



**REPORT
OF
THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**on the Consideration of Proposals for the Supplementation of
Appropriation for the fiscal year 2024**

FOURTH SESSION OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT (2023/2024)

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Standing Finance Committee

The Standing Finance Committee was established under House of Representatives Standing Order 82(1) to consider the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. House of Representatives Standing Order 87(1) also states that, *“The Standing Finance Committee shall consider and report on all proposals for the expenditure from public revenue or other funds which are not included in the Annual Estimates, including proposals for supplementary and unforeseen expenditure.”*

Publication

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the Parliament website using the following link:
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Date Presented in the House of Representatives: June 07, 2024

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THE COMMITTEE

Mandate of the Committee

1. The Standing Finance Committee is established by House of Representatives Standing Order 82(1) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders. It is the duty of the Committee to consider the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. The Committee is also empowered by House of Representatives Standing Order 87(1) to consider and report on all proposals for expenditure which are not included in the Annual Estimates including proposals for supplementary and unforeseen expenditure.

Membership

2. In accordance with the House of Representatives Standing Order 82(1), this Committee is a Committee of the Whole House of Representatives and is chaired by the Speaker.

Meeting

3. The Committee held a public meeting on Monday June 03, 2024 at 1:30 p.m. The Minutes of the Meeting and the Verbatim Notes are attached at Appendices I and III respectively.

4. The purpose of this meeting was to consider proposals for the supplementation of the appropriation provided in the Appropriation (Financial Year 2024) Act, 2023 and varied by the Finance (Supplementation of Appropriation) (Financial Year 2024) Act, 2024. The Schedule relating to the Supplementation of Estimates for fiscal 2024 is at Appendix IV.

Supplementation

5. The Committee noted the supplementation to the Appropriation for fiscal year 2024 in the sum of Two Thousand, Three Hundred and Twenty-Eight Million, Ninety-Nine Thousand, Six Hundred Dollars (\$2,328,099,600.00) required to meet:

- Personnel Expenditure - \$17,500,000.00
- Goods and Services - \$660,064,500.00
- Current Transfers and Subsidies - \$1,059,270,000.00
- Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies - \$587,026,600.00
- Development Programme - \$4,238,500.00

6. The Committee noted that it was necessary to have a Supplementation of the Appropriation of resources to fund urgent and critical Recurrent and Capital Expenditure to September 30, 2024, in areas where insufficient or no allocation was provided. The source of these additional funds is the Consolidated Fund.

7. The Standing Finance Committee considered and approved the supplementation to the Appropriation for fiscal year 2024 in the sum Two Thousand, Three Hundred and Twenty-Eight Million, Ninety-Nine Thousand, Six Hundred Dollars (\$2,328,099,600.00). The details of the Supplementation are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Supplementation by Heads of Expenditure for fiscal year 2024

Heads of Expenditure	Amount \$
06 Service Commissions	4,140,000.00
15 Tobago House of Assembly	50,000,000.00
23 Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs	124,300,000.00
26 Ministry of Education	144,200,000.00
28 Ministry of Health	495,286,000.00
30 Ministry of Labour	130,538,600.00
39 Ministry of Public Utilities	527,800,000.00
40 Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries	570,900,000.00
42 Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government	95,027,500.00
43 Ministry of Works and Transport	155,677,000.00
65 Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs	9,182,500.00
80 Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts	21,048,000.00
TOTAL	<u>2,328,099,600.00</u>

Recommendation

Supplementation

8. The Committee recommends the Supplementation of the Appropriation for fiscal year 2024 in the sum of Two Thousand, Three Hundred and Twenty-Eight Million, Ninety-Nine Thousand, Six Hundred Dollars (\$2,328,099,600.00).

9. The Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the House of Representatives.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sgd.

Hon. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George, MP

Chairman

June 03, 2024

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Minutes of Meeting

STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE
FOURTH SESSION (2023/2024), TWELFTH PARLIAMENT
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY JUNE 03, 2024 AT 1:30 P.M.
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CHAMBER
OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT, RED HOUSE
ABERCROMBY STREET, PORT OF SPAIN

Members of the Standing Finance Committee

Present

1. Hon. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George, MP - Speaker of the House of Representatives
2. Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis, MP - Minister of Housing and Urban Development
(Member for Arouca/Maloney)
3. Hon. Colm Imbert, MP - Minister of Finance
(Member for Diego Martin North/ East)
4. Hon. Stuart Young, MP - Minister of Energy & Energy Industries &
Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister
(Member for Port of Spain North/ St. Ann's West)
5. Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds, MP - Minister of National Security
(Member for Laventille West)
6. Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh, MP - Minister of Health
(Member for St. Joseph)
7. Hon. Faris Al-Rawi, MP - Minister of Rural Development and Local
Government
(Member for San Fernando West)
8. Hon. Penelope Beckles, MP - Minister of Planning and Development
(Member for Arima)
9. Hon. Ayanna Webster-Roy, MP - Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister
(Member for Tobago East)
10. Hon. Shamfa Cudjoe, MP - Minister of Sport and Community Development
(Member for Tobago West)
11. Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, MP - Minister of Education
(Member for St. Ann's East)
12. Hon. Stephen Mc Clashie, MP - Minister of Labour
(Member for La Brea)
13. Hon. Foster Cummings, MP - Minister of Youth Development and National Services
(Member for La Horquetta/ Talparo)
14. Mr. Esmond Forde, MP - Deputy Speaker
(Member for Tunapuna)
15. Hon. Symon De Nobriga, MP - Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister
(Member for Diego Martin Central)
16. Hon. Brian Manning, MP - Minister in the Ministry of Finance
(Member for San Fernando East)
17. Hon. Lisa Morris-Julian, MP - Minister in the Ministry of Education
(Member for D'Abadie/ O'Meara)
18. Mr. Keith Scotland, MP - Member for Port of Spain South
19. Mr. Kennedy Richards, MP - Member for Point Fortin

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 20. Mr. Roger Monroe, MP | - | Member for Toco/Sangre Grande |
| 21. Mr. David Lee, MP | - | Member for Pointe-a-Pierre |
| 22. Mr. Rodney Charles, MP | - | Member for Naparima |
| 23. Ms. Khadijah Ameen, MP | - | Member for St. Augustine |
| 24. Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh, MP | - | Member for Couva South |
| 25. Mr. Barry Padarath, MP | - | Member for Princes Town |
| 26. Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP | - | Member for Oropouche East |
| 27. Mr. Saddam Hosein, MP | - | Member for Barataria/San Juan |
| 28. Mr. Rushton Paray, MP | - | Member for Mayaro |
| 29. Mr. Dinesh Rambally, MP | - | Member for Chaguanas West |
| 30. Dr. Lackram Bodoie, MP | - | Member for Fyzabad |
| 31. Mr. Arnold Ram, MP | - | Member for Caroni Central |
| 32. Dr. Rai Ragbir, MP | - | Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla |
| 33. Mr. Davendranath Tancoo, MP | - | Member for Oropouche West |
| 34. Ms. Anita Haynes, MP | - | Member for Tabaquite |
| 35. Mr. Ravi Ratiram, MP | - | Member for Couva North |
| 36. Dr. Rishad Seecheran, MP | - | Member for Caroni East |

ABSENT

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley, MP | - | Prime Minister
<i>(Member for Diego Martin West)</i> |
| 2. Hon. Marvin Gonzales, MP | - | Minister of Public Utilities
<i>(Member for Lopinot/ Bon Air West)</i> |
| 3. Hon. Adrian Leonce, MP | - | Minister in the Ministry of Housing and Urban
Development
<i>(Member for Laventille East/Morvant)</i> |
| 4. Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC | - | Leader of the Opposition
<i>(Member for Siparia)</i> |
| 5. Ms. Michelle Benjamin, MP | - | Member for Moruga/Tableland |
| 6. Ms. Vandana Mohit, MP | - | Member for Chaguanas East |

ALSO PRESENT

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Sen. the Hon. Allyson West | - | Minister of Public Administration |
| 2. Sen. the Hon. Reginald Armour, SC | - | Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs |
| 3. Sen. the Hon. Rohan Sinanan | - | Minister of Works and Transport |
| 4. Sen. the Hon. Dr. Amery Browne | - | Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs |
| 5. Sen. the Hon. Randall Mitchell | - | Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts |

COMMENCEMENT

- 1.1 The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.
- 1.2 The Chairman indicated that in accordance with Standing Order 82 (6) and 87, a meeting of the Standing Finance Committee was convened to consider proposals for the Supplementation of Appropriation for the fiscal year 2024.
- 1.3 Members were advised that in accordance with Standing Order 45(1) the speaking time in Standing Finance Committee shall not exceed five (5) minutes on each intervention.
- 1.4 The procedure for the consideration of the Heads of Expenditure was outlined.

PROPOSALS FOR THE SUPPLEMENTATION OF APPROPRIATION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2024

Head 06: Service Commissions

- 2.1 The Chairman announced Head 06: Service Commissions a supplementation of \$4,140,000.00.
- 2.2 The Minister of Public Administration was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.3 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 06: Service Commissions be supplemented by the sum of \$4,140,000.00.
- 2.4 The Members for Barataria/San-Juan, Oropouche East and Oropouche West sought clarification from the Minister. The Ministers of Public Administration and Finance provided explanations for the supplementation.
- 2.5 The question was put and agreed that Head 06: Service Commissions be supplemented by the sum of \$4,140,000.00.

Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly

- 2.6 The Chairman announced Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly, a supplementation of \$50,000,000.00.
- 2.7 The Minister of Finance was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.8 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly be supplemented by the sum of \$50,000,000.00.
- 2.9 The Members for Couva South, Couva North and Pointe-a-Pierre sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Finance provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.10 The question was put and agreed that Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly be supplemented by the sum of \$50,000,000.00.

Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs

- 2.11 The Chairman announced Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs, a supplementation of \$124,300,000.00.
- 2.12 The Attorney General was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.13 The Chairman proposed the question Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs be supplemented by the sum of \$124,300,000.00.
- 2.14 The Members for Barataria/San Juan, Oropouche East, Oropouche West, Chaguanas West, and Mayaro sought clarification from the Attorney General. The Attorney General and the Minister of Finance provided explanations for the supplementation.
- 2.15 The question was put and agreed that Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs be supplemented by the sum of \$124,300,000.00.

Head 26: Ministry of Education

- 2.16 The Chairman announced Head 26: Ministry of Education, a supplementation of \$144,200,000.00.
- 2.17 The Minister of Education was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.18 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 26: Ministry of Education be supplemented by the sum of \$144,200,000.00.
- 2.19 The Members for Couva North, Couva South, St. Augustine, Oropouche West, Princes Town, Barataria/San Juan, Tabaquite and Naparima sought clarification from the Minister. The Ministers of Education and Finance provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.20 The question was put and agreed that Head 26: Ministry of Education be supplemented by the sum of \$144,200,000.00.

Head 28: Ministry of Health

- 2.21 The Chairman announced Head 28: Ministry of Health, a supplementation of \$495,286,000.00.
- 2.22 The Minister of Health was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.23 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 28: Ministry of Health be supplemented by the sum of \$495,286,000.00.
- 2.24 The Members for Fyzabad, Caroni East, Cumuto/Manzanilla, Naparima and Couva North sought clarification from the Minister. The Ministers of Health and Finance provided explanations for the supplementation.
- 2.25 The question was put and agreed that Head 28: Ministry of Health be supplemented by the sum of \$495,286,000.00.

Head 30: Ministry of Labour

- 2.26 The Chairman announced Head 30: Ministry of Labour, a supplementation of \$130,538,600.00.
- 2.27 The Minister of Labour was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.28 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 30: Ministry of Labour be supplemented by the sum of \$130,538,600.00.
- 2.29 The Members for Couva South and Tabaquite sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Labour provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.30 The question was put and agreed that Head 30: Ministry of Labour be supplemented by the sum of \$130,538,600.00.

Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities

- 2.31 The Chairman announced Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities, a supplementation of \$527,800,000.00.
- 2.32 The Acting Minister of Public Utilities was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.33 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities be supplemented by the sum of \$527,800,000.00.

- 2.34 The Member for Princes Town and Oropouche West sought clarification from the Minister. The Acting Minister of Public Utilities (Ag.) and Minister of Finance provided explanations for the supplementation.
- 2.35 The question was put and agreed that Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities be supplemented by the sum of \$527,800,000.00.

Head 40: Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries

- 2.36 The Chairman announced Head 40: Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, a supplementation of \$570,900,000.00.
- 2.37 The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.38 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 40: Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries be supplemented by the sum of \$570,900,000.00.
- 2.39 The Member for Couva North sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.40 The question was put and agreed that Head 40: Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries be supplemented by the sum of \$570,900,000.00.

Head 42: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government

- 2.41 The Chairman announced Head 42: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, a supplementation of \$95,027,500.00.
- 2.42 The Minister of Rural Development and Local Government was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.43 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 42: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government be supplemented by the sum of \$95,027,500.00.
- 2.44 The Members for St. Augustine, Tabaquite, Couva South and Couva North sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Rural Development and Local Government provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.45 The question was put and agreed that Head 42: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government be supplemented by the sum of \$95,027,500.00.

Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport

- 2.46 The Chairman announced Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport, a supplementation of \$155,677,000.00.
- 2.47 The Minister of Works and Transport was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.48 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport be supplemented by the sum of \$155,677,000.00.
- 2.49 The Members for St. Augustine, Couva South, Couva North, Tabaquite, Oropouche West and Naparima sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Works and Transport provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.50 The question was put and agreed that Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport be supplemented by the sum of \$155,677,000.00.

Head 65: Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs

- 2.51 The Chairman announced Head 65: Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, a supplementation of \$9,182,500.00.
- 2.52 The Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs was invited to make a brief opening statement for less than five (5) minutes.
- 2.53 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 65: Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs be supplemented by the sum of \$9,182,500.00.
- 2.54 The Members for Nparima and Couva North sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.55 The question was put and agreed that Head 65: Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs be supplemented by the sum of \$9,182,500.00.

Head 80: Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

- 2.56 The Chairman announced Head 80: Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, a supplementation of \$21,048,000.00.
- 2.57 The Minister of Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts was invited to make a brief opening statement for less than five (5) minutes.
- 2.58 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 80: Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts be supplemented by the sum of \$21,048,000.00.
- 2.59 The Members for Tabaquite and Couva North sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.60 The question was put and agreed that Head 80: Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts be supplemented by the sum of \$21,048,000.00.

Total Supplementation

- 2.61 The question was put and agreed that the Appropriation for fiscal year 2024 be supplemented by a total of \$2,328,099,600.00

REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 3.1 Requests for additional information to Ministries/Departments are listed in Appendix II of the Report.

OTHER BUSINESS

- 4.1 The Chairman informed Members that the debate for the adoption of the Committee's Report will take place on Friday June 07, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.
- 4.2 The adjournment was taken at 5:43 p.m.

We certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

Monday June 03, 2024

APPENDIX II

Requests for Additional Information from Ministries/Departments

MEETING OF STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE 2023-2024 SESSION OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
3rd JUNE, 2024

HEAD 15 – TOBAGO HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Recurrent Expenditure - \$50,000,000

02/008/36 – Extraordinary Expenditure - \$50,000,000

1. Provide the respective breakdowns of the remediation and clean-up costs related to the oil spill to be covered with this supplementation.

HEAD 23 – OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Recurrent Expenditure - \$124,300,000

02/001/23 - Fees - \$120,000,000

1. Provide a breakdown of legal fees to be paid to local and foreign attorneys with this supplementation including the names of those attorneys who consent to their names being disclosed.

HEAD 26 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Recurrent Expenditure – \$144,200,000

02/001/22 – Short-term Employment – \$15,000,000

1. With respect to the 279 persons hired by the Ministry as short-term employees, provide a breakdown of their respective periods of employment.

02/001/43 – Security Services - \$12,700,000

2. Provide the Ministry's arrears for security services from FY 2023.

04/011/02 - National Schools Dietary Services Ltd. - \$47,000,000

3. Provide the respective breakdowns for FY 2024 of the sums spent by the NSDSL on payment of staff salaries and on the provision of student meals.
4. Provide the number of students who receive meals through the programme in FY 2024.

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Recurrent Expenditure – \$495,286,000

02/004/39 - Drugs and Other Related Materials and Supplies – \$202,583,300

1. Provide the following:

- a. The number of outstanding invoices on hand over 90 days at NIPDEC for which this supplementation is being requested; and
- b. The list of the suppliers to whom these sums are owed

04/009/02 - North West Regional Health Authority - \$40,002,500

04/009/03 - Eastern Regional Health Authority - \$60,006,900

04/009/04 - North Central Regional Health Authority - \$121,126,000

04/009/05 - South West Regional Health Authority - \$60,005,600

1. For each RHA, provide the number of invoices and the list of suppliers who are owed for each item under outstanding trade payables – utilities, rent, janitorial, security services, food supplies, medical gases, medical supplies and other expenses

04/009/03 - Eastern Regional Health Authority - \$60,006,900

2. Provide the breakdown of the new staff to be hired as part of the operationalisation of the New Sangre Grande Hospital Campus.

HEAD 30 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Recurrent Expenditure - \$130,538,600

02/004/16 – Contract Employment - \$55,000,000

1. Provide the amount from this requested supplementation to be used specifically for the payment of NIS.

HEAD 39 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

Recurrent Expenditure - \$527,800,000

04/009/04 – Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation - \$5,600,000

1. What is the duration of the contract awarded to TTPOST by the American Consulate to deliver passports and visas within the country?

HEAD 42 - MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Recurrent Expenditure - \$95,027,500

02/001/16 - Contract Employment - \$10,755,500

1. Provide a list of the names of the positions, respective job descriptions, salaries and date of first employment of the officers whose contracts have been renewed.
2. Provide the breakdown of the positions assigned to Regional Corporations for which contracts have been renewed.

02/001/22 – Short-term Employment - \$5,572,000

3. Provide a breakdown of the positions held by officers who are awaiting approval on long-term contracts, who will be paid with this supplementation.

04/009/04 - Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) - \$36,700,000

4. Provide a breakdown of the sum to be allocated to wages and the sum to be allocated to NIS contributions.
5. Provide a breakdown of CEPEP's operational and administrative expenses to the end of FY 2024 for which this supplementation is being requested.

04/011/07 RDC - National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (N.R.W.R.P.) - \$7,000,000

6. Provide a breakdown of the respective sums from this requested supplementation to be allocated to wages and to NIS contributions.
7. Provide a breakdown of the NRWRP's operational and administrative expenses to the end of FY 2024 for which this supplementation is being requested.

006/05/32 – Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation - \$2,500,000

8. Provide a breakdown of the number of contractors to whom arrears are to be paid with this supplementation.

HEAD 43 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

Recurrent Expenditure - \$155,677,000

02/005/09 – Rent / Lease – Vehicles and Equipment - \$20,000,000

1. Provide the programme of works for clearing and desilting works to be undertaken to the end of FY 2024 under this item.

02/002/28 – Other Contracted Services (Highways Division) - \$58,000,000

2. Provide a list of the projects earmarked to be completed by the end of FY 2024, broken down by district.
3. Provide a breakdown of how this sum will be spent across all districts.

02/005/28 - Other Contracted Services (Drainage Division) - \$20,000,000

4. Provide a list of drainage works to be done for each district.
5. Provide the scope of works, scheduled completion dates and percentage completed as at June 2024 for the St. Augustine, St. Joseph and Valsayn South areas.

HEAD 80: MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Recurrent Expenditure – \$21,048,000

06/004/22 - National Carnival Commission – \$5,300,000

1. Provide the total sum expended on Carnival 2024.
2. Provide a list of the security services and construction service providers and the respective amounts to be paid to each with this supplementation.

APPENDIX III
Verbatim Notes

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HELD IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CHAMBER, RED HOUSE, ST. VINCENT STREET, PORT OF SPAIN, ON MONDAY, JUNE 03, 2024, AT 1.30 P.M.

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon everyone.

Hon. Members: Good afternoon.

Madam Chairman: I now call to order this meeting of the Standing Finance Committee. Hon. Members, in accordance with Standing Orders 82(6) and 87, this meeting of the Standing Finance Committee was convened to consider proposals for the supplementation of appropriation for the fiscal year 2024.

Speaking time: Hon. Members, in accordance with Standing Order 45(1), the speaking time in Standing Finance Committee shall not exceed five minutes on each intervention. The procedure shall be as follows:

1. I will announce the Head and the amount to be supplemented.
2. The Minister with responsibility will then be invited to provide an explanation for the supplementation.
3. I will then propose the question that the Head be supplemented.
4. Members may then seek clarification from the Minister.
5. Once this is concluded, I will then put the question that the sum to be supplemented be approved.
6. The procedure will be repeated for each Head.

Hon. Members, we shall now consider the proposals for supplementation of appropriation for fiscal year 2024.

Head 06: Service Commissions \$4,140,000

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

Sen. The Hon. West: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Service Commissions Department is the Secretariat for the following four constitutionally enshrined Service Commissions: The Police Service Commission, the Judicial and Legal Service Commission, the Teaching Service

Commission and the Public Service Commission. The SCD is charged with providing these Commissions with administrative and technical advisory services to enable them to carry out their constitutional functions. As the Service Commission continues in its thrust to improve its operational efficiency to better serve the public service and through that, the public, the Commission has been undertaking various initiatives to improve its operations.

The Department has been providing support to the Service Commissions as the Commissions fulfill their mandate of filling key vacant offices. The ongoing process of this mandate has seen critical leadership positions in the public service being filled. The current request for additional expenditure is based on the shortfall in the 2023-2024 fiscal allocations, and is required to meet the payment of fees in respect of certain court matters that are ongoing and contracted services for the continued engagement of certain senior offices within the public service. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Question proposed: That Head 06 be supplemented by the sum of \$4,140,000.

Madam Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Mr. Hosein: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, to the hon. Minister, on the first line Item 23 which deals with fees and in the current estimate that we have, it is \$3.6 million and now they are increasing it by \$1.1 million in this mid-year review or supplementation. Minister, in light of this being expenditure for legal fees in particular, can you tell us basically how many matters, because I saw indicated ongoing matters. How many matters right now, the Service Commissions are dealing with that require this expenditure?

Sen. The Hon. West: There are five main matters that are currently ongoing and they are the ones that attract the majority of fees we are requesting to be supplemented.

Mr. Hosein: Minister, is it possible that you can give us a breakdown of the attorneys who would be paid these fees that you are asking for?

Sen. The Hon. West: I can list the attorneys for you. The amounts of the fees, I cannot tell you at this point. They would be Senior Counsel Douglas Mendes, Senior Counsel Russell Martineau, Senior Counsel Deborah Peake and Ian Benjamin, are the main attorneys.

Mr. Hosein: So is it that you can give us an undertaking to then provide to us the fees that are paid to those senior counsels?

Sen. The Hon. West: I do not know if that is possible at this point, we will have an estimate of what we expect but because the matters are ongoing, the amounts payable will shift depending on how often the matters are heard, which matters are given priority, that kind of thing.

Mr. Hosein: And can you confirm this \$3.6 million has been used up and now you are required this 1.1—

Sen. The Hon. West: That is correct.

Mr. Hosein: Okay. And also, Madam Chair, if I can move on to line Item 28 also? Line Item 28 deals with the payments of specialized assessment exercises conducted through the Assessment Centre for the senior officers of the public service. Minister, can you just confirm for us whether or not this is a recruitment firm that we are going to be paying or, what is this Assessment Centre that is being referred to?

Sen. The Hon. West: The Assessment Centre is a process that is been set up by the Service Commission, they do engage consultants, but it involves a whole process of engagement of senior public servants. So they will have assessment sessions where the public servants come in and are assessed, they will have consultants reviewing and marking and assessing to determine who gets priority, that kind of thing so, it is an entire extended process to ensure that the whole procedure is open and defensible.

Mr. Hosein: Well, this crosses various Service Commissions because I am seeing police service, public service and so on.

Sen. The Hon. West: Yes.

Mr. Hosein: Can you tell us who is the contractor in particular for the Police Service Commission?

Sen. The Hon. West: That has not yet been determined.

Mr. Hosein: I did not hear that.

Sen. The Hon. West: That has not yet been determined.

Mr. Hosein: Okay, so this is for the recruitment of that particular firm?

Sen. The Hon. West: Yes.

Mr. Hosein: Can you tell us if you have that information, how many candidates we have for the position of Commissioner of Police?

[Minister confers with technocrat]

Sen. The Hon. West: No. *[Laughter]*

Madam Chairman: Member, I will rule that question out of order having regard to the exercise that we are undertaking.

Mr. Hosein: Madam Chairman, the Member for Laventille West, he just entered late and he is making some very disparaging remarks, if you could just rein him in please?

Madam Chairman: Okay.

Mr. Hinds: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: All right.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Chairman: So Members, on both sides, let us keep this in a manner that we will all be very proud of ourselves. Okay? And our public will be proud of us. So let us keep our decorum. All right. Anyone else? Yes, Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, to the Minister. The Contracted Services fee requested, \$3 million also includes payment for assessment of some kind relating to the Integrity Commission. Could you just tell us exactly what is this independent firm/entity assessing in relation to the Integrity Commission?

Sen. The Hon. West: This Commission is charged with the responsibility at this time of engaging a Registrar for the Integrity Commission and that is what that amount is in relation to.

Dr. Moonilal: And could I also ask in relation to your answer earlier, if at this stage you have not completed the process to recruit an independent agency to assess those specific officers, how did you come across to the \$3 million mark? Why is it 3 million, but you have not started or completed a process?

Sen. The Hon. West: The Estimate would have been based on previous assessments.

Dr. Moonilal: It would have been based on previous assessments. And could you indicate then on a previous assessment, maybe the last one or two, which organization agency was used?

Sen. The Hon. West: Which organization—sorry?

Dr. Moonilal: Or agency was used for that process?

Sen. The Hon. West: I am unable to say at this point.

Dr. Moonilal: Could you undertake to provide in writing—

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, may I—

Dr. Moonilal: Because you are saying—

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, may I object, please?

Dr. Moonilal: No, I just want to explain. My five minutes is not up, I just want to explain.

Mr. Imbert: You can explain what is before us, not what is in your mind.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam.

Madam Chairman: I think it is really an objection being raised. Minister of Finance, what is the objection?

Mr. Imbert: The Member is trying to solicit information for a past period. Nothing to do with this Finance Committee or the supplementation of appropriation.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: The Minister was very kind to indicate to us that the—

Mr. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Dr. Moonilal: He is continuing.

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance, I—

Mr. Imbert: Chairman, may I raise a procedural point, please?

Dr. Moonilal: May I ask the Minister of Finance to conduct himself?

Madam Chairman: And you have, and you have. I am allowing the Member to respond and then I will rule. Thank you.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chair, the Minister was very kind enough to indicate in a most polite manner that the Estimate of \$3 million is based on the previous undertaking, where firms were contracted to undertake similar assessment, and that figure was arrived at because of a previous engagement. All I ask is if the Minister will be kind enough to indicate the identity of the contractor agency that undertook this before, that arrived at the \$3 million. That is all.

Madam Chairman: So—[*Inaudible*]—just in response to the Integrity Commission?

Dr. Moonilal: In response to the various bodies, because it is one agency, I understand this to mean, not two or three agencies. It is just one independent agency or entity undertaking this type of assessment for all. That is all. Nothing more.

Madam Chairman: So I uphold the objection. I am sure you will have an opportunity to ask this question in another way when it so presents itself. Member for Oropouche West.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Madam. Hon. Minister, the initial Estimate was \$655,000 provided in the budget—the 2024 fiscal budget read in October; \$655,000. You are now asking for an increase of more than four and half times of what was initially budgeted for, for assessments—for posts that, clearly, is supposed to be predictable because we have persons whose term of office is ending. So on that basis, I assume that you would have been able to project better. Can you advise what would have happened between the budget submission of the Ministry, which resulted in \$655,000, and today's date, which has now—where you are now asking for four and a half times of what initially budgeted for? What was the trigger that caused a lower figure than what is required now? Because this is a substantial increase. Minister?

Sen. The Hon. West: May I proceed, Madam Chair? Yes, in the budgetary process, the Service Commissions would have done an assessment of what it expects during the period and what allocation it requires to cover that cost. There may be discussions and adjustments by—with the Ministry of Finance because it would be unclear at that time as to how far along the process we would have advanced.

Having come to mid-year and knowing where we are in respect to each of them, we are now clearer on when we need what allocation of funds, which is why we have come at this time to say that this is what we need for the rest of the year.

Mr. Tancoo: So, Minister, based on what you are saying, this would have been your estimate? You would have assumed that you would have needed \$655,000 and now you have revised your requirement to be \$3.695 million? Is that correct to say?

Sen. The Hon. West: When we go to the Ministry of Finance with our initial estimates, we would estimate for what we expect to cover. The Ministry of Finance may push back and say, “We are not convinced that you would get this fund in the process during this period. So let us do a reassessment when you have gone through some of the procurement issues and whatever. So at this point, we are clearer on what we need to take us through to the end of September. And the Ministry of Finance is persuaded that we need this additional amount, so it is recommending what—it has accepted the request for the increase in allocation.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Ma’am. In the explanatory notes provided to us, the Ministry listed some examples of some of the assessments or entities who will be subjected to the assessment. Can you provide a detailed list of which entities are going to be—so, for example, you have Commissioner of Police, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Commissioner of Prisons, et cetera, et cetera, but these are just the examples. Would you be able to provide a list of those entities who would be subjected to these specialized assessment exercises? What was provided to us was just an example. We just want the full list now.

Sen. The Hon. West: What we would have provided is a list of the most significant offices that are needed—that require urgent attention. But as we go through the process of continuing to do the operations of the Service Commissions, other offices will be added and become more prominent.

Mr. Tancoo: Yes, Ma’am, I understand. But your request for \$3.040 million was based on some assessment that you would have done, that would have determined that we are going to deal with item a, b, c, d or e, et cetera, down the road. All I am asking for is a list of what those a, b, c, d, e, et cetera, is that would have determined how much money you are now going to ask for in the mid-year review.

Sen. The Hon. West: The amount that we are seeking approval up today will cover the list that we have provided in the explanation.

Mr. Tancoo: I am hearing you, but your explanation simply says, “for example”, which means it is not the complete list.

Madam Chairman: Yes. But, Member, I think the Minister just provided some clarification of that, at that point.

Mr. Tancoo: Respectfully, no, Madam. What she said was that the list she provided is the list.

Madam Chairman: And that is what she said, so that is the explanation. You have raised—

Mr. Tancoo: Yes, Madam.

Madam Chairman: From what I understood, you raised a question on the “for example”, meaning that it is including others.

Mr. Tancoo: Yes.

Madam Chairman: The Minister has just explained and said that is the list. So I think, to me, that answers for the example.

Mr. Tancoo: Sure.

Madam Chairman: Do you have—

Mr. Tancoo: So that means the explanatory notes provided is wrong?

Madam Chairman: And I so rule. Do you have another question?

Mr. Tancoo: No, Madam, proceed.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 06 supplemented by the sum of \$4,140,000.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Director of Public Administration.

Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly, \$50,000,000.

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

Hon. Imbert: I will make it five seconds. As we all know, there was an oil spill in Tobago. The Tobago House of Assembly submitted a request for reimbursement and additional funding for the clean-up exercise, and the Ministry of Finance has determined that they should be given \$50 million.

Question proposed: That Head 15 be supplemented by the sum of \$50,000,000.

Madam Chairman: Member of Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. To the Minister: Minister, could you just give a breakdown, in terms of this \$50 million, how much has been utilized for clean-up and how much for remediation costs?

Hon. Imbert: The request from the Tobago House of Assembly was \$153 million. We found justification for \$50 million. I will provide you with the breakdown.

Mr. Indarsingh: Based on what was submitted by the Tobago House of Assembly, is that a final cost in terms of bills?

Hon. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Indarsingh: Well, I would expect that it—

Hon. Imbert: We do not know. We do not control the Tobago House of Assembly. They may submit an additional request. I do not know.

Mr. Indarsingh: Okay. Minister, based on your involvement as the Minister of Finance and overall overseeing expenditure at the level of the central government, have you been able to total the final bills as it relates to this oil spill exercise?

Hon. Imbert: That is completely irrelevant. This is the Tobago House of Assembly aspect of it.

Mr. Indarsingh: The \$50million that has been allocated to the Tobago House of Assembly, will this be part of Trinidad and Tobago's claim before the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund?

Hon. Imbert: As you know, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is governed by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, this money is for the THA which is not the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Indarsingh: No, but the money comes from the central government and, by extension—

Hon. Imbert: Tobago House of Assembly—

Mr. Indarsingh:—the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Imbert: Tobago House of Assembly—

Mr. Indarsingh: So I am asking—

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Imbert: I know what he is asking me you know.

Madam Chairman: Yeah, so just give him an opportunity to express what he is asking.

Mr. Indarsingh: I am simply asking, on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago if this \$50 million, which is being given by the central government to the THA, will form part of the Government's claim that will go before the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund?

Hon. Imbert: What I am saying is I would respectfully ask you to stay in your section. This is an

appropriation for the THA—

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance—

Hon. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Let us—

Hon. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance—

Hon. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance, let us try to keep the conversation at a certain kind of level, which you have been doing pretty well so far. So I think you could find another way to, you know, describe what you would like to say to the Member in the particular level that I have asked for.

Hon. Imbert: The answer is, yes.

Mr. Indarsingh: The answer is, yes. Minister, in terms of the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund—

Hon. Imbert: So I have been trying to get the Member to stay on the topic.

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance, I know you—

Mr. Indarsingh: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: One minute. One minute, Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: [*Inaudible*—taxpayers' money.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South, one minute. Minister of Finance, while you may have the ability to see the question before it is expressed, I do not have such an ability. The Member is allowed a five-minute intervention so I would prefer we allow the Member to air his intervention and then we would see where we go from there. I would ask you to contain your ability to see ahead.

Hon. Imbert: I will try.

Madam Chairman: Yes, thank you. Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Chair, I know that the Minister of Finance is obsessed with a number of matters—

Hon. Imbert: Madam Speaker—[*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Okay. Alright.

Hon. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: There are no “bouffs” going on here. Member for Couva South, I understand you would like to have a little banter, you can do that afterwards with the Minister of Finance. Please make the relevant intervention that you wish.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Based on your responsibility as the Minister of Finance and your engagement with the Tobago House of Assembly, and providing ongoing financial interventions as it relates to the clean-up and so on, have you been able to ascertain from the Tobago House of Assembly if all remediation and clean-up operations have been completed as it relates to further request for financial support?

Madam Chairman: Okay. So I think that was asked in another way—

Hon. Imbert: And I answered it.

Madam Chairman:—and the Minister answered. It was asked in another way if that is all the money. I might be just paraphrasing, and I think his answer was, “Your guess is as good as mine”. Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you most kindly, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, to the hon. Minister: Minister, you indicated that \$153 million was requested by the THA, however you saw the justification for \$50 million which is why we are seeing this \$50 million here increase. Can the hon. Minister advise if consideration was given to individuals who would have lost their income as a result of this oil spill that that will be taken into consideration with this \$50 million being allocated?

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Imbert: Firstly, let me correct the Member who has an unfortunate way of words sometimes, I did not determine that they were entitled to \$50 million. The public servants in the Budget Division of the Ministry of Finance requested supporting documentation from the Tobago House of Assembly from their counterparts. They interrogated the documents and recommended that a sum of \$50 million be made available. So let me just make that clear—

Mr. Young: In the mid-year—

Hon. Imbert:—in the mid-year—

Mr. Young: Exercise.

Hon. Imbert:—exercise. So let me make it clear, it is not me.

Mr. Young: Correct.

Hon. Imbert: The Budget Division technocrats interrogated the documents and came up with this number. That is number one.

Mr. Young: [*Inaudible*]

Hon. Imbert: Number two—

Madam Chairman: Minister of Energy and Energy Industries—

Mr. Young: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Minister of Energy and Energy Industries—

Mr. Young: Sorry.

Madam Chairman:—you are disturbing a very important contribution coming from the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance.

Mr. Young: Apologies.

Madam Chairman: Accepted. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Imbert: Secondly, and for the guidance of all Members, if one reads the explanation circulated to all Members, one will understand what this is for, and since there is clearly some difficulty in understanding, I will read it:

These costs include clean-up and remediation, lease and rental infrastructure, marine support services and consultancy, security, materials and supplies, catering and refurbishment.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche West. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, I know you allocated or we are asked that we approve \$50 million for this clean-up, has any funds been released to the THA out of this \$50 million to date?

Hon. Imbert: That is impossible. This is a supplementary appropriation, which is in the future. I cannot travel back in time.

Mr. Lee: No funds have been allocated or released?

Hon. Imbert: That answer is, no. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Lee: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Yeah. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he could point us to which document he is reading from, because that information that he just read out there is something that has not been provided to us. The information that is in front of us, hon. Minister, for Head 15, Tobago House of Assembly, Recurring Expenditure, \$50 million, for line Item 02/008/36: Extraordinary Expenditure, \$50 million, to meet the clean-up and remediation costs associated with the oil spill which occurred in Tobago on February 07, 2024. And that is as much information that has been provided to us, so it is only reasonable for us to ask, can you share with us that document that you are reading from?

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance.

Mr. Indarsingh: [*Inaudible*]

Hon. Imbert: I have explained—

Mr. Indarsingh: We know the Minister has a lot of documents and so on.

Madam Chairman: So, Member for Couva South, I am sure Couva North wants to hear the response to his question, so let us be accommodating. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Imbert: I have explained what the money is for, and let me just repeat it, it is for clean-up, remediation, lease and rental infrastructure, marine support services, consultancy, security, materials and supplies, catering and refurbishment. That is what it is for.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, hon. Minister. Minister, from the items that you have read out there, which was not provided to us, nowhere in that indicated that any kind of funding is going to be allocated or put aside for individuals who would have lost income as a result of this oil spill. So can you advise, one, how soon this \$50 million is going to be made available to the THA, and, two, can you advise what consideration that your Ministry or this Government is putting in place to assist individuals who would have lost income or unable to ply their trade as a result of this oil spill from since the 7th of February?

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, Member for Couva North, I will allow the first question with respect to time; the second question, I rule this out of order having regard to what this process is about. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Imbert: Thank you. The debate on the supplementation of appropriation takes place on Friday, the 7th of June, in the House of Representatives, and then the debate in the Senate, the other place, is—

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Imbert: “You sure they want to hear?”

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South, I think your mike might be on, you know—

Mr. Indarsingh: [*Interruption*]

Madam Chairman: Alright. So therefore your lovely baritone, if you could kind of control that in this Chamber. Barataria/San Juan and Oropouche East, even though you all do not sing in the baritone section—

Hon. Member: “What section dey singing in?”

Hon. Members: [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

Madam Chairman:—the sound is still disturbing, so I will ask you all to please watch it.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Chairman: You might be tenors. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Imbert: Thank you so much. The debate on the supplementation of Appropriation Bill will take place in the House of Representatives on June 07, 2024. The Bill is then scheduled to be debated in the Senate, in the other place, on Tuesday the 11th of June, 2024. After that the Parliament will have to prepare the document, it will have to be sent to Her Excellency for assent. That usually takes a couple days, and then as soon as cash flow permits, the money will be sent to the Tobago House of Assembly.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you most kindly, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, to the hon. Minister: Can the Minister advise if there was any impact study done, and if it was done, by who?

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North, again, I rule that out of order having regard to this exercise.

Mr. Ratiram: To just clarify a little further to assist. Environmental impact studies would determine the additional list of equipment and the additional expenses that is going to be created—

Mr. Chairman: And Member, I ruled it out of order. There are opportunities available to ask questions outside of this exercise.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 15 supplemented by the sum of \$50,000,000.

Madam Chairman: Thank you Minister of Finance and thank you to the Chief Administrator and the other supporting staff from the Tobago House of Assembly.

Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs, \$124,300,000.

Madam Chairman: I will now invite the Attorney General to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of 5 minutes. Attorney General.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: Good afternoon and thank you very much Madam Chairman. Madam Chairman, the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs is requesting an appropriation of funds in the sum of TT \$124,300,000. This is for critical areas which allow it to function optimally. These moneys are necessary to cover operational costs within the Ministry, as will be detailed. It also preserves the provision of reliable services to the public at large. The Office of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Legal Affairs has the supervision of various public bodies and also provides indirect employment and office accommodation for thousands of its staffing complement. Madam Chairman, the Office of the Attorney General is requesting this supplementary

funding to address critical areas Under Recurrent Expenditure to include Legal Fees, Other Contracted Services, Police Complaints Authority, and AML/CFT Compliance Unit.

As Attorney General, I am committed to the discharge of my constitutional duty of serving all of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago to ensure fairness, defence of and promotion of the rule of law to ensure a vibrant country for the people of Trinidad and Tobago, thank you.

Question proposed: That Head 23 be supplemented by the sum of \$124,300,000.

Madam Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Mr. Hosein: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am at line Item 23, dealing with fees. In the original allocation, the legal fees expenditure would have been \$45 million, the Attorney General is now coming to this Parliament to ask for an additional \$120 million in legal fees which means that the revised provision for 2024 would be \$165 million of which we are being now told that \$30 million of the additional allocation would be for the local attorneys and \$90 million will be for the foreign attorneys. Can the Attorney General provide this House with a list of those local attorneys and foreign attorneys that will be paid with this additional allocation?

Madam Chairman: Attorney General.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: Madam Chair, it has been the practice of this Ministry even before I was privileged to assume office to provide details to this Honourable House in large terms whilst respecting the privacy of individuals who offer their services to the Office of the Attorney General and I am prepared to offer to this House in writing a breakdown of fees, but not to name the attorneys to whom those fees are being paid.

Madam Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Mr. Hosein: Madam Chair, can the Attorney General be clear on his response? Is it that he is not providing any of attorneys' names who are collecting public moneys, no names?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: I ordinarily speak in the English language.

Dr. Moonilal: Not always.

Mr. Hosein: Not always.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: I apologize if I was not clear.

Mr. Hosein: Not always.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: I apologize if I was not clear, so I may repeat myself. I am prepared to provide in writing a breakdown of the fees that this Government is committed to pay, that my Ministry is committed to pay. I am not prepared to provide individual names of individual attorneys.

Mr. Hosein: Madam Chair, what is happening here is, there is now a shifting of the goalpost. Initially

we were told for the allocation of the \$45 million, the original allocation that is now being supplemented, that the Attorney General would provide legal fees to those attorneys who consented to their names or consented to their fees being published. Now, we are hearing a different story where he is not providing a single name to us and he is going to now ask this Parliament to approve \$165 million worth of legal fees and we cannot know who the attorneys are, what they are being paid for, which matters they are being paid in, that is absolutely ludicrous, Madam Chairman.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Hosein: This does not auger well, the Attorney General in his opening statement said that he is here on his constitutional remit on the rule of law, but also he has a duty to account and be transparent to the taxpayers. This is one of the largest expenditures—

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, could I get a ruling, please?

Mr. Hosein:—we have ever had in the history of the Attorney General's Office—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Imbert: May I get a ruling please?

Mr. Hosein:—for legal fees for any single financial year and—

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, may I get a ruling, please?

Mr. Hosein:—Attorney General is now giving us no information whatsoever on this matter.

Madam Chairman: Yes, Minister of Finance.

Mr. Imbert: The five minutes that a Member is allowed, is that for the purpose of making a statement?

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Members: Yes. Yes.

Mr. Imbert: No. A general statement that has nothing to do with a question?

Madam Chairman: Well, well—

Mr. Imbert: Or is it to elucidate a question, is it to assist a question?

Madam Chairman: Member. Member, it says an intervention, it did not necessarily say a question, that is the procedure—

Mr. Imbert: We need to fix it.

Madam Chairman:—that was agreed to even before I came here, okay? So, yes Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much. Let me begin my five minutes by reflecting on the Attorney General's comment earlier. You said you are prepared to give a breakdown but, that breakdown will

exclude the identity of the attorneys-at-law. Could you just elucidate on what would the breakdown would include?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: Thank you very much, Member. And perhaps in answering you the Member to your left, the Member for Barataria/San Juan, will listen to what I am saying for the second time.

Dr. Moonilal: But there is no need to be rude.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: No. No, I am not being rude. Allow me to finish.

Madam Chairman: Excuse me, there is no rudeness here.

Hon. Member: He is pointing at the Members.

Madam Chairman: All right. So, let us calm down, let us respect each other and let the response come. Member for St. Augustine, if it is you wish to make an intervention—Member for St. Augustine if it is you wish to make an intervention and I recognize you in the appropriate way, certainly you will be allowed, Attorney General.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I was not being rude by pointing my finger. I raised my pen in admonition because you were suggesting that I was being rude. Now, if I may continue, Member for Oropouche East—

Hon. Members: *[Interruption]*

Madam Chairman: Members, do we want the answer or do we not? Member. Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West please, let us proceed with this exercise. I know it gets us very excited. Attorney General.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: Thank you, Madam. I was in the process of saying, Madam Chair, that if I were listened to carefully—and I am grateful to the Member for Barataria/San Juan to have recollected the history of what I have said in the past. When I say will give a breakdown, I will do it in writing, but I will not disclose the names of attorneys, I went on to say that I wish to respect their privacy in the breakdown which I will give to this Parliament, I will take the opportunity to consult with those attorneys who wish to waive their right to privacy, and if they wish me to give their names, I will. But, I am not making an unequivocal commitment at this stage to give a breakdown of every attorney, I will give the gross sum and those attorneys who wish to have their names pilloried in this august Chamber by the Opposition can do so. Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East, yes.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Mr. Attorney General, thank you very much for the response. It is very clear in your statement that you will consult with the attorneys and if they

wish that their name be released, you are prepared to do that.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: I am glad you understood my English language.

Dr. Moonilal: And now you will now understand my question. Notwithstanding that, you proposed to give a breakdown, what would the breakdown include, apart from identity?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: The breakdown will include as an example, and as one example only, that for the period of 2010 to 2011 the sum of money—

Mr. Hosein: Madam Chairman, I “doh” think we can go back to that period because the financial year we are dealing with is ’24.

Madam Chairman: No. No. One minute. Let us understand what is going on here. The Attorney General says he is going to give a breakdown in writing, he has limited what the breakdown is going to be, okay, and that is where the conversation started. The Member for Oropouche East asked what it would contain. The Attorney General is giving by way of example what it will give. So, he is not answering—because you must take in the context of his first answer, he is going to give it in writing. So, if you are saying as the Member, I think it is Oropouche East and if he is agreeing with you, as the Member he does not want the answer, then we could go on to another question.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, could I ask for another ruling, please? May I ask for another ruling, please?

Ms. Ameen: Madam Chairman, we would like an example from the current period, please.

Madam Chairman: One minute. One minute, please. Oropouche East, is this your question or it belongs to everybody else?

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, I am prepared to allow the Attorney General—

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much.

Dr. Moonilal:—to continue to go back to 2010 and we will go back to 2001 and 1962.

Madam Chairman: No, no, no. Well, all of us could be guided—

Dr. Moonilal: I have an example from—

Madam Chairman: Member, all of us could be very facetious inside of here and we would be wasting time. Okay. So, I take your first answer, I understand that you were going to get what you—or something in writing which relates to current, are you saying you do not want the “for example” of what it contains?

Dr. Moonilal: There is matter before us now, let me put on my glasses.

Madam Chairman: Okay.

Dr. Moonilal: There is a matter before us now involving the Office of the Attorney General and

Ministry of Legal Affairs in which the Attorney General has asked for supplemental funds, it is—

Mr. Hosein: \$120 million.

Dr. Moonilal:—of \$120 million, that is clear. The Attorney General has come to our committee and he is requesting \$120 million more, in addition. He has said clearly that he is not prepared to give the identity of both foreign and local attorneys-at-law unless they so permit, that is very clear. I have asked—he has also said he is prepared to give a breakdown, I have asked the goodly gentleman what would that breakdown of the \$120 million, what would that pertain to? He is now going to tell us about 2010. If that is his answer, that is fine.

Madam Chairman: Well, somehow or the other, like, I recall it a little differently, because it has to be in the context of what the original answer was, that is how I understand it, you are going to get it in writing. So, if you are saying you do not want the “for example” right, for an earlier period, then we can gladly go on to something else, okay?

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, remember I have a request for another ruling.

Madam Chairman: Yes, Minister of Finance. Okay.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chairman, I am permitted—I will allow the Attorney General to answer and say anything he wants. I am asking about \$220 million. I am not asking about no matter in fiscal 2009.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So Minister of Finance?

Mr. Imbert: Yes, Madam Chairman. You clarified that the word “intervention” is used with respect to the time allotted to a Member to speak. Can a Member make multiple interventions on the same matter?

Madam Chairman: Yes, Minister of Finance. As I said, these rules were agreed to by Members of Parliament long before I got here. I believe you proceed me in time—

Mr. Imbert: So a Member could make 10 interventions each of five minutes?

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance, you are now asking me the same question in a different way. It is very clear.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Chairman: Attorney General.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and if I may be allowed to answer the Member for Oropouche East in a few sentences, possibly a paragraph, as opposed to being limited to one word at a time and being interrupted. As I was saying, my explanation of the details in writing will give context. The context with reference to the 2015 to the 2024 period will contextualize the 2010 to 2015 period, under the United National Congress, when \$99 million was spent every year on

legal fees. I will then give the context for the period 2015 to 2014 to show that in this current period, \$113 million a year is being spent, so it is not a significant difference. I will then, in the details I wish to give, demonstrate that a \$164 million was paid between the period 2015 to 2022, as moneys that we inherited and owed—

Madam Chairman: All right. So, Attorney General, at this stage, I think I will intervene and stop the process, and I guess the Member for Oropouche East will have to await his response in writing. Member for Oropouche West.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chair, I beg the Attorney General to also give the context—*[Inaudible]*

Madam Chairman: I am now recognizing the Member for Oropouche West.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I have several questions. Based on the Attorney General's response just now, can the Attorney General indicate the time frame for submission of this information? When will he supply it, given that the debate on this matter and associated matters will be on Friday?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: You get it not later than Thursday.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Attorney General. Another question, Sir. This additional \$120 million, is this based on bills that have been provided to the Office of the Attorney General and validated, or does it also include your projection for what else you will need before the end of the year?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: It includes both. And among those which it includes, you will, for instance, be getting, in the details that I am going to give to the Member, a bill for \$6 million, which the State has had to pay for the Ravi Balgobin litigation that has being commenced against the State and earned by well-known practitioners who represented that gentlemen. It will also include the sum of \$14,620,340—

Mr. Tancoo: Have you written to the Honourable—

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC:—which has been paid for COVID-19 litigation against the State by the Attorney General.

Madam Chairman: Yes, Member for Oropouche West.

Mr. Tancoo: The Minister just indicated—the hon. Attorney General just indicated that he could not provide any information because he had to communicate with the attorneys, and yet here he is providing that information without having had—

Hon. Members: *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. Tancoo: He just said that, that he will first—

Mr. Scotland: He called any names?

Mr. Tancoo: He did.

Ms. Ameen: He called the litigants and the attorney.

Mr. Tancoo: Are you not paying attention? Pay attention, please.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Tancoo: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Order.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Chairman: Order. Order.

Mr. Tancoo: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche West, I asked for order. Now—

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Chairman, this kind of behaviour—

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South. Member for Couva South, you did not hear me ask for order? So, please abide. Okay. So if everyone will bring their tempers down. I am sure the Member for Oropouche West can interrogate the topic all on his own and also, certainly, the Attorney General could respond all on his own. Anyone else who wishes to make an intervention, there is particular procedure, which I will ask us all to observe. Let us proceed. Member for Oropouche West.

Mr. Tancoo: Follow-up question based on what the hon. Attorney General—and I really hope I will be able to ask my questions without being interrupted by anybody else. The follow-up question, Sir. You indicated previously in your conversation with my other colleagues, including your conversation just now, that the intention is to provide this list, Sir. Is the objection—or is the list, or the objection based on the list, is it based on the concern about the name of entities receiving the funds, receiving payment from this \$120 million, or is it based on the value? So, for example, would the list contain the list of lawyers, which will include those who have approved the publication of the value and those who have not—who have declined to approve publication of the value, or is it simply going to be those who have agreed for the publication of the value? Because what we want is also all the attorneys that are proposed to be paid from this \$120 million additionally that you are seeking.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: Member for Oropouche West, my answer intends to provide detail. As I have explained—respecting the public interest of disclosure, which I am committed to, but equally respecting the rights of individuals to privacy. Therefore, those individuals who consent to their names—attorneys who consent to their names being given, will be given. Those attorneys who do not wish their names to be given, the gross sums that are paid to those attorneys, minus names,

will also be given in the interest of full disclosure of public expenditure.

Madam Chairman: Member for Chaguanas West, thank you for waiting.

Mr. Rambally: Hon. AG, why are we continuing—and this arises directly out of this Sub-Head—why are we continuing to engage services of those who do wish to have their names published? They are being paid by taxpayers and it should be a condition that they are, in fact, prepared to have their fees published in the Parliament and that is the condition on which they will be engaged. Why are we continuing to just have this rotate year after year, budget after budget, supplemental or otherwise, mid-year or otherwise, and we are meeting the same problem, that we cannot have the list here produced when we want it because some attorneys may object to having their fees made public.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: My policy, as Attorney General, is to retain the best attorneys for the case at hand, from case to case.

Madam Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Mr. Hosein: Thank you very much. Madam Chair, I am on the line Item that deals with AML/CFT compliance unit. I noticed that there is an expenditure of \$360,000 for rental from the period July to September. Can the Attorney General give us some detail of the accommodation, please? Where is this?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: The accommodation is that the Secretariat of the CF—ACTF—CFATF, sorry, not the ACTF. The CFATF Secretariat resides in Nicholas Towers, downtown Port of Spain, on the Brian Lara Promenade.

Mr. Hosein: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East. I am ready for the question.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chair, on this matter of the Other Contracted Service—this is line Item 28—could the Attorney General indicate—give any details on the company owed, AXIELL, when was it recruited, and the terms and conditions of the recruitment of this company, and what is the total sum owed to the company?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: The entire project was \$1million originally. The company, AXIELL, is a Canadian company that provides software services and they have been providing services for the Registrar General's Department from that time.

Mr. Hosein: Attorney General, which department of the Registrar General? Companies Registry?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: It is the Companies Registry, in particular, the CROS—

Mr. Hosein: The CROS.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC:—you might be familiar with Companies Registry Online System. That

is the company that has been providing software services to bring the whole system digitally online for Trinidad and Tobago citizens to have easy, unimpeded access.

Mr. Hosein: So this \$1 million is what, the annual fee? Is the annual fee \$1 million?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: No, that was one of the original cost that was paid. There have been developments since then, so there was an example when, I think towards the end of 2023, when the existing system failed and I have spoken to that already in this House. Further work had to be done and AXIELL was brought on board because the existing system had failed and there was a purchase of a new system to replace the old system which failed. AXIELL had to be brought on board at short notice to tweak the existing software system which was intended for complete roll out to match the limited application that could be brought on board at the time in the legislative framework that existed at that time. Since then, as you know Member, we have been coming back to Parliament to amend the legislation to allow the complete overhaul of the AXIELL services. The annual figure varies between—the annual fee is US \$101,111.

Mr. Hosein: USD. Okay. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Member for Mayaro.

Mr. Paray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. AG just for clarity, this \$1 million is not a licensing fee but it is more of a warm body maintenance fee that is doing work in terms of the fixing of the Companies Registry?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: The \$1 million was for the total build-up of the system from that date and the US \$101,111 is the annual maintenance fee coming forward.

Mr. Paray: AG, is there a global partner that is actually on site or is AXIELL sending people from Canada here to do the job?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: Actually the way it is working out, and it is a dynamic system that is working out, AXIELL is working with the Registrar General's Department and on an ongoing basis, we have very able and active critical support through the Ministry of Digital Transformation who allow and bring their services to work with the Registrar General's Department to streamline what we are getting from AXIELL. Yes.

Mr. Paray: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche West.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Ma'am. Minister, I want to go back to the Rental Accommodation for the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force for the period July 2024 to September 2024.

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: *[Inaudible]* You lost me.

Mr. Tancoo: I am sorry, you will find me back. CFATF, I want to go back to that line Item where we have an increased supplementation for \$360,000 for the three-month period July to September. My question, Sir, is this like a first time or short term rental or was this property that we are talking about, that you just described to my colleague before, was this rented previously? So is this a continuation of the rent, a supplementation?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: The rental, to my recollection, began in March 1999, to house the CFATF Secretariat. It is an ongoing rental. By my recollection it is about 92 members of staff, the majority of whom are Trinidad and Tobago nationals and they service the large entity known as the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force which is the Caribbean component of the Financial Action Task Force to provide very important services to our transparency, beneficial ownership, relationships of our local banks with international banking. And that Secretariat—as a matter of fact when we speak right now, the 58th Plenary Session of CFATF is taking place, as I speak, at the Hyatt Hotel. There are 276 persons representing 23 delegations in Port of Spain, as we speak. It began yesterday, I attended the first session, it continues until Friday of this week and it is an absolutely invaluable service being provided by that Secretariat for CFATF and the Global Forum. And we are proud to have that Secretariat in Port of Spain.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you very much, Sir. Back to the question and the issues at hand, this estimate then works out to about \$120,000 per month. But what I am asking, the question I want to ask is, this a predictable expense, because you indicated that they had been at this location for several years, quite a few years. And therefore my question is, this is a predicable expense, why was it not considered in the annual budget delivered in 2023 for consideration for the fiscal 2024 year?

Sen. The Hon. Armour SC: It was considered among other fees. We did not get the full amount that we asked for at the time so we are coming now to supplement, to continue to make the commitment that we have given to this international organization.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Sir.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 23 supplemented by the sum of \$124,300,000.

Madam Chairman: Thank you Attorney General, thank you PS and your supporting officers.

Head 26: Ministry of Education, \$144,200,000

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

Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Ministry of Education is committed

to the provision of modern, quality, relevant and equitable education for all. As the staff of the Ministry of Education work toward the realization of this vision, the supplementary appropriation for fiscal 2024 is welcomed and will be utilized in furtherance of our mandate. Thank you.

Question proposed: That Head 26 be supplemented by the sum of \$144,200,000.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you most kindly, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like to refer the Minister's attention to line Item 01/006/01: Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance. We are asking for an increase in \$17,500,000. Can the hon. Minister advise how many teachers will be paid from this sum?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: This is to meet the shortage in allocation to facilitate the payment of the approximately 13,000 teachers in the primary school system.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, hon. Minister. And Minister, can you advise when these teachers can expect to receive their arrears of the increments and if this sum will be sufficient to treat with all outstanding payments to the teachers on this matter?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: At this time, 95 per cent of all teachers have received the arrears of increments and therefore of the primary section, \$230 billion has been already expended in that exercise.

Madam Chairman: Yes, Member for Tabaquite.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I am on the line Item that deals with Short Term Employment, where we are looking at an additional \$15 million. Under the line Item can you tell me if there is any consideration given to the payment for substitute teachers under this line Item with this supplementation of \$15 million given that I have had information from some of the substitute teachers that they have not been paid since April of 2024?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Hon. Members, no this line Item is not used to pay substitute teachers.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: So this line Item will be used to pay what exactly?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: The increase in the stipends awarded to invigilators and supervisors for the CSEC and CAPE examinations for January and June 2024. In addition to that, the data entry staff, it has to be supplemented to provide for the funds that were expended in paying the data entry staff who would have assisted with the completion of the back pay. In addition to that, it will make up the deficit to be able to pay short-term salaries for the rest of this fiscal.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: And so where will the shortfall for the substitute teachers come from?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: It does not come from this line Item.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Understood. But can they get some assurance that their payments will be made before—

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: This is a question on this line Item. So I have identified what is paid under this line Item?

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: No problem.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Minister with respect to Short-Term Employment and this \$15 million, could you advise how many persons were recruited as short-term employees?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: At this time, there are 279 short-term employees at the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Indarsingh: And you said that they were specifically data entry persons?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: No, I said that was one category of persons that the \$15 million will be used to make up the payment for. They were paid out of this Vote and the Vote is now in deficit. So we need that money to complete the payments that have to be made under this Vote for this fiscal.

Mr. Indarsingh: So this 277 persons that were recruited, could you give a breakdown in terms of the classification?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Social workers, 69; administrative personnel, 59. That is business operations clerks and coordinators, et cetera. Special education instructors, resource personnel, 39; nursing/education, 19; early childhood 13; guidance councillors, eight; ICT personnel four; developers under IT, four; procurement specialists, four; braille personnel, three; help desk assistants, one; facilities manager, one; human resource assistant, one; foreign language specialist, one; clerk of works, one; curriculum officer, one; and numeracy coach, one.

Mr. Indarsingh: And out of this short-term employees, again, how many worked on the completion of the arrears exercise, pertinent?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Fifty.

Mr. Indarsingh: Fifty. Out of this 277 short-term employees, could you advise how were they recruited?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: That information would not be present with me at this time.

Mr. Indarsingh: Would not be? Could you give an undertaking that you will furnish this meeting with such information?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: I would have a difficulty unless it is clarified what you are asking. We have

over 279 persons employed under short-term, employed for different periods of time, and I would need to be very clear about what you are asking, how each of these were recruited over the—however long they have been recruited, I would have a difficulty getting that information for you.

Mr. Indarsingh: No. I am very clear on what I am asking because \$15 million of taxpayers' money I want to know how constituents of Couva South probably were not informed of this short-term recruitment in the Ministry of Education. It is simple.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: If I may? These short-term—

Mr. Indarsingh: So that is why I am asking for the provision of information on how they were recruited.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: I can commit to providing the short-term officers and their period of recruitment. I cannot commit to providing how they were recruited. These are short-term officers.

Madam Chairman: So Member for Couva South, while I understand your interest, this exercise does not allow that particular interest. Okay?

Mr. Indarsingh: We will find out.

Madam Chairman: Yeah, I am sure. Member for St. Augustine.

Ms. Ameen: Thank you. Madam Minister, given that you indicated that there are 69 social workers to be considered under this Head, and given that there was a JSC—I think in 2021—which indicated that there were currently 127 school social workers, but because of the needs in the schools of over 300 there was a shortfall of close to 200 school social workers. Can you indicate if these 69 school social workers you mentioned are renewals of contracts or is it that you have 69 additional school social workers given we are facing all the school violence and other social ills that require the complements to be met?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: The category identified is social workers which would not only be the school social workers, they were also include the restorative practices facilitators. If that JSC was in 2021, then subsequent to that the Ministry of Education would have taken on 80 school social workers which were placed in the schools of focus that we have identified, and in addition to that we would have added to that another 26. So subsequent to that, we would have taken on 106 school social workers specifically, and about 40 to 80 guidance councillors to deal with the problem you are speaking about. Some of these persons identified here would be a part of that who are in between contracts and being sorted out now on, so they would appear on this short-term list.

Ms. Ameen: All right. Can you indicate what plans the Ministry has to reach up to the complement in this category?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: That would be outside of the questioning that we are speaking about now. At this point, we are talking about the payment for short-term workers.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche West.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Ma'am. Ma'am, I want to treat with this same line Item. I have understood what the Minister said in response to a question by one of my colleagues with regard to the method of selection of persons, the method of hiring, et cetera, but I was wondering whether the Minister cannot—I am sure that there would have been at some policy guideline that would determine the overall process for employing persons under short-term employment. So we are not asking specifically how you would have hired person A or person B, but what would have guided the process for hiring under short-term employment?

Madam Chairman: Member, again I rule that question out of order according to this exercise.

Mr. Tancoo: Then Ma'am I would request—

Madam Chairman: Do you have another question?

Mr. Tancoo: Yes, Ma'am. Then I would request with my colleague a breakdown of exactly how each person who would have been hired under this required money, how they were hired. Secondly, I would like the Minister to disaggregate between how much money was paid on the basis of the increase in stipends, and how much would have been paid on the basis of payment for salaries to short-term employees. Provide a disaggregation of the two items listed as the reason for the \$15 million increase in request.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Madam Chair, I once again reiterate that what can be provided is the list of short-term employees and the length of time that they have been employed under short-term. I cannot commit to providing the recruitment method used to get each of these persons into their position. In addition to that, with regard to the increase in stipends, \$2.3 million is allocated to the increase in stipends. Approximately \$1 million is to deal with the additional staff that we used for the back pay process, and \$36 million will be allocated to the payment of short-term staff, of which at this time we have 279.

Mr. Tancoo: Hold on. Hold on, Ma'am. You have asked for a \$15 million increase in allocation. You are now talking about a \$36 million, plus a \$2.3 million, plus a \$1 million. I am asking for a disaggregation specifically of this \$15 million.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: From the \$15 million, \$2.3 million will be going towards the invigilators/supervisors, \$1 million towards the additional staff that were used for the data entry back pay, and that will leave from the \$15 approximately \$9 million—\$10 million?—approximately \$12

million that would go into the back pay—sorry, the short-term Vote to pay workers for the rest of the fiscal in terms of short-term workers.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Ma'am. As I have the Floor, Ma'am, if I may continue, I turn to line Item 43: Security Services, where you are asking for \$12.7 million more for the provision of security services to enable payments of current and previous years' bills which arose from the increase in the minimum wage from effect from 01/2024 and are payable to MTS and other companies. So several questions arise there, Ma'am. If the minimum wage was increased from January 2024, what bills are outstanding from the previous years since the minimum wage would have taken effect from January 2024?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: If I may, Madam Chair, the total expenditure in 2022/2023, which was last fiscal under this line Item was \$224 million and that figure would have left unpaid arrears as of the end of the fiscal cycle. Therefore, if the Member wants the specific amount that is outstanding for that fiscal, that can be provided in writing. However, this increased provision of \$191 million will still be lower than what was expended on this line Item last year. So we can provide the exact amount that may be owing for fiscal 2022/2023 in writing.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you very much for that commitment, Ma'am. Can you also commit to provide it before the parliamentary debate on Friday?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: What?

Mr. Tancoo: The same information that you agreed—

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Sorry.

Mr. Tancoo: [*Laughter*]*—*to, committed to provide, would you be able to provide that before the debate on Friday, Ma'am?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Yes, that should be available.

Mr. Tancoo: May I also ask whether this that you are proposing will meet all outstanding payments at the end of fiscal 2024 or whether they would still have arrears? You indicated that some arrears came forward from previous years which is what you are trying to address with this increased allocation. Would this increased allocation together with the previous allocation be sufficient so that by the end of fiscal 2024, we would have none outstanding to pay for any security services under this line Item?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: No, that is not anticipated.

Mr. Tancoo: So is it that we are likely to have arrears? Predictable arrears?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Yes.

Mr. Tancoo: Can you also provide an estimate?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: I will not be able to provide that because during the fiscal, depending on the usage of funds in all of the Votes and so on, we will be pay more as more is paid—as more is available, sorry. So I would not be able to provide that because at the end of the fiscal, we will be able to make up based on what we have available to us.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Ma'am. But just out of curiosity, your request for \$12.7 million more would have been based on your assessment of the expenditure going forward, it is not just to pay arrears. It would be based—

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: The sum of \$12.7 million is what has been allocated in the midterm.

Mr. Tancoo: Yes, so my question then, is your assessment, your request for funds from the Ministry of Finance—

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: That does not reflect the requests.

Mr. Tancoo: May I? Your request for funds from the Ministry of Finance would have been based on your assessment that what you would need to end fiscal 2024 to pay all your bills for security services for fiscal 2024. I asked whether—even with my five minutes, I asked whether or not if what you have requested and what you would have gotten here now, once this is approved, will be sufficient to meet your needs. You indicated that it would not, so you are clear that this is not sufficient. I asked for an estimate. Based on your estimate that would have informed your request to the Ministry, you indicated this is not sufficient to meet all payments and there will still be arrears. That is the difference I am asking for. What is the value of the arrears? Estimated arrears.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: What I am committed to provide is whatever arrears were outstanding for the last fiscal. What I have indicated is that we have received an increased allocation and on the basis of this and whatever other funds will be made available to us from the Ministry of Finance, we will clear off as much of our payments for this fiscal as possible. Therefore, at this time, I will not be able to provide to you an estimate of what will be unpaid.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Ma'am. Can you also indicate what other companies? So in this, you indicated that some of this money is to be paid to MTS, National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited but you also indicated other companies are going to be owed money for security services. Can you provide a breakdown as to how much money MTS is going to receive and which other companies and their value that they will receive?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: We have eight companies that are providers of security, as the invoices come in, we will pay them. So it is not possible at this time to indicate how much. We are in the middle of the fiscal so it is not possible at this time to indicate how much of this \$12.7 million will go

to each of them. This will depend on what invoices are sent in and when they are sent in and when the payments are made.

Mr. Tancoo: That is frightening, Ma'am, because what you are explaining is that this 12.7 does not necessarily relate to what you actually need because you would have—you are—I will leave that for the debate, Ma'am. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, line Item 04/007/42: School Supplies and Book Grant, there is an allocation of \$20 million. But Minister, you would agree that when this announcement was made, it was made against the backdrop of high levels of unemployment and high levels of impoverishment in the country and it was met with a lot of enthusiasm, but with the figures given of 65,000 students being the targeted figure, you are now asking for \$20 million almost at the end of the school year. Can you then say how many students would have benefited from this grant, seeing that the target was 65,000 but we are at the end of the school year almost, and now \$20 million is being asked for in terms of supplementation, which tells us that a significant amount of students would not have benefited from this grant?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Madam Chair, this fiscal measure is intended to take effect within the new school year and the application for the school grant was opened on April the 1st to the 26th, 2024. To date, in that time, we have received 26,967 applications which are now being processed. Of those, 10,428 have had all the information provided and so on and have been deemed satisfactory and therefore based on what we have received, the number of applications received, the \$20 million should be sufficient to cover those who would have applied for the book grant.

Mr. Padarath: Minister, therefore, in light of those who have actually applied for the grant going forward into the new school year, what provisions are being put in place in terms of additional applications? Is it that you would be opening—because I will tell you this. A lot of people have been coming to my constituency office, and I am sure almost all MPs, specifically asking about this and therefore I was told that there was a cut-off date in terms of the application process. Can you say if that is indeed so and when would the application process be reopened for those wishing to apply? Because you would have an intake of new students coming into the academic year in September.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: At this time, applications remain closed as we are processing what we have available now. Depending on the number of grants that are given, we will reopen the application process but we are first processing what is available to us now so that we are able to give the grants in good time for the opening of the next school year which is when they are intended to come into effect.

Mr. Padarath: Minister, as you would appreciate, the July/August vacation period is fast approaching. Is the Ministry looking at the possibility of reopening those applications before we embark on the July/August when actually people will get booklists, et cetera, to purchase books for their children?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: We are going to be processing as quickly as we can. We have reached 15,000 out of the 26 and we will be processing as quickly as we can to be able to deal with the first tranche of persons who would have applied. Once we have been able to deal with those, then we will look at how soon we can possibly reopen the applications. But at this time, our focus is on dealing with those that are before us.

Madam Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Mr. Hosein: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Minister, I am on line Item 01 which deals with Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance. This \$17 million expenditure or an increase in the allocation, just to confirm, Minister, this is in relation to the 4 per cent revised terms and conditions for the teachers?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: We would have paid the 4 per cent based on the backpay out of this Vote for primary teachers and so to pay the salaries until the end of the fiscal, we would require a supplementation of that amount.

Mr. Hosein: So this is not for the backpay but just going forward for the secondary school?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Yes.

Mr. Hosein: Okay, thanks.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: For the primary.

Mr. Hosein: For primary also. Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I am on the line Item that deals with the school supplies and book grants. Given that you are still in the process of—well, you are processing the applications, will there be any communication made to the unsuccessful applicants? Are they going to know that they are not eligible for a book grant?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: We have sent quite a few applications back to schools for verification. A lot of those applications have incomplete information submitted. So we are doing our best to get parents, even though they would have submitted incomplete applications, to give us the information so that we can. But yes, the intention is to apprise persons of their success, or if they are not apprised by a certain time, to let them know that it means that they were not successful.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: That was part of my question, if it was a simple matter of an incomplete application or a missing document, if they would be able to submit that, because a lot of the persons who are, in fact, in need find it very difficult to go through the bureaucracy of accessing the grants and they find it more difficult to, you know, get the copies in, et cetera. So they will get the opportunity to provide the missing information.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: As we did with the means test for the laptops, we really tried to allow persons the time to be able to get some documents in. Some persons have more difficulty than others, as you have indicated, so we are working with it.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Will you also be making it public, what exactly is in the means test, how are you accessing who is needy versus who is not in need of the extra thousand dollars?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: No, we will not be discussing that in public, as we did not for the means test for the laptops as well. What we are doing is, based on the applications, we are taking the neediest first, and based on that, if we have extra, we will extend it, but we are taking those who have been identified as the most needy ones first.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: One final question. During the budget debate, there was a figure of 65,000 persons anticipated. That for some—I assume the Minister of Finance would have sought advice to come up with that number 65,000 number, and he did not pull it out of a hat. So is it that as you go through the applications—I know you have given us the number of applications you have received thus far. But is there any method, in terms of working with the Minister of Social Development and Family Services, for example, to reach out to those persons who would have made up the data that gave you the 65,000, and for some reason or another, whether it be that they are in a rural community and they are not able to access the information, or that they are not in a space to access the information that the grant is available and that this is what you need to apply, is there any outreach for persons—because, as you said, the Minister would have identified that there are some 65,000 persons who may be in need. So is there an outreach in that regard?

Mr. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Once your colleague is ceding to you, I will allow it.

Mr. Imbert: Yes, these are the estimates prepared by the Ministry of Finance. We have to use all available information. The public servants looked at the number of persons who received school meals. So it is sort of a rule of thumb approach because that is based on a means test.

But what it tells us—not just this, but another matter, which I will not detain the House with—is that sometimes we have numbers of persons who we believe are entitled to social grants and social

measures, but when you send out an invitation for persons to apply for another grant based on the existing information, you find a lower number, and what does that tell you? It could be what you are saying, that persons are unable to access it. It could also tell you that there are persons accessing these services who, you know, are not entitled to them.

Mr. Imbert: So I have seen that in another grant that we did where there was a significantly large number given to us by the Ministry of Social Development, well over \$100,000, in terms of a particular grant. But when we ask people to apply for the grant, the actual applications were far less. And it makes you wonder if there is need for a greater forensic examination of the people getting grants. Okay?

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you most kindly Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like to refer the hon. Minister's attention to line Item 02/001/43: Security Services, with an increase of \$12,700,000. Minister, one of the major issues that we see happening in the education system is our students being victims of violence, violence happening in the school place, a lot of school violence has been occurring within recent times. Can the hon. Minister advise if this \$12,700,000—any of that—is going to be allocated specifically for the combat in the increase in school violence?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: Madam Chair, this funding, identified under this vote is to be used to pay for the provision of security services across our schools, our nation, and insofar as those services were implemented, one, to provide security to the school buildings, as well as to assist where possible in any disciplinary infractions, then that will be the benefit to all the students.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you Madam Minister. And yes, while you have a responsibility to provide security to the buildings, we also have a responsibility to provide security to the students. And I am seeing here other companies for the provision of security services, so we are making payments to MTS, and other companies for the provision of security services. Madam Minister, what we have been seeing circulating in the public space is a lot of these acts of violence happening in the school, happens like after school, sometimes in front the school, sometime outside of the schools. And is any consideration being taken to provide patrols, to provide additional security services there to the front of the schools, after the schools, et cetera, so that we can seriously address this issue of school violence that is happening?

Madam Chairman: Member, while I think your question is important, for the purposes of this exercise, it is out of order. The Minister has said what this vote is for, what this allocation is for, I think she even went on to say there are eight companies for providing the security services for what

particular purpose, so maybe your question you can ask at another stage, not in this exercise. Member for St. Augustine.

Ms. Ameen: Thank you. Can the Minister state for what period this money is outstanding for? How far back we are going?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: Which money outstanding?

Ms. Ameen: Under the same Security Services, yeah.

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: Just to indicate that this increase will be used to pay current bills, and we would have been able to clear off some of our outstanding bills for the previous fiscal. So it is not a matter of this is arrears, this is also to deal with the current payments that are being invoiced to us monthly.

Ms. Ameen: Okay. And does this cover all of the current bills you have before you?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: It will not.

Ms. Ameen: Can you indicate how much additional you would need to cover all?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: At this time, what I can indicate, is in 2022/23, we had expended \$224 million under this line item. At this time the revised subdivision is \$191 million, we have not reduced any of the providers or guards of schools. Therefore, just based on the trend as for last year, it will not be sufficient. However, during the rest of the fiscal, based on our allocation and our interaction with the Ministry of Finance, additional funds once required will be provided, and therefore, at the end of the fiscal is when we would know what would be outstanding.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Chair. Minister, very quickly, with respect to the schoolbook—school supplies, and the book grant, I mean given the budgetary process, we all know that after the mid-year review and so on, do you have a timeline when this will actually be rolled out based on the needs of challenged families and so on?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: We are processing now, and we intend that before school closes, we will start to make payments to the parents. School closes the 1st week of July.

Mr. Indarsingh: And some of my colleagues have zeroed in on the issue of communication, and challenges with vulnerable families and so on. For example, I would have sent 17 letters to your Ministry based on 26 vulnerable children. Would Members of Parliament's offices be communicated with respect to whether the applications have been denied or shorting information, so that we can assist these families to rectify whatever shortcomings and so on?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: I have not received 17 letters from you on the matter of this book grant. Though—

Mr. Indarsingh: I am very efficient, I am very efficient.

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly:—well I am just saying that I have not received, but you would also know in your efficiency that I also respond to letters that are sent to me from any Member of Parliament.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: I cannot commit to necessarily giving a blow by blow of every constituent that you have that has been awarded, however, if there is a query on issue I am certainly available—as you know by phone as well—to assist any Member of Parliament.

Mr. Indarsingh: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre—are you finished?

Mr. Indarsingh: No, and—

Madam Chairman: Are you finished? No? Okay, sorry.

Mr. Indarsingh:—with respect to gratuities to contract officers, \$20 million has been requested and we are seeing it has to do with arrears of gratuity to contract officers as far back as 2019. Is there any reason for delay in relation to the payment to contract officers?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: There are a number of factors which would affect payment of gratuity, terms and conditions, settling of terms and conditions, that is one of the things that—not in all cases is up to date, and so these things would—and others like it. Also if workers have any outstanding leave applications and so on, these will delay the payments of gratuities to officers. So, in some cases it is pretty straightforward, in some cases it is a bit more complicated and takes a longer time.

Mr. Indarsingh: So these things are dependent on your Ministry or the Office of the Chief Personnel Officer?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: The staff member themselves, the Ministry and the Chief Personnel Officer.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Point-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, the line Item school supplies and book grant, \$20 million. When the Budget was read back in October, I got the impression—and I stand to be corrected—that this line Item was specific for this fiscal year '23/24 as far as the book grant is concerned of \$1,000. Question one is that, why it took so long, I think your window to apply was from the 1st of April to the 30th of April, am I correct?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: The 11th to 26th.

Mr. Lee: “Ah?”

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: The 11th to the 26th.

Mr. Lee: The 11th what?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: The 11th of April to the 26th.

Mr. Lee: Or, the 11th of April to the 26th of April. Why was that window so tight for applications to be received from the vulnerable in that two-week period, or just about two-week period? And that is my first question, why? And if applications were received after the 26th, what happens to those applications? Would they be processed for this fiscal?

Hon. Gadsby-Dolly: Okay, let me clear up the first misconception, the budget measure was in effect for the coming school year so that we are well within our time at this point for implementation. In terms of the second question, the deadline was extended to the 30th, to allow for additional persons who would not have made the 26th to give in their applications. It is an online system, therefore if it came in after that, it would not have been received because it would be shut off.

As I indicated, persons would have submitted some without the full documentation, and what we have done is verify with the schools and allow parents—identify and allow parents to submit some of the full documentation that is required. Of course, looked at by some as bureaucracy, but also very important and necessary when you are expending taxpayers' money. So, once we are able to process this initial batch and we do have funds that are remaining, we will, and we intend to, reopen the application period.

However, we must deal with what we have in front of us now, so that in a timely fashion we would be able to start making payments to the persons who would have applied and then we would deal with those who come in afterwards, if we are able to extend the deadline again—to open again.

Mr. Lee: So Minister, this measure that is being given out, these applications that are being funded, is really for next year fiscal, '24/'25?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Yes, it is for that academic year.

Mr. Lee: For that academic year.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: So, we are processing now to be able to give the funds in this fiscal so that they have access to the funds in the next academic year.

Mr. Lee: Okay, I misinterpret. I thought when it was measured it was for this fiscal.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche West.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Madam. I refer to line Item 04/011/02: National Schools Dietary Services, where you are asking for an increased allocation of \$47 million to enable the payment of salaries for staff of the National Schools Dietary Services Limited, as well as to provide meals to students for the period June 2024 to September 2024. Minister, can you provide some level of disaggregation so we

can know how much is actually for the payment of staff and how much is for the payment of meals?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: The National Schools Dietary Services Limited would have expended 270 million in fiscal 2022/2023. So, to be able to match that expenditure, another 20 million would have been required based on the estimate of 250. That would be in total to deal with all of the expenditure in terms of their caterers, as well as staffing, and so on.

In addition to that, as of April 2023, there was a \$1 increase in the cost of meals given to that institution. Therefore, the expenditure may go over that 270 million that was spent last year and so there is extra allocated in this mid-term to be able to cater for that. I do not have necessarily a breakdown of how much of the 47 million would be used for staff and how much for meals, but it is all taken as their operation expenditure, and that is the supplementation to provide for what was expended last year and if there is any increase, based on the increase in the meals.

Mr. Tancoo: Just for clarification, the additional expenditure for the provision of meals would have been because of this increase in the cost of providing the meals?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Yes. There is no increase in the number necessarily.

Mr. Tancoo: Excellent. You indicated \$273 million was paid under this line Item: National Schools to the National Schools Dietary Services Limited in 2023, and therefore that you had a shortfall of 20million coming out of the budget?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Yes, based on the provisions that were given in this.

Mr. Tancoo: So is it that you had an under-budgeting or an underfunding? Is it that you requested a matching of the Revised Estimate of 273 that you got in 2023? Did you request something parallel but got less and, therefore, now you are asking for the supplementation?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: I do not have the Estimate before me, what the Ministry would have submitted. What I have before me though is the budget provision, which would have been 250, which is in fact less than the expenditure in the last fiscal.

Mr. Tancoo: Just for the clarification then. So this does not deal with any additional staffing that has been hired by the NSDL?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: No, it is not meant to cater for that, no.

Mr. Tancoo: All right. So then Minister, can I ask if you would provide in writing at your convenience that breakdown; the amount that would have been paid for staff specifically, as opposed to the amount that would have been paid for the provision of over facets, the increased meal, et cetera.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: And that is for last fiscal or for this fiscal?

Mr. Lee: This fiscal. I am clear that last fiscal you would have received a figure that would have

netted some 270 million, as you told us, but because you had a \$250 million allocation you ended up with this shortfall. I just want to get the actual breakdown.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Okay, sure.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you. And, Minister, this would be sufficient to ensure that you have no arrears of salaries and/or to contractors and suppliers to the NSDL? This would be sufficient to cover that?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Well, in 2022/2023, there were no arrears going forward. So, one would expect if it continues in the same trend then, yes, it would be sufficient.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Ma'am.

Madam Chairman: Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Madam Chair, the same Item 04/011/02. You have explained disaggregation of the \$47million supplemental to June, and it says:

“...to provide meals for students for the period June2024 to September 2024.”

Could you give us an idea of how many students at the moment would be getting meals during this period, on average?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: I do not have before me the number of students at this time. Daily they provide 54,000 breakfast meals and 79,000 lunches. So, it would be within that order, but I could provide the exact number.

Mr. Charles: In a previous allocation they are saying 65,000 needy students. How does the Ministry go about identifying students who are eligible for this?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: They apply.

Mr. Charles: Excuse me?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: They apply within the school. The principal has the forms and they apply through the principal.

Mr. Charles: So, is there any quality assurance to ensure, for example, that some students may need, but do not apply? In other words, are we sure that those in need actually get?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Well, the Ministry uses the funding that is provided to provide lunches and breakfasts for those who indicated a need.

Mr. Charles: Right. The teachers, for example, if a teacher sees a child who is in need but the child, for whatever reason, his parents cannot read or write or whatever, they would have to apply mechanisms to ensure that he—

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: There is provision in place for teachers to liaise with parents and to assist in this regard.

Mr. Charles: Right. In my time and I think those who are of my age would know that in the colonial era every child got a glass of milk, skim milk I think it was, and a nutritious biscuit. The philosophy was that all children would access this offer by the State, and that it would be low cost, because it was not expensive. Have we given thought to broadening the number of people by lowering the individual costs, having regard to the nutritional needs of our young citizens?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: I think what we have identified here are students who require the assistance. Those whose parents can provide for them, we allow them to do that so that we can focus this funding on those who need it the most.

Madam Chairman: Thank you so much for the reminder of the milk and biscuit days. Member for Tabaquite.

Mr. Charles: I was a beneficiary.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I unfortunately never benefitted from the milk and biscuits during the colonial times. However—

Madam Chairman: Actually it was independence time. I did not go to school in the colonial time.

Mr. Young: The PNM got rid of the colonial masters. I want to put that on the record.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Madam Chairman, I have excited the population with a history lesson, and I would like to get back on track very quickly, thank you.

Just quickly on the National School Dietary Services, Madam Minister, in our documents that we have, it also says that this \$47million would be paid to provide meals for students for the period June 2024 to September 2024. Now, given the school year ends in July and picks back up in September, can you tell me exactly how much money we are looking to expend from June to September 2024, under this particular line Item?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: The expenditure last fiscal was in the order of 270million. So, we would expect that it would approximate that. However, we are catering for any increases in the cost based on the increased cost of the meals and also the National Schools Dietary Services Limited, they do provide services for the Vacation Revision Programme. And so, those students will also benefit, and have been benefitting even in the after-school programme during this fiscal from the services of the NSDSL. So, it should approximate to the order of 270, but we have been allocated extra to be able to cater for if it goes beyond that. This would be the first year that we are having the entire fiscal with the increase and the after-school programme and the Vacation Revision Programme. So, we are looking at 270 as an average, but we may go over and so we have the catering for that.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Okay. Thank you. And is it the same application process for the meals for the Vacation Revision Programme? If it is the same that you have to apply, you have to indicate that the meal is required.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: No. For the Vacation Revision Programme they supply—

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Everybody gets?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Yes.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Okay.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: And for the after-school programme.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Alright. I do not know if I could continue. So just moving on to the other line Item with the Metal Industries Company Limited, National Skills Development Programme. We are looking at supplementing \$12 million. If you can give us a breakdown of where this \$12 million will be going?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: This covers the STEEP Programme which is a new programme introduced by the MIC where they go into different communities. They have five cycles running from January 2024 to August 2024 at 18 centres nationwide, in six-week sessions. They are catering to reach 500 hundred students and they have done three cycles already with a total of 270 students, and the total cost for that programme is budgeted at \$3.75 million. So, that is a part of that increase. In addition to that, the operational cost at three of the centres, Pointe-a-Pierre, St. Bedes, and Macoya. They require some supplementation and so that is in the order of \$1.25 million and the operational expenditure of MIC itself which was \$40 million in the last fiscal, was allocated \$33 million in this fiscal and therefore \$7 million is required to meet the last fiscal's recurrent expenditure. That is the breakdown.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you most kindly, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like to refer the Minister's attention to line Item 04/001/02: National School Dietary Services. That a \$47 million increase which is really to provide meals for students for the period June 2024 to September 2024. I want to ask the hon. Minister if it is that this allocation is to provide the meals from June to September if all outstanding arrears or outstanding payments to the suppliers have been met.

I am asking this against the backdrop that we have received several complaints that providers of the school transport system, the maxi-taxi operators have not been paid but there is no line Item here to treat and deal with that. However, in addition to the school transport not being paid, can you confirm whether all the suppliers for this school dietary services have actually been paid up to May

month?

Madam Chairman: So Member, I am a bit confused. I got lost in the statement. Are we talking about school transport? If we are talking about that, I am not going to allow that question. Is your question only about this item here about the dietary services?

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I referenced school transport with respect to the—

Madam Chairman: No, no. I just want to know the question so I know whether I will allow it.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair the question is related to the school dietary services and suppliers to confirm from the Minister if it is that all suppliers have received their payments and there are no further outstanding payments under this line item?

Madam Chairman: Okay. Thank you.

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Yes.

Hon. Members: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Yes. The question was answered.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I know where my colleague wanted to go, so let me ask a relevant question, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Ministry of Education has asked for a \$144.2 million increase overall above their allocation in the estimates of expenditure from the Budget. Does any of that request for an increase of \$144.2 million deal with any of the existing arrears specifically for the transport of school children?

Madam Chairman: So Member, I am not going to allow that question because we all have some explanatory notes which deal with the breakdown, and to me, they are patently clear. So, if you want to ask a question about any of these items in the breakdown I will certainly allow it.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes, Madam Chair. Minister, very quickly the expansion of this programme of the Student Enhancement Empowerment Programme from 26 to 500 youths. How this expansion is being communicated?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: I myself, Member have seen the Ministry of Education sharing it via social media, as well as MIC sharing it, and I as a Member of Parliament have taken up those advertisements and have disseminated from my office to all the constituents that I can. So, it is being disseminated via social media and it is available for students, for persons—

Mr. Indarsingh: As the line Minister could you recommend to MIC to communicate with the

Members of Parliament—

Madam Chairman: So, you know, member for Couva South, I know you know you are skating on the periphery but I only allowed it in the interest of the public but I am not going to let you go off the table completely. Okay? So, Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like to refer the Minister's attention to line Item 04/001/07: Metal Industries Company Limited. Minister, can you advise, when will the trainees receive their training material and protective equipment as outlined here in the explanation?

Hon. Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: Once the process for the midterm has been completed and the Ministry is credited the funding, then we would do the necessary to MIC for them to go through their processing to do what is required.

Mr. Ratiram: Hon. Minister, can you advise us how the absence of this training material and personal protective equipment for the trainees has affected the administration of this programme?

Madam Chairman: So, Member, again, I rule that question out of order. I am sure it is an important question and you will have another opportunity to ask it at another time.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 26 supplemented by the sum of \$144,200,000.

Madam Chairman: I thank the Ministers and the PS and the supporting staff.

Head 28: Ministry of Health, \$495,286,000.

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

Hon. Deyalsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Good afternoon to you and good afternoon to the Committee. The Ministry of Health is a national authority charged with oversight of the entire health system in Trinidad and Tobago. It plays a central role in the protection of the population's health and in ensuring that all organizations and institutions that produce health goods and services, conform to standards of safety. That concludes my statement, Madam Chair. I am open to questions.

Question proposed: That Head 28 be supplemented by the sum of \$495,286,000.

Madam Chairman: Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, if I can draw reference to recurrent expenditure 02/001/08: Rent/Lease Office Accommodation and Storage. Can you indicate what the shortfall of \$8,837,024, what period that will cover?

Hon. Deyalsingh: Thank you. So, that covers a shortfall from fiscal 2023 to 2024.

Dr. Bodoë: So, with this allocation, Minister, would you be in a position or the Ministry be in a position to cover their rental commitments to the end of fiscal 2024?

Hon. Deyalsingh: Yes. I am advised that that is so.

Dr. Bodoë: Right. Can you indicate just by way of information, the monthly rental for that building?

Hon. Deyalsingh: Okay. So, it has to do mainly with the lease arrangement—the both arrangements for the new Ministry of Health headquarters which is not really a rental. It is \$2.9 million which is per month which is paid quarterly.

Dr. Bodoë: Minister, the request for rental payment to the Ministry of Health's previous head office. Can you indicate whether this building is still occupied?

Hon. Deyalsingh: No, we vacated that building around October/November of 2023. The move was completed then.

Dr. Bodoë: All right. So this is just to cover the outstanding rent.

Hon. Deyalsingh: Correct.

Dr. Bodoë: You would have said in the last budget presentation that the Vertical Division of the Ministry of Health and the Insect Vector Control Division were not, at that time, going to be moved into the new building. Can you indicate whether that is still the situation, or whether those divisions will not be moved?

Hon. Deyalsingh: So that does not fall under this line item.

Dr. Bodoë: All right. So, Minister, if I can move on to Drugs and Other Related Materials and Supplies?

Hon. Deyalsingh: Sure.

Dr. Bodoë: So with regard to the sum requested for \$202,583,300, which is:

“To facilitate part payment for outstanding invoices on hand for over 90 days at NIPDEC...”

This is:

“...for the pharmaceuticals and non-pharmaceuticals...”

Can you indicate how many invoices were on hand over the 90 days?

Hon. Deyalsingh: How many invoices?

Dr. Bodoë: Yes.

Hon. Deyalsingh: I will not have that detail with me.

Dr. Bodoë: Sorry. Can you undertake to provide that in writing?

Hon. Deyalsingh: If it is available, we will certainly try.

Dr. Bodoë: In that case, Minister, can you also indicate, or commit to list the suppliers you are owed?

Hon. Deyalsingh: Sorry, list the?

Dr. Bodoë: The suppliers who are owed this amount.

Hon. Deyalsingh: List the suppliers?

Dr. Bodoë: Yes.

Hon. Deyalsingh: If we can get it from NIPDEC, we will endeavour to do so.

Dr. Bodoë: Minister, can you make a commitment to have this provided before the debate on Friday?

Hon. Deyalsingh: We will certainly contact NIPDEC, and if NIPDEC can supply it in the time frame, we will do so.

Dr. Bodoë: All right. So, Minister, can you indicate—because it is also here, inclusive of CDAP's monthly recurrent expenditure. Can you give a breakdown of how this sum will be, in terms of the allocation to—

Hon. Deyalsingh: Sure.

Dr. Bodoë:—CDAP?

Hon. Deyalsingh: Yes. So, for example, vaccines: HPV vaccines, \$1.4 million; pharmaceuticals, \$555.9 million. And the breakdown for that: \$132.7 million for oncology drugs alone; \$20.6 million for HIV drugs alone; \$40.5 million for antibiotics/anti-infectives; \$58.7 million for psychiatry; \$60.3 million for NCDs alone.

When we come to non-pharmaceuticals, about \$84.8 million, of which \$28.4 million is for medical devices for ophthalmology, renal treatment consumables; \$8.4 million for diagnostics; \$1.2 million for orthopaedic products; \$460,000 for PPE; \$200,000 for HIV test kits and so on. So that is some of the details that you are asking for.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Minister, for that information. So, Minister, are you in a position to say the total amount outstanding? Because in the explanation, we are being told here, this is to facilitate part payment for outstanding invoices at NIPDEC? Are you in a position to say what would be the total amount outstanding?

Hon. Deyalsingh: I do not have that exact figure with me but we can try and get it for you.

[Minister confers with technocrat]

Hon. Deyalsingh: Sorry, I am being told \$392 million.

Dr. Bodoë: Outstanding?

Hon. Deyalsingh: Yes.

Dr. Bodoë: Okay. I just want to make it clear. So we are saying \$392 million outstanding and you are paying off \$202 million?

Hon. Deyalsingh: Yes.

Dr. Bodoë: Okay. Can you give an indication, Minister, as to the reasons why you would have had the invoices outstanding for 90 days?

Hon. Deyalsingh: A lot has to do with when the invoices actually reach NIPDEC and when they are certified. It is a little process.

Dr. Bodoë: Yes. Minister, if I can just draw your attention to the other transfers, 04/009/02 to 04/009/05? These would be the allocations to the regional health authorities. And I just want to start with the North West Regional Health Authority with regard to the request for \$40 million—just over \$40 million, and the explanation here is:

“To enable the North West Regional Health Authority to meet the partial payment of outstanding trade payables...”

And there is a list included here of the various services.

Hon. Deyalsingh: As you said—

Dr. Bodoë: Yeah. So the particular question would be with regard to the NWRHA. Are any of the outstanding payments would due to the janitorial services companies specifically providing services at the NICU in the Port of Spain General Hospital? Can you give us an indication, Minister?

Hon. Deyalsingh: So we do not go into that type of detail here, but there are general janitorial services for the entire facility.

Dr. Bodoë: Yeah. Would you in a position to provide that allocation in writing, Minister?

Hon. Deyalsingh: The allocation for what, Member? Could you be specific?

Dr. Bodoë: Particularly, the services that will be the janitorial services at the NICU in Port of Spain General Hospital?

Hon. Deyalsingh: So, Member, I am quite surprised because you are a former CEO of a RHA. We do not break janitorial services by ward. You know that. So it is a general allocation for total janitorial services, and you know that.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Imbert: Madam Chairman, may I intervene?

Madam Chairman: So I think the Minister of Finance wants to add some clarification.

Mr. Imbert: Thank you very much. I would just like to make it crystal clear that, as far as I am concerned, when I interpret the Standing Orders, this matter relates only to supplementation of an appropriation and therefore, whatever question the hon. Member is asking, can only refer to that supplementation, not what happened before. That is going back in the past. That is my

understanding. You cannot go back in the past.

Madam Chairman: Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Minister of Finance, and I am so guided. Minister, can you then, just for clarity, with regard again to NWRHA, provide a disaggregation—based on the various headings that you are asking:

“...utilities, rent...security services, food supplies...”

—and so on, would you be in a position to provide a—

Hon. Deyalsingh: Yes.

Dr. Bodoë:—disaggregation now, or in writing later?

Hon. Deyalsingh: I can give you that now. Medical supplies, \$13.5 million; utilities, \$3.8 million; security services, \$10.2 million; food supplies, \$10.5 million.

Madam Chairman: So, Member Bodoë, I know you may not have been finished, but I will invite other Members, so that we can rotate this.

Dr. Bodoë: Sure. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni East.

Dr. Seecheran: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Minister, what are the terms of the rental agreement for the Ministry of Health’s Administrative Building, in terms of the yearly payments and the duration of the contract?

Hon. Deyalsingh: So it is not a rental, as I explained.

Dr. Seecheran: The bolt agreement, sorry.

Hon. Deyalsingh: It is a bolt agreement, it is for 15 years, and I have already given the value per quarter.

Dr. Seecheran: So what is the total amount that the country would pay over this 15-year period?

Madam Chairman: Okay. So—

Hon. Deyalsingh: Madam Chair, can I have a ruling?

Madam Chairman: Okay. So just one minute. So, Member, I cannot allow this line of questioning based on this. It is very likely that that information is already residing somewhere that is available to us. If not, as I have said before, Members would have other opportunities to interrogate things in a different exercise. You have anything else, Member for Caroni East?

Dr. Seecheran: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, line Item 04/009/02: North West Regional Health Authority. Here, they say that it is:

“To enable the...Authority to meet partial payments...”

—of a various number of payables, including:

“...utilities, rent...”

And then, they say:

“...other expenses...”

Do these “other expenses” include legal fees? And if so, can you expand on those?

Hon. Deyalsingh: I am not aware that this includes legal fees.

Dr. Seecheran: Okay.

Hon. Deyalsingh: It is for “trade payables” as clearly stated.

Dr. Seecheran: And Minister, it also states “security services”. Would there be a security upgrade with regard to the North West Regional Health Authority given certain instances—

Hon. Deyalsingh: Madam Chairman, could I have a ruling on this, please?

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, again, Member, it is quite clear. They said:

“...partial payment...as at February 29, 2024.”

So we could interrogate it that way but not in terms of future plans. Okay? Anything else, Member? Yeah? Okay. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Dr. Ragbir: Thank you Madam Chairman. To the hon. Minister, I want to refer back to Sub-Item 39: Drugs and other related materials and supplies. Can the hon. Minister state due to these invoices being overdue, did it cause—was it responsible for any delay in distribution of CDAP drugs not being able to persons that need it, such life-saving medication?

Hon. Deyalsingh: So let me state categorically that in front of a Joint Select Committee held just two weeks ago, where the Member for Fyzabad was a Member. It was clearly demonstrated, there has been no disruption in the provision of pharmaceuticals. That was held in a Joint Select Committee for over four hours.

Madam Chairman: Member for Caroni Central. No, Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, if I can just refer to the allocation for the Eastern Regional Health Authority and that would be 04/009/03, the sum of over \$60 million being requested and in particular to the second part, which is the deficit in operation expenses with regard to the sum of \$48,408,614. And this speaks to—it is broken down into personnel emoluments and goods and services. With regard to the personnel emoluments Minister, can you give us an update on what is happening at the Sangre Grande Hospital and whether that allocation will speak to the employment of additional staff, or whether it will be for staff being transferred from the current facility to the new facility.

Hon. Deyalsingh: It would be a combination. As we ramp up new services in the new hospital, some staff will be transferred, as some departments will be transferred but then some services which start over de novo, we will have new people coming in.

Dr. Bodoë: Yes. Would you be in a position—thank you Minister—as part of the operationalization plan to say how many new staff would be engaged in that facility and perhaps give a breakdown?

Hon. Deyalsingh: What we expect, for instance, Specialist Medical Officers, 20; Registrars, 31; House Officers, 60; lab techs, 20; EMTs, 32; pharmacy staff, 19 and other administrative staff. So those are some of categories of staffing that will be required.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you Minister. Just to be clear, that speaks to new staff that will be hired for this facility or it speaks to a combination of current and new staff?

Hon. Deyalsingh: As I indicated, it is going to be a combination. Some staff will be transferred and some new staff would be hired. It is campus facility. The old hospital, new hospital and the enhanced health facility. So that is what we are doing.

Dr. Bodoë: I am just trying, Madam Chair, if I can persist just a little bit further. Would Minister be in a position to give this breakdown of the new staff? That is what I am trying to get the answer to.

Hon. Deyalsingh: We can ask the ERHA for that for new staff and if it is available and able to be produced before Friday, we will certainly endeavour to do that.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Deyalsingh: You are welcome.

Dr. Bodoë: Through you, Madam Chairman, if I can refer to the SWRHA allocation of just over \$60,000,000, again to make the payment of outstanding trade payables. Minister, can you give us a disaggregation according to the categories requested here, as to what sums would be required to meet these outstanding payables.

Hon. Deyalsingh: Some of the critical categories would be medical supplies, 43.3 million; utilities, 5.6 million; security services, 13.8 million; janitorial, 3.7 million and food supplies, 4.7 million.

Dr. Bodoë: Through you again, Madam Chair. Minister can you give us a similar breakdown for the sum of 121 million, 126 million additional allocation being requested for the NCRHA. Can you disaggregate that amount?

Hon. Deyalsingh: Sure. So for North Central Regional Health Authority, Medical Supplies, 65.1 million; Utilities, 17.4 million; Security Services, 18.2 million; Janitorial, 3.6 million and Food Supplies, 1.9 million.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you.

Hon. Deyalsingh: You are welcome.

Madam Chairman: Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Dr. Ragbir: Yeah. Thank you Madam Chair. To the hon. Minister, that same line Item: 04, Sub Item, the 121 million, are any of these moneys for the Couva Multidisciplinary Hospital?

Hon. Deyalsingh: So this is under North Central Regional RHA. They operate many facilities so it will be a combination of Mount Hope, Caura, Arima, Couva and all health centres under their purview.

Dr. Ragbir: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche West.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you. Minister, the line Items referred to before, in fact, I think this will be all line Items referred to before a lot of these are for payment of arrears. Can the Minister indicate whether the additional \$495,286,000 that is now being requested would pay off all arrears so that we will not have any arrears outstanding at the end of fiscal 2024?

Hon. Deyalsingh: It depends on when invoices come in. So we cannot say categorically, but this will go a very long way in clearing up arrears. And as invoices come in, they may carry over into another fiscal as you know.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance.

Mr. Imbert: I would just like to make a general point. You will realize we are supplementing the Ministry of Health by almost \$500 million, almost half a billion dollars. Now, the Ministry of Health already requires significant sums of money every year, another 5 million or so. It is proving quite difficult to finance the purchase of free pharmaceuticals and all the other free services that are available in the health sector. So, I just want Members to understand this. We believe this is important, we have to do it, but to find that \$500 million is going to prove to be very difficult. If one actually looks at how much is being spent on the health sector over the years, it has been increasing exponentially.

I recall when I was Minister of Health, which is some 20-odd years ago, the budget was 1 billion. So in that 20 years, it increased from 1 billion to over 5 billion. So understand, we as a country spend huge amounts of money on health care, and it is something that we need to look at to make sure that we are getting value for money and so on.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you most kindly Madam Chair. Madam Chair, to the hon. Minister, I want to bring the Minister's attention back to the North West Regional Health Authority, that increase of 40 million, and the explanation provided here is:

“...to meet the partial payment of outstanding trade payables”—and listing the trade payables—“as at February 29, 2024.”

And, hon. Minister, we have seen recently the incident that took place on Sunday night with respect to that security breach, that murder that happened outside of the hospital. This increase of \$40 million is saying that it is to pay outstanding supplies.

Can you advise us if this outstanding payment is a result of—the line Item was under budgeted for when the budget was read, or is it that after the budget was read, the Ministry had taken the initiative to increase security and from when the budget was read to February 29th that increase in security now has caused the Ministry to require this additional \$40 million in funding to supplement the increase or to make up for the under budgeting of Security Services and other Items listed here?

Hon. Deyalsingh: So yes, thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, whilst the Member is focusing on security, I did indicate all the categories that were going to be covered. Let me repeat. It includes Medical Supplies, 13.5 million; Utilities, 3.8 million; yes, Security, 10.2 million; Food Supplies, 10.5 million. It is a wide variety of expenditure Heads.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, Minister, for that explanation but you still did not answer the question that I was asking. With respect to this supplemental funding, is it to supplement a shortfall in the budget, or is it to supplement an increase in the trade payables for when the budget was read up to the 29th of February? Because you are saying that I am focusing on security but I want to tell you, Minister, that the doctors and the health workers are right now in fear in that hospital and Security Services, something extremely important to all the workers and even the citizens who have to use that facility taking into consideration what transpired on Sunday night.

So I am really hoping that in going forward just as how there outstanding arrears, that the Ministry will take the necessary measures whether it is to incur that we will treat within the next finance meeting. But with respect to Security Services at that Port of Spain Hospital, I am really hoping that you will drive the necessary initiative to ensure that our citizens and our health workers are safe at the Port of Spain General Hospital.

Hon. Deyalsingh: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Fyzabad.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Now Minister, I note that you give the breakdown under the various categories, will you be able to give a commitment in terms of the list of suppliers under each category? Can you give an undertaking to provide that information?

Madam Chairman: Under each category of what Member?

Dr. Bodoë: So, for all the RHAs Madam Chair—

Madam Chairman: Um-hmm.

Dr. Bodoë: —so just to give for example—

Madam Chairman: The suppliers of the trade payables.

Dr. Bodoë: —the suppliers of the trade payables. Yes.

Hon. Deyalsingh: I indicated we will engage NIPDEC and, as I said on two previous occasions, if NIPDEC can produce it in the required time frame, it is going to be hundreds—

Dr. Bodoë: Yeah.

Hon. Deyalsingh:—hundreds and hundreds and hundreds. If they can provide it in the time frame, it will be provided.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Minister. So, you are speaking about the drugs, but I am speaking about the Items that would have come to you from the RHAs Minister. That would not necessarily be NIPDEC, the RHAs should be able to supply given it to those suppliers.

Hon. Deyalsingh: So again, the same principle will arise. We will certainly engage the RHAs to ask them if they could provide the required list that you want, and if it can be provided in the time frame we would provide it. It is going to be hundreds and thousands as you know.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you Minister. So, can I ask then that—will you give the undertaken it will be provided regardless of the time frame?

Hon. Deyalsingh: Sir, I have answered that about five times you know.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, Minister okay. So I think Member what the Minister has said is that if the information is available under the each of these categories, before Friday, it would be provided. Some of the information comes from NIPDEC, some come from individual RHAs, and whatever is available would be made available before Friday. It is a lot of information and I think I heard him say cannot give the undertaking that it will be, but whatever there is, will be given. That is what I have understood the questions and the answers in the last couple of minutes.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: All right.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 28 supplemented by the sum of \$495,286,000.

Madam Chairman: I thank the Minister of Health, I thank the PS in the Ministry of Health.

3.55 p.m.

Head 30: Ministry of Labour \$130,538,600.

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

Hon. Mc Clashie: Madam Chair, allow me first to thank my colleague the hon. Minister of Finance for his efforts, and the efforts of his team at the Ministry of Finance, as they attempt to ensure that Ministries are adequately funded. The Ministry of Labour remains committed to achieving the goals as set out in our mandate and guided by our *National Development Strategy, Vision 2030*, particularly with respect to putting people first. It is in this context that I wish to share briefly on the critical areas that the Ministry of Labour has identified for an additional funding amounting to \$130,538,600.

Madam Chair, the majority of this money is going to be expended on the OJT programme, the arrears of salaries and gratuities for the Occupational Safety and Health Agency and the Cipriani Labour College, in terms of bringing them up to date, in terms of salaries and gratuities. Madam Chair, the request for this amount will be for the payment of outstanding arrears and salaries owed to employees both current and past, arising from revised terms and conditions of their employment. I thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to be part of this meeting, and I am open to receiving any questions that members may have.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Question proposed: That Head 30 be supplemented by the sum of \$130,538,600.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much. Minister, could you—meeting in relation to the \$55 million which is being requested for the Occupational Safety and Health Authority, how much is—or give the breakdown as it relates to the shortfall in salaries, and how much is for the National Insurance contribution?

Hon. Mc Clashie: Let me see if I understand the question correctly.

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes, just that you are asking—

Hon. Mc Clashie: Looking for the breaking down, with regard to what is for NIS, I will have to provide that to you in writing.

Mr. Indarsingh: You do not have that at this moment?

Hon. Mc Clashie: No.

Mr. Indarsingh: With respect to the payment of arrears, and this is for contract employment, how much is for past and how many for present employees?

Madam Chairman: The note that explains, as it says, for periods—all those periods are past.

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes. Well, I see that there—whether if they are still in the organization, or have they exited the organization?

Madam Chairman: Okay, okay. You mean for existing—

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Alright.

Hon. Mc Clashie: For existing people?

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes. Well, they were on contract. And I am seeing for past and present employees.

Hon. Mc Clashie: Currently there are 72 employees who are active and will benefit and there are 121 past employees who have exited.

Mr. Indarsingh: So, in terms of—from the point of view of contract, is any for the former chief inspector and deputy chief inspector at OSHA, out of this sum?

Hon. Mc Clashie: If they have qualified, then I will say yes. If not, it is a question of whether they would have qualified for that payment. And so to answer that question directly now, I cannot say two people out of the 200 people, whether they are in the list or not.

Mr. Indarsingh: Alright, and out of these contract officers, are they on what we call short-term contracts, or what we would call extended contract. Short term, I am saying in the context of three months.

Hon. Mc Clashie: We have moved away from those three-month contracts, particularly for inspectors, which is a question you would have asked during this term, and we have 58 such inspectors, which tend to be the group of people we look at, and we have closer to about 40 of those inspectors in place, and they are all on three-year contracts.

Mr. Indarsingh: On three-year? And, from a policy point of view, Minister, in terms of the establishment within, and the organizational structure, you have said you have moved away from short-term to three-year contacts, are you moving in the direction or your Ministry, to have all these officers placed on what we would call permanent employment on the organizational structure?

Madam Chairman: So Member, you prefaced your question with a statement in itself. It speaks for itself that it is not allowed, well, here. You started from a policy perspective, so I rule that question out of order.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I am on the line Item that deals with training, the \$58 million. Now, we understand that this is for the OJT programme, On-the-Job

Training Programme. And that there is a division among an increase in the stipend and to cater for an intake, an increased intake. Could you tell us how many persons are currently benefiting from the programme, and what this increased intake of trainees would look like over this fiscal year?

Hon. Mc Clashie: We are currently as of April, have 5,071 trainees active, and we would like to take it to 6,000.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: And this allocation will cover this objective, this aim?

Hon. Mc Clashie: Yes, it will.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 30 supplemented by the sum of \$130,538,600.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Minister of Labour. Thank you, PS and supporting staff.

Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities, \$527,800,000.

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

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Madam Chairman, the Ministry of Public Utilities is before you today for a supplementation in the sum of \$527,800,000. The sum appropriated to the Ministry of Public Utilities for the year 2024 was \$2,826,724,000. And, Madam Chairman, there have been some changes to some of the requirements of the Ministry, particularly in TTPost and WASA, and consequently, we are before the Committee in order to get these changes examined and for us to obtain the requisite supplementation. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Question proposed: That Head 39 be supplemented by the sum of \$527,800,000.

Madam Chairman: Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you, Madam. Madam, as a housekeeping matter, can the Minister indicate if she is the Acting Minister of Public Utilities, or if the Minister is just absent from today's meeting?

Mr. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Madam—

Mr. Indarsingh: Are you the Acting Prime Minister?

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance, I think I addressed the Minister as the Acting Minister of Public Utilities.

Mr. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Young: You are missing Marvin?

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Mr. Padarath: Madam, if you would allow me under line Item 04/009/04: TTPost, there is an allocation of \$5.6 million, in terms of the supplementation. The explanation for TTPost has to do particularly with a contract that was awarded for the delivery of passports and visas within the country from the American Embassy. Can the Minister indicate what is the duration of that contract period?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chairman, I do not have that information but I will provide it.

Mr. Padarath: Okay. Minister, can you also indicate how much revenue is expected to be received annually by TTPost with this contract from the American Embassy?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: [*Inaudible*]—million dollars.

Mr. Padarath: Annually?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes.

Mr. Padarath: And, Minister, you indicated you would provide for us the duration?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes.

Mr. Padarath: Thank you. Madam, if you would allow me to go on to 06/004/51: WASA? And under WASA, there is a breakdown for the shortfall, in terms of fiscal 2024 and the subvention. If we go to page 16 of the document that we were provided with, there is an allocation for Government's Contribution to NIS for \$29.1 million. Now, Madam Chairman, the allocation here for \$29.1 million. In the last Standing Finance Committee, the application for the \$29.1 million to cover Government's Contribution to NIS, when you compare the figures, you see that there is a \$4.1 million less that is being asked for, compared to what was previously asked for in October of 2023. I wanted an explanation from the Minister, in terms of the \$4.1 million less that is being asked for. What would have accounted for it? Is it that hundreds of WASA employees have gone home?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chair, I am not seeing those figures that my colleague is asking about.

Madam Chairman: I was just going to ask the Member for Princes Town if he could give us some greater guidance because I do not know where we are at.

Mr. Padarath: Madam, I am looking at the Government's Contribution to NIS and we are being asked to supplement \$29.1 million. The question that I am asking is that—in the last Standing Financial Committee of October 2023, we saw major cuts to this particular Item, and I am asking whether or not this will cover all of the existing employees or is it that there is a shortfall compared to last year's figure of \$4.1 million.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chair, if I am not mistaken, I think the revised provision is \$29.9 million. That is the amount we have here.

Mr. Padarath: I am seeing \$29.9 in our document—\$29.1 in our document.

Madam Chairman: That is what the Minister said, \$29.1

Mr. Padarath: Okay.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: And it is anticipated that because of attrition, that is why we had a different figure.

Mr. Padarath: Okay. Now, Minister, in terms of the overall supplementation for WASA under the area of Cost of Living Allowance, Wages, Overtime- Daily Rated Workers, Monthly Paid Officers, Allowances, Travelling and Subsistence, Contract Employment, under that particular line Item, the Minister of Public Utilities is on public record about speaking about the transformation of WASA, and these figures indicate that it will take us until the end of the next financial year. Can you tell us where are we with respect to the transformation of WASA, in terms of employees at the Water and Sewerage Authority?

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chair, I do not think that this relates to that question. As a consequence of that, Madam Chair, I do not think I need to answer that question because it does not arise from the information that has been given to the Committee.

Mr. Padarath: Okay. Minister, if you look at the allocation for Contract Employment in WASA, it is \$153,200,000, and this is an area that annually we see a lot of cuts to, in light of the current water problems being experienced—

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chair—

Madam Chairman: Member, I am really lost. I am seeing Contract Employment, if I am correct, \$153,200,000. That is where you are?

Mr. Padarath: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Yes. I did not hear that figure though. So maybe you could point us to where you are at.

Mr. Padarath: Contract Employment, \$153,200,000.

Madam Chairman: Okay.

Mr. Padarath: We are asking for a supplementation for that in WASA—

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Padarath:—and we saw and we raised the issue of these cuts that we saw in October of 2023 at the Standing Finance Committee. So when I am seeing a supplementation here of \$153,200,000, in terms of the comparison of the figures, you still—based on the 2023 figure, we still have a shortfall compared to the year before of over \$100 million. So what I am asking, has this had a direct impact,

in terms of the Contract Employment that you are asking for, for \$153,200,000 to take you to October, in terms of the operations of WASA?

Madam Chairman: I am still lost about the question. I am not sure if you are asking if this \$153,200,000 is to make up for a shortfall—

Mr. Padarath: Is sufficient enough, yes, Madam.

Madam Chairman:—and therefore, if it is sufficient to carry them to the fiscal. Is that what you are asking?

Mr. Padarath: Yes, in light of the operations of WASA being affected right now.

Madam Chairman: And that is where I am being lost.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: I do not understand about the operations of WASA being affected. But, Madam Chair, the reason that we have asked for the supplemental is in order to carry us through to the rest of the fiscal.

Mr. Padarath: Yes. But the part, I think, that was lost upon you—

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Yes, it was lost upon me.

Mr. Padarath:—was the area that I raised, compared to the previous years, where we saw a large cut at WASA in the area of Contract Employment. So now you are asking for \$153,200,000, when we told you that you underbudgeted in October of 2023.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: What is the question? I do not understand the question.

Mr. Padarath: The question is, this now takes us from June 2024 to October 2024, where the operations of WASA have been severely affected because one of the areas being Contract Employment.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chair, where is that coming from?

Madam Chairman: I mean, Member, that is a conclusion that I do not know that is tested by anything here, so I am not sure what the question is. I mean, if I understand you well, I do not think that question is allowed. All right? So I think you are talking about a decrease—

Mr. Padarath: Yes, Ma'am.

Madam Chairman:—that was in the appropriation in—

Mr. Padarath: Yes, in the previous year.

Madam Chairman:—in September—October.

Mr. Padarath: In the previous year. Correct.

Madam Chairman: No, I am going to let you go back—not the previous years. I am letting you go back to the appropriation that we did in October. So if you are asking whether this \$153,200,000 will

make up for the shortfall between what they asked for and what was appropriated in October, I will allow that, but I do not think that is what you are asking here.

Mr. Padarath: Madam, I think you answered my question when you said you would not allow me to go back.

Madam Chairman: Good. Thank you. That is really forthright. I do admire that. Yes. Member for Princes Town, anything else?

4.15 p.m.

Mr. Padarath: No Ma'am that is it.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Member for Oropouche West.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you, Ma'am. Again, with regard to WASA, I am looking at the principal on the US \$60,000,000 RBL revolving loan and the interest on the same loan. Between the two, we are looking at \$164,000,000, as I requested, increased allocation for 2024. Can the Minister advise why is it that this provision was not made in the annual budget, since this is the predictable, and in fact, a recurrent average figure?

Madam Chairman: Minister of Finance.

Mr. Imbert: WASA presents a significant burden on the taxpayer every year as I am sure Members know. We are talking about a subvention of an excess of \$2 billion. We are also speaking about payment for desalinated water, which could reach as much as \$700 million a year. For years, all administrations have been trying to improve operational efficiency and reduce costs at WASA. We continue to hope and expect that we will achieve this objective. So, if you look at various budgets going back, it was always anticipated and hoped that we would achieve operational efficiency at WASA and therefore, the amount of the subvention could be reduced. That is it. So you start off the year with an expectation, things do not always work out as planned, there are all sorts of reasons you know, people get in the way, they file legal action, they obstruct you, the Opposition gets involved, so things do not always work out as planned.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Robinson-Regis: In addition to what the Minister of Finance has said, in the initial allocation, an amount of \$477,281,000 was allocated. WASA got releases of \$204,024,995, resulting in a remaining allocation of \$273,256,005. The Ministry of Finance, therefore, in order for us not to have a difficulty with the loan, the Ministry of Finance recommended that we do a virement to transfer funds in the amount of \$107 million, from the principal on the U.S. \$60 million RBL revolving loan

facility, in order for us to meet our April and May commitments. We did that, and consequently this is now to replace the amount that we have vired, so that is in addition to what the Minister told us to do.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 39 supplemented by the sum of \$527,800,000.

Madam Chairman: I thank the Minister, the PS, and the other representatives from the WASA and the other public utilities.

Head 40: Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, \$570,900,00.

Hon. Young: Thank you very much—

Madam Chairman: Just a moment, I am just letting your PS come. I will now invite the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister.

Hon. Young: Good afternoon, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, as the country is aware, is in charge of managing our mineral resources, including the oil and gas, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hardworking staff at the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries for the stellar work that they have been doing, not only in the last fiscal but before that, under the stewardship of the two Permanent Secretaries and the younger members of staff.

[*Mr. Forde in the Chair*]

Hon. Young: Mr. Chair, welcome.

4.20 p.m.

Question proposed: That Head 40 be supplemented by the sum of \$570,900,000.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you most kindly, Mr. Deputy Chair. To the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, can the hon. Minister state how the \$570,900,000 will be disaggregated between the National Petroleum Marketing Company and UNIPET?

Mr. Chairman: Minister.

Hon. Young: Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, this amount of money that is being allocated to the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries in the mid-year review of \$570, almost \$571 million, is solely to provide money towards the payment of the fuel subsidy in Trinidad and Tobago.

In 2022, the fuel subsidy that was paid by the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago towards fuel at the pump was \$1.67 billion; in 2023 it was \$1.845 billion. It is projected for this year to be over \$1 billion. We had in the original budget allocation \$500 million, which obviously is a shortfall. So this sum of money is going to go wholly towards the subsidy and the money is really going to be paid towards Paria as they import the fuels on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. So far for the year we have paid \$304 million towards Paria. We have an outstanding sum of just about \$200 million left, so this \$571 million is to subsidize and to add towards the sum of money that is going to be owing during this fiscal. To ask for a breakdown between National Petroleum and UNIPET is premature at this stage, this is the supplemental amount towards the expected fuel subsidy that is being paid for this year.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, Minister. And Minister, based on the explanation provided here in the documents it is:

“...re: sale of petroleum products for the period 2022 and 2023 owed to:

- National Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (NPMC)
- United Independent Petroleum Company Limited (UNIPET).”

Is there a breakdown for 2022 and 2023?

Hon. Young: So, what we have, Mr. Chair, is the surplus that is owed, they have been paid money over the period of time. What is currently owed— Just one second.

[Minister confers with technocrat]

So what we are now being told, this is really for the last fiscal and the amounts owed for the last fiscal of about \$575 million. But again, right now the accounting of what is owed to National Petroleum and what is owed to UNIPET has to be worked out, because right now there is a surplus owed by both of those companies to us and there is a set off that needs to take place.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, hon. Minister. Minister, is the payment of the subsidy, re: sale of petroleum products for fiscal 2024, be made in its entirety during fiscal 2024 or will there be outstanding arrears to be paid in fiscal 2025?

Hon. Young: There will probably be outstanding arrears going forward as happens on every occasion because of the accounting cycle. There is always a carried forward.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, Minister.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 40 supplemented by the sum of \$570,900,000.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you Mr. Minister, thank you Madam PS, and the technocrats from the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries.

Head 42: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, \$95,027,500.

Mr. Chairman: I will now—your technocrats—

Hon. Al-Rawi: We can start.

Mr. Chairman:—are on their way?

Hon. Al-Rawi: Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: Yeah. I will now invite the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Over to you, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Al-Rawi: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: Welcome, Mr. PS and the technocrats from your Ministry. Proceed.

Hon. Al-Rawi: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government is pleased to receive the underwritten increases provided by the Ministry of Finance at the supplementation. As indicated at the appropriation Bill we had intended that we would be back here to make adjustments as was required, bearing in mind the provisions that were then prevailing, and we therefore subject ourselves, as we are in the course in the roll-out of full local government reform, including the establishments of terms and conditions under the new structures, for any questions that the Members of this House Standing Committee may have.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Question proposed: That Head 42 be supplemented by the sum of \$95,027,500.

Mr. Chairman: Member for St. Augustine.

Ms. Ameen: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister. Under 02/001/16: Contract Employment, this would be at the Ministry's headquarters and you indicated in the explanation that it is:

“To facilitate payment of Salaries to the end of the fiscal year for... contracts”—that—“were renewed”.

Can you provide the names, the job descriptions, and the salaries of those persons whose contracts are being renewed and the date of their first of employment?

Hon. Al-Rawi: Mr. Chairman, if that information is able to be crystalized before Friday we will certainly make endeavours to obtain that. That is quite a bit of information to obtain in a short period of time.

Mr. Chairman: Sure, Mr. Minister.

Ms. Ameen: Secondly, these are officers whose contracts are being renewed. Was this budgeted for at all initially? Was a request for funding made for this at all?

Hon. Al-Rawi: Mr. Chairman, we had provided estimates at the beginning of the year but because of the state of flux of the change from the current Municipal Corporations Act to what we anticipate to be full procurement we had held back on—the Ministry of Finance had held back upon certain confirmations until they were properly in gear and now is the time for that.

Ms. Ameen: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you Mr. Minister. Member for St. Augustine, any?

Ms. Ameen: Yeah, if I could move on another Head, 02/001/022: Short-term Employment, the sum of \$5.572 million. The explanation is:

“To enable payment of Salaries to persons employed on short-term contracts, and to also facilitate payment to officers who are awaiting long-term contracts.”

Can you indicate what preventing these long-term contracts from being finalized?

Hon. Al-Rawi: The submission for the continuation of the six-year plan is before the PMCD; that is a division of the Ministry of Public Administration. They have asked for some further information in light of what the settled provision post full proclamation of the law will look like. We have provided that information. So in answer to the direct question, we are awaiting the approval of the PMCD division to take forward those contract positions by way of a note to Cabinet for the carve out and creation of further six-year contract terms for the established long-term positions.

Ms. Ameen: Alright, does that include officers to be assigned to regional corporations?

Hon. Al-Rawi: Yes, they do.

Ms. Ameen: Can you provide a breakdown of those positions, please?

Hon. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Chairman, if that information is available before Friday we would happily do that, yes.

Ms. Ameen: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed.

Ms. Ameen: I want to ask through you, a commitment. I do not want that if the information is not available by Friday, that I do not ever get it. So while Friday is the preferable deadline because we have a debate, I would still ask the Minister to give an undertaking to provide the information, please.

Mr. Chairman: Undertaking is compulsory.

Hon. Al-Rawi: Asked and answered in the conditional fashion as given.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Minister, I am on the line Item that deals with National Reforestation Watershed Rehabilitation Programme, so—yes? So we have an \$18 million allocation that is being supplemented with a further \$7 million in this supplementation exercise that we are in. And I know in our Explanatory Note we have, it is due to the increases in the minimum wage, et cetera, but if you can give us an idea of how many persons are benefiting from this programme, or are in this programme currently, I would appreciate that.

Hon. Al-Rawi: Sure, there 80 contractors in the programme and each contractor has an associated complement of 30 workers.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you, and we are also told that this funding is also required to deal with—to cover operational cost and administrative expenses to the end of September 2024. Can you give us some idea of what that would look like as well?

Hon. Al-Rawi: That is the standard distribution between contract labour and management fees, so it is the split between those sums. There is a standard sum per contract, part of it goes towards labour or contract work and part goes towards the maintenance or management fee.

Mr. Chairman: Couva South and then I will come back to you, Member for St Augustine.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Deputy Chair. Minister, I stepped out from the meeting for a bit, so I do not know if this question was asked already. With respect to the \$36,700,000 for CEPEP, I see that it is to enable payment of wages and NIS contribution, \$32.4 million. Have you provided a breakdown what sum is for wages and what sum is for National Insurance contribution?

Hon. Al-Rawi: The note associated with that line Item 04/009/04, says to enable payment of wages and NIS contributions, \$32.4 million arising from increases in minimum wage to cover operational and administrative expenses of \$4.3 million. So the total sum is \$36.7 million. Is that you are asking for the split between wages and NIS contributions?

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes.

Hon. Al-Rawi: I see. I will have to endeavour to obtain that. Just give me a moment to ask my PS if he by chance has the NIS split. We will ask for the information on the NIS contributions to be segregated from the \$32.4 million.

Mr. Indarsingh: And if you can do same for the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme.

Hon. Al-Rawi: Sure, if that information is available before Friday it will certainly be.

Mr. Indarsingh: Yeah, and Minister, this from the point of view of the Government providing

contributions to NIS. Now, it may not be in here but as we are focusing on NIS, I am get some feedback that contractors are not making their contributions to the National Insurance Fund under both programmes, and if you could endeavour with the passage of time to ensure that contractors meet their obligations from a statutory point of view under these respective programmes.

Hon. Al-Rawi: I can tell you now that the Government pays the NIS contribution on the part of contractors and has for many, many years.

Mr. Indarsingh: Okay, because I know that there are complaints from employees in both programmes.

Hon. Al-Rawi: Yeah.

Mr. Indarsingh: When they go to get a read out from the National Insurance local offices, they always get—and they come to my office and so on, and tell me that their contributions are not recorded and so on

Hon. Al-Rawi: Several years ago by way of a Cabinet, original Cabinet approval, but several years ago the contributions for NIS for the contractors part, the bit that it is not paid to the workers themselves was directly paid from CEPEP to NIS. So, I know for sure that those contributions were made. I believe that the Ministry of Finance had done some work to investigate and there may be some reconciliation aspects to happen but I do not have information beyond that, and will not before Friday.

Mr. Indarsingh: But I know the Minister of Finance is normally a very cooperative gentlemen.

Hon. Al-Rawi: He is indeed.

Mr. Chairman: Member for St. Augustine.

Ms. Ameen: Thank you. I just want to go back to Short-Term Employment the 5.5.

Mr. Chairman: 02/001/22?

Ms. Ameen: Correct.

Mr. Chairman: Right, proceed.

Ms. Ameen: Minister, there has been an issue of a shortage of Chief Officers in several regional corporations and several of these Chief Officers are hired. The Chief Officers are hired and paid by the Ministry and assigned to various corporations. Corporations without Chief Officers are now being forced to use their Short-Term Employment, which will usually provide employment from the communities to pay these Chief Officers. Would the sum allocated here suffice to provide Chief Officers to all the regional corporations, and if not, what is the—an explanation, please?

Mr. Chairman: Would that be considered within this line Item?

Hon. Al-Rawi: Short-Term Employment currently involves Officers including Chief Officers.

Mr. Chairman: Right, proceed.

Hon. Al-Rawi: As I indicated earlier, the position is that with the expiry of the six-year contract term cycles, a note to the Cabinet to be approved by the PMCD division, has been prepared and PMCD is making that investigation as it is. This sum for Short-Term Employment will cover the chief operation of—the Chief Officers, sorry, and in the event that it does not, when that note to Cabinet, which establishes the positions, is taken, there will be a further option subject to availability of financing, in this financial year to take care of it in the long-term contract cycle.

Ms. Ameen: Can you indicate by when this situation will be rectified because it is a serious drain on the regional corporations' finances?

Hon. Al-Rawi: We are fully aware, we have been actively pursuing the approval of the PMCD division, the Permanent Secretary's office, and the Minister's office, and we are hoping in the next couple of weeks we that should have that solved.

Ms. Ameen: No, I am asking—I understand that you are waiting on the PMCD and I know that could be quite a challenge. What I am asking is that the Short-Term Employment is being used to cover—

Hon. Al-Rawi: I understand.

Ms. Ameen:—these Chief Officers in the meanwhile. At this time the regional corporations are paying the Chief Officers from their short-term Vote. Can you indicate how soon the Ministry's supplemental that you are asking for today, will begin to cover these Chief Officers, so that the regional corporations would not have to pay that expense for the short term, under short term?

Hon. Al-Rawi: Thank you for your question. If I could perhaps assist this way. The Ministry makes the payment for short term, not the corporations.

Ms. Ameen: Well, Minister, perhaps, you should investigate why some corporations are being advised to pay Chief Officers out of their Short-Term Employment. It prevents them from hiring labourers and so on from within the community and it really is a task for them.

Hon. Al-Rawi: Duly noted. The Permanent Secretary has informed me, and I verily believe that the payments come from head office. Almost \$800,000 per month.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Couva North. Couva North, are you still interested?

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Chair, I want to refer the

Minister's attention to line Item 04/009/04, CEPEP, asking for an increase in \$36 million. Minister, can you give us a breakdown of the operational and administrative expenses associated with this line Item?

Hon. Al-Rawi: I cannot now, and if the information is available before Friday, I will endeavour to supply.

Mr. Chairman: An undertaking was given prior to the Member for Couva South.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Ratiram: Yeah, thank you, and in addition to that, can the Minister advise how many people are working at minimum wage that this line Item is going to affect?

Hon. Al-Rawi: I cannot say that now, because as you are aware persons occupy different positions, so not everyone who is at the CEPEP Company would be at minimum wage. There would a number of them who are there which is what this line Item seeks to cater for, which is the subvention of \$32.4 million to deal with the wages and NIS contributions which were caused by the increase in the minimum wage. So, I could not provide that number now, because it is not a flat general number.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, hon. Minister. Minister, recently, you made a statement that:

“...‘CEPEP’s future involves diversifying the company, moving into something that make sense—hydroponics, agriculture, mulching.’”

Can you advise if this increase is going to bring these projects into fruition, or we may have to look at this in the future?

Hon. Al-Rawi: Regrettably, because this does not involve any of the line Items before us, I am constrained to stay away from that answer. As enticing as the answer would be, I would love to answer to say that we are on a good path, but it is not relevant to the line Items before us.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize the Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: I think the question was asked in terms of providing a breakdown of the operational and administrative expenses in relation to the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, it was. Right. So I recognize St. Augustine now. Member.

Ms. Ameen: Staying with this line Item, does the additional \$36.7 million requestid under CEPEP cover any new contractors that you plan to engage?

Hon. Al-Rawi: No, it does not.

Mr. Indarsingh: Chair, with respect to—

Mr. Chairman: Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh:—the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation, \$2.5 million, and out of this, \$1.9 million is requested:

“...for Scavenging Services and to provide for the payment of arrears owed to contractors...”—being \$1.9 million.

Minister, could you provide a breakdown in terms of how many contractors are being paid with this sum of money? Because I have been having some challenges with respect to one contractor in the provision of their services in the Calcutta No. 1, 2, 3, Mc Bean area. I have had some discussions with the CEO and the other arm of the corporation, and they have been indicating to me that they are liaising with head office to explore whatever opinions are available where contractors are falling short, in terms of how they are carrying out their services to the public.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, Mr. Minister. And we are at 006/05/32, right? Just for the records.

Mr. Indarsingh: Yeah.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed.

Hon. Al-Rawi: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will endeavour to obtain that information to provide to the Member.

Mr. Chairman: Member for St. Augustine, again? Okay, go ahead.

Ms. Ameen: Thank you, Madam—Mr. Chairman. Madam Chairman, was there all morning. Mr. Chairman, through you, to the Minister, from Item 06/005, from 24, go right down to—well, these are the regional corporations. For each of these regional corporations, the explanations seem to be along the same lines, which is, expenses incurred for scavenging services by the various corporations. And I think this really is because of a shortfall in the budget initially, and the Minister did explain that in order to meet the expenses, he will come in the mid-year review. There are several other Heads, which the Minister committed that in the mid-year review he will get—he will try to supplement Heads that are very critical to the regional corporations. I do not know if—because it is not here in the explanation—the Minister could indicate how some of these expenses are going to be born, if by the headquarters, or how you expect to treat with those?

Mr. Chairman: Again, Member, we can only deal with what is listed in the supplemental.

Ms. Ameen: Yes.

Hon. Al-Rawi: The question was put with such a lovely smile, Mr. Chair, that I compliment the Member on trying to make—

Mr. Chairman: So you want to venture?

Hon. Al-Rawi: I compliment the Member on trying to make relevance—

Mr. Chairman: All right. I will give you the opportunity.

Hon. Al-Rawi:—on something that is not here. So I regret that because none of the questions relate to any line Item before us, that I am constrained as I have no information.

Mr. Chairman: Right, fair enough. Right.

Ms. Ameen: That is it. I want to know about the money that is not here, what is not given.

Mr. Chairman: You will have another opportunity on another occasion.

Ms. Ameen: Yes, I might have to use other avenues to ask that.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 42 supplemented by the sum of \$95,027,500.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, Mr. PS, and also the technocrats from your Ministry. Thanks for coming.

Hon. Members, we move to Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport.

Welcome, Madam Permanent Secretary, and your other officers. Okay. Welcome.

Head 43: Minister of Works and Transport, \$155,677,000.

Mr. Chairman: I will now invite the Minister of Works and Transport to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Mr. Minister.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I take pride in coming here this afternoon to answer any questions that might be put forth by the Members of this august House. Thank you.

Question proposed: That Head 43 be supplemented by the sum of \$155,677,000.

Mr. Chairman: I will now recognize the Member for St. Augustine.

Ms. Ameen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will refrain from asking the Minister anything about doubles. What I want to know about is the drainage issues.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Minister—

Ms. Ameen: No, we do not eat doubles in the same category.

Mr. Chairman:—it has to go through the Chair. Proceed.

Ms. Ameen: You have to ask through the Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Right.

Ms. Ameen: Mr. Minister of Works and Transport—

Mr. Indarsingh: We eat doubles differently.

Ms. Ameen: We have a—

Hon. Members: *[Interruption]*

Ms. Ameen: You have a request here for an additional \$58 million. And the explanation is that it is: “...required for drainage; bridge repair; safety; slope stabilization, road rehabilitation and payments to contractors.”

The thing is those are some very broad areas and what we really would like to get is a breakdown of how this \$58 million would be spent across these various areas. But what I also specifically want to ask is, whether the repair works at the network of drainage, surrounding the Bamboo areas, the Valsayn South, and heading to the Caroni River, if those are all covered in—whether it is in the actual provisions you got or in the supplemental?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question. So let me just enlighten the Member. Firstly, we all eat doubles the same way. It is just that I am a little cultured and you all might be a little “ladbhesar”.

Ms. Ameen: With knife and fork? No, we do not all eat doubles the same way.

Mr. Indarsingh: Hello, hello.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: I have to respond—

Mr. Indarsingh: Chairman—

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Secondly, Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Indarsingh:—tell the Member—

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Secondly, Mr. Chairman, in terms of—

Mr. Indarsingh:—he is a visitor to this House and—

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan:—the question—

Mr. Indarsingh: No, no—*[Inaudible]*

Hon. Members: *[Crosstalk]*

Mr. Chairman: Members, Members, Members—

Hon. Members: *[Continuous crosstalk]*

Mr. Chairman: No, Members, Members, please.

Hon. Members: *[Continuous crosstalk]*

Mr. Chairman: Members, Members, Members—

Mr. Indarsingh: He must withdraw that.

Mr. Chairman: No, listen, Members. Proceed, Mr. Minister. Listen, we know where it started—

Mr. Indarsingh: *[Inaudible]*

Mr. Chairman: No, no, no. Proceed, ask the Chair. I will determine accordingly. All right? Proceed.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Secondly, Mr. Chair, the Member should understand that drainage in the Highways Division does not cover the Bamboo area. The drainage that we are speaking about here is drains on the side of the highway and so. Drainage in Bamboo is covered under a different Vote. This is Highways Division that got this, not the other divisions of the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Couva South, question?

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Chairman. With respect to the vehicles and equipment, rent/lease, \$20 million will be spent, could the Minister provide—

Mr. Chairman: Member for Couva South, just to make it a little easier, identify the line Item first please and the number.

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes. 02/005/09: Rent/Lease - Vehicles and Equipment, \$20 million. Could the Minister provide a breakdown of the equipment that will be rented and the rental fee for the use of each?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: So again, Mr. Chairman, let me explain, 09 is the line Item that we use for desilting under the bonded contractors. We use bonded rates by the bonded contractors. So that 09 is equipment that is required for the cleaning of the watercourses and so, and different equipment will be required at different times based on the job that they are doing.

Mr. Indarsingh: And your Director of Drainage has indicated a programme of works that you may be aware of the type of equipment that will be utilized in the forthcoming month.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Mr. Chairman, again, the Director of Drainage will put forward a programme of work that we would like to get done. Based on the allocated of funding, then those jobs are reprivatized and the level of work to go in depends on the amount of funding that we get. Once we get this allocation then it will be allocated based on the amount we get to jobs, because our ambition is to do close to 400 to 500 projects this year, but it is all base on the availability of funding. So what I can do for you, is to forward you some of the jobs that will be done on this programme because we would have a list prepared.

Mr. Indarsingh: Because in respect of the desilting programme and so on, clearing and desilting, Minister I have sought your assistance through letters, official correspondence, in relation to the desilting of the drainage system on the Southern Main Road in Couva, from Isaac Junction to Roops Junction, and I hope that in your programme of works that may be part and parcel of—

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Again, Mr. Chairman, I do not want the Member to be confused with what is basic desilting of watercourses and underground drains. I think the Member before tried to bring

in watercourses and so, in Bamboo under a different Vote, and now what you are trying to introduce here is cleaning underground drains under this. It is not included in that line Item.

Mr. Chairman: I recognize Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to the hon. Minister: Minister, can you provide a disaggregated breakdown of how this \$58 million—line Item 02/002/28—will be spent across on drainage, bridges, bridge repairs, safety, slope stabilization, road rehabilitation and payments to contractors, and which specific projects it is going to be allocated to?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: So all those different scope that spoke you about, they fall under the Highways Division. This \$58 million is strictly for the Highways Division, and the Highways Division we do undertake all those work that you just spoke about, but they are specific for projects. The projects range from Victoria East, Nariva/Mayaro, St. Andrew/St. David, Caroni, Victoria West, St. Patrick, St. George West and St. George East. So it is projects around Trinidad. If you—again we do a scope of works and based on the amount that is allocated then we pick the projects out. But it is work that is being done around the country, some of which is road rehabilitation, bridge repair, landslip, cleaning underground drains, and everything to do with the Highways Division.

Mr. Ratiram: Also, Minister, under line Item 02/05/28: Other Contracted Services, there, that line Item which is the third Item on the Explanatory Notes provided to meet the cost of works relevant to the improvement, construction, desilting, clearing, cleaning, embankment works and payments to contractors, would this include the desilting of the underground drainage along the Southern Main Road in the Edinburgh area?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: This Vote is 028 under drainage. So this is for cleaning main watercourses and rivers. So the underground drains at the side of the road, once roads fall under the Ministry of Works and Transport, they will be taken up under the Highways Division under recurrent and some under 028. But again, based on the funding that we have, specific projects will be allocated to the funding that we get.

Mr. Ratiram: And at this time, Minister, can we get an undertaking from you that you would look into the desilting of this underground drainage that I have made mentioned of in the Edinburgh area?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: So I would give you the undertaking that we will do as much as possible base on the funding that we have.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister, I am on the same line Item, just the Other Contracted Services (Highway Division), given the answers that you have already provided, which is

to indicate that based on the funding available, you will pick the projects and those projects will be executed. When we were last here in October, we had discussed the programme of works anticipated for fiscal 2024. So my question is: Given the additional \$58 million that will be supplemented via this Supplementation of Appropriation, what projects have the Ministry earmarked to be completed by the end of fiscal 2024, given the additional \$58 million and the total \$1 plus million under this line Item?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: I cannot tell you what will be completed, but I can tell you what we have started. To start, I can tell you in Tabaquite, there are about—one, two—three projects that are earmarked in your constituency.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Could we list them out, please?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Well I can forward that to you.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you. I will appreciate that very much.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: I would not want to call out all the projects here today.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: No, but we could take it in writing so that it could form part of the debate.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: I will submit that to you in writing and I will highlight your constituency so that you could go back and—

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Do not worry, I know my constituency very well. So I would not need the highlighter.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: You could campaign.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Member. Oropouche West.

Mr. Tancoo: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I am very grateful that the Minister seems to be so generous in being willing to provide the information. I am hoping that he would provide the information for every constituency for each of these line Items here, specifically with regard to drainage, in terms of work to be done in clearing watercourses, et cetera. So Minister, I am aware that you have the documentation present. You indicated that just now. So we are hoping that we will be able to get that before the debate on Friday. So that is my first question. My other question relates to—

Mr. Chairman: One second. The Minister just wants to respond.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: You will get it by district.

Mr. Tancoo: I am sorry.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: You will get by district. I could make it available today you by district.

Mr. Tancoo: By district. That will work.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: We operate by district.

Mr. Tancoo: As my colleague said, we know our constituencies very well. With regard to Item 011: Transfers to State Enterprises, that is the two loan Items referenced here, I will deal with them one at a time. Sub-Item 11: NIPDEC Repayment of \$1.542 billion Fixed Rate Bonds under P.U.R.E. Minister, we have a provision based on the documentation in front of us, based on the schedule provided by the Ministry of Finance. We have a provision in the Estimates for 2024 including direct charges, transfers and virements, \$26.532 million. We are now asking for an increase of \$26.8 million, which will take the provision, the revised provision, with now, to \$53.4 million. Is that correct? Please correct me, Sir.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: So we started off with \$53 million. What we did is that we transferred money because these loan payments are due in the second half of the financial year. We would have transferred money to highways in one instance, and I think drainage. Yes, so highways because of the volume of work that we are doing in the Highways Division. So this money comes back to supplement the money that was transferred out of it. So we are still at the same level.

Mr. Tancoo: Right. So you had an initial—

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Twenty-six.

Mr. Tancoo:—provision of 26. I am trying to get the numbers clear. You had an initial provision of 26. Is that what you are saying?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: So we had an original allocation 2024, \$53,355,781.

Mr. Tancoo: Right.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Then you had—we transferred from that to the Highways Vote 28, \$26,823,671, and then you have a revised allocation now, the supplementary funding, for \$26 million. So it just brought it back to where we were at the start.

Mr. Tancoo: Okay. Thank you very much, Minister.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Right.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Naparima. Still have—

Mr. Charles: Yes, thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Charles: Minister, Item 02/003/28 - Other Contracted Services (Traffic Management Division):

“To facilitate payment to the end of fiscal 2024 (\$3.7Mn) as well as for the installation of Traffic Controlled Devices required for an existing Reversible Lane Control Signals and

Intelligent Transportation Systems along...”—and this is the critical thing—“the Eastern Main Road...”

The question I ask, and I know you are from Sangre Grande and you use the Eastern Main Road. But when will such similar devices be brought to the rest of Trinidad and Tobago including areas like Naparima?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Again, if you understand the system that we are putting here, there is a place called St. Joseph.

Mr. Charles: “Mm-hmm.”

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: And what we do, we use reversible lanes so wherever that is required, it will eventually get to there. But right now, we cannot do the entire country at the same time but that St Joseph area is an area that we have been working on for the last nine, 10 years.

Mr. Charles: “Mm-hmm.”

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: So the system that we are using with the traffic lights, the signalized traffic lights is that we try to synchronize them so that when one change on one part of the highway—the main road, it continues so that you have a free flow for a while.

Mr. Charles: Correct.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: This \$15 million here in total is for some outstanding bills, maintenance and so for the continuation of the year and also to revitalize all the traffic lights and synchronize them even in Port of Spain.

Mr. Charles: Do you have a time frame for the rollout to major urban areas like San Fernando?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: It is an on-going process and that is why we have different levels at the Ministry, which, I mean, they are not funded here so I should not really get into them but we do traffic management plan in terms of build out of new roads, build out of highways, and also intersections, modernizing the lights and so on. We have removed—if you notice we have gone to the stage now where we have above-the-ground monitoring of intersections rather than below the asphalt.

Mr. Charles: “Mm-hmm.”

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: So we have one camera and the intersections are maintained by cameras where, if there is no need for a stoplight because there is no traffic on the other side—

Mr. Charles: Free flow.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Free flow of traffic. So we are actually at the point now where we are using technology to modernize the way traffic flows in the country.

Mr. Charles: Just to be clear in my mind, this is not yet in operation in San Fernando?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Some of it is in operation.

Mr. Charles: Some of it?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Yes.

Mr. Charles: Okay.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: We have on the East West—on the highway, several lights have been already synchronized and above-ground monitoring, half have already been installed.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. Item 02/005/28: Other Contracted Services (Drainage Division), and it says:

“To meet the cost of works relevant to improvement, construction, desilting...”—et cetera—“payments to contractors.”

Could you indicate whether the Guaracara River is listed among these?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: As we speak on Guaracara River, I understand that even the mouth of the Guaracara River has been earmarked for desilting. So again, we have work going on around the country, some under 09, some under 28, and some under other line Items. So yes, work is going on around the country and the Guaracara River is one that we pay a lot of attention to.

Mr. Charles: And the time frame for this would coincide with the rainy season?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Yeah, so we are now in the second phase of the drainage programme. That is where these projects will be rolled out. We have already completed the first phase, so we are on target to have our programme completed before the height of the rainy season.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: The question was asked, and I hope that the Minister will provide the list. With respect to 04/007/40 - Gratuities to Contract Officers, \$10 million. Minister, just from a number's point of view, it is indicated—or the note, the explanatory note indicates:

“To facilitate payment of gratuity to 268 officers whose contracts have ended...”

When I do the computation, would the numbers that have been placed under the explanatory note, it falls short by 27 because I see:

“...PURE - 24 persons, etc.)”

Could you indicate where the other 27 officers are from?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Again, this takes into consideration different departments in the Ministry as you are aware and it is based on the completion of all the necessary documents before payment. So this goes back some time but this is the—the ones that we are catering for here are basically the ones that are already for payment, which includes 157 traffic wardens.

Mr. Indarsingh: Or so but you are saying to facilitate payment to 268 officers. So what are you advising the meeting, that between now and the end of the fiscal year, further persons in terms of numbers will be added to this list or?

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Yes, more will be added to the list.

Mr. Indarsingh: Okay, because “et cetera” does not give me a sense of comfort.

Mr. Chairman: Member for St. Augustine.

Ms. Ameen: Thank you. Minister, under Other Contracted Services in the Drainage Division, where you initially had a provision of \$66.7 million and now getting an additional \$20 million, can you provide for the areas within the St. Augustine constituency, whatever administrative area the Ministry uses that would deal with the construction, desilting, clearing, cleaning, the embankment works and any payment for contractors for the same and provide the scope of works, the completion date, well the scheduled completion date and the percentage complete?

I am raising this in concerns raised from the meteorological office that indicates that you have a higher than usual rainfall expected this season and that the persons in these areas such as St. Joseph, Valsayn, St. Augustine South, are very concerned at the lack of completeness of works in that area, and while we do appreciate that work is ongoing, we are concerned about whether the work will be completed on time. So whatever we as a community can do to facilitate, I do not know, but I am asking you as Minister to ensure that those works are finished in time for the rainy season, but if you can provide the information with the percentage of completeness in the meanwhile.

Sen. The Hon. Sinanan: Okay. So Member, a lot of these jobs span financial year. So that to say that a job can be issued and completed within one financial year, a lot of these jobs may take two or three years depending on the level of the job and the amount of work that has to go in. You will recognize, and I thank you for recognizing that a lot of work has gone into that area because it is flood-prone area. Most of it is below sea level and there are challenges when you have the Caroni River at its peak.

So in terms of giving a guarantee that the work will be finished before the rainy season, there are several different projects ongoing, some have already been completed, some will be completed and some will continue until it is completed.

Ms. Ameen: All right, well I think, Mr. Chair, if you will allow me, what the people in these flood-prone areas really are looking forward to is some kind of assurance that enough work will be completed to prevent the level of flooding we would have seen in previous years and where especially for instance if work is ongoing now, the banks are compromised. So at least they want to be assured that those

banks will be secured enough to save them while the work continues. And this is why I asked for the completion dates of these projects because part of my duty as an MP is to provide information to people.

Sen The Hon. Sinanan: Sure, I think I got a question in the House on that, and we submitted. So I will just resubmit the answer again.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you most kindly, Mr. Chairman. To the hon. Minister, line Item 04/011/11, the PURE \$26 million increase that you are asking for the repayment on the \$1.542 billion loan, can the Minister advise what the terms of this loan agreement are and what is the balance on this loan?

Sen The Hon. Sinanan: Mr. Chairman, again, it is not an increase. It is a replacement for the money that was transferred and the loan—let me just get the information. Alright, this loan was taken out in 2010. It is for 18 years, and it is a First Citizens Trust loan. Is that good enough?

Mr. Ratiram: Can you provide the balance on the loan?

Sen The Hon. Sinanan: Sure. The balance on the loan was, well, 2010, it was taken out for 18 years. I will have to get the balance. So the balance on it is \$625,085,616.53.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you very much, Minister. And can you provide similar information to the other request? On the NIDCO - Road Works \$500 million loan, line Item 04/011/25

Mr. Chairman: 04/011/25.

Sen The Hon. Sinanan: The loan was \$500,000 at 4.8 per cent for 9 years and was taken out in 2019 from Ansa Merchant Bank. The balance on the loan is \$511 million. And it will come due by September 04, 2028.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 43 supplemented by the sum of \$155,677,000.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, Madam PS.

Head 65: Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, \$9,182,500.

Mr. Chairman: I will now invite the Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Mr. Minister.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs works to exercise prudent management in furtherance of its mandate through responsible utilization of funds allocated. The additional funds being sought through this mid-year process for fiscal 2024 are required to undertake required repairs and refurbishment to buildings, as well as upgrade of essential IT equipment, both at headquarters and overseas. The aim is to ensure

sustained and improved service, a safe environment for clients and staff, as well as compliance with international building codes and standards. The current allocation is insufficient to undertake the required areas of expenditure. However, the requested modest increase in allocation would cover the required activities to the end of this fiscal year.

So, Mr. Chair, I am here with the leadership team of the Ministry, and I am available to assist this Standing Finance Committee with any enquiries that Members may wish to offer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I now recognize Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Mr. Chairman, Minister, Item 09/005/06/F/075: Upgrade Works at Overseas Missions—

Mr. Chairman: Member for Naparima, one second. I just need to propose the question. My apologies.

Question proposed: That Head 65 be supplemented by the sum of \$9,182,500.

Mr. Chairman: My apologies. Over to you now, Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Understood. Item 09/005/06/F/075: Upgrade Works at Overseas Missions, \$2.2 million. And the question is, which government-owned properties will be upgraded? Because it is to meet the cost of critical refurbishment and upgrade works at government-owned properties abroad. The reason why I asked the question is because when I look at the Auditor General's Report, I see at the time of the audit in August 2023, it was noted that the official residence and the chancery—that is in Ottawa, the High Commission in Ottawa—were in need of repairs, so I wanted to know if it is included in this list.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: Okay. Mr. Chair, may I proceed? Yes, so additional works are required at this time on 10 government-owned overseas properties. These are: The official residence of our permanent representative at the United Nations in New York; the official residence in Brussels, Belgium; the official residence in Washington, D.C., and the residence of the head of chancery in that city as well; the chancery building in Washington, D.C.; the chancery building in Ottawa, as referred to by the Member for Naparima; the chancery building in Jamaica; the staff residence of the financial attaché in New York; the official residence in London; a staff residence building in Pretoria, South Africa; and with respect to the chancery in Abuja, Nigeria, this is the specific to the purchase of a generator.

Mr. Chairman: Member for Naparima, proceed.

Mr. Charles: Yes. Is there a capability within the Ministry, like, you know, an inspector general or

somebody who identifies and prioritizes these upgrade works, or is it based on feedback from the missions abroad?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: Well, it is a combination. We do have competent staff at our overseas missions, which would liaise with staff at headquarters, particularly in the mission's inspectorate division. We also have a properties management team, which is staffed and is continuously being revitalized to ensure—because as the Member would know, these needs arise on a continuous basis. And what we have done here is, with the very kind and competent collaboration of the Minister of Finance, we have identified now a new line Item, where these—

Mr. Charles: [*Laughter*]

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: Yes, this one.

Mr. Charles: This one?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne:—where—[*Laughter*—I think it is an accurate description—where these matters could be more efficiently addressed as opposed to pulling from recurrent, which has been done in the past. So that is the rationale.

Mr. Charles: Another question. Item 02/001/21: Repairs and Maintenance Buildings, and it is an increase of \$752,000:

“To meet the cost of repairs and other remedial work to the buildings resulting from a mold infestation.”

The Minister cares to tell us which buildings?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: These are the buildings at the headquarters in Port of Spain. There was some ventilation in the past—and I used that in the figurative sense—of a mold issue. We have, in the interest of the staff members of the Ministry and in the interest of clients who would be required to visit us, have taken comprehensive action to treat with this mold issue definitively. There is some additional work required to achieve that, and that is the rationale for this modest request for an increased allocation.

[MADAM CHAIRMAN *in the Chair*]

Mr. Charles: Item—Development Programme, \$4.2 million, Upgrade of IT Infrastructure at the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs and Overseas Missions. Could the Minister indicate what specifically the critical IT equipment to be upgraded, and how would this improve the mandate of the Ministry?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: Yes, I can. Madam Chair, the Committee would be aware that the entire Government—in fact, the Trinidad and Tobago society is on a trajectory of digital

transformation led by the Government and the Ministry of Digital Transformation. We have recognized our role in this process, and the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs is undergoing significant upgrade with respect to our IT technologies; our capacity to keep information safe; and also, to interact, within our diplomatic responsibilities, in a modern, and efficient, and technology-driven manner. More and more of our meetings, interactions and exchanges are occurring in the virtual space, and we have to be up to speed and able to treat with these matters competently. So I have details here if the Member is seeking further details.

So this upgrade of IT equipment is focused both at headquarters and at overseas missions, and covers things like: modern desktops, a number of laptops, two additional servers, networking and other equipment, modern printers, firewall appliances, and telecommunications equipment as well. And I do have an additional breakdown with respect to the headquarters, it is \$1.4 million. And with respect to the upgrades at the overseas missions, it is just over TT \$500,000—so TT \$559,500.

Mr. Charles: Yeah.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: So we propose to expend this very efficiently, again, with specs being guided at all times by the Ministry of Digital Transformation. So we are not on an adventure of our own.

Mr. Charles: Right.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: We are working within the whole-of-government approach.

Mr. Charles: So, Minister—and this is just for clarification—you will now have, because of the firewalls and whatnot, secure lines of communications with ambassadors because—

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: Absolutely, yes. In fact, we have already done some upgrade with respect to a Cisco system and other means to ensure that we communicate with—sometimes sensitive communication—the best possible approach. With this modest upgrade package, we will take that to the next level.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Madam Chair, to the hon. Minister, line Item 04/007/01: Severance Benefits, the increase of \$4.19 million to facilitate the payment of terminal benefits to locally-recruited staff of the High Commission in London, Hon. Minister, can you advise the number of persons this line Item is going to impact upon?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: I can. There are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 persons who would benefit from this particular sum, with respect to payment of severance benefits. They are all former locally-recruited staff members of our High Commission in London, England and the total sum is \$419,000. And I, if

you wish, do have a breakdown for person.

Mr. Ratiram: Thanks.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: But it is five persons.

Mr. Ratiram: Can you provide a breakdown?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: Yes. Person No.1, if I may be allowed to refer to her as person No. 1, \$72,126.85; individual No. 2, \$51,769.60. I am going to, for accuracy, start over that breakdown. The total is £419,191.

Mr. Ratiram: Okay.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: So, everything I say is in pounds. Individual No. 1, £72,126; individual No. 2, £51,769; individual No.3, £106,016; individual No. 4, £58,900; individual No. 5, the last individual, £130,379. I want to clarify and I would give by way of one example, individual No. 5, that would be with respect to a period of service between 1979 and 2022. So, you are talking about a very long period of service and these are the normal severance benefits that would accrue with respect to those who serve as locally-recruited staff at the overseas mission.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you very much, Minister. Minister, can you provide us with the reason for the termination?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: What?

Mr. Ratiram: These are—

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: No they were—

Mr. Ratiram: They were not terminated?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: These are not individuals who were terminated. So, there is no--Madam Chair, I do not know if you can assist.

Mr. Ratiram: Okay, so what I am looking at is the terminal benefits.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: There is no rationale for termination.

Mr. Ratiram: Okay. Have these positions been filled or are they vacant?

Madam Chairman: So, Member I am sorry, I would not allow that question under this Item. This is for severance benefits. So, unless you have another question that you could interrogate this Item, I suggest you move on.

Mr. Ratiram: One more question to the hon. Minister with respect to the line Item 02/001/21. The explanation provided here: to meet the cost of repairs and other remedial works to buildings resulting from mold infestation. Minister, can you advise if any employees were affected by the mold infestation and if any compensation had to be paid to employees?

Madam Chairman: Member, again I regret to say I cannot entertain that question under this Item. It is for repairs and maintenance to the buildings. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Thank you very much. Minister, I know we interrogated 09/005/06, F, 075 and you gave the list, the comprehensive list. I am interested, only because the Auditor General had raised the point. Could you indicate what works are being carried out at the official residence at Chancery in Ottawa?

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: Could you just speak up a little bit? I did not hear the question.

Mr. Charles: Only because it was mentioned in the Auditor General's Report, I am just interested in finding out. I knew you had just given the names of the missions but I am reading:

It was noted that the official residence and the Chancery office were in need of repairs. Could you give us a little detail on the work at the residence and, perhaps, Chancery of the Ottawa High Commission?

Madam Chairman: Before I allow that question—

Mr. Charles: Yes.

Madam Chairman:—and I may allow it if you ask a preliminary question.

Mr. Charles: The preliminary question: the Minister had indicated to us that works will be done at that mission and the question I am asking if he is willing to provide details of that work?

Madam Chairman: Was that with the mold?

Mr. Charles: No, no, no. This is—

Madam Chairman: Upgrade?

Mr. Charles: Yes, Upgrade Works at Overseas Mission.

Madam Chairman: Okay, great, I see it.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, with respect to the Ottawa Chancery, we are seeking to expend TT \$50,000 for some work. A detailed structural analysis is required on the facility with a structural assessment. We are also obliged to do an OSH assessment and some structural work will be undertaken with these funds.

An initial assessment was conducted. A more in-depth and in-detail analysis is required at this time. We would be applying that with this approval. There is evidence of some movement affecting the structure, which does affect infrastructure from time to time and there were a few transverse and longitudinal cracks that were identified. So, we are looking at that and doing the relevant assessments and we will be doing remedial work where relevant. So, that is the Ottawa Chancery and I have similar details on all the other work we seek to undertake.

Mr. Charles: Excellent. Are any of the refurbishment works looking at the issue of asbestos? And I will tell you why. When I was at PRUN and they started repairs, the building, because of the time we bought the building in 1962, they discovered a whole set of asbestos and it is suspected that the residence in Washington, which was bought at the same time, may be similarly affected. So, just out of an abundance of caution and interest.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. Browne: With respect to Washington, if I may, Madam Chair, in particular, a full roof replacement will be conducted, including the framing, the ceiling and other elements that may pose such a risk as identified by the Member. We certainly are bearing that experience that you referred to in mind with respect to all assessments at our overseas facilities. Sometimes we do not give ourselves credit here, but T&T is ahead in some cases of some of these offshore locations with respect to safety elements.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 65 supplemented by the sum of \$9,182,500.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Minister, PS and other officers from the Ministry.

Head 80: Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts be supplemented by the sum of \$21,048,000.

Madam Chairman: I will now invite the Minister of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister.

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and good afternoon to this Committee. The supplementary appropriation in the amount of \$21,048,000 proposed for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts will be utilized towards the payment of recurrent expenditure items under the Statutory Boards.

The “National Carnival Commission”—in the amount of \$5,300,000 in respect of—“the construction of facilities”—during Carnival 2024—“and for the provision of security services.”

NAPA in the amount of—“\$9,645,000...for the cost of repairs...of the HVAC...system...”—the elevator, and outstanding—“...payments...for...Electricity”—and Other Contracted Services and for—“...salaries for contract staff.”

SAPA in the amount of—“\$6,103,000...

“To facilitate the payment for maintenance of the building;”—outstanding payments for—“Electricity”—and Other Contracted Services—“and for...payment for salaries for contract staff.”

Madam Chair, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts remains committed to the

development and growth of the sectors and will continue to build on the foundation we have created to ensure that Trinidad and Tobago continues to be recognized.

Question proposed: That Head 80 be supplemented by the sum of \$28,048,000.

Madam Chairman: Member for Tabaquite.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon Minister, I am on line Item 06/004/22. So, the National Carnival Commission were we adding a further \$5.3 million. So I note the explanation in respect to construction of facilities and provision of security services during the Carnival 2024 period. Is the Minister in a position today to tell us what is the total sum expended on Carnival 2024 at this time? Would you be able to provide it to us before Friday?

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: I could provide you a statement.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Thank you. In terms of the provision of security services, was there a specific firm used for the provision of security services?

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: Yes. A number of firms were used. So under security services, the amount to be supplemented would be \$2,387,174.10. It is Heller Security Services in the amount of \$79,104.38; Paragon Protection Consultants Limited in the amount of \$90,171.56; Security Analysts Services in the amount of \$646,974.03; SWAT Estate Police Service in the amount of \$7,522,257.13; Yuja Security Service Limited in the amount of \$81,667.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: Minister are you in a position to tell us how much was earned by the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the carnival period 2024?

Madam Chairman: So, Member, regrettably I cannot allow that question at this time.

Mrs. Haynes-Alleyne: No problem. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Member for Couva North.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you, most kindly Madam Chair. Madam Chair, to the hon. Minister, Minister for the line Items identified here you gave us the breakdown of the security services. Can you also provide us with the service providers and the amount for the construction of the facilities in line Item 22, the Janitorial Services for line Item in 59, and the Janitorial and Security Services for line Item in 60: The service provider and the amount.

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: Sorry. I am sorry. Are we on the National Carnival Commission or have you gone on to NAPA and SAPA?

Mr. Ratiram: Okay. So, on the National Carnival Commission—

Madam Chairman: Ask your question separately. And maybe—I know you are trying to be efficient, but it might be easier to ask them separately.

Mr. Ratiram: Okay. Sure.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you.

Mr. Ratiram: Sure. Hon. Minister with respect to line Item 06/004/22: National Carnival Commission.

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: Yes.

Mr. Ratiram: The Construction of Facilities. Can you provide us with the information of the service provider and the amount?

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: Yes.

Mr. Ratiram: Also for line Item 06/004/59: NAPA, the provision of janitorial services and securities services, would you be kind enough to provide us with the service providers and the amount?

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: Yep. One second I can provide that now. With respect to NAPA. Janitorial services, the contractor is Building Maintenance Services Limited, and the security services, the contractor is Heller Security Services Limited.

Mr. Ratiram: And the amount?

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: The amount that would be paid in this supplementation is \$817,138. That is to the security services contractor and \$510,414 for the janitorial services contractor.

Mr. Ratiram: Can you also provide us with an idea in terms of the arrears for the provision of electricity, how much outstanding arrears do we have there for electricity?

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: So the projected expenditure for fiscal 2024 is \$3,795,868 that includes arrears and the amount to take us to the end of the fiscal year. So the shortfall and the amount that would be paid with this supplementation is \$1,296,868.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you Minister. That is the—

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: That is for NAPA.

Mr. Ratiram: That is the shortfall. Do you have a breakdown of what the actual arrears are with respect to electricity?

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: No. But if you would like the arrears—What I am giving you is the arrears plus the amount to the end of the financial.

Mr. Ratiram: Okay. So moving on.

Hon. Members: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: Yes, so it will cover the arrears.

Mr. Ratiram: Okay. Moving on to line Item 06/004/60 for SAPA, the increase of \$6.1 million, can

you also provide us with the breakdown of the service providers and the amount for janitorial services and security services?

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: For the security, the security provider is Intrepid Security Agency, and the amount to be paid is \$230,838. The janitorial service provider is, again, Building Maintenance Services Limited and the amount to be paid with this supplementation is \$2million.

Mr. Ratiram: And with respect to the arrears with the provision of electricity?

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: So the projected expenditure until the end of the financial year is \$4,698,702 and the amount to be paid with this supplementation is \$1,538,526.

Mr. Ratiram: So this would be able to fulfil all the arrears?

Sen. The Hon. Mitchell: Yes.

Mr. Ratiram: Thank you very much Minister.

Madam Chairman: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre. Thank you. Member for Princes Town.

Mr. Padarath: [*Inaudible*]

Question proposed: That Head 80 be supplemented by the sum of \$21,48,000 million.

Madam Chairman: Thank you to the Minister; thank you PS, thank you all supporting staff.

Question put and agreed to.

Appropriation for fiscal year 2024 supplemented by the sum of \$2,328,099,600.

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, please note that the debate for the adoption of the Committee's Report will take place on Friday, June 07, 2024, at 1.30 p.m. This meeting of the Standing Finance Committee is now adjourned.

5.43 p.m.: *Standing Finance Committee adjourned.*

APPENDIX IV

Schedule relating to the Supplementation of Estimates 2024

SCHEDULE							
RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTATION OF ESTIMATES - 2024							
HEAD/SUB-HEAD/ITEM AND SUB-ITEM			Provision in Estimates 2024 including Direct Charges, Transfers & Virements	Revised Provision 2024	NET		Explanation
			\$	\$	Increase	Decrease	
HEAD	06:	SERVICE COMMISSIONS	88,545,000	92,685,000	4,140,000		
SUB-HEAD	02:	GOODS AND SERVICES	34,388,630	38,528,630	4,140,000		
Item	001:	General Administration	25,406,000	29,546,000	4,140,000		
Sub-Item	23:	Fees	3,670,400	4,770,400	1,100,000		
Sub-Item	28:	Other Contracted Services	655,000	3,695,000	3,040,000		
HEAD	15:	TOBAGO HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY	2,558,000,000	2,608,000,000	50,000,000		
DIVISION	02:	OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SECRETARY	153,490,000	203,490,000	50,000,000		
SUB-HEAD	02:	GOODS AND SERVICES	88,559,300	138,559,300	50,000,000		

Item	008:	Tobago Emergency Management Agency	11,580,000	61,580,000	50,000,000		
Sub-item	36:	Extraordinary Expenditure	1,200,000	51,200,000	50,000,000		
HEAD	23:	OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS	466,130,000	590,430,000	124,300,000		
SUB-HEAD	02:	GOODS AND SERVICES	243,296,600	364,296,600	121,000,000		
Item	001:	General Administration	185,973,400	306,973,400	121,000,000		
Sub-Item	23:	Fees	45,000,000	165,000,000	120,000,000		
Sub-Item	28:	Other Contracted Services	2,000,000	3,000,000	1,000,000		
SUB-HEAD	04:	CURRENT TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES	98,720,900	102,020,900	3,300,000		
Item	009:	Other Transfers	22,093,900	25,393,900	3,300,000		
Sub-Item	01:	Police Complaints Authority	18,650,000	21,590,000	2,940,000		
Sub-Item	05:	Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Compliance Unit	2,000,000	2,360,000	360,000		

HEAD	26:	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	6,145,435,000	6,289,635,000	144,200,000		
SUB-HEAD	01:	PERSONNEL EXPENDITURE	3,189,858,200	3,207,358,200	17,500,000		
Item	006:	Primary Education	1,400,604,000	1,418,104,000	17,500,000		
Sub-item	01:	Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance	1,311,154,000	1,328,654,000	17,500,000		
SUB-HEAD	02:	GOODS AND SERVICES	617,376,000	645,076,000	27,700,000		
Item	001:	General Administration	564,213,076	591,913,076	27,700,000		
Sub-item	22:	Short-term Employment	24,000,000	39,000,000	15,000,000		
Sub-item	43:	Security Services	179,000,000	191,700,000	12,700,000		
SUB-HEAD	04:	CURRENT TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES	1,880,776,900	1,979,776,900	99,000,000		
Item	007:	Households	106,563,921	146,563,921	40,000,000		
Sub-item	40:	Gratuities to Contract Officers	24,000,000	44,000,000	20,000,000		
Sub-item	42:	School Supplies and Book Grant	0	20,000,000	20,000,000		
Item	011:	Transfers to State Enterprises	566,727,429	625,727,429	59,000,000		
Sub-item	02:	National Scools Dietary Services Ltd.	250,846,129	297,846,129	47,000,000		
Sub-item	07:	Metal Industries Company Ltd. (National Skills Development Programme)	33,923,000	45,923,000	12,000,000		

HEAD	28:	MINISTRY OF HEALTH	6,408,773,950	6,904,059,950	495,286,000		
SUB-HEAD	02:	GOODS AND SERVICES	787,698,900	1,001,843,900	214,145,000		
Item	001:	General Administration	183,422,500	194,984,200	11,561,700		
Sub-item	08:	Rent/Lease-Office Accommodation and Storage	36,045,500	47,607,200	11,561,700		
Item	004:	Vertical Services	596,469,050	799,052,350	202,583,300		
Sub-item	39:	Drugs and Other Related Materials and Supplies	574,006,100	776,589,400	202,583,300		
SUB-HEAD	04:	CURRENT TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES	5,042,866,550	5,324,007,550	281,141,000		
Item	009:	Other Transfers	4,642,887,290	4,924,028,290	281,141,000		
Sub-item	02:	North West Regional Health Authority	1,039,312,600	1,079,315,100	40,002,500		
Sub-item	03:	Eastern Regional Health Authority	504,866,900	564,873,800	60,006,900		
Sub-item	04:	North Central Regional Health Authority	1,281,200,000	1,402,326,000	121,126,000		
Sub-item	05:	South West Regional Health Authority	1,231,400,000	1,291,405,600	60,005,600		
HEAD	30:	MINISTRY OF LABOUR	399,562,700	530,101,300	130,538,600		

SUB-HEAD	02:	GOODS AND SERVICES	321,124,450	434,124,450	113,000,000		
Item	004:	Occupational Safety and Health Authority	20,493,450	75,493,450	55,000,000		
Sub-item	16:	Contract Employment	9,166,613	64,166,613	55,000,000		
Item	005:	On The Job Training Programme	263,865,400	321,865,400	58,000,000		
Sub-item	17:	Training	251,749,400	309,749,400	58,000,000		
SUB-HEAD	04:	CURRENT TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES	10,360,000	19,120,000	8,760,000		
Item	007:	Households	6,000,000	14,760,000	8,760,000		
Sub-item	40:	Gratuities to Contract Officers	5,500,000	14,260,000	8,760,000		
SUB-HEAD	06:	CURRENT TRANSFERS TO STATUTORY BOARDS AND SIMILAR BODIES	36,080,000	44,858,600	8,778,600		
Item	004:	Statutory Boards	36,080,000	44,858,600	8,778,600		
Sub-Item	17:	Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies	36,080,000	44,858,600	8,778,600		
HEAD	39:	MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES	2,826,724,000	3,354,524,000	527,800,000		

SUB-HEAD	04:	CURRENT TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES	1,017,197,000	1,022,797,000	5,600,000		
Item	009:	Other Transfers	826,944,000	832,544,000	5,600,000		
Sub-item	04:	Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation (TTPost)	69,000,000	74,600,000	5,600,000		
SUB-HEAD	06:	CURRENT TRANSFERS TO STATUTORY BOARDS AND SIMILAR BODIES	1,250,209,000	1,772,409,000	522,200,000		
Item	004:	Statutory Boards	1,250,209,000	1,772,409,000	522,200,000		
Sub-item	51:	Water and Sewerage Authority	1,250,209,000	1,772,409,000	522,200,000		
HEAD	40:	MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES	802,381,260	1,373,281,260	570,900,000		
Sub-Head	04:	Current Transfers and Subsidies	624,956,300	1,195,856,300	570,900,000		
Item	007:	Households	432,698,100	1,003,598,100	570,900,000		
Sub-item	01:	Shortfall in Subsidy re Sale of Petroleum Products	430,000,000	1,000,900,000	570,900,000		

HEAD	42:	MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	2,215,271,000	2,310,298,500	95,027,500		
SUB-HEAD	02:	GOODS AND SERVICES	48,835,000	65,162,500	16,327,500		
Item	001:	General Administration					
Sub-item	16:	Contract Employment	29,000,000	39,755,500	10,755,500		
Sub-item	22:	Short-term Employment	1,000,000	6,572,000	5,572,000		
SUB-HEAD	04:	CURRENT TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES	540,015,000	583,715,000	43,700,000	0	
Item	009:	Other Transfers	430,000,000	466,700,000	36,700,000		
Sub-item	04:	Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme	430,000,000	466,700,000	36,700,000		
Item	11:	Transfers to State Enterprises	106,786,000	113,786,000	7,000,000		
Sub-item	09:	R.D.C. -National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (N.R.W.R.P.)	80,000,000	87,000,000	7,000,000		
Item	06:	Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies	1,522,131,000	1,557,131,000	35,000,000		
Sub-item	005:	Local Government Bodies	1,522,131,000	1,557,131,000	35,000,000		
Sub-item	23:	Port of Spain City Corporation	237,657,000	239,757,000	2,100,000		

Sub-item	24:	San Fernando City Corporation	136,429,000	141,029,000	4,600,000		
Sub-item	25:	Arima Borough Corporation	89,515,000	90,915,000	1,400,000		
Sub-item	26:	Point Fortin Borough Corporation	73,848,000	75,348,000	1,500,000		
Sub-item	27:	Chaguanas Borough Corporation	72,033,000	75,033,000	3,000,000		
Sub-item	28:	Diego Martin Borough Corporation	98,811,000	101,011,000	2,200,000		
Sub-item	29:	San Juan / Laventille Regional Corporation	169,625,000	174,625,000	5,000,000		
Sub-item	30:	Tunapuna /Piarco Regional Corporation	164,900,000	169,900,000	5,000,000		
Sub-item	31:	Sangre Grande Regional Corporation	76,030,000	78,530,000	2,500,000		
Sub-item	32:	Couva /Tabaquite /Talparo Regional Corporation	103,700,000	106,200,000	2,500,000		
Sub-item	33:	Mayaro /Rio Claro Regional Corporation	62,045,000	63,045,000	1,000,000		
Sub-item	34:	Siparia Borough Corporation	83,078,000	84,578,000	1,500,000		
Sub-item	35:	Penal /Debe Regional Corporation	67,375,000	68,375,000	1,000,000		
Sub-item	36:	Princes Town Regional Corporation	71,877,000	73,577,000	1,700,000		
HEAD	43:	MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT	2,490,909,000	2,646,586,000	155,677,000		

SUB-HEAD	02:	GOODS AND SERVICES	463,335,192	576,335,192	113,000,000		
Item	002:	Highways	168,174,512	226,174,512	58,000,000		
Sub-item	28:	Other Contracted Services	144,776,512	202,776,512	58,000,000		
Item	003:	Traffic Management	25,456,000	40,456,000	15,000,000		
Sub-item	28:	Other Contracted Services	15,000,000	30,000,000	15,000,000		
Item	005:	Drainage	132,418,000	172,418,000	40,000,000		
Sub-item	09:	Rent / Lease - Vehicles and Equipment	50,000,000	70,000,000	20,000,000		
Sub-item	28:	Other Contracted Services	66,741,000	86,741,000	20,000,000		
SUB-HEAD	04:	CURRENT TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES	1,146,283,488	1,188,960,488	42,677,000		
Item	007:	Households	24,098,842	34,098,842	10,000,000		
Sub-item	40:	Gratuities to Contract Officers	9,840,000	19,840,000	10,000,000		
Item	011:	Transfers to State Enterprises	898,276,215	930,953,215	32,677,000		
Sub-item	11:	NIPDEC - Repayment of 1.542Bn. Fixed Rate Bonds - PURE	26,532,110	53,356,110	26,824,000		
Sub-item	25:	NIDCO - Road works \$500Mn. - Point Fortin Highway	18,047,159	23,900,159	5,853,000		
HEAD	65:	MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS	256,700,000	265,882,500	9,182,500		

SUB-HEAD	02:	GOODS AND SERVICES	97,914,900	98,666,900	752,000		
Item	001:	General Administration	20,004,759	20,756,759	752,000		
Sub-item	21:	Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings	500,000	1,252,000	752,000		
Sub-Head	04:	CURRENT TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES	65,703,400	69,895,400	4,192,000		
Item	007:	Households	1,465,000	5,657,000	4,192,000		
Sub-item	01:	Severance Benefits	700,000	4,892,000	4,192,000		
SUB-HEAD	09:	DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	4,500,000	8,738,500	4,238,500	-	-
Item	005:	Multi-Sectoral and Other Services	4,500,000	8,738,500	4,238,500		
Sub-item	06:	General Public Services	4,500,000	8,738,500	4,238,500		
Project Grp.	A:	Administrative Services	1,300,000	3,300,000	2,000,000		
Project No.	027:	Upgrade of IT Infrastructure at the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs and Overseas Missions	0	2,000,000	2,000,000		
Project Grp.	F:	Public Buildings	3,200,000	5,438,500	2,238,500		
Project No.	075:	Upgrade Works at Overseas Missions	0	2,238,500	2,238,500		

HEAD	80:	MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND THE ARTS	360,096,000	381,144,000	21,048,000		
SUB-HEAD	06:	CURRENT TRANSFERS TO STATUTORY BOARDS AND SIMILAR BODIES	187,048,035	208,096,035	21,048,000		
Item	004:	Statutory Boards	187,048,035	208,096,035	21,048,000		
Sub-item	22:	National Carnival Commission of T&T	140,803,000	146,103,000	5,300,000		
Sub-item	59:	National Academy for the Performing Arts	18,627,835	28,272,835	9,645,000		
Sub-item	60:	Southern Academy for the Performing Arts	9,033,400	15,136,400	6,103,000		

APPENDIX V

Proposals for the Supplementation of Appropriation for fiscal year 2024

AGENDA FOR THE First MEETING OF STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE 2024 SESSION OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
TO BE HELD ON

3rd JUNE, 2024

MATTERS RELATING TO THE 2024 ACCOUNTS

	F.C. NOTE NO.	FILE NO.	SUBJECT	PAGE NOS.
01	01	F:BUD:4/4/8	Supplementary Appropriation for fiscal year 2024	1 - 13

NOTE FOR STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE

ITEM NO. 1
4/4/8

F.C. (2024)

F: BUD:

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2024

Standing Finance Committee is being asked to consider the under-mentioned proposals:

Provision of Supplementary Funds in the sum of *Two Thousand, Three Hundred and Twenty Eight Million, Ninety Nine Thousand, Six Hundred Dollars (\$2,328,099,600)* to fund urgent and critical Recurrent and Capital Expenditure to September 30, 2024, in areas where insufficient or no allocation was provided.

2. Standing Finance Committee is asked to note that as a result of the review of the Recurrent Expenditure and the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) which was conducted by the Ministry of Finance it is necessary to return to Parliament to seek approval for a supplementation of the Appropriation (Financial Year 2024) Act, 2023 for twelve (12) Heads of Expenditure totaling \$2,328,099,600.

3. Further, the Standing Finance Committee is now being asked to approve the additional sum amounting to **\$2,328,099,600** which will be sourced from the Consolidated Fund and is required to meet expenditure under the following sub-heads:-

- (i) Personnel Expenditure - \$17,500,000
- (ii) Goods and Services - \$660,064,500
- (iii) Current Transfers and Subsidies - \$1,059,270,000
- (iv) Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies - \$587,026,600
- (v) Development Programme - \$4,238,500

4. Details of the total proposed Supplementation by Heads of Expenditure are given in the Table below:

Supplementation by Heads of Expenditure – 2024

Heads of Expenditure	Amount \$
06 Service Commissions	4,140,000
15 Tobago House of Assembly	50,000,000
23 Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs	124,300,000
26 Ministry of Education	144,200,000
28 Ministry of Health	495,286,000
30 Ministry of Labour	130,538,600
39 Ministry of Public Utilities	527,800,000
40 Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries	570,900,000
42 Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government	95,027,500
43 Ministry of Works and Transport	155,677,000
65 Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs	9,182,500
80 Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts	21,048,000
TOTAL	<u>2,328,099,600</u>

5. Explanations for the areas for the proposed supplementary funding are as follows:

HEAD 06 – SERVICE COMMISSIONS

Recurrent Expenditure - \$4,140,000

02/001/23 - Fees - \$1,100,000

Funding is required to meet anticipated legal costs for ongoing court matters.

02/001/28 - Other Contracted Services - \$3,040,000

To facilitate payment of specialized assessment exercises conducted through the assessment centre for senior officers of the Public Service for example; Commissioner of Police, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Commissioner of Prisons, Deputy Commissioner of Prisons, Registrar - Integrity Commission, Director - Government Forensics Centre, Government Archivist.

HEAD 15 – TOBAGO HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Recurrent Expenditure - \$50,000,000

02/008/36 – Extraordinary Expenditure - \$50,000,000

To meet the clean-up and remediation costs associated with the the oil spill which occurred in Tobago on February 7, 2024.

HEAD 23 – OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Recurrent Expenditure - \$124,300,000

02/001/23 - Fees - \$120,000,000

To facilitate the payment of monies owed to Local (\$30Mn.) and Foreign (\$90Mn.) attorneys-at-law for the provision of legal services.

02/001/28 - Other Contracted Services - \$1,000,000

To pay monies owed to AXIELL for the maintenance of software at the Companies Registry.

04/009/01 - Police Complaints Authority - \$2,940,000

To enable the Authority to meet its operational costs to September 2024.

04/009/05 - Anti-Money Laundering/Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Compliance Unit - \$360,000

To cover the cost of rental accommodation for the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force for the period July, 2024 to September, 2024.

HEAD 26 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Recurrent Expenditure – \$144,200,000

01/006/01- Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance - \$17,500,000

To facilitate the payment of arrears of increments owed to teachers in accordance with the revised terms and conditions of employment for members of the Teaching Service for the period October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2020.

02/001/22 – Short-term Employment – \$15,000,000

To meet the cost associated with: (a) an increase of the stipends awarded to Invigilators /Supervisors for services provided during the January 2024 CSEC and CAPE examinations as well as for payments to be awarded for services rendered for the June 2024 CSEC and CAPE examinations. The increase stemmed from an amendment to the minimum wages which took effect from January, 2024 in accordance with the Minimum Wages Act; and (b) the payment of salaries to short-term employees who worked on the completion of the arrears exercise pertinent to members of the Teaching Service.

02/001/43 – Security Services - \$12,700,000

To enable payments of current and previous years' bills which arose from an increase in the minimum wage with effect from January 01, 2024 and are payable to the National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited (MTS) and other companies for the provision of security services.

04/007/40 - Gratuities to Contract Officers - \$20,000,000

To facilitate payment of arrears of gratuity to contract officers whose contracts expired during the period 2019 to 2024.

04/007/42 - School Supplies and Book Grant - \$ 20,000,000

To meet the cost of school supplies and book grant to needy students of primary and secondary schools. Cabinet agreed to the provision of a school supplies and book grant of \$1,000 to 65,000 needy students of primary and secondary schools.

04/011/02 - National Schools Dietary Services Ltd. - \$47,000,000

To enable the payment of salaries to the staff of the National Schools Dietary Services Ltd. as well as to provide meals to students for the period June 2024 to September 2024.

04/011/07 - Metal Industries Company Ltd. (National Skills Development Programme) – \$12,000,000

To facilitate the payment of salaries and operational expenses viz training materials and personal protective equipment for trainees. Cabinet agreed to the expansion of the MIC-IT Youth Programme, Student Enhancement Empowerment Programme (STEEP) from 26 to 500 youths in the sum of \$3.75Mn.

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Recurrent Expenditure – \$495,286,000

02/001/08 - Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage - \$11,561,700

The sum is required to meet:

- a shortfall in allocation with respect to the new Ministry of Health Administrative Building in the sum of \$8,837,024 in accordance with rental agreement.
- rental payment with respect to the Ministry of Health's previous Head Office (63 Park St, P.O. S), carpark space (Park Plaza, POS), Pan American World Health Organization (Briar Place, St. Clair) and Head Office (Scared Heart Building, Sackville St, POS) for the period September 2023 - November 2023 which was not catered for in fiscal 2024 - \$2,724,676.

02/004/39 - Drugs and Other Related Materials and Supplies – \$202,583,300

To facilitate part payment for outstanding invoices on hand over 90 days at NIPDEC for pharmaceuticals/non-pharmaceuticals inclusive of CDAP's monthly Recurrent Expenditure.

04/009/02 - North West Regional Health Authority - \$40,002,500

To enable the North West Regional Health Authority to meet the partial payment of outstanding trade payables (utilities, rent, janitorial, security services, food supplies, medical gases, medical supplies and other expenses) as at February 29, 2024.

04/009/03 - Eastern Regional Health Authority - \$60,006,900

The sum is required to facilitate payments with respect to:

- Outstanding trade payables (utilities, rent, janitorial, security services, food supplies, medical gases, medical supplies and other expenses) as at February 29, 2024 in the sum \$11,598,286; and
- Deficit in operational expenses in the sum of \$48,408,614 (Personnel Emoluments \$30,673,248 and Goods and Services \$17,735,366) with respect to the New Sangre Grande Hospital Campus which is scheduled to be commissioned in fiscal 2024.

04/009/04 - North Central Regional Health Authority - \$121,126,000

04/009/05 - South West Regional Health Authority - \$60,005,600

To meet the payment of outstanding trade payables (utilities, rent, janitorial, security services, food supplies, medical gases, medical supplies and other expenses) as at February 29, 2024.

HEAD 30 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Recurrent Expenditure - \$130,538,600

02/004/16 – Contract Employment - \$55,000,000

The sum is required to facilitate the payment of arrears of salary to past and present employees in the Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA), for the periods November 01, 2012 to October 31, 2015 and November 01, 2015 to October 31, 2018. Funds are also required to meet the shortfall in salaries and NIS for the period May to September 2024.

02/005/17 – Training - \$58,000,000

To facilitate the payment of arrears of stipends owed to the On The Job Trainees (Level 1), under the purview of the On The Job Training Programme. The arrears are due to the award of an increase of the monthly stipends with effect from 01/01/24. The additional sum is also to meet the expenditure to be incurred as a result of the increase in monthly stipends and to cater for the increased intake of trainees

04/007/40 – Gratuities to Contract Workers - \$8,760,000

To meet the shortfall for the payment of gratuities to contract officers and arrears of gratuity with respect to the revised terms and conditions to past and present employees of the Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA).

06/004/17 – Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies - \$8,778,600

To facilitate the payment of arrears arising from the agreement between the Banking, Insurance and General Workers Union and Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies, for in-active permanent staff, in-active academic staff, in-active temporary staff and active staff of the College.

HEAD 39 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

Recurrent Expenditure - \$527,800,000

04/009/04 – Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation - \$5,600,000

Funding is required for the following:

- to purchase Track Packs, parcel stickers and other items used in the delivery of highly sensitive and confidential mail. The heightened demand for the afore-stated resources is due to the fact that TTPOST was recently awarded contracts by the American Consulate to deliver passports and visas within the country and to deliver Credit Cards on behalf of local commercial banks (\$1,100,000);

- for the payment of VAT liabilities owed by TTPOST for the years 2014 to 2018 to the Board of Inland Revenue (BIR). The adjusted liabilities stemmed from audits conducted by the BIR (\$4,500,000);

06/004/51 - Water and Sewerage Authority - WASA - \$522,200,000

To meet the shortfall in the Water and Sewerage Authority's (WASA) fiscal 2024 subvention as follows:

• Salaries and COLA	-	\$ 55,200,000
• Wages and COLA	-	\$ 69,600,000
• Overtime – Daily Rated Workers	-	\$ 21,000,000
• Overtime – Monthly Paid Officers	-	\$ 17,500,000
• Government's Contribution to NIS	-	\$ 29,100,000
• Allowances – Daily Rated Workers	-	\$ 4,600,000
• Travelling and Subsistence	-	\$ 7,700,000
• Contract Employment	-	\$153,200,000
• Principal on US\$ 60Mn RBL Revolving Loan	-	\$107,000,000
• Interest on US\$ 60Mn RBL Revolving Loan	-	\$57,300,000

HEAD 40 - MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES

Recurrent Expenditure – \$570,900,000

04/007/01 - Shortfall in Subsidy re Sale of Petroleum Products - \$570,900,000

To facilitate the part payment of outstanding arrears with regard to Subsidy re Sale of Petroleum Products for the period 2022 and 2023 owed to:

- National Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (NPMC)
- United Independent Petroleum Marketing Company (UNIPET)

HEAD 42 - MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Recurrent Expenditure - \$95,027,500

02/001/16 - Contract Employment - \$10,755,500

To facilitate payment of Salaries to the end of the fiscal year for officers whose contracts were renewed.

02/001/22 – Short-term Employment - \$5,572,000

To enable payment of Salaries to persons employed on short-term contracts, and to also facilitate payment to officers who are awaiting approval on long-term contracts.

04/009/04 - Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) - \$36,700,000

To enable payment of Wages and NIS Contributions (\$32.4Mn.) arising from the increases in the minimum wage and to cover operational and administrative expenses (\$4.3Mn.) to the end of September 2024.

04/011/07 RDC - National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (N.R.W.R.P.) - \$7,000,000

To enable payment of Wages and NIS Contributions which arose from the increases in the minimum wage. In addition, funding is also required to cover operational and administrative expenses to the end of September 2024.

06/005/23 – Port of Spain City Corporation - \$2,100,000

To enable the payment of Gratuities to Non-pensionable Employees due to former employees of the Corporation up to the end of the fiscal 2024.

006/05/24 - San Fernando City Corporation - \$4,600,000

006/05/27 - Chaguanas Borough Corporation - \$3,000,000

06/005/28 - Diego Martin Borough Corporation - \$2,200,000

06/005/29 - San Juan /Laventille Regional Corporation - \$5,000,000

06/005/31 - Sangre Grande Regional Corporation - \$2,500,000

06/005/33 - Mayaro/ Rio Claro Regional Corporation – \$1,000,000

06/005/34 - Siparia Borough Corporation - \$1,500,000

06/005/36 - Princes Town Regional Corporation - \$1,700,000

To meet the cost of expenses to be incurred for scavenging services by the varied Corporations to the end of fiscal 2024:

006/05/25 – Arima Borough Corporation - \$1,400,000

To provide for the payment of arrears owed to a contractor who was recruited by the Corporation to provide additional scavenging services, in July 2023 (\$0.3Mn) and to meet the payment of scavenging services for the Corporation to the end of fiscal 2024 (\$1,070Mn).

006/05/26 – Pt. Fortin Borough Corporation - \$1,500,000

To facilitate the payment for scavenging services (\$0.3Mn) required for the re-conditioning of the Guapo Landfill site under the purview of the Corporation; and for the issuance of gratuity payments by 30, September 2024 (\$1.2Mn) due to daily-rated workers and monthly paid staff of the Corporation.

006/05/30 – Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation - \$5,000,000

To meet the anticipated shortfall in payment of Wages & COLA due to hourly and daily-rated workers to the end of fiscal 2024, stemming from an increase in the cadre of Daily-Rated workers (116) under the Corporation.

006/05/32 – Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation - \$2,500,000

To facilitate payment for Scavenging Services and to provide for the payment of arrears owed to contractors (\$1.9Mn.) for the period July to September 2023.

006/05/35 – Penal/Debe Regional Corporation - \$1,000,000

To enable the payment of sick leave bonuses due to be paid within the final quarter of fiscal 2024 to hourly and daily-rated workers in conformance with the bargaining agreement.

HEAD 43 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

Recurrent Expenditure - \$155,677,000

02/005/09 – Rent / Lease – Vehicles and Equipment - \$20,000,000

To facilitate payment for the rental of equipment to assist the Drainage Division in the execution of its Fiscal 2024 clearing and desilting programme.

02/002/28 – Other Contracted Services (Highways Division) - \$58,000,000

To meet the cost of works required for drainage; bridge repair; safety; slope stabilization, road rehabilitation and payments to contractors.

02/003/28 – Other Contracted Services (Traffic Management Division) - \$15,000,000

To facilitate payment to the end of fiscal 2024 (\$3.7Mn) as well as for the installation of Traffic Controlled Devices required for an existing Reversible Lane Control Signals and Intelligent Transportation Systems along the Eastern Main Road (\$7.8Mn) and to upgrade the traffic signal systems from inductive loop sensors to video detection sensors (\$3.5Mn).

02/005/28 - Other Contracted Services (Drainage Division) - \$20,000,000

To meet the cost of works relevant to improvement, construction, desilting, clearing, cleaning, embankment works and payments to contractors.

04/007/40 – Gratuities to Contract Officers - \$10,000,000

To facilitate payment of gratuity to 268 officers whose contracts have ended (Traffic Warden - 157 persons; IT - 16 persons; Highways - 17 persons; Drainage - 14 persons, Transport - 13 persons; PURE - 24 persons, etc.).

04/011/11 - NIPDEC – Repayment of 1.542Bn. Fixed Rate Bonds - PURE - \$26,824,000

To provide for loan payments due in September, 2024.

04/011/25 - NIDCO – Road Works \$500Mn. – Point Fortin Highway - \$5,853,000

To provide for loan payments due in September, 2024.

HEAD: 65 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS

Recurrent Expenditure – \$4,944,000

02/001/21 – Repairs and Maintenance – Buildings - \$752,000

To meet the cost of repairs and other remedial work to the buildings resulting from a mold infestation.

04/007/01 – Severance Benefits - \$4,192,000

To facilitate the payment of terminal benefits to locally recruited staff of the High Commission, London.

HEAD 80: MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Recurrent Expenditure – \$21,048,000

06/004/22 - National Carnival Commission – \$5,300,000

To facilitate expenditure incurred for Carnival 2024 in respect of the construction of facilities and the provision of security services.

06/004/59 - National Academy for the Performing Arts – \$9,645,000

To meet the cost of repairs and maintenance of the HVAC air-condition system; repairs and servicing to Lift; payment of arrears for the provision of Electricity, Janitorial Services and Security Services; and facilitate the payment of salaries to contract staff.

06/004/60 - Southern Academy for the Performing Arts (SAPA) – \$6,103,000

To facilitate the payment for the maintenance of the building; payment of arrears for the provision of Electricity, Janitorial Services and Security Services; and the payment of salaries to contract staff.

Development Programme – \$4,238,500

09/005/06/A/027 – Upgrade of IT Infrastructure at the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs and Overseas Missions - \$2,000,000

To facilitate the payment for critical IT equipment upgrade at Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs Headquarters and Overseas Missions.

09/005/06/F/075 – Upgrade Works at Overseas Missions - \$2,238,500

To meet the cost of critical refurbishment and upgrade works on Government-owned properties abroad.