

National Assembly Debates

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE FIRST SESSION (2001-2002) OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF
GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE
REPUBLIC OF GUYANA**

Part I

28TH SITTING

2.00 PM

Wednesday, 10th July, 2002

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (68)

Speaker (1)

The Hon. Hari N. Ramkarran, S. C., M. P. - Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government - People's Progressive Party/Civic (34)

The Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, M.P.

*-Prime Minister and Minister
of Public Works and Communications*

The Hon. Reepu Daman Persaud, O.R., J.P., M.P.

-Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

The Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P.

*-Minister of Foreign Trade and
International Co-operation*

The Hon. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P.

*-Minister of Local Government
and Regional Development*

The Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P.

*-Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport
(AOL)*

The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P.

-Minister of Education

The Hon. Saisnarine Kowlessar, M.P.

-Minister of Finance

The Hon. Shaik K.Z. Baksh, M.P.

-Minister of Housing and Water

The Hon. Navindranauth O. Chandarpal, M.P.

*-Minister of Agriculture
(Region No. 4-Demerara/Mahaica)*

The Hon. J. Ronald Gajraj, M.P.

*-Minister of Home Affairs
(Region No. 3-Essequibo
Islands/West Demerara)*

The Hon. Rev. Dr. Ramnauth D.A. Bisnauth, M.P.

*-Minister of Labour, Human
Services and Social Security*

The Hon. Clinton C. Collymore, M.P.

-Minister in the Ministry of Local

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The Hon. Satyadeow Sawh, M.P.	<i>Government and Regional Development - Minister of Fisheries, Other Crops and Livestock (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)</i>
*The Hon. S. Rudolph Insanally, O.R., C.C.H., M.P.	<i>- Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Foreign Affairs</i>
*The Hon. Doodnauth Singh, S.C., M.P.	<i>- Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs</i>
The Hon. Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P.	<i>- Minister of the Public Service (Absent)</i>
The Hon. C. Anthony Xavier, M.P.	<i>- Minister of Transport and Hydraulics</i>
The Hon. Bibi S. Shadick, M.P.	<i>- Minister in the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/ West Demerara) (Absent)</i>
**The Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.	<i>- Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce</i>
The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues, M.P.	<i>- Minister of Amerindian Affairs (Absent)</i>
The Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P.	<i>- Minister of Health</i>
Mr S. Feroze Mohamed, M.P.	<i>- Chief Whip</i>
Mr Cyril C. Belgrave, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.	<i>- (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)</i>
Mr. Donald R. Ramotar, M.P.	
Mr Hasman Alli, M.P.	<i>- (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)</i>
Mr. Komal Chand, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.	
Mrs Indranie Chandarpal, M.P.	
Mr Bernard C. DeSantos, S.C., M.P.	<i>- (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent - on leave)</i>
Mrs Shirley V. Edwards, J.P. M.P.	
Mr Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P.	
Mr Heeralall Mohan, M.P.	<i>- (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supernam)</i>
Mr Ramesh C. Rajkumar, M.P.	<i>- (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)</i>
Mr Kumkaran Ramdas, M.P.	
Mr Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.	<i>- (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/ Corentyne)</i>
Dr Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.D., M.P.	
Mrs Philomena Sahoye-Shury, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.	<i>- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Water</i>
Mrs Pauline R. Sukhai, M.P.	<i>- (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)</i>

*Non-Elected Minister

Members of the Opposition (30)

(i) People's National Congress/Reform (27)

Mr. Hugh Desmond Hoyte, S.C., M.P.	- <i>Leader of the Opposition (Absent-On leave)</i>
Mr. Robert H. O. Corbin, M.P.	- <i>(Absent-on leave)(AOL)</i>
Mr. Winston S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Mrs Clarissa S. Riehl, M.P.	- <i>Deputy Speaker of the N.A -(AOL)</i>
Mr E. Lance Carberry, M.P.	- <i>Chief Whip - (AOL)</i>
Mr Ivor Allen, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.2-Pomeroon/Supenaam)-(AOL)</i>
Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Mr. Deryck M.A. Bernard, M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Mr. C. Stanley Ming, M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Mr. Raphael G. C. Trotman, M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Mr Vincent L. Alexander, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.4-Demerara/Mahaica) - (AOL)</i>
Mr. Andy Goveia, M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Dr Dalglish Joseph, M.D., M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Miss Amna Ally, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.5-Mahaica/Berbice) - (AOL)</i>
Miss Sandra M. Adams, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.10-Upper Demerara Berbice) - (AOL)</i>
Mr. Jerome Khan, M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Dr George A. Norton, M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Miss Myrna E. N. Peterkin, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.4-Demerara/Mahaica) - (AOL)</i>
Mr. James K. McAllister, M.P.	- <i>(Region No. 3-Essequibo Islands West Demerara - (AOL)</i>
Miss Lurlene A. Nestor, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.4-Demerara/Mahaica) - (AOL)</i>
Mr Abdul Kadir, J.P., M.P.	- <i>(Region No.10-Upper Demerara/Berbice) - (AOL)</i>
Mr Ricky Khan, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.1-Barima/Waini) - (AOL)</i>
Mrs. R. Bancroft, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.8 - Potaro/Siparuni) - (AOL)</i>
Mr Nasir Ally, J.P., M.P.	- <i>(Region No.6-East Berbice/Corentyne) - (AOL)</i>
Miss Judith David, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.7-Cuyunii/Mazaruni) - (AOL)</i>
Miss Genevieve Allen, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.4-Demerara/Mahaica) - (AOL)</i>

(ii) Guyana Action Party/Working People's Alliance Party (2)

Mrs Sheila V.A. Holder, M.P.	
Mrs Shirley J. Melville, M.P.	- <i>(Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)</i>

(iii) Rise, Organise and Rebuild Party (1)

Mr Ravindra Dev, M.P.

OFFICERS

Mr Sherlock E. Isaacs, *Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly*
(Performing the functions of Clerk of the National Assembly)

Mrs Lilawtie Coonjah, *Principal Assistant Secretary (Finance)*
(Performing the functions of Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly.)

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PRAYERS

The Clerk read the Prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave

Hon. Members, leave has been granted from today's sitting to the Hon. Member Mr Bernard De Santos

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

By the **Minister of Agriculture:**

Annual Reports for the Guyana Sugar Corporation for the years 1999 and 2000.

STATEMENT BY MINISTERS

ATTACK ON THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT ON WEDNESDAY, 3RD JULY, 2002

The Speaker: The Hon. Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation

Hon. Clement J. Rohee: Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to make a statement. Mr Speaker, Wednesday, 3rd July, 2002, marks another dark and dismal day in the history of the People's National Congress, when its organised protestors attacked and stormed the Office of the President's Complex with the clear objective of making an attempt on the life of His Excellency President Bharrat Jagdeo and overthrowing the democratically elected PPP/Civic Government on the same day on which commenced the 23rd Heads of Government Meeting being hosted by Guyana and on which our President was to assume the Chairmanship of CARICOM.

This act and the other acts of violence, resulting in the burning down

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of places, the torching of cars and assaults and robberies and other acts of violence committed on peaceful and law abiding citizens including law enforcement ranks have been wrongly condemned by most citizens and from nearly all sectors of civil society.

The citizens and Government of Guyana also welcome the condemnations by CARICOM Heads and by the Governments of the United States of America, United Kingdom and Canada. The Statements of their commitment to the preservation and protection of democratic government such as Guyana is most welcomed and showed that the era of violence, extra parliamentary behaviour and unconstitutional acts will not be condoned by the international community.

On behalf of law abiding citizens of Guyana, I wish to state our thanks and appreciation to our security forces for thwarting an attempt to overthrow the democratically elected government. *[Applause]* They continue to maintain a high standard of professionalism and the carrying out of their duties under the Constitution.

Mr Speaker, we must also recollect that on May 24, 2002, there was an attempt to blockade Parliament and deny access to those Parliamentarians, who wished to attend and perform the mandate for which they were elected. We have seen that some of the individuals from the PNC/R involved in that disgraceful act were also involved in the illegal marches and the subsequent storming of the Office of the President on July 3, 2002.

These actions clearly illustrate the illegal, un-parliamentary and terroristic behaviour, an intention of certain elements in the PNC/R, which must be wrongly exposed and condemned by the entire country. If the PNC/R is interested in contributing to the good of our democracy and the progress and prosperity of all Guyanese then it must purge itself of such violent and disruptive tendencies. As a first gesture, the PNC/R must return to Parliament to fulfil the mandate of those who voted for that party at the March 2001 General and Regional Elections.

Again, Mr Speaker, I wish to applaud representatives of political

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groups including several prominent PNC/R Members, civil society, the international community, the media and all law abiding Guyanese for condemning and taking a firm stand against Wednesday 3, 2002, acts of domestic terrorism. Thank you. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Member.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

The Speaker: Hon. Members, I omitted to mention that Questions Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 on the Order Paper by the Hon. Member, Mrs Sheila Holder are for written replies and there is one Question on the Supplementary Order Paper, No. 5 by the Hon. Member, Mrs Sheila Holder, which is also for a written reply. The answers, therefore, in accordance with our Standing Order are circulated.

QUESTION NO. 1 - LAND CRUISER - PGG 8042

Has the Forestry Commission ever owned or does it own a Land Cruiser vehicle number plate PGG 8042? If so, how was it utilized in each month between January, 2000 and June 2001?

WRITTEN REPLY submitted by the Minister of Fisheries Crops and Livestock with the responsibility for Forestry:

Yes. The vehicle was acquired by the Guyana Forestry Commission in July 1999. It has been assigned to the Hon. Satyadeow Sawh, M.P., who has been given the responsibility by His Excellency the President for Parliamentary Representation on Forestry, and for all administrative matters involving the Sector and requiring the inputs of the Executive.

QUESTION NO. 2 - FOOD SHORTAGE

Could the Minister say whether any Amerindian villages in Region 8 were seriously affected by food shortages during the years 2001 and 2002, inclusive. If so, please name them?

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WRITTEN REPLY submitted by the Minister of Amerindian Affairs:

There was some degree of food shortage in Region 8 during the year 2001. The communities reportedly affected were Paramakatoi, Kato, Kurukabaru, Waipa, Kamana and Chenapou. No reports on serious food shortage have been received for 2002.

QUESTION NO. 3 - GOLD AND DIAMOND MINERS

WRITTEN REPLIES submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs:

3(i) *How many non-Guyanese miners have received work permits and/or residency permits to operate gold and diamond mines in the interior during each year from 1990 to the present time?*

R(i) Information available from November 20, 1990.

Year	No. of Permits
1990 - November 20 to December, 31	- 44
1991	- 320
1992	- 393
1993	- 203
1994	- 243
1995	- 188
1996	- 253
1997	- 249
1998	- 249
1999	- 225

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2000	-	397
2001	-	984
2002 - up to May 31	-	522

Q(ii) *Can the Minister say how many Non-Guyanese by country are living in Georgetown?*

R(ii) It is not at this time possible for this question to be answered with any satisfactory degree of accuracy since persons change residential addresses without notice to the Ministry of Home Affairs and /or any of its constituent agencies.

Q(iii) *How many Non-Guyanese are engaged in Gold and Diamond mining activities in Regions 7, 8 and 9?*

R(iii) It is not possible to provide accurate and up to date figures in respect to miners in the stated Regions. These miners are in the habit of moving from one area to another as the shouts for gold and diamonds are announced. These are available and approximate figures from GGMC:-

Region 1	-	310
Region 7	-	368
Region 8	-	100
Region 9	-	64

Q(iv) *Are Amerindians consulted before gold and diamond*

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miners are granted work/residency permits to operate in areas contiguous to their villages?

R(iv) Amerindians must give permission through their Captain/ Touchou before a coast lander or non-national enters into a reserved area or reservation. This is also necessary in the case of a possible joint venture involving Amerindian and non-nationals. Yes, there is prior consultation with Amerindians.

Q(v) *How many firearm Licences have been officially issued to Non-Guyanese miners, by country, in possession of Guyanese work permit between 1990 - the present time inclusive?*

R(v)	Brazilians	-	7
	Swedish	-	1
	American	-	2

Q(vi) *How many Americans have applied for a firearm licence and how many firearm licences have been issued to Amerindians specifically and Guyanese in General during the period 1990 - the present time, inclusive?*

R(vi) Two hundred and eighty (280) Amerindians have applied for firearm licences, one hundred and eighteen (118) were granted approval to be issued with firearm licences.

QUESTION NO. 4 - AGRICULTURAL MATTERS - REGIONS NOS. 8 AND 9

Q(i) *Could the Minister provide data on the total area under cultivation and the individual areas for each specific crop under cultivation for the following villages:*

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- Paramakatoi
- Monkey Mountain
- Kato
- Kurukubaru
- Chenpau
- Karisparu
- Wandaik
- Itabac
- Puwa
- Kamana
- Bamboo Landing
- Kopinang and
- *In the Pakaraima areas of Sub-region No 1 Region 8, and in the Takutu areas of Sub-region No 1 Region No. 9?*

WRITTEN REPLIES submitted by the **Minister of Fisheries, Crops and Livestock.**

R(i) In presenting the figures the following must be noted:

1. This is the rainy season and the total acreage is still under cultivation. Therefore, the total cultivated acreage for 2002 including total crop damage and effectiveness of pest control will only be available at the end of the rainy season.

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2. The figures presented for Region 8 are estimates obtained for the 2001 season (attached). Figures for the Takutu areas of Sub-region 1 Region 9 are unavailable. In the Takutu area cassava and peanuts comprise the highest cultivation.

3. The general objective for Hinterland agriculture is to encourage agricultural development in Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 to the extent that production does not exceed ability of producers to dispose of the produce within these areas. This objective is to ensure food security and sustainability. [*See Appendix 1: CULTIVATION OF CROPS*]

Q(ii) Could the Minister say what provision, if any, was made during the years 1995 - 2000 for the eradication of the fern, now sweeping from the South and devastating the fragile indigenous vegetation in the Pakaraimas? If provision was made, what was the expenditure?

R(ii) The fern is secondary growth after the removal of the forest. This growth only takes place in moist conditions. **There was never a complaint to the hinterland unit for the control of the fern.** The farming techniques used in the hinterland aid in the natural control of the fern.

It must be noted that there are two types of fern that are present in the farms. Both types are not problems.

QUESTION NO. 5 - EAST DEMERARA WATER CONSERVANCY

Q(i) In regard to the East Demerara Water Conservancy, what are the responsibilities of:

- The Drainage and Irrigation Board,
- *The Chairman of the Drainage and Irrigation Board?*

R(i) submitted by the **Minister of Agriculture:**

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- **The Drainage and Irrigation Board has no responsibility. All duties and responsibilities are vested in the East Demerara Water Conservancy Board.**

- The Chairman of the Drainage and Irrigation Board has no legal responsibility in regard to the East Demerara Water Conservancy.

Q(ii) How many embankment failures occurred at the East Demerara Water Conservancy during the period 1990 to the present time, inclusive?

R(ii) Three major embankment failures occurred in 2000 at Lusignan, Hope and Maduni and one in 2001 at La Bonne Mere.

Q(iii) How much water was lost during these failures?

R(iii) No determination was made on the amount of water lost during these breaches in the dam.

Q(iv) What was the value of the damage done to the affected communities on each occasion there was an embankment failure and which communities were affected?

R(iv) Following the La Bonne Mere breach, the Cane Grove area was affected and the Government expended approximately \$20 million as compensation to residents. The Maduni breach resulted in no community being affected. The breaches at Lusignan and Hope caused some discomfort to the affected villages and their environs due to the flooding but no survey was carried out to determine the amount of losses suffered by residents.

Q(v) What were the costs of the corrective works carried out

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on each occasion there was an embankment failure?

R(v) The cost of corrective works to breaches at Maduni and Lusignan were \$31.4 million and \$18.0 million respectively. Repairs at Hope and La Bonne Mere were carried out within the existing contracts for works on the East Demerara Water Conservancy.

Q(vi) *What is the annual maintenance budget of the East Demerara Water Conservancy?*

R(vi) This varies annually depending on the amount of maintenance to be carried out during the year. However, the figures for 2001 and 2002 are approximately \$30.0 and \$31.0 million respectively

Q(vii) *Which Consultancy Engineering and Civil Engineering Contracting Companies were engaged to do rehabilitation, maintenance and remedial works on the East Demerara Water Conservancy Dam during the period 1980 to the present time inclusive?*

R(viii) No consultancy firm was engaged during this period. The contracting firm, B.K. International Inc. was engaged to carry out rehabilitation work on the East Demerara Water Conservancy.

Q(viii) *What were the costs to the Government Treasury for the services provided by Civil Engineering and Consulting Companies for rehabilitation, maintenance and remedial works done for the same period?*

R(viii) The cost of the works carried out under contract on the

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East Demerara Water Conservancy and funded by the Inter-American Development Bank is \$452.7 million.

Q(ix) *In the tendering process employed for the award of technical and contracting works done on the East Demerara Water Conservancy Dam, was the policy of awarding contracts to the lowest bidder employed?*

R(ix) The lowest responsive bid was awarded the contracts and these awards were concurred by the Inter-American Development Bank.

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

The Speaker: The Hon. Member, Mr Ravi Dev.

Mr Ravi Dev: Mr Speaker, I rise for leave to move the adjournment of this Assembly to discuss the following matter, which is of most urgent public importance for us to address the circumstances leading to, and the Protest March of July 2, 2002, wherein the Presidential Compound was stormed, numerous citizens primarily of Indian origin were assaulted and robbed and several businesses were burnt.

Mr Speaker, the Minister has spoken about some aspects of what I would like to discuss. I do believe that we need to have a fuller discussion. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Member.

Hon. Members, I have had notification of the request by the Hon. Member and I have considered the claim and I am satisfied that the

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matter qualifies as one which may properly be raised on a motion for the adjournment of the Assembly. Since the leave of the Assembly is required, I will now seek such leave. Those in favour say 'Aye', those against say 'no'. *[Pause]* I didn't hear anything.

Those in favour say 'Aye', those against say 'no'. The Ayes have it. The motion will therefore, in accordance with the Standing Orders, stand over until 4.30 p.m.

Motion put and carried

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

The Speaker: Hon. Members there are two Motions on the Order Paper in the name of the Hon. Member, Mrs Sheila Holder dealing with the supply of electricity. There is an amendment to the Motion submitted by the Hon. Prime Minister and copies have been circulated. I understand that the mover of the original motion has agreed to the Prime Minister's Amendment. If that is so, the Motion which we would be considering is in the amended form.

1. ACCESS TO THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE

WHEREAS many citizens of Guyana, with great sacrifice, acquire title to land for their domestic security or as an economic investment; and

WHEREAS immovable property can be fraudulently transferred by means of forgery of documents or false claims; and

WHEREAS all such dealings in land are required to be advertised in the Official Gazette which, although published weekly,

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is not easily accessible to the general public who are likely to be affected by any fraudulent transactions.

BE IT RESOLVED that this National Assembly urge the administration to take immediate steps to ensure that the public have easy, timely and unhindered access to the Gazette at all Post Offices, Magistrates Courts and other public Places and by purchase from governmental agencies and bookstores.

The Hon. Member, Mrs Sheila Holder. I need to remind you that you need a seconder after you move the motion.

Mrs Sheila V. A. Holder: Mr Speaker, I rise to move the Motion pertaining to the Access to the Official Gazette.

Whereas many citizens of Guyana, with great sacrifice acquire title to land for their domestic security or as an economic investment; and ~~whereas~~ immovable property can be fraudulently transferred by means of forgery of documents or false claims; and whereas all such dealings in land are required to be advertised in the Official Gazette, which although published weekly, is not easily accessible to the general public who are likely to be affected by any fraudulent transactions. Be it resolved that this National Assembly urge the Administration to take immediate steps to ensure that the public have easy, timely and unhindered access to the Gazette at Post Offices where ever possible, Regional Offices, Magistrates Courts and other public places and by purchase from government agencies and bookstores.

Mr Speaker, the system in use in Guyana for the conveyance of land and properties from one owner to another is based heavily on the notification in the Official Gazette. Because of this and the fact that there has been a worsening situation developing in the country, in which legitimate property owners had been fraudulently relieved of their properties have been critical over these years, of the lack of action by the Administration to make the public have easy, timely and unhindered

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access to this very important legal instrument to curtail this type of scam.

Over the years, Mr Speaker, Guyanese have witnessed a rise in crimes generally in the society, the growing trend is one of scant regard for the sanctity of life. We have witnessed the most brutal racial attacks on our innocent brothers and sisters of East Indian descent. The most horrendous crimes of banditry and terror being unleashed on the business community. The brazen threats to lives being distributed in handbills by individuals too cowardly to dare to reveal themselves. And then there are the cries of extra-judicial killings by the ethnic African community and those cries have so far fallen on deaf ears. These are signs, Mr Speaker, that point to the fallen standards of governance, decay in the spiritual, moral, social and ethical fabric in all sections of our society. It is within this scenario that citizens have come face to face with the growing, property appropriation scam that hits at the very root at their financial and economic foundation. Through the means of forgery of legal documents such as the Power of Attorney facility, coupled with the employment of false claims and other illicit tactics, immovable property have been fraudulently transferred from legitimate property owners. Sometimes unsuspecting buyers of immovable property have been made unwitting parties to this scam and having invested considerable sums of money in the deal are made parties to a wrong doing.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, to explain. The purchase of a piece of land or some other immovable property, unaware at the time that a fraud is being committed, acquires the deed for the property upon the passing of transport and henceforth becomes the lawful property owner, free to retain ownership or resell the property at will, since, according to the laws of Guyana, the purchaser would have had legal title vested in him/her. To a great degree overseas based Guyanese are the most vulnerable group in the scam.

One method employed in this property appropriation scam often begins with the acquisition of a Power of Attorney in the name of the property owner without, of course, their knowledge, by means of affording signature to access a certificate of title. This is done through the

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impersonation of the property owner to a notary public, who would issue the proper legal documentation. The law, Mr Speaker, provides for Attorneys-at-Law only to hold a position of a notary public and the authorities of this land should see that this requirement is adhered to, but because the Deeds Registry is in a state of debacle, confusion reigns supreme and provides the perfect environment for the thievery of this nature to thrive. The way to curtail this type of fraud is to check the Official Gazette regularly. As it is the only way to spot that a fraud is being committed and it also allows the genuine owner to put a stop to such a fraud in a timely manner before the passing of transport. This requires immovable property owners and even their associates and friends to inculcate the habit of monitoring publications of the Official Gazette. But this is where the problem begins, Mr Speaker, for Members of the public because of the fact that the point of sale of the Official Gazette happens to be in the Office of the President in New Garden Street, a place that I believe should not be, by any means a public thoroughfare. For many law abiding citizens, this is the place perceived to be out of bounds and somewhat daunting and intimidating to them. Imagine coming from a village far away from Georgetown, having to pluck up the courage of the towering gates of the Presidential Secretariat, having to submit to security check, having to be issued with a security tag before being **permitted** to proceed into the compound to purchase a copy of the Official Gazette, a most unacceptable and discouraging state of affairs. The result is that only those individuals and business entities that could afford to pay the astronomical cost to have the Official Gazette delivered to them by post have easy, timely and unhindered access to this very important, legal document. I must emphasize that since our laws provide for the publication of the sale of properties in the Official Gazette before the passing of transport, a heavy burden of responsibility resides in Members of the public to note the ongoing exercise of the official transfer of properties, since it is at this stage the property owners could in fact intervene and put a stop to this scam. It is also necessary to emphasize that in this process the Official Gazette is an essential component of our legal system of property transfer that citizens need to be informed about. So to the extent that access to the Official Gazette is made difficult the

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authorities are in fact aiding and abetting the scam unwittingly.

It is my view, Mr Speaker, that the current situation for purchasing of the Official Gazette should be discontinued and immediate steps taken to ensure that the general public have easy, timely and unhindered access to this very important document. It is my recommendation that the Official Gazette should be made available free of cost for public scrutiny at Regional Offices, Post Offices wherever possible, Magistrates Courts wherever possible and other public places and by purchase from Commercial bookstores and other government agencies.

Over several years, many public spirited citizens have either written in the print-media or spoken on the radio or on the electronic media about the scam, and the need for government to take such action is ever mentioned in the short term, yet to date, nothing has been done. I have personally spoken on this matter to former Ministers of this Government, who were vested with responsibilities for consumers affairs as well as made a point of giving wide publicity to the scam over the years all, regrettably, to no avail. It was Socrates who said:

No man undertakes the training has not learned even the meanest yet anyone thinks himself sufficiently qualified for the hardest of all trades, that of government.

It was the likes of such unresponsiveness and governmental indifference of the needs of the people that have us now in this impending state of national anarchy. What will it take for you as the Government of the day to acknowledge that your duty goes beyond casting blame to adopting a posture to embrace the concept that the French called *noblesse oblige* to whom much is given much is expected.

In closing, Mr Speaker, as I crave the support of this Honourable House for this Motion. I believe it is apposite for me at this time of political array of unrest in the city, on the East Coast Demerara environment in particular, to refer you to a document that exemplifies a rear occurrence of national consensus in our country. I refer to the

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National Development Strategy which has been left to languish to a certain extent in no man's land. I refer you to paragraph 5 on page 9 of Chapter 3 on the topic of governance and it reads:

As the history of governance in Guyana demonstrates, from the country's very origins, its various constitutions, the political systems under which it has been governed culminating in a Westminster's type of arrangement, and its political configurations have militated toward consensus building and the practice of participatory and consultative democracy. Indeed, often the only objective of the political exercise is to confound the opposing political party. In such circumstances the opacity in government is seen as a virtue and transparency an impediment in the exercise of power. Moreover, because voting preferences are not based on performance in government or on the policies of contending political parties, but almost inextricably linked to, Guyanese do not appear to have as yet fully developed that level of political sophistication which demands good governance as a right. This is the basic reason for the necessity to establish guidelines, rules of procedures and laws to ensure inclusivity.

Mr Speaker, I appeal to this Honourable House to take those words on the advisement. I thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Member.

Motion proposed.

Mrs Shirley J. Melville: Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Motion of my colleague, Mrs Sheila Holder.

The Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Member.

Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds: Mr Speaker, I rise to generally agree with the Motion moved by the Hon. Member, Mrs Sheila Holder and to note, I think, there was implied in her presentation some amendments from the written motion and that in particular was essentially to remove the term *all* in the resolution clause that *the Gazette be at all Post*

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very disappointed and angry, not only at those who are perpetuating this horrendous mess in our country, the travesty that is occurring in our country, but also the travesty of those of us who are willing to stand up and find excuses to justify the action of those who will commit banditry in our country, those who beat up innocent people, those who burn and loot, every time - every time - anyone of us even if we are not in the marches, even if we are not doing the beatings, even if we are not doing the burning and the pillaging in this country, every time we stand up and refuse to call a spade a spade, we are equally guilty. Every time, we stand up here and refuse to unequivocally condemn those who are responsible for these actions, we also contribute to continuing this travesty. Ever since 1992 and intensifying after 1997 elections and further intensified this year, there must be absolutely no doubt as to who is responsible - absolutely no doubt. Absolutely no doubt, who raised their hands and fling their hands and don't stop before their noses. It is the PNC, it is the PNC and it is all those who would stand up in this House and anywhere outside of this country and say, but there is a reason why people go out there. There is absolutely no justification for beating and burning, *[Applause]* absolutely none and I am disappointed that the Hon. Member would stand up here and say the PNC must stop prevaricating, must stop equivocating, they must be unequivocal in their condemnation and then turn out and spend seventy-five percent of his time attacking Cheddie Jagan and the PPP and the PPP/Civic Government - it is a travesty. When you stand up in this House and say that Indo-Guyanese are being beaten and innocent Guyanese are being beaten, but it is because somebody has a grievance, then each one of us must go outside of this House now and find somebody, because it is all of us who have grievances. I have a grievance against Mr Desmond Hoyte and the PNC and I am not allowed to go and fling my hands and not stop before their noses. I have a grievance and as an Indo-Guyanese and a Guyanese (they are all my Guyanese brothers and sisters, who feel pain and who feel hurt) we cannot come here like the Hon. Member, Mrs Sheila Holder and talk about defending the rights of people and then not being unequivocal in our condemnation.

Mr Speaker, we must have no doubt, no doubt, about what is

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happening in our country and who is responsible for it. The PNC is unequivocally responsible for the mayhem on our streets [*Applause*] and the reason is clear, it has nothing to do with the reasons they gave about marginalisation. The Hon. Member knows very well for twenty-eight years who marginalised the Afro-Guyanese of this country and who marginalised every Guyanese. It wasn't the PPP, it wasn't anyone of us sitting here; it was the PNC. That was marginalisation and we must be brave and bold enough, as the Hon. Member said, to speak out - no buts and, Mr Speaker, in saying this I am not saying Guyana is a paradise; and I am not saying that Guyana does not have problems - Guyana is a poor country - and who caused us to be in this poverty? It is the PNC - twenty-eight years of mismanagement. I ask you, Mr Speaker, I ask the Hon. Members, and I ask the people of this country, who pauperised the workers of this country, who destroyed our economy, who destroyed our infrastructure, who took away the fundamental rights of Guyanese? And I ask you, Mr Speaker and I ask the people of this country, who assassinated Walter Rodney and who killed Father Dark and who is responsible for the deaths of a heroine like Kowsillia? And I can name more and more and more. We need to ask ourselves that question and when you come today and you ask yourself what is going on in the street, does it have to do with our poverty, does it have to do with our shortcomings as a nation, the gaps that exist? The answer is clear, it has to do with a political party that refuses to live within the framework of a democracy. It has to do with a political party that knows only about being in power, that refuses to work within the framework of that democracy. They rigged the elections and now that they cannot rig the elections, they want to take power by any means whatsoever. Not my word, Mr Speaker. It should not elude us, that it is only several weeks ago, at the Square of the Revolution, that Mr Hoyte, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition stood up and joined other leading members of the PNC and said that this Government must be overthrown and they have been saying that all along. After the 1997 elections, it was Mr Hoyte himself and other PNC Members who said that *Guyana must be made ungovernable*.

Why are we so surprised then that they are doing what they are

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doing and then try to justify that they are doing this because they don't see an opportunity to participate. I have news for all of us here: there can only be one President of this country and there can only be one government, all of us cannot be Presidents, we have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that there are other roles to play in the development of a people and of a nation [*Applause*] and the Leader of the Opposition and Members of the Opposition have equal responsibility and equal role to play. I want to ask ourselves this question: this country has many problems, one of which is the ethnic relationship that exists among our people. Yes, we have ethnic distrust, yes we have a problem and we need to confront that problem. But how are we going to advance when some of us use this fact to create more confusion, more disharmony and therefore more mayhem on the street? On the one hand you have the PNC saying to us that Afro-Guyanese are marginalised and that this Government's intention is ethnic cleansing. On the other hand the Hon Member Mr Ravi Dev is all over the country saying the Government is not doing anything for the Indo-Guyanese people [*Contradiction*] It is confusion. All of us must join together and do what Dr Cheddi Jagan said to do - unite the people of this country. We have to work together. And yes, we have differences and I am not going to stand here and say we have all the answers. I am not going to stand here this afternoon and say we do not have problems.

We are still a poor country. By 1990 more than 85% of the people of this country lived in poverty. It might be nice for those of us on this side of the House to stand up and say that yes, today, we have reduced that number down to about 33% and we can boast, 'look what a good job we have done'. But 33% of people living in poverty is not good enough. We know that. That is why this Government is working so hard. But we can't do it alone, Mr Speaker. We can't do it in an environment of division and polarization. The only way we can alleviate those problems, reduce those problems, is if all of us work together and tackle the problems we do face.

Let us talk about democracy, Mr Speaker. Guyana has a democracy. Guyana's democracy is fledgling. Guyana's democracy is

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building but it has many, many weaknesses. Do we have a parliament that is ideal, that is the best in the world? The answer is unequivocally, no. And we need to work at it. But let me remind the Hon Members, and let me ask the people of our country to look at what we have today and compare it to what we had. At no time in the past would the Hon Member Mrs Sheila Holder be able to come here and move motions and get support from the Government. There was a time in this country when you could not do that. At no time as a member of the Opposition could you stand up here and raise matters of urgent public business and get your voice heard. It is progress. Small steps, maybe! Not enough, maybe! But our country is strengthening democracy, and I will not stand up here and say we should not do more.

But I want to remind everybody too that dialogue is the way to go. We started dialogue in this country. Don't forget that it was this Government with its sensitivity and recognition that people do have problems and that we have to do bold things in order to have everybody feel that they belong. It was this Government, to the great chagrin of many of its supporters, that stood up and said we will reform the Constitution and give up half of our term in order to ensure that everybody participates. *[Applause]* It was this House, Mr Speaker, and you, Mr Speaker, that participated in constitutional reform consultations. And it was Members of this House who sat here and deliberated over the suggestions made. I want to remind this nation that on the Constitutional (Reform) Commission and the Oversight Commission where all the decisions were finalised, that I sat on, the PPP/C did not have a majority. People said that we were mad, Mr Speaker in that we sat here on the Oversight Committee where the PPP/C was outnumbered. Of the seven (7) members on the Oversight Committee three of them were PPP/C. The decisions on how to reform the Constitution was not made by the PPP/C. The decision was made by the country, the representatives of the people of this country. We all agreed to move forward with that reformed constitution. So why is it we are also unhappy? Because many of the provisions still do not have enabling provisions. So, Mr Speaker, should I suggest then that we here who are ready to have the enabling provision come by ourselves with the three Members on the

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other side and do it and then face the possibility of the others, who decide to stay out, saying they were not given an opportunity? We want to introduce and pass the enabling legislation but we want all of us to do it. The responsibility and burden must not only be the Government's. It is for all of us. *[Applause]* We must condemn those who will not live up to their responsibility.

Mr Speaker, Wednesday was a travesty but it was no less repugnant than all the other times that there have been mayhem on the streets. Mr Speaker, several weeks ago the Hon Member Donald

Ramotar introduced a motion to sanction some of the Members of this Parliament who were out there blocking the gates of Parliament. On Wednesday, many of those same Members, the Hon Robert Corbin, Hon McAllister, Hon Amna Ally and Hon Vincent Alexander were on the streets with those who beat, those who burn. Then I heard on T.V. last night the Hon Member Robert Corbin saying,

I want to tell the senior Minister that I was not marching with anybody, that I just happened to be on the streets on various corners.

It is shameful. We must stand up here and say it, and do not excuse it. There are poor people out there. But no poor person out there can justify the fact that Hon Members of this House would lead people out to burn and pillage. None of it. That is my anger. That is why I say that in the midst of all of us here there are terrorists. There is domestic terrorism in this country and the only way we can stop it is if every Guyanese stand up and say *there is terrorism, it must stop*. There is absolutely no justification for it. *[Applause]* For all the people beaten, I want the Hon Member (since he stood up here, and I want to thank him for doing it) to go to his Indo-Guyanese brothers and say 'I know you were beaten but the reason you were beaten, and the people that beat you up *got a good excuse*. I want you to do that.

Mr Speaker, I do not want anybody to think that we do not have

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deficiencies. I sometimes sit in my office and wonder what more can I do. I sometimes find myself at a loss wondering what I can do to make things better, and that in a sense is saying that we do not by ourselves have the answer. Mr Speaker, I am Indo-Guyanese and I am proud to be Indo-Guyanese. I am proud of the contributions that I make as a Guyanese. I want to be able to go into every part of this country - I want to go to Buxton, I want to go to Tiger Bay - I want to go to every part of this country and feel just as safe as when I go to Albion. I want to be able to embrace my brothers and sisters whether they are Afro-Guyanese or Indo-Guyanese and feel that I am expressing my solidarity as a Guyanese. *[Applause]* I want to feel proud about Guyana. I want to feel proud about a Hooper whether he is Afro-Guyanese, Indo-Guyanese or whatever. I want to feel proud of all our people out there who are excelling and doing well regardless of what race they belong to. Mr Speaker, I want the same for myself. I want also that my brothers and sisters, whatever their race, could look at me and say there is a brother that I am proud of. We cannot do that as long as you have people running wild on the street talking about Afro-Guyanese **marganilisation and Indo-Guyanese marganilisation. The day we mature and stand up and say we are going to work for this country, we are going to work for all of the people of this country, that is the day we are going to begin to move on.** *[Applause]*

I invite this House, Mr Speaker, to join us because, with all our weaknesses and frailties on this side of the House, that is what we want. We must look back and see where we have come from. We have a House that meets, maybe we should meet every week. I wish we could. I wish we had more things to do in this House, and we have much to do. I wish that people would come. We say we want Parliamentary Management Committee. Well, let us have it. We say we want Sectoral Committees, let us have it. If you think the formula for its composition is not ideal let us start it anyway. Let us start it and let us work because dialogue, Mr Speaker, has got us some place.

Last year, Mr Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition agreed to dialogue, in this whole country there was a sigh of relief. Guyanese

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from abroad, friends from abroad, technical experts from abroad, the business community, with everybody there was a sign of relief. This is the way to go. Indeed during that period of dialogue there was peace, uneasy peace perhaps, tension perhaps. But there was peace, and suddenly Guyana was picking up again. And, Mr Speaker, not only the President and Members on this side said that dialogue was useful and beneficial. None of us here would ever forget or should forget the fact that the Leader of the Opposition in the Budget Speech of 2001, in his response, said to this House and to this Nation that the dialogue process was useful and beneficial, more beneficial than many people would imagine. The Leader of the Opposition said so. Soon after members of the press inquired at a press conference (I can't remember the exact time) asked Mr Hoyte about the dialogue process and his response was, 'if not dialogue, what'? Everyone agreed that dialogue was the way to go. Mr Hoyte was determined to answer his own question 'if not dialogue, what'? He is showing us what the 'what' is. The 'what' is beating innocent people, burning property and destroying our country. And I as a Guyanese citizen say no. Absolutely not. We must stop it, and we must stop it now. As Mr Haslyn Parris, a former Minister, long time ago, said, 'the confounded nonsense must stop.'

Mr Speaker, we know the answer. In all of this it has nothing to do with the problems out there. That doesn't mean we do not have problems and it does not mean that we do not have tension. We have to deal with them. The bauxite industry and those who work in the bauxite industry - we need to look at those problems. The rice industry, the sugar industry, our economy as a whole, our health sector, our education sector - you can't look at those things while running on the streets. We need to come into this House.

Mr Speaker, the business of this House, the business of this country, cannot be conducted on the streets of Guyana. The business of this country, the development of this country belong in this hallow Chamber. We must work it out here and we must go to our communities and work with our people. That is where it belongs. Whoever is at greater fault? Yes, we have a parliamentary impasse and somebody has to be at fault.

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And, maybe, everybody is at fault. But that is not justification for what is going on out there. And at anytime anybody who stands up here and says that justification lies in the fact that the PPP/C is contributing to it, is himself contributing to the mayhem. *[Applause]* Mr Speaker, there must be no buts in criticizing those who are responsible. And if the Government is at fault, if the government is not doing things effectively, if the Government is not doing all that it should do, come into this House and say so and let the people judge. There are elections in this country and when elections come the people will judge. That is why we have a democracy so that the people will vote and make their decision. I have used harsh words, Mr Speaker, but I think it is the only way that we will employ the same principle that the Hon Member Mr Dev says, '*call a spade a spade*'. If you are going to call a spade a spade and you must use harsh language, then you must do so.

Mr Speaker, I want to encourage all of us to go out there and call on the PNC to rejoin the dialogue process. I want to say that there are many ways for participation. There are many ways of sharing power. There are many ways of improving governance. We need to ensure that we represent our people the best way we can in this House. Let us come here and let us work. Let us look at the Public Accounts. Let us find what is wrong. Let us have our Sectoral Committees and so on and let us work together. It has worked before.

Dialogue, Mr Speaker, is not an easy thing, it is not overnight. It is painstaking, full of pain. Dialogue could be excruciatingly painful. It does not happen overnight. It does not bring results overnight. But every time you are in dialogue it means compromises. It means not everybody will have everything they want. On this side of the House we have been bold. We have taken our chances with dialogue and have made the compromises. To this day, more than forty (40) years later, Dr Cheddi Jagan is still being criticised for being bold in offering dialogue and compromise. When Dr Cheddi Jagan offered Duncan Sands to determine the electoral system he was being bold and he was criticised by his own supporters for decades. But he was bold. When Mrs Janet Jagan decided to give up three years of government she was being bold.

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Do you think she wanted to? But, we made the compromises.

When we sat here on the Constitution Reform Commission and we decided that we will take away the powers from the President in appointing Service Commissions, do you think we wanted that? But we were creating a more even playing field. We were expanding the role for people to play and maybe we need to go further. But nobody, no one could point to this Government and say we have not made compromises. And we will continue to make compromises for the people of Guyana. We will stand up for Guyana. We will stand up for a united Guyana and we will always be the voice of the people of Guyana.

Thank you Mr Speaker. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Hon Member.

Hon Member Mrs Sheila Holder.

Mrs Sheila V.A. Holder: Mr Speaker, there is clear evidence that we are in the presence of a breakdown in law and order and a total disregard for the symbols of authority in our society. Many of the crimes have exceeded the description of heinous, the suffering of the victims unimaginable, the powerlessness of the population evident, and the disciplined services have responded ineffective to date. The response by the spokesperson and the Hon Member Dr Ramsammy have been predictable. They have provided too little too late in terms of resources for a demoralised and unpopular Guyana Police Force and provided the usual cure-all treatment of appealing to the society to issue words of condemnation as if the criminals are likely to be responsive to the society's weight of moral indignation. The focus has been on the effect being experienced by the society while ignoring the causes. The cause is visible for all who have eyes to see and ears to hear. There is clear evidence that large sections of our African and Indian population are showing an increasing disillusionment with a political system that has failed to deliver security and prosperity to them but continues to spawn victims harbouring strong feelings of being marginalised. Whatever the Hon Member says,

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he cannot dictate the feelings of people of being victims of a partisan political system that lacks crucial elements to guarantee equal treatment and equal opportunity. Given our impersonal political system that ignores the people's desire for a return to constituency representation, for a reduction of control from the central government, for the value of reciprocity and fairness as fundamental principles of our democracy, these all have led to the electorate seeing us all sitting in this National Assembly as being irrelevant and ineffective to addressing their many grievances. So they have taken to the streets in protest to impress upon us all forcefully that this nonsense must stop.

The July 3, events that took place at the Office of the President, as shocking and as horrific as they were, must be seen in the context of these realities and indicative of the contempt large masses of people have for the current undemocratic political system that entrenches incompetence, indifference and injustices. The time has come for us to acknowledge that the debacle we are witnessing all around us is merely a symptom of the problem which partisan political interests and politicking have conspired to deliver to us. As I see it, the political directorate in Guyana have lost the moral imperative with the determination to hold fast to a failed system. In doing so they have opened the gates to political extremists. As I see it, opportunity must be provided for the ventilation of people's experiences over the last four decades of Afro-centric and Indo-centric politics. Failure to do so will be tantamount to denying national space for reconciliation. There is need to acknowledge that the policy of holding fast to the fallacious argument that democracy was restored in Guyana in 1992, allowing for the pointing of fingers and the passing of blame at a time when institutions important to building our democracy are exhibiting blatant signs of failure to function effectively and to deliver in a timely and just manner. I implore you and the major opposition political party to stop fiddling as Guyana burns.

The Speaker: Thank you, Hon Member. [Pause]

Are there any other speakers?

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Hon Members if you wish to speak please stand so I can recognise you. If not, we will move on.

Hon Member Mr Rohee.

Hon Clement J. Rohee: Mr Speaker, I, in the course of my short political career and experiences have not come across a democratically elected government that has not the political will nor the interest in spending the time in government for which it has been elected. I don't know about any democratically elected government that does not have the interest nor the will to spend, and in the case of Guyana, the entire five-year period for which it has been elected. I start out by making this point, Mr Speaker, because if we were to take the position that the PPP/C was discriminating and marginalising, adopting and taking policies that lead to discrimination and marginalisation then, Mr Speaker, this Government would not have lasted one year from 1992 onwards. *[Applause]* That is the reality and I thought I should make this point to emphasise that all the posturing and the platitudes that we are hearing in this House are outside the House is not going to get us anywhere, unless we are seeking to make political mileage out of this discussion. And as my colleague, the Hon Dr Ramsammy said, let us call a spade a spade. Could anyone really imagine the PPP/Civics shooting itself in the foot by consciously pursuing a policy of discriminating, consciously pursuing a policy of marginalising, consciously pursuing a policy of what some might describe as apartheid and yet succeeding in three elections? How is that possible? Where is the logic? And if it was, indeed, so, Mr Speaker, I would want to believe that the groundswell against the Government and against the ruling Party would have been so tremendous that we probably would have been sitting on the other side of the House even in mid-1992.

But clearly, Mr Speaker, the experience has shown that this is not the reality. This is not the case. What is happening in Guyana is that some political leaders, and we know who they are, are using this racial card to their political advantage, or seeking to do so, at least. They are seeking to do so. Some are trying to disguise it in different ways but the subtly of

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the argument that was used by the Hon Member Mr Ravi Dev, is not something that one cannot discern easily. The subtly is there and it can easily be picked up. This position of blaming both sides is an old argument. We have lived with this argument since the PPP Government came into power in 1992 and even when we were in the Opposition - blaming both sides and trying to set oneself up on a pedestal, trying to project to the people of this country that *I have the answer to the problem in my hand*. Mr Speaker, the situation is much more complicated and complex than that. And let me make another point. There are some who, in presenting the argument, try to set themselves up as the champion of one section of the population or another by speaking about who they are particularly representing or who they are not particularly representing. Everybody inside and outside of this House knows where the bulk of the PPP/C support is. But the PPP/C even when it was in opposition, and now that it is in Government is not going to concede, ever, that we have never been speaking on behalf of the entire population of this country. *[Applause]*.

We do not have to pretend or seek political mileage by saying we are speaking on behalf of one section of the population in order to seek to undermine the support which a party like ours has enjoyed over the years in this country. So when we speak, and all the policies we have adumbrated over the years, and even now in the Government, it has always been on the question of racial and working class unity. We have always hammered away on that point and we are not going to get involved in any cleavages or naturalist positions which seem to be representing one section of the population or the other because if you do that then you are contributing, regardless of what you say, to the syndrome which was established in this country by the colonial powers since the days of colonialism and that is the principle or practice of divide and rule.

Mr Speaker, the entire nation is traumatised as a result of the events on July 3. All social classes and strata are traumatised and it is in the interest of the Government, particularly the Government, since we have a major responsibility to ensure that there is social cohesion. The role of the state and the Government in Office must be to ensure at all times that

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there is no social disintegration of the society but rather cohesion of the people so that the nation can consolidate itself and move forward. Mr Speaker, the rhetorical question can easily be asked, and has been asked time and again as to who stands to benefit from the present situation in which this country finds itself at this point and time. Nobody stands to benefit. Is this situation bringing greater richness to the nation? Is it bringing greater investments to this nation? Is it contributing to an improvement in the well-being of the people? And if the answer to each of these questions is no then obviously we have to determine who and what are the circumstances that are contributing to this situation.

The PNC/R continues to be absent from this Honourable House. Is it helping them? Is it helping the nation? The PNC/R continues to demonstrate on the streets under different semblances, under different guises. Is it helping this nation? Clearly, the answer to that is an unequivocal no, Mr Speaker. The scaring away of investments is an extremely important factor that we must take into consideration, because on the one hand there is no point in people talking about marginalisation and unemployment, and on the other take actions that contribute to investors not coming to this country, development not taking place. You yourself, by virtue of your own actions, by dint of your own actions, are contributing to this situation. So who is trying to fool who? Mr Speaker, we cannot on the one hand be talking about the need for employment generation and economic growth and on the other hand taking actions to scare away investors, to make the local private sector in this country not feel the type of confidence to invest and contribute to economic growth. There is some kind of cynicism in the position of the PNC/R on this matter and it has to be exposed. We already have in this country pockets of poverty in many parts of Guyana. Our GDP per capita lags far behind that of many other countries in the Caribbean, CARICOM countries, probably with the exception of Haiti. Our private sector, Mr Speaker, unlike the private sector in countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados et cetera, needs time and space and the necessary enabling environment to develop and to become the real engine of growth. But, Mr Speaker, how on earth is all of this going to happen in a situation like this? Yet we

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hear people clamouring and making a hue and cry about marginalisation and discrimination - people not getting jobs, people not getting money in their pockets and so on. Mr Speaker, if this is the objective of the PNC/R then it seems to me that this is some sort of political and economic sadism.

[17:50 H - Mrs Shirley Edwards, Presiding Member in the Chair]

There are some sadistic tendencies of a political and social nature on the part of the PNC/R because what you are subjecting your people to is more and more hardship thinking that these hardships will eventually create the economic and social conditions for the Government to become unpopular and for its eventual removal. This is rather sadistic thinking of a political nature and we have to expose it for what it is. Madam Speaker, we have political, economic and social problems in this country and there is no one who can gainsay this. The problem has always been how to search and how to find the solutions. And solutions, as everybody has recognised, are not going to be found in confrontation. And the solution is certainly not going to be found in the scenario which the PNC/R seems to be drawing up to the effect that you scare the investors away, you scare the private sector from making more investments in the country else, you create more problems and more social instability in the country and as a result of that the government will fall, as a result of us putting pressure and more pressure.

What happens when they get into the government? What is the dialectic of that? Which government or party wants to succeed and inherit a situation where there is total disintegration, total economic collapse and disaster and to start all over again? Madam Speaker, I dread to think that we have in this country people who are prone to that kind of thinking. Because in the same way that it was not easy for us in 1992 when we got into government it is not going to be easy for them. In the same way that people are talking now about alienation, marginalisation and so many other things, in a situation like that, you will hear people raising the same arguments because clearly nobody will be satisfied in a situation like that either.

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So we have to decide what we want for this country. Madam Speaker, I want to submit that this is a rather dangerous line of thinking, a direction in which some leaders of the PNC/R have chosen to go. And it also smacks of the view that all they are interested in (that is to say the people who are of that kind of political thinking) is political power. All they are interested in is political power. It simply means that they have no interest at all in the common people...

[17.55 H - Return of the Speaker]

... because if you want the people to punish now thinking that by punishing they will revolt and you will get their support and then when you get into the government people will still continue to punish, this Mr Speaker is rather dangerous thinking.

Mr Speaker, I want to warn that the danger that we saw with the attack on the Office of the President, on July 3, is not yet over. It is not yet over. What we are witnessing is a respite, because, as was said earlier, the Hon Leader of the PNC/R has openly said, and everybody carried it faithfully - the BBC, Voice of America, CANA - that he will not disclaim anything he said at a bottom house meeting in Buxton, which is, that the Government must be gotten rid of, and he talked even about overthrowing the Government.

Mr Speaker, we also heard that the role of the Opposition is to expose, oppose and depose - with the emphasis on depose. I read an interesting interview with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago who recently attended the CARICOM Summit and he was of a different view. He said that as far as he was concerned the role of the Opposition is not necessarily to oppose but to keep the government on its feet. [Interruption]

The Speaker: You mean on its toes?

Hon Clement J. Rohee: Thank you Mr Speaker. We refer to the now infamous gathering of sorts that took place some weeks ago at the Cuffy Square where the unholy alliance of the People's Solidarity Movement

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was born and was created. All the forces that gathered on that rather rainy evening at Cuffy Square, I dread to think, if Cuffy was alive what he probably would have been thinking of those lesser beings who were standing below him. Because, clearly, the ideals and aspirations of those who fought for the abolition of slavery do not coincide with what these people claim to be fighting for.

Mr Speaker, the agenda is clear. It has been reiterated over and over again ad nauseam, and it has gained greater resonance within recent times, which is, to overthrow the Government by force.

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member Dr Ramsammy said, and I made a note of it here, that it all started out in 1990, (I go back a little further) when Mr Hoyte in the midst of the political campaigning and the struggle for electoral reform said that he will do everything to ensure that Dr Jagan does not get into government. Those are words that came out of the mouth of the same man who is saying other things now. He said that he will dedicate his life to make sure that Dr Jagan does not get into government. And as my colleague said, when Dr Jagan did get into government he said he will give him one year. Because he thought that **Dr Jagan would have** pursued a conscious policy of discrimination, retribution, marginalisation and would have been like a bull in a china shop. But it did not happen and will not happen. *[Applause]* Mr Speaker, that line did not reach with any success and after the 1992 elections they then adopted the position that they will do everything to make the situation ungovernable. I do not want to go into that as it was spoken about already. What I am trying to show is that there is a pattern. They lost the elections in 1997 to the white American Jew who they so hated so that they made black magic and so on in front of the gate of the Office of the President - we saw that - to get the white American Jew, this old lady, out from Office. Then in 2001, they talked about the 'lil boy' and refused to accept the 'lil boy' as a real challenge and lost there too. So he lost against the old man Jagan, he lost against the lady, the white American Jew, and he lost against the 'lil boy'. *[Interruption: "Political 'wammie' "Is that parliamentary language Mr Speaker?"]* Triple political 'wammie' on the electoral front. *[Applause]* That is precisely what they

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cannot stomach. That is precisely what is driving this deep hatred for the administration. All this talk about marginalisation, let us get to the statistics, people are using that as manipulative political language to achieve their political objective. It is not so.

Where is the marginalisation taking place. Some may say it is a perception and therefore politicians must deal with the perception and maybe we have to do some more to educate people and show them what the reality is. Mr Speaker, they never accepted the results of the 1992 elections, the 1997 elections nor the 2001 elections.

And now, at the rally I referred to that took place at the Cuffy Square, about three weeks ago, this motley gathering of political sorts launched the People's Solidarity Movement, and I want to submit most respectfully, Mr Speaker, that I believe that that was precisely the catalyst. All of those who were sitting on that platform have to bear responsibility for what occurred on July 3 in this country. They have to bear responsibility because they were all committed, and all committed themselves to a political platform which manifested itself by the attack on the Office of the President. [Interruption]

The Speaker: Time Hon Member.

Hon Harripersaud Nokta: Mr Speaker I beg that the Hon Minister be given an additional fifteen minutes to conclude.

Motion put and agreed to.

The Speaker: Proceed Hon Member.

Hon Clement J. Rohee: Mr Speaker, I believe that an opposition party must, from time to time, engage in some degree of soul searching to determine how it must engage the Government of the day. When the PPP was in the Opposition, Mr Speaker, in 1973, just after the infamous rigged elections, where two of our comrades were shot on the Corentyne, the PPP adopted a policy of civil resistance and civil disobedience towards the ruling PNC. Then almost one year after, between 1974 and 1976

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we adopted the position of critical support. By the 1980s we adopted the position of winner does not take all and made a public call for the national patriotic front and a national front government. Throughout this period, contrary to what some ignoramuses are saying, on the TV and other places, the PPP was consistently fighting for free and fair elections. We were not just documenting evidence. We were in the trenches and we are proud to have been in the trenches, to have contributed. *[Applause]* Many of us and many of our fore-bearers did so with their lives and made great sacrifices for us to have what we have in Guyana today. *[Applause]* We only have to look back and make a comparative analysis to see what we are enjoying now, and what we did not enjoy then, to appreciate what came out of that struggle. There are many who are not around, many who are not to be seen, who are now... *[Interruption]* We do not have a problem with that. We do not have a problem with people basking in the sunshine of democracy brought into this country by the PPP/C. Let it be, as the song says, but don't ever seek to denigrate the struggles conducted by the PPP, don't ever try to denigrate the struggles conducted by the people of this country to bring democracy into this land of ours. *[Applause]* Even now that we are in the Government we hold this question and cherish it more dearly in our hearts, and I have no doubt that there are many who are prepared to **fall by the barricades in defence of this democracy which the PPP/C is fighting for** *[Applause]* So, let those who are marching and demonstrating in the streets know that there is a silent majority who are maintaining their discipline, understanding and appreciation, tolerance and patience. So let us not believe that this thing is going to be a push over. There are people who are prepared to stand up in defence of this Government in the same way as they stood up to defend the struggle to win free and fair elections with their lives. *[Applause]* I want to make that absolutely clear, Mr Speaker. I make these examples to show that when we were in Opposition we were able, flexible, but, at the same time, firm, combining struggle and unity, two principles of being firm and flexible in our political tactics on how to bring about democracy in this country with a new Government in a new dawn. What is significant about this is the fact that there are some out there who keep saying that the PPP/C is

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bankrupt, that we have no ideas, we have grown stale, we have no fresh thinking. Mr Speaker, the Party to which I belong has never been found wanting for new thinking and new ideas [*Applause*]. So let us get rid of this notion that the ruling Party, and by extension the Government of the day, is bankrupt in respect of fresh political ideas, political thoughts and is able to take, from time to time, doses of adrenalin in order to be effervescent and to be active.

Mr Speaker, one of the issues that has forced itself on the agenda, not that it hasn't been on the agenda, but it has forced itself in a much more pronounced way on the agenda since the events of July 3, that is the question of the need to return to dialogue. If you read all the letters that are published in the newspapers, if you read all the comments, you go to different parts of Georgetown and the country side as well, there is a yearning and a burning desire for a return to the political dialogue. There is widespread support for this, Mr Speaker. But Mr Hoyte has a penchant for breaking off dialogue and talks. Some of you may not know but in 1985 just before Mr Burnham died we used to be having talks with the PNC while we were in the Opposition in this same building. In that corner over there we met from time to time with the PNC to try to find a political solution under Mr Burnham before he died. Then Mr Hoyte became President and within a matter of weeks he broke off the talks. Seventeen years after he has visited with the same kind of thinking and has broken off talks once again. One gets a sense of *deja vue* from 1985 to now in terms of Mr Hoyte's behaviour.

Notwithstanding that, Mr Speaker, the question was asked, and an important question, what is the alternative? And if there is an alternative then what? Mr Speaker, we are in a situation which no Guyanese wants. Everybody wants to live in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. The Hon Member Mr Ravi Dev in his presentation kept making reference to the need to be firm as though we are weak, as though we are not firm. Mr Speaker, with your leave I would like to refer to the speech that was made by His Excellency the President, Mr Bharrat Jagdeo, at the National Day Reception of the United States on July 4th. He said, I quote:

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I remain ready and open to dialogue in the national interest. I have urged, cajoled towards this path. We must stop making excuses and setting obstacles to dialogue. In our case dialogue is not only the preferred way, it is the only feasible and acceptable way for us to solve our problems and I will remain untiring in my pursuit of solutions to our national problems.

That is the flexibility side. On the question of firmness, this is what he had to say, I quote:

The unacceptable invasion of the Office of the President, the unprovoked assault of hundreds of innocent citizens and the wanton destruction of property cannot be justified. Just imagine the analogous situation if a band of criminals calling themselves freedom fighters were to invade the White House what would have been the response of the US security forces? There is no justification for terrorism. Similarly, no grievance, legitimate or other-wise, can justify criminal and anti-social behaviour. These acts and such behaviour must be unequivocally condemned. We will not cultivate democratic values by excusing this conduct. We must in this hemisphere summon the courage and find ways to deter such behaviour.

Mr Speaker, on that note, I thank you. [Applause]

National Assembly Debates

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE FIRST SESSION (2001-2002) OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF
GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE
REPUBLIC OF GUYANA**

Part 2 (from p.72)

28TH SITTING

2.00 PM

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The Speaker: Thank you Hon Member.

Hon Member Mrs Shirley Melville.

Mrs Shirley J. Melville: Mr Speaker, I rise to condemn all forms of violence. We are all aware where violence would lead to and after all the violent actions we will still need to sit around the table and negotiate. We have an obligation to the citizens of our country to create the environment for development. Our young people should not be placed in the position they are today with the sort of environment that is happening at the moment.

Mr Speaker, we need to draw a line here and to move on towards creating a more democratic society regardless of our diversity. Democracy is a very long process and we should start to implement more of the principles of democracy in creating a society where the people of our country could feel that they are participants in the process of governance.

Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Hon Member.

Hon Member Mr Nadir.

Hon Manzoor Nadir: Mr Speaker, it would be remiss of me if I did not stand and at least record in the Hansard the position of the Party that I represent in this National Assembly on this important motion moved by

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the Hon Member Mr Ravi Dev. The attack of July 3 by purported members of the People's Solidarity Movement and supported by the PNC/R can only be seen as the first attempt to overthrow the democratically elected Government of Guyana. All persons who claim that they are supportive of democracy, all persons who speak of democracy, those who consider themselves democrats, must come out and condemn, without qualification, this attempt at the overthrow of the Government.

Mr Speaker, the Party I represent did so in no uncertain terms and went so far as calling for all those who were arrested in the compound of the building of the Office of the President to be charged with treason. The sharpest condemnation has to be given to this despicable act. And it is not that there wasn't warning. In fact perhaps, if today we were in a court of law one would have seen intent and also attempt, perhaps a stronger legal term is the overt action (not attempt, but intent and attempt rhyme quite nicely, Sir). That is what it is because we have heard for no less than a year words from leading members of the Peoples National Congress that Jagdeo is occupying Burnham's chair and he must be removed, that the Government must be removed at all cost. And, Mr Speaker, had I been here and sitting over there and speaking from over there, I would have stood up and firmly defended the right of a democratically elected government to rule. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, this is not an isolated incident. And how we see it ... first there was the attempt at economic sabotage. All forms of misinformation, threats and intimidation on part of the productive sector were carried out. The Internet is inundated by misinformation and the attempt has been, as Minister Rohee said, to stop people from investing in Guyana. The marches were intended to send that strong fear among all of our peoples especially the diaspora that support us so strongly. Yet, in spite of all of that, the economy recorded a 1.8 percent positive growth rate in 2001. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, a few weeks ago I was saying to my colleagues in **Cabinet that the tourist arrivals were good for the first five months and**

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one person said to me maybe you shouldn't say it because then they will try to disrupt even more. So the attempts at economic sabotage having failed, the rumour started spreading that August 1st would see the overthrow of the Government and that rumour was rife in our Guyanese society. That was being reinforced by statements by unnamed officials in the regional media who said and tried to paint a picture that the security forces of this country were divided. There was one headline carried by the Caribbean Media Corporation about three (3) weeks ago that said the GDF was unwilling to have joint patrols with the Guyana Police Force. That was totally false but it was plastered throughout the pages of the regional newspapers coincidentally, just a few weeks before the CARICOM Heads of Government were supposed to come to Guyana, and with all of this culminating on the day that the 23 CARICOM Summit was to begin - an Organisation that started with the three (3) B's, Bird Barrow and Burnham. On the 23 anniversary an attempt was made to overthrow the elected Government.

So, Mr Speaker, it would be remiss of me, and a neglect of my duty not to record this very strong position of my Party on this incident. That is why I am happy that it was brought as a matter of urgent national interest. Unfortunately, the debate deviated from the significance of that attempted overthrow into, what I consider, very petty politics. It denigrated into that, and Guyana must see it firmly as it is, and all democratic forces must come out and support democracy, support the elected Government.

Thank you. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank You Hon Member.

The Minister of Home Affairs

Hon J. Ronald Gajraj: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, we sat here at length and listened to the debate as it emanated from all the Parties that are represented in this Hon House. **But, what I would like to place on record is that the Government is fully**

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cognisant of this situation and attaches much importance to the events as, and when, they occur, giving rise to the current situation as a result of which my colleague has made a statement in his capacity as a Minister pointing out certain aspects of the Government's concern.

Mr Speaker, I do not propose to go back into all the political aspects that have been ventilated, some very much, some not so much, and perhaps some areas that have not yet been dealt with. Suffice it to say, however, that it is common knowledge out there as to the PNC/R's involvement and the extent of that involvement that gave rise to the situation which obtains today. And when I say the PNC/R's involvement, Mr Speaker, I must not be construed as meaning each and every supporter of the PNC/R Party. There are many senior personnel within the PNC/R Party that have called me and spoken with me on a number of occasions on different issues and I know that they have expressed much chagrin and disappointment at the position that has been taken by some of their colleagues. It is a fact that there are some senior members of that particular political Party that have sought to distance themselves from the situation which obtains at present in this country. But in my humble opinion it is not sufficient to just issue a disclaimer when the record shows your **involvement** over a period of time in fueling the situation that now obtains. There are those who seek now to take a pilot position when they themselves in weeks and months gone by mounted political platforms and harangued the people for them to continue to do what they are doing until this Government falls. Then come July 3rd whether by compunction or fear of prosecution they seek to take the high ground.

The Hon Member, Mr Dev, I am glad that he has sought and obtained leave to have this issue ventilated, even though we would have done so at a later stage when we considered it more appropriate. But I agree with him that the causes for the crime are, as he put them, proximate cause and ultimate cause. As has been mentioned, albeit perfunctorily, the involvement of ROAR in a certain manner encourages the crime situation that obtains today. I do not know if it is because of compunction on the part of the Hon Member Mr Dev when he realised that it was only the Tuesday when he mounted certain operations that were inundated

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with a partisan position, partiality and a lot of propaganda designed to fuel certain criminal activities. There was some collusion, Mr Speaker. The Hon Member would tell you that while the picketing exercise in which he was involved, which he organised, and in which he participated, was conducted at certain location in Lacytown he did so peacefully, but when they moved to another location right away they were confronted by picketers that were ready for a confrontation and the belligerence was obvious in the exercise as it played out there, hence its short life. Those are the situations that fuel the criminal situation in this country.

Mr Speaker, much has been said of the PNC/R's involvement in the July 3 incident. I do not wish to say much but this, that those who seek, like the Hon Mr Vincent Alexander, the Hon Mr Robert Corbin, the Hon Mr Hoyte and others were actively involved in the mobilisation of these people for July 3, incident. This is not to mention the likes of Philip Bynoe and Mark Benschop. I single out those names because there are Members of this Hon House, senior politicians in this country, who now seek to disclaim any responsibility for what transpired on July 3. On the evening of July 2, Mr Vincent Alexander addressed a meeting at Mocha Arcadia of about seventy persons (70) and he said among other things that the PNC/R had accepted the invitation of the People's Solidarity Movement to participate in the march scheduled for Wednesday 3rd July and urged his supporters to come out and march. Mr Corbin did likewise in North Ruimveldt, and Mr Mc Allister, an Hon Member of this House, at another venue on the very night, in addressing their supporters said, *tomorrow is the day*, meaning July 3rd. So it was an orchestrated position. But not only that, Mr Speaker, on the very 3rd July, Hon Member Mr Corbin, Hon Member Mrs Backer, Hon Member Mr Mc Allister among others were at the Square of the Revolution with people who had gathered there and had been dispatching them in various numbers in minibuses which were registered in favour of the PNC/R to various parts of the city. And yet now they come to disclaim. It must sound hallow in their mouths. Whether they want to loose Philip Bynoe like hot potato or otherwise I want to say this much, that the rule of law will take its course. *[Applause]* I will say this, Mr Speaker, that the **Philip Bynoe's and the Mark Benschop's have embarked on a crusade**

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where they are calling different people, including international organisations based in this country to intervene on their behalf so that the rule of law does not take its course. I want to say to those people that if they were inclined to get so involved it is a criminal offence because they will seek to pervert the course of justice. I want that message to go out to all of them in a very clear manner. *[Applause]*

Much criticism has been leveled against the Police particularly with respect to July 3. But I want to say, Mr Speaker, that the Police in the course of their operations are at all times guided by the principle of *minimum force*. And it is clear that the restraint that was exercised by the Police on July 3 was beyond comparison in this country, it has never before been seen. *[Applause]* Because very many people on both sides of the divide have said that had the police done what they were expected to do there would have been many more bodies coming out of that compound motionless. But the Police must be complimented, not only for July 3, bear in mind there were several other international events in this country within recent times, bear in mind there were a host of other criminal activities, bear in mind the criticisms that are being levelled against the Police, day in and day out, calculated and designed to demoralise the Police Force. But the Police have taken cognisance of that and have used that as a basis for their resolution to continue in the fight against crime. *[Applause]* Not only the Police but even the Army has been involved, albeit up to this point in time to a limited extent in dealing with the situation as it is. The Hon Mr Dev knows that because he gave an interview in the international paper or magazine in Miami, Florida and has sought to make certain statements that would necessarily scare investments from coming into this country. I would have no problem if it were a true representation of what obtained. But when people of this level goes out there and makes these pronouncements it is cheap popularity designed to obtain some objective that would inure to their advantage. That situation must be frowned upon and must be deprecated.

I want to assure this Honourable House, Mr Speaker, and the country at large that every effort is being made... the investigations into **the July 3 incidents have started. The investigations are incomplete, but,**

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again, having regard to our respect for the rights for those who were involved we have had them placed before the courts, but, we have made it clear to the courts that the investigations are incomplete and that more charges are likely to be laid, and, perhaps, more serious charges as well. But we want the nation to know that this will not be swept under the carpet.

I will not go back into what my colleagues, and even what the Hon Members on the other side have said with respect to the seriousness with which this incident in particular must be seen. Like any other country, Mr Speaker, we have crimes and it might surprise a lot for me to say that while the crime figures have not really increased the sensationalisation of the crimes gives an impression that there is an increase in crime. But we are conscious of the changing face of crime and we are fighting the psychological aspect of it and the physical aspect of it.

There are those who criticise asking why on July 3, those who were on the East Coast were allowed to get into Georgetown? Why were they not stopped probably on the East Coast moreso where they had not been given permission for the march? Mr Speaker, very often we have rocking chair generals. Mr Speaker we have analysis being done ex post facto, but when an analysis of the situation was done, as appeared on the morning of July 3, the course of action that was pursued was considered in the best interest of all concerned. We must be cognisant of what are our logistics, what are the resources at our disposal, what are our capabilities and what contingency plans we must have in place. All those are factors that will advise us as to what tactic or strategy should be employed, bearing in mind at all times, Mr Speaker, that the cure must never be worse than the malady. The Army continues to be deployed and so too the Police Force. There are several complaints we get that we have to pursue only to find while it is a usurpation of resources, it is the deployment of our ranks and all of that. We cannot take chances, and insofar as we can, we try to do more pro-active policing than reactive. We have had roadblocks set up, for example, Mr Speaker. I have several letters coming to me from people within communities who you expect will understand and give support to the law enforcement

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agencies but, instead, they complain about inconveniences caused because they might have to wait for about five minutes or so - you get that complaint.

It comes back to, as we said before, there is the talk about marginalisation. The PNC/R on the one hand says the blacks are marginalised, the Hon Member Ravi Dev. on the other hand, says the Indians are marginalised. And with the Police Force, Mr Speaker, if you do you are damned and if you don't do you are still damned. But we have to maintain resoluteness on course. We have certain objectives, we know what is at our disposal and we try to employ what we have. The Hon Member Mrs Holder talked about two little resources too late. I don't know if the Hon Member is aware of what were the resources available to the Police or the security forces in general when the PPP/C **assumed office** in 1992 as against what it is now. For this year alone, Mr Speaker, over \$300 million has been allocated for Capital Expenditure in the Guyana Police Force and with the recent measures that the President declared another \$100 million will be used for security development in this country.

It is one thing for us to say but we need to do a proper analysis. We have deviant behaviours out there. We have people who are beyond the capability of rationalising anything but they are the products of a certain era having regard to what our education system was. We are now reaping the benefits of that and that was why, Mr Speaker, when this Government assumed office much of the little budgetary cake that we had, had to go toward the social sector. We had to rebuild - not only start building, we had to undo what had been done then to start building in order to get it to the level at which we have it today. When we spend so much resources in those sectors we have our big brothers and sisters coming in offering a carrot more to our professionals enticing them to go, and compensate us with the criminal deportees. That is the world in which we live. That is the situation in which we have to operate. The policemen I say, Mr Speaker, there may be some justifiable criticism levelled at them, perhaps occasionally, in specific instances, but by and **large our security forces have stood up and have acquitted themselves**

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with distinction and I feel sure they will continue *[Applause]* to do so as we seek to improve the resources, not only material resources, Mr Speaker but human resources as well.

I think it was only yesterday in the newspaper that an advertisement had been put out inviting people to join the Guyana Police Force. All those law abiding citizens, all those who talk about imbalance in the Force what have they done to regularise the position? Those are situations we have to deal with. The security forces, I repeat, have displayed professionalism and we will encourage them to be professional because the security forces are to work across the board whether it be black, white, green or blue, whether it be ROAR, PNC/R, PPP/C, GAP/WPA or TUF. They are all entitled to the service and protection that the Police Force has to offer. *[Applause]* But it is easy, Mr Speaker for us to stand and criticise the security forces.

I need to mention Article 32 of the Constitution in the House for my colleagues at this level to remind themselves that it is not only the State or the security forces that has to do with the security of this country and the fight against crime, but it is also the state and every citizen *[Applause]* that must be involved.

Those who have been here and who want to level criticisms about the Police Force not being able as yet to recapture the five escapees would do a dishonesty to themselves if they do not recognise that we are not only dealing with a criminal situation here. The network that has been established, the social support that they have been able to get, the resources that have been made available to them, and given the technological advances that they have used to their advantage make it so much more difficult for them to be recaptured. It is not a case, Mr Speaker, that we want to go on a shooting spree. Even though we have lost many of our ranks and even though business people have, in fact, been murdered and, there have several felony murders committed, though I say not in all cases by those escapees, any of them or all of them, we have situations that we are concerned about and we need to address, **and all of us must get involved.**

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It is one thing for us to talk about our standard of living, it is one thing for us to talk about the remuneration packages, but yet we do things that scare away investors who would enhance the economy and as such afford a better wage package, a better standard of life, a better quality of life. So we must be involved at this level.

It is no point we go out there preaching partisan politics. Mr Philip Bynoe, for example, was called in by the Police Commissioner and spoken to and he said that while Hon Member Mr Ravi Dev is there representing Indians, nobody is there to represent blacks so he has to represent black people. I am repeating what he said and I don't think you have to go to secondary school much less the university, Mr Speaker, to see what such division would cause. It is not without significance that the Hon Member would refer to the 1950s and quote Dr Jagan's position. The very picketing exercise - *this time nah lang time politics; the PPP must go* - advocated against everything the PPP/C is trying to do in order to bridge the divide and pursue the development of this country. It is one thing for us to say one thing, but, very often our actions speak louder than our voice and, in more ways than one. Whether consciously or unconsciously we contribute to a situation and, in this case, the crime situation in this country.

We need to take stock of our position. We need to take stock of the people out there and as the Hon Member Rohee said, Mr Speaker, while there are some who may choose to masquerade down the streets and commit criminal acts there are those who are looking on and while they may not be Job they are exercising a lot of patience and we must do all that is within our powers to ensure that day does not come when one community in this country turns against another community. Very often politicians, to suit themselves, want to refer to certain periods in the history of this country because they are probably cornered with their backs to the wall and they think they can get solace, comfort and strength from those areas, but they are barking up the wrong tree, Mr Speaker, and they might not realise the dynamite that they are seeking to ignite in that process. They must be warned against it in the strongest possible terms [*Applause*] in as much as we must condemn all acts of crime and

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criminal activities. True, people have been robbed, people have been beaten, people have been abused. The sum total is that there has been brutality, but very often when we want to move into certain situations some people do not want to come and assist us with the prosecution whether by making statements available or not and given in those flare-up kind of situations, if you would permit me that term, please, Mr Speaker, very often they do not know the assailants even if they were to see them again. That is why whenever these situations happen... we have several activities for police notwithstanding which we try to provide protection at the car parks and the bus parks et cetera. But what happens sometimes is that while we try to move the police there at what might be considered the usual hours when employees from out of Georgetown might travel down to the park, in the light of the situation there are some who might move there a little earlier and so they might not have any significant police presence at that particular time or place. It is not an excuse, it is a reality. We are cognisant of it and are seeking to address it so that if we cannot annihilate those kinds of situations, at least, we will considerably reduce them.

But, Mr Speaker, there are those who give various adjectival descriptions to the crime situation in this country **without stopping** to look and see how much they, by themselves, or their organisations contribute to it. The point has been made before that some people create that situation so that they can benefit fully and keep a certain status quo, they can preserve a certain status quo, because they probably perceive that there are certain advantages to be derived. I think with the recent Heads of Government meeting in Guyana the point was made clear that you cannot want to commit criminal activities and atrocities and still expect to be countenanced at a certain level. No, no, no, that is the wrong message and we will not allow it. We will not allow it. If you are a politician, moreso a Member of the National Assembly, there is a certain decorum that is expected of you.

And, as an Hon Member said, the business of this country and this Government is not to be ventilated in the streets. There are forums where **those discussions can be had. Much emphasis has been placed on the**

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dialogue but it has also been pointed out that there are those who have shown a propensity not to get involved in dialogue or even if there is dialogue, to kill it, get rid of it. Those are situations that we must deal with.

But we must admire the resilience of our President for the resolution and the conviction with which he has committed himself to pursue the dialogue process because it is felt that in that process lies much advantage, at least, for the time being until we can determine some other ways and means by which the business of this country can be conducted for greater advantage to all and sundry irrespective of race, colour, class, creed, religion or political affiliation. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, there are those who advocate power sharing. I do not want to go into a political speech, I want to confine to the crime situation. But it is not for the want of efforts to have certain issues ventilated but there are those who have expressly said that that is a course that is not negotiable. They will not pursue that. Some senior elements in the PNC/R have said that clearly. I do not take a position whether I am for or against it at this point. I confine my address to the criminal situation as it is. And before I take my seat, Mr Speaker, I want to thank all the Members of this Honourable House who have contributed to this debate and I want to give an assurance to this Honourable House and to the nation out there that the rule of law would take its course and anybody, irrespective of whom, that tries to break the law or breaks the law, we will take such action as we consider appropriate or desirable in order to deal with the situation. The public must be reassured and the reassurance will be even greater if the citizens throughout this country were to come out, band themselves together and give support to the law enforcement agencies in order to deal with the criminals and the crime situation.

Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Hon Member.

Hon Member Mr Ravi Dev.

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Mr Ravi Dev: Mr Speaker, I was happy to hear that the Hon Minister

Ramsammy empathised so much with those who were beaten in the streets of Georgetown recently. It means that he has changed from 1992 when as a US citizen he hid in the US Embassy and left the members of his executive of the URP out on the sidewalk. So that is at least progress, that he can now empathise. I am happy too that Minister Rohee accepts that those who were not here during that struggle could also have a space, or else Dr Ramsammy...[Interruption]

The Speaker: Yes Hon Member.

Hon Dr Leslie Ramsammy: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, the Hon Member is making up a story that he knows nothing of and misleading this House and this Nation. Because if this Hon House and the Hon Member want to know what happened I can explain it to him. I was at my office.

The Speaker: You are saying that the assertion is not true.

Hon Dr Leslie Ramsammy: The assertion is a lie.

The Speaker: It is not true

Hon Dr Leslie Ramsammy: But, Mr Speaker, it is not just a lie, the Hon Member knows the truth.

The Speaker: It is not true, Hon Member.

Proceed Hon Member.

Mr Ravi Dev: Mr Speaker, these are matters that can be proven. Mr Leyland Roopnarine, one of the individuals who was left on the sidewalk will attest to that, but we move on.

It is very obvious also that the Hon Member is not very *au fait* with what he speaks and therefore most of what he spoke about were simply misconceptions of what I spoke about. For example, it was very

laughable for him to say that I attacked Dr. Jagan when, in fact, I lauded

the efforts of Dr Jagan, from 1957 to 1985, to seek unity to bring this country forward. All I was saying and asking is that the PPP/C acts in that fashion. But this is the problem when we deal with political dilly dance and we have to accept that.

So we move on, and I will deal with the comments of Minister Gajraj. He spoke about the picketing exercise of the ROAR Organisation in front of the PPP/C and the PNC/R. As a matter of fact, the point we made in front of the PPP/C was that at this juncture strong leadership was needed. Minister Gajraj concedes that he had intelligence from his people as to what was planned for the next day and this did not take great intelligence because it was common knowledge in this country.

ROAR as a matter of fact attempted to do its national duty to go in **front of the PPP/C** to tell them that they should stand up and do what is necessary. And in front of the PNC/R, the ROAR Organisation demanded that the PNC/R denounce violence because, unlike what Minister Gajraj and his advisers concluded, we felt that it was of almost certitude that under the context and the climate that had been created by **the same speeches** that he alludes to that violence was not only likely it was very probably. For that reason we demanded that the PNC/R **denounced violence**. We went in front of their Office and, as he said, they demonstrated that they would not take any kind of advice. So, for Minister Gajraj to make any linkages in terms of what ROAR did and what happened the following day is to deny his own intelligence which is:

(a) that the PNC/R had already applied for permission which had been denied and

(b) he had intelligence of what had been said at various and sundry meetings.

It, therefore, behooves us to ask why is it that Minister Gajraj and his advisers made the decision that they made? He concedes, or asks, or pleads that we accept that he made it in good faith. That does not cut

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any ice. The Captain of the Titanic in all good faith made a decision and sped full steam ahead and we know what happened. We also know what happened on 3rd July, 2002. It does not cut any water.

I would also like to remind Minister Gajraj, the good Member Mr Gajraj, that again his intelligence is flawed - intelligence in all of its various and varied meanings. He said that I spoke in Florida. I would just like to inform him that I was never in Florida to give the interview that he alludes to.

I move on, therefore, to Minister Rohee. I must complement Minister Rohee for the analytic approach that he took which demonstrated, I guess, the difference between Civic and the PPP. His approach betrayed the training, I guess, of Dr Jagan, where he did take an analytic approach and address the issues on its merits. I would remind the other Members of Civic that loudness does not equal cogency. Cogency comes out of logic and argumentation. I would say that Minister Rohee displayed that skill. *[Applause]*

I want to say that I was very pleased that Minister Rohee was bold enough to say, and I quote, *the PPP will never say it has not spoken for all Guyanese*. Meaning that it does speak for all Guyanese. This is a key point and it is a point which the PPP/C has to consider because this has been the position of the PPP/C throughout its history and, I guess, again, the General Secretary reiterates that. And I happen to accept that the PPP/C has tried its utmost to speak for all Guyana. But I want to pose this question to the PPP/C. How come it is then that 42% forty-two percent of Guyana, the African Guyanese of this country, after twenty-eight (28) years of hardship, in 1992 when by all objective indicators African Guyanese were suffering at that time more than Indo Guyanese, in terms of nutrition and other schemes of measurements, they voted for the PNC/R? I am posing to the PPP/C that it must address this problematic. I am happy that Minister Rohee also said that it might be a matter of perception. I am happy therefore that by implication he said that they might have to address that. That the PPP/C is finally **moving, that not because in an objective sense it takes a particular position**

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it means that that translates in a subjective sense. And it is out of subjectivity that 99.9% of the people of this world act.

I therefore am again restating all that I have said. ROAR is saying this not because it wants to be even handed, but as a matter of real politics. The PPP/C as the governing Party, as the Party that has the majority of the votes in this country, has to design a system that leads to stability. All of the work, all of the good intentions it has will be of nought if it does not address the problematic as to why Afro-Guyanese are not under its camp. All I have said, all that I am saying, (and I did not invoke power sharing) is that it is very obvious that new forms of governance have to be worked out, new models will have to be invoked because all of the people of this country must feel that they have a stake in the state. And that is as objective a statement as one may make.

There are three options. We can go down the path we are going down with all the good intentions. I take them at the word of the PPP/C, and therein lies what we are experiencing - nothing has changed since 1998 when we first spoke up about the problematic. The only thing that has changed is at least the PPP/C is willing to use the word Indians, that Indians are being beaten. Therefore, if that is not the approach there are two other approaches.

That would be the approach of Mr Burnham which is to assert hegemonic control. But, I think it has been demonstrated through our own history - we do not have to go abroad for any models - that hegemonic controls will not work. You cannot stifle democracy. There can be no development without democracy. You do not have to be Rosa Luxemburg to agree on that. All of us agree on that, that there can be no real development if there is no democracy.

The other model therefore is inclusiveness. As to the modalities and as to the specifics I leave that, as Minister Rohee says, to the creativity of the PPP/C which he assures us is not bereft of ideas.

As for my Party, the PPP/C likes to remind me that I got one seat

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out of left over votes, so it is possibly a half seat, but Manzoor has left me another one so I can rest my bag. I can only say this with all seriousness that we are at a crucial moment.

The PPP/C is going into a Congress within two weeks. All I am saying to this Party is, please confront the objective conditions that are out there, face reality and rise to the moment. Stop casting blame. Leaders cannot just be politicians they have to be statesmen, they have to look at the national good and I hope that is what we will have.

Thank you Mr Speaker. *[Applause]*

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: Hon Members this brings our business for today to an end.

Hon Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

Hon Mr Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr Speaker, I think it was a lively debate that has lasted for hours. For the first time in my experience a matter of urgent public importance has had this depth of discussion. *[Applause]*

I move that the National Assembly stands adjourned to a date to be fixed.

The Speaker: The National Assembly is adjourned to a date to be fixed.

Adjourned accordingly at 19:13 H