current. They are still being utilized internationally, but there is now a new system, an upgrade to the
type of passport available. So it is something I am looking at.

Mr. Karim: And when do we expect that we might have the first issuance?

Hon. Young: It really depends. You have to go through the procurement process. We have to approve it, and these types of things. If I can get that done in this fiscal it will be done.

Mr. Karim: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Lee: Minister, line Item 061: Cure Violence, which is a new project, $6 million has been identified. Could you give us an insight?

Hon. Young: For time immemorial we have talked about social intervention and the different types of programmes that are necessary in national security to really take on the issue of crime at different levels. Not only the preventative detection level, but through social programmes, working in communities, giving young people a chance, alternatives to life, et cetera. There was something called the Citizens Security Programme that existed for decades. We have taken a decision to discontinue that programme at the end of this year, 31 December, 2019. We have identified there is an international programme called Cure Violence, which the Parliamentary Secretary has been working with the IDB on, and this is the new programme we are going to introduce that allows us to get into certain troubled communities, and work with them through social intervention, et cetera. We have reduced the expenditure astronomically, now down to six million, which is just about $500,000 a month. So we are hoping to use that programme to continue the type of successful work of the Citizens Security Programme.

1.45 p.m.

Mr. Lee: So it is a continuation of the Citizen—or it is a new—?

Hon. Young: No, it is a different philosophy, a different way of thinking,
different type of intervention and in fact, if you google it, you will see that it has been used successfully throughout a number of different jurisdictions, in Chicago, in New York, in the United Kingdom and other jurisdictions.

Mr. Lee: So it has not been rolled out as yet?

Mr. Young: We had a pilot programme and we actually won awards for it via the IDB, so that is why we decided okay, well, let us now take it out of a pilot programme and get it into a full programme.

Mr. Lee: So can I ask what area would be your first—?

Hon. Young: That will be announced at the appropriate time.

Dr. Moonilal: Three questions on three areas if I can.

Madam Chairman: Once you are within A.

Dr. Moonilal: Yeah, we are within that. 006, Minister, as you see here, the electronic monitoring programme which has been something on the table for a while. You were able in 2019 to convince the Ministry to move the budget from an Actual of 138,000 to $10 million, that was revised down to 1.5 million and now we have about 4 million. Now, clearly in 2019 something was about to happen, something positive that required that. If we can just get an update on what is the status of this, and what clearly is another stumbling block on the way to this matter?

Hon. Young: Actually, it is not a stumbling block, the actual amount of money spent for this fiscal is 7.1 million, not the 1.5 million.

Dr. Moonilal: Oh, so 7.5 million is the real thing now.

Hon. Young: And what has happened is we have procured all of the equipment, we have set up, we have recruited the staff. The only stumbling block right now is for the Judiciary to do what they have to do on their side with the rules to then be

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able to implement it as part of their sentencing guidelines. But we are ready to go.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Fine. 046, could I ask on this matter of passports, if the Government currently owes the provider of the books itself in Canada, any outstanding moneys for passports?

**Hon. Young:** I am certain that we would owe them some amount of money, because it is an ongoing, it is a rolling account.

**Dr. Moonilal:** For the passports?

**Hon. Young:** Not for the passports, we have paid up the full amount for the passports they provided.

**Dr. Moonilal:** That would be it for now, Ma’am.

**Dr. Bodoe:** With regard to line Item 060: National Baseline Survey to measure public safety and security, can you enlighten us as to what you are hoping to achieve, and how you will go about doing this? It is a new project.

**Hon. Young:** I think this is something that we approved which is—I cannot remember if it is an IDB-based consultancy, but basically where we wanted the consultants to take a look at it, and to see what are the various areas and how do you properly, and adequately, and accurately measure public safety and security. You know, as opposed to right now in the country we just use the homicide rate and these types of things. How do you from an international benchmark perspective do it? So we have engaged the consultant to do it.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Can you say how soon it is going to start?

**Hon. Young:** No, I do not have that information, it could be provided.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Sure, one more, Madam Chairman. With regard to line Item 053: Institutional Strengthening of the Forensic Science Centre, an allocation of 4.6 million thereabout. Can you say what you would expect to achieve with this
Hon. Young: This is really a continuation of the ongoing conversation we have had over the last few hours, and the emphasis that we are going to be placing on the Forensic Science Centre, and in particular one of the areas we are looking at is proper accreditation of the Forensic Science Centre. But, it is a number of things, for example, I believe it was, I cannot remember which Member but we had spoken about ballistics, so I want to get the latest state-of-the-art equipment, and measuring for the ballistics. Also, the DNA is another area we will be focused on, and then also doing some repairs to the Forensic Science Centre.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Two questions, one, the Establishment of a DNA Database - Establishment of the Custodian Unit—

Hon. Young: Where is that?

Dr. Gopeesingh: That is line Item 012. I thought we had an established DNA Database already.

Hon. Young: Correct.

Dr. Gopeesingh: What is the Establishment of a Custodian Unit?

Hon. Young: Okay, so the Custodian Unit is the person in legislation that is in charge of securing the database, and securing the various samples.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Okay, so just last one. There is a big expenditure under line Item 050 in 2019, of 39 million for Upgrade of Computer Hardware, Software and Maintenance for Immigration Division, and another 10 million is carded to be spent. Give us some understanding of it.

Hon. Young: So what it is, is we are look at the upgrade of the systems and the interface for biometrics.

Dr. Gopeesingh: To—?
Hon. Young: To ensure, you know, the same way so persons coming in we can capture their biometrics and this type of thing to make more secure, and that is also going have to be part. And also paying Canadian Bank Note, but especially with the announcement that was made during this budget of getting rid of the Immigration and Customs forms, you have to have a system that still captures information of people coming in.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And so when you expect that? But that has been going on for a while it would seem—39 million.

Hon. Young: Correct. Well, you would see that the Revised Estimate was the 39 million, so there was an upgrade in the last fiscal, so it is the continuation of the upgrade.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That will complete it?

Hon. Young: I hope so.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Not sure, all right.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. My colleagues asked the questions already.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, line Item 053 with Institutional Strengthening of the Forensic Science Centre. You just spoke about ballistics, is it that you will have institutional strengthening with respect to personnel too? Because as we speak we have matters adjourned in criminal court for lack of ballistic reports, four and five years to get ballistic reports.

Hon. Young: So we had had that conversation a little earlier. What we are looking to do is supplement and bring in more experts into that area. So this is now the hardware side and we are looking to recruit more persons on the—

Dr. Rambachan: Item 045: Upgrade of Automated Fingerprint Identification
System for the Immigration Division. I am trying to understand what this is. It is like the United States when you go and put your four fingers, and you get—

**Hon. Young:** It is the same thing I was just discussing, it is the same biometric system, so yes.

**Dr. Rambachan:** So that every passenger coming in will now be fingerprinted.

**Hon. Young:** Correct.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Every passenger leaving will be fingerprinted or just coming in?

**Hon. Young:** That will have to be worked out, because right now as you are aware passengers leaving, we do not scan their passport leaving and this type of thing, same thing in the United States, and in Europe, et cetera.

**Dr. Rambachan:** So coming in mainly.

**Hon. Young:** Correct.

**Dr. Rambachan:** So this means that you now have the potential to have fingerprints of everybody in the country if they are travelling?

**Hon. Young:** Once you are travelling.

**Hon. Member:** Like the US have.

**Dr. Rambachan:** No, no, no. I am not talking about the US, I am just concerned about here. I have no problems with it. I am just trying to understand, and let the public understand, you know, what is amiss here. Thank you.

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I just want to follow-up on a question my colleague from Fyzabad asked with respect to line Item 053: The Forensic Science Centre. Is this facility, the centre, accredited as we speak?

**Hon. Young:** Is this facility, the centre—

**Mr. Karim:** Is the centre accredited, the Forensic Science Centre?

**Hon. Young:** We are pursuing accreditation, all the accreditation conversation
comes in for international transactions. So for example, we need to send the results from our Forensic Science Centre for use in an international court not in the current court system.

Mr. Karim: But the provider of DNA testing that you relate to are they accredited?

Hon. Young: Which provider?

Mr. Karim: Well, do you have a provider that will do the DNA testing?

Hon. Young: We have a custodian right now, so what we need to do is move the current DNA facilities to where we can do the testing. Right now we are not doing the testing locally, so all of those that we send the samples away to be tested for specific cases, yes, those are accredited.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Following, Madam Chair. Following that question, Minister, has there been any case within the courts that will question the non-accreditation of the forensic lab?

Hon. Young: That have what? Sorry.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That would question in non-accreditation of the Forensic Science Centre?

Hon. Young: As I said, it is not in our court system you know, this is for the foreign court system but not that I am aware of.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Is not beyond—

Hon. Young: I mean, I could be wrong, but not that I am aware of.

Madam Chairman: F. Public Buildings; G. Equipment and Vehicles.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, Madam Chair. Well, the Minister alluded—we are finishing now, Minister. I know you are tired.

Hon. Young: Not tired, I have a comfort break.
Dr. Gopeesingh: All right, just the one on the two naval patrol vessels which you had alluded to when we had asked the question previously, 24 million was given for it last year, no, 24 million spent already in 2019, and it is 161 it came up to, and then you have another 100 million. What is the total cost of it, and how much will really be owed on them, or both of them?

Hon. Young: That information had been previously provided. I cannot remember the specific cost off of the top of my head, if I remember correctly it is $41 million US per vessel.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That works out to about 280 million TT, around there. So 162 million has been down payment on it.

Hon. Young: As you know, you have to make periodic payments that come up when they reach certain stages of the vessel. But what we are seeking is—part of the reason we went with these Austal vessels, is the Government of Australia has a new defence fund, a defence budget fund for international persons who buy Australian military equipment. So right now we are working through the Ministry of Finance at getting EFIC, which is the Export Finance, I cannot remember the rest of the acronym for Australia, and getting the loan financing from them. So this is really to just carry us through the current payment.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Until that loan is financed.

Hon. Young: Correct.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So the both might cost around about 550 million TT, both.

Hon. Young: The 41 million by two, that is 82 million US.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, all right. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Infrastructure Development Fund, page 178; Item 004: Social Infrastructure. Hon. Members will note that this spans 4 pages, therefore I will also
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announce these project groups.

Hon. Young: What page, I am not seeing that.

Madam Chairman: Page 178.

Hon. Young: Thank you, Ma’am.

Madam Chairman: A. Coast Guard, page 178.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Line Item 043: New Project Upgrade utilities at Staubles Bay. Could you identify what the upgrade is about? Or to cater for the vessels, I do not know.

Hon. Young: For the $200,000?

Mr. Lee: No, 5—

Hon. Young: No, that is the total, the 5 million is the total for Coast Guard.

Mr. Lee: No, 043.

Hon. Young: So 03—

Mr. Lee: No, 043.

Hon. Young: Okay.

Mr. Lee: Upgrade utilities at Staubles Bay, $5 million.

Hon. Young: There are a number of upgrades that are necessary at the Staubles base for example, generators, replacement of generators and these types of things.

Mr. Lee: Okay.


Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. 006: Construction of Video Conferencing Facilities at Remand Yard. And the question is, you spoke about it earlier: What is the status of this? Because this will deal with the transport.

2.00 p.m.

Hon. Young: So you will see here, on explanation, “project number 006,
transferred to the Judiciary”. So the shell of the building is up, so now we are transferring it. Cabinet took a decision to transfer it to the Judiciary who will be the end user for them now to outfit it and get it operational.

**Mr. Charles:** Right. Also Item 008: Upgrade of Plumbing and Electrical Systems to the Remand Yard. So the Remand Yard as far you are concerned, it is getting to where it ought to be.

**Hon. Young:** Not as quickly as I would like but, yes, we have taken a decision to get quite a lot of work done there to make it better facilities.

**Mr. Charles:** What is the data on the number of detainees per cell?

**Hon. Young:** No. Well that would vary. So when you tour the Remand it would vary according to—different cells have different numbers in them.

**Mr. Charles:** But a typical 10 x 10 may have?

**Hon. Young:** Three to five.

**Madam Chairman:** E. Immigration. Member for Fyzabad.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, 001: Construction Acquisition of an Immigration Building in San Fernando, because as you are aware—

**Hon. Young:** Which one. Sorry?

**Dr. Bodoe:** 001: Immigration Building in San Fernando.

**Hon. Young:** Okay. Yes.

**Dr. Bodoe:** I am sure you are aware it is very inconvenient for parking and so on right now. Can you indicate what location has been identified and when you are proposed to start?

**Hon. Young:** So you see that is being worked on. And you see this 500, this is really to start the plans and those types of things. Do not worry, you have a very
active Member for San Fernando and San Fernando East who are constantly fighting for better facilities in San Fernando.

Dr. Bodee: It needs to be done soon.

Hon. Member: But they converted Chancery Lane, you know.

Hon. Young: That is where it was going to go. Correct.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Can we move on, please? Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: 004, maybe I should ask, San Fernando East, then. San Fernando Fire Station, Lady Hailes. That is completed?

Hon. Young: No.

Mr. Charles: And that is their station together with the south regional by the bypass, so there will be two in San Fernando, Mon Repos—so there will be two.

Hon. Young: Yes.

Mr. Charles: In San Fernando. Okay.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So I believe Naparima you took us to F., which is Fire Service. F. Fire Service. Anybody else? Item 005: Multi-Sectoral and Other Services.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 22 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So we will take the suspension now. Minister, are you prepared to go through?

Hon. Young: I am, Ma’am.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So if you are fine.

Hon. Young: During the suspension period I will just—

Madam Chairman: Okay. I was really concerned about you.

Hon. Young: Ma’am, I am—there has to be a transition now for the police service
and their executives to come in, so during that period of time I will be fine.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Fine. So we will take the break after the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

**Hon. Young:** Thank you, Ma’am.

*Head 64:* Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, $2,552,615,350.

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of National Security to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes.

**Hon. Young:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, one of bodies in Trinidad and Tobago that needs very little introduction is the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Over the past year we have had a new Commissioner of Police, and I am sure the country agrees that that was the correct decision taken by those on this side, and certainly the Commissioner of Police has brought a new energy, a new vibrancy and a new sense of purpose including—and which has led to an increase in the morale in the Trinidad and Tobago Service.

I would like to thank all the men and women in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service who every day go out there to protect and serve, and whilst they are making tremendous improvements, unfortunately sometimes very often they come in for unfair criticism, but I would like them to know that we in the Government and me in particular as the Minister of National Security stand with them and appreciate the service that they are providing. Thank you, Ma’am.

*Question proposed:* That Head 64 stand part of the Schedule.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of $2,552,615,350 for Head 64, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of Development*
Programme. We shall now proceed to consider the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure. We are at page 323.

Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure; Item 001: Police Service. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much. I wish to indicate from the onset that, we too appreciate the service of the police officers. Item 01, could the Minister just explain the $20 million increase in salaries and cost of living? Is it new employees, new bodies, or it is increases in—

**Hon. Young:** What this really was to cover is a certain amount of arrears that were paid in the last fiscal.

**Mr. Charles:** So there is no increase in real terms.

**Hon. Young:** No.

**Mr. Charles:** Could the Minister also explain on Item 08: Vacant Posts – Salaries & C.O.L.A (without incumbents) 2 million, which vacant posts are being take care by this allocation of 2 million.

**Hon. Young:** Well that will be to cover arrears as well.

**Mr. Charles:** That will be to cover arrears.

**Hon. Young:** Yes. Because as you see it is “without incumbents”, so that is covering—there is an audit process that needs to take place to verify whether claims being made are, in fact, legitimate claims, so that is to cover that.

**Mr. Charles:** All right. So it means that there are no new bodies being recruited. But the overtime rate, 03, for monthly officers, the Estimate is 328 million to be increased by $10 million.

**Hon. Young:** Sorry. What?

**Madam Chairman:** 03.
Mr. Charles: 03.

Hon. Young: Okay.

Mr. Charles: 328 to increase by 10. So it seems as if no vacancies—sorry, no new bodies are being brought on, but the overtime rate is significant. Is this that they are relying on overtime to carry out the remit of the TTPS?

Hon. Young: No. Actually there is also an element of arrears in overtime here as well, but we are also planning for a number of increased operations and a heightened police presence for meetings that will be taking place over the next year. So in order we have two sets of elections taking place over the next fiscal, during the next fiscal, so the Commissioner of Police has quite appropriately planned in advance to make sure that all of those types of events are properly policed and secured.

Mr. Imbert: And just let me come in here, if you look at the actual figures for overtime, you will see that present commissioner has managed to reduce the expenditure on overtime from $375 million a year down to 318, so there is a significant reduction and therefore, the 10 million addition for 2020 is small—

Hon. Young: Still below.

Hon. Imbert:—compared to the almost $60 million in savings.

Mr. Charles: Could we then get in terms of the updated figures, the Revised Estimates for 2019, since you say it has been—

Hon. Young: No. No. No. What the Minister of Finance was trying to articulate is, when you look at 2018 the actual amounts paid are 375.

Mr. Charles: I see that.

Hon. Young: So this is correct, the 318.

Mr. Charles: 318 is the actual as of now.
Hon. Young: Correct. That is the revised.

Mr. Charles: The latest revised. Okay. In terms of the establishment of the TTPS, could you—and I am looking at overtime and wages together—give us an idea of the—and the fact there are no vacant appointments or whatnot? Could you give us an idea of the acting appointments, the acting situation, the situation with acting with the TTPS as far as you can?—in terms of the top three levels or the—

Hon. Young: When you say “acting” what are you referring to?

Mr. Charles: How many officers are acting or not?

Hon. Young: Throughout the whole police service?

Mr. Charles: No. Not through, at least, for the top say four levels?

Hon. Young: Okay.

Mr. Charles: As you did with the fire service.

Hon. Young: Okay. As you are aware we have for the first time since 2012, we have the Commissioner.

Mr. Charles: Correct.

Hon. Young: After that there are four Deputy Commissioners of Police.

Mr. Charles: Yeah. DCOPs.

Hon. Young: There is one appointed.

Mr. Charles: One appointed.

Hon. Young: The only permanent one is Mr. Stephen Williams, the other three positions they have been filled by acting personnel.

Mr. Charles: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, and welcome to the Commissioner and other officers. Through you, Madam Chair, a matter that was raised before, just to
update really on behalf of officers, and I am relating it to 27 in terms of health insurance and so on. Could we just get for the record, and you could get the information if you do not have it now and just supply it some other time, what is the maximum amount for police officers to access dental and optical? And are these facilities available to police officers now?

**Mr. Imbert:** May I ask what page are you on and what Item?

**Dr. Moonilal:** I am page 325 and I am looking at the group health insurance.

*Crosstalk*

**Mr. Imbert:** No, no, no you “cyar” go to page 325.

**Dr. Moonilal:** 323.

**Madam Chairman:** Yeah. We are still at page 323.

**Dr. Moonilal:** And number 27, Government’s Contribution to Group Health Insurance - Monthly Paid Officers.

**Madam Chairman:** That is where we are.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So I am asking a matter concerning that group insurance, the health, to just indicate, if not now, some other time, the maximum amount for police officers to access dental and optical. Do they have access to these facilities? And if there is a list of service providers for these specific facilities? Because we have received some complaints by officers that when they try to access these facilities, dental and optical, they are being told that it has been reduced, and that the service, the facility is no longer available, and a cap has been placed on these arrangements. So, we would like to know what the maximum amount for any officer than can access these services is.

**Madam Chairman:** So you want to know if those are included in this.

**Dr. Moonilal:** In that.

**Unrevised**
2.15 p.m.

Hon. Young: The services are included in the Vote. Every single medical plan in the world—health insurance plan in the world, has certain ceilings, some would have certain excesses et cetera. The specifics can be provided. What we are looking to do in the next year is we are looking at whether it is possible to introduce a new medical health plan, a private medical health plan, not only for the police service, but we are looking at the other areas. For optical it is $1000, and for dental $5000, and there are 58 different medical facilities that can be accessed. [Interruption] Sorry.

Dr. Moonilal: While you are getting the figures, could I just ask if you could indicate whether or not this is in practice and implemented at this time? We have received some concerns from officers that when they seek to access this facility, they are being told that they do not have any money to provide that types of service.

Hon. Young: The answer is yes, they can access it.

Dr. Moonilal: Sure. You have the corrected figure?

Hon. Young: Corrected figure of what?

Dr. Moonilal: That was the figure you gave just now?

Hon. Young: $1,000 for your eyes, and $5,000 for your teeth.

Madam Chairman: Oropouche East finished?

Dr. Moonilal: Fine.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Can we get an appreciation of the complement of the police service? How many positions are there, how many are filled, and how many vacancies? And does that include—go ahead, and then I would ask you a small subsequent.
Hon. Young: So, according to the establishment we have 8,078 sanctioned. Right now we have 6,004 in position, in post, so there is a vacancy of 2,074 according to the establishment, and then you have of course, the Special Reserve Police where we have a sanctioned strength of 6,457. We have 3,236 in post, so there are 3,221 vacancies.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right, is there any attempt now to help fill these 2,074 vacant positions?

Hon. Young: The answer is yes. Similar to what we have discussed this morning, when you do the training and taking in of intakes and batches. The Commissioner of Police is intending over the next fiscal to double the amount of intake and increase the batches by double.

Dr. Gopeesingh: There is one question that—this new figure of 8,078 is based on the new manpower audit, because I remember somewhere along in the past the complement was about 7,000 approximately. So this to me, now, I am seeing it as an increase.

Hon. Young: No, there has not been any change in the establishment certainly from the Police Service Commission point of view, nor any Cabinet decision to increase the number of Special Reserve Police. So these figures are the figures that would have existed from before.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And this is based on the new manpower audit which—

Hon. Young: No, these are the figures that existed before the manpower audit. There has been no implementation of if in the manpower audit there is a specific, you should have 5,000 police officers, we have not reduced to 5,000.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right, thank you for the answer.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services; Item 001: Police Service
Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. Item 13: Maintenance of Vehicles. 34 million estimated, 17 million allocated. Could the Minister update us on the latest figure?

Hon. Young: That would be the latest figure.

Mr. Charles: So therefore, the Commissioner of Police was correct when he said he gets money for salaries, but not for goods and services, one of which is the maintenance of vehicles? [Interruption] I am page 324, Item 13, 34 is requested, 17—

Hon. Young: We had actually gone through—towards the end of the last fiscal we actually had a process where we sat down with the Minister of Finance and his staff, the Commissioner of Police and his staff, as well as myself and the Permanent Secretary for Ministry of National Security, and found there had actually been provided, there had been releases for all of the money that had been allocated to them and some additional in the mid-year review. So what it means is here, because of course the Commissioner of Police is the accounting officer has to do a juggling exercise the same prioritization exercise. So he may have had to vire money that had been allocated for the maintenance of vehicles to other areas to cover other arrears and these types of things.

Mr. Charles: Well if he had to change money—

Hon. Young: Okay, I am now being provided with the actual figure was 32.1 million. So, out of the 34 million, 32.1 was actually spent.

Mr. Imbert: What had happened, at the end of the year we met with the Commissioner, and in fact the provision had been revised at the mid-year for Goods and Services and we made arrangements with the Commissioner for the
entire allocation for fiscal 2019 to be released to them. I believe the last set of funds might have come a day or two before this September 30th. These figures in this book would be about a week or two before the end of the fiscal, but I am reasonably confident that the actual disbursements are closer to about $372 million for Goods and Services.

**Mr. Charles:** And for Goods and Services, what was—so therefore, what was requested, you are saying is what has been given as of now?

**Hon. Imbert:** I am reasonably confident that the full allocation for 2019, for Goods and Services was released to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

**Mr. Charles:** All right, if we go to Item 96: Fuel and Lubricants. I see 20 million here. Could the Minister give us the updated figure, because this cannot be right, 20 million estimated, 6 million spent?

**Hon. Young:** You have gone back. You went back to the page before.

**Mr. Charles:** “Or hor”

**Hon. Young:** Which page?

**Madam Chairman:** No, no, we are on page 324.

**Mr. Charles:** I am correct.

**Hon. Young:** Okay, but I am just asking which line Item?

**Mr. Charles:** Line Item 96.

**Hon. Young:** 96. Okay, so the actual amount spent was $16.9 million.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay, so that is more in line with what was—

**Hon. Young:** Correct. Allocated.

**Mr. Imbert:** Yea, and I have just gotten clarification from the Director of Budgets that because the money was released towards the end of the year the reporting is now coming in on the actual expenditure and it is much higher than what you are
Mr. Charles: It is much higher that what we are seeing?

Mr. Imbert: Much higher, yes, much higher.

Mr. Charles: Okay, in terms of Item 17: Training. Again could the Minister give us the updated revised figure, 1.5 million? I just want to see that the training in the police service that they are getting the services.

Hon. Young: 1.345 million.

Mr. Charles: I am on page 324.

Hon. Young: 1.345 million actually spent. Member for Naparima, 1.345 million.

Mr. Charles: 1.345 million?

Hon. Young: So out of the 1.5 allocated, 1.345.

Mr. Charles: All right, we are just making sure—

Hon. Young: I know.

Mr. Charles:—that you do what you are supposed to do in terms of providing proper finance to the TTPS. Looking, if I may, Chair, go back to page 323, 08, under the same heading Goods and Services. 08, and I am seeing 29 million. First question in terms of rent. Where—police, you have a head office, you have sub office—

Hon. Young: Where are you referring to?

Mr. Charles: I am at 08: Rent, Office Accommodation and Storage.

Hon. Young: Yes, yes.

Mr. Charles: Where are these rentals? Because you have police stations, you have head office?

Hon. Young: So, you have certain—the police service rents a number of properties across Trinidad and Tobago. So, for example the IATF is in a rental

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property. You have the Traffic Branch in a rental property. So there are a number of different units in addition to storage and this type of thing. The actual spent in rental was actually $24.7 million. So you have rental for example: Special Branch; the Police Complaints in San Fernando; we have various car park facilities; GEB and IATF; you have CAPA; the PSP and Police Complaints. And then there are some police stations, some out posts, for example, Las Lomas, the Matura Police Station, so there are a number of rentals.

Mr. Charles: Right, so that the 24 million spent is more or less—

Hon. Young: Correct.

Mr. Charles:—consistent with what they have.

Hon. Young: Correct.

Mr. Charles: We want to go to 03: Uniforms. 8 million and 2 million, and a significant jump to 25 million in 2020. What explains that?

Hon. Young: Well, in 2020 what the Commissioner of Police is intending to do is introduce new police uniforms for the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Mr. Charles: Okay, thank you very much.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Let me add my words of welcome to the Commissioner and members of his team. I would like to refer to line Items 16 and 23. [Crosstalk] If you could, hon. Minister—

Madam Chairman: May I hear the Member for Chaguanas East? Item 16 and—?

Mr. Karim: I just want to refer the Minister if you could give me some explanation with respect to line Item number 16 and number 23? There is some significant jump particularly in terms of the fees. So let me deal with the first one. Could you give us some sense as to what the increase of $7 million is going to be utilized for in terms of contract employment? How many persons would be served
Hon. Young: All right, remember first of all that some of these—some of these increases will go towards crime analysts, bringing on eight of them; auditors, six; homicide investigators, 11; crime scene investigators, 15; some curriculum development specialists which we need in order to comply with the registration requirements of the Accreditation Society of Trinidad and Tobago, two; and then a number of BOA Is and BOA IIs throughout the Police Service.

Mr. Karim: Okay, and might you be able to tell us what is responsible for that significant increase in fees. What are these fees?

Hon. Young: Sorry, what line Item is fees? Okay, 23. Well that is going after corruption.

Mr. Karim: Sorry?

Hon. Young: That is going after corruption. You see, white-collar corruption has taken place for too long, the white-collar criminals. So what the Commissioner of Police has done as you would have heard said before, a number of specialized personnel who are very well trained and experienced, in pursuing those who have engaged in white-collar corruption.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Can we move ahead?

Dr. Moonilal: No, no. I am just following up.

Madam Chairman: Just now, who had had my ear also, Chaguanas East? Yes, so you are finished?

Mr. Karim: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Okay, so Naparima, sorry we have a certain order, we will come back to you. Member for Chaguanas West.

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Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to follow up the question of Item number 13: Maintenance of Vehicles. I went to a car dealership early this year and they complained that the new police vehicles that they maintained, they were not being paid for. I just want to know whether in reconciliation at the end of the year between the meeting between the Minister of National Security and the Minister of Finance, that those matters were taken care of.

Hon. Young: As you would have heard us say, the full amount of allocation or close to the full was actually released. So the answer is yes, a lot of the overdue invoices were settled.

Mr. Singh: Thank you.

Mr. Lee: Thank you Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 58: Medical Expenses. There is a sizable increase of $21 million this year. I do not know if it is for arrears of some outstanding bills, but medical expense is normally averaged around $8 million to $12 million. It is a sizable increase, could you—?

Hon. Young: Okay, so this actually ties in to what I had mentioned a short while ago. The police service has asked for and been given a provision, this 21 million increase, if we are able to implement a private medical health care plan in this fiscal, that is the contribution toward it. And also one of the other areas the Commissioner is looking at is revamping the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service hospital facilities. He is looking after his men and women.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you Ma’am. One of the challenges over the last year or so has been this concern about the timely release of funds. It appears that the funds are being provided and budgeted for properly and in some cases with significant increase, but there may be some problem associated with the system for the timely and appropriate and relevant release. I am at 10 on page 323, Office Stationery
and Supplies. We still hear of cases of where there are complaints about basic stationery, the provision of ink and pen and paper at stations and so on. And clearly we have a Vote for that and funds, sufficient or not. Is there some problem with the Ministry of Finance releasing funds in the timely manner to satisfy the needs, not only in this, but across the board of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service?

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Imbert: What I can tell you is that what we did in 2019 was to release virtually all of the allocation for Goods and Services and also to give approval for cheques to be written, and as you can see now in 2020 the provision for Goods and Services has jumped by almost $200 million, and that is in recognition of the projects and programmes that the new Commissioner has put in place and the requirements for funding for Goods and Services for those programmes. So, we will ensure in the coming year that the police service gets timely releases for Goods and Services. But I want to stress, we have given them almost 200 million more this year than last year. Almost 200 million more.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Minister, the issue of fleet of vehicles and the vehicles in police stations and so on has always been an issue for members of the public and—

Hon. Young: Sorry. What sorry?

Madam Chairman: You are at Item 13, is that where you are?

Mr. Indarsingh: The issue of Maintenance of Vehicles, an increase of $21,531,000, Minister, is this maintenance being done with dealerships and outside of what we would call the established dealerships from a private point of view and so on?
Hon. Young: The answer is, it depends. I mean, the new vehicles that are under warranty will be maintained by the dealerships, but there are, as you know, a number of garages throughout Trinidad and Tobago that are utilized by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. One of the conversations we are having is to move everything back and centralize it with VMCOTT. But currently as it stands, yes, there are a number of private garages across Trinidad and Tobago that provide services to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Mr. Indarsingh: I do not know with the passage of time you may not have it, but if you could furnish the meeting with the list of private garages and so on who are carrying out these repairs.

Madam Chairman: Naparima.

Mr. Indarsingh: And also with respect to 28: Other Contracted Services, could you just elaborate Minister, on this allocation of $20 million?

Hon. Young: Under contract employment? It is 28—?

Mr. Indarsingh: 28: Other Contracted Services.

Hon. Young: Right, so this includes First and Second Division assessments, consultancy services for cold cases and foreign investigators, the leasing of drones, waste disposal, pest control, removal of items of furniture, laundry services, amongst others.

Madam Chairman: Are you finished Couva South?

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes. Member for Naparima. No?

Mr. Charles: No, I asked already.

Madam Chairman: Yes. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Minister, Item 37: Janitorial Services. There is a leap of about 25 million, so the Estimate for 2020 is 55 million for Janitorial Services, you want
to give us a little idea of how that is so high?

**Hon. Young:** Well, what this is, first of all the increase of the 25 million is when you use the Revised Estimate of 29.1 million. How much we had actually spent?

**Advisor:** 44.4.

**Hon. Young:** 44 million was actually spent. So if you use 44 million, that is about a 10 million increase. This is because there are a number of police stations, as you know, outposts, various units spread throughout Trinidad and Tobago, wide and far, so it is to provide janitorial services for each and every one of them.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. Okay. Just one little question on the Maintenance of Vehicles. Approximately how many vehicles that would be considered—that are down and out and cannot be repaired, and how many are being repaired at the moment? What is the stock?

**Hon. Young:** So, right now there are 1,945 vehicles. There are 1,653 operational, 292 are currently down.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** How many of those do you think will become operable or they are out completely?

**Hon. Young:** Well, that would be difficult to say because they would be in different states.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right, okay. Thank you for the answer.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 002: Police Service (Tobago); Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases. Item 001: Police Service (Trinidad); Item 002: Police Service (Tobago); Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies. We are at page 326. Item 001: Regional Bodies; Item 004: International Bodies; Item 005: Non-profit Institutions. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you. 001: Police Youth Clubs, again. Could we get the
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Actual figure for 2019, and again in the context of at-risk youth, and ensuring that money is spent.

**Madam Chairman:** We are at page 326.

**Mr. Charles:** 326.

**Hon. Young:** 2.6 million was actually spent.

**Mr. Charles:** 2.6 million.

**Hon. Young:** 2.6, and as you know that is an area that the TTPS has been focusing on.

**Mr. Charles:** Yes, and that is very good.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, Member for Chaguanas East.

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, same line Item 01, could you say what you envisage to do with the increase of 4.4 million?

**Hon. Young:** Spend a lot more time with the Police Youth Clubs, get a lot more programmes going, a lot more inter-activity. We are also going to be refurbishing some of the youth clubs and providing homework supervision in some of the youth clubs, et cetera. In other words, ramp up the amount of services and make sure they are properly refurbished for these Police Youth Clubs.

**Mr. Karim:** I do not know whether we had asked or my colleague, how many of these Police Youth Clubs exist by police divisions? If we could get that list if you do not have. If I could get the number now?

**Hon. Young:** So we have 105. [Interruption] You want the answer, Member for Chaguanas East?

**Mr. Karim:** Sorry, yes, of course.

**Hon. Young:** We have 105 currently active Police Youth Clubs, 87 in Trinidad, 18 in Tobago; 7,250 members, 6,114 are in Trinidad, 1,136 are in Tobago.
Mr. Karim: Is it possible that I get a list of those in the central division of which my constituency is a part of?

Hon. Young: Yes.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Hon. Young: I am sure you are familiar with them.

Madam Chairman: Item 007: Households. Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Minister, line Item 02, Compensation to the Estates of Members of Protected Services. I think this was a line Item on the—

Hon. Young: No, this is something different. Under the Police Service Regulations and the Police Service Act, when you have a person pass away, even under natural circumstances whilst in the service, they become—their beneficiaries, their dependents become entitled to three months of their salary as an automatic payment.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Okay, so different from the other—

Hon. Young: Correct, this is, yes. Different to the $1 million.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Item 009: Other Transfers. Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Just a quick question. Sorry, hon. Minister, when you are ready.

Hon. Young: No, go ahead, sorry.

Mr. Karim: Okay. I recognize from what you mentioned just now, the word "registration" with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Academy.

Hon. Young: Accreditation, yes.

Mr. Karim: I just wanted to find out in terms of the accreditation process, how far away are you from the actual accreditation by the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago?
Hon. Young: Unfortunately, right now I cannot say. As you know that is an ongoing process, so I am not sure how far along they have reached.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Hon. Young: I will find that out.

Mr. Karim: All right, I am asking it for a deliberate purpose. The accreditation will help tremendously, if you, and I do not know if you have with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Academy, whether you have any joint programmes with institutions of higher learning outside of Trinidad and Tobago?

Hon. Young: That is something that we are looking at. I mean, very often we have, for example, the FBI and others coming to provide training—and I am using the academy, but also some of the police academies from away as well.

Mr. Karim: All right, there is a phenomena in police academies aboard where they may offer courses to members of the public who may articulate in any service of that nature, do you have that in mind in terms of this?

Hon. Young: Offer courses to members of the public?

Mr. Karim: Yes, to members of the public. Some police academies in other countries, what they do is they offer some of these—in terms of self-sufficiency as well, but also in terms of the articulation into a service in the future.

Hon. Young: We have not gone down that road as yet.

Mr. Karim: All right, are you considering in the academy—

Hon. Young: Well, you know, hon. Member, our attitude really is to get the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to a high enough level, so right now that is the focus. We still have a little way to go. So until we are satisfied that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is at the levels that we would like them to be at, I think I would prefer to spend—to prioritize that. And then, I mean, you are right, if we
reach to that level then we can start looking at some sufficiency in terms of offering courses to the public and these types of things.

**Mr. Karim:** All right. Does the academy offer blended learning to the persons who are there?

**Hon. Young:** We have online courses for local and regional officers, yes.

**Mr. Karim:** Okay. Do you also have vocational courses in terms of the equipment and the vehicles and so on, or are you considering that in terms of the diversified curriculum?

**Hon. Young:** I think they do have that. Yes.

**Mr. Karim:** I am okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, we will now move on to the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*, Sub-Head 09, we are page 134. Sub-Head 09: Development Programme, Consolidated Fund; Item 004: Social Infrastructure.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Thank you. Minister, with regard to Item 022, Upgrade of the Police Hospital, you mentioned earlier that the intention was to refurbish and upgrade the Police Hospital, but I see no allocation here in 2019 or 2020, can you explain?

**Hon. Young:** What number?

**Dr. Bodoe:** Twenty two, page 134.

**Hon. Young:** The Commissioner is informing me that the hospital is already in place so the work may have already been there, is operationalized.

**Dr. Bodoe:** Just one more question. This would be on page 135, 059, Expansion of Polygraph Suites. In view of the Commissioner’s signal that polygraph testing is to be increased in the police service, I see no allocation in 2020. Is there an explanation for this, Minister?
Hon. Young: Just give me one second. It is actually under Minor Equipment.

Dr. Bodoe: Okay, thanks.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. I will go way down to—

Hon. Young: If you look above—just to help the Member for Fyzabad—at 047 you would see that the Government has actually taken a decision to provide the police service with $25 million for the purchase of equipment for the police service, so it would be captured there.

Mr. Charles: Item—yes, thank you very much, Madam Chair. Item 047, Purchase of Equipment for the Police Service. There is a figure of 30 million, and I see in the PSIP, 2020—

Hon. Young: No, that is vehicles. The vehicles are the 30 million.

Mr. Charles: Sorry, not vehicles, 047, Purchase of Equipment. That is vehicles?

Hon. Young: No, if you look above, it is 046 is the 30 million for vehicles.

Mr. Charles: All right, 25 million, sorry.

Hon. Young: What I was just discussing with Fyzabad, 047—

Mr. Charles: Thanks for the correction. Thanks for the correction. The ruler is not—you know. [Laughter] Purchase of equipment for the police station, 25 million estimated.

Hon. Young: Not for the police station, purchase for the police service—

Mr. Charles: Sorry, for the police service. Yeah, yeah.

Hon. Young: Member, you better go upstairs and eat, your sugar is dropping.


Hon. Young: Right. [Member thumps desk] Great is the PNM.

Mr. Charles: All right. And I will take you to the PSIP which is on page 153,
and it says under the Purchase of Equipment for the Police Service, not station—

**Hon. Young:** But you are the one that said station, not me.

**Mr. Charles:** —The TTPS will—

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, all right, let us have some order. Yes.

**Mr. Charles:** “The TTPS will create a centre with a capacity to monitor and analyse social media activity via the use of surveillance systems.” Could you explain how that will operate and how it is conceptualized?

**Hon. Young:** As you would recognize, and as every sophisticated society recognizes, with the advent of social media there is a lot evidence and a lot of intelligence on social media. So, for example, those engaged in gang activity, sometimes they like to share a lot of the activities that they are participating in, planning in, on social media in a type of boastful—

**2.45 p.m.**

So the police service has recognized that there is a need to step-up and to increase their capability of monitoring what is on social media from a criminal perspective. Child pornography as well is another area, human trafficking. You all will be surprised that right now on social media there are some individuals who are offering for sale drugs, offering for sale, firearms and this type of things. So it is really to increase the police’s capacity and capability of monitoring criminal activity.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister you much be aware that concerns have been raised in the media about the fact that this leaves itself open to possible abuse in terms of invasion of privacy and those sorts of things. What oversight mechanisms are being put in place to ensure that it operates consistent with the rights of individuals, constitutional and otherwise?
Hon. Young: So first of all there is legislation that is already in place. So the IOCA which is the Interception of Communications Act provides for that. So if people breach and they are intercepting person’s communications and it is not the Commissioner of Police, it is not the Director of the SSA or the Chief of Defence Staff, they will be in breach of the law.

So there is always going to be this cry of the possibility, the potential of abuse, and at the end of the day it is in the police service’s hands. They are going to have what we called SOPs, Standard Operating Procedures, as to how these equipment can be used. I am certain that the Commissioner of Police will ensure that there is certain oversight taking place. There is also the Police Standards Bureau and these types of offices that if there is any abuse it will be dealt with.

Mr. Charles: But would it be too much to ask that rather than rely on it is better to put a system in place to ensure—

Hon. Young: No, but that is what Standard Operation Procedures are.

Mr. Charles: So I am asking you, so that there will be Standard Operating Procedures that will govern this.

Hon. Young: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Charles: And this would be approved by whom? And is this known to whom?

Hon. Young: You know the question of invasion of privacy does not really arise with social media. As you would recognize with social media that is a platform that is public, it is Facebook, it is Instagram. So once their accounts are public accounts there cannot be call or no cry with respect to invasion of privacy.

Mr. Charles: You know Minister that there have been concerns about data mining and those sorts of things. But respect to—
Hon. Young: We have serious concerns as to what was done in 2010 and 2015.

Mr. Charles: Hold on. When I was talking—

Hon. Young: Go on.

Mr. Charles: And you have raised or at least your Government has raised concerns about data mining and Cambridge Analytica and we heard endlessly about this and you are taking steps. In that context, I am asking, I would prefer and we would prefer on this side, to have the thing transparent and open so there is no question or no thoughts in our minds about what is taking place.

Hon. Young: I am glad that you, the Member for Naparima, have recorded that you all have concerns and that you all would like to ensure that this thing is properly done. The assurance that I can give is once persons do not break the law and do not engage in criminality they have nothing to be worried about. If it is that persons may be hiding and criminal acts behind what they believe are false profiles and the police are able to go behind that and find out who the real perpetrators are, so be it. Then suffer the consequences of your criminal activity.

Mr. Charles: We are on the same page. I think the difference is we want it to be listed and to be clear.

Hon. Young: The difference is I have never met with Cambridge Analytica. I am not sure who else can say they have not.

Mr. Charles: I have not met. [Crosstalk] All right let us go on—nobody on this side has dealt with Cambridge Analytica. [Laughter] Nobody.

Hon. Young: “Yuh hear lie? That is lie”.

Madam Chairman: And the interest of us going ahead with what our mandate is—

Mr. Charles: They started it.
Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance, Minister of Finance let us continue, please. [Crosstalk] Are you finish?

Mr. Charles: No, I am not finish. Under the same Item 047: Purchase of Equipment for the Police Service, we see an allocation in the amount of 25 million will be utilized to employ mobile devices, tracking system. Could the Minister tell us the areas which this will cover other than the social media monitoring that I spoke of.

Hon. Young: Okay, the $25 million. So the $25 million would be utilized for mobile device tracking systems, polygraph equipment, public order equipment which include Tasers, pepper spray, canister grenades, rubber batons, riot gear, certain surveillance systems and tablets for utilization in, for example, the ERP vehicles that you have the direct cameras feeding back to the Command Centre and this type of equipment. At the end of the day section 123A of Constitution gives the Commissioner of Police the full responsibility for running the police service administratively and financially. So it is up to him as to how he decides to spend this $25 million. This is not the Government.

Mr. Charles: Item 046: Purchase of Vehicles for the Police Service—

Hon. Young: Correct.

Mr. Charles: —$30 million. Could you indicate, what are these new vehicles? I know but I just want to hear it from you. [Laughter]

Hon. Young: You know what is going to be purchased?

Mr. Charles: Yeah, I can tell you. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Allocation to purchase sports utility, personnel carrier, sport utility vehicle. But you confirm it.

Mr. Imbert: What is your problem with that?

Hon. Young: All right. This amount here in the Development Programme, and I
am surprised that you all passed it over, is in addition to what is under Goods and Services of $40 million. So a decision was taken to give the police a full allocation of $70 million under vehicles. They are going to get, as you say, sport utility vehicles; sedans; APCs, Armoured Personnel Carriers; riot control vehicle; sport utility vehicles for specialist sections which are unmarked; sedans which are unmarked; certain types of patrol operational vehicles; semi-long wheel-based four by fours; certain escort vehicles, unmarked and marked; buses for the community policing for the use of the police clubs, et cetera. Also in there is going to be the Marine Unit where you have heard that the Commissioner is going to be reestablishing the marine branch.

**Mr. Charles:** That is an excellent thing.

**Hon. Young:** We are also getting our bomb disposal truck and a vessel with low water.

**Mr. Charles:** My interest and the interest on this side is with the armoured personnel carrier. Could you just give us an idea of the justification behind that?

**Hon. Young:** This is absolutely the ordinary and normal, especially in today’s settings. This is to allow the police service and it is only a certain number of them, it used to exist with the defence force many years ago, to go into certain areas in a safer sort of mode of transport, in particular, at night and this type of thing.

**Mr. Charles:** So if a particular, for example, Minister, wants to go into, let us say the Beetham—

**Hon. Young:** No, no, no.

**Mr. Charles:** —and not get wet he could use these armoured vehicles. This will also provide the protection.

**Hon. Young:** No, it is not for that. This is for the police service. So unlike what
may have taken place in an administration between 2010 and 2015, you are not finding Ministers travelling within police vehicles. But it might be, I mean some of these police vehicles, I do not know, the ones that they put persons to take them in prisons and to station, paddy wagons. I do not know who might be travelling in it.

**Mr. Charles:** Are you aware of concerns expressed by people, like Prof. Kraska, who has indicated that he has defined what we call the militarization with the police and he defines it as police service and he defines it as the process whereby civilian police increasingly draw from and pattern themselves around the tenets of militarism and the military model. And he is supported by people like Prof. Glenn Greenwald, et cetera. No concern at all in your mind — *[Crosstalk]* — for that.

**Hon. Young:** All right, first of all — *[Crosstalk]* Ma’am if I may. First of all in 2014 a UNC Cabinet approved the purchase of APCs. I accept that Doppy, I mean, Member for Naparima, was not there in 2014 but it has been previously approved by your Cabinet, all right. So it is the fulfillment of that Cabinet decision — *[Crosstalk]* that is taking place now.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Young:** We did not amend, we did rescind, we did not reject. They may have been different circumstances previously that it was felt that there was no need, but the Commissioner of Police has requested and he is pursuing the obtaining, the procurement of these APCs.

**Mr. Charles:** All you are confirming to me is that you have no specific view on the matter. We did it and therefore —

**Hon. Young:** My view on the matter is that the Commissioner of Police can proceed.
Mr. Charles: Thank you very much, we move on, we move on.

Hon. Young: My view is the Commissioner of Police should actually get more paddy wagons and some comfortable ones as well.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister a couple questions, line Item questions. 059: Expansion of Polygraph Suites. In 2019 you had budgeted—

Hon. Young: Oh God, I just answered that.

Mr. Lee:—1.5 million and I see—

Hon. Young: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre I just answered this. This actually moved upwards to the purchase of Police Service Equipment at 047. That is where they are going ahead with it.

Mr. Lee: So you now—

Hon. Young: Yeah. So that 25 million at 047 is going to be utilized for the expansion of the polygraph suites.

Mr. Lee: Line Item 048: Establishment of Juvenile Booking Stations. I know it is an ongoing process. Could you just elaborate where that project has reached?

Hon. Young: Correct. So right now what we are doing is we are completing the juvenile court booking station project at the Cumuto Police Station and outfitting a number of other booking centres with specialized furnishings throughout Trinidad and Tobago. This is to keep us in accordance with the juvenile court project and that pilot project as well as the new Children Act and this type of thing.

Mr. Lee: So are there presently any existing Juvenile Booking Stations?

Hon. Young: Yes.

Mr. Charles: That is not in Cumuto? It is somewhere else right? Or is it—

Hon. Young: Oh yes, actually yes, in the new police station that we recently opened in Shirvan there is one there. Some of the newer police stations, the
And my last question Minister is the line Item 014: Refurbishment of Police Head Quarters. You have identified 2 million. Are there any plans to build a new headquarters?

The Commissioner of Police is looking at pursuing the construction of a new headquarters.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I am on line Item 041. When I raised the matter of Police Youth Clubs the hon. Minister indicated that this was very important, but you have an allocation of 1 million in 2019 and none was drawn down. Could you tell us what are these facilities you wish to establish and where?

Three hundred and seventy-four thousand was actually spent. Remember this is the Developmental Programme. So this will be the establishment of new ones.

I am seeing a dash here in 2019 you know. I am seeing a blank—

Okay, but we have gone through this for the whole morning.

Just indicate to us, what are these facilities and where are they going to be?

This is for the establishment of—so what happened is that they actually utilized $374,000 and they used it for the refurbishment of existing youth clubs. Roxborough, Mason Hall and El Dorado.

Member for Couva South.

I will defer to my colleague now.

Member for Oropouche East.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Only one question now because other colleagues dealt with the other matter. Under Purchase of
Equipment for the Police Service, 047, page 135, I did not hear you mention another programme that has been advertised to come on stream. I think on Independence morning at the parade we saw the use of the drone. What is the status of that programme to introduce on a more full scale basis the use of drones in policing and intelligence gathering and other related work? Is that provided for in this and do we expect in the fiscal year that programme would be fully on stream.

**Hon. Young:** It actually is under the Recurrent Expenditure so we have passed that already. And yes that is in addition to what the police service is doing. The Air Unit, I should have said that earlier, is in the process of acquiring about 30 drones for by the police service, the defence force, and our intelligent services.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Item 001: Improvement Works to Police Stations, there is an allocation of $3 million. Madam Chair, in my constituency in the Caroni Police Station, whenever it rains the areas is flooded. So there is need for significant—

**Hon. Young:** The area around the station.

**Mr. Charles:** And the station, it is flooded. So that therefore there is need to focus and making a plug for drainage for that particular police station. And I am happy on 013 to see that the Commissioner is getting some measure of creature comfort with the allocation of moneys for the refurbishment of the Commissioner’s residence on Item 13. Because that is from my own experience in dire need of a refurbishment.

**Hon. Young:** I do not know how recently you visited the Commissioner there, but this money is, the Commissioner is actually residing there and this is actually for the Commissioner to provide improved services for the security services that guard
the Commissioner.

**Dr. Tewarie:** I am really focusing here on 047: Purchase of Equipment, and the issue of surveillance was mentioned. And I want to ask, what is the extent of surveillance in the country?

**3.00 p.m.**

And are the identified gang leaders in the country and gang members which number was articulated here in this Parliament, are they under surveillance with the equipment that we have?

**Hon. Young: With what?**

**Dr. Tewarie:** 047—

**Hon. Young:** Are they under surveillance by what?

**Dr. Tewarie:** The gang leaders and the gang members—

**Hon. Young:** No, but you made—the end, by the equipment that we have?

**Dr. Tewarie:** Are they under surveillance?

**Hon. Young:** Member of Parliament for Caroni Central, you would recognize that there is no way I am coming here to say who exactly is under surveillance, et cetera. What I can say is that it is pursuant to the IOCA, the Interception of Communications Act. That is one type of surveillance that can be done. The second type, of course, would be a human surveillance. The third type may be CCTV camera surveillance.

**Dr. Tewarie:** No, I understand the CCTV. What was the second one you said? Human?

**Hon. Young:** Human, yes. You could have persons surveilling, so for example, persons who we may suspect are involved in terrorist activities—

**Dr. Tewarie:** Right, right. I understand.
Hon. Young:—and these types of things. So the answer is, the criminals who require surveillance are being surveilled.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. So that the surveillance system really focuses on the control of criminal behaviour?

Hon. Young: Only focuses on control of criminal behaviour.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. There is—

Hon. Imbert: Line Item, please.

Hon. Young: Madam Chair, lest this turns out to be anything other than—I do not want mischief to enter into it. I am not suggesting that you are—

Dr. Tewarie: I am not going to engage in mischief.

Hon. Young:—so I would like to say that this Administration is following the law, which is the Interpretation of Communications Act. There are only three persons who can order interception of communication under that Act: the Commissioner of Police, the Chief of Defence Staff and Director of SSA. All of the annual reports are up to date and laid before the Parliament. The only person that they report to when they have done any interception would be the Minister of National Security in accordance with the Act. That comes via reports that do not identify the persons in particular, who are being intercepted. It just says—and they use code names. There is no way you know who it is. That is all that has gone on under this Administration. No one else can instruct that anybody be intercepted legally, and that is certainly how I have operated.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. I want to assure the Minister there was no mischief intended, but I wanted to understand, first of all, whether known criminals were under surveillance, and secondly, I wanted to know the limits of the surveillance capacity in terms of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. For instance, would there be any kind
of political surveillance? I will take the Minister’s statement as setting the limits, and I proceed.

**Madam Chairman:** Any more questions, Caroni Central?

**Hon. Young:** Ma’am, if I may be allowed to intervene, because this—as I said with interception, that is how it operates. In terms of surveillance, I can say here without any fear of contradiction, I have never instructed the Commissioner of Police or any police officer to surveil anybody, other than, for example, we are in a meeting and there is suggestion—intelligence—that terrorist activities are afoot, or criminal activities, to do with gangs, et cetera. All right? So I am just putting that on the record.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva North, you are still interested?

**Ms. Ramdial:** No.

**Madam Chairman:** No? Okay, we move on to Item—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Madam Chair—

**Madam Chairman:** Caroni East, you have a question?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes, for a long time I wanted to ask.

**Madam Chair:** Oh, Lord. [Laughter]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I just wanted to ask in this allocation of 047, the Purchase of Equipment for the Police Service, of $25 million, basically what percentage of the—that satisfies the Commissioner in terms of his full requirements for the things that you mentioned just a while ago? From what I gather it is—

**Hon. Young:** All, all.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:**—probably about 10 per cent of the requirement.

**Hon. Young:** Well, “I doh know who yuh gathering dat from”. The Commissioner of Police has just told me, all.

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Dr. Gopeesingh: All?
Hon. Young: All.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So that will satisfy the funding for all?
Hon. Young: That is what the Commissioner of Police has just indicated.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. Well, if the Commissioner says so, it is so.

Madam Chairman: So Item 005: Multi-sectorial and Other Services on page 136. Infrastructure Development Fund, page 221; Item 004: Social Infrastructure.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 64 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you all the other members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. So we now take the suspension for lunch. We will return at 3.45.

3.05 p.m.: Standing Finance Committee Suspended.
3.45 p.m.: Standing Finance Committee resumed.

[MR. FORDE in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman: Okay, Members. Good afternoon. We will resume the Standing Finance Committee. I trust that everybody had a hearty lunch, and we shall proceed. Where is our hon. Minister?

Mr. Indarsingh: Mr. Chairman, I would hate to think that the Minister has taken an early resignation, or handed in her resignation based on a pronouncement in the media.

[Short pause]

Mr. Chairman: Welcome, Madam Minister.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Thank you kindly, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Welcome to the Standing Finance Committee. Welcome also to
your Permanent Secretary and the senior executives of the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development. Welcome.

**Head 30:** Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, $454,648,883.

**Mr. Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you kindly, Mr. Chairman. I am grateful for the opportunity to meet with the distinguished members of the Standing Finance Committee to discuss the budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development for the fiscal year 2019 to 2020. There is no doubt that labour, employment, industrial relations and entrepreneurship are critical issues in any discussions on economic growth, stability and strength of our economy. This Government has taken a proactive stance on these issues as opposed to a reactive one. Our aggressive action to reform the industrial relations system by modernizing the labour, legislative and policy frameworks, enhancing employment and employability, promoting rights and responsibilities in the workplace and to encourage entrepreneurship, is a testament to our proactive approach.

Mr. Chairman, in the conduct of our work at the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, we are mindful of the changes in the world of work, modern human resource management practices and rapid technological advancement which are transforming the future of work. We recognize that it is not business as usual. Over the last fiscal year, the Ministry has pursued a robust agenda to put in place policies and to lay the foundation for amendments to labour legislation that would create a more enabling environment for a sound and stable industrial relations system in Trinidad and Tobago.
I will be addressing this critical topic in more detail in my contribution to the budget debate in the Senate. But I must say that the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development can boast of unprecedented accomplishments in the reform of labour legislation and the adoption of effective policies since September 2015. Mr. Chairman, we will continue to address the issues of employment and employability of our young people, retrenched workers and the unemployed. This will be done through our ongoing programmes, such as the On-the-Job Training Programme and the National Employment Service, as well as through new initiatives such as the Business Accelerator Programme to be implemented by the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited, also known as NEDCO.

Mr. Chairman, for this fiscal year, Team MOLSED, as we famously call ourselves across at the Ministry, we will continue to undertake critical work as outlined in our Strategic Plan, 2017 to 2020, and in keeping with the National Development Strategy, 2016/2030 and the National Performance Framework, together with the support of our social partners, that is the workers and employers organizations and other stakeholders. We look forward to great achievements that will redound to the benefit of the labour force and the population at large.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, we look forward to a fruitful and productive session and avail ourselves to provide the necessary information and clarification required by this Standing Committee. I thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Madam Minister.

*Question proposed:* That Head 30 stand part of the Schedule.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of $454,648,883 for Head 30: Ministry of
Labour and Small Enterprise Development is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure, 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 now proceed to consider the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure. So we are in the Recurrent Expenditure booklet. We are at page 206, and it is Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure; Item 001: General Administration, page 206. And I recognize the Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to welcome the Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development to this Committee and take the opportunity here to wish her all the best in all her future endeavours, and so on. Mr. Minister, I see that you have increased the allocation of—

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Is that directed at me? I heard “Mr. Minister”.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Minister. [Laughter]

Mr. Chairman: For the record, it is “Madam”, please.

Mr. Indarsingh: My sincere apologies to my valued constituent. Under 001: Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, the allocation has been increased by $926,977. Minister, could you inform this meeting how you intend to utilize this increased allocation?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank my Member of Parliament for that question, and I cannot believe my Member of Parliament wants to change my sex. But the response to that is simple. The increase is to facilitate the payment of increments and arrears of acting allowances.
Mr. Indarsingh: So you have no vacant posts existing?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Pardon me?

Mr. Indarsingh: No vacant posts existing?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes.

Mr. Indarsingh: Any of this will be utilized to fill any of these vacant posts?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes.

Mr. Indarsingh: How many vacant posts do you have?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Contract or public service, or both?

Mr. Indarsingh: Well, within the establishment.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Okay. So the public service position, we have a total of 384; 160 of those positions are filled. Out of the 224 vacant positions, we have 126 persons acting against those positions. So we have approximately 98 vacant positions.

3.55 p.m.

Mr. Indarsingh: And the 2020 estimates of $9 million that was calculated on in terms of salaries for which collective bargaining period?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I am advised that the figure represents the salaries for the period 2011—2013.

Mr. Indarsingh: 2013. Okay. I know Minister, without compromising the collective bargaining process, because I know you may tell me that disputes will be lodged at the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, and so on, but have you entered into any discussions with your colleagues as it relates to moving the collective bargaining process forward for public officers?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: That is not my responsibility. My responsibility begins
when there is a breakdown in negotiations and either the employer or the recognized majority union forwards that outstanding negotiation to the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, or whether or not it goes down to the Industrial Court. I do not come in when the both parties are meeting and engaging in the negotiation process.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Item 002: Co-operatives, page 206. Question? Go ahead, Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Minister, under 002: Co-operatives, the Minister in his budget statement indicated that the Government proposes to create a new independent authority, and in relation to 01, Salaries and Cost of Living, I see that there is no increase or decrease in the allocation of Salaries and Cost of Living. Is there a plan to disband what we would call the Co-operative Division through the establishment of this new independent authority and dismiss all of the existing public officers?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman, I want to give the Member of Parliament the assurance, and the population at large, that this Government has no such plan. What we are engaged in is institutional strengthening of the Co-operative Division to bring the officers up to present-day standard in attempting to manage the sector.

Mr. Indarsingh: So that will mean if there is the establishment of this new entity or this new authority, all the existing officers of the Co-operative Division, will they be transitioned into the new entity with preserving their terms and conditions of employment?
Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, that independent body is a work in progress. There is an intention to create that independent body. That independent body has not yet been structured; it does not have form and structure as yet, so that we still have the responsibility. Now, I think I should point out to you that there are financial co-operatives and non-financial co-operatives. So the intention would be to transition the staff that are responsible for financial co-operatives to that new body, and the non-financial that responsibility would be retained within the Co-operative Division. So there is no idea, no intention at all to send anybody home because I think that is what you are alluding to.

Mr. Indarsingh: Well I am alluding to it in the context of I would have heard the Prime Minister say that the Government was not closing down Petrotrin and 5,000 persons were dismissed.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Okay, Member.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:—where in the line Item is that relevant?

Mr. Chairman: Item 003: Friendly Societies, page 207; Item 004: Occupational Safety and Health Authority, page 207, and I recognize the Member again for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes, Chairman. Minister, 06, Remunerations to Board Members, you have an increase of $258,200. Have you reclassified the board, or the Government has appointed additional members to the board of the authority?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I am not aware that there is an increase in the membership on the board. I am sorry Member for Couva South. The board did not have all the members sitting and, as such, a Note is currently before Cabinet for the
reconstitution of the board and, as such, provision has to be made for those two members.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Two additional members. Without divulging who, could you tell us what sectors of the society they may be in terms of adding value to the composition of the board?

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Well the Occupational Safety and Health Act directly states who the members of the board should be. I could easily recall a member from the National Safety Council, a representative of the Ministry of Health. I do not recall the other representatives, but the construct of the board is in strict accordance with the provisions of the Act.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** I hear you. You said that the Cabinet was taking on, I think, two additional members if I—

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** All right. Let me give you the information. In accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Authority, section 65:

“(1) The Authority shall consist of—

(a) a Chairman appointed by the Minister;
(b) a Deputy Chairman appointed by the Minister;
(c) the Executive Director of the Agency...;
(d) a representative of the Ministry responsible for occupational safety and health;
(e) a representative of the Ministry responsible for health;
(f) a representative of the Ministry responsible for energy industries;
(g) a representative of the body responsible for standards in
And when you go to subsection (2), it states that:

“(2) Before appointing the members of the Authority, other than the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, the Minister shall—

(a) as to two of them, consult such organisations representing employers as he considers appropriate;

(b) as to two of them, consult such organisations representing employees as he considers appropriate; and

(c) as to five of them, consult such other organisations, the activities of which are concerned with matters relating to any of the general purposes of this Act, as he considers appropriate, including the Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago, the Board of Engineering of Trinidad and Tobago and organisations representing women’s affairs.”

So the Board is constituted in accordance with the provisions as laid down in section 64.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 005: On The Job Training Programme, page 207. I recognize the Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Minister, may I start with line Item 01? I know that there is a decrease in the Travelling and Subsistence which is very critical, important, and voluminous programme. Is that
amount sufficient for your Travelling and Subsistence; and how many officers will you deem to be accessing the Travel and Subsistence?

Mr. Chairman: You are on Item 005, page 207?

Mr. Karim: Yes.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I am aware of that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed, Madam Minister.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I was just waiting for your directive. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, Mr. Chairman, may I enquire of the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas East, 01, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance?

Mr. Karim: No, no, I am on Travelling and Subsistence.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: You are on Travelling and Subsistence.

Mr. Karim: On page 211?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: No.

Mr. Karim: Where you reach, 207?

Mr. Chairman: No, you are in Goods and Services.

Mr. Karim: All right. Okay. When I get there.

Mr. Chairman: Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services, page 208; Item 001: General Administration and it is pages 208 and 209. Chaguanas East, here you at?

Mr. Karim: The 005, can I refer to that?

Mr. Chairman: One second. Couva South, you are on this Item.

Mr. Indarsingh: Goods and Services?

Mr. Chairman: Item 001: General Administration. We are on that Item.

Mr. Indarsingh: No, I am on page 208.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, well one second. Item 002: Co-operatives. You all are
Standing Finance Committee (cont’d)
Head 30: Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (cont’d)

following with me?

Mr. Lee: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: What question you want to pose, Member for Couva South?

Mr. Indarsingh: I am on page 208, Goods and Services.

Mr. Chairman: Good and Services under which Item? Co-operatives? General Administration?

Mr. Indarsingh: General Administration.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Proceed.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Minister, under 16: Contract Employment, if I could recollect at some point in time, whether it was in 2015 or 2016, you publicly stated that you were concerned about contract employment and contract employment increasing within the public service, and contract workers not having the ability to go to financial institutions, and so on, to enter into financial transactions as it relates to mortgages and so on, but I have seen in your Ministry and other Ministry—but I will limit to this particular Ministry—that contract employment continues to increase and you have increased that allocation to $11 million. Does this indicate that you have abandoned your concern for contract employment in terms of reducing it?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman, the whole idea one cannot, and my Member of Parliament for Couva South is well aware, remove contract employment. What one as an employer can attempt to do is to reduce the dependence on contract employment. Now with regard to the OJT, the PMCD Division would have assessed the information sent and would have advised that we

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needed 30 public officers and the balance of contract officers. And with regard to that particular line Item, Contract Employment, and the increase, that is meant to fill 16 vacant contract positions and the breakdown: two IT System Specialists; two IT Technical Officers; one ICT Manager; two Labour Inspector positions; three Labour Market Specialists, and so on, and so on. I know the Member did not—

Mr. Indarsingh: No, I—

Mr. Chairman: More questions, Member?

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes. I want to know given the increase in Contract Employment, what has become of the committee on contract labour which includes representatives of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance, the Chief Personnel Officer, the Director of Personnel Administration, and so on; and whether the commitment you gave as it relates to a policy position continues to be on your radar or has it been abandoned as it relates to this issue of reducing contract labour within the public service?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister, that questions fall within this particular—

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Well not really. I think I know what the Member of Parliament—

Mr. Chairman: Well give a response. I will give you the opportunity to give a response.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:—is attempting to get, but I want to remind the Member of Parliament that even where in instances we are trying to reduce our dependence on contract labour, and we do not renew contracts, we hear a holler from the Member and his colleagues on that side. So I do not know “whither thou goest” on this
issue.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Without getting into any tit for tat, Madam Minister, I am trying to see if you have developed on your concern for contract officers in the public service and fulfil your commitment, because you are to demit office that you would have fulfilled—

**Mr. Chairman:** Thanks, Member.

**Mr. Indarsingh:**—your commitment as it relates to ensuring—

**Mr. Chairman:** Member? Member, come to the question, please.

**4.10 p.m.**

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Mr. Chairman, if my recollection is that I am entitled to about five minutes you know.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member, you have started your discourse already, question please.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you very much. All I am saying is that I think that given our history, both of us should be concerned about the dignity of workers and you had indicated very early in your tenure about transitioning contract workers into what we would call the established positions within respective Ministries and so on. So that is why I find it strange. Because I could call out all the line Items in the respective Ministries where we have seen an increase of contract labour and that is all I am asking, whether this has been abandoned by your Ministry.

**Mr. Chairman:** No, but again, Member, it will be only relevant to this particular line Item, not the other Ministries. So in all fairness, Madam Minister, I will give you the opportunity to respond if you care to.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** No, I have not abandoned the idea.
Mr. Indarsingh: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Chaguanas East, you on this point?

Mr. Karim: Yeah, I was just going to ask the Minister, given the fact that she gave some figures with respect to contract employment, is she in a position to let us know how many are the total number of employees in the OJT programme?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman, I did not offer any information on contract employment. My Member of Parliament for Couva South is the one who drew attention to Item 16: Contract Employment.

Mr. Karim: Okay. How many persons then, Mr. Chair?

Mr. Chairman: So okay. Under line Item 16: Contract Employment, will OJT be covered under this particular line Item, Madam Minister?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: It is under another Vote.

Mr. Chairman: Under another Vote. All right. Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Chair. Minister, under 08: Rental/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage, you are seeking or you have increased the allocation by $1,262,725. Would you be so kind to inform what this increase is being utilized for?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually it covers five offices, four warehouses, and car park accommodation at the Waterfront.

Mr. Chairman: Item 002: Co-operatives, page 209; Item 003: Friendly Societies, page 210; Item 004: Occupational Safety and Health Authority, pages 210 and 211; Item 005: On The Job Training Programme, pages 211 and 212 and I recognize the Member for Chaguanas East.
Mr. Karim: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I revert to my original question, hon. Minister, line Item 01: Traveling and Subsistence, and I repeat, I notice that there is a decrease there of 15,000. Will this be sufficient to cater for your travelling officers and their subsistence and what amount of persons will this cater for?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: My information is that is to conduct—you are talking about 01 and the Traveling and Subsistence?

Mr. Karim: Yeah.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Just give me a second.

Mr. Karim: Sure.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: This figure represents travel to Tobago for quarterly training sessions.

Mr. Karim: There is a decrease in it.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes.

Mr. Karim: Okay. And is that going to be sufficient for your needs to—

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: For quarterly travel?

Mr. Karim: Okay, thank you. Mr. Chairman, may I go to line Item 08: Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage?

Mr. Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Karim: There is an increase of 111,000. Hon. Minister, might you be able to indicate the reasons for this increase?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is meant to accommodate payment to the new office, the rent.
Mr. Karim: The new office?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes.

Mr. Karim: And where is the new office may I ask?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Well we have identified a building, Nicholas Court, where Customs used to be at the corner of Abercromby and—yes, Independence Square. We are in the final stages of signing off the various agreements.

Mr. Karim: Thank you. Line Item 12, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed. Materials and Supplies.

Mr. Karim: You had an allocation of almost 500,000 in 2019, only 50,000 of that was utilized. The figure is repeated in the 2020 estimate so there is an increase of 499, almost 500,000 again. Can you tell us why we were not able to drawdown on that amount that was allocated and what will this increased amount be used for?

Mr. Chairman: Ma’am.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chair, thank you very much. I will start with your last question first. This is meant to cover the increased number of trainees. They would require a larger amount of consumables. You would recall that in the hon. Minister of Finance’s budget presentation, he indicated that not only would there be a 10 per cent increase on stipends for the OJTs but the numbers would be increased to 8,000, so provision is made for additional trainees being placed on the programme and therefore the need for larger amount of consumables.

Mr. Karim: Okay, thank you. Okay, continue.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Member for Couva South. We are on page 211.

Mr. Indarsingh: 211. With respect to line Item 17 and the allocation for training being increased by $40,389,834, Minister, could you account to this meeting how
this money is being utilized or in what direction?

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and it is a similar explanation. The programme is being expanded up to 8,000 young persons and therefore the increase is meant to cover the increase in stipend.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** If I missed it, could you inform the meeting how many trainees currently exist in the programme before this increased allocation?

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** We have a little over 5,000 trainees in the programme at the moment.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** But Minister, if I could recollect very clearly, the last time I think that there was a commitment that there were 6,122 trainees that was given to this meeting. I stand to be corrected but if my memory serves me—

**Mr. Chairman:** To this meeting you said?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Last year’s meeting.

**Mr. Chairman:** Or, I just wanted to be sure. So what are you saying? You want what? Clarity?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** I am saying if the Government is increasing the utilization of taxpayers’ money to the tune of $40-plus million, at least the country, and especially the young people, should know whether there will be the need for 2,000 applications or whatever or 2,000 persons will become part of this initiative or thrust on the part of this Government.

**Mr. Chairman:** Madam Minister.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chairman, that is a rather confusing statement to be quite honest.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** No, it is not confusing.
Hon. Baptiste-Primus:  May I, Mr. Chairman? May I?

Mr. Indarsingh:  You must tell the country—

Mr. Chairman:  Member for Couva South, the Minister—[Interruption] No, hold on, I will come back to you but we have passed on to the Minister. Go ahead, Madam Minister and then if it is anything, I will come back to you.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:  Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member for Couva South said he stands to be corrected, I would advise him to sit because he is totally incorrect. At no point in time did I come before this honourable Finance Committee under the last fiscal year and gave the information he is saying that I gave. Because this programme is being increased to 8,000 coming out of the budgetary measure. We got approval from the Cabinet—and that is recent—to increase to 6,000 and we are just over 5,000 trainees.

Mr. Chairman:  Member for Couva South, you need to come back? Proceed.

Mr. Indarsingh:  Yes. You see, Mr. Chair, and again, I am trying to get the proper accountability for the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago. The Minister could say a, b, c or d. I am saying based on the Standing Finance Committee that we need to know at the last fiscal year, whether it is 6,122 or what figure and based on a commitment to increase this to 8,000, how many additional persons will be recruited into the On The Job Training Programme? That is the simple issue I am asking or the simple statistic.

Mr. Chairman:  Fine, and Madam Minister, you provided that information?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:  Mr. Chairman, he is now asking a question.

Mr. Chairman:  All right, proceed.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:  And I have the information. We are here to share the

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information. Now, with the new fiscal approval to increase the programme to 8,000, the OJT programme will be placing approximately 3,000 young persons into the programme. We have on-going registration throughout the year. Every day, young people come in, young people register, they are then placed to be trained, a one-week training programme. Once we ascertain that we have the providers on board with the number of places, they are placed without any form of discrimination of colours, whether it is yellow, white or red. We place young people because that is what we are here for, to ensure that young people obtain the opportunity to gain the two-year experience in the programme, and after 24 months, transition out of the programme into sustainable employment.

Mr. Chairman: Member.

Mr. Indarsingh: And I thank the Minister for saying that it will be done without discrimination. I wish the Minister could provide a breakdown in terms of the numbers by constituency.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman, this programme is not run or operated or managed based on constituency basis. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Chairman: Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, lest you misunderstand my hand, I have a number of questions to ask.

Mr. Chairman: No problem, proceed.

Mr. Karim: Okay. Let me just start where my colleague left off. So you indicated, hon. Minister, that there are just about over 5,000 trainees on the programme.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: May I enquire which line Item are we under?
Mr. Karim: No, I am on the same—the training, Item 17.

Mr. Chairman: Training, 17, OJT, same page 211.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Okay.

Mr. Karim: So you indicated to him just now when he asked you how many persons are currently on the programme, your answer was over 5,000.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes, a little over 5,000.

Mr. Karim: And I am asking whether you are in a position, if not to tell us now but to provide in writing for us of the five levels, how it is broken down in terms of that 5,000? Are you in a position to tell us or will you have to put it in writing?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: How many trainees at Level 1, Level 2—?

Mr. Karim: Up to 5, yeah.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: We should have that. Yes. So at Level 1, we have 1,400—permit me, Mr. Chairman, to enquire from the Member for Chaguanas East, you want the breakdown for the last fiscal? Is that what you are asking me?

Mr. Karim: Yes, you could give it to me for the last fiscal.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Because I cannot give you for this fiscal.

Mr. Karim: No, no, you cannot because this is kinda just started.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Okay, so for the last fiscal, certainly. So for the last fiscal, we placed approximately 3,790 trainees. At Level 1, there were 1,478 trainees; at Level 2, 673 trainees; Level 3, 149 trainees; Level 4, 1,338 trainees, and at Level 5, which is the Master’s programme, 152 trainees.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Would you like the regions?

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Mr. Karim: If you want, you could give to us. I mean I do not want to detain you but I will be happy to hear them.

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister, how lengthy would it be?

4.25 p.m.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: It is not lengthy.

Mr. Chairman: Right, proceed.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: It is not lengthy.

Mr. Chairman: Once you are willing.

Mr. Karim: We would be happy to hear it.

Mr. Chairman: Provide it. Go ahead.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: South, 1,645 trainees; east, 1,483 trainees; west, 1,368 trainees; central, 847 trainees; and Tobago, 260 trainees.

Mr. Karim: Okay. With the increase that you are projecting to 8,000, will you have sufficient staff to physically visit these trainees and monitor them on the job?

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead Madam.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman, that is a very good question. Right now, we are in the process of preparing a document to forward to the PMCD making a request for additional Placement and Marketing Officers I and Placement and Marketing Officers II. You are quite correct. We will need to increase the staff to accommodate the larger number of trainees.

Mr. Karim: Okay. I also want to ask, with respect to the private and public sectors, might you be in a position to tell us for the last fiscal year, how many persons were placed in the private sector and how many of the trainees were placed in the public sector?
Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Certainly.

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister, you have the information?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I am waiting for the staff of the OJT to pass me the relevant information. Okay, so the figures I have here—

Mr. Chairman: It is the number of OJTs in the system.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: In the public sector—

Mr. Chairman:—public and private.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:—and in the private sector.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Chairman, we will have to provide that information in writing.

Mr. Chairman: Oh sure. Member?

Mr. Karim: Let me ask a follow-up question to that. Based on what you know with respect to the private sector, I suspect the private sector may not have anything close to the intake that you have for the public sector.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I am sorry, could you repeat that?

Mr. Karim: I said that, given the experience, it may be that the private sector has not taken up as many trainees as you would have in the public sector. Am I correct?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Karim: And, therefore, with respect to the—

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Government being the largest employer in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Karim: Right. Do you have a projection based on your 8,000, as to how many you project you will want to have included in the private sector versus the
Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually the director and the staff at the OJT are in the process of going out there and attempting to bring new providers on board. Because with this increase of trainees, we definitely need to bring the private sector providers on board and some of the state enterprises. And that is a work in progress. Because when you look your registration would advise you which area, which providers, we need to target, and, therefore, that is the systematic and clinical way it is being addressed.

Mr. Karim: May I ask, as a follow-up to that, in terms of the whole marketing strategy for and the reception of trainees by the private sector, do you have any outstanding sums of money for reimbursement to the private sector, and if so how much?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We anticipated that question, Member of Parliament for Chaguanas East, and the outstanding reimbursement for private providers is the sum of $237,554.97.

Mr. Karim: Okay. Thank you very much. Another follow-up, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed, Member.

Mr. Karim: This is also not only for me, but for the persons who are looking on and viewing this Standing Finance Committee. Most of your trainees would apply online. Am I correct? The potential trainees?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: You have a mix who would come in person and—

Mr. Karim: You have a mix of the online and some will go in person.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Right.

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Mr. Karim: How long after they apply would you have the interview process?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A maximum of four weeks.

Mr. Karim: And how long after they are interviewed, are they placed?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: It would depend on the request of the trainee, because we place trainees consistent with their qualifications, their career path. And it also depends on whether or not we have the placement for those trainees. But what we do, and what we are putting in place, every month we are conducting the necessary five-day training programme. And, therefore, once these trainees go through the training programme, they are on hold, and as soon as placements are identified, they are contacted and they are brought on board.

Mr. Karim: So, Hon. Minister, how long, from your experience—and I have some evidence from trainees; the evidence suggests that some of them actually are on a waiting list to be placed—one year, two years, six months, nine months? What is the maximum waiting time?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I would tell you it is not one year, because we did an assessment and went back to those who were registered to see. Because I did have one or two complaints and I requested the director to certify that we did not have any falling through the loop. But I can agree with you for a six-month period yes. Remember, these young persons are coming in daily. They are registering daily. So that we do have a waiting list at the moment. But with the new budgetary measure, to increase the programme to 8,000, the rubber is hitting the asphalt in this regard.

Mr. Karim: Can I?
Mr. Chairman: Go ahead.

Mr. Karim: It seems as though the rubber is not only hitting the asphalt; “it hitting de dollar”. Because when you look at the minimum, the level one, at $3,025, with the 10 per cent increase, with your allocation of 274 million, will it reach anywhere close to your target that you want to accomplish?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Well we intend to go back to the Minister of Finance mid-year review to request the balance of the funds.

Mr. Karim: So given this existing amount here, and you may not be able to go back until March or May next year, how much do you think—[Interruption]

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: We do have adequate allocation.

Mr. Karim: To take you to how many by May next year?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Mr. Karim: No, but to take you, based on this, to how many trainees by May next year, when the mid-term comes?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: So, it would take us close to 2,000 trainees.

Mr. Karim: And that will bring you the total complement to what?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Close to 7,000.

Mr. Karim: Madam Minister, through you, Sir, I want to tell you that, the information that I have—and many people come to me to ask to be recommended the programme—there are a number of, particularly university graduates who are waiting much longer than six months and a year, and have not been placed on the programme.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman, may I? I would like to take the opportunity to invite the Member for Chaguanas East to provide me with a list of
names of those university students and I give him the assurance we would examine our information, the data we have, and where we see that it is accurate, corrective action would be taken. But I can tell you, we do not have anyone at the university level waiting for more than a year in this programme. But I invite you to submit the list to us.

**Mr. Karim:** Sure, okay. Thank you.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Chairman, I just want to give the assurance that all of the funding that the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development requires for the OJT programme will be provided in full.

**Mr. Chairman:** Follow-up, or you have more? Okay.

**Mr. Karim:** I have some. We always hear this from the Minister of Finance every year when this question is raised. But I receive it in good grace.

**Mr. Imbert:** I speak the truth every year.

**Mr. Karim:** I want ask the hon. Minister: Do you have my instances or any experience, based on this amount of money, that could diminish the quantum of trainees? Do you have any instances that you have to deal with overpayments or even ghost payments, or even misappropriation of payments?

**Mr. Chairman:** Madam Minister.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. There is a matter, as we speak, that is before the court for fraudulent activity. The young man is on suspension. The young man has been arrested and charged by the police and is it now a police matter.

**Mr. Karim:** Apart from him, you do not have any information or any evidence of overpayments that you have to seek and get returned to the OJT programme? I
want to get this on record, because I am aware of certain instances where people—you see I will tell you what happens, Madam Minister. Sometimes the OJT office is not aware when people have completed their term and unfortunately and mistakenly they continue to get payments without the efficiency of the system.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I know that I do not have any evidence. I was just checking with the director. I do not know where the Member for Chaguanas East got his information from.

**Mr. Karim:** No, no. Do not take this conversation down to that level.

**Mr. Chairman:** No, okay we are going fine.

**Mr. Karim:** I want to just continue.

**Mr. Chairman:** We are going fine, colleagues. Another question?

**Mr. Karim:** Mr. Chairman, this is an OJT programme. The "T" means training. Will the Minister be kind enough to tell us or say something about the training component? Not the five-day component. This is On-the-Job Training. Do you have any formalized system, informal that when your monitoring and evaluation, your placement officers go around that there is something that is being done with respect to training of the trainees in the workplace?

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chairman, I am happy for that question. Because when I assumed the responsibility of the line Minister, there were no systems in place to ensure that when the trainee was placed at the worksite that the trainee was operating in accordance with a training plan. Under this Administration, we are ensuring that wherever we place those trainees that the employer develops a training programme so that the trainee would undergo the necessary training to build his or her skills in accordance with a documented training plan.
Mr. Karim: Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the Minister, and I say this from my own evidence and experience, we in fact had training plans for trainees in the workplace.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: We saw no evidence of that.

Mr. Karim: Well you may not have seen it.

Mr. Chairman: Members, Members. Hold on, one second.

Mr. Karim: You may not have seen.

Mr. Chairman: We are not going to go back and forth with regard to that issue. Next question, please?

Mr. Karim: I would go on with another question. You indicated earlier on about the number of trainees and they are online, as well as physically come to the office. Can you tell us, if I am a trainee, I am living in Guayaguayare, or Mayaro or Toco, or Rampanalgas or Sangre Grande, to which office do I physically present myself?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: The San Fernando office.

Mr. Karim: From Guayaguayare?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: We have an office in Sangre Grande. We have office in San Fernando. We have a Ministry, any Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development office. We have them in Siparia. We have in Point Fortin. So any one of the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development offices, a trainee can go in and register on the programme.

Mr. Karim: I will come back to some more questions.

Mr. Chairman: Caroni Central, still have?

Dr. Tewarie: Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed.
Appropriation (Financial Year 2020) Bill, 2019  
Standing Finance Committee (cont’d)  
Head 30: Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (cont’d)  

**Dr. Tewarie:** I have two questions and a suggestion.  

**Mr. Chairman:** Just fix your mike, please Member?  

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes. The first question is—I am just doing this for clarity—you have about 5,000 or so OJTs.  

**Mr. Chairman:** And we are on the same training programme?  

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes, same OJT.  

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead.  

**Dr. Tewarie:**—and basically fiscal allocations are going to be made available for another eight. So really, what are we looking at? I do not know if that is settled in the Government's mind. Are we looking at an OJT programme of about 8,000 annually, or are we looking at an OJT programme of 8,000 plus whatever is in the system now? Is it then a replenishment annually of what, of 8,000?  

4.40 p.m.  

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The programme at this point in time will be increased to 8,000 in accordance with the budgetary measures, and as we go along, it will be determined by the levels of registration.  

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay, so the idea then is to reach 8,000 and then you determine where you go from there.  

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** That is correct.  

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay, that is what I wanted to clarify. The second issue I wanted to ask is that, does this programme apply to returning scholars or scholarship winners who have graduated from the University of the West Indies who might, on the basis of the scholarship, have an obligation to meet to the country for working, either in the public or private sector? Does it include those or is that a separate
programme?

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** No, once you are a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, you have tertiary level or post graduate level and you are unemployed and you want to gain the two-year experience. They register with the programme, we place doctors, we place engineers, we place attorneys at law, whatever level they emanate from, once they register with the programme we place them.

**Dr. Tewarie:** The question I am asking might—maybe when the Minister of Education is here, I wanted to ask if there was a separate and distinct programme for the scholarship winners unless they register for this? That is what I really want.

**Mr. Chairman:** You can provide that information, Madam?

**Dr. Tewarie:** Do you know? If you do not know it is okay because I am not trying to—I am just trying to get the information. I will ask the Minister of Education when he is up. Okay?

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Yes, because once they register with the programme we place them.

**Dr. Tewarie:** So the registration is the key matter?

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** We place them.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Registration is the key matter.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** But you do know where you have the situation of returning scholars depending on the Ministry, the Ministry employs those returning scholars. They are not left outside there.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Well, that is what I wanted to—

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Once they return they are employed.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay. All right. I will pursue that same question with the Minister...
of Education and hear what he says.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Certainly.

**Dr. Tewarie:** And the third issue I wanted to raise is, as a policy issue, I wanted to make a suggestion. In this country 75/80 per cent of the businesses in the country are small businesses as you know, and many of the OJTs could be easily absorbed in the bigger businesses if they get an opportunity or they can be absorbed in some Ministries or other institutions. Because with the OJT Programme the Government pays the OJT, if this were aligned to small and medium enterprises it could make a significant impact on the productive process, because the small and medium enterprises would basically get free labour and they would get productive labour as well, and many of the small businesses that are under pressure, all right, would really get a boon. So I am saying that you might be doing some of that already. But I am saying as a policy measure, if it were pursued it could make a big difference.

**Mr. Chairman:** Madam Minister, care to comment.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chair, we have done, we are in the processing of doing that. We are wooing small businesses, medium businesses, large—we call them providers, and we are encouraging them to come on board, register with us. So that the spread of the trainees can be greater and have a greater impact.

**Dr. Tewarie:** All right. That is my contribution.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Okay. Thank you.

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Hon. Minister, might you be able to give us some information, or explanation with respect to line Item 28, Other Contracted Services?
Mr. Chairman: We are on page 212 now.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: That relates to, for example, contract support services, for example, like Internet services.

Mr. Karim: Okay. As you go on.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. So I can continue now. Members, Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases, page 212; Item 001: General Administration, page 212. Member for Chaguanas East, proceed.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much. Hon. Minister, might you be able to give us some details of 001, the $1.5 million there?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: 001, 1.5? Are you under—?

Mr. Chairman: Under Minor Equipment Purchases. Almost mid table on 212, mid page, 001.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: That is General Administration?

Mr. Chairman: Yes. He asked about the increase in 1.5. You with us?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I am trying, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. We are on page 212, we are at 03: Minor Equipment Purchases, and it is 001: General Administration, and there is an increase there of 1.5.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I am dealing with an extract, Mr. Chairman, I am going to the source document, what page?

Mr. Chairman: 212, 2-1-2. 03: Minor Equipment Purchases; 001: General Administration, there is an increase of 1.5.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: What is the purpose?
Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chair, we will have to provide that information in writing subsequent.

Mr. Karim: Okay. That is fine.

Mr. Chairman: Item 002: Co-operatives, page 212; Item 003: Friendly Societies, page 213; Item 004: Occupational Safety and Health Authority, page 213; Item 005: On the Job Training, page 213; Sub-Head 04—Member for Chaguanas East, you with us, Sir?

Mr. Karim: Yeah.


Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Chair. Forty gratuity to contract officers, an allocation of—an increase of $2 million. Could the Minister advise this meeting how many persons have benefited from this, or will benefit from this increase?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes, Mr. Chair. Just give me one second.

Mr. Chairman: Page 214, down to the bottom 007: Households, Gratuities.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman, we will supply the information in writing.

Mr. Indarsingh: And could I ask, Minister. These are for persons whose contracts have been renewed in the Ministry?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister, you could shed light there?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: All that information will be provided.

Mr. Indarsingh: And if the contracts have been renewed, when would the advertisements placed for inviting persons to apply for these positions? And
where were these advertisements placed?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister, all that would be provided?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yeah. But, Mr. Chairman, I just want to point out that the Gratuities to Contract Officers, that is applicable to all Ministries, and I am aware that the Minister of Finance is making provision so that Ministries will become responsible for payment of these contract gratuities instead of the Comptroller of Accounts.

Mr. Indarsingh: I have absolutely no problem with what the Minister of Finance said. In fact, during this entire meeting I have agreed with the ease of wanting to pay persons. I am seeking transparency as it relates to the contract positions.

Mr. Chairman: So the Minister will provide the information.

Mr. Indarsingh: Well, I hope so.

Mr. Chairman: Right, Madam Minister?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: But, Mr. Chairman, is it that the Member of Parliament for Couva South is enquiring under Households, 04, Settlement of Claims - Former URP Workers?

Mr. Chairman: No. He is on 40: Gratuities to Contract Officers. Not so, Member?

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you for clarifying that, Mr. Chair. So the information will be provided.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Certainly, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Karim: I wanted to ask a question, I had my hand up, for non-profit organizations.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah, go ahead. Oh, you have just gone back up. All right.
Mr. Karim: Line Item 04. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Grant to International Labour Organization, ILO. I believe I heard somewhere that the ILO has done a report on the OJT Programme? Is that correct, I am not sure?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, this programme was implemented in 2002 and when I became Minister in 2015, for the span 2002 to 2015—which includes the period 2010 to 2015—the programme was never assessed. In collaboration with the International Labour Organisation, the OJT Programme was assessed, a report has been submitted and that report will be going to Cabinet soon.

Mr. Karim: So that is the period from 2002 when it started?

Mr. Chairman: 2002 to 2015.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Well, the programme started in 2002, but it was never assessed.

Mr. Karim: But will it—the assessment period, is it with the inception to 2015?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Well, it cannot be from the—

Mr. Karim: But why can it not be?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: But I have to lay the foundation to indicate how long this programme has been implemented without an assessment being conducted, and one was conducted this year in collaboration with the International Labour Organization.

Mr. Karim: But, Mr. Chairman, this is an incomplete assessment. If you have a programme that has a lifetime, how can you dissect a certain period of time and have that period only assessed?

Mr. Chairman: Again, Member, we are at Standing Finance, I hear your point,
the Minister has said what period. Again—

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

**Mr. Karim**: That is the line Item 04.

**Mr. Chairman**: Okay. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert**: That is the subscription. No, Mr. Chairman, that is the subscription to the ILO, not for that.

**Mr. Chairman**: Item 009: Other Transfers, page 215. Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh**: Thank you, Mr. Chair. National Entrepreneurship Development Company, the allocation has moved to $20 million, an increase of $8 million. Minister, I would like you to elaborate on what you are utilizing this additional $8 million for?

**Hon. Imbert**: Mr. Chairman, I just want to point out this is something that has been repeated by the Opposition, but it is not accurate. The 2019 provision was 20 million. So there is no increase in 2020 over the original 2019.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus**: It is same the same.

**Hon. Imbert**: It is exactly the same.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus**: Same amount.

**Hon. Imbert**: It is the same programme that was envisaged in 2019, will be done in 2020.

**Mr. Chairman**: Minister, what was it used for?

**Mr. Indarsingh**: Thank you, thank you.

**Mr. Chairman**: Okay. What it is for, the purpose? He asked what the purpose is.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus**: It is for the operating expenses for NEDCO and for granting of small loans.
Hon. Imbert: It depends on how many loans it has.

Mr. Indarsingh: So out of the 20 million that is projected to be spent in 2020, Minister, could you tell us how much will be utilized for operational expenses and how much will be utilized for the purposes of loans?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: We do not have that information available at the moment, but it will be provided.

Mr. Indarsingh: Do you have the information for 2019 fiscal?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Well, Mr. Chairman, if it would assist the Member for Couva South, would you want to have the value of the loans for the last fiscal? Or would you want to know the number of loans disbursed?

Mr. Indarsingh: Loans disbursed, the value, everything, and the operating expenses too.

4.55 p.m.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: All right. So, Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: You could provide it now?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: So, Mr. Chairman, two out three can be provided now. The value of loans disbursed for last fiscal was $16,324,875.67. [Desk thumping] The number of loans disbursed in last fiscal was 285 loans. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Indarsingh: Are any of the recipients of the loan arrangements in bad pay status or?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry.

Mr. Indarsingh: No, we have a responsibility too.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Indarsingh: If you are disbursing taxpayers’ money, you do not want to tell
Mr. Chairman: Member, I am proceeding to the Minister. Minister?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Deputy Chair—

Mr. Chairman: Could the information be provided?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:—I want to give the Member for Couva South who, I do not know whether that is a plus or a minus, is my Member of Parliament. [Laughter] I want to give him the assurance—[Laughter and crosstalk]

Mr. Chairman: Please, please proceed Madam Minister.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I want to give him the assurance that NEDCO has put in place a very robust system to ensure [Desk thumping] the levels of delinquency that existed before has been reduced considerably.

Mr. Indarsingh: Mr. Deputy Chair, my constituent has not visited my office for the last nine years, so she is a satisfied constituent.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Thank you, Member. Thank you, Member. Item 010: Other Transfers Abroad, page 215. We now move to the other book, Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies, Sub-Head 06. Right? We will be going to page 173. Sub-Head 06: Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies.

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. No. 17, Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies; Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure, page 173. Item 001: General Administration, page 173; Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services, page 173. Item 001: General Administration, pages 173 and 174; Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment

Different book, development programme, page 74 Hon. Members, we will now move on to the Draft Estimates of the Development Programme. Sub-Head 09: Development Programme, Consolidated Fund, page 74. Item 003: Economic Infrastructure, page 74. Item 005: Multi-Sectoral and Other Services, pages 77 to 79.

Hon. Members, Item 005 spans three pages, therefore, I would also announce the project groups, starting with M. Cipriani College of Labour and Corp. Studies, page 77. A. Administrative Services, pages 78 and 79. I recognize the Member for Chaguanas East.

**Mr. Karim:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Minister, line Item 063, might you be able to give us some information with respect to that item?

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Sorry. What is the question?

**Mr. Karim:** Line Item 063.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Yes.

**Mr. Karim:** The MLMIS.

**Mr. Chairman:** Which page you are on Member?

**Mr. Karim:** 78. Are you not on 78? You called it 06—

**Mr. Chairman:**—3, Development of a Modernized Labour Market—

**Mr. Karim:**—Information System.

**Mr. Chairman:** We are on page 78.

**Mr. Karim:** Yeah, 78.
Mr. Chairman: 063.

Mr. Karim: 063. Yeah, 063.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chair, what is the question from the Member of Parliament?

Mr. Karim: I just wanted to get some information with respect to that line Item, Development of a Modernized Labour Market Information System with an allocation of 300,000.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes, Mr. Chairman. This refers to the engagement of a consultant to conduct a private sector vacancy survey and that is being finalized right now, and the objective of the survey is to determine employers’ unfulfilled demand for labour in the private sector as measured by the number of unfilled vacancies, and we expect this survey to be completed within a six-month period.

Mr. Karim: When will it commence?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Well, we are almost completed with the process in developing the terms of reference. So, I would say we would be able to roll that down by the end of next month.

Mr. Karim: And six months thereafter?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed Member.

Mr. Karim: Yeah. Hon. Minister, might we get some information with respect to line Item 071?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: 071.

Mr. Chairman: Development of a Labour Migration Policy.
Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes. What is the question, Mr. Chair?

Mr. Chairman: Information, some information on it.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Okay. This refers to the need to develop a draft policy framework which would include a situation analysis on the labour migration, and that is being developed by the Inter-Ministerial Committee that was appointed in August of this year. We held a stakeholder consultation on the 13th of September to obtain input from our key stakeholders, which would inform the development of this labour migration policy. At this stage, the input from the key stakeholders is being analyzed. What came out of the consultation on September 13th, we are in the process of analyzing it. The output would be a first draft of a labour migration policy.

Mr. Karim: By when hon. Minister?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Pardon me?

Mr. Karim: You have a timeline?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: We anticipate submitting that draft to Cabinet before the end of December.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, Member.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Line Item 085. I am seeing this Item here, Delinking the On The Job Training Programme from the National Training Agency, $2 million. What is it for?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. This is meant to install a new telephone system, video conferencing with regard to training of staff, so that the Tobago staff could be part of the training programme that we have in
Trinidad. It is meant to cover surveillance, CCTV system, a new information system within the OJT Division.

Mr. Karim: Is that what delinking means?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes.

Mr. Karim: Delinking?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Yes, delinking from the National Training Agency.

Mr. Karim: Well them maybe I can ask another question along delinking. Is there any truth to any information—or well let me ask it another way. Do you have any sums of money belonging to the OJT Programme still in the hands of the National Training Agency and, if so, how much money?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: And I would say, like you, I know you know about that account, because it was opened under your tenure, and you would be aware. So there are funds in that fund, in that account, which will be transferred to the Ministry of Labour in this new fiscal.

Mr. Karim: Madam Minister, the OJT Programme was delinked in a sense from the National Training Agency towards the end of 2015. Since that time and four years now, can you tell us the sum of money that continues to be resident in the hands of the National Training Agency that after four years has not been transferred to the responsible Ministry?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chair, that account has a little over 145 million in it.

Mr. Karim: $145 million which—[Crosstalk]

Mr. Chairman: Please, Members.

Mr. Karim: Now, listen, Mr. Chairman, I do not want—

Mr. Chairman: You are getting your answer, Sir. So let us concentrate on the
Mr. Karim: I want to ask the question again. So that money has stayed there for four years without being used to assist trainees in this country who are unable to get jobs and for which that sum of money could have been used to place a lot of those persons who are unemployed since that period of time.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, your response. Hold on. Okay. Minister.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Mr. Chairman, I could easily remind the hon. Member of Parliament for Chaguanas East that the very building the OJT in, there were no approvals for that building. We were stealing WASA water. We had no kind of appraisal.

Mr. Karim: Is that the question I asked?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:—the sewer system—

Mr. Karim: Is this the question I asked?

Mr. Chairman: Members, listen.

Mr. Karim: Is this the question I asked?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: That is the answer you are getting.

Mr. Chairman: Again, Minister, you would complete it?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: No, she is not finished, go ahead.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: I would like to remind the Member of Parliament that no trainee in the programme has suffered. Those funds have been used—when we assumed office in 2015, there were huge bills, outstanding bills. We had almost a million dollars in security payment outstanding occurred under my friend’s administration. So those bills, the funds, we have been using those funds to pay off all those bills. It has taken a while, because the very providers have been
negligent in submitting their invoices and those invoices had to be verified. So once we have completed that process, the hon. Minister of Finance has agreed to transfer those funds to the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development.

[Desk thumping]

**Mr. Karim:** Mr. Chairman—

**Mr. Chairman:** One sec, one sec. Hold on. Again, Members, I am not going into any debate, but I will give you the opportunity to comment.

**Mr. Karim:** I would like to complete the question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sure.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** What is the question?

**Mr. Karim:** Why did you not transfer the sum of $145 million to the Consolidated Fund if you were not using it? You had it in your hands for four years and you did absolutely nothing with it when people are unemployed and looking for jobs. [Desk thumping]

**Mr. Chairman:** The question was answered, but you care to shed some light? All right, Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** I would like to shed some light on this. When the Minister took over that programme that was being run out of an illegal building, the number of trainees was in the order of 3,000 to 3,500. The number of trainees is now up to 5,500 and we are going to 8,000 under this PNM administration and, therefore, all of the money was utilized to employ more people.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Deputy Chairman, more than that, when I became the line Minister, we found a very unsettling situation where trainees were just crowded together and placed in areas with absolutely nothing to do, which showed
that they were placed—

Mr. Karim: That is not true.

Mr. Chairman: Listen. Members if—listen. Hold on Members, Members hold on. If it is that we are not going listen in silence, I would move on to the next Item. Okay? So we would hear the Minister. You have your hand up for another comment, I would give you the opportunity.

Mr. Karim: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Hold on. No, the Minister is on the floor Member. You will get your opportunity after, rest assured. Proceed.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: So that, Mr. Chairman, we had to conduct an assessment to determine, and what we found was that the indiscriminate placing of OJTs simply to say we have placed X number of OJTs, but they were not benefiting from the programme. They were sitting twiddling their thumbs. In TTPost we found 200 OJTs inside there.

Mr. Karim: That is not true.

Mr. Chairman: Minister of Finance, please. Okay, Member.

5.10 p.m.

Mr. Karim: It is very unfortunate that a line Minister would come here and tell such erroneous information. [Crosstalk] No, no, hold on.

Mr. Chairman: Members, hold on.

Mr. Karim: “Listen nuh, doh tell me it is true. Ah want to tell yuh”, if you want to see how many persons were registered as of 2015 June, go to the document that was presented by this Minister of Finance in this House for the 2016 budget. It was in excess of 7,000 trainees. [Desk thumping] You must not come and mislead.
You are misleading the House. You see, I will tell you why—[Crosstalk]

Mr. Chairman: Any further questions Member?

Mr. Karim: I want to end. I will tell you why. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Chairman: Silence!

Mr. Karim: I will tell you why they are doing this. They cannot answer the question. You kept 145 or 50 million dollars in an account without using it for the benefit of the children and the unemployed in this country, and that is what you did. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Hon. Member: Ghosts in “de” programme!

Mr. Karim: Ghosts was under the PNM.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, Members, fine. Couva South, you have, or you are okay?

Mr. Indarsingh: I want to bring some stability here.

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no.

Mr. Chairman: Do you have a question, Member?

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Which line Item?

Mr. Indarsingh: 059, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Labour Legislation Reform.

Mr. Indarsingh: Mr. Minister, I see that you are asking for an allocation of $1 million to follow through on a review of the Minimum Wages Act, the Maternity Protection Act, legislation that governs HIV/AIDS and employment standards and so on. Do you have a timeline for the completion of these pieces of legislation?

Mr. Chairman: Minister, we are at page 78, 059: Labour Legislation Reform.

UNREVISED
An update, please, for the Member?

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** I would like to share with this honourable committee, that over the fiscal 2018 to 2019, we at the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development held consultations on the following pieces of legislation: the Cooperative Societies Act, Chap. 81:03, consultations held on September 11 2019 in Trinidad and on September 17\textsuperscript{th} in Tobago; Foreign Labour Contracts Act, Chap. 88:11, consultation held on March 29, 2019; Employment Standard Legislation, report of consultations submitted in January 2019; Trade Union Act, Chap. 88:02. Following the consultation, the working group was conducted in February and April. The National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment was laid in Parliament on International Women’s Day, March 08, 2019. We also held consultations on the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Chap. 88:08 and associated regulations. On the Employment Exchange Act, Chap. 88:09, that consultation was held on May 17, 2019. Another consultation was held on June 07, 2019, on the Recruiting of Workers Act, Chap. 88:10, and Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies Act, Chap. 39:51. That Bill is expected to be laid in the House before or by the end of this year.

It is proposed that the following items would be addressed: Legislation relating to employment standard, formerly basic terms and conditions, the Minimum Wages Act, Chap. 88:04, Maternity Protection Act, Chap. 45:57, also legislation to cover HIV/AIDS in the work place and legislation to govern sexual harassment in the workplace. We aim to complete and submit the draft policy position papers in respect of these items within the fiscal year to Cabinet.

I also want to point out at present what is before the Cabinet, draft policy
position papers on amendments to the Retrenchment and Severance Benefit Act, to the Industrial Relations Act. The Cabinet would have referred those two policy position papers to the National Tripartite Advisory Council. The Council which is led by the Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis, our Minister of Planning and Development, the NTAC met over a period of time and considered the amendments to these two pieces of legislation. I am very happy to say that the comments of NTAC are now back before Cabinet for its consideration, and we are looking at placing those amendments before Parliament by the end of this year, Leader of Government Business?

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Yes.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: With respect to the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the date for the introduction of the legislation will be determined on the fact that the agency is working on the finalization of several draft policy position papers which will be submitted to Cabinet.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Madam Minister.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have listened very attentively, but I have not gotten a timeline in terms of the Minimum Wages Act, the minimum protection. In fact, all of the legislation.

Mr. Chairman: You are now asking for that information?

Mr. Indarsingh: But more importantly, I listened to the Minister with respect to the National Sexual Harassment Policy in the workplace and so on. I do not know if the Minister can tell us what has become of the report into sexual harassment at the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, that report that was handed to the Prime Minister one year ago.
Mr. Chairman:  Again, Member, I will ask the Minister to provide the timeline in writing; not today.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:  Mr. Chair, I did give that information.

Mr. Chairman:  Timeline?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:  Yes, within this fiscal.  I did say within this fiscal.

Mr. Indarsingh:  What month?  What month will it be laid in the Parliament and so on, the amendments that you indicated to the respective pieces of legislation?

Hon. Baptiste-Primus:  Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, my Member of Parliament for Couva South spent five years in office.  How many pieces of legislation did you bring to Parliament?

Mr. Indarsingh:  I am examining your Development Programme, Madam Minister.

Mr. Chairman:  Couva South, the information will be provided.  F. Public Buildings, page 79. You have a question there, Member?

Mr. Indarsingh:  No, no, yes, Administrative Services, I am not finished as yet.

Mr. Chairman:  You are not finished yet, Member?

Mr. Indarsingh:  No.

Mr. Chairman:  Okay, come on quickly, Member.

Mr. Indarsingh:  The operationalization of the National Tripartite Advisory Council was launched with much fanfare I think somewhere—

Mr. Chairman:  93—question please.

Mr. Indarsingh: —on the 15th of March, 2016, Mr. Chair.  In 2020, why it took us so long to engage in public consultation and I think a national logo and tagline competition and so on? We would expect by now the National Tripartite Advisory
Council would have addressed the opening or reopening of the ArcelorMittal Steel Plant and other business initiatives and so on.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member for Couva South, we are dealing with the finances of it. You want to find out what the million dollar increase is for?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member, the million dollar increase. We are not going into the other debate.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chairman, I want to give the Member of Parliament for Couva South the assurance that this Government is very concerned that the situation relating to ArcelorMittal does not recur. That is why the amendment to the Retrenchment and Severance Benefits Act will be brought before Parliament. I want to soothe his concerns in that regard.

We are operationalizing the National Tripartite Advisory Council. We have had challenges over the period of time with regard to accommodation. Mr. Chairman, on two occasions we identified accommodation. In one instance just before we signed off the owner of the building sold the building. He got an offer that he could not refuse. He sold the building, the process had to start all over again.

My friend knows, as a former Minister, he understands the process whereby accommodation is sought. We have to go through PRESD in order to obtain accommodation. We have identified a building, the Nicholas Court at the corner of Abercromby and Independence Square, and we are in the final stages.

We have advertised all the positions needed for NTAC. We have conducted interviews. We have identified the staff. We brought one research officer on
board, and as soon as we get the new accommodation, we will be bringing the additional staff on board.

I also want to tell him that NTAC is working. NTAC has appointed subcommittees, and therefore once we get the accommodation we will have the necessary support staff to work with NTAC in delivering its mandate. [Desk thumping]

**Hon. Member:** Good answer! Good answer!

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I guess that the 63,000-plus people who have lost their jobs have been deceived as it relates to the National Tripartite Advisory Council.

**Mr. Chairman:** Question? No question yet, Member?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Yes, Development of a Labour Migration Policy.

**Mr. Chairman:** Call the number, call the line number.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** I just did that.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** 071.

**Hon. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chair, I dealt with that. It was a question raised I think by you.

**Mr. Chairman:** You dealt with that already? [Interruption]

**Mr. Indarsingh:** But if my colleague asked a question, I respect the fact, I should be entitled to ask—

**Mr. Chairman:** Let me hear your question. Your question Member?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** —any question I want.

**Mr. Chairman:** Member, your question.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Any question I want.
Mr. Chairman: Question?

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Development of a Labour Migration Policy in Trinidad and Tobago, we see an increase in the Estimate to 600,000. Would that have been influenced, Minister, by the BBC’s report as it relates to 40,000 Venezuelans existing in Trinidad and Tobago?


Question put and agreed to.

Head 30 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Madam Minister. Thank you, Madam PS and to all your senior executives of the Ministry. Thanks for coming. We will be in book Recurrent Expenditure and we will be on page 52. Page 52, Members. Chief Whip, page 52.

Head 11: Registration, Recognition and Certification Board, $4,553,060.

Mr. Chairman: I wish to invite the Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes. Welcome Secretary to the Board, and your colleague. Welcome to the Parliament Chamber.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The Registration, Recognition and Certification Board herein referred to as “the board” is a tripartite body created via the Industrial Relations Act, Chap. 88:01. The board consists of a chairman and eight other members who are appointed by the Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development.
The chairman is selected by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, after consultation with such organizations, as in her opinion, most representative of workers and employers.

With respect to the other members of the board, three members are persons nominated by such organizations as in the opinion of the Minister are most representative of workers. Three members being persons nominated by such organizations as in the opinion of the Minister are most representative of employers, and two members being persons jointly nominated by the organizations most representative of workers and employers.

The Minister appoints the chairman and the other eight members of the board, and shall in like manner appoint an alternate member. The board has a secretariat which is headed by a secretary who is the accounting officer. The secretariat is comprised of 25 public officers who carry out the day-to-day functions of the board.

The duties of the board are outlined in section 23:1 of the Industrial Relations Act. I shall not proceed to read all of them, but just to say that one of the functions of the board is the making of agency shop orders under Part IV, and the conduct of ballots and proceedings in connection with that. The board also has the responsibility of granting recognition to unions who have submitted applications in that regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I avail myself to any questions that this committee is so inclined to ask.

5.25 p.m.
Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Madam Minister.

UNREVISED
Question proposed: That Head 11 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of $4,553,060 for Head 11: Registration, Recognition and Certification Board is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure.

So as I said, we are on page 53, Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure, page 53; Item 001: General Administration, page 53; Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services, page 53; Item 001: General Administration, pages 53 and 54; Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases, page 54; Item 001: General Administration, page 54; Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies, page 55; Item 007: Households, page 55. Chief Whip, are you okay?

Mr. Lee: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Lovely.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 11 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Madam Minister, thank you, secretary and your colleague from the Board.

Hon. Baptiste-Primus: Good evening, everyone.

Mr. Chairman: Members, we are now going to Head 02: Auditor General, Recurrent Expenditure book, page 6. Members, please, page 6, Recurrent Expenditure booklet. Welcome, Auditor General, welcome to the Parliament Chamber. Minister of Finance, and also your deputy, welcome to the Parliament Chamber. Minister of Finance, we are ready.

Head 02: Auditor General, $39,065,135.
Mr. Chairman: I will now invite the Minister to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes.

Hon. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, the Auditor General’s department is a supreme audit institution in the finest tradition of supreme audit institutions in the Commonwealth. It is seized with the responsibility to conduct audits of government expenditure, it supports the Public Accounts Committees with respect to audits of expenditure and accounts of government departments and Ministries and statutory bodies and state enterprises. It is one of the most important areas of government. It is the last item in the chain when we are disbursing funds, because it is a little known fact that when the Ministry of Finance goes through the process of approving the release of funds and approving the writing of cheques that at the end of the process the Auditor General has to step in and audit the documentation before anybody can be paid. So that the Auditor General’s—and they usually do it in a very quick time, they turn it around sometimes in an hour or less—department is a critical pillar of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Question proposed: That Head 02 stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the sum of $39,065,135 for Head 02: Auditor General is comprised of moneys for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure. We shall now proceed to consider the Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure. And we are at Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure, page 6; Item 001: General Administration, page 6. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Just one question, thank you, hon. Minister, 01, just to ask if they have the full complement of staff? That is it.
Mr. Chairman: 01, full complement of staff, Minister? We are on page 6, Recurrent Expenditure, page 6, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, 01, full complement of staff, if you all have it.

Hon. Imbert: I am advised that at present the Auditor General’s department has 167—sorry, 77 vacant positions without bodies. Okay?

Mr. Chairman: Item 002: Tobago Services, page 6; Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services, page 7; Item 001: General Administration, pages 7 and 8; Item 002: Tobago Services, page 8; Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases, page 9; Item 001: General Administration, page 9; Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies, page 9; Item 001: Regional Bodies, page 9; Item 002: Commonwealth Bodies, page 9; Item 004: International Bodies, page 10; Item 007: Households, page 10.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 02 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Thanks for coming, Madam Auditor, and your deputy. Thank you, Minister of Finance. I would now welcome the Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts. Head 62 Recurrent Expenditure booklet, and we are at page 310 Recurrent Expenditure booklet. Welcome, Madam Minister—

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman:—and to your senior staff of the Ministry, welcome to the Parliament Chamber.

Head 62: Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts, $415,512,249.

Mr. Chairman: I will now invite the Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes.
Over to you, Madam Minister.

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** Thank you, Chairman. The Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts and its officials are very happy to be here to examine our allocation for the upcoming fiscal. We are a developmental and transformational Ministry with a focus on developing communities, developing culture. Our vision is resilient, culturally rich communities and our key activities include, skills training, artiste professionalization, audience development, exposure to the arts, sustainable festival development, financial support for communities and culture, construction and refurbishment of key community infrastructure. We are happy to here, and we stand ready to answer questions as posed to us by the Opposition.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Madam Minister.

*Question proposed:* That Head 62 stand part of the Schedule.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of $415,512,249 for Head 62: the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts 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 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.

As I said, we are in the Recurrent Expenditure booklet, we are at Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure, page 310; Item 001: General Administration, page 310. I recognize the Member for Princes Town.
Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, line Item 14: the Remuneration to members of Cabinet-Appointed Committees, this appears to be a repeat of 2018/2019 with no expenditure. Do you envisage that there will be Cabinet-appointed committees in the next financial year? And if you can give us an idea of what will be focused if there ever will be?

Mr. Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Sorry, Mr. Chairman, not at this time.

Mr. Chairman: Item 002: Community Development Division, page 310; Item 006: Best Village, 311; Item 008: Culture Division, page 311; Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services, page 312; Item 001: General Administration, and we are on pages 312 and 313. Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, line Item 05: Telephones, you will see that there is an increase reflected in this line Item by $1 million. Can you give us an idea as to why such a large increase would have been considered?

[Mrs. Annisette-George in the Chair]

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Thank you. We do have some outstanding bills that have to be covered, and so this caters for that.

Mr. Padarath: Would these outstanding bills be for the landlines?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Yes. They would.

Mr. Padarath: Or would it be for officers who have allowances with respect to cell phone allowance and so on?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: It would be a mix of the both.

Mr. Padarath: Okay. I know you may not be in a position to give the information
now, but would you be able to give the undertaking to give us a breakdown of those?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: A breakdown of all the phone bills that are outstanding in the Ministry?

Mr. Padarath: The ones that are outstanding with respect to this—

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Under this particular line Item?

Mr. Padarath: Yes. With respect to land lines and the officers who would have arrears with respect to cell phones.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Ma’am. Madam Minister, line Item 08, an increase of 80,000 for Rent/Lease Office Accommodation and Storage, could you indicate which facility this increase would be for?

5.40 p.m.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: That is for our main offices at Nicholas Towers, Chepstow building.

Mr. Padarath: Okay. And, Ma’am, if I can continue, with your permission, to line Item 16: Contract Employment, we see an increase of one million there, can you indicate how many contract offices you have across the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts, and what positions you envisage to utilize this additional $1 million for in the next financial year in terms of what areas of focus for the Ministry?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: We have 533 available positions, we have 237 filled, and there are quite a number of divisions that are looking at filling some of their
positions, that has not fully been finalized yet, so I cannot provide that information as specifically as you would like.

**Mr. Padarath:** And line Item 34, I know the hon. Minister of Finance gave us a policy position with respect to the University Graduate Recruitment Programme, hoping that that policy would now be put in place and we would be able to utilize this particular Vote under your Ministry, can you say whether or not the Ministry has identified areas in which this particular line Item will be utilized with respect to graduates in terms of the specific areas?

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** We do have many areas that we would be able to accommodate graduates in, and so we await the policy, and once that has been in place we are ready to move, because we have areas, yes.

**Mr. Padarath:** You have identified them?

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** Yes.

**Mr. Padarath:** Okay, great.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 002: Community Development Division. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you Madam. Minister, line Item 08 again, Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage, an increase of 758,000, if you can indicate which facility this would be utilized for, please?

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** That is for our general offices, Community Development offices at San Fernando and Port of Spain.

**Madam Chairman:** Princes Town, anything else?

**Mr. Padarath:** No, Ma’am.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 005: Mediation Centres. Member for Princes Town.
Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam. Madam, line Item 16: Contract Employment, with an increase of $956,000 for the next financial year, if the Minister would be kind enough to indicate under the Mediation Centres how many contract employees do we currently have now, and how many you envisage to bring in with respect to this 956 across the Mediation Centres?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: The Mediation Unit has vacancies for 34 persons at this time, and so the increase is to cater for some, increased hires, however, that has to be determined in terms of the exact numbers of positions that need to be filled within the division itself.

Mr. Padarath: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Item 006: Best Village. Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam. Madam Minister, line Item 16: Contract Employment, again, a significant increase here of 805,000 under the Best Village Programme. Again, you would see in this financial year, as I have indicated, 805,000 has been increased for this particular line Item, can you indicate what would this be used for under the term Contract Employment?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: There are 28 vacant positions under the Best Village Unit, and that is, again, up for review. An allocation has been made just in case we do have to have an increase, however, the intention is not to hire and fill out all the positions, but we have to do a careful analysis of which ones we would need to, if any, this year.

Mr. Padarath: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Can we move on?

Mr. Padarath: Yes.
Madam Chairman: Item 008: Culture Division; Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases.

Mr. Padarath: Ma’am, before you go on to that—

Madam Chairman: You are on Item 008?

Mr. Padarath: No. Yes, sorry, 008, Culture Division, which is one line Item there. If you would allow, thank you, Ma’am. Line Item 89: Cultural Programmes, an increase of $2 million. The question I have with respect to this is that you see the expenditure in the last financial year only being 563,800. Can you indicate what Cultural Programmes this funding was utilized for, and why the entire funding was not utilized, if this is to support Cultural Programmes?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Thank you, Madam Chair. The spend is actually $3,084,949, that is actually reflected at this point in time. So when the estimation may have been made it would have been that amount, but the actual spend is much more than that, and the entire line Item was utilized, and this deals with all of the Cultural Programmes that have gone in that division, and so that was completely utilized.

Mr. Padarath: Madam Minister, along that same vein, with respect to the Cultural Programmes, can you indicate how does the Ministry identify these Cultural Programmes in terms of what areas of Trinidad and Tobago's culture, et cetera, is identified? How do you guys come up with a plan in terms of your work agenda for these Cultural Programmes?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: The staff of the Culture Division would make their prepositions for the different programmes that are running, and that would be considered, and then we would implement.
Mr. Padarath: Okay, so it is not like a consultation process where you engage groups or organizations reflective of cultural organizations, of course, to put forward proposals?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Cultural organizations are considered, and their programming is also considered, and in many cases the Ministry assists with their programming to ensure that different communities and different cultural groups, NGOs, FBOs, CBOs, have their programmes implemented. Not in this line Item, however.

Mr. Padarath: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001: General Administration; Item 002: Community Development Division; Item 005: Mediation Centres; Item 006: Best Village; Item 008: Culture Division; Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 005: Non-Profit Institutions. Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Minister, line Item 05: Contribution to Community Based Organisations, an increase of 4.5 million. Would you be able to tell us the amount of community-based organizations, the last allocation was utilized to assist, and the criteria that is being used with respect to the disbursement of that funding to these organizations?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Thank you, Chair. The allocation actually does not reflect an increase. If you would look at the 2019 and 2020 Estimates you would realize that there is not an increase in the allocation. It is pretty much the same, probably a small decrease, and this is used to run the CEP classes, skill training classes and provide assistance to centres that need help.
Mr. Padarath: Okay.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, line Item 06: Operational Expenses for Community Facilities. 2019 had estimated half a million, nothing was utilized. I do not know if at present, and now you have budgeted 3 million, could you identify what, because it appears to be a new Item that has not—there were no expenses in 2018, Operational Expenses for Community Facilities, could you clarify what—

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: The actual expenditure was 1 million, just about 1.7 million actually, that is reflected from the Ministry’s records, so maybe it would not have been picked up here at the time of the estimation. However, that is the line Item that is used to pay the Community Centre Boards. We have recently implemented Community Centre Boards for the larger and more modern community centres, and those were used to pay that as well as security, janitorial staff and so on, for community centres.

Mr. Lee: Okay, and what would have—the janitorial and security expenses in the past, where would that line Item that would have met—because this appears to be a new line Item?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: They would have taken it out of a previous line Item that we just spoke about, Contribution to Community-Based Organisations.

Mr. Lee: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Item 007: Households. Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Madam, the Hosting of Cultural Camps under line Item 08, I do understand, Minister, where we looked at a previous line Item you did point to me that it was not necessarily an increase, but that only a certain amount was spent in
the last financial year, and therefore it was pretty much around the same. I understand the concept of that. The hosting of these cultural camps seems to be another one of those scenarios where we had an Estimate of 900,398 having been spent, and a reflection of a 501 increase in 2020, which would pretty much bring you back to the same figure. The question is, the hosting of these cultural camps, can you indicate, in the last financial year, how many camps were hosted? The areas and the criteria used to select the hosting of these camps?

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** The hosting of the camps are advertised in the newspapers and social media. This year we have done social media only based on our new thrust to reduce marketing expenditure, and so people do apply for their camps to be assisted by the Ministry, and we can provide you with the list in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so Item 009: Other Transfers. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Ma’am. Minister, line Item 11: Stollmeyer’s Castle, an allocation of 1.4 million in this financial year. I am guessing that this is really an operationalizing figure, the 1.4 million. Can you indicate, Minister, with this facility being a new facility, is there any future plan to have this facility be self-sufficient instead of being subsidized by State support?

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** Well, all of our major performing spaces and so on, they do attract major subsidies from the State, and certainly it would be a noble gesture to want them to be self-sufficient. But that would mean a lot of changes in terms of how they operate, and therefore a lot of changes in terms of how available they are to the population for their use. So even though that is yes, one of the ideals,
that it would take some working towards that so that we can realize that goal.

**Mr. Padarath:** Okay, but you are saying that it is happening in terms of that long-term plan for Stollymer’s Castle?

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** I am saying that it may be an ideal thing, however, it will take a lot of work to get you to that point.

**Mr. Padarath:** The question I am asking is, is there anything in place to get us to that point?

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** I am saying that that may be a long-term ideal. However, we are not at that point.

**Mr. Padarath:** Okay, and there is no plan in place at this point?

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** I feel like I have answered.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 011: Transfers to State Enterprises. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Ma’am. Line Item 01: National Commission for Self-Help Limited. Madam, when you look at the 2030 achievement report, one of the areas identified was the Self-Help Commission. I believe that 163 grants, if I am not mistaken, but I know it was mentioned in the 2030 achievement report that was presented by the Minister of Planning and Development. The question is, with respect to this allocation of 10 million for National Self-Help, can you indicate in the last financial year how many applications you would have received?

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** I do not have that information with me.

**Mr. Padarath:** Would you be able to provide that for us?

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** Yes, certainly.

**Mr. Padarath:** Yes, and again is there any plan to expand this National Self-
Help? Because I noticed that it is sort of consistent over the years with respect to this $10 million figure.

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** Well, certainly, as finances increase, certainly that would be one of the plans to ensure that the communities get more help.

**Madam Chairman:** We now go on to Sub-Head 06: Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies. Hon. Members, we will now move on to the *Draft Estimates*—

**Mr. Padarath:** Ma’am, I am sorry, under 06, if you do not mind, one question?

**Madam Chairman:** What I would ask you, Member for Princes Town, in the light of the time, I would try to keep abreast with you and therefore if you could keep abreast with me?

**Mr. Padarath:** Certainly, my apologies.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so I would allow you this indulgence on this occasion but just try to keep—

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, where are you?

**Mr. Padarath:** Page 320, under line Item 22: the National Carnival Commission of Trinidad & Tobago.

**Madam Chairman:** So, you are at 011?

**Mr. Padarath:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Padarath:** The question here, Minister, is that in 2020 we see an increase in the National Carnival Commission of 44,390,300. Now, this is a significant increase for Carnival 2020. Could the hon. Minister indicate what would have
contributed to this, whether or not it is based on arrears from last Carnival? Okay, proceed Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** The NCC has been carrying arrears for many, many years and we in the Ministry of Finance thought this year we would try our best to wipe off most, if not all of the arrears, because it affects their ability to pay for services in the upcoming year, and you realize Carnival is very close to the beginning of the financial year, so they have to start making payments in October, November, December and so on. So we thought we would give them this allocation to try and wipe off most of the arrears. They have been carrying it for many, many years. It is not now. It is many years, so that is what it is for.

**Mr. Padarath:** Okay.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay? So we will move on. Sub-Head 06: Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies. 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.* We are at page 453, 20 - Queen’s Hall; Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure; Item 001: General Administration.

**5.55 p.m.**

Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services; Item 001: General Administration. Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 007: Households.

21 - Naparima Bowl, and we are on page 459. 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.

22 - National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago, and we are at page 465. 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 008: Subsidies; Item 009: Other Transfers.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, we will now move on to the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*. We are at page 130. Sub-Head 09: Development Programme, Consolidated Fund; Item 004: Social Infrastructure.

Hon. Members, you may have observed that this Item spans 3 pages, therefore I will announce them by project groups. A. Culture. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. Madam, line Items 051 and 055, the Queen’s Hall refurbishment and the Upgrade of Facilities - SAPA. I just wanted to find out from the Minister whether or not these sums reflect the completion of the projects in terms of what will be needed to complete the projects. And if the hon. Minister can give us an idea of whether or not these projects would be completed in terms of timeline pretty soon.

**Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:** Yes, they do. The actual expenditure in 051 was just about 2 million. So again, it is a reflection of when the snapshot was taken. And for SAPA, which is 055, the Actual expenditure was 252,000 and, yes, the sums given in these cases will be able to complete the works that are projected for the next fiscal.
Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam. Madam, if you would allow me to move to line Item 056: Hosting of Carifesta XIV 2019. Madam, when I look at the figure it is shocking, it is shameful and it is startling. Because when you look at the 2019 Estimate there was 24 million. The Revised Estimate is 27.462 million, which tells us that there have been cost overruns and this appeared to be a runaway horse. In 2020 you see an Estimate of 5 million after the event has already passed. The question is: In light of the Government’s mantra of saving, why is there an allocation of additional $5 million for the hosting of CARIFESTA 2019? Does this reflect cost overruns and outstanding bills of $4,000 cakes and cocktail parties? [Crosstalk]

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Thank you so much, Madam Chairman. [Crosstalk]

Madam Chairman: Could we, could we—Members, I am sure the Minister can answer. I would like to hear her please.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I noticed that the hon. Member may have been very, very busy during this period and I say congratulations to him. I know how it is with young parents so he may have missed the fact that CARIFESTA was spoken about on numerous occasions in the media at $43 million. And so, I understand maybe his confusion and I sympathize. I remember my days.

However, the 5 million that is allocated here simply reflects bills that have to be paid. I know the Member has not been in Government, he does not understand how a Ministry would exactly work. However, when events are finished we do have invoices that come in after and so this is catered here to clear all of those invoices.
So in terms of the mention of the cake, I want to mention to the Member that it is very, very customary when we have people, especially 500 volunteers who have given up their time and service, and I am glad he brought it up so I can publicly put it on the record and the Hansard [Desk thumping] that those 500 volunteers who gave of their time, no stipend to come out and to make our country proud and to make us the toast of the region—we had 13 Ministers of Culture coming to Trinidad and Tobago for CARIFESTA, so very proud were they of what our accomplishments were. So those 500 persons and that cake comes down to $8 a person.

And, Madam Chairman, I want to really say thank you to those volunteers and to say [Desk thumping] that we are ensuring that we thank them publicly for their service to this country.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam. Madam, I do not need any parenting advice from the Member and the hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Oh, but you do. [Laughter]

Mr. Padarath: But maybe the hon. Minister needs to go back to reading and writing—

Madam Chairman: Member, Member.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Oh, but you do. [Laughter]

Mr. Padarath:—and start back reading Hansel and Gretel.

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: Oh. But you do. [Laughter]

Mr. Padarath: Because when you look at the figures here, Madam Chairman—

Madam Chairman: Member!

Mr. Padarath: Sorry.
Madam Chairman: There is no need to shout.

Mr. Padarath: But, Madam, I am hearing uproar so I just—

Madam Chairman: There is no need to shout.

Mr. Padarath: Well then, Madam, you have to quell the disturbance.

Madam Chairman: You have a mic and you have a lovely voice—

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam.

Madam Chairman:—that can project, I do not need you to shout.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam.

Madam Chairman: And I would like everybody to be quiet so that the Member does not feel that he has to rise above your noise for me to hear him. Please continue.

Mr. Padarath: Madam Chair, when you look at page 130, Hosting of Carifesta, the hon. Minister mentioned that the media carried this story of 43 million. I am dealing with the numbers that are in front of me. I do not take my figures—you may probably take your figures from the media. I take my figures from the Ministry of Finance who printed these books. [Desk thumping] We were told that there was an appropriation of 24 million. You have spent 27.4 million in 2019 and now you are asking for more money. So that tells me that you have surpassed your budget and that this is a total runaway horse situation.

Now, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts, Madam Chair, with this situation of a massive over-expenditure on this particular project is no longer the Ministry of Culture. It is the Ministry of cake, Hansel and Gretel and Betty Crocker. That is what the Ministry is known for.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Is there a question coming, Madam Chairman, because I
Mr. Padarath: So that is why I am asking the hon. Minister—so do not come to tell me, all sanctimonious about—

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Is there a question for it? If you have a question you can ask it and it will be answered. [Crosstalk]

Mr. Padarath: Madam, Madam, I “doh” need your help parenting.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: But your sanctimonious—but you need it!

Mr. Padarath: You need to learn to add.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: But you do need help for parenting—

Mr. Padarath: You need to learn to add.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly:—you need that.

Mr. Padarath: You need to learn to add. You need to learn to add. You need to learn to add.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: You have a question? If there is a question it can be answered. [Continuous crosstalk]

Mr. Padarath: If it is parenting skills you are looking for, learn to read and write.

Madam Chairman: Member for Princes—Member for Princes Town. [Crosstalk] Member for Princes— [Continuous crosstalk]

Mr. Padarath: You “doh” have to be condescending and nasty.

Hon. Member: You are condescending and nasty. [Continuous crosstalk]

Madam Chairman: Member for Princes— [Members shout across the floor] Member!

Mr. Padarath: I am not.

Mr. Imbert: What is going on here? [Continuous crosstalk]
Madam Chairman: Member for Princes Town!

Mr. Padarath: All you have to do is look at Diego Martin Central, you might be in the same situation just now.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chairman—“you out ah place, Princes Town” Stop it!

Mr. Young: Pick up your hand bag and leave.

Mr. Padarath: Hello. Go and drop your stepdaughter somewhere, eh. [Continuous crosstalk]

Mr. Young: Go home and breastfeed. [Continuous crosstalk]

Mr. Padarath: We are dealing with [Inaudible] and you want to be condescending and nasty.

Madam Chairman: I now suspend this Sitting.

6.03 p.m.: Standing Finance Committee Suspended.

6.09 p.m.: Standing Finance Committee resumed.

Madam Chairman: This meeting of the Standing Finance Committee is resumed.

Hon. Members, we will now move on to the Draft Estimates of Development Programme. Sub-Head 09: Development Programme, Consolidated Fund, we are at page 130. Item 004: Social Infrastructure. Hon. Members may have observed that Item 004 spans three pages, therefore I will also announce the project groups. A. Culture, I believe we completed that.

6.10 p.m.

Question put.

**Madam Chairman:** Do you want a division?

**Dr. Moonilal:** No.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, good.

*Question agreed to.*

*Head 62 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Thank you, PS. And I would appreciate, since everybody has somewhere else to go—I have nowhere else to go—that for the last couple of Heads we conduct ourselves in a particular kind of way. I have heard every Member here talk about parenting. I do not know what your children are thinking watching you all. Okay?

**Head 78: Ministry of Social Development and Family Services.**

[Crosstalk] Minister of Finance, I do not believe this is your Head. **Head 78:** Minister—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, the Member for Laventille West is disturbing—he is disturbing us. We are not hearing properly.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. So what I would ask again, I keep telling Members, we have added some lovely facilities. Member for Princes Town, I do not appreciate you speaking when I am speaking. Okay? We have added lovely facilities which help us. It helps us to keep attention; it helps us to exercise; it helps us to keep our thermostat down, and so on. Let us not waste the taxpayers’ money with the facilities. We can visit them. Take a little drink of water and come back.

**Head 78:** Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, $4,968,500,000.
Madam Chairman: I will now invite the Minister of Social Development and Family Services to make a brief opening statement not exceeding five minutes. Minister?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has received the fourth highest allocation of $4.96 billion in the 2020 budget. This will help to ensure that the Ministry continues to effectively carry out its mandate of maintaining the nation’s safety net, including the provision of income support, the delivery of social services and the caring for, and protecting our poor and other vulnerable groups from the impact of poverty. In keeping with the social transformation thrust of successive PNM governments, most of our grants and programmes have been, and will continue to be, focused on poverty-reduction. Over the last four years, despite our straitened economic circumstances, we consistently paid recipients of the senior citizens pension, disability grant, and public assistance grant, unreduced, enhanced, and the correct amounts on time.

In fiscal 2018, $4.4 billion, or approximately 93 per cent of the Ministry’s allocation was spent on these grants and in fiscal 2020, 93.7 per cent or $4.6 billion has been so allocated. The importance of these poverty-reduction programmes cannot be overstated and should not be overlooked as they constitute the only, or main source of income for approximately 194,854 individuals and households in Trinidad and Tobago.

In fiscal 2020, the Ministry will therefore ensure that it continues to efficiently and effectively manage these and our other poverty-reduction strategies, including the provision of 13 general assistance grants and three NSDP grants. We
will continue to build resilience and self-sufficiency via the Social Transformation and Empowerment Programme - Uplifting People; the SEED Grant, and implementation of the National Social Mitigation Plan. Our outreach and empowerment caravan has already brought the country’s more than 100 grants and social services directly to five communities in south-west Trinidad that were impacted by retrenchment and job loss. We have also been to three north-eastern communities and during 2020 we will be bringing all social services to communities most affected by poverty.

The Ministry will also be focused on improving our targeting and allocation mechanisms, including a review of the standard means test to ensure that none of our most vulnerable is excluded. We will also improve our social service delivery by implementing an integrated social enterprise management system, paying all food support via our new debit card system, transitioning at least 90 per cent of our benefit recipients to direct deposit, completing our business process re-engineering exercise and commencing the implementation of an organizational structure that enables our technology-driven integrated approach to service delivery. The Government and this Ministry is ever mindful of the needs of all our citizens and will continue to develop and implement programmes and services that improve the quality of life of our nation’s families, poor, disabled, elderly and socially-displaced, reduce poverty and improve social justice. Thank you, Madam Chair.

*Question proposed:* That Head 78 stand part of the Schedule.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of $4,968,500,000 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 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 for the information of Members we are at page 397. Item 001: General Administration. Member for Cumuto-Manzanilla.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, Line Item 01. During the last Standing Finance Committee in response to a question posed on salaries and cost of living allowance, you had indicated that the allocation will be paid to 153 persons: 132 permanent and 21 temporary. Can you indicate at this stage, at the end of September 30, 2019, what is the number of persons employed, please?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** They are currently in the General Administration area. There are currently 154 persons: 133 permanent, 21 temporary.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** So that means that one additional person would have been employed. Instead of 153, it is now 154 and instead of 132 permanent, it is 133.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Yes.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Line Item 02: Wages and COLA. I notice that this Line Item, there is no allocation for it. Could the Minister advise whether there is no estimate for 2020 as a result of job cuts, or would the persons be redeployed?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** This relates to daily-paid employees and there are no daily-paid employees currently at the Ministry.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** But there was an allocation prior. What has happened to
Appropriation (Financial Year 2020) Bill, 2019 2019.10.18
Standing Finance Committee (cont’d)
Head 78: Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (cont’d)

those daily-paid workers, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** There was one person and he has since retired.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** One person. 08: Could the Hon. Minister indicate that—the allocation here was not spent for the fiscal year. Could you indicate if there are any posts identified in this fiscal year to be filled?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** There are 71 vacancies: 27 without bodies. Ideally, we would like to have the positions filled, but we await the Public Service Commission.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And can you advise—you could put that in writing—what are the classifications of the vacant posts?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Yes, we will do that.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Go ahead. I will wait—

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. So Item 003: Social Welfare. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, can you indicate how many persons are employed under Social Welfare?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** There are 251 persons: 216 permanent and 35 temporary.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And these persons are dispersed throughout the various regions?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Yes.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And line Item 06: Remuneration. Could the hon. Minister indicate whether all the boards have a full complement of members?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** I think there is one board that is missing one member,
but all of the other boards have their full complement.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay. Because I notice that there is, in the allocation for 2018, the actual, and also the revised for 2019 far surpassed the amount that you have estimated for 2020. Is it that some members are not on board? Is it that there are different—what has happened for there to be such a decrease?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: The same amount that was allocated for 2019 is the same amount that has been allocated for 2020.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: In 2018 the actual is 2539. The Estimate was 25, but the actual revised in 2019 was 26.5—2 million, 650. So what I am saying to you is that there is an estimate of $150,000 less, and I am asking if it is that anyone would not receive their remuneration—compensation package.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Hon. Member, I assure you that all sitting board members are paid their remuneration and the amount that was allocated is the amount that the Ministry would have requested.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Can we move on?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Um-hmm.

Madam Chairman: 005: Child Development Centre. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Hon. Minister, again, can you indicate how many persons are employed and how many centres do you have?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: There are 14 persons employed at present, and there is one centre.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: One centre?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Yes, at Couva.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay. And is there any plan at all to have these centres throughout Trinidad and possibly Tobago?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No, there is not. This centre was established—it is a Government-funded preschool programme and it was established in relation to a specific situation that existed in Couva at the time, and is really intended to assist the children of vulnerable families.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay.


Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Again, I would ask the hon. Minister if under Line Item 01, how many persons are currently employed with the National Family Services.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Currently there are 22 persons employed: three positions are filled, 19 are vacant and 13 are without bodies. So at present we have nine persons functioning there.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And is this service able to handle the workload with such limited staff? And what is being done to bring the levels up to optimum staffing?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We have been utilizing the contract officers. The complement of contract officers have complemented this.

Madam Chairman: Are you finished, Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services. Item 001: General Administration. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Line Item 01, can the hon. Minister indicate how many
persons would benefit from this travelling and subsistence, and if it has been extended to field officers?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This allocation is with respect to all monthly-paid travelling officers, public servants, and it also covers travel to Tobago.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: How many persons benefit from this? Because I know not all public servants receive travelling.

6.25 p.m.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: It would be all the public officers. Could we provide that in writing, please?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes, you may. Line Item 08: Rent/Lease, can the hon. Minister indicate what accounts for this increase of 1.15?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Currently, we rent 18 buildings including four car parks and one offsite storage. There are also plans to relocate to King’s Court. So we expect that our rent would increase. So this is in anticipation of us acquiring that additional building.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And in 09, can you indicate what it is you intend to rent and lease?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This would primarily be for equipment. We are not leasing any vehicles at present, and it has to deal with photocopiers.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Line Item 10. Hon. Minister, is this increase here to pay arrears for stationery, or do you have adequate supply for the regional offices? Because in my area, in Sangre Grande, we could not get any services as a result of no stationery.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Hon. Member, I am not aware that we had offices
that were not in receipt of stationery and supplies, however, this increase is going
to be sufficient to take care of our needs. If you look at the figure in 2018 and
even the Revised Estimate—sorry, the Estimate for 2019, this $1,277,000 would be
sufficient to take care of our needs.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Is it to take care of arrears as well, or this a new budgeted
figure that you have applied to, to take care of all the needs? Is there any arrears in
this?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** No. I am advised there is not. What may have
happened, the outstanding amounts may have been paid late in the last financial so
it is not reflected here.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Line Item 16: Contract Employment. I noticed there is a
decrease of 2.7 million. How many persons are currently on contract employment
and will the decrease impact upon the effective functioning of services?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** No. Currently, we have 457 contract positions
available, 134 are filled. The reason you are seeing this decrease here—sorry.
Yes. What has happened, we recognized that we have not been able to fill more
than a certain number of positions each year. So based on our experience over the
last three years, we are now in a better position to anticipate how many positions
we can fill. So instead of budgeting for the entire number of vacancies, we have
scaled it down in relation to what we believe we can fill.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And this is for the general administration?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** This is for the entire organization.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Okay. Madam Minister, I do not know if you are aware
that there are a number of offices that function on skeleton staff and, as a result of
it, the services have really been short on services to those who are most vulnerable, and I really think that the impact of this decrease here will really be significant in terms of the services being—

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Hon. Member, what we have been doing at the Ministry is we have identified the critical positions and the critical areas, and where necessary we have supplemented the staff with short-term employees. So I am very surprised to hear you say that there are areas where there is skeleton staff and service has been compromised.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** It has been.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Our experience is that is not the case.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And so, therefore, line 22, coming to Short-term Employment, as you indicated, there is also a decrease of 5.192 million and, again, Madam Minister, how will the Ministry operate with less staff? I mean, how will they be able to offer these services to the most vulnerable when it is we operate on a very small staff? And I mean—

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** When these figures were compiled, we would have had 169 short-term employees. Fifty-two of those were—43 of them were officers engaged on the recertification exercise. If you do a quick calculation they were paid about $10,000 per month; if you do a quick calculation you would see that this 5 million roughly equates with their annual salary, and they have since completed the exercise and are no longer with us. They would have left on the 30th of September. So this is why you would see this decrease reflected here.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Okay. So those would have been for contracts that may have come to an end?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No. They were there to engage in a specific exercise, which was the recertification exercise to ensure that all persons in receipt of the food support had been assessed.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Line Item 28, what are these services, Other Contracted Services?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: These Other Contracted Services has to do with pest control, cost of contracts, roto bins, upkeep of premises, that type of thing.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: 37, there is a $2.5 million increase in Janitorial—

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: In addition Member, you would also find that we would pay PTSC here where we have our elderly and children who ride free on the buses. So this would be covered here, also NIB to some extent for the printing of cheques.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: The ELDAMO bus you are referring to?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Yes.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: What is the cost for the ELDAMO bus, Madam Minister?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: We would have to send that in writing.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And if I can get also how many clients are being serviced? I do not need the names of the clients. I just need how many clients have been—

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Over the last year I think the figure was approximately 16,000—people would have utilized the service on 16,000-plus occasions, but we have a spreadsheet and we can send you that in writing.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay. Line Item 37: the Janitorial Services. I saw there is an increase of 2.5, does this increase represent arrears, or was there an increase in the cost of services?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This is to take care of the 14 social welfare offices. We have also now included the National Enrichment Centre and it provides for the quarterly shampooing and cleaning of carpets, and cleaning of windows, and that kind of thing.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Was that a new contract that was issued for the carpet—

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: It now includes NEC, but the other areas we have existing contracts.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Line 43, again there is an increase of 3 million, can you indicate—

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This, hon. Member, this would include arrears that we owe to some of our security providers.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Can you repeat that, Madam?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This includes arrears where we currently owe some of our security providers.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And this will be brought up to date after you have paid this off?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Yes.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay, Madam.

Madam Chairman: Are you finished?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Item 002: Division of Ageing; Item 003: Social Welfare. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Hon. Minister, line Item 05: Telephones. Is this landlines, or a combination of landline or mobile, or both; and how many persons benefit? Is
this for employees with mobiles and—yes—how many persons really benefit from this?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** We would have to provide you with that in writing.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And with line Item 10, I am here specifically dealing with office stationery and supplies to the Social Welfare which will be for all the satellite offices, right?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Yes.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** So therefore—and how many offices are there?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Fourteen.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Fourteen, and between 14 offices you have $451,400—

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Hon. Members, if it is we are just speaking specifically about the local boards, it is 10 in Trinidad, one in Tobago.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** All right. Okay. How many—that is it, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Chairman:** You are finished?

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** With that line Item, yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, please. Item 005: Child Development Centre; Item 006: National Family Services; Item 007: Disability Affairs Unit. Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases; Item 001: General Administration; Item 002: Division of Ageing; Item 003: Social Welfare; Item 005: Child Development Centre; Item 006: National Family Services; Item 007: Disability Affairs Unit. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla. We are at page 405.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Okay, no, no. Go ahead.

**Madam Chairman:** Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies; Item 005: Non-profit Institutions; Item 006: Educational Institutions; Item 007: Households.

**UNREVISED**
Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, under line Items 03, 04, 05, there have been decreases of 54 million for the Senior Citizens Grant, and for the Social Assistance Grant there is a decrease of 31 million, and for Urgent Temporary Assistance, 110 million, and as I am on that, the Disability Grant there is a decrease of 45 million. So there is a decrease of $221 million in these four areas, could you give us a little understanding of the reasons for the decrease?

Madam Chairman: Madam Minister.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Hon. Member, in terms of the three major grants, I can give you the assurance that in the mid-year review if the need arises we will go back to the Minister of Finance and we would receive the necessary allocations. As I would have indicated in my opening statement, we have over the past four years ensured that all of those beneficiaries were paid on time and the correct amounts, and we will continue to do so.

Dr. Gopeesingh: So this might not be indicative of the situation, six months down the line it can possibly change? You are not too sure where we are going with it.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: This Government has given the commitment to take care of our poor and vulnerable, and we will continue to do so. [Desk thumping]

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. Thank you. [Desk thumping] Not at all, but Minister—

Madam Chairman: Item—

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, I just want to ask—

Madam Chairman: Are you finished, Member for Caroni East?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Minister, could you give us, and to the country, the Senior

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Citizens Grant, how many people benefit from this?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Currently, as at the end of September there were 99,332 persons.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** One ninety-nine thousand?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** 99-3-32.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And the Social Assistance?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** The Social Assistance last year, we would have had 25,502 persons.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Urgent Temporary Assistance?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Urgent Temporary Assistance, this covers our 13 general assistance grants. Last year, I believe the figure was one thousand—I think it was 1,386.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And the Disability Grant?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Sorry, you asked a question just now in terms of Item 04, where there is a decrease of $110 million—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** and I just want to bring to the attention of this Committee and the general public, that this has to do with the fact that last year in terms of the October and November floods we would have paid $138.4 million in flood relief grants.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. Okay. So that would have accounted for the Revised Estimate of 140 million?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Yes.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay, I understand.
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: And in terms of Item 08: the Disability Grant, as at the end of September there were 23,344 persons in receipt of that disability grant.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Twenty-three thousand. Thank you very much, Minister.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 04, you raised the issue of the flooding victims being paid out of this UTA line Item, can the Minister indicate what has become of the $45 million that was allegedly taken by a member of the—at least that was what was said. The Prime Minister indicated that $45 million was taken by a—there is an irregularity in terms of some member of the staff, can the hon. Minister—

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Hon. Member, I am certain the Prime Minister would not have said that. We had a situation, we had an incidence of fraud, the police were called in and I believe that there are 18 persons currently who were arrested and charged, three were former employees of the Ministry. But there was no incident of $45 million being fraudulently taken from the Ministry.

6.40 p.m.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: So it was less than that or more than that?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: I am certain it was not $45 million.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Okay, whatever the figure is, can the Minister indicate whether attempts have been made to have those moneys recovered?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: As I would have indicated previously, those persons were arrested and charged and those matters are now before the court.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: In line Items 02 and 08, I notice there is a decrease and I was wondering with the Government’s decision to increase grants to senior citizens
and for disability, how will this decrease in allocation impact upon persons being able to get their increase?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Hon. Member, we have already started paying the increases and as I indicated before, if necessary, in the mid-year review, we will have that situation rectified but the Government is going to honour its commitment to pay all of these benefit recipients the correct amounts.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And line Item 40, does the Minister know how many persons will be eligible for gratuity?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** It is 269 persons.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 009: Other Transfers. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** 01, hon. Minister, can you indicate with this mid-year increase of 500,000, this programme is certainly oversubscribed and I am wondering, you know, how many persons are actually assisted and how many persons are employed under this programme and is there any intention to expand it?

**Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn:** In fiscal 2019, 1,719 persons would have benefited from this programme. Previously, we had approval for 600 caregivers. Cabinet, last month, would have approved an additional 200 persons so we anticipate that in the mid-year review, we are going to have to seek approval for additional funds, but we recognize the need for additional caregivers and a note was taken to Cabinet and Cabinet has approved 200 additional caregivers.

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** And line Item 02, this $4 million increase, is this for arrears?
Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No, no.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: None of it is for arrears?

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: No.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: All right. Okay.

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

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Chair, just one question there.

Madam Chairman: Where are you?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Well when you—you want me to speak on—

Madam Chairman: Okay, so let me call it. So no, when I asked where are you, you will be in where we are going on to, right?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, I am page 408.

Madam Chairman: Okay, good, fine. Hon. Members, we will now move on to the Draft Estimates of—

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, no, I wanted to ask a question on page 408, Current Transfers and Statutory Bodies. A small question.

Madam Chairman: Yeah, “we aint reach there as yet”. We are now coming to there, Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, I am on page 408 of the—

Madam Chairman: Oh, but that is not the summary that you are in there now and we going now to the actual details or you want to ask on summary specifically?

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right, I see what you mean.

Madam Chairman: All right, okay. So can I proceed then?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Sure, sure.
Madam Chairman: Thank you. 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. 15: Trinidad and Tobago Association for Retarded Children (Lady Hochoy Homes). Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure. We are at page 523. Item 001: Lady Hochoy Home North. That is where you are, Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, I will wait.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: I have some questions. Yes, thank you. Line Item 01: Salaries and Cost of Living, how many persons are employed?

Madam Chairman: Member?

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: I asked the question, hon. Minister.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Madam Chair, we will submit that in writing.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: And if also you can indicate what is the ratio of persons employed to children being cared for. And if it will be easier, Madam Chair, I will request it for all the—

Madam Chairman: Item 002: Lady Hochoy Home South.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Same thing.

Madam Chairman: Item 003: Penal Day Care and Training Centre.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Same thing.

Madam Chairman: Minister, “yuh okay?”

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Yes.

Madam Chairman: 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. 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. Sub-head 01: Personnel Expenditure. Item 001: General Administration, and we are page 531. Member for Cumuto—

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: No, no, next one.

Madam Chairman: Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services. Item 001: General Administration. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mrs. Newallo-Hosein: Thank you, Madam Chair. Line Item 22: Short-term Employment, I see it is a new Sub-Item. If the hon. Minister could indicate how many persons would be employed on short-term as well as 28, but you do not have to give it to me now.

Hon. Crichlow-Cockburn: Okay, we will do that, Madam Chair.

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. Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure. We are at page 537. Item 001: General Administration. Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services. Item 001: General Administration. Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases. Item 001: General
Hon. Members, we will now move on to Draft Estimates of the Development Programme. Sub-Head 09: Development Programme. We are at page 166. Consolidated Fund. Item 004: Social Infrastructure; Item 005: Multi-Sectoral and Other Services.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 78 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Madam Minister and thank you, Madam PS.

**Head 68:** Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, $301,504,178.

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes.

**Hon. Cudjoe:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is mandated to facilitate the development of sport and the physical recreation and to act as an enabling organization for youth development. This mandate is primarily driven by its Division of Physical Education and Sport and Division of Youth Affairs. The other units lending support to the Ministry’s operations are: General Administration, Accounts, Human Resource Management Services, Information Technology, Monitoring and Evaluation, Project Management, Research and Planning, Audit, Legal and Procurement.

The Ministry is also assisted in executing its mandate by the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago which serves as the implementation arm and fulfils three key roles:

1. The promotion of the concept of sport for all;
2. The construction of high-quality sport and recreational facilities for both communities and high performance; and

3. The provision of oversight for the management of the national governing bodies for major sporting disciplines.

The Ministry’s mission is to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of quality development services with special emphasis on the enhancement of youth and sport for recreation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Minister.

*Question proposed:* That Head 68 stand part of the Schedule.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the sum of $301,504,178 for Head 68: Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is comprised of moneys proposed for expenditure under the following Sub-Heads and Items to be found in the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure* and the *Draft Estimates of Development Programme*. We now proceed to consider the *Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*.

Sub-Head 01: Personnel Expenditure. Item 001: General Administration; Item 002: Physical Education and Sport Division; Item 005: Youth Affairs; Item 006: National Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centres.

Sub-Head 02: Goods and Services. Item 001: General Administration; Item 002: Physical Education and Sport Division; Item 003: Dwight Yorke Stadium; Item 004: Youth Centres; Item 005: Youth Affairs. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Minister, line Item 16, Contract Employment, there is no Revised Estimates for 2019 but there was an allocation of 2 million in 2019. This time in 2020, there is an allocation of 4.5 million. Would you be able to clarify for us what took place in 2019 seeing that
there is no figure here and what would account for such a large increase for Contract Employment under 005, please?

**Hon. Cudjoe:** Could you point me to what page you are referring to please?

**Mr. Padarath:** We are on page 358.

**Hon. Cudjoe:** Okay. Contract Employment for Youth Affairs?

**Mr. Padarath:** Yes.

**Hon. Cudjoe:** We used to have in the years 2008/2009 youth development officers and when the Ministry was moved to Gender Affairs, that was not continued, they were not hired. So we are now bringing on again the Youth Development Officers I and II and that is about 32 positions.

*6.55 p.m.*

Now, these officers cover different geographical areas of Trinidad, because in Tobago it is under the THA. So you spread these officers throughout the different youth facilities throughout Trinidad and Tobago and they cover managing the youth groups, helping them with succession planning, helping to deliver youth programmes in these different communities. So we advertised for these positions earlier this year and we did interviews around the June/July period and they came on at the end of August. So we now have 30 Youth Development Officers I, and I think two Youth Development Officers II. We did not have them on last year, so they are on this time.

**Mr. Padarath:** So the expenditure, if any occurred, it would have been very small from this $2 million allocation, yeah? Seeing that it was August when you brought them on.

**Hon. Cudjoe:** Yes, they came on in August.

**Mr. Padarath:** Okay.

Sub-Head 03: Minor Equipment Purchases. Item 001: General Administration; Item 002: Physical Education and Sport Division; Item 003: Dwight Yorke Stadium; Item 004: Youth Centres; Item 005: Youth Affairs; Item 006: National Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centres.

Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies. Item 002: Commonwealth Bodies; Item 005: Non-Profit Institutions. Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam. Minister, line Item 29: Contribution to Non-Profit Institutions - Sporting Organisations, with an allocation in 2020 of 21,450,000, would the hon. Minister—

Hon. Cudjoe: I think you are on the wrong place. We are still on youth, page 362.

Mr. Padarath: Yes. We are on 362 Minister.

Madam Chairman: Page 362.

Hon. Cudjoe: Page 362, there are two contributions to nonprofit—you are dealing with 29, yeah?

Mr. Padarath: Yes.

Hon. Cudjoe: Okay, sporting organizations. I thought you were dealing with—

Mr. Padarath: You got it?

Hon. Cudjoe: “Um-hmm.”

Mr. Padarath: Okay, line Item 29, the allocation in 2020, this financial year coming, 21,450,000, with having spent just 8,089,100 in 2019, would you be kind enough to let us know which organization, the non-profit institutions, would have benefitted from this? And I am guessing that, and you can probably clarify, this is
based on applications. Or is it that there is a standard set of institutions that Government provides subventions through this Vote annually?

**Hon. Cudjoe:** Okay, the NPI Vote, 29, is used to provide grant funding and support funding to national governing bodies that are under the remit of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, and we have 35 of those. If they are going abroad to represent Trinidad and Tobago. Then you have those who are doing development programmes. We also utilize this vote to provide assistance to elite athletes, for also community groups that are doing sporting activities within Trinidad and Tobago.

So, it is a host of different items covered under this specific Vote. You would see an increase which almost doubles the figure because we had agreed to host the Commonwealth Youth Games in 2021. So we have to provide funding for the Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee. This is where we provide money to TTOC also and this is where we provide money for CPL also.

**Mr. Padarath:** Okay. Minister, you mentioned earlier the issue of the elite athlete programme. So the funding would come from this particular line Item?

**Hon. Cudjoe:** That same Vote. Yes.

**Mr. Padarath:** Okay.

**Hon. Cudjoe:** So individual athletes who are in the development stages, elite athletes, community groups, national governing bodies from Trinidad and Tobago Jump Rope Association, to scrabble association to canoeing association. We have remit over 35 of them in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, and under SporTT, about 15 under SporTT.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Item 007: Households.
Appropriation (Financial Year 2020) Bill, 2019
Standing Finance Committee (cont’d)
Head 68: Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs (cont’d)

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: In line Item 05: National Incentives and Reward Initiative; I just need to know how does one apply to this programme, this initiative programme here, and how many persons benefitted? Is there a criteria, a set criteria so one may apply for it?

Hon. Cudjoe: Okay, you cannot apply for national rewards and incentives. National Incentives and Rewards programme is to provide incentives or rewards for athletes who would have medalled at regional and international sporting meets. So, for instance Commonwealth Games, the Olympics, international championships, that kind of thing. That is what this Vote covers. So we are talking about Olympics, World Cups, Central American and Caribbean Games, World Cup qualifiers, and so on. So Cabinet would have taken the decision to provide incentives. We would have done consultations with the different sporting entities throughout Trinidad and Tobago and we would have also done a comparative analysis looking at the reward system in other countries in the world throughout the region. And based on the medal that you would have accomplished, you are given an incentive.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: How many persons benefitted thus far from this?

Hon. Cudjoe: The list of people for rewards and incentives, I can provide that to you later. But last year we would have spent, so far $8 million in rewards and incentives and that covered the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and part of 2019 for the Special Olympics that would have taken place in April of this year. Yeah.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Thank you.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, just a quick one, in terms of the line Item 06. I just want to get a sense, since I am seeing it started in 2019. Could you give me an idea as to what this is; the Youth Skills Development
Hon. Cudjoe: Okay, the Youth Skills Development Programme, when I assumed duties at the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, we recognized that we have these seven youth facilities throughout Trinidad and Tobago but youth programmes were not being run at the facilities. So we developed a programme called the LEEAP programme. It stands for leadership, employability, entrepreneurship, activism and patriotism and we get stakeholders from throughout the public and private sector to come and deliver classes or sessions for these young people, teaching them how to write resumes, how to develop a business plan, dining etiquette, interviewing skills, how to dress for work, that kind of thing.

So far we have had at least three cycles of this programme and at least about 400 graduates of this programme and we go from place to place in our different youth facilities. And where we do not have youth facilities or a youth centre, we would work through a community centre. We have worked with communities both in Trinidad and in Tobago in providing this service to young people.

Mr. Karim: Can I ask, what age group?

Hon. Cudjoe: The age group is from 16 to 29. But if somebody is 12 years old or younger and they come, we would not turn them back. But the target group is really 16 to 29, because the age for youth covered by the Ministry is 12 to 29. So if somebody younger than 16 comes, we do not turn them back.

Mr. Karim: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Okay? Item 009: Other Transfers.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Minister, the Sport Company, line Item 04, the allocation has been given for an increase of 35 million. Is there any special programme or something the Sport Company is going to undertake?
Hon. Cudjoe: Well, that is really recurrent expenditure for the Sport Company and they are responsible for—that provides assistance also for the 15 NGBs under their watch for payments of salaries, for maintenance of facilities and that kind of thing.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Now, I am seeing a difference in 2019, 55 million was expended, but you have an allocation in 2020 for 36 million more, approximately.

Hon. Cudjoe: Yes, we have some outstanding bills to pay that is to the tune of about $38 million. So this would help to cover some of that outstanding cost.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, just a query on the same line Item, the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago with an increase of 35 million. Now, I know you did indicate that this is sometimes used to pay for upkeep of facilities, and so on, through the Sport Company. I know in the past that UDeCOTT would have done the work on the Brian Lara Stadium. The question that I have with respect to this particular line Item, is that even though UDeCOTT does the work for the Brian Lara Stadium, sometimes the funding may come through the Sport Company. I am not too sure if this is the arrangement in this particular case. But, in light of the Prime Minister’s announcement that additional work will have to be done in order for the facility to be accredited, can you indicate whether or not that funding will come from here? And whether or not, out of this allocation, you have a ballpark figure of how much it will cost?

Hon. Cudjoe: Certainly not from this allocation because this is recurrent expenditure. So I know for sure it is not from this allocation. When the development of Brian Lara, when the construction work was ongoing it was a PSIP item.

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Mr. Padarath: Okay.

Hon. Cudjoe: But it is no longer a PSIP item right now as we speak. If we go in to do some more works, which we intend to towards ICC accreditation, then we would have to redevelop or reactivate a line item under the PSIP Vote. Yeah?

Mr. Padarath: Just to get you clear, at this point there is no ballpark figure in terms of how much the work would cost in order to complete for accreditation?

Hon. Cudjoe: Well, a major part of what is needed for accreditation is fixing the roads in order to treat with traffic problems, the flow of traffic in and out of the Brian Lara Academy and that is being handled by the Ministry of Works and Transport. So you would have seen that when you would have asked questions to works and transport or when they come you can investigate that matter.

Mr. Padarath: Okay, thank you.

Madam Chairman: Item 011: Transfers to State Enterprises.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Minister, 01: First Citizens Bank Limited - Repayment of Loan - Brian Lara Cricket Stadium. The sum of 67 million, approximately was paid in 2018. And 2019 it was estimated that 71 million was paid. For 2020, there is no payment made for that, probably suggesting that the loan payments have been completed. Could you give us an appreciation of what was the total loan for the Brian Lara, from First Citizens Bank for that? Probably the Minister of Finance might help you there.

Hon. Cudjoe: I do not have that information. I would be happy to provide you with that at a later date. But if I am not mistaken, we would have completed payment of that loan in September. Yeah?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah, well, I saw so far about 138 million was paid in two years.
Hon. Cudjoe: I would be happy to provide that information to you. I would not want to guess and I would not want you to guess either. So I would provide that information to you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. I see the Minister of Finance is searching, but probably he might have the answer there.

Mr. Imbert: I am not searching.

Dr. Gopeesingh: All right. [Laughter] I thought you were going to provide it.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East, anymore questions?

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, no I have completed, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, we will now move on to the Draft Estimates of Development Programme. Sub-Head 09: Development Programme, Consolidated Fund, we are page 148. Item 004: Social Infrastructure. Hon. Members, you may observe that this Item spans three pages, therefore I will also announce the project groups: C. Sports; D. Youth Development. Item 005: Multi-sectoral and Other Services.

We now go on to the Infrastructure Development Fund, page 229. Item 004: Social Infrastructure. Hon. Members, you may observe that this Item spans two pages. Therefore, I will also announce the project groups: C. Sports; D. Youth Development.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 68 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, this Standing Finance Committee is suspended to Monday, the 21st of October, 2019, at 10.00 a.m. I wish everybody a safe journey home and a good and restful weekend.

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