

# Official Report

*PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2015-2016) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN*

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36<sup>TH</sup> Sitting

Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2016

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*The Assembly convened at 2.17 p.m.*

*Prayers*

*[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

### **Death of Mr. William Arnold Lennox Haslyn, CCH**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, you are aware that Mr. Arnold Lennox Haslyn Parris, a former Member of Parliament, died on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2016, at the Balwant Singh Hospital after a brief illness.

He was 75 years old, having been born on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1941. Mr. Parris came to this House from the People's National Congress (PNC). He first became a Member of the National Assembly of the Fourth Parliament of Guyana, that is of the Third Session, 1983 to 1984, when the National Assembly first met on Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1981. On Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> August, 1984, Mr. Parris was appointed Deputy Prime Minister responsible for planning and development in the State Planning Secretariat. The Fourth Parliament was dissolved on Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1985. The Fifth Parliament commenced when the National Assembly first met on Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 1986. Mr. Parris had, again, been appointed Deputy Prime Minister on Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1986 until Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1991, when he resigned from that post on Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1991. He then served as an ordinary Member of Parliament from Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1991 to Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1992. That Parliament

was dissolved by the President on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1992. He also served as Secretary to the National Assembly's Oversight Committee and also helped to shepherd the constitutional reform process between 1999 and 2000.

Hon. Members, let us stand and observe one minute's silence as a mark of respect for the late William Arnold Lennox Haslyn Parris.

*One minute's silence was observed.*

I thank you, Hon. Members.

### **Frequency of Sittings and Meetings**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I bid you all welcome to this 36<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the National Assembly. It has been eight weeks since we last met to consider the matters then placed before us. I must tell you, Hon. Members, that I have been pondering whether the present attenuated frequency of our Sittings leave Hon. Members satisfied that we are using, to the fullest, all the facilities which this noble House provides.

It is therefore my intention, Hon. Members, to, at the appropriate time, enter into consultation with all parties as regards the frequency of our meetings both in this House and in Committee.

On Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, this National Assembly will mark our first year. It seems, to me, a suitable time to let you know of such thoughts as I may have as regards the workings of our Assembly.

### **Events of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, during the months of March and April, two events were designed to enhance the capacity of Hon. Members in the discharge of their service to this House. Those events also afforded officers of the Parliament Office an opportunity to match their skills with the demands of all the arrangements of the events and to acquire additional insights in providing solutions to problems which they encounter in the discharge of their duties. The Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, that is internationally, also visited Guyana during these events.

A third event saw the Speaker of the National Assembly accepting an invitation to meet the Speaker of the House of Commons and, together with the Clerk of the National Assembly and a number of senior officers, we participated in wide-ranging discussions with the Clerk of the House of Commons, with senior Members of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords and with very senior members of staff of the United Kingdom's Parliament Office. It should be recorded that, as it was with the two events which took place here in Guyana, the event which took place in England met, fully, our expectations.

These three events were held under the auspices of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The first two which were held in Guyana was a joint approach between the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, United Kingdom (UK) and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Canada, with support from the Parliament Office of Guyana. The third event was held under the auspices of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association of the United Kingdom. As an aside, but of no less importance, is the reestablishment of the CPA, Guyana Branch.

It is my hope that, after speaking with the two Hon. Members, namely the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, who, by office, tradition and practice, hold the offices of Vice-Presidents in a Guyana Branch of the CPA, we would have taken the first steps towards re-establishing the Guyana Branch. It is my hope that I will soon be in a position to inform this House of the establishment of our Branch.

### **Work Programmes of Committees**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, as we are all aware, the Committee system is the means through which the main work of the National Assembly is undertaken. I would be correct to say that, with very few exceptions, both attendance at and meetings of a number of Committees have not so far met expectations. Much to my regret, Hon. Members, I have been unable, so far, to provide this House with information on the work programmes of the various Committees. It remains my hope that Hon. Members will see their contribution to the work of their respective Committees as being obligatory.

### **Breaches of Privilege**

**Mr. Speaker:** In the interim, Hon. Members, but more particularly while I was away, a number of complaints relating to breaches of privilege have been submitted to me. I must, first, thank Hon. Members for the vigilance with which they protect the privileges of this

House. It is also appropriate for me, as Speaker of the National Assembly, to remark on the conduct of some Members in this House which gives rise to a perception in some Hon. Members that the particular conduct of which they complain warrants the attention of the Speaker of the House.

The Speaker of the National Assembly will examine all complaints for breaches of privilege addressed to him. It is with that in mind and I observe that the Office of the Speaker of the National Assembly, indeed of any National Assembly, is to be held in strict regard by all Hon. Members at all times. This duty is well known to all Hon. Members of this House. The dignity and respect for the Office must be upheld at all times by all Hon. Members, even when the Speaker of the National Assembly rules in a manner that is different from the expectation of Hon. Members. Indeed, our Standing Orders exist in support of that position. When senior and long-serving Hon. Members of this House should make public reference to the Office of the Speaker in what is a political event and that within the precincts of Parliament, there is not simply irony in their conduct, but it gives cause for great concern. It must demonstrate a disregard of their obligations towards this House, a signal disrespect of their sworn duty towards this honourable House. When a very junior Member of this House makes use of the electronic media to attempt to lampoon certain Hon. Members of this House and to make comments about the Office of the Speaker of the National Assembly and the holder of that Office, it must be that the Hon. Member is either unaware of his duties and obligations towards this House or that that Hon. Member acted in reckless, uncaring disregard of those transgressions. Perhaps, Hon. Members more committed to the maintenance and dignity of this House may have advised that Hon. Member, since I have been told that those posts have been removed. All the conducts to which I refer are breaches of privilege and I have considered them as such. I have determined too that no further action will be taken on them and this matter is now closed.

2.32 p.m.

## **PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS**

The following Papers and Reports were laid:

- (i) The Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana Information Agency for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009. [*First Vice-President and Prime Minister*]

- (ii) The Annual Report of the Supreme Court of Judicature for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2015. [*Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*]
- (iii) The Audited Financial Statements of the Integrity Commission for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2014. [*Minister of State*]
- (iv) Financial Paper No. 3/2015 – Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$799,897,637 for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2015.
- (v) Annual Report of the Financial Intelligence Unit for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2014.
- (vi) The Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana National Shipping Cooperation for the years ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2011, 2012 and 2013.
- (vii) The Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana Securities Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2015. [*Minister of Finance*]
- (viii) Annual Reports of the Guyana Energy Authority for the years 2013 to 2015.
- (ix) The Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana Energy Authority for the years ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2014. [*Minister of Public Infrastructure*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Minister, I wonder whether you are in a position to name the day for consideration of the Financial Report.

**Minister of Finance [Mr. Jordan]:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not at this time; I will announce a date shortly.

## **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

The following Report was laid:

Third Periodic Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations of the Tenth Parliament. [*Chairperson of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations - Ms. Teixeira*]

## **ORAL QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I received some oral questions without notice from the Hon. Member, Bishop Juan Edghill. These questions are directed to the Hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure, the Hon. David Patterson. Hon. Member Mr. Edghill, I wonder whether, in light of the number of questions - I noticed that you have 11 questions here – and in the light of the importance of which the questions speak, this matter should be requested with notice.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, I propose to proceed as oral questions without notice. I propose to proceed as requested, that I put the questions to the Minister today.

**Mr. Speaker:** As I looked at the matter, there is no question of the importance of them. The matter does not stand in relation to anything that is being done today, and that you know, and I would not, in the circumstances, wish to accommodate them as oral questions. It is not my wish to disallow them, but I ask the Hon. Member, in the light of the number of questions, whether he would not feel that they would be better treated as written questions, given, as I said, it is not a matter that relates to the work of today.

**Opposition Chief Whip [Ms. Teixeira]:** Standing Order No. 18...

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member...

**Ms. Teixeira:** I just wish to say, Sir...

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, let us deal with this first and then we will come back to it.

**Ms. Teixeira:** But Sir, with due respect, the issue is Standing Order No. 18(b) which states:

“...or relate to the business of the day.”

It does not state ‘and’.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member. Will you kindly answer the question please, Bishop Edghill? If you say no, then no it is, but I cannot allow it.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, I am relying on the rules of engagement and, when I submitted the questions without notice, my understanding, at Standing Order No. 18(b):

“only Questions that are urgent and important or relate to the business of the day...”

While, Sir, you would have indicated that my questions do not relate to the business of the day, you have already deemed that they are urgent and important, and I propose to continue to ask the questions to the Hon. Minister.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, on what limb of this Standing Order are you standing? I asked that question because of my reading of the Standing Order and I am doing this because it is my wish that this matter be saved. It is my wish that I do not disallow it. I am guided by the Standing Orders. It states:

“(b) only Questions that are urgent and important or relate to the business of the day shall be permitted;”

I agree with you that it is important, but you will agree that there is no urgency in this nor is it related to the business of the day. That is my guidance on this matter. I will listen to you.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, there are two things I would like to bring to your attention. The questions that are being put relate to a very current matter. One of the questions has to do with public safety and assurances as it relates to an activity that will be taking place in two weeks' time. Sir, I submitted these questions, not this morning, as is expected for oral questions without notice and I think I did say to the Clerk, even though he indicated to me that it was early, that I did not want to spring a surprise on the Minister. This was submitted since the 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 and it was not intended to spring a surprise on the Minister. I saw the urgency of having these matters dealt with and I beg that these questions be allowed to be answered this afternoon. I do not think they are difficult questions for the Minister to handle.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member but difficulty is not a reason why a Minister must not answer a question, so we are not discussing the difficulty of a question or not. I am saying to this House that this matter does not form part of our consideration today. I do not wish to disallow it, but, if the Hon. Member insists on the course he wants to take, then that is what I will be guided by.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, just for clarity, are you indicating that the only way you would allow these questions is if I resubmit them for written reply?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is what I am saying, Hon. Member.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, but, at that stage, the questions will become useless. It will be after the fact.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would not agree with you, but you are presenting the motion and I will let you speak. Hon. Member, is there nothing more that you wish to say about this?

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, the only thing that I would like to say is that I am anticipating to be given the opportunity to ask my questions and be allowed to have the answers because my understanding of this particular provision in the Standing Orders is to allow the House and the people of Guyana to have an opportunity to hear, from policymakers, what is necessary as it relates to questions that are being asked. Sir, if these questions relate to a specific project that is being undertaken at the Jubilee Park, there are several concerns out there. As a representative of the people, we have formulated this into questions and we would like to have the answers. These are urgent matters, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** I take that the Hon. Member will not accept that these should be questions with written answers.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, at this stage, I am accepting that we should proceed with the questions being asked and the Minister answering today, in keeping with the Standing Orders, because I do not believe that my questions violate the Standing Orders or that they are out of order in anyway. I have submitted this with adequate notice. These are questions that need to be answered and, Sir, I do not see why I should be asked, as a Member of the House, who has the privilege of asking questions, to rework how I put my questions to a Member. I have asked for an oral response from the Minister on these questions and I am standing by that, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member for his statement. I think it is very clear. Then the motion is disallowed.

*2.47 p.m.*

## **MOTION OF PRIVILEGE**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I received a Privilege Motion from the Hon. Member Mr. Charrandas Persaud.

**Minister of Public Infrastructure [Mr. Patterson]:** Mr. Speaker, I am just seeking some clarification, but more particularly your guidance. I have heard the Hon. Member's request and I am very willing to, and I will, lay my responses in writing immediately, at the end of this sitting. I just wanted to say that for clarification.



**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Speaker, if you are disallowing my question, how can a Hon. Member stand up and put something on record in this House? What is he answering to? I have not put the question to this House. The question has not been properly put. Is there some amount of protectionism that is taking place, Sir? I do not understand this. I would like to be guided.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I thank you. I think the point you made is very apposite. This matter has been disallowed. If a Hon. Member wishes to do aught he may. The Speaker is not in a position to prevent him since, this matter is not before the House. You cannot have it both ways.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Speaker, the point the Hon. Member is making is valid. If the Hon. Minister is handing out his answer to questions that have been tabled they cannot be circulated in this House. They are not for the House. It is his personal thing. One cannot be answering questions which were been put, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, you may not have heard the Speaker say that this matter is not before the House.

**Minister of Natural Resources [Mr. Trotman]:** Sir, may I, perhaps on a point of assistance? It is the discretion of the Speaker to ask to be put into writing any question for which an oral answer is requested. That is within the Standing Orders. Your Honour may ask that the question for which an oral response is requested be placed into written form. *[Interruption]* The Speaker may request that questions which a Member wishes to put in oral form be reduced into writing. That is your discretion, Sir. That is within the Standing Orders.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member for his statement. We will move to the second item.

Hon. Members, I received a Privilege Motion from the Hon. Member Mr. Charrandas Persaud, seconded by the Hon. Member Mr. Jermaine Figueira, requesting that the Hon. Member Bishop Juan Edghill be referred to the Committee of Privileges.

Mr. Charrandas Persaud would you please read the motion.

**Mr. C. Persaud:** Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members, the notice of motion reads:

“WHEREAS on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 at the 18<sup>th</sup> Sitting of the National Assembly of the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament the Hon. Member Bishop Edghill presented for debate, a motion to have the National Assembly Annual Order No. 16 of 2015, which Order pertained

to increases of salaries for Ministers of Government, Members of Parliament and other Constitutional Office Holders;

AND WHEREAS during his presentation on the motion the Hon. Member Bishop Juan Edghill used the following words:

“...I would, moderately, put to the people of Guyana; that is not including other benefits. It is just adding to the salary, moving it from before 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015 to what it is now. It is a minimum of an additional \$18 million dollars per month which represents close to \$200 million per year and in the term of Office it will represent almost \$1 billion;”

AND WHEREAS the Hon. Winston Jordan, Minister of Finance at the same sitting called on the Hon. Member Juan Edghill to withdraw the statement; after explaining that the correct and total amount annualised sum of the salary increases would be **\$67,890,508.08**;

AND WHEREAS on 28<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2016 the Government’s Chief Whip and Minister of Social Cohesion, the Hon. Anna Ally, wrote to His Honour, the Speaker, raising a complaint about the words used by the Hon. Bishop Juan Edghill;

AND WHEREAS despite repeated requests and demands the Hon. Juan Edghill failed to and/or refused to withdraw the statement;

AND WHEREAS the Members of the National Assembly believe that the erroneous words spoken, together with the subsequent action of the Hon. Member Juan Edghill, are violative of the privilege of a Member of the National Assembly and of the Standing Orders of the National Assembly and have brought the entire National Assembly into disrepute;

BE IT RESOLVED, that this House expresses its disapproval of the false statements made by the Hon. Member Juan Edghill and refers the matter to the Committee of Privileges for it to consider and recommend to the House an appropriate response.”

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, you have heard the statement made by the Hon. Member Mr. Charrandas Persaud. I have received that complaint and this matter will now be sent to the Committee of Privileges.

## **Letter from Ms. Teixeira on State Forest Lands Allocation**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I received a letter from the Hon. Member Ms. Gail Teixeira concerning the Hon. Mr. Raphael Trotman, Minister of Natural Resources, with respect to the allocation of state forests. For the benefit of Members I shall read the letter from Ms. Teixeira.

“Dear Mr. Speaker,

During the 2016 Budget debate, the Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Raphael Trotman, speaking on his sector, stated on the floor of the House that “we were met with an alarming situation where we discovered that 100% or all of our productive forest was allocated by the past Government.”

Vice-President and Prime Minister Moses Nagamootoo repeated this statement by the Minister of Natural Resources. They both asserted that all of Guyana’s productive forest was allocated by previous PPP/C Governments, mainly to foreign investors.

Mr. Speaker, there is publicly available and internationally verified reports that demonstrate that these statements are untrue and have caused much embarrassment to the country and the Guyana-Norway Partnership.

Guyana’s forest covers an area of 18,483,000 hectares. The breakdown of this area is summarized on Page 5 of the latest Monitoring, Report and Verification (MRV) report which was independently verified by an agency engaged by the Norwegian Government.

Furthermore, the Guyana Forestry Commission’s website under Publications provides information on the **State Forest Allocation as at February, 2016** which illustrates that there are 12,594,000 hectares of Total State Forest Estate of which 7,181,923 hectares have been allocated as Total Forest Allocated (Management by the GFC) and 5,412,077 remains Unallocated State Forest Estate.

I have attached a copy for easy reference. The same website advices on the holders of these allocated forests lands.

Furthermore, as you are aware, forest management standards within the allocated concessions are among the highest in the world. Deforestation and degradation, as

well as governance standards, have been independently verified and assessed since the commencement of the Guyana-Norway Partnership on forests in 2009. The most recent Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) report dated October, 2015 shows that Guyana's forest cover has a deforestation rate of 0.062%, one of the lowest rates in the world.

I am therefore calling on behalf of the entire Opposition for the Hon. Members to apologise for misleading the House.

Failing which we shall seek your permission in accordance with SO# 32, to bring a privilege motion asking that the Members be sent to the Privileges Committee for misleading the House and the nation.

Sincerely yours,

Gail Teixeira. M.P.,

Chief Whip, Opposition"

Hon. Members, you have heard the letter which was sent to the Speaker by the Hon. Member Ms. Gail Teixeira.

Hon. Minister Raphael Trotman, you too would have heard the letter. Is there anything you would wish to say at this time?

**Mr. Trotman:** Sir, there is no motion before the House. There is a letter. May I respond?

**Mr. Speaker:** You have heard the letter before the House and we ask whether you wish to respond.

**Mr. Trotman:** Yes Sir. I wish to respond. I crave your protection as I do so. My response is out of concern about this request made for the Hon. Prime Minister Mr. Moses V. Nagamootoo and myself to either issue an apology or go before the Committee of Privileges, I wish to make a few statements.

Previous to today, I have seen newspaper reports which suggest that a letter was either written to you or will be written to you, and I gather it has been written. I wish to state, at the outset, that the Hon. Prime Minister, during budget debates, was merely repeating statements made by me. In my view, respectfully, I say that he ought to be... [*Interruption from*

*Opposition Members.*] Sir, I did crave your protection. As you read the letter from the Opposition, there was silence, out of respect and deference to your Chair.

3.02 p.m.

Sir, I do believe that because the Prime Minister repeated a statement made by me that he ought to be totally exonerated from any accusation of ill-will or the accusation of misleading this House.

Further, I believe that I being the target of the Opposition's attack and as such not the Prime Minister, he should be excused from these proceedings. I wish to state some facts for the benefit of the House. As Minister for natural resources, in preparation for budget debates, I did speak on the 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2016, I was provided... [*Interruption from the Opposition Members*].

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I really believe that it would be helpful to us all, if we allow the speaker on the floor to address the House.

**Mr. Trotman:** Thank you Sir. Sir repeating two days ago *Citizens Report* did state that a letter would have been written to bring myself and Prime Minister, and being a lawyer I only sought to prepare a defence. May I proceed please, Sir? As Minister of Natural Resources, in preparation for my budget presentation, I was provided with a document prepared by the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) which showed the allocations of forest lands as well as those lands which were held in reserve. It was this document that I both relied on and quoted from during my budget presentation on Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2016. I further went along by sharing copies of the document with the Chairman of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Natural Resources and other Members of the Opposition on the very evening who requested copies of same.

The document, Sir, and I will provide a copy again, showed that the total production area allocated by GFC was 7,027,840 hectares which represent 56 % of the total state forest, but represent 100% of lands identified for production. The point being is that the document showed that all the productive forest had been allocated. Undoubtedly there are other lands available but these other lands are held in reserve as the document showed. My statement was, therefore, exclusively focused on productive forest being allocated.

In the circumstances, I also respectfully but strenuously reject the assertion that this matter has hindered relations with the Government of the Kingdom of Norway. This view is supported by a letter written to me by the Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway, dated 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2016, in which he congratulated me for making public and transparent the allocation of the forest. Sir, I will also provide a copy of that letter to Ms. Teixeira and any other Member who wishes to have a copy.

At no time during the debate was I called on to retract or correct the statement as was done in the case of the Hon. Member Edghill, being corrected immediately, then, by the Minister of Finance, and called on to correct the statement on the annualised cost of the salary increases. On the contrary, I have not been spoken to directly and instead have seen threats and statements being made at Opposition's press conferences, and other fora, demanding an apology from me. I am not aware that I am obliged to respond to public theatrics.

I made my statement honestly, believing in its veracity, and without any intention of misleading this House. In the circumstances, I respectfully submit that neither the Hon. Prime Minister nor I should be called on to apologise or have this spurious complaint referred to the Committee of Privileges. On the contrary, I respectfully submit that the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira should be sanctioned for abusing the process of the august National Assembly by bringing this obvious spurious and vexatious allegation before you, Sir.

Finally, assuming for the sake of argument that my statement was wrong and in error, it would still not be considered misleading, but rather one of mistake. Up to the present time, I have not been provided with any proof that my statement was wrong and I will leave it to your good self, Sir, to make that determination. I am prepared, Sir, to abide by whatever course of action you deem fit and appropriate. As I said, I have all the documents prepared by the Guyana Forestry Commission to support my contention, that I should neither apologise nor be sent to Committee of Privileges.

That is my statement, Sir. [*Applause*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Do wish the floor?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Yes Sir. I mean, if you have opened the door, then let us open the door.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member will resume her seat.

**Ms. Teixeira:** That is fine Sir – freedom of speech.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member will resume her seat. If the Hon. Member wishes the floor, the Hon. Member will rise in the appropriate fashion and address the Speaker. Hon. Members, you have heard the statement of the Hon. Raphael Trotman, who is the subject of the complaint in the letter of Ms. Teixeira. The letter requested an apology, or otherwise, and failure to do the apology or withdrawal, the matter will be sent to Committee of Privileges. She would seek the permission of the Chairman, the exact words, “Failing which we shall seek your permission... to bring a privilege motion...”

The Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira has an opportunity to hear and I wonder whether she would hold her hand, since I have heard no apology or withdrawal of the statement, but the Hon. Minister has undertaken to provide information of a kind which he thinks would be useful in the context of this matter. I do not know whether the Hon. Member would wish to hold her hand until she sees those papers to determine what she would do, because, at this point, she has not approached the Speaker with a request for Mr. Trotman to be sent to the Committee of Privileges. I wonder whether she would hold her hand. You have the floor, Hon. Member.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Standing Order 32 (5):

“If during a sitting of the Assembly a matter suddenly arises which appears to involve the Privileges of the Assembly and which calls for the immediate intervention of the Assembly, the proceedings may be interrupted, save during the progress of a division, by a motion based on such a matter”.

That motion does not need to be written, Sir, and, therefore, based on Standing Order 32 (5), I am calling on you that we send Mr. Trotman to the Committee of Privileges based on his own utterances today he is again misleading this House, Sir. Therefore, Sir, I am appealing to you that the statements, which were made here, today, are again misleading the House and the figures he has given...Unless he takes down the Guyana Forestry Commission website which has data that totally contradicts him, then we have to only go with what is a public document on public Government’s website. The Hon. Member has tried to fudge these issues. I am sorry Sir, but I want to strongly recommend and I am putting on the floor the motion based on Standing Order 32 (5) based on the Minister’s utterances a few minutes ago that the Minister should go to Committee of Privileges.

**Mr. Trotman:** Sir, I may apologise to you and the other Members of the House for bringing you into this disarray. Sir, Standing Order 32 (5) pertains to a matter that is instance. Sir, you

cannot invoke Standing Order 32 (5) for something that happened on the 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2016. Secondly, Sir, I am Minister of Natural Resources, under me comes the Guyana Forestry Commission. I have a document provided by the Guyana Forestry Commission on which I said I relied on then and I do rely on today. I do not know how Ms. Teixeira can abrogate my authority as Minister and become Minister for forest and asked that I be sent to Committee of Privileges for a statement made based on information, which was provided by me and which information, on the day I made the statement, was provided to every Member of the Opposition with the assistance of the Clerk's office.

Sir, that is my response and I again apologise to you, for this has cause you such embarrassment.

**First Vice-President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]:** My name has been inadvertently dragged into this issue and I wish to say that this is unfortunate because the letter that was read by Your Honour states that the Hon. Member of the Opposition, Madam Gail Teixeira, is invoking privilege and in so doing one would have expected that the letter, which was read, would reflect some aspects of principles of equity. If you come here to seek some form of redress or justice before this Parliament, the principle states that you must come with clean hands.

The letter states and I quote, quoting Minister Raphael Trotman, "We were met with an alarming situation where we discovered that 100% or all of our productive forest was allocated by the past Government". Sir, the *Hansard* does not reflect that those were the words spoken to this House by the Hon. Minister and therefore to invoke a privilege in this honourable House with an erroneous statement is itself a violation of the privilege which is being sought to be exercised. The *Hansard* is available to the House.

Therefore one cannot rely on those words of complaints as founding a motion which is yet to come for this matter to be sent to the Committee of Privileges. I wish to refer to the *Hansard* that states that Mr. Trotman, the Minister... [Ms. Teixeira: Date?] There is only one *Hansard* for that. You did not verify yours from the *Hansard* obviously... [Ms. Teixeira: We do not know the date?] I will give you the date just now.

3.17 p.m.

It is the budget debate of 2016, the date you said the words... [Ms. Teixeira: What is it?] It is the date you said, the budget debate of 2016, that when asked the question about total



production forest areas available in Guyana, all 100% had been given out. There was no reference to the former Government and I rose during the debate, when I responded, I referred to the letter that was quoted by my honourable friend, and it was in the budget debate on the 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2016. [Ms. Teixeira: That was when you spoke.] Yes. It is the copy. I quoted that and said, page 13 of the copy, that there was this document that referred to 100% of the total production area which was given out. I presented the document in the House, so that there was no attempt to mislead the House. There was no attempt to lie, because both Minister Trotman and I were referring to a document, which was made as a part of the document of the House, and find that this attempt, that this diversion, is very apparent to all of us, is designed to counter another Member being sent to the Committee of Privileges, by trying to impute that there were other Members of the Government who have committed certain infractions of the rule of the House.

I find, Sir, that there is nothing to apologise for because what I have said was based on a document. There was no objection made at the time and no verification was sought. Therefore I believe that the diversion being created, here, is for some other political purposes and it should not detain the work of this House any further.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Could I also move the motion? The Hon. Prime Minister said in this House today that a 100% of the productive areas was given away. He therefore is talking about the entire square miles of Guyana... [*inaudible*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, I thank you but most of what you said was inaudible. Hon. Member, I do not know whether a matter, which you appear to feel very strongly about, was clearly heard by everyone, certainly not by the Speaker. I will suggest the following: If the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira remains unconvinced by what the Hon. Member Mr. Trotman has told this House and is still bent and determined to seek that Mr. Trotman be sent to the Committee of Privileges, and the Hon. Member wishes to address a complaint to the Speaker, in those terms, we will take it from there. If, on the other hand, the Hon. Member is prepared to receive whatever documentation, Hon. Mr. Trotman told this House of, and is prepared to look at that documentation and to see whether her complaint and concern are satisfied thereby, the Speaker would think that that is one way that is available but, of course, the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira did say what she would do and she must determine if she must do that now.

**Ms. Teixeira:** It is all under the GFC's website. Minister Ramjattan, I think, you need to get more familiar with what is on your websites. The websites have exactly who owns what and where. However, Sir, the original letter, which was sent to you, calls for what was said in the House that needed to be corrected. Just as the Hon. Member said that it did not harm the Norway partnership agreement, this figure went viral. This statement by the Minister went viral in February. It was not because of any one internet or newspaper in this country. We are live streaming and we must remember that.

However, Sir, I am willing to receive what the Minister wishes to share, and I would then reconsider. I believe very strongly that the evidence I produce, and I share it with you, is proof that, the first thing, it is not true that 100% or all of our productive forest was allocated by the past Government. That is number one, Sir.

Secondly, and more importantly, maybe more immediately, Sir, is that right here in the House, at this moment, the Hon. Minister made some statements where clearly his own figures, which he is giving again, are distortions, and the Hon. Prime Minister...

**Mr. Trotman:** Sir, I rise on a Point of Order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, would you give way, the Member rises on a Point of Order.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I wish to..., no but I will sit.

**Mr. Trotman:** Sir, the imputation that I am distorting figures when I am quoting from a document supplied to me by the Guyana Forestry Commission, it is highly improper, unethical, and unclean for Ms. Teixeira to make a statement that I am distorting figures. If she is decent enough she would withdraw it. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I am sure we can proceed with our business without so much distraction. I wonder whether the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira would wish to proceed.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Sir, I will take into consideration your suggestion that we look at the matters that the Minister brings in relation to the first matter. However, Sir, in relation to what is being presented here on the floor today by the Hon. Prime Minister, by the Hon. Minister Mr. Trotman, I am calling on Standing Order 32(5) being invoked and the Members be taken to Committee of Privileges, based on the statements that they have made here, in this House today, for misleading the House. I, therefore, will look at the first issue and will advise you, Sir, when I receive the documents from Minister Trotman.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Minister Mr. Trotman, you will no doubt ensure, as you have undertaken, to make the documents available to Ms. Teixeira.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, I rise under Standing Order 40(b) to elucidate on a particular matter that was raised by the Hon. Minister Trotman when he made his statement. He referred to me saying that "...unlike Bishop Edghill who was spoken to and called upon to withdraw." Sir, I would like to make it very clear that at no time at all, when the Hon. Member Ms. Ally's letter came to this House, I was called upon to make a response. I was never asked to make a response. I was never given the opportunity, as what happened here today, to give a response. I was never given an opportunity to make a response.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, are you rising on a Point of Order?

**Bishop Edghill:** Yes Sir. It is Standing Order 40(b). I am elucidating on a particular matter that was raised by Mr. Trotman in his response, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** You are elucidating what Mr. Trotman said.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, I am bringing clarification.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, you must assist the Speaker sometimes. I am asking a question, try to help me with the answer. You are elucidating something that Mr. Trotman said.

**Bishop Edghill:** I am clarifying...

**Mr. Speaker:** I think the intention here is that that Member "i.e. Mr. Trotman" may rise to elucidate a point he had made. That is how I understand it. It may be that there is some other provision of the Standing Orders that would assist you, but I suspect that one does not.

**Bishop Edghill:** I am clarifying, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Are you rising on a Point of Clarification?

**Bishop Edghill:** Yes Sir. I am rising on a Point of Clarification.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, I am making the point that it is misleading for Mr. Trotman to say to this House that "...unlike Bishop Edghill, who was called upon to withdraw and was spoken

to...," he was not spoken to. He is hearing this by way of a letter. Sir, in the equal manner, a letter came to this House...

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, what is it that you are talking about? Please assist us here.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, would I be allowed to express myself?

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, in accordance with the rules that guide us, you may express yourself. I am asking: What do you now speak?

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, I am speaking about Mr. Trotman's address that referred to my privilege motion. I was...

**Mr. Speaker:** The privilege motion is already sent to the Committee of Privileges.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Trotman, in his address, spoke about it and I am seeking to clarify that, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not believe that we can have a full blown discussion on something that has gone to the Committee of Privileges.

**Bishop Edghill:** I will abide by your ruling. The motion has gone to the Committee of Privileges. That is not what I am talking about, Sir, but I am clarifying what Mr. Trotman said in his response. That is what I am addressing. I am not talking about the privilege motion, Sir. I am talking about what he said.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am trying to think of which Standing Order would enable you to clarify what another Member says. You can dispute what he said, I suspect. If you wish to do that, you are free to do that.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, as I said, I am rising on a point of clarification. Would I be allowed to conclude...?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it on a point of clarification? Yes. Please state what it is that you want to clarified, Hon. Member.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, I am clarifying, and I am making it public, at no time at all was I called upon to retract or was given an opportunity to explain what I said in my debate as it relates to the motion. I was not given that opportunity. Up until today, I have not been given that opportunity.

3.32 p.m.

## **REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ON DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

### **ESCALATION OF THE CRIME SITUATION**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I received, today, a letter from the Hon. Member Clement Rohee which falls under this item. Hon. Member Mr. Rohee, I invite you to speak to the House.

**Mr. Rohee:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. I was distracted for a moment, Sir. Would you wish to indicate to me what you are inviting me to do, lest we end up in a situation such as what occurred before?

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, unless I am mistaken, I do not believe that that would ever arise between the two of us.

**Mr. Rohee:** Mr. Speaker, I wrote a letter to you, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2016, seeking your leave to move the adjournment of the Assembly on definite matters of urgent public importance, *vis-à-vis* Standing Order 12. Mr. Speaker, it is if I may crave your indulgence and that of the House to proceed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, you may crave my indulgence. What I would only say to you is that it is by way of introduction to the matter, since I would want an opportunity to say the stance that I have taken on your letter.

**Mr. Rohee:** Of course. I do not think that I could prevent you from doing that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in my letter to you, I stated that I was of the opinion that the matter, which I wish to raise, qualifies, under the Standing Order, as definite, urgent and of public importance, but I leave that to your judgement to so determine. I am of the view that it is of all three qualifications.

Mr. Speaker, as you are no doubt aware, the crime situation has escalated alarmingly, with more violent and brutal assaults on citizens with no regard for life and limb over the last year. The families of victims, leading civil society bodies and citizens have been calling on the Government to respond and to bring the situation under control.

Going to *wake houses* and funerals of the deceased, it is indeed very painful to hear the human side of these atrocious acts by members of the criminal world.

Sometimes, as I pointed out to you in one paragraph, we tend to quote statistics in order to convince the reading public and the public at large that effective action is being taken to address the crime situation. Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, there are statistics, statistics and damn statistics. Irrespective of the number and what might appear to be the convincing nature of the statistics of those who churn out and manufacture these statistics, the public finds it very difficult to reconcile their experiences - personal, familiar and otherwise – with those statistics. That is a challenge that we all have to face.

I noticed that in today's *Guyana Chronicle* newspaper – I do not have a copy with me, but I suppose that a lot of people would have read the *Guyana Chronicle* newspaper today – there is a headline captioned “Crime Down”. I do not know what that was in response to, but I thought that it was rather timely, having regard to statements that have been made over the past few days. I understand that, not too long ago, a letter was sent to the Ministry of the Presidency (MotP) by the Private Sector Commission (PSC) drawing to the attention of the occupants, high and low, its concerns with respect to the crime situation in our country.

Only recently, I think it was just a few days ago, the Canadian Government issued an advisory to its citizens with respect to visits to our country.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, I am wondering if it is not a wise thing for me to remind you that you would have an opportunity to speak on this motion once the Speaker has spoken to the House about his reaction to it.

**Mr. Rohee:** I do agree with you, Sir. I just mentioned those two incidents. I would not mention others. I would leave them for later to stress the urgency and the immediacy of the matter that is before you.

I therefore wish request that I be permitted to move the adjournment of the National Assembly to discuss the following motion:

“WHEREAS the crime situation has reached alarming levels with increasing incidents of violence and brutality;

AND WHEREAS as a result citizens are fearful for their lives and property, especially farmers and businessmen who have been the main targets of armed criminals;

AND WHEREAS the APNU+AFC 2015 elections manifesto formulated a twenty-seven (27) point Action Plan “to address the breakdown of law and order,” most of these have not been implemented;

BE IT RESOLVED that this National Assembly calls upon the Government to immediately report to the House on what measures are being taken to bring the escalating crime situation under control and provide a safe and secure environment for its citizens.”

Mr. Speaker, I ended my letter to you with the sincere hope that you would allow a debate on this definite matter of urgent public importance.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I did, as I indicated to you, receive this letter. The letter was received at 8.15 this morning and therefore was properly presented at that time. I find that the request meets all of the requirements as set out in the Standing Orders.

*3.47 p.m.*

It deals with one matter which is urgent and important. I therefore find it in order and would permit a debate on the issue. This debate will take place at the resumption, after our first suspension.

We will need to, at that time, bear in mind the matters that we have. I thank you.

**MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY  
AND MOVED BY A MINISTER**

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 54**

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 54 be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its Sitting on Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2016, with the second reading and the remaining stages of the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment) Bill 2016 – Bill No. 12 of 2016.” [*First Vice-President and Prime Minister*]

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order No. 54 be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its Sitting today, Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2016, with the second reading and the remaining stages of the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment) Bill 2016 – Bill No. 12 of 2016.

*Motion proposed.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** The Hon. Prime Minister is doing it once again for the ninth time now, moving the suspension of the Standing Orders to have a Bill go through all three stages in one day.

We have spoken at length in this House on this practice of the Government. Whilst the Standing Order allows for such occasions, it is not to be abused. It must not be allowed to be used by the Government to *rail road* Bills through, without having the proper discussion, debate and time. In many cases these Bills, including this one, have to go to a Special Select Committee.

I have heard that the issue is the “rush”, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) will be reviewing Guyana in May, 2016. I must also question, if that is the case, why had this Parliament not met for two months? Sir, you also said it in your Opening Remarks - eight weeks. If it is that Guyana is coming up for review and we have to have all these Bills and this Bill came up, then why did we not have a meeting?

Sir, with due respect to you, I have sat and looked at the last sittings between 10<sup>th</sup> March and today. Put aside the travelling for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Ministers travelling, and Sir, you also had a very powerful delegation travel to London and so on. There were 17 free days when we could have met.

I am sorry for my Prime Minister because he seems to keep repeating these things until they are becoming a habit. Just as the last times, the Prime Minister did not attempt to give to the public or to the Opposition... Why the rush?

I am saying that I can only conjecture or speculate that the reason why this Bill is going through all its stages is because there is the May, 2016 Review. If that is the issue, then why was this not brought within the eight weeks when this Parliament did not meet?

Sir, as you know, for this May, 2016 FATF Review, normally, the issues that would have to go before them have to be submitted months before, not today and then signalled. Even if one



goes to Paris or Geneva and he/she says, we have passed a Bill in one day and the President has enacted it. I have been there and I have sat at that forum. The FATF representatives would say thank you very much Guyana. We will now review that in the future. It will do nothing to take Guyana off of the grey list. The Hon. Member seems to be ignoring the facts of a letter sent by the Assessor from the CFATF of Guyana, dated 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2016, which stated and let me read the last paragraph, which goes on to explain what the areas of weaknesses were in the legislation.

“Information should also be provided on the size of the financial sector as at the end of December, 2015 or the date nearest and any technical assistance received, requested or obtained during 2015.

Responses to the Secretariat should be submitted by 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2016.”

This is 4<sup>th</sup> May and the Government is coming to rush through a Bill in the three stages.

“This deadline is necessary to facilitate a proper review of any changes to your matrix and the requisite review and update of the follow-up analysis, report and translation to Spanish.”

There is a paragraph which talks about the areas that Guyana is still outstanding in. The paragraph states:

“Whilst some progress has been made, we are still outstanding.”

Therefore:

“precluding Guyana from applying to exit in May, 2016”.

Mr. Speaker, that is the number one issue – rush. The Government has to get this Bill through because it has to attend a meeting with FATF in May, 2016.

First of all, that letter, dated 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2016, was sent by Mr. Hernandez, who some of you in this House had the honour to meet when he came before the Parliamentary Select Committee in the last Parliament on the same Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Bill.

The second issue is the Government wants to pass the Bills. Since 2015, the Government has passed the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, according to how the Government wanted it and it got it. It went through the three stages.

The Government also brought regulations and another amendment in December. This Bill has been amended in the last few months about four times. All you are doing Hon. Member, is taking the directive orders that the former Attorney General had put into the *Official Gazette*. You are taking those and now making them into law.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, the heart or brain that drives the anti-money laundering regulatory system in any part of the world is the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU). One can pass the best or perfect Bill in 2016 but in the world today and he/she will fall flat on his/her face *bodoom* because the FIU is headless. The Director of the FIU, at the end of December, the Government did not want him, but retired him. The contract had ended... **[Interruption]** That is not my position; that is not my business. You are the Government, you do what you want. Face the music when you make your decisions.

There has been no FIU Director from 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2015 to 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. If anyone understands money laundering legislation and the regulatory system... **[An Hon. Member:** You know it well?] Yes, I know it well and I take credit for knowing it well. I made it my business to know it well, not like you, Sir.

The FIU is the artery or heart of which all the information - The International Police (INTERPOL), the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), local banks, local insurance companies, money lenders, money transfer agencies, co-operative societies, all go through this filtering, clearing and regulatory body. The FIU has been headless for over four months and the Government expects that when it rushes to FATF with this Bill, that FATF would be accepting? Seriously? That the Government has been able to pass something or that it has been able to make it. The Government is fooling the Guyanese people over and over in this House. **[An Hon. Member:** ...a Privilege Motion...] Take me to the Committee on Privilege, please, I want to go. **[Interruption]**

Mr. Speaker, three times in this House, between the Government and the Opposition, there were agreements that three Bills had to be rushed through its stages in this House. They had to do with the tendering and awarding of Guyana hosting the World Cup Cricket in 2007. It

was negotiated before with the then Opposition Chief Whip and then brought to the House and passed. These had to do with the movement of the police forces because, in the Caribbean, we had all shared the security system, *et cetera*. The others had to deal with the Advanced Passengers Information which was being brought in. The third one I cannot remember.

Sir, I would say this to you that if there is an emergency or disaster or something has happened, this side of the House will give you 100% support. The Leader of the Opposition has said on this floor from the very day of 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, that we will not be obstructionists. When it comes to national interests, we will stand by the Government. This is what we did on the border issue. I challenge anyone in this House on the Government's side to say that this side has not given full co-operation to the Government on the Guyana/Venezuela border issue. I challenge Mr. Greenidge to ... [*Interruption*] If you do not know, be quiet, Mr. Greenidge knows and the President knows, so if you do not know, then it is too bad. The issue is this request to rush this Bill through.

I did receive a telephone call from the Hon. Ms. Ally, Minister of Social Cohesion and Government's Chief Whip, saying that she has been asked by her Cabinet to speak to me about whether the Opposition would support this Bill going through its three stages on one day, that is, on 4<sup>th</sup> May. That was about one week ago. I had said to her upfront, no that we would not support it. It was absolutely unnecessary. Even at that point, we had not seen the final version of Bill.

Ms. Ally and I have worked together for years. I had said to her that in principle we would not support it. However, on this particular issue, I had asked her why. She said that it was something to do with FATF and that there was a deadline. I asked her when the deadline was and my dear Colleague could not give me the deadline, but I went on the website and I found the deadline which is May, 2016.

It is true that the Hon. Chief Whip did approach me, but I had also said that we would not support this. So there is no surprise about the position we are taking today. The Government knows well. I even told the Hon. Member to table the Bill for First Reading on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 and if within the week we decide to have a Sitting the following week, then we could agree for the Second and Third Readings then. We would have greater time.

4.02 p.m.

There had been a lot of amendments brought and for me personally and for some of us who have read this Bill, there seem to be some overlaps and even possible duplicates. We would like to be able to do this properly. So, we are saying that, our normal position on these big and complex issues is that we should go to a Special Select Committee. We understand the Government's dilemma; its back is against the wall. This should have been reported since 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2016, not on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.

Therefore Sir, the Bill has problems and we are saying that this rush is not in the best interest of Guyana nor of this House. So we will not support this motion moving to suspend the Standing Orders to allow the Bill to go through all three stages. Thank you. [*Applause*]

**Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Williams]:** Sir, this is a matter of grave importance to Guyana and the Guyanese people. We are not surprised about the attitude of the Opposition Members of this hollowed House. Also, the question of whether the contentions are factual or not. We were told and the nation was told that the Opposition cannot agree because there was no consultation. They never saw the Bill, which is what the Opposition is saying. It is clear that we conducted consultations in relation to this particular Bill twice. We submitted copies of the Bill to the Hon. Member Mr. Nandlall before the meeting. On two occasions we consulted and on neither of those occasions did Mr. Nandlall see it fit to grace the consultations with his presence and he never sent any apology in that respect.

We cannot wait on the Members of the Opposition. They have already shown the attitude, the reticence, towards the Anti-Money and Countering the Financing of Terrorism regime in this country. They could not have care less whether we pass this Bill or whether we are black listed, or not. They do not care less about that, and so we have to protect the Guyanese people. We have seen what the Opposition has done with this AML/CFT programme that the FATF and CFATF had organised for Guyana.

The FIU Director - we all know that there is a transparent process that is supposed to be undertaken by the Committee of this House. I trust that the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira would address these issues speedily, but it has been nine months now. The recent development was that a Sub-Committee was appointed to look at criteria, not even for the applications to fill the Office of Director of FIU.

There is nothing wrong with the FIU as it is presently constituted. In fact, I have in my hands an email from the Hon. Mr. Calvin Wilson, Executive Director of CFATF. This email is addressed to Ms. Alicia Williams, FIU Office Guyana. If as the naysayers were saying that there is some crisis in the FIU, this is what the Executive Director is saying. He is saying,

“I shared with Attorney General Mr. Hood of Grenada the progress that Guyana was making in the FATF International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) process and that the final outstanding issue will be addressed by legislation this month.”

Which I anticipate he will pass. [Ms. Teixeira: What date is it?] When is this dated? [Ms. Teixeira: What date is the letter?] This letter is dated 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2016. It puts paid to whatever was contributed on the other side. So, we are in no crisis. We are dealing with FATF and it has one outstanding recommendation. We will meet with the Americas Regional Review Group (ARRG) in the margins of the CFATF meeting that is due early in June. So I do not know where all of this... [*Interruption*].

Mr. Speaker, I thought that we were regaled by the Hon. Members with the expertise of the money laundering regime. They must know that we have to get the legislation sometime before the meeting. Does the Opposition want us to walk with the legislation to the meeting? Is that what the Opposition is saying? Why are they trying to play games with the economic health of this nation? When they were in power they did just that.

This letter was the result of a query by a Member - Prime Minister - of CARICOM to President Granger. The Hon. Member, Mr. Mitchell, was apprehensive. He wrote to the President saying that he was seeing that we had made a public statement and that he had been requested to take counter measures against Guyana because we had been published by CFATF.

When the enquires were made it was discovered that this, in fact, was a belated response by Grenada to the public statement that was issued against the last Government in 2013, which I will address in greater detail in the debate. Just to say, to suffice for this point in time, that this is a very piece of legislation. It is nothing new; it is a process. Since we came into office we have passed several bits of legislation in order to get Guyana to exit the FATF and CFATF process.

We are asking that, in the light of the importance and the gravity of the situation with respect to blacklisting or no blacklisting, there are even issues of de-risking where correspondent banking could be lost - all these issues. I cannot understand how the Hon. Members on the other side cannot appreciate the danger that the country could be in and that we could imperil.

Fortunately, we are on this side of the House and that puts us in a position to do something about saving the Guyanese people and the Guyanese economy. I am respectfully submitting that this Bill should be allowed to proceed. [*Applause*]

**Mr. Nagamootoo (replying):** Mr. Speaker, I know that I have the right of reply and I had asked that the question be put. I fully concur of the rationale for having the suspension of the Standing Order that allows this Bill be taken through all its stages. There are important national imperatives for so doing which have been fully expatiated by the learned Attorney General. Of course, we have been warned for so many years about the specter of blacklisting and what will happen to the old-age pensioners going to the Western Union and not being able to draw moneys being sent from abroad. Those were all the pleadings we had heard from that side when they were here.

Today, we have this backsliding and backstabbing that they no longer see the urgency to complete the requirements that have to be followed so that we could exit this FATF process; that we can set our financial integrity above board; and that no more should our country be threatened with all those horrible happenings that that side, when they were over here, had warned us about. So, there is urgency for this.

My learned friend, the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira had said that I had not given any reason, but when she stood up she had anticipated me quite rightly. She gave all the reasons why this Bill should be taken through all its stages today and to have compliance with the requirements of FATF and CFATF. So I now move that the question be put.

*Question put.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, I am prepared to listen to your request for a division, if you so utter now. This is the time to do it.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Speaker, we would like to have a division please. Thank you.

*Division bell rang.*

4.17 p.m.

*The Assembly divided, Noes 28, Ayes 32, as follows:*

**Noes**

Ms. Veerasammy

Mr. Gill

Mr. Anamayah

Mr. Dharamlall

Mr. Charlie

Mr. Damon

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Chand

Mr. Neendkumar

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks

Mr. G. Persaud

Mr. Mustapha

Ms. Selman

Dr. Westford

Dr. Ramsaran

Mr. Croal

Mr. Hamilton

Ms. Chandarpal

Dr. V. Persaud

Mr. Seeraj

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Lumumba

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai

Dr. Anthony

Ms. Manickchand

Mr. Nandlall

Ms. Teixeira

Mr. Rohee

**Ayes**

Mr. Rutherford

Mr. Rajkumar

Mr. C. Persaud

Mr. Figueira

Mr. Carrington

Mr. Allen

Mr. Adams

Ms. Bancroft

Ms. Wade

Ms. Patterson

Ms. Henry

Ms. Charles-Broomes

Dr. Cummings

Mr. Sharma



Ms. Garrido-Lowe

Ms. Ferguson

Mr. Holder

Mr. Gaskin

Ms. Hughes

Mr. Patterson

Ms. Lawrence

Mr. Trotman

Mr. Jordan

Dr. Norton

Mr. Bulkan

Dr. Roopnarine

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Ms. Ally

Mr. Williams

Mr. Ramjattan

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nagamootoo

*Motion carried.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon Members, we have gone past the four o'clock hour, but I will propose that we continue for another 10 to 15 minutes before we take the suspension.

**MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY  
AND MOVED BY A MINISTER**

## HOURS OF SITTING

“WHEREAS Standing Order No. 10(1) provides for every Sitting of the National Assembly to begin at 2.00 p.m. in the afternoon and, unless previously adjourned, end at 10.00 p.m. on the same day;

AND WHEREAS Standing Order No. 10(2) provides for the Speaker to suspend the Sitting at any time for a stated period but, unless the Assembly otherwise resolved, the Speaker shall, at 4.00 p.m., suspend the Sitting for one hour, and at 7.00 p.m. suspend the Sitting for half an hour;

AND WHEREAS Standing Order No. 10(3) provides for the Assembly at any time by motion made and carried without amendment or debates suspend or vary the provisions of paragraphs one (1) and two (2) of Standing Order No. 10;

AND WHEREAS Standing Order No. 10(4) provides for the Assembly from time to time, alter, by Resolution, the hours provided by Standing Order No. 10 for the beginning and ending of a Sitting.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 10(1) and (2) be suspended to enable the Assembly to begin its Sitting on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 at 1.00 p.m. and to end at 5.00 p.m.

*[First Vice-President and Prime Minister]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have given consent, in accordance with Standing Order No. 28 (2), for the following motion to be proceeded with at this Sitting.

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence. The motion, having been approved for the suspension of the Standing Orders... we would like for the Bill, subject to that motion, to be proceeded with, with alacrity. However, I am intimating that the next sitting of the House would be on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. I wish to propose a variation of the hours of Sittings to permit the National Assembly to commence at 1.00 p.m. and to end at 5.00 p.m. I will move the motion, but I wish to explain that, on that day, there would be... If you allow me to move this motion now or, perhaps, after we would have concluded the day's Sitting... That is why I had a doubt as to whether you want to proceed with this at this time or to proceed with the Bill.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Prime Minister, as you have begun, you may proceed to complete.

**Mr. Nagamootoo:**

“WHEREAS Standing Order No. 10(1) provides for every Sitting of the National Assembly to begin at 2.00 p.m. in the afternoon and, unless previously adjourned, end at 10.00 p.m. on the same day;

AND WHEREAS Standing Order No. 10(2) provides for the Speaker to suspend the Sitting at any time for a stated period but, unless the Assembly otherwise resolved, the Speaker shall, at 4.00 p.m., suspend the Sitting for one hour, and at 7.00 p.m. suspend the Sitting for half an hour;

AND WHEREAS Standing Order No. 10(3) provides for the Assembly at any time by motion made and carried without amendment or debates suspend or vary the provisions of paragraphs one (1) and two (2) of Standing Order No. 10;

AND WHEREAS Standing Order No. 10(4) provides for the Assembly from time to time, alter, by Resolution, the hours provided by Standing Order No. 10 for the beginning and ending of a Sitting.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 10(1) and (2) be suspended to enable the Assembly to begin its Sitting on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 at 1.00 p.m. and to end at 5.00 p.m.”

Your Honour, on that day, there is, earmarked to be held, a very important national event, Guyana Exposition (GuyExpo), which is of great importance to the mercantile and business community of Guyana, both big and small producers, and our enterprising manufacturers. It is because of the importance that this Government has placed on stimulating business activities in this country that we are asking to put this motion for us to be able to grace this important national event. [*Applause*]

**Ms. Teixeira:** It is rather an unusual timing for such a motion but we will deal with what is.

This motion looks innocuous. It is asking for us to commence early and finish at five o'clock so as to accommodate the GuyExpo, as it turns out.

The issue is really a profound one because the next sitting is the fourth sitting which is the Opposition's day. It is called the private members' day. It is commonly called, in all Parliaments - maybe not this one - the Opposition's day. Standing Order No. 24 (3) states:

“Government Business shall consist of Motions proposed to be made and Bills sponsored by Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries and shall be set down in such order as the Government think fit.”

Standing Order No. 24 (2) states:

“Subject to the provisions of these Standing Orders, Government Business shall have precedence on every day except on every fourth sitting when Private Members' Business shall have precedence.”

Between August and 21<sup>st</sup> January, we had our first private members' day. We have been preparing, sending in motions and questions on notice so that, when it is our day, we would have our agenda, which is on the 12<sup>th</sup> May.

The Prime Minister is not saying [*inaudible*] because what is also happening on that day, as far as I understand or maybe the schedule has changed, as Presidents' schedules do change, is that the President is expected to address the Parliament. I have no problem with the President coming to speak, since it is his right; it is covered for under the Constitution and he is the head of Parliament. However, the Parliament and the Opposition have their roles to play. The Hon. Speaker began his comments by talking about the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) workshops that were held on 30<sup>th</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April at the Guyana Marriott Hotel Inc. and April 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> April in this Chamber in which CPA UK, Canada and the Secretary General were very strong on issues such as Ministers not sitting on committees, Opposition having the right to ask questions without notice at every single sitting and the issue of Bills not going through all three stages at the same sitting. Some of you were not present and so maybe that is why you have to be forgiven.

The point is that this is unacceptable to us. We have waited from August, 2015 to 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2016 to have our day then from 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2016 to the 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.

In fact, the first conversation was when Minister Amna Ally called me concerning the next sitting which was to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> May. Then, on Wednesday, when we met at the Committee on Appointments, I was told that the sitting would be moved to the 12<sup>th</sup> May. It

was then that I said to Ms. Amna Ally that it was our day. Why not let the President come on another day? From the conversation, what came out was that it was not just the President who was coming to speak but that it was also a truncated session because everyone has to go to GuyExpo.

Your Government did not invent GuyExpo; it was set up and held by the PPP/C Administration. I can bring you proof of the number of Sittings that were held when GuyExpo opened and when Ministers went to the opening and returned to the National Assembly, and our Administration did not have a huge majority but certainly we were not like you with only one seat more. I understand your predicament because you do not have a choice. That means you are going to muzzle the Opposition.

*4.32 p.m.*

It is innocuous - let us start at one o'clock and let us stop at five o'clock! Therefore, we would have an hour in between for supper, the President will come, we will pause and he will speak. I know the President is not a long-winded speaker. Nevertheless, we have to stop; the Assembly has to be adjourned; the President has to be brought in; he has to be escorted out and a whole hour will be gone. Then there is another hour for supper. Out of that Opposition's day, we will end up with two hours of actual time in this House. That is a shameful thing. It is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. I think, Sir, that the Members of this House are pulling wool over your eyes. This looks like an innocent thing but it is not innocent. It is dastardly. Therefore, we are opposing this.

I even suggested to the Hon. Chief Whip and Minister of Social Cohesion, Ms. Ally, up to today, that we could meet on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. We want to meet on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. Therefore, we could have our day and then the President will come on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 and we would all be happy. I was told no, because Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 has something else going on. There was something concerning the Ministry of Social Cohesion. So, again, this Parliament is held at ransom to the issue of some National Cultural Centre programme.

Mr. Speaker, governments have programmes. Mr. Speaker, trust me on this, please. We were in Government for a long time. We know about days when the President was going somewhere, Prime Minister going somewhere else and Ministers other places. There was the National Cultural Centre, the National Sports Award and sometimes there were five or 10

different events in one day, but Government moves; the Government continues to work and Parliament continues to work. How many times did the former Prime Minister, the Hon. Samuel Hinds, run out to open something and come back? How many times did Ministers do that? How many times did we have to decide who could go and who could stay because there were important matters to be dealt with? That is the management of the Government's business. If the Government wishes that all 33 persons go and then all 33 persons come back, Sir, this Parliament is not going to work. You started out your speech this afternoon by saying that you hope and you wanted this Parliament to hold more sittings and Committee meetings and I believe that is what you truly want, but look at this travesty coming here.

We are totally opposed to this. We want our day; we want our time. The fourth sitting of the sittings of this House is ours. *[Applause]*

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member for her statement. Hon. Minister, do you wish the floor?

**Minister of Social Cohesion and Government Chief Whip [Ms. Ally]:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Ms. Ally:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this Government is not an unreasonable government. I recall that the Government Chief Whip had discussions with the Opposition Chief Whip and I brought her up to date with all our proposals and matters that we believe that we want to have done. **[Mr. Williams: Really?]** Yes.

Mr. Speaker, I did tell the Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira, that, if we have any matter remaining at the end of the sitting on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016, we will allow those matters to take precedence at the following sitting.

We hear a lot of things about us not meeting for so long. This very Opposition cannot remember the many months it prorogued this Parliament. Where was the interest of the Guyanese people? I do not want to be long but I just want to reassure the Opposition that we hold to what I told the Opposition Chief Whip that, if there are remaining matters after the sitting on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016, those matters, since it is private Members' day, will take precedence at the following sitting.

Finally, let me remind the Opposition that we are the Government and we will not allow you to tell us how to run the Government.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make just one point. The Minister is absolutely correct, as she did say that she would give us precedence if our matters flowed over. However, I then said to her, “Could I have that in writing?” I have been the victim of commitments made and not done. I was told that you, Sir, were going to call us in and make this kind of commitment. That is why I said, when I began speaking on this issue, that I am surprised that this is coming up where it is coming up. I was told, with nothing in writing, that you, Sir, the Speaker of the National Assembly, will convene a meeting and this arrangement would be supported. I just wanted to say that, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member. The Hon. Member is quite correct. It may be apposite to say that I did exercise an initiative in that regard, but maybe I should say that it was premature because the intention was that both of you would meet with me to have that commitment spoken and that is why you might have noticed that there was consultation at this desk with the Hon. Minister. So you are quite right; you should have met with me together with the Government Chief Whip.

**Bishop Edghill:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member, who is speaking, should allow me to speak. It is courteous to do that, if nothing else.

In that way, this could have been avoided. I believe that it will be true to say that the Speaker understands that the sitting which follows the one on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 will be a sitting which sees any matters which are left incomplete. Those matters will be given precedence at the sitting that follows the 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.

**Mr. Nagamootoo (replying):** Sir, you are so eminently fair, all I need to say, at this point in time, is that there is no attempt to muzzle the Opposition and we did consider several dates on which we could have Sittings of this National Assembly and we did consider Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2016, but we thought that, if we did so, we would have been accused of being *triumphalis*, since we would celebrate, on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2016, the victory that was achieved by the Guyanese people just a year ago on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2015. So we decided not to use that day and be accused of being *triumphalis*. We decided on a date that will be convenient to all and the assurances that I have received from the Government Chief Whip were the assurances I

believe to be communicated to the other side and that it would have been found reasonable for us to meet under the terms that were discussed so that, on the next occasion, the Opposition would have its fair day in this National Assembly. I wish to say that, as always, when we want to throw missiles at the other side, we must always remember that we do not have the right to do so when we committed more heinous violations such as not holding a sitting for nine continuous months and trying to accuse the Government of not holding a sitting in order to muzzle the Opposition. This Parliament is alive and well, even though we have all of this banter that goes on from time to time. It is alive, well and kicking and I want to now move the motion in my name.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I thank you for your forbearance well beyond four o'clock. I believe it is appropriate that, at this time, we have our suspension. I will remind Members of The Assembly Committee and the Committee of Selection to meet with me in my Chamber for some business that we will need to undertake.

*Sitting suspended at 4.43 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 5.53 pm.*

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

### **Presentation and First Readings**

*The following Bills were introduced and read for the first time:*

#### **INSURANCE BILL 2016 – Bill No. 11/2016**

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to provide for the regulation of insurance in Guyana, the promotion of competition in the insurance industry, the protection of consumers and to repeal the 1998 and 2009 Acts on insurance and for related matters”. [*Minister of Finance*]

#### **ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND COUNTERING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 12/2016**



A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Act”. [*The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*]

## **PUBLIC BUSINESS -**

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

#### **Suspension of Standing Order No. 12(3)**

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, with your leave Sir, may I move the suspension of Standing Order No. 12(3) to permit the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (amendment) Bill 2016 – Bill no. 12/2016 to proceed through its second and third readings? Thereafter the other matters may flow.

*5.58 p.m.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Speaker, maybe I misheard that, when we finish at the break and when we come back, we would then be dealing with the motion on crime. In keeping with the Standing Orders, it usually states that business should be moved to 5.00 p.m. We had a break from 4.30 p.m., so that is what I thought you had said. So, I am a little bit confused with what the Prime Minister is asking the House to do now. Could you clarify, Sir?

**Mr. Speaker:** The Speaker indicated to the House that, at the resumption, the crime Bill would be taken. That is the position as the Speaker expressed it to the Members of this House. The Hon. Prime Minister has made a request and moved the motion for a suspension of the Standing Orders to allow a certain item to be taken and, thereafter, matters to proceed as they should. That is my understanding of what has happened, the effect of which is to have the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment) Bill taken now and, thereafter, matters to proceed as they should.

*Motion put.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** A division, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** A division is called.

*Division bell rang.*

*Assembly divided: Ayes 32, Noes 28, as follows:*

*Noes*

Ms. Veerasammy

Mr. Gill

Mr. Anamayah

Mr. Dharamlall

Mr. Charlie

Mr. Damon

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Chand

Mr. Neendkumar

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks

Mr. G. Persaud

Mr. Mustapha

Ms. Selman

Dr. Westford

Dr. Ramsaran

Mr. Croal

Mr. Hamilton

Ms. Chandarpal

Dr. Persaud

Mr. Seeraj

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Lumumba

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai

Dr. Anthony

Ms. Manickchand

Mr. Nandlall

Ms. Teixeira

Mr. Rohee

*Ayes*

Mr. Rutherford

Mr. Rajkumar

Mr. C. Persaud

Mr. Figueira

Mr. Carrington

Mr. Allen

Mr. Adams

Ms. Bancroft

Ms. Wade

Ms. Patterson

Ms. Henry

Ms. Charles-Broomes

Dr. Cummings

Mr. Sharma

Ms. Garrido-Lowe

Ms. Ferguson

Mr. Holder

Mr. Gaskin

Ms. Hughes

Mr. Patterson

Ms. Lawrence

Mr. Trotman

Mr. Jordan

Dr. Norton

Mr. Bulkan

Dr. Roopnarine

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Ms. Ally

Mr. Williams

Mr. Ramjattan

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nagamootoo

*Motion carried.*

### **BILLS – Second Reading**

#### **ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND COUNTERING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 – Bill No. 12/2016**

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Act.” *[Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs]*

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to move that the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment) Bill 2016, Bill No.12/2016 be now read a second time.

The magnitude of the failure of the last Government in implementing an efficacious Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) regime is revealed on a proper examination of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF).

This Government inherited a situation of great reticence to fight against money launderers and an even greater reluctance to counter the financing of terrorism. The last Government had continuously failed to remedy the many deficiencies in the action plans it had agreed to with both the CFATF and FATF in or around 2011 and 2014 respectively. I need to do this to finally clear the air about the situation that we are in and how we arrived at that situation.

Guyana was featured in the following three of four CFATF public statements published: one, public statement of 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2013, issued in Managua, Nicaragua; two, public statement of 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2013, issued in Freeport, Bahamas; and three, public statement of 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2014, issued in Miami, Florida, United States of America (USA).

The first statement identified Guyana as a jurisdiction with strategic AML/CFT deficiencies that had not made sufficient progress in addressing deficiencies or had not complied with its action plan developed with the CFATF to address the deficiencies. The CFATF called on its members to consider the risk arising from deficiencies associated with Guyana. That is the first public statement on Guyana.

The second statement also identified Guyana as a jurisdiction with strategic AML/CFT deficiencies that had not made sufficient progress in addressing the deficiencies or had not complied with the action plan developed with the CFATF to address these deficiencies. What did the CFATF do? The CFATF called on its members to consider implementing countermeasures to protect their financial systems from the ongoing money laundering and terrorist financing risk emanating from Guyana.

The third statement identified Guyana as a jurisdiction with strategic AML/CFT deficiencies that had not made sufficient progress in addressing the deficiencies or had not complied with the action plan developed with the CFATF to address these deficiencies. And what did the CFATF do? The CFATF called on its members to consider implementing further countermeasures to protect their financial systems from the ongoing money laundering and terrorist financing risk emanating from Guyana. So, this is all under the last Government.

The fourth statement that was published by CFATF was published in Trinidad and Tobago on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. The new Government was in place on that day, but only Suriname was featured therein. So, subsequent to the third public statement issued in May, 2014, by the CFATF, Guyana was referred to the FATF.

In June, 2014, the FATF decided to take up Guyana's AML/CFT deficient matters. In August, 2014, Guyana agreed to an action plan developed by the FATF and, in October, 2014, Guyana provided written, high-level political commitment to address the identified deficiencies. In October, 2014, again, under the remit of the last Government, Guyana was featured, for the first time, on the FATF public document, *"Improving Global AML/CFT Compliance: on-going progress."* Countries that are featured in this document are the countries which have strategic AML/CFT deficiencies, for which they have developed an action plan with the FATF and have also provided a written, high-level political commitment to address the identified deficiencies.

To date, Guyana was featured on FATF's public document five times: October, 2014; February, 2015; June, 2015 - we would have barely been getting our feet wet as a Government in June, 2015; October, 2015; and February, 2016.

As Guyana has been making progress in addressing the action plan items, FATF, in all its publications regarding Guyana, commended Guyana for its efforts and encouraged Guyana to continue to implement its action plan.

The A Partnership For National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) Government has reduced the many recommendations that have been unimplemented to one. The latter has now been addressed in the current AML/CFT (Amendment) Bill 2016, due for passage in this honourable House, upon which Guyana can apply to exit the FATF process. Of course, I have read, earlier, a statement from the Executive Director of CFATF, confirming what I have just said.

The CFATF, on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2015, notified all its members of Guyana's progress with the FATF as follows:

“The Honourable Basil Williams, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Guyana, welcomed the recognition by FATF International Cooperation Review Group of the positive impact of the enactment of the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) (Amendment) Bill 2015 on Guyana's national architecture, in addressing inter alia, the criminalization of money laundering and the financing of terrorism; the confiscation and provisional measures; the financial institution secrecy laws and the reporting of suspicious transactions.”

*6.13 p.m.*

“The Government of Guyana, in its ongoing drive to strengthen the national regime against terrorism also included the AMLCFT Regulations 2015 as well as the Guidelines on Targeted Financial Sanctions which were issued to Reporting Entities in August 2015”

It should be noted that all of this happened after May, 2015.

“By his presence at the FATF October 2015 Plenary meeting in Paris, France, Honourable Attorney General Basil Williams demonstrated his Government's strong and unwavering political commitment towards strengthening the country's AML/CFT regime in keeping with the FATF Recommendations.

The CFATF Secretariat would like to encourage Guyana to continue with its reform efforts and expeditiously address the remaining Action Plan Items with particular reference to the outstanding terrorist financing matters.”

Mr. Speaker, as I said to you, we are down to one partially completed Recommendation which deals with ensuring that when the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) applies for a freezing order, that order is immediately granted. It also deals with making provision for accessing frozen funds under the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNRSC) 1373. All of these are addressed in the Bill. The Bill makes it mandatory that, whenever the Director of the FIU receives information from an external country identifying a terrorist or a terrorist organisation, the Director shall recommend to the Minister of Finance that this person be designated as a terrorist, pursuant to the UNSCR 1373.

If one looks at clause 2 of the Bill, one would see that the word “may” has been changed to “shall”.

The Government is confident that Guyana should be able to exit the Financial Action Task Force process in the upcoming June Plenary. There is a ARRG meeting which would take place in the margins of the CFTAF meeting. At that meeting with the ARRG, which has been set, these remaining paragraphs of the sole remaining Recommendation would be treated with and we would request that efforts be made to allow us to exit the process. To exit that process, we would have to request an onsite visit and the process would be moved from there.

Let me turn my attention to the CFATF. In relation to the CFATF, the situation is worse. The Government found a plethora of Recommendations that the previous Government failed to implement since the publication of Guyana’s Third Round Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2011.

In that Mutual Evaluation Report, Guyana was rated compliant and largely compliant in only six of the 40 + 9 Recommendations on which Guyana was assessed. Guyana was found to be deficient in all of the other Recommendations. The CFATF has since been publishing Guyana’s Follow-Up Reports twice annually in which these deficiencies are continuously identified. However, having entered Government in May, 2015, we were unable to attend the meeting, in which the 8<sup>th</sup> Follow-up Report was reviewed by CFATF in May, 2015. This Government will, for the first time, engage the CFATF on the status of our compliance with the remedying of its deficiencies in the Follow-Up Reports, something which the previous Government had failed to do.

By letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2016, the CFATF wrote Guyana informing that, as per its 9<sup>th</sup> Follow-Up Report, one Core and five Key Recommendations were still outstanding, which precluded Guyana from applying to exit the Follow-Up process in May, 2016. We were non-starters because of the brilliance of the last Government. This first opportunity that we are having here, as we did with the FATF process, we are telling the Hon. Members on the other side and we are telling the Guyanese people, that we are going to make it count.

We have passed two amendment Bills, two regulations, not to mention all of the other things that were done by the FIU that we have been hearing the lamentations about. What is mind-boggling is that, since 2011, twice a year there were meetings with CFATF and the previous Government had resolutely refused to comply with those recommendations. The members of



the previous Government have the temerity to tell this Government, which has been addressing these issues to save the Guyanese economy and the Guyanese people; they have the temerity to try to mislead this nation by telling them that the Government is not doing anything. This is the record.

These Recommendations – the one Core and five Key – have been addressed in legislation which was passed by the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) Government.

The remaining three Recommendations: Special Recommendation 1 (SR1) – Implementing United Nations Instruments, Special Recommendation 3 (SR3) – Targeted Financial Sanctions and Recommendation 23 (R23) - Fit and Proper Criteria for persons holding important offices in Reporting Entities are included in this Bill that is before this honourable House for passage.

The person performing the functions of the Director of the FIU of Guyana has confirmed that to exit the CFATF Follow-Up process, Guyana only has to satisfy these five Core and Key Recommendations, notwithstanding that other Recommendations have not been fully addressed.

It is important that Guyana exits the Third Round because the Fourth Round looms. As I said, we have shown the political will to implement the recommendations of the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism regimes. We are going to continue to try to save this country after all these years of neglect.

I do not wish to detain the House further. I just wish to say that consultations...as I said earlier, we invited the spokesperson on legal affairs of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and he had refused to take part in our consultations, which is just consistent with the attitudes that the PPP has displayed over the years. This is the same Government that never arrested or prosecuted one person under the AML/CFT regime, much less to convict anyone.

Let this be the last time we hear of any kind of interference by the Hon. Members on the opposite side in relation to the business of the AML/CFT while it is being conducted by an APNU/AFC Government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *[Applause]*

**Mr. Nandlall:** I want to begin by addressing a point which was made by the Hon. Attorney General concerning consultations. He spoke about it earlier this evening and he reiterated those arguments a few moments ago by saying that he invited me to consultations and I did not attend.

Our position, firstly, is that, in relation to Bills, we have been elected to serve the people of Guyana in this Eleventh Parliament. Therefore, the business of the Parliament must be done within the precincts of the Parliament. That is why we are asking that this Bill be sent to the Special Select Committee, where it should be sent in accordance with the parliamentary rules, practice and procedures.

We, on this side, would not sacrifice, compromise and ostracise the parliamentary process, the institutions of this House through its various committees and resort to some office outside of this Parliament to hold consultations.

The second point is that, when I received the invitation, I enquired from the person at the Attorney General's Office who had sent me the invitation if I could be sent the particular recommendations from FATF and CFATF that this Bill was intended to incorporate. Any person who has some semblance of understanding of this AML/CFT regime would know that we are not legislating at large at our own capris, but that we are legislating to incorporate recommendations which have been made to Guyana. It would be an exercise in futility to go to a consultation to consult on a Bill without having been given the background information in terms of the recommendations to have satisfied one's self that those recommendations are captured and incorporated into the Bill. That was pointed out to the person who sent me the email. I got the recommendations but it was after the date of the consultation. I had no great desire to sit and listen to Mr. Williams at some "consultation" when I did not know what I was consulting about. I have passed that stage in life.

Thirdly, my learned Friend sought to give us, in this House, a historical recitation of how Guyana has reached where it is and he pointed to three public statements which were issued about Guyana during the last Parliament. He must believe that the masses out there, who are listening to him being streamed live, and he must think that the Clerk of the National Assembly and the former Speaker of the National Assembly have something wrong with them. It is because he came here and stood with a straight face and told the nation that the PPP Government is responsible for where we are, when the whole world knows that the

Tenth Parliament was controlled by a one-seat majority that was enjoyed by the Opposition. They rejected two Bills that were brought here by the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) Government.

Mr. Ramjattan, who was the leader of the Alliance For Change, said that he did not care what the Bill contained. He wanted the establishment of the Public Procurement Commission.

6.28 p.m.

If you do not give me that haul your..." That is what Mr. Ramjattan said. There was no support for the Bill until we have the procurement commission. Well, they are in Government and we still do not have the procurement commission. That is a different matter. A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) while in the Opposition wanted local government elections and the demand came more and more in order to give support to the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AMLCFT) Bill. The people of this country will never forget that.

Therefore, my friend, they will never forget that we had statements, repeated statements, from the Private Sector Commission calling on them to support the law, from the diplomatic community. A petition came here from the Private Sector Commission and they rejected it; the CARICOM Heads of Government issued a statement; the CARICOM Secretariat issued a statement calling upon them to support the Bill; the labour movement issued several statements calling upon them to pass those Bills; the religious community issued several statements calling upon them to pass the Bill. My friend's little *en train* into theatrics is very shallow and time wasting. Nobody buys that kind of thing. It is cheap.

The three statements which he referred to I brought them back to Guyana. I attended the Managua Conference, representing Guyana, and reported why we could not have passed the Bill. I attended the one in the Bahamas and in Miami, and I brought back those public statements. It is I who announced it when I came back and at the same time gave the reason. Ms. Alisha Williams, who is there, accompanied me at all those meetings and knows as well why we are where we are. I do not think anybody should fall for that kind of cheap propaganda. That is the history.

We come to the urgency. My friend used terms such as "magnitude", "gravity" and "urgency". The meetings are held on specified days. First of all, when this Government took office in May, it had an understanding, having the controlling vote in this Parliament, we

were already deficient. Ms. Alisha Williams and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) have an institutional compilation of all the outstanding recommendations. Rather than bringing this piecemeal, Bill after Bill, since all these things are already stacked against us, we could have brought one singular Bill, accumulating all of the deficiencies and all of the outstanding recommendations, at one time to the National Assembly and pass it, and we could have entered the fourth round, he is speaking about.

The reason why we are stuck in the third round is because someone does not understand how to accumulate all the outstanding things, put them together, and bring them one time to this National Assembly. I am not going to call a name, Sir. That is how it should be done. Everything is there. It is at the Attorney General's office. There was a task force established and Ms. Alisha Williams and her staff have institutional knowledge of all that has to be done. All could have been done from 15<sup>th</sup> May to now. One year they have control of the Parliament and still they cannot get off the backlog when all they have to do is to bring the Bills to the National Assembly - the backlog in recommendations, the outstanding deficiencies. You hear him speak of the outstanding deficiencies. Those deficiencies are not developing now. They were there because of our inability to pass the Bills because of their non-support. When they took office they were all there in arrears and could have been mopped together in a singular Bill, brought here and we could have graduated out of the third round and joined the rest of the Caribbean and the rest of the Commonwealth in the fourth round. Now, we are still lagging behind due to the ineptitude of those who are in charge of the system. I want to make that fundamental point.

The other point is that these recommendations are grouped into administrative and legislative. When we were in Government we could not have satisfied the legislative requirements because there was a one-seat majority in the Opposition which refused to pass the Bill. We did not have legislative compliance. All this Attorney General is doing, with a majority in the National Assembly, after one year, is trying to fill that hole. [Mr. Williams: It is a big hole you have left.] It is because you do not know it; it is simple. It is one Bill and I would have finished it.

The other blueprint is administrative deficiencies. When we left office we satisfied all the administrative requirements. The last one, which we had to do, was the establishment of an enforcement arm, a Special Organised Crime Unit called SOCU. That was the last one we had to do and we did that. Administratively, we passed everything.

They obstructed us legislatively. Now, what have they done? They have the legislative power and still cannot pass the requisite legislation. They have now put us in default administratively because we no longer have a FIU. We are not moving forward; we are backsliding. While we are creeping, in terms of legislative advancement,... That is only because they have a majority and not because of anything else... While we are moving step by step legislatively, while we are moving in a piecemeal way legislatively, we are backsliding administratively.

What did they do in 2015? The first Bill, which the Attorney General brought here, he sought to incorporate a very elaborate, FIU, a financial institution, governed by a board of persons, all to be appointed by this National Assembly. We warned then that if they go with that mechanism to please put something in place, because there was going to be a delay. Once there was a parliamentary driven process that will allow a transition. While we await Parliament to make the appointment, at least there is an FIU that will function. As usual, arrogance, when the size of the ego exceeds the size of the brain, nothing can happen, so they rejected our submission. What is there is that when the law was passed, they outlawed the former structure and brought in a new structure which they now cannot fill. There is a void that they cannot fill and will not be able to fill over the last nine months.

My friend referring to a letter from Mr. Wilson, addressed to the FIU, used that as evidence of the existence of an FIU. There is an FIU in the law but in reality there is no appointment, and, most importantly, the heart and soul of it, the Director, is not there. It is the FIU that is the axis around which the AMLCFT apparatus rotates. The FIU, which is the agency, and the Director are the personnel through which the outer world deals, in terms of the financial architecture. The whole objective is to create a universal financial architecture, impenetrable by money laundering or terrorism. All the external agencies, extraneous to Guyana, deal directly with the FIU – the United Nations Security Council. Internally, the FIU receives all the information and supervises all the supervisory authorities and the reporting agencies, receives all information and processes and analyses it and which requires prosecution or investigation the FIU passes on to an enforcement arm. In Guyana's case it ought to be SOCU, but we know that SOCU is now a different organisation. We do not know what the mandate is of that organisation. That is how the system operates.

Sir, we can never become compliant by passing laws unless there is the hub. Everything rotates around the FIU. We can pass a million pieces of legislation but they will not be

enforceable and we will not pass any test overseas to make us compliant with the absence of an FIU. That should be our priority. It is not ramming Bills down our throats. I will deal shortly with the Bill to show why we should go to a Special Select Committee but I am dealing with some other points at this point in time.

The argument that this is urgent and we are exposed is *non sequitur*. It is not established; it will not happen. Guyana will not advance if we take a month more to take this Bill to a Special Select Committee because there is no FIU. When I begin to examine the Bill I will show Your Honour that the Bill itself confers a series of responsibilities upon the FIU and the Director. What is the hurry? I will go through the Bill clause by clause shortly. The important thing is that there is no great urgency for us to push this Bill through. My friend would have known about this Bill since November. As my honourable colleague Madam Gail Teixeira said, the Hon. Prime Minister, I presume, made a collective decision to adjourn the National Assembly for eight weeks. I do not know if he did not communicate with the Attorney General who, since November, would have been told about this. The deadline has long gone. If this Bill is going to the Summit in May, it ought to have been submitted at least eight weeks before, in March. We have done this over and over. My friend seems to have forgotten. He thinks he is speaking to novices. We have been through this process. Nobody is going to read this. We are only violating our parliamentary norms, suspending Standing Orders and going through this ordeal. It is a time wasting exercise. Nobody will read this. The agenda is already fixed.

6.43 p.m.

The agenda for that meeting is already fixed and Guyana's Bill will not be reviewed, because, Sir, it is peer review. Let me explain how it will be reviewed. Whenever this Bill is finished, it is not sent to FIU. A formal copy is sent to FIU. This evaluation process is done on a peer mutual evaluation basis.

This Bill has to be sent to every country which would be evaluating Guyana at the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) meeting. Who Attorney General will put his schedule on hold to read some Bill that somebody hand him three days before a summit? Nobody! Mr. Williams, himself, did not read this and this is his Bill. He did not read it, and I am going to show you why, Mr. Speaker. If he did not read it then who he expects to read this for him. The whole argument with which we have been bombarded and confronted about urgency, do not fall for it, Sir. It is argument that is fictional created by my learned friend, misleading the

Cabinet creating this urgency because this decision to pass this Bill must have been made at Cabinet. It is a one-eye man and you know what happens.

I think I have spoken enough on the perambulatory matters. I would like to go to the Bill itself. First of all, you have to go through the Principal Act and then look at what the Bill amends. Clauses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this Bill, which is more than 80% of the Bill, confer responsibility on the FIU and on the Director, and there is none. It puts more responsibility on the reporting entities; it puts more responsibility on the monitoring agencies; it put more responsibility on the supervisory authorities. All these responsibilities have to be monitored by the FIU. Why are you adding responsibilities and there is nobody to look over? Direct your energies towards getting that to function. The whole 80% of the Bill would be exercised infertility. It cannot be enforced because there is no FIU.

Let me predict. Act No.1 of 2015, the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Act 2015, section 5 reads:

“5. The Principal Act is amended by the substitution for section 8 of the following section as section 8 –

8 (1) The National Assembly shall –

(a) by a simple majority; and

(b) on the recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee on Appointments, appoint the Director and Deputy Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit.”

That has not happened and yet the Attorney General sits there and said there is an Executive Director. It is misleading.

“(2) The persons appointed Director and Deputy Director shall – ...”

Then it lists the qualities.

We have not begun this process of staffing the FIU. There is a gaping hole in the structure. When he stands to mislead, I want the camera to reflect that.

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. Sit down! I am on my feet.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Attorney General is rising on a Point of Order.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Yes, but I am not going to sit because he asked me in that manner. I am not going to do that. I will sit at my convenience.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member Mr. Nandlall, you were right. Hon. Attorney General, will you resume your seat? Your comments, Sir, are disrespectful. Your address to this Speaker was disrespectful. The point you said about sitting at your convenience, you will rephrase or withdraw

**Mr. Nandlall:** I will not sit because Mr. Williams asked me to sit. That is what I said. He did not ask me, he shouted at me to sit.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, you are addressing the Speaker of this National Assembly and you will do it politely.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Yes Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Now, I am saying to you that you would explain what you said just now or you will take your seat.

**Mr. Nandlall:** What I said just now was that I will not sit, Sir, because Mr. Williams shouted at me in a rude manner to sit. I stood my place because I did not want to convey the impression that I am complying with a rude and unruly request. That is why I stood my ground. I meant no disrespect to the Chair. I meant, no disrespect to the National Assembly.

**Ms. Ally:** It is to the Speaker.

**Mr. Nandlall:** To Speaker, to the Chair or to the National Assembly – none at all. Your Honour knows that I would not do that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, you may proceed.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Proceed with my presentation.

**Mr. Speaker:** Your presentation.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Thank you Sir.

**Mr. Williams:** No. Mr. Speaker, I am on a Point of Order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Do you have a Point of Order still?



**Mr. Williams:** Yes. The Hon. Member Nandlall erroneously stated that I said that our FIU has an Executive Director. I never said that, Sir, and I am calling on him to withdraw that statement.

**Mr. Speaker:** Have you heard what the Attorney General said?

**Mr. Nandlall:** If he did not say so, then I withdraw it. I have no difficulty with that. If the Hon. Attorney General did not say that and I said that he said so, that is not a matter for contention, and I withdraw it.

**Mr. Speaker:** I take it that you are saying that you withdraw the reference to the Executive Director.

**Mr. Nandlall:** If the Hon. Member is saying that he said so, then I withdraw it.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Speaker finds difficulty with these issues sometimes bordering on sophistries. Now the Speaker is asking: Are you withdrawing what you said in the light of what Mr. Williams said? Are you withdrawing the comment you made?

**Mr. Nandlall:** Three sentences ago, I said so.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am asking you a question. Do you withdraw the reference to an Executive Director, in the light of what Mr. Williams has said?

**Mr. Nandlall:** For the fourth time, Sir, yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, each time I ask you, it is the first time.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Very well, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** I will ask you again. Are you withdrawing your reference to the Executive Director in light of what Mr. Williams said?

**Mr. Nandlall:** Fifth time, Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Thank you very much Sir.

Sir, it is if I may be permitted to refer to clause 9 of the Bill to make the point of the creation by this Bill itself, of additional functional responsibility for the Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit. It states, clause 9 (2):

“Where the Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit verifies that the name reported by the person or entity is on the List published by United Nations Security Council ...”

The Director shall do certain things. Why are we rushing to pass this when there is no Director? Why? [Mr. Williams: You said that a 100 times.] I will say it a million times because it is relevant.

Sir, I would like to dwell a bit on clause 9 (2). First of all, this clause is a very strange clause, in that it authorises the Director of the FIU...I am looking at clause 9, Sir. Clause 9 authorises the FIU to take certain actions if the FIU makes contact with a particular person who is a listed person. The FIU is authorised to call the agency, which is dealing with that person, and to tell it not to deal with that person for five days. Let me read it.

“direct the person or entity by telephone to be followed up in writing, not to deal with the funds or assets of the listed person or entity for a period as may be determined by the Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit which shall not be more than five days, in order to allow the Director of Public Prosecutions to apply for a Judge in Chambers for a freezing order”;

The Director, who currently does not exist, is given this vast power to call a bank to say to the bank not to deal with this person, freeze the assets of this person, to permit such time for the Director of Public Prosecutions to go to a judge to get a freezing order. Let us proceed on.

“The Director of Public Prosecutions shall immediately upon notification by the Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit but not later than five days thereof...”

The FIU now takes this information to the DPP and must do so not more than five days and the DPP is to

“...apply ex parte to a Judge in Chambers for a freezing order in respect of the funds or assets...”

This is the part that I find most intriguing:

“The Court shall immediately, pursuant to the application of the Director of Public Prosecutions... grant the freezing order...”

The court is directed by the Parliament to seize this asset. The court judicial inherent discretion is being removed by this Bill. Sir, the Constitution ascribes interpretation of law to the judiciary. Certain functions are inherently judicial. Your Honour must be aware of attempts made previously to take inherently judicial functions and give them to executive officers and the courts have never countenanced it, the case of Hinds and the Queen. There are many lawyers here.

*6.58 p.m.*

There is creation of the Gun Court in Jamaica and by the Act it states that when the magistrate finds the accused guilty the magistrate must then send the accused to a board for sentencing. The board was comprised of public officers - psychiatrists, social workers and others - who are to make rehabilitation orders. That was challenged, Sir, as you know. The Privy Council said sanction and penalties are essentially a judicial function. It cannot be taken from the judiciary and given to the executive. You cannot do that. The Privy Council struck it down.

I am saying, Sir, that similarly, you cannot mandate to a judge that the judge shall seize. Why are you going to the judge? Why not seize it yourself? Why the DPP not seize it herself? Going to the judge is just as going through a motion because the judge's hands are tied. You do not even have to appear before the judge, you just send the order and you go home. Send the application to the judge and you go home because the judge has no other course but to grant it.

I am talking about we are making laws and I am making a very important point, and the lawyers are grinning. The lawyers on that side are grinning. Where you are taking away from a judge... A judge of the High Court has inherent power, but this judge becomes a stooge of the Director of Public Prosecutions. That is what this Bill does to the judge. Then it does not finish there. The judge makes the order and freezes the assets. This is the most offensive part of the Bill. This part is even most offensive. There is a judge who has been de-gutted of judicial flexibility and is now performing a robotic function but grants an order freezing.

Listen to how the order freezing, now, is going to operate. I am at clause 10.

“Where the funds or other assets of a listed person or entity specified by the Minister responsible for Finance...the listed person or entity may apply in writing to the Minister responsible for Legal Affairs for access of the frozen funds...”

They are going to him for access of the frozen funds. When I looked at this I immediately went to the Explanatory Memorandum, Sir. In all Explanatory Memorandum, in every one of the clauses, the clauses are very detailed except, this one, this exceptional power that the Minister of Legal Affairs is given, is not mentioned in the Explanatory Memorandum. The Explanatory Memorandum states how frozen funds are to be access – one sentence. It does not state who to whom. A judge is freezing, so the person goes to the Attorney General to release. I am reading. My friend said that I have not read, but I am reading.

“The Minister responsible for Legal Affairs upon receipt of a written application referred to in subsection (1), may, by written notice, permit funds or other assets specified in the notice to be used and dealt with in a specified way.”

My friend is now presiding over people’s private property that a judge has frozen. He is now presiding over it, and telling them how much money to get, and so on. It goes on:

“Where the Minister responsible for Legal Affairs has permitted access to the frozen funds or other assets, the Minister shall immediately - ...”

My friend is now giving himself regulatory power. He is regulating his powers now.

“(a) notify the listed person or entity that a request has been granted; and

(c) serve on the reporting entity holding the frozen funds or other assets of the listed person or entity a copy of the written notice referred to in subsection (2).”

Then there is clause 4.

“Upon receipt of the notice referred to in subsection (2), the reporting entity shall immediately allow access to the frozen funds or other assets of the listed person or entity where it has been determined by the Minister responsible for Legal Affairs to be necessary basic expenses, including payments for foodstuffs, rent or mortgage, medicines or medical treatment, taxes, insurance premiums and public utility charges, or exclusively payment of reasonable professional fees...”

Sir, I have never heard of people's property being seized and they have to go to a governmental officer. Seized by a judge pending some investigation or something, and they have to go with a begging bag to an executive officer for money to pay their house rent and medication. This Bill is warped. No executive officer can have that power over people's property. This is vulgar, Sir, with the greatest of respect to my learned friend. It is unconstitutional. No Minister, Sir, should have this. No executive officer must lord over people's private property. People will be going to the Minister of Legal Affairs to pay their medical bills, to pay their house rent, is what is in the Bill. My friend is speaking about theatrics. This is in the Bill.

I have identified only a minuscule of instances, a very small number of reasons, why this Bill Sir, I asked, be sent to a Special Select Committee. It will take us a week, Sir. I know where the mistake is. This power that the Attorney General has is a power that the judge ought to have. It is just a paradigm shift back to the judge and removes the seizure of discretion from the judge and gives the judge... The recommendation from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) states very clearly, when it is speaking about this provision, that the application to the judge must be supported by evidence. Implicit in that is that if there is an absence of evidence, the judge has a power to refuse. Here, any application that the DPP goes with it states that the judge shall grant. Therein lies the mistake. Of course my friend will blame other people for it. It is not a matter of blame. This will never pass. Even if it pass muster at the AMLCFT level, it cannot pass muster at the constitutional level above – it cannot.

All I am asking, Sir, in the best interest of the country...I appreciate the importance of this thing. I have done a lot of work on the AMLCFT. I am asking my friends on that side to let us take it to a Special Select Committee. I have said already... [Mr. Williams: Do not beg now.] I do not have to beg. I am doing my duty. The people will judge. I have already said, Sir, that this cannot advance our cause at no meeting in May. That is a fabrication; that cannot happen. All I am asking is for two weeks in a Special Select Committee and let us cleanse and sanitise this Bill of its impurities.

Thank you very much Sir. [Applause]

**Mr. Williams (replying):** Mr. Speaker, I have to, notwithstanding, thank the Hon. Member Nandlall for his contribution for whatever it was worth, but at least the Hon. Member could have done us the favour of reading the Bill before he attempted to speak to the Bill. I just wish to give two illustrations to show and to reinforce my contention.

The learned Member was accusing the framers of that Bill and then he certainly tried to reach me in it... How could there be a provision that “the judge shall seize”? The second one was “never heard of funds being seized”. He was talking about “seizure” when we are talking about “freezing”, so we could understand his confusion. How could we go and tell a judge “seize”? He has never read it. This is a simple Bill. The Hon. Member, in fact, has been in this process longer than all of us.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Your Honour, I rise on a Point of Order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member Mr. Nandlall, you rise on a Point of Order.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Yes Sir, that I am being misrepresented. I was reading verbatim, Sir. I said “freeze”. It is written here, Sir. I did not say “seize”. If my friend heard “seize”, I did not say “seize”. I said “freeze” because I was reading.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member. Hon. Mr. Williams, will you please continue.

**Mr. Williams:** Yes please, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just wish to assure the Hon. Member and the Members of this honourable House that the legislation does not speak to seizing anything and the Attorney General does not have control over seized property. He does not understand. That is why he is mixing up constitutional rights and all of these things in this argument. If the Hon. Member... [Interruption] Am I protected, Mr. Speaker? I do not want to have a feral blast at this time. Sir, we are talking about “freezing” and we are having feral...

**Mr. Speaker:** Could you continue your presentation, please.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you Mr. Speaker.

If the Hon. Member had read the Bill, the Hon. Member would have recognised... [Mr. Greenidge: He may have read it, but he does not understand it.] Perhaps he might have read it but did not understand it, but let me clarify the matter. The Bill addresses, under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373, a lacuna in the regime that we inherited from the last Government. That is the first thing. What is it addressing? It is addressing the situation that when funds are frozen under that resolution there could be a situation where the victim or the person might need to have access to those funds for certain reasons and purposes - very humane. I do not understand what the argument is. It shows the

ignorance or the lack of knowledge that is in existing legislation in this regime. There is a similar provision for freezing funds under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1267.

*7.13 p.m.*

The lacuna was there under United Nations Security Council 1267 and that is where the United Nations Committee would be the body that one would go to get leave to access the funds that have been frozen. But they were not the same in the counterpart, Resolution 1373 and that is what is being addressed. Somebody has to do it. In fact, in the AML/CFT legislation, the Attorney General is the designated Minister under this Act.

In the Special Select Committee we had in the last Parliament, it was changed in some instances from the “Attorney General” because it was felt that there was an incestuous relationship between the Minister of Finance and the Attorney General. People were scared to have that combination and they substituted the Director of the FIU. The Hon. Member ought to have known that. I do not understand the problem of density in the area, but the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira ought to have known that also. They are evincing a palpable absence of knowledge and appreciation for the Bill.

In the same token, when they were castigating us, how could we have a fine of \$15 million together with debt? It is the same type of absence of knowledge of the old legislation that they passed.

Again, they are regaling us with this one seat majority; they are blaming us for a one seat majority in the Opposition. That is why they caused Guyana to be crippled by public statements after public statements. That is their excuse. Before the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the Hon. Member used the same argument, taking that to the court, that because of our one seat majority they could not pass some legislation. As a result, Rudisa Beverages and Juices NV and Caribbean International Distributors Inc. received a \$6 billion judgement. It is the same excuse over and over.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. Can I ask that the Member not go in that direction, please? If we do, we will then get into another discussion on Privilege, Sir. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Williams:** I am saying that the excuse has been introduced by the Hon. Member. He opened the door when he said that the PPP/C Government was unable to pass the legislation because of a one seat majority in the Opposition.

Now we have a one seat majority in the Government and they are still complaining. They were never efficient. They never addressed the issue. They either turned a *Nelson's Eye* to it or they were indifferent and lacked the political will to deal with money launderers or it was just a plain absence of appreciation for what the international community is trying to forestall - the spread of money laundering and terrorism.

For example, the provisions of Recommendation 35 were never addressed by the last Government from 2011 until we addressed them by passing the Anti-Terrorism and Terrorists-Related Activities Act. All had done these things. What prevented the last Government from dealing with an adequate anti-terrorism regime? They have failed this nation. It is for the APNU/AFC to save this nation because when the would-be terrorists look at our legislation and they see \$20 million together with death, they would be able to say that there are a lot of crazy people in this country and would not want to come to Guyana. I noticed that Trinidad is now saying that they want to pass similar legislation. So if my learned Friend had read the Bill, I would have been able to engage him.

Special Select Committees - I have been in Parliament for some time now. The only Bills that really go to Special Select Committees are the very complex ones. In the era that we used to send them, we never had the kind of consultations that have now evolved in this present Parliament, where we are having wide consultations beforehand.

My learned Friend the Hon. Member Mr. Ramjattan has just conducted one on Juvenile Justice and we conducted one on Cyber Crimes. They have called for consultations and now that we are doing consultations they are bawling and saying no and that they want the Special Select Committees. Let us compare Special Select Committees with the kinds of consultation that are open to everyone.

In the Special Select Committees, what happens? We are enclosed in that small room and we publish notices in the newspapers inviting persons to submit memoranda, then we tell those who submit to come in and talk to us for about 45 minutes. How could that be more effective than the nature or type of consultations that the members of this Government have been



carrying out in this country? [Ms. Teixeira: It is not a substitute] There is no substitute.

Let us take for example the Telecommunications Bill - a complex Bill. We can understand a Bill of that nature going to a Special Select Committee. We cannot have these Bills of which people can be easily consulted on and then say it should go to Special Select Committee, where it is a delaying tactic.

As I am on this topic, let us talk about the FIU. The Hon. Member was talking about the FIU as though he has some idea or plan that the Director is not going to be appointed in the next month or year. He said that he warned us about the delay when we wanted to make the amendments to add in the Government's procedure. I do not know if the Hon. Member has been given some assurance that they are going to hold up the appointments in the Committee on Appointments for some period of time. That would be very unpatriotic, but I trust not.

The point is, if the Executive Director of CFATF is dealing and relating to Ms. Williams, who was the Assistant - there was no Deputy Director. There was one Director and a Legal Advisor. I do not know what staff the Opposition is talking about. Mr. Geer was everything. We are proposing a situation where we are preventing the Minister of Finance from hand-picking the FIU Director and also preventing the President from dismissing him. We are giving them security of tenure when they are appointed by the Parliament. All we are asking is that the parliamentary committees operate in a way so that we could have the Director appointed.

When one really examines the contributions of the Hon. Member, it is clear that they could find no fault with the legislation. The FIU has to perform its role, but it is not the only important element in this whole regime. There is the Central Bank. The Central Bank would be increasingly playing a more important role. At present, we have the whole question of de-risking and the spectre of losing correspondent banking that is affecting the entire hemisphere. This matter is very grave.

We have received correspondence from CFATF. This correspondence came from Attorney General Mr. Faris Al-Rawi who is Chairing the CFATF, a few days ago. He says:

“Dear Hon. Williams,

Please see the attached FATF Compliance Table which outlines the progress that CFATF Members have made and continue to make in strengthening the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism regimes within the context of the Third Round Mutual Evaluation”

He continues to say:

“Many CFTAF Members continue to experience restrictions to or loss of correspondence, banking relationships with considerable disruption to the national economic and financial landscape”.

The PPP must understand that they are playing games with us. To this end, the Secretariat, in keeping with the Chairman, Mr. Al Rawi’s Work Programme, is in the process of organising a Regional Conference on de-risking and loss of correspondent relationships, which is set for a particular date.

This is what he is saying:

“The objective of the Regional conference is to bring together all the relevant stakeholders, particularly in the correspondent banks so that they can share information on the decisions that are being made with regional respondent banks, regulators and important regional institutions such as CARICOM, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), *et cetera*.”

Countries in this region are losing correspondent banking. Three-time President of Barbados Mr. Owen Arthur recently wrote on the threat of de-risking and the loss of correspondent banking and we have people here not taking this issue seriously.

We are happy that we are at a stage where we could see some *light at the end of the tunnel* in respect of FATF. We are confident that the institutions that were created, largely by the efforts on our side, have been able to set up an authority that is independent and which, in fact, they are asking about now - this National Anti-Money Laundering Committee. This again has to be appointed by the Committee of Appointment.

The FATF and CFATF are not unreasonable. They must recognise that we have a system where the FIU is continuing to operate. They held a de-risking conference recently with the

World Bank. Therefore, I do not know what the Opposition is talking about. The faster they proceed to get the staff of the FIU, the better it would be for all of us.

I would like to commend this Bill to this honourable House for its passage so that we could go a far way in trying to insulate our economic and financial systems from any threats, for money laundering and terrorism and also sanctions from the FATF and CFATF administrations. Thank you.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Speaker, in keeping with Standing Order No. 58, I wish to move that the Bill goes to a Special Select Committee.

*7.28 p.m.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Ms. Teixeira.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Yes Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** One moment please. Prime Minister, are you asking for the floor?

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Your Honour, just to say that I had move the suspension of the relevant Standing Order for the Bill to be taken through all the stages and it was passed here upon a division. Therefore, a subsequent motion to abort a decision of the Assembly would not be admissible at this time. That is my submission.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Ms. Teixeira I will address the question you raised a moment ago. You will know, as you have read in Standing Order 58 that it speaks to after the Second Reading of a Bill. As I understand what we are embarked on here, we have not reached that stage yet.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind you of the issue of when one puts the motion, the Hon. Minister closes the debate. The next point was you putting the question to the House. Therefore, in my interpretation, for the Seconding Reading of this motion, which is in the Standing Orders I have made them up... In fact Sir, the Hon. Member, who is now the Attorney General, in the last Parliament used exactly this Standing Order in relation to the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Bill that came for the second time to this House. They used the same Standing Order No. 58 as a Member with the one seat majority to send the Bill back to Special Select Committee. Therefore, I am just saying, as far as I know, that when the Hon. Member closes the debate and you move to the

vote, the only space that I have during the Second Reading is to come in at this point and ask for the matter to be sent to the Special Select Committee.

If it is that I am using the Standing order in the wrong way please tell me, if I should now bring the motion for going to the Special Select Committee after the vote because that was the next stage that you were moving too. I need to be guided by you. When, under Standing Order 58, does a Member bring the request for going to Special Select Committee, under the Second Reading of a Bill?

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira, I have been trying to attract your attention, but it is clear that other matters in the Chamber elsewhere are more important at this time.

**Ms. Teixeira:** My apologies Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Second Reading is not yet completed. Until the Second Reading is completed and the Bill is read a second time, then we will listen to whatever the Hon. Member wishes to propose. I will ask the Hon. Member to be mindful, however, of the point made by the Hon. Prime Minister when he rose a few minutes.

*Question put and carried.*

*Bill read a second time.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Hon. Ms. Teixeira still wish to raise a question?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to move that the Bill be taken to a Special Select Committee under Standing Order 58(1). The issue of a motion in the House to suspend to have a debate on a Bill going through all three stages could never preclude the opportunity for any Member of this House, on either side of this House, wanting to send a Bill to a Special Select or Sectoral Committee. Therefore, the Prime Minister has passed a motion to suspend the Standing Orders. That is what it was, not to suspend moving a motion on the Bill.

I have been in this Parliament long enough to see Bills, in the middle of their passage, being sent to Special Select Committees or being paused or suspended to allow people more opportunities to make decisions on what to do. I refuse Sir, to in anyway be curtailed by what the Hon. Prime Minister said. I am moving that the Bill be sent to Special Select Committee.

Based on what our side feels about the Bill, this is the best way to quickly resolve some of the problems in this Bill. Thank you Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Would the Hon. Member move a motion to that effect?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I would therefore move that the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment) Bill No. 12 of 2016 be sent to a Special Select Committee forthwith.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members you have heard the motion put by the Hon. Ms. Teixeira that the Bill, which is the subject of our discussion at this time, be sent to a Special Select Committee.

*Motion put and negative.*

*Assembly resolved itself into Committee.*

*Assembly in Committee.*

*Bill considered and approved.*

*Assembly resumed.*

*Bill reported without amendments, read the third time and passed.*

*7.43 p.m.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, before we take the suspension, the Hon. Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs will move the following motion.

## **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

### **GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS**

#### **MOTION**

#### **SYMPATHY ON THE DEATH OF MR. W. A. L. HASLYN PARRIS, CCH, FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT) AND FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**

**“BE IT RESOLVED:**

That we the Members of the National Assembly of the Parliament of Guyana:-

- Place on record our profound grief at the great loss suffered by the Nation and the people of Guyana on Easter Monday, March 28, 2016, as a result of the sudden death of Mr. W.A.L. Haslyn Parris, C.C.H., former Deputy Prime Minister (Planning and Development), Member of Parliament from 1984 to 1991, former Chairman of the State Planning Board and former Chairman and CEO of BIDCO and Guymine, respectively;
- Pay tribute to the committed and meritorious public service which he rendered to the people of Guyana in General, and those of Region Ten, the Bauxite Industry in particular and our Parliament; and

BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly directs that an expression of our heartfelt condolences and sympathy be conveyed to his sorrowing widow, children and relatives.” [*The Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs*]

**Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs [Mr. Greenidge]:** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to be given the opportunity to speak to the motion concerning this sad event.

Mr. Haslyn Parris was one of those Guyanese citizens whose life and achievements have been extensively commented on and discussed in the public domain. Indeed, there are many myths that have surrounded the life and achievements of William Arthur Lennox Haslyn Parris or WHP to his bauxite industry colleagues. A case in point was the brief biography related to me by a mutual friend from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). In that vision, I learnt that, though he was a gifted student, he had barely secured a first degree in Mathematics at the University of the West Indies (UWI), although he had been both a Guyana scholar and a Caribbean scholar. The reason, I was told, was that he had dissipated his time and talent on the trumpet. Some of his friends doubtlessly surmised that there were other reasons also learnt. However, having been chastened by that experience at UWI, he then took a distinction, an MSC in Economics at the LSE, which is the most prestige of the UK specialist schools in social sciences and economics, in particular.

I was told that he subsequently returned to Guyana and, whilst still a mere economist, he attended a nationalisation meeting over which the Prime Minister, Linden Forbes Sampson

Burnham, presided. Mr. Parris passed Burnham a note, the contents of which so impressed the Prime Minister that he almost instantly appointed Mr. Haslyn Parris as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Guyana Bauxite Company (GUYBAU). The moral, I was meant to grasp and I think people were meant to grasp from that breathless summary of his life up to that stage, was his academic prowess, his resilience in the face of adversity, his boldness, stellar preferment and performance. The pace of the tale, as related by my friend, was clearly exaggerated, but the key terms were undoubtedly amongst Haslyn Parris' main characteristics.

Equally, they only hinted at the complexity of the man who was christened with these names and who I preferred to simply call Haslyn. He was, undoubtedly, of exceptional mental agility and with an obsession for pushing boundaries, conceptual and otherwise. Unless that aspect is understood, it would be difficult to even comprehend the many contradictions that pop up along the way. In fact, Mr. Haslyn Parris, rather than achieving prominence overnight, earned that recognition. He spent 14 years *en route* from graduate student to Deputy Prime Minister. To go from a first job as Senior Economist at the Central Bank to CEO of the largest enterprise in the State, which he did in 1971, is stellar by any reckoning. Just as important, he had considerable success in the bauxite industry at home, on the world stage as well as in the community of Linden, the health of which the bauxite industry determined under his domain up to 1982.

When I met Haslyn, as most people called him, he was already at the top of his game. In the course of 1795, I was drafted into a little remembered body termed "The Restructuring Committee". I have described, elsewhere, the political and economic importance of that Committee and its work. Haslyn was a member of that Committee and I recall him commenting very wryly. Soon after I joined the Committee, after a decision about why a certain meeting, like most others, would be held in Georgetown rather than in Linden, it was said:

"It would appear that the Members have concluded that the distance from Linden to Georgetown is less than that from Georgetown to Linden".

With the help of his emblematic giggle, effected by forcing air through his front teeth, he left us with that enigmatic swipe, accepted the venue and moved on with the debate.

The Committee included William Demas, Sir Alister McIntyre and Ranji Chandisingh, amongst others. The recommendations of the Committee were captured in a report concisely written by Mr. Haslyn Parris. In the course of the Committee's work, he and I were asked to jointly prepare a paper on one of the themes. It was to be the first of many such pieces of writing we were to jointly undertake. The chapter in question concerned education and science as well as technology or, more specifically, how the education system, formal and informal, university and pre-university, should be modified to take account of the needs at the time of the new socialist economy.

Five years later, in recognition of his skills as a wordsmith, the Prime Minister called him to assist me in crafting what he termed a peroration for that year's Budget, my first. That exercise marked the start of a relatively long and intense professional and personal relationship. At the start of that relationship, in 1977, Haslyn was already the CEO of GUYBAU. He ranked amongst the most influential technocrats and industrialists in the country. Those technocrats and industrialists would have included David Yankana of the Guyana State Corporation (Guystac), Harold Davis of the Guyana Sugar Corporation Inc. (GuySuCo), Yesu Persaud, Pat Thompson, Bernard Crawford, amongst others. These distinguished technocrats controlled Guyana's most technologically advanced and capital intensive enterprises. They were not automatic members of all the highest policymaking and political fora. Haslyn was, however, a much respected member of the central executive of the People's National Congress (PNC).

Outside of the Central Bank, Haslyn's achievements have – sad to say - almost been forgotten nationally. That national amnesia is largely due to his long retirement, the onslaught of politically motivated rewriting of Guyana's history and an attack on socialist policies across the globe. In fact, under his hand, during the period 1973 to 1983, Guyanese managers replaced the largely white expatriate managers of the sugar and bauxite industries. The bauxite industry alone funded the training of more engineers and technicians than the rest of the economy in any one year. In the process, it was primarily Parris who resisted the pressure from the Prime Minister to make the scholarships extended to bauxite workers conditional on the return of the trainees. These trained engineers and others did the remarkable and audacious things which Guyana has hitherto been so proud.

As the first locally born CEO of the former multinational branch plant, he was called upon to provide leadership to a challenging industry in a region notorious for industrial strife and the



short attention span of the populace as regards the political leaders. He did so charismatically and effectively until around 1982 when the consequences of the problems in the Alumina Plant and fiscal problems at the Treasury became evident. But I am getting ahead of myself, Mr. Speaker.

When Guyana nationalised the bauxite operations of Alcan in 1971, many Guyanese, in and out of the industry, joined mild intention foreigners in voicing aloud their views that it was impossible. Three years earlier, in 1968, Union Carbide had walked away and abandoned the Plant that was responsible for manganese operations in Mathews Ridge and in Port Kaituma, triggering something of an employment crisis. Eventually, the Government responded with the Matarkai Development Authority but no attempt was made to take on the task of running the Plant. Many thought that the Government should do the same with bauxite.

In 1971, however, amongst the things that were different were, probably, the managers of bauxite but most especially of Haslyn Parris and his confidence in himself and those people around him. He was a key factor in this deviation, but, clearly, the key managers were able to persuade and be persuaded that they could handle the challenge. The dangers of taking on a branch plant, which simply had existed to meet the needs of a multinational corporation, ARVIDA Plant in Canada, were obvious. The challenge of pricing in circumstances where the buyer was the sole market was only one danger. The industry responded well, if not magnificently. Mr. Haslyn Parris made arrangements to assemble a corporate planning team with many Guyanese from amongst the students and graduates abroad, including Mr. Lance Carberry, who this Parliament knows very well, building a team where there had been none under GUYBAU. They began the process of converting GUYBAU into the Guyana Mining Enterprise Ltd. (Guymine) and into a self-standing entity.

Mr. Haslyn Parris and his managers managed to oversee the diversification of the industry, that is of output and of process. The mix of output moved in favour of refractory bauxite over which the company, over time, was able to extract and improve on better margin. They were also able to produce chemical grade bauxite for use in water treatment. Furthermore, the industry achieved a number of notable successes on the technological front. The managers, having decided to open up the Montgomery Mine, with its exceptional level of overburden, needed to find ways to economically exploit the Mine and that exploitation could not be properly and profitably effected without innovations.

*7.58 p.m.*

The industry embarked on the construction and increasing use of walking draglines after 1974. Amongst these was what the industry claimed to be the world's largest walking dragline, Sioric. Notable also was the industry's success in the construction of the kilns for the use by the industry. The most notable of these was Kiln 13; this would mean more to the people of Linden than elsewhere, but it is important. These successes were symptomatic of the returns to the training as well as the confidence and prowess of the technicians and managers of the industry overseen by Parris and his team. It takes a special significance when one reads the observations made by Dr. Richard Shelton as regards what Guyana generated in the past.

There were also new approaches to meeting the high cost of food to workers. In 1973, Parris' team negotiated with the trade unions to secure cheaper wage goods for the community and they recruited people, including Benny Holder, to help provide protein by way of, believe it or not, goat meat. Of course, the traditional members of the community were heard to ask, in amazement, "What goats got to do with bauxite?" Well, it had a lot to do with it because it had to do with the availability and the cost of protein.

I also make mention of the establishment of the consumer good complex, the recreation hall and the pedestrian walkway which should be seen in the same vein.

The point I am trying to make is that Haslyn Parris was a person open, very much, to novel ideas. He stepped out of the box to deal with problems when the problems appeared to be out of the ordinary. The industry was early in the adoption of Information Technology (IT) and, to help the company do this, Haslyn imported, again, the likes of Irwin Davis, Mike Griffith, Keith Burn and others to lead the digitisation of the industry at a time when this was not even being done in many of the advanced industries in the North.

Guyana's Alumina Plant dominated the industrial refractory market, but, in a bid to diversify and reduce the firm's dependence on the product, the managers of the industry hit on the idea of generating metallurgical and chemical grade bauxite for the market and utilised the by-products of the washing plant, for example, as part of that exercise. Along with this, they created a turning basin, the one that is found in the Berbice River, and that basin was used to replace the transshipment facility that we used in Trinidad for shipping metallurgical bauxite to Alcan.

In the international arena, GUYBAU and then Guymine, under Parris, played the leading role in the 1973 discussions with Prime Minister Barrow and Prime Minister Eric Williams that were intended to transform the region's industry and its industrial base. Of course, the failure of that exercise has nothing to do with those three countries but with the fourth partner who joined and then went off in its own direction. The smelter, therefore, did not materialise.

I should say that another one of the innovations which Haslyn played a leading role in was the establishment of the International Bauxite Association (IBA). At that time, in recognition of Guyana's influence and capacity, many of the developing countries turned to Guyana for advice on how to manage their industries. What I am saying is that there are a number of innovations and initiatives undertaken by Guyana, initiatives occasioned by special and exceptional circumstances and, therefore, we find that the role in leading that set of initiatives has to go to Haslyn Parris and his teams. Although eventually the difficulties facing the bauxite industry forced Haslyn out of Guymine and eventually out of the Berbice Industry Development Company (BIDCO), which he chaired, his role as a key national figure on the economic stage remains. He started out as a Senior Economist in the Central Bank, moved to the bauxite industry, made a mark in the bauxite industry and then moved elsewhere where he also made a remarkable contribution.

With the passage of the State Planning Commission Act of 1977, he was additionally appointed Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Board and also of the State Planning Commission. The Secretariat eventually took over the activities of the old Development Secretariat and, in 1979, following a ministerial crisis, the State Planning Secretariat took on the responsibility for the preparation of the annual Budget, in addition to its overall responsibilities of long and medium-term planning. In the management of capital projects, Haslyn was central to the work of planning and policymaking, although, when this exercise started, he was still based in Linden as the Central Executive Officer of Guymine. It is that kind of location bifurcation that led to his comment.

He often claimed that not every problem was soluble, but, in truth, when one saw him at work, one got the impression that he tried to solve all the problems that came before him. He believed that he could solve them indeed and that was one of his great attractions to the political administration, obviously.

Outside of bauxite, he was the author or contributed to a number of major policy innovations and initiatives such as the discussions which started with Reynolds to produce ceramics for

motor engines and also rum cola to be packaged in aluminium cans made from bauxite mines in Guyana. It did not materialise, but those discussions went quite a long way and something similar in the future may yet prove to be feasible.

Haslyn was the chief architect in the restructuring and rationalisation of the public sector. It was he who introduced and prompted the exercise by Kuhn/Loeb/Lehman Brothers, the merchant Bankers in the arena of the restructuring of the public enterprises and the corporations of Guystac. Those exercises led to the reduction in the number of Ministries as, I think, many people recall occurred under the hand of former President, the late Hugh Desmond Hoyte.

In a sense, however, only a mean spirited commentary on the life of William Haslyn Parris could be written without an excess of superlatives about his personal qualities and abilities. He was obviously quick witted, humorous, diligent and hard working. He moved amongst the good and great. Indeed, as a consequence of that, there was often a debate and Mr. Burnham himself contributed to that by confiding in people that he rated Haslyn as one of the three brightest men he had come across.

Parris had a certain tenacity in tackling problems and it was difficult to start any debate or argument with him and leave it in suspension for resolution at another time and for you to hope that he would have forgotten. Often, you would attend a meeting and, before the meeting started, you could hear him say either to the Prime Minister or whoever else was around: "Before we get to the main point for which we are here, do you recall that we are discussing A or B?" Then he went back to that issue with some idea for taking it forward or for bringing an angle that you had not anticipated, in a bid, I think people often felt, simply to win the argument but also demonstrating this preoccupation he had with finding a way around a particular hurdle that might have been raised at the time. So that tenacity and doggedness meant that, at times, he could divert a meeting in a cerebral and intellectual discussion that sometimes went nowhere. He did not like losing arguments but the truth is that he had a formidable, persuasive and logical capacity, a capacity which, for some of us, was as alluring and lethal as the songs of the famous half bird and half Greek sirens who, by the sweetness of their songs, lured sailors to their destruction in the rocks. Mr. Speaker, I see you have smiled; you obviously had some exposure to Greek myths.

Such was the fear of his persuasive capacity that he had what I believe was an unusual distinction. In 1977, when we were working on the national minimum wage deal, President

Basil Blair, who you might remember as an outstanding Guyana Trade Union Congress (GTUC) President, was also a very aggressive and militant leader. When the Prime Minister called upon the GTUC to listen to Mr. Parris' presentation of a proposal for dealing with the problem of minimum wages and inflation, they refused to listen to him. Blair, in particular, absolutely refused. When asked why, he said, "This man is capable of persuading us of anything, even that pink is blue so the best thing to do is not to listen." That is a distinction that I know that no one else has attracted.

Whilst that side of Mr. Parris is true, it is not the whole story. I did say that, while he claimed that not every problem has a solution, he did try to find one. That mental agility in the face of a search for solutions is what attracted him to the political leaders, whether it was Burnham or Hoyte. I might say that when President Lusinchi of Venezuela visited - I do not remember the exact year, it might have been 1990 or early 1991 - after having a session with Parris, who was sent to conduct discussions with Venezuela on the various forms of cooperation - we had a lot of difficulties with Venezuelans as we would agree on one set of things and they would come back and have some different interpretation - when he met Parris in the line where the Ministers had lined up to meet the President, he stopped by Parris and said, "This one knows how to tie his boot laces." When explained, it was taken to mean that this was somebody who had an exceptional ability to handle himself in the course of argument and debate. That, I think, was a fair assessment of Parris. It is now recognised, I think, that unusual dilemmas require unorthodox solutions based on a questioning of conventional assumptions and you could always rely on Mr. Parris to do just that. His job, deliberate or otherwise, in those administrations was to take the President and his colleagues to that point where you question the assumptions and you try to find a way around whatever was taken to be the obvious and, therefore, the idea that you could not solve or deal with it was not accepted.

To understand his significance, it is necessary to forget about his brilliance or his genius as a thinker or as a debater and to isolate his role in this community in the corridors of power. It is, I think, almost invariably lost in the encomiums about just how brilliant a mind he possessed. He played a role, perhaps the most influential person in policymaking in the mid-1970s to the late 1980s as a result of that capacity, that tendency, that ability, that persuasiveness. I think many of the influential persons who worked with him would agree that his genius was evident but more importantly than that was the unrivalled influence that he exercised on the Presidents and Prime Ministers and their policies. Parris' main influence was that exceptional ability to persuade Presidents and those around him, including

technicians who were his peers, to adopt policies that might not have appeared obvious or efficacious at first glance.

I would say that, whilst there was little doubt that he would rank very highly amongst those with outstanding intellectual capacity, he would, I think, rank a place as a gold medallist in the pantheon of advisors over the years to Presidents and Prime Ministers, people here notwithstanding.

*8.13 p.m.*

He took over from me when I was removed as Minister of Planning, Finance and Trade and he became the Vice-President and Deputy Prime Minister of Planning and Development, when I was then the Senior Minister of Finance, and I had the privilege of working with him, because that is what it was, unlike the ill-informed comments from the other side. It was the creation of a team, which, I would argue, in the Caribbean, was recognised by the institutions with whom we were called upon to negotiate in very difficult circumstances, not of our making; it was an extremely formidable team that was put together in that way.

For the period 1984 to 1989, we had some of the most difficult circumstances that were faced in the region, and whilst, in many of these countries, there were a variety of meltdowns, what we managed to do was to ensure that that collapse which we had seen elsewhere, including problems that were viewed in Venezuela, was avoided. In doing that, one of the lessons that, perhaps, were not fully grasped by the teams was that, in management, it is necessary to eschew ideal solutions in favour of impractical ones.

Suffice it to say, at this point, the difficulties of trying to manage a regime with planning on one side and finance somewhere else eventually led to Mr. Haslyn Parris' resignation in 1991 at the age of 50, after almost 20 years at the top of his game. As a friend, I believe that the decision was premature and the loss of the 1992 Elections cemented it. He was, for a number of reasons, excluded from making a sensible and meaningful contribution to the national effort from that point onwards. It is not that he made any, but, I think, it had no reference to the potential that he had for contributing.

In keeping with his approach to life, he made himself over. He underwent a makeover and he turned a new leaf and pursued new interests. The Constitution was something which attracted his attention, writing of books and the question of humour. His legendary incisive powers of analysis, his thoroughness and his formidable debating skills were lost to us, by and large, but

he was concentrating on those things which interested him, and it is very important that those who would have worked with him, for example on the Constitution, recognise and some of those who I hear heckling from the other side also would recognise, from the work that he did, that an understanding and development of a Constitution is not a matter to do with lawyers alone. That is just the point I would like to make.

We had many shared interests. I am saying this in the context of what a friend was. We had many interests in common. In the case of music, we discovered that in the course of writing a speech. Mr. Haslyn Parris was, of course, an accomplished musician. People remembered that he played a musical tribute to the late President, Linden Forbes Burnham, and I was privileged to share the stage with him as a co-trumpeter, as pointed out to me the other day. I shared a stage with him along with Deryck Bernard, but also as a co-trumpeter with Oliver Basdeo, who was playing the other day with Dave Martin, when they were launching the 50-year-old Demerara rum. I did not even realise that he remembered. That was an event and, perhaps, it should be of interest to politicians here. There was an event later on which was called, "Politicians in Concert." Well, they are clearly not in concert in here, but they were in concert on that occasion, in which we entertained the citizenry of Georgetown. We also shared birthdays, within a matter of a few days, with Desiree Bernard, and also many years of reading and so forth.

Having said what I said about him, his hard work, the academic genius and so forth, I think it is necessary to say that he also knew how to enjoy life. His annual Boxing Day bash was very popular, and I, for example, never missed the opportunity to attend, however late I had to leave Georgetown to get there. It is, perhaps, an interesting coincidence that the very day that he died, I was preparing to go to an event that he was holding only a few days after his birthday.

For all of his achievements, for all the points I have made just now, I think he was an amazingly modest man. For example, I only discovered his achievements by way of athletics and sports when Wendell Mottley, who you might know as the 400 metre silver and bronze medallist for Trinidad and Tobago in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, heard me make mention of him at a party I had in Stanley Place and said to me, "Was he a Queen's College student?" He said, "I believe I ran against him when I was at school." Sure enough, when we called Mr. Haslyn Parris and asked him, he did, in fact, compete in the same games, but he treated it as so matrofact. I think most other people would have made more of it.

He had also, of course, a very well developed sense of humour, very much tinged with what I thought was a lot of boyish mischief and, of course, use of words even in that sense of humour, his love of double *entendre* and the like.

In conclusion, I am sure that I run no risk of being contradicted if I were to say that most commentators would agree that he had one of the sharpest minds around. That mind had lost little of its lustre when he celebrated his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in a relatively restrained style a few weeks ago, and it is a testimonial to the dysfunctional nature of our political system that a citizen of such remarkable ability, catholic interest and as widely read could have been so little utilised by a country so critically short of skills.

I worked on and off with him over the years 1976 to 1977, 1979 to 1980 and, very closely, 1983 to 1991. Subsequent to that, I was rather surprised to learn that he would retire to Buxton, and he stayed there through the disturbances of the turn of the millennium. I found him in Buxton, with the assistance of Sarah, his daughter, and we linked up again, notwithstanding our earlier disagreement over economic strategy, and we were able, in spite of that, to work together as part of the Economic Advisory Committee that, initially, the APNU alone had, and the committee that served or serviced the Opposition when it was trying to put together a programme to interest the People's Progressive Party (PPP) in a joint common platform. His major contribution in that exercise was to identify, for us, the critical elements of the Constitution that had been identified as being worthy of urgent attention prior to and, perhaps, even without having to get to the two-thirds majority. So, even in that latter period, even in his semi-retirement in Buxton, he contributed significantly to some of the things that we will be doing or have been looking at here in this House. So, having left it, as we pointed out, in 1994, he did continue to contribute and the fruit of his work with Dr. Rupert Roopnarine... I believe the Prime Minister and others were in addition to that issue of constitutional reform.

I offer the view that he was, in policymaking, part of the engine of a decade. His ability to question, his out of the box approach that he provided prior to 1992 Governments, in particular, with answers and routes out of difficulties that would have backed humbler and less brave men... It was Haslyn who was one of the major contributors to the confidence that characterised the Burnham regime, in particular, a belief that was born not only of whatever inherent genius one might have had, but of a thoroughness, of a self-belief and maybe some degree of brashness and risk taking.



In the end, he left, I think he would himself had scripted it, “quickly and quietly”. He was not, I might add, a sentimental or nostalgic person and did not particularly relish rites of passage. So, how he left, I am sure would be how he would have scripted it. For myself, I think I as well as those around me who worked with him over the years are much richer for the experience, and I am certainly proud of what we achieved together and believe that Guyana is a better place for his contribution.

Please permit me to close by offering sincere condolences to Mr. Haslyn Parris’ family and relatives, including Faye and his children, Yamani, who is not here, and Sarah and Yarudin, who are here, as well as his relatives and others, and Mrs. Parris, who grieve for him. I just really want to invite Colleagues and Members of the House to embrace and support the motion which, as you know, ask that it be further resolved that the National Assembly directs that an expression of our heartfelt condolences and sympathy be conveyed to his sorrowing widow, children and relatives. I wish to propose the motion to you, Mr. Speaker. *[Applause]*

**Mr. Lumumba:** I rise in support of the motion as presented by the Hon. Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Carl Greenidge. On behalf of this side of the House, the PPP, we always want to say nice things about those who have contributed positively to our country and I would think this can signal the beginning of how we should work together, once we have isolated an issue that makes sense for the country, that we support that issue, whether it be a personality or a project.

I want to give my sympathies to the family of Haslyn Parris. The last time I spoke to Haslyn, we were having a drink and I said to him, “Why don’t you do more in Guyana?” Do you know what Mr. Haslyn Parris said? Mr. Greenidge would know his special way. He said, “I deh right hey. Deh know where to find me,” and he was finished with that. In turn, he said to me, “When will the two sides get together and carry this country forward?” Haslyn was a nationalist. He always wanted the PPP and the PNC or whether it be the APNU... Haslyn was a big fan of national unity. If one looks at how he approached the Constitution, the approach was a manner that would bring the races and the political parties together.

8.28 p.m.

Haslyn, as you know, grew up in Buxton and he was known as “Mr. Parris’ son” and “Mrs. Parris’ son”. Haslyn was probably the only person in Buxton who did not have a false name or about whom anybody had anything bad to say. As a matter of fact, we used to *lime* on

Saturday nights on the line top in the village. When we discussed Muhammad Ali and Frank Sinatra, Haslyn's name would come up and the discussion was that Buxton had the brightest man in the world - Haslyn Parris. That is how he was seen and known in Buxton. When we were children, our parents used to ask us why we could not have been like Haslyn, like Mr. Parris' son.

Haslyn was clever; he was bright. The rumour on the line top of Buxton was that he had shown Mr. Burnham how two plus two equalled five. He went on a blackboard and went through the addition and when he finished, Mr. Burnham told him that he was right. That is how good Haslyn was. We want to hope that there would be many more Haslyn Parris in this country. This country needs the Haslyn Parris. It needs his brilliance and it needs his leadership. Like Mr. Greenidge said, we need people who are quiet and who have space.

There are too many people in this country who do not know how to retire. Haslyn Parris retired and he did something that was very special, which all of us should do. You would not believe that Mr. Haslyn Parris retired and went back to Buxton to live in an ordinary house. It was not a three-storeyed house. It really touched me to see that. I think that Haslyn Parris was the only person of prominence in Buxton, who I know of, who went back home and built a house and lived on a corner. His wife would sell fried fish and cook-up rice and persons would go there and eat. Haslyn Parris would come downstairs, once he knew persons were there, and would give persons books *on the house*.

I think that Mr. Greenidge has spoken for everybody. He has spoken for the Government side, the Opposition side and the nation. So, there is no need for me to be redundant.

We want to thank his family and we want to thank this Parliament. I want to let his children know that Haslyn Parris would always be a part of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *[Applause]*

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I thank you. We will now take the suspension. Immediately upon our return, we would address the debate on the motion on crime.

*Sitting suspended at 8.33 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 9.08 p.m.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, we have resumed our Sitting. We would consider the request standing in the name of the Hon. Clement Rohee, which was granted this morning. I am mindful of the terms of our Standing Orders in relation to a request of this kind and I wonder whether there is an Hon. Member who would wish to move the suspension of that Standing Order to permit this debate to continue until its conclusion.

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, I stand to be guided because I had anticipated that we would have had a list of the speakers. I am told that there may not be more than two speakers from either side.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, I do not know whether there is a list of speakers. None has been so far given to me. Perhaps, we should get a list of the speakers before we proceed.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Speaker, normally, on a matter of adjourning the Assembly on a definite matter of urgent public importance, the mover of the motion and the opponent of the motion speak. Rarely has there been occasion when the Speaker has allowed two speakers from each side. In practice – and the Standing Orders does not guide us on this - it has been the mover and the opponent. We are quite prepared to go with two speakers – one from our side and one from the Government's side. If the Government wishes to have two on each side, our second speaker is ready.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member. We were aware of that, but, in the circumstances, we will follow what is the traditional approach, that is, one Member on either side will speak.

**Ms. Ally:** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to indicate that the Government wishes to field just one speaker for this motion. In keeping with what the Opposition Chief Whip said, we concur.

#### **Suspension of Standing Orders No. 12 (3) and No. 10 (1)**

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** I bow to the superior knowledge of Hon. Mdm. Gail Teixeira on this issue of the Standing Orders. I now move that Standing Order No. 12 (3) be suspended and that Standing Order No. 10 (1) also be suspended to permit the debate to go until its conclusion, if it goes beyond 10.00 p.m.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Standing Orders suspended.*

**Mr. Rohee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last time we had a debate on the crime and public security situation in this House was during the Budget debate and there were a number of questions that were asked in the Committee of Supply. We were informed of the resources that were to be made available to the law enforcement agencies and, in this respect, to the Guyana Police Force (GPF), in order to boost their capacity to perform better and to deliver a much more qualitative service to the people of this country.

Months have passed and, notwithstanding the assurances that we have received from the Hon. Minister and some of his Colleagues who have pronounced, from time to time, on this vexed question, the situation remains basically the same, meaning that there have been spikes, from time to time, particularly in respect of serious crimes perpetrated in our country.

Obviously, all is not well in Guyana insofar as public safety and security is concerned. I would not go so far as to speak about national security, which is a much wider concept and which is dealt with by a much wider body within the State apparatus. I would limit myself to the issue of public safety and security because this is precisely the area in which the main law enforcement entity is called upon to protect and serve the citizens of this country.

I want to start off from the premise that all is not well in the Republic as we approach the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our country's Independence. The question, as was raised in the letter to His Excellency the President by the Private Sector Commission, is: could citizens move around without fear in our country?

Let me, for the purpose of the debate on the motion, put aside, for the time being, the political arguments and the political stakeholders and players in this matter. There are entities such as the Private Sector Commission, the Berbice Chamber of Commerce, the Upper Corentyne Chamber of Commerce, the Central Corentyne Chamber of Commerce and the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce.

*9.18 p.m.*

I would want to submit that these are non-political stakeholders who have a vested interest in ensuring that public safety and security is at the top of the agenda. The President, of recent, spoke on two occasions, once on his programme *Public Interest*, where he said, in clear, unequivocal terms, that public safety and security is at the top of his agenda, and that he expects those vested with the responsibility to ensure that happens that fulfil that directive in order to ensure that the communities, meaning the villages and towns, are kept safe and

secure. The President has pronounced, so it is left to the operatives, the political as well as the professional, to fulfil that task.

I want to qualify my contribution from the very outset to say that there are a number of stakeholders, in the business community, the corporate sector and professionals who are concerned about public safety and security in general, and their own safety and security as citizens of this country. Nothing is wrong with that; they have a right to be. So far, these are the organisations which have come out to express strong opinions and, to a large extent, disagreements with the administration and the Guyana Police Force in respect of the extent to which their personal safety and security as well as their families, and the society at large, is guaranteed and secured.

The magnitude of the problem is seen through the prism, on the one hand, by the law enforcement agency, the Guyana Police Force, reciting a number of statistics. On the other hand, it is seen through the prism of the public, *vis-à-vis*, its perception of what is going wrong in our country. These are two contesting views in our country of who is right and who is wrong.

I was astonished to read recently, just a few minutes ago, that the Guyana Police Force issued a statement that the public perception of the crime rate in Guyana is inaccurate. This is a totally unscientific position for the police force in this country to take. How can they say that the public perception, with respect to the crime rate in this country, is inaccurate? On what basis has it come to this conclusion when all of us – at least those who are better informed – know that perception is the reality? It is taking a stand against tremendous odds. I will come to that later.

There is a distinguished American historian by the name of Barbara Tuchman, who was a Pulitzer Prize winner, wrote a book called *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*. In that book she elucidates historically what she describes as the pursuit by governments of policies contrary to their own interest. She has given a number of examples to show how governments pursue policies contrary to their own interests. I have sat in this National Assembly and witnessed Members on the Government benches pursuing policies which Tuchman referred to as contrary to the interest of the Government, but only time and history will tell. They believe now it is right for them, but time and history will tell the extent to which it was folly for them to pursue that course which they adopted on several occasions, including this evening.

I want to submit that the question is not about how many vehicles we have made available to law enforcement. It is not about if enough have been recruited in compliance with the fixed establishment of the organisation; it is not about the extent to which budgetary resources have been allocated to this organisation. Those things are important, I have to admit, but it is more than that. It is much more than that. We have to avoid, when discussing and debating this matter, that we do land into two pitfalls, number one, using this issue as a political football and, two, sending the wrong signals irrespective of the argument we take to the public out there. In the public there are the miscreants; there are the potential lawbreakers; there are those who have been released from prison and those who are somewhere out there waiting to commit a crime. I would like to respectively guard against these two pitfalls: one, using this debate as a political football and, two, sending the wrong signal to the public at large.

The Hon. Prime Minister has a knack for public relations. I do not know how he managed to allow Mr. Khan to walk away from the National Communications Network (NCN). *[Interruption]* Allow me to develop my argument with your protection, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Prime Minister has a knack for the spin rule. I would not qualify him as a spin doctor such as Mr. O'Reilly on *Fox News*, but he has a knack for public relations. I want to submit that irrespective of what spin is given to this question, such as in today's *Guyana Chronicle* newspaper, public relations do not make you win the war on crime. You can be the best spin doctor in the world, put out the best statements, and so forth, but that is not going to make you conquer the criminal underworld. It is not a public relations matter. You might convince yourself that that might very well be the case, that you are going to win the war against crime by public relations. As the Hon. Prime Minister would know that in countries, for example, where tourism is a major foreign currency earner, crime takes a back seat and a *modus vivendi* has been established with the media on this subject. Every time a crime is committed in a tourist destination it affects the tourist industry. I want to establish this, from the very outset, that irrespective of the efforts of the spin doctors, whoever they might be on the Government side, it is not going to help the fight against crime.

I link this question also to the constant churning out of statistics, which I will come to, to help buttress the view that by publishing the statistics it will act as a deterrent to crime. One thousand Guyanese cannot be wrong. That is my catchment area for argument sake. There is the saying that one hundred Frenchmen cannot be wrong. One thousand Guyanese cannot be wrong. I am sure if one thousand Guyanese are polled in various parts of this country they are certainly going to say that they are not satisfied with the efforts of Government to address the

crime situation. There is no point in stubbornly holding on to this position. This is part of the exercise in folly. There is no point in holding on to the stubborn position that based on statistics churned out that we are winning the war against crime. Those are good for international organisations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Organization of American States (OAS). It is good to publish those figures so it could go into the books for them to see what the situation is in Guyana. We are talking about lives and living in Guyana.

Did the statistics help? The statistics, which I refer to, are those that were recently published and have been published all the time. Even during my time statistics are published. The police would bring the statistics at the Ministry of Home Affairs in the same way it takes them to you. I do not think it has changed its *modus operandi*. The force has not changed its *modus operandi*. These things were discussed at Central Intelligence Committee (CIC) which is now the National Security Committee (NSC). We read the daily reports in the morning, and so forth.

The Minister has to have an objective position. If he does not have an objective position, if he does not distant himself, at least psychologically, from what is being fed to him he is going to be sucked in and find himself just parroting what was read to him without making an objective assessment. Critical in this exercise is the connection with the people.

Statistics are not going to stop the criminals from committing crimes. Do you believe those statistics mean anything to the man at the Stabroek Market selling coconut water or the vendor who was just pushed off the pavement? Do you believe it means anything to the common man and woman out there? They do not gauge the fight against crime on the basis of statistics published. What they base their fight against crime on is the frequency with which they see police presence and the extent to which a murder or serious crime affects them that law enforcement is there within seconds.

9.33 p.m.

Now the question, is that achievable? Given the age in which we live, I would like to submit that at this age of technology and computer science, it is possible for the reaction of law enforcement to be speedy than it is today. It is hiding behind the need for vehicles. Every time the police reports are read... I just read what Mr. Amsterdam said, in B Division. Mr. Amsterdam, in B Division, keeps talking about shortage of vehicles, lack of resources and it

is a perennial argument. The force never has sufficient. It has a gargantuan appetite for these things. I have asked the Hon. Minister, during the debate, whether he would consider it feasible to conduct or to commission an inventory of what the police force has been receiving over the past ten years. [Mr. Ramjattan: Do you ever do that?] Yes. We have done it.

We must stop both the civilian oversight body... Unless anyone thinks that I am veering away from the issue, I am trying to clear the foundation in architecture that will lead us to this fundamental and vexed question, as I said. I am talking much about the question on statistics because the Hon. Minister thankfully circulated... [Mr. Ramjattan: It is beating you.] It cannot beat me. I have been there and done that. Statistics do not beat me.

I am submitting to this honourable House that statistics must be approached with caution and in context that is what the civilian oversight body must do. Law enforcement does not have to do that. By the way we know that there are certain crimes that go unreported, what we call non reported crime such as rape. There are many incidents of rape in this country that are not reported for obvious reasons; there are many instances of sexual abuse that are not reported; there are many instances of child molestation that are not reported and the buggery that are not reported. These are serious crimes but they go unreported. As you know, in the village, in the street and in the community, the people know what has happened to that child, to that woman, to that family and it is not being addressed. The perceptions gain strength and momentum from community to community. The people talk on the phone; people engage in Blackberry Messengers (BBM); people text each other, and so it goes. It is a difficult one.

There is also this issue of defining what a crime is. I am not saying that the force does that but I know law enforcement in many countries have different definitions of crime and this sometimes is used to manipulate the data to make it appear favourable to law enforcement. That is why I make the point that unless the civilian oversight body does not take cognisance of these issues, we will just parrot what is given to us and we would critically examine what is given to us.

Statistics in crime tells us very little about how safe we are. To what extent does statistics in crime tell us how safe we are? How would this tell us how safe we are? This is good for academia; this is good for criminologist and this good for people whom I call the police watchers. They do not tell us how safe we are. They do not stop this statistics. I am sure the Private Sector Commission and the other stakeholders would have received something such



as this or know about something as this, but then it did not prevent or stop them from issuing statements or writing the letters to the President.

Sir, the statistics published recently in the newspaper did not convince the Private Sector Commission and the other stakeholders that they should hold their hands and not write to the President seeking an audience with him. They are not convinced. They feel that better must be done.

The issues that we have confronting us, the recent incident at the Princess Hotel, notwithstanding the fact that it was an inside job and we know that most of the things are inside jobs, that is not rocket science,...The fact is that we heard during the budget debate that the city is going to be *camerarize*. [Mr. Ramjattan: It is coming.] It is coming. [Mr. Ramjattan: Yes. It is coming.] Well, while it is coming people are dying, Mr. Ramjattan. What are you doing? It is a disaster. This constant harping or hiding, as it were, about what we did...Why do they keep hiding behind the thing that you had 22 years? Why did you not do it or what did you do? That is not going to solve anything. Your conscience is going to harping it, you have been there for 23 years and why did you not do it. That is not convincing anybody. Nobody is going to buy that argument. You are there now, do your job but do not tell me what is coming. Is it c-o-m-i-n-g or c-u-m-i-n-g? Which one?

Nobody pays attention, save and except, maybe 0.1 % of the Guyanese population in respect to these crime statistics and maybe the other Commissioners of Police in the Association of the Caribbean Commissioners of Police, in the Caribbean. Where is it going? Where are we going? I think we are putting a lot of emphasis on crime detection rather than crime prevention. This is two sides of the same coin, but a lot depends on what the force is oriented to do. I read that somewhere the Hon. Minister sat with the Commissioner of Police and the hierarchy of the police force and give it instructions of how to fight crime. I never knew the Mr. Ramjattan was a crime fighter and he knew the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and the Standing Orders. I did not know that was the case.

We were told in July, of last year, that a draft crime fighting strategy arose out of the discussion with some key stakeholders at the Ministry of the Presidency. After a spike in the crime situation had occurred, a crisis meeting was conveyed, the kitchen Cabinet met, and arising out of that discussion instructions were given to draw up a crime strategy. What did it say? It states "...The State would not sit idly by and allow criminals to run riot in the streets"

and “The aim of the strategy is to ensure the safety of citizenry and to send a very strong message to the criminal underworld and intellectual office.”

We were told that this strategy was going to go to the Ministry of Public Security, from the Ministry of Public Security to force headquarters, from force headquarters to Camp Ayanganna and then to all the experts who are quite knowledgeable on this matter for their field. In the meantime, the Presidential Adviser on National Security was strutting across the courts, having been given the responsibility by August, last year. We were told that the strategy was going to be made public in order to give to stakeholders an opportunity to contribute to it and that it will be laid in the National Assembly. None of that has happened, Mr. Speaker. I do not know if you virtually have got a copy, or it has been embargoed until after the jubilee celebration.

What we know is that the Minister of Public Security... One morning Guyanese woke up to an announcement that Operation Dragnet was to fight crime. The crime fighting strategy had been subsumed within Operation Dragnet. It was that the Guyana Police Force, Guyana Prison Service, Guyana Fire Service, Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit (CANU) and Guyana Defence Force are those which will be the shakers and the movers in this Operation Dragnet. What has happened?

We had the disaster with respect to the surveillance by the SOCU; we had the jail problem; we have CANU being investigated for being in bed with a drug lord. All of these entities were supposed to be playing an integral and cohesive role to keep the Operation Dragnet moving. How could it happen if these are in total chaos? It has fallen apart. Operation Dragnet, we were told, was going to be a panacea for solving the crime situation in Guyana.

*9.48 p.m.*

Operation Dragnet is to last up to the end of the 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. Life has shown that Operation Dragnet had been a total disaster. It is not working it; it is not effective; it is a horrible initiative.

I have here with me the APNU/AFC manifesto. In section 7, dealing with “Crime Reduction, Personal Public and Territorial Security this is what it states:

“The APNU/AFC will:

**Develop a comprehensive public security plan.** It will appoint a specialised committee to include national stakeholders and supported as appropriate by external agencies with the objective of developing a comprehensive public security plan for early implementation which identify the main causes of violent crimes and escalating crimes in Guyana and the mechanisms for the prevention.”

It is another unfulfilled promise. It has not happened. I understand that there is an ideas committee at the Ministry of the Presidency. This ideas committee is constantly churning up ideas after ideas after ideas, so much so that they are tripping over each other. One idea is replacing another idea. The strategy has replaced the... or I should say the Operation Dragnet has replaced the anti-crime strategy. We are going on and on and in the meantime it is costing lives. I dare anyone from that side of the House to, in any convincing manner, tell us that the whole confusion in the camp on this question. There is no cohesion and there is competition as to who has the better ideas to fight crime. We know that. There is big competition among those who claim they know the solution which is the best one to put forward. I wish them well, Mr. Speaker, but I can tell you this, with due respect, that if that situation continues the country will suffer, the nation will suffer and the citizens of this country will suffer. It is because the ordinary man will begin to ask the normal question: Is that what we voted for? Is this the change? This is the question he would ask: Is that what we put you there for? That is the normal question from the common man and woman when they reach the stage of frustration,

By the way, continuing on this same page, I would not go too much into detail but there were two sections of this document that stopped me. They quoted from a lap-up 2012 report and they obviously had reasons why they chose this section of the report to put it in their manifesto. This is what it says:

“Guyana has the lowest level of trust in the police in the region and this trust has decreased over time. Between 2012 and 2014 trust in the police in Guyana decrease by 10 points on a 0 to 100 scale of 45.8 in 2012 to 35.4 in 2014. The drop has been most steep for those who are identified as Afro-Guyanese.”

The Comrades, on that side of the House, keep harping on the question: We have only been here for one year, what do you want? Every day is a day. It is as in America, every dollar is a dollar. Every single day in this country crimes are being committed with impunity. It appears to me, from all that we are hearing on the other side of the House, on the eastern benches, as I

would call them, that all of this has disappeared. This is no longer the case. This has disappeared overnight by some magical wand, *abracadabra*. We are now supposed to be benefiting from Operation Dragnet but as far as my experience in this sector tells me, reading the tallies as it were, Operation Dragnet is no longer there.

Later on, something else came up. We were told that the Government is actively pursuing the financing or a return, so to speak, of the cooperation with the Government of the United Kingdom to have this security plan. I understand that the people were here; we had an audience with them, I would not deny that, and we told them in no uncertain terms that much ground had been covered already. They told us a lot of interesting things too. You keep looking out for that money and see if you are going to get it. We are now hoping and praying that this plan, which is being drawn up by the olive group, is going to be the be-all and end-all for all over problems in the security sector in Guyana. They have virtually encouraged the people to throw out the Capita-Symonds Group's plan. We are reinventing the wheel once more. Why? It is because the Capita-Symonds Group's plan came from the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and we do not want anything associated with the PPP. We want to start all over again. It is as in the olden days, in the cinemas, when you would have gone into the cinema late and people start shouting "start over". All because they believe that they want to be different.

I have sat in this House, since there has been a change in House where we sit, and I have seen, over and over again, how the Hon. Members, on that side of the House, that on the question of security, seek to write off, almost whimsically, nonchalantly, as if this People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) Government did nothing for Guyana. Twenty-three years has virtually disappeared. Nothing has happened. Now they have arrived – tomorrow is Arrival Day, our friends have arrived - having wiped the slate clean and everything is new.

It is not to say that the Government does not have at its disposal recommendation proposals. The security sector is one of the sectors that have been over studied. Over and over, again, there are series of consultancies, recommendations that were made. They do not have no documents with them. What is it that is preventing this new Cabinet from finding the right course, implementing the appropriate measures through law enforcement policies, in order to ensure that organisations such as those that I had mentioned here earlier...? These public-spirited citizens, these civic organisations, feel that there is a certain level of comfort that as it were *modus vivendi* between the state, between the Government and themselves, in which

they can now go about and propagate that they believe the Government is doing well and they should support them. I believe that is what we would like to see, but it is not going to happen when the 'HYA' Minister told *Berbicians* that he was busy with the jubilee celebrations. What can be more important than going and attending to the people's interests?

The Hon. Prime Minister made a public statement. I believe it was at the National Park. He made a statement at the National Park and I am sure that everybody would have heard it when he said that he believed that the increase in the salaries the public relation was a total disaster. You did it the wrong way. The Hon. Member, on behalf of the Government, had admitted that. By the way at that meeting, this was where the trade unions were gathered on May Day, almost every speaker, including myself spoke, about the crime situation. Every single speaker, save the Prime Minister, of course, representing the Government, expressed his or her concerns about the crime situation in Guyana.

I do not believe that we can dismiss, as a whimsical piece of folly, statements emanating from the organised labour in this country. We do have to agree on everything but how can we dismiss and call people ungrateful. They have a right to demand what is theirs. They are taxpayers. I am speaking about the people in Corentyne. How can you call them ungrateful? [*Interruption from Government Members.*] Apparently the Hon. Member does not understand the English language. I am using the word "you" as a generality, "you" meaning the Government. If he wants to take it personal I cannot help him, but as it is known, the saying, "A guilty conscience needs no accuser."

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, let us all try to be as respectful in our references as we can. Please proceed.

**Mr. Rohee:** It is reckless and irresponsible, and I believe to a larger extent denigrated to deem residents in Corentyne as ungrateful. Why are you calling them ungrateful? Is it because they are being unreasonable in their demands? Who determines what is unreasonable or not? If the people do not feel a sense of satisfaction... [**An Hon. Member (Government):** Come on, what are you talking about carrying on?]

*10.03 p.m.*

If the people in the Corentyne feel upset and offended, if the people feel that their cases are not being fulfilled, that is their right. Are we saying that the people - the taxpayers, the

farmers and all these people - do not have a right to make a call on a force that is there to provide service and protection? Is that what we are saying? I hope not.

As I said in my original comment, when the motion was introduced, attending *wake houses* of people who have been murdered, who have had damage to their properties and who have been affected by serious crimes is the human side of this problem. It is the human side go and listen to these people about how they are affected.

There are some politicians who were elevated to Ministerial and Vice-Presidential positions and this happens worldwide, I am not saying that this is peculiar to Guyana, who eventually becomes so *governmentalist* that they develop a distance between themselves and the people.

When one listens to the individuals speaking at these *wakes houses*, funerals, *et cetera*, one gets a very good sense of the human side in respect of these crimes that have been committed.

Mr. Speaker, every life counts. Relatively speaking, we have a small population. The loss of life for a family, as a result of a crime committed, is a loss in the national inventory of public life.

When the farmer and his wife were killed on the East Bank Essequibo, they were some of the major rice farmers in the community and now they had been wiped off of the map of Guyana. This will have an impact on the rice industry. Their existence was critical to the survival of the rice industry in that community. Those are the human and economic sides. So we cannot look only at this subject in respect of how much resources we are making available to law enforcement, whether they are properly equipped, *et cetera*. What about the human side? The human side can only be felt when one touches the people who are affected.

The businessman or the businessmen that were killed in the shops in the communities provided a service to those communities. When their lives are wiped out the whole village goes into mourning. It may very well be that that businessman has now left a wife and two or three children to fend for themselves. That is the human side to it. What about the children; what about the single parents; what about when the business is affected and the others who have inherited it are not in a position to run the business? The business closes down.

I want to submit that when we are discussing the crime situation in this country that we also look at the human side and not only at the law enforcement side.

I want to refer to the motion. The motion calls on the Government to immediately report to the House, and this is put in this formalistic way because we are talking about “a report”, not the Minister standing, haranguing and trying to convince us with Governmental arguments. We want a comprehensive report. We do not use the word comprehensive, but I submit, most respectfully, that we put it in this formal way, which by implication means and could be interpreted to mean that the Hon. Minister is asked to submit a formal report to this House on the measures that are being taken to bring the escalating crime situation under control and to provide a safe and secure environment for our citizens.

I believe that it would be counter-productive. We will listen to what the Minister has to say but not withstanding what he might say, and we can anticipate what he will say in defence of the Administration. In addition to what he will say would require a printed document, elucidating on the measures, vis-à-vis, a report on what the Government is doing. We do not want a propaganda document. I see Mr. Nagamootoo is speaking to his Colleague. We know what a propaganda document is, Mr. Nagamootoo. I hope that this exercise is not used by the Administration for political propagandistic purposes. I know that they will be tempted to do so.

I know that when Mr. Ramjattan speaks, the Hon. Prime Minister would be listening very attentively to see what *sound bites* could be used for tomorrow’s media. We have been in the business for years. We know that it will be used to signal to the Diaspora that is expected to come in floods to Guyana, to say that the Hon. Minister of Public Security has spoken and things are *honky tonk* in Guyana. In today’s world of information and misinformation...  
[Mr. Nagamootoo: That makes you angry, right?]            No, it does not make me angry. My skin is thick enough not to be angry over such petty nonsense.

We need to be careful that we do not translate. If you translate your view then it is quite natural and obvious that we will translate our view. Then the Diaspora will be fed with a diet on how the two sides see this question in Guyana. That is a reality that the Government will have to face. They will not get one view, they will get the other view and the other view is always important.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleading, not begging, for a commitment to be made under your watch, for the Oversight Committee on National Security and on Public Safety and Security to be established. What is holding this up? What is the mystery behind this Oversight

Committee not being established? Mr. Speaker, with due respect, I think it would be a total waste of time for us to be told that, on one hand the Government is talking about bi-partisan support on the fight against crime because it cannot be done otherwise.

If the Hon. Minister of Public Security feels that he is competent enough to be the bad man, as he calls himself in Berbice and the *HYA* Minister to solve these issues, then I am sorry, it will not happen, neither will your colleagues ensconced at the Ministry of the Presidency who are experts on this question. Alone it will not happen. In the same way we had said that the police alone would not be able to solve this problem. The police have admitted that they alone cannot solve this problem. That is why I referred to what was in this manifesto with respect to the broad-based committee.

In my view, the broad-based committee, looked at in the context of the Parliament, is the Parliamentary Oversight Committee. But if we want to go, as Ms. Tuchman said in *The March of Folly* believing that we have all the answers, believing that we know it all and believing that we are in the Government and, therefore, we have information at our disposal to solve all of these problems, then at some point in time, the Government will face the same situation that we faced. I rest my case. Thank you. *[Applause]*

**Vice-President and Minister of Public Security [Mr. Ramjattan]:** Mr. Speaker, let me preamble my rebuttal to inform this honourable House that we on this side are also very concerned about crime, especially serious crimes.

We too grieve for those deaths that have been the result of robberies, murders of whatever type –disorderly, for the sake of wanting properties, killing of mothers and fathers. Whatever it was or whatever it is, we too grieve. Our hearts bleed over here too. It is important to understand that, we over here have tremendous concerns. These concerns were not as a result of just being in Government, it was a long time there while we were on the opposite side. While on the opposite side we were seeing crimes skyrocketing all across this country. Being a Minister today, we are doing all that is possible and all that can be done under the circumstances and we are having tremendous results.

At the beginning of the speech that was just delivered, the Member tried to give the impression that we would come with statistics and that the statistics should not be believed because those statistics would be used as political footballs.



Statistics will also give us what the actual happenings on the ground are.

10.18 p.m.

Knowing very well that he has been someone who knows the statistics, the Hon. Member Mr. Rohee could not have done better but to start eroding the credibility and reliability of Guyana. That is why he started the way he did. I have circulated to the statistics to the press, I have given the Hon. Member the copies and I think that I had given copies some of the Members on this side. I will make some more copies and give to the other Members.

I want to say that I am glad to hear from Mr. Rohee that perception does not lie. Not so long ago, when it was said that there was pervasive corruption under his regime, they had screamed that not true and that it is only perception. Then he had asked the question where was the evidence and pronounced had it “e-vi-dence”. He would scream. Now he says statistics lie. Why? Because the number of crimes cannot be compared to that which under the PPP regime...

Mr. Rohee tries to highlight sensational casino crimes. I want to measure it because he used political football on me. He forgot about the massacres of Buxton, Lusignan, Bartica and Lindo Creek. That Administration, which I was part of then and had been opposing from inside, had been using Roger Khan to stop crime, have now come here to lecture to us about crime.

What were more terrifying than drive-by shootings? Even the police had to take cover. There were all those extra-judicial killings, which President Granger have complied in a *dossier*, by the drug lords who had been, in a sense, covered by them over there, some working for them.

Mr. Speaker, we have the answer and in keeping with the manifesto that was read from that there were the very two points because there are about 25 other points. I want to tell the Hon. Member that, indeed, we had 25 points in there or thereabout. Trust in the law enforcement was the lowest when we got in Office in May last year. It is improving now and the Opposition cannot deny that. It is because of that trust being regained that we have a huge set of members of the community coming forward with information, evidence, witness statements, and all of that, so that we can solve the crimes.

It cannot be denied that, today, we are in a far superior position in relation to crime solving. That is what the statistics are saying. If the Hon. Member does not like the statistics, then what is it? Look at where the country was on the graphs that were done. The figures are coming right down to 199, literally. The figures that we had some time ago were 373, 341 and 311 per a month. We must appreciate that. Do not play political football with the statistics. That is what you want.

I want to give some more statistics in relation to what happened from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Last year, up to the 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2015, we had 55 murders, we now have 50 murders. It is not something to be proud of, but there are five less murders or -9%. We had 14 cases of robberies during that period last year we now have 23 cases robberies this year. That is indeed a 64% increase. There were robberies where fire arms were used. Last year there were 206 such cases during that period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> April, this year there are 188 cases. There is a -9% decrease. Robbery-under-arms with other instruments and firearms - last year there were 120 cases, this year there were 111 cases or -8%. Robbery with violence – there were 45 cases last year, there are 28 cases this year or -38%. Robbery with aggravation – there were 32 cases last year, there are 20 cases this year, which is a 38% drop. Larceny from person - last year there were 85 cases during that period, for this year, there were 37 cases or a 56% drop. Rape – this was statutorily regarded under two categories and this was a classification that was made about five years ago. Statutorily there were 81 cases, this year there are 63 cases. For the forcible there were 23 cases, this year there are 22 cases. For burglary there were 84 cases then, to date there are 72 cases. Break and enter and larceny - last year there were 560 cases there are 437 for this year. The total of serious crimes from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 as against 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016 was 1305 last year and 1051 this year. That is why the statistics was out there, -19% as against last year. It was less.

By the way, let me mention the hotel. The hoteliers had indicated that they had their own security. Although, as it happened, the police went there on time and had manage to capture one person and investigations had led to the capture of two others with moneys that were wet. It shows that the police force is doing something. The hoteliers had indicated that they had their special security and that they have a certain lock off system in place. They have even gotten a British expert, as I understand, that helps them with their security on a daily basis. Well, crime is like that and especially when one does not have a lock and key for when there

are inside jobs being done. That is what happened here. A lot of inside jobs are happening all across. That is why the Commissioner of Police is begging a lot of the business men, big farmers, *et cetera* to go plastic. Why walk with \$5 million as the individual at No. 43 Village had done? Why is it that they are not using cheques? [*Interruption*] [Ms. Manickchand: Blame the victim.] I am not blaming the victim, but if there is a problem, I am saying that it is important. They do not want to because they might very well be other reasons why.

It is not blaming the victims. It is creating the conditions for something that will bring a solution to the crime situation. If you know what Mr. Rohee knew all the time, even while your Administration was in Government a year ago and was asking the question why not. It is a lot of money. That is also one of the contributing causes for the crimes. [Ms. Manickchand: That was a family matter.] That is true.

We also want to make this point. I got a little distracted there. But this trust between the police and the community is very important. We have to start building that trust. That trust has come around because of a number of activities that the Commissioner has gone and done. The trust also has to do with letting the police have a certain comfort level. We know that their salaries are not the best, but that is as a result of our difficult economic times. I have been pleading with the Minister, but the Minister has indicated that he had to put \$21 billion in the sugar industry since the year began and that he has no money to put into the Guyana Police Force, other than that which was allocated. We have to understand that they are lots of priorities where the moneys must go to. But we are trying.

With all of that, the Commissioner and I, since the Government took office, have establish a number of things that are helping in the communities that also reflect unto the Guyana Police Force and that has increase that trust. The establishment into the Suicide Help Line Office; the establishment of a Fallen Hero's Foundation - when persons died their families are given some moneys; the establishment of the Occupational Health and Safety Unit; decentralisation of the Mounted Branch to Lethem - and it has being proving to be a very worthwhile venture; social crime prevention projects in all Divisions - Mr. Mansell, Mr. Hickens - who is one of the best, Mr. Amsterdam, Mr. Griffith and every one of them. They are doing very well - job opportunities, careers, then there are the projects - the social mentorship projects, they have a whole lot of things going, even allowing a number of schools get projects done for them.

We also see that even the libraries are being filled up with books in Division D. Mr. Mansell did that. All of this helps in that regard. So, it is important that this be understood and that is what we are going to continue to do.

The establishment of the Divisional Based Management Information Unit; the movement of Divisional F Headquarters to Bartica. Why should the Division F that is regarded as heading the interior locations be in Georgetown? We sent it to Bartica. The Divisional F Commander is in Bartica. Very important for their comfort level too is the establishment of a group health insurance with the Guyana & Trinidad Mutual Fire & Life Insurance Companies (GTM). All of this helps. It is important then to understand that we are doing what we have to do in relation to raising the comfort levels.

As regard to local and international experts, as mentioned in our manifesto, yes, indeed, we have done that. The Private Sector Commission (PSC) did give me a huge document as to how to help. We are incorporating a lot of what they have in that document in our operational plans and even in our strategic plans. Also, the international experts who are helping out as to what is required, like the British Security Sector Reform - the Olive Group, we are going to incorporate lots of what they have to say. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in relation to the Smart City Project had experts that are saying this it was something that should be done and that they were going to spend some moneys there. The IDB has a certain procedure about it. One just cannot go there and cambiarse the city, as Mr. Rohee wants... **[Interruption]** I said that that is a project because the Opposition wants our strategy. We have four or five more years to go, it is not a one year thing, understand that.

For this IDB project it is going to mean that we will have to go to some countries to see how best to deal with this issue. The Project Execution Unit has already been established and is now consulting with the IDB as to which experts would come in and how best to ensure that we have a city that will be totally videoed and a command centre with enough cameras that would allow us to literally see the entire city. I have made mention of this. It is a very costly project. It will come up to about US\$2 or US\$3 million, but we have to try as best as possible to see that project.

*10.33 p.m.*

It will take some time. I would like for it to happen very quickly, but the procedures in relation to disbursements, the procedures in relation to deigns... It will not happen

immediately. We are incorporating local people's advice and international experts' advice on the issues.

A lot is being said that we are 'ungrateful'. I did not use that word against the Berbice Chamber of Commerce. We will never be ungrateful to whatever ideas are forthcoming - not Ramjattan. [Mr. Rohee: *Inaudible*] tell the police they should be [*inaudible*] I have indicated that to them but, in any event, that is their opinion. You have an opinion and you could always express it. But if a certain branch of the Police Force wants to express itself, it can do so just as the Berbice Chamber of Commerce has a right to freedom of expression.

I could not understand their feral blast when they asked. I will read the letter to you.

"Dear Mr. Ramjattan,

The Executive and Members of the Central Corentyne Chamber of Commerce kindly request a meeting with you at a mutually convenient time to discuss the prevailing crime situation."

They asked me for a mutually convenient time to meet them. I then indicated to them:

"I am going to be available only after the jubilee celebrations to meet because I am busy in relation to that.

I hope you appreciate my unavailability. In the meantime, could you kindly... "

[Hon. Member: Are you busy?] Of course I am busy. It is important that it be understood that 'mutually convenient' seem to have a certain meaning for the Hon. Member, Mr. Rohee, but it is clearly a case where it did not require all of that. I will respect the views of the Commerce. It became very angry and the trouble was that 'mutually convenient', for me, I felt that the Commerce was going to accept my explanation on my unavailability but it did not. That is fine. If the Commerce feels that that is the response it will give me, then I will accept it. As soon as I am available, after the jubilee celebration, I will be there. When there was the spike in Berbice, the Commerce called and I was there in 24 hours and, within those 24 hours, we managed to get the joint operation Forces right down in Berbice. We also got the piracy issue under control. We do not hear about pirate attacks in Berbice. The point is that we have responded to them.

The crime rate, as against when we took office, has been reduced almost by 27% in Berbice. I have to concentrate my efforts, generally, in Georgetown especially because of the jubilee celebrations because 57% of the crimes, nationally, are committed in Georgetown. It is important. [Hon. Member: So you want to abandon Berbice.] It is not that we want to abandon Berbice; it is simply that there are certain times and, in the arrangement of that time, I did... There was a time when Berbicians used to call on Mr. Rohee, Mr. Gajraj and others and they never went. I was part of the call, too, and they never used to go. What I am saying is that I have an important activity to attend to that is especially important to me, and that is it. [Interruption]

The Opposition Members seem not to like what I am saying. They are saying that we must not talk about vehicles, the fixed establishment or budgetary allocation; these things will not solve crime. With all that Mr. Rohee mentioned, he did not say what it is that has to be done. They used to read the book by Lenin, *What Is To Be Done*, but they do not know what is to be done now. What is required, as part of the deal, is to ensure that the establishment's strength is fulfilled. The actual strength now is 3,862 ranks and the establishment's strength is 4,956 ranks. When I got into the Administration, it was 3,400 ranks. We have managed to hire 424 more ranks into the Police Force. We are about 1,000 short. The positions need to be filled and we have been pleading... I, personally, pleaded with them the last time I went to Berbice to join the Police Force. They did not. We opened the Hogstye Adventure...hardly. Especially that side going up to Skeldon and central Corentyne, they seem not to want to help. There is better help in Georgetown and I am very happy. It is important that we get the actual strength.

We also have seen that there have been a number of international training programmes conducted where I have ensured that not one is bypassed. Cabinet, I am so proud to say, has literally met all of them to ensure that the ranks go overseas for training - training in terrorism and intelligence gathering, state crime scene investigations, course for prosecutors, investigators course in forensic video analysis, leadership seminar in relation to subordinate officers and inspectors and women leadership, immigration border awareness training, *et cetera*. The list of all the training programmes that the officers have gone to is here. It has created a huge amount of comfort level. If the Hon. Member wants, I can give him the names of all who have travelled to attend the training programmes. It is more than 100 officers and there are 20 of them who will be attending a four or five-month training in China. It is important that all of this be understood as to what we are doing.

In relation to crime reduction, there must be a strong Criminal Investigation Department (CID) component and that is what we are emphasising as part of the five-point strategy. The resources we have put in as one of the five-point strategies have to do with vehicles and improving the 911.

We felt that the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company (GTT) would make the provision for the platform but it has not. Digicel has now come forward and we are going to use Digicel. I have gotten the green light to do that but it is costing a huge set of moneys. We might very well have to come for a supplementary allocation and I hope that you will approve it. In any event, that is an important issue because I, sometimes, am ashamed when a police station is called and there is no response. Emergencies are not... We need to strengthen that. It is an inheritance and it needs to be strengthened. It was terribly bad and we are going to solve that through Digicel creating a platform. I am very impressed with Digicel's project proposal and it will require lots of moneys but is something I will definitely pursue.

The important thing is not only that as a technological platform, but we must have vehicles and that is why, last year, in the half-year Budget, we provided for 28 vehicles. Because of the long process that it has to go through, such as the evaluation committee for all of the tenderers and a number of other delays, that caused it not to come through. It has now been cleared up and there are 11 vehicles coming as of today. Those vehicles will be distributed across the division. There are 17 vehicles more outstanding and we will get those. This year's Budget, too, provided for another 30 vehicles and so we will get that when that process is concluded. We had asked the Permanent Secretary (PS) to ensure that the process be fast-tracked but she said that it could not since it has to go through the stages – evaluation, NPTAB, Cabinet. Democracy is full of bureaucracy. We feel that it is a good initiative and it will happen.

Our country has a lot of ways that moneys have to be allocated. One of those is to bail out the sugar industry and we are doing that. It is important that we do not play political football with the statistics; we must never do that. When there are certain people who are coming to our assistance and realising what we have been doing, like the British security experts when they were told what the statistics were; they were very impressed... They said that those were some of the things that had to be done. The policemen must have a certain comfort level and there should be no interference with their operational matters. If the workings of the present administration within the Police Force will do certain things, even though, sometimes, I find

it very strange, it must be allowed. When there is interference, then it becomes a slippery slope. Then it can result in a lot of things going wrong and confidence levels being wiped out.

We feel that it is important that we do community level projects. That is why great emphasis is being placed on community policing. The community policing must not only do enforcement work, like driving around in vehicles. The Hon. Member, Mr. Rohee, was correct; it must not be exclusively law enforcement. It must include the human side and the community side and what they are doing to enhance their capacities to identify where the culprits are coming from. The criminals are coming from the communities. This is the literature on it. When there are dysfunctional families, there will be dysfunctional youths and the economy being not as best as we would want it; that can also play a role. It is important that communities are touched and not by giving them a helmet, a suit and a pickup to drive around. A huge amount of training will be done to allow them to be in a position to diagnose the crime phenomena so that they will be better able to help the police to identify... We want them to bring out a greater confidence level in giving information to the police. That is why I was criticised by the Berbice Chamber of Commerce for taking a hard mile on the police. There are some rogue elements in the Police Force that dented the communities' confidence in the Police Force. We have to ensure that the rogue elements are cut. That is what we have been doing. A lot of them have been brought to book under the police Act and regulations, some have been summarily dismissed and some have been charged.

*10.48 p.m.*

We also have to create multi-sector domestic violence protocols in relation to domestic violence because inside of that has a huge potential for crime from the young people who are in that household and also even the adults. There was a very high crime rate that has fallen. We have to ensure that, at the community level, all the parents in the community ensure that the children go to school. That is why a set of young people get into wandering, truancy and all manner of misbehaviour, some of which are criminalised. I am in the process of addressing the Juvenile Justice Bill, trying to get those decriminalised because I think psychological and socioeconomic conditions create those kinds of behaviours. We should not be jailing them or sending them to the school in Essequibo. No.

We also want to strengthen a local diagnostic survey on the crime situation in localities. Every community should have a local diagnostics survey and we are enhancing the Divisional Commanders of Police with that capacity to do that, so that, in his office, there



will be a place that will have all the information about the members of the community - who are the “Bad Johns” - and we will have an eye on them. It is very important that we do that but also the community will be helping.

Of course, as I said, we have to start giving a comfort level to the places where these policemen have to exist. That is why almost 28 police stations, 18 under the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) project, will be repaired and another 10 under our budgetary allocation will be rehabilitated. Of course, we have to get the designs because a lot of the IDB officials have been saying that we should get a uniform design for their comfort levels and we have to get some experts to do that, but those police stations around the country that are in real bad shape are going to be rehabilitated.

This capacity building at the community level and implementing your local crime and violence prevention solution are very important for us. We are not only talking about law enforcement; we are also talking about what Hon. Member Mr. Rohee described as the human side of it all. These social projects at the community level are playing a big role. When the young people now have a broader horizon as to what it is that they can be when they grow up, we are going to help in that regard, and it helps them. A big portion of the project in the IDB and the British security sector has to do with how many recreational centres we must establish in each community. It is not only that we are going to train them there. Are we going to get sports and things at the community level? We are redoing all the cricket grounds in Berbice, ensuring that all are playable, getting gears for them, redoing volleyball courts and, if there is a structure nearby, converting that structure into a library with some resources so that we can have them becoming computer literate, reading more and so on. This is a very important part of the strategy and so it is important that we do have all of these implemented. They are not going to happen overnight. They are going to happen after some time but the immediate problem, which is to give the Criminal Investigative Department (CID) better comfort levels, has been done. That is why you would see, in the graph in relation to May, 2015 to April, 2016, it is going right down to the extent that we are 19% less in this quarter or a little more. It is important that we understand that. So, we must not play political football with statistics.

I want to comment on the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on the Security Sector that was mentioned just now by the Hon. Member. [Hon. Member: You have not called a meeting.] I have not called a meeting. That is true, but it is probably because I am taking

a guide from Mr. Rohee. In three years in the Tenth Parliament, he never called one. He never convened any meeting. He never called a meeting and I have the record. I will call a meeting soon. I want to say this: I have been speaking to Mr. Rohee because I want to do three things, which are very important, before I call a meeting. Due to a whole lot of other interruptions, I did not. I want to complete the drugs master plan and a lot of what Mr. Rohee did in his early years have been incorporated there. I also want to complete the trafficking in persons master plan. Mr. Rohee has given some excellent ideas, recently, and I have incorporated them. I want to finish off the Special Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) protocols and I am going to ensure that that be completed and then we will convene the meeting. There are two or three other things that I have spoken to the Hon. Members, Ms. Teixeira and Mr. Rohee, about and we are going to have that meeting. Please, they must not give the wrong impression to the public out there. He had three years and did not convene one. So, please understand that.

It is important too that we pay heed to the fact that sometimes the press blows issues up. The press is very important in this country. The press has indicated that there seems to be an extremely high spike in the crime rate. I have given them the statistics but somehow some members of the press, like the former Hon. Minister, seem not to believe it. What has happened, and I will concede, is there is a tremendous increase in the brutality about some of these crimes. I will be very frank with you. At this stage, I have not gone through the studies and the literature as to what is causing that, but there has to be some study. To just go and take fire and burn two old people that were involved in the rice industry, as Mr. Rohee mentioned...what can be in the minds of these people? But it has happened. When someone has arranged for someone to murder her father and somebody in Skeldon arranged to murder her husband in such a brutal manner... **[Hon Member:** And on hire purchase.] And on hire purchase, yes. We must all be concerned about this. There is a heightened cruelty, brutality and reprehensibility about the whole thing that really stuns me too and we, altogether, will have to work to solve these problems. I know I can ask Mr. Ganga Persaud because he has written a lot about these things. I have his reports and his report is also indicating again... **[Mr. Williams:** Are you paying him?] It requires money because it is a lot of money. We have to pay him. So it is important that we understand the crime situation in the context of what we have today. **[Ms. Manickchand:** Blame the press.] We are not blaming the press but we are saying that, sometimes, what is stated on front page headlines occur with the senses and damaged sensibility.

The other important point I want to make has to do with the advisory. This is, again, to rebut some of the political footballing of the Hon. Member. The Canadians have always indicated, in an advisory a long time ago and even today, that Guyana exercises a high degree of caution.

“There is no nationwide advisory in effect in Guyana. However, you should exercise a high degree of caution due to high crime rates.”

If you go to Trinidad and Tobago, it is the same thing.

“Trinidad and Tobago exercises a high degree of caution. There is no national advisory in effect. However, you should exercise a high degree of caution due to a high crime rate in Trinidad.”

That is what they do. If one goes to Jamaica, Jamaica is the same thing. Barbados is a little different. Please understand the argument because that is why when I asked the Canadian High Commissioner if there were anything exceptional because we are bringing the crime rate down, he said: “No. There is absolutely nothing exceptional. It is because we have a duty to advise our citizens.” Then he gave me a website and I went in there and I found the same thing. A lot of countries in the Caribbean face the identical situation. All of them are like that. Barbados is the one that is better because the crime rates in Barbados are very low. The whole point that I am making is that we have crime contained and controlled and are doing our best to get it even better. It requires more resources; it requires better recruits into the Police Force and, if bodies like the Berbice Chamber of Commerce can help me with that, then fine. We also want to ensure that there are more moneys given to the policemen so that they can have their comfort but we will have to skirt around with things like house lots and things like those to help them. We are doing our best in identifying these other things.

What the Commissioner of Police, especially, has done for the Fallen Heroes Foundation and all of those, has helped. That is why the Police Force, in its remarks, trying to counter the Berbice Chamber of Commerce, came out like that. It is important. We have the plan; we have the strategy and we have the execution process now. One very big point of it is that we are not interfering. They told me that big political interference was there prior to May, 2015, in the entire administration of the Police Force. Do you want me to name them? There is Mr. Seelall, Mr. Benham...all of them indicated that there was too much political interference and it has stopped now under this Administration. That is why they are doing a great job. We are

going to do it and we are going to ensure it be done. You interfered so much, Hon. Member Mr. Rohee, that we sent back the British to London. That is what you did. [Hon. Member: And then told them the Government did not get the money.] Yes, he wanted the money. We have managed, through President Granger, to ensure that the British are back. The British are back through a group called the Olive Group and they are going to ensure that we make all of it.

In relation to trafficking in persons, we are going to the have the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) come. INTERPOL was here; it came in and it is doing a basic needs assessment study, the drug enforcement agency which was kept at bay for such a long time by that Opposition when it was in Government. INTERPOL is giving us as much support as possible. But, of course, crime in a society like Guyana, which has been up and up for a long time now, is not going to be reduced drastically overnight. A lot of things have to be done and a lot of things are being done.

*11.03 p.m.*

Mr. Speaker, I now come to an end by saying that we cannot support this motion on two grounds: one, because the statistics are wrong. I remember reading part of the document sent to me by Mr. Sherlock Isaacs that they were saying that crime rates are so high. Well, I wanted to make it clear that that is a basis that is wrong; it is going down but it is still high. We are not saying that it is not high, but it is far lower than what we had just before we took office. [Ms. Manickchand: Is five far lower?] It is 19% less.

The motion states:

“WHEREAS the crime situation has reached alarming levels with increasing incidents of violence and brutality;

AND WHEREAS as a result citizens are fearful for their lives...;

AND WHEREAS the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) elections manifesto formulated a twenty-seven (27) point Action Plan “to address the breakdown of law and order...”

BE IT RESOLVED that this National Assembly calls upon the Government to immediately report to the House...”

Well, I think I have reported here on the measures that are being taken to bring the escalating crime situation under control and provide a safe and secure environment. I think I have made my case beyond a reasonable doubt, and I think it is very important that that be understood. I will make the commitment though, because the Hon. Member, Mr. Rohee, is a good friend of mine, that when we convene the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on the Security Sector, I am going to ensure that he gets the written copies of all these master drug strategy plan and all of those and also this, as part of it. Until such time, what I address here will be that which he will have. I wish to take my seat now, Mr. Speaker, and say, in relation to this motion, it should not be supported because it is, obviously, on the wrong end of the action taken.  
*[Applause]*

**Mr. Rohee (replying):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened, with rapt attention, to the Minister and, in speaking, he reminded me of myself when I was sitting on the other side. The same kind of reporting that he is doing is the same kind of reporting that I was obliged to do to the honourable House. So, he was not really speaking there *[inaudible]*. **[Mr. Williams:** Do you have another hour here?] No. Mr. Ramjattan placed a lot of emphasis on statistics. Mr. Speaker, I am sure, in your quiet moment, you will find the time to look at it because I know you have a very sharp mind.

The periodisation of the information that is provided here creates an impression that, indeed, crime is going down, but, when one does the Mathematics, from May to April, 2014 to 2015, there were 3,721 serious crimes and then, from May, 2015 to 2016, there were 3,962 serious crimes. But, if it is done in this clever way in which it was done, all is well; as Mr. Ramjattan said, “*All’s well that ends well.*”

Mr. Speaker, Mark Twain once said:

“There are lies, damned lies, and statistics.”

And I am not repeating this to anyone, Mr. Speaker; I am just quoting the famous Mark Twain. I am not intimating that anyone is lying or anyone made damned lies, but I am just saying that contextualisation of statistics remains a critical factor in critiquing, objectively, what the statistics really mean.

I insist, respectfully, that, if the Hon. Member was to go out there with his numbers and the graph that he just gave us, or even on the television, and he recites what he regaled this

honourable House with, it is not going to be very convincing. So, I am not going to rely heavily on that.

The Hon. Member spoke about building trust. That is what was one of my mantras too, but, when one seeks to demolish the neighbourhood policing, when one seeks to appoint political appointees to be coordinators and when one seeks to rummage the role and responsibilities of these individuals, the degree of demoralisation that creeps into the ranks of these individuals...it is hard to repay the damage when it is already done.

The Hon. Member said, “We are trying,” but I want to insist, very emphatically, that the “trying” is not enough. It is not good to only come with the declaratory statement to say that you are trying because, while you are trying, the criminals are trying out there too, and the criminals are trying to deprive people of life, limb and property. Is that not so, Hon. Member Mr. Felix? You know it well. I wish, again, to emphasise that the National Security Committee (NSC) which, I understand, meets on a weekly basis and which comprises of some Members who are presently seated in this House, which has replaced the Crime Intelligence Committee (CIC), needs to do a much better job. I doubt whether the NSC is doing what it ought to be doing.

The Parliamentary Oversight Committee on the Security Sector, as the Hon. Member pointed out, was never constituted. The Hon. Minister, Mr. Trotman, knows that. I honestly believe that, in the same way that the police cannot do it alone, the same way the Government would not do it alone. This is a universal phenomenon; Governments are usually viewed with suspicion and you are facing that too. So, the comfort level that the Hon. Minister is speaking about can only come about if there is a bipartisan approach with the establishment of the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on the Security Sector.

To close, I disagree with the Hon. Minister. The Minister is the person who has civilian oversight of law enforcement. When the police issues a statement saying that the people are ungrateful, your task, as the Minister, with due respect, is to correct them. You are the ones who are seeking the votes and not the police. The police do not face elections; you do. Therefore, you have to correct them when they make these highly irresponsible and anti-people statements. That is your job as the Minister, and that is what I did.

On the talk about interference, which I keep hearing, from time to time, and the Minister went a step further on this time, in my last speech to the Police Officers’ Conference, I said,

in the presence of all of the senior ranks of the Guyana Police Force - and when I made this remark, I looked straight at the Assistant Commissioner Ramnarine - if there is intrusion and if there is interference in the Guyana Police Force, list the intrusion, list the examples and send them to me. They never did and he never did. That was just a few days before the Elections when that Police Officers' Conference was held.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, this brings an end to our matters for today. We will ask the Hon. Prime Minister to...

**Ms. Teixeira:** Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. Could I seek your indulgence? There is a motion on the floor. Do we not put it to the House? [Mr. Trotman: There is no motion.] Yes, there is a motion. It was given to the Speaker. It was there and that was what the request was. It was read out in the House several hours ago when we started to table it. So, I am just asking, is it not normal that such a motion is put to the House? Thank you.

**Mr. Trotman:** Sir, may I be heard just by way of providing some assistance? Your Honour, when the House has moved to adjourn the House, it is to discuss and not debate. It is to discuss a matter that is urgent, definite and of public importance and that is why no decision is taken at the end; there is no resolution. It is a discussion and not a debate, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member.

Hon. Members, we have reached the end of our business for today. I invite the Prime Minister to move the adjournment.

### **Arrival Day Greetings**

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Before I move the adjournment of the House to the date that I had intimated before, I am cognisant that tomorrow is a national holiday to mark Arrival Day, 2016. On behalf of the Government of Guyana, I would like to convey greetings to all of our people as we celebrate all our indentured immigrants and ancestors' arrival in what was then British Guiana, from all ancestry - Chinese, Portuguese, Indians - people of all ethnicities who have come here as indentured servants. We know that this is the 50<sup>th</sup> year of our country's Independence and, as we observe the Golden Jubilee, we must pay tribute to the hard work, sacrifice and the commitment of our ancestors who have arrived here and we hope that, in the next 50 years, we can say that we are making a fresh start. We are not only

celebrating arrival but knowing that we have arrived and that we can, in fact, turn their dreams and their aspirations into a reality as we become bonded into a free and united Guyanese people.

*11.18 p.m.*

In saying these words, Sir, I would like to wish all Members of Parliament, you, Your Honour, the staff of the Parliament Office, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly and members of the media a happy Arrival Day.

I would like now move that the House be adjourned. Before I do so, Sir, I know the usual procedure. I do not know if someone from the other side would also like to convey felicitations, but I could move the motion and you could decide, at the end of any other contribution, that the House be adjourned to Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 at 1.00 p.m.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Members, I wish only to draw to your attention the happy circumstance which allows me to say that today is the birthday of the Hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure.

**Dr. Anthony:** Mr. Speaker and Members of the Government, first of all, let me join you in wishing Hon. Member Mr. Patterson a happy birthday. On behalf of Members on this side of the House, we would like to also join with the Prime Minister in extending happy Arrival Day greetings to all Guyanese. As the Prime Minister would have said, this is a day when we celebrate the arrival of indentured immigrants to Guyana – Chinese, Portuguese, Europeans and East Indians and a little known fact is that there were also indentured Africans who came to Guyana. That is something that is often overlooked.

Tomorrow is a day, I think, that should give us some time to reflect on the contributions of all those who came before and what they would have done for our country, because without their hard work and their sacrifices we would not have advanced as far as we have done in this country. There is a lot to be proud of. Therefore tomorrow, as we reflect on Arrival Day, let us celebrate all of our ancestors and their contributions.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the House stands adjourned to 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 at 1.00 p.m.

*Adjourned accordingly at 11.22 p.m.*