National Assembly Debates

PROCEEDINGS AND **DEBATES** OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2006-2007) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF **GUYANA UNDER** CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE **REPUBLIC** OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC Part I of II BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

29th Sitting 14:00h Friday 27 July 2007

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

The Hon Hari N Ramkarran SC, MP

Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government (42)

People's Progressive Party/Civic (41)

The United Force (1)

The Hon Samuel A A Hinds MP

(R# 10 - U Demerara/U Berbice)

Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

The Hon Clement J Rohee MP

Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon Shaik K Z Baksh MP

Minister of Education

The Hon Dr Henry B Jeffrey MP

Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation

The Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy MP

(R# 6 - E Berbice/Corentyne)

Minister of Health

The Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett MP

(R#9 - U Takutu/U Esseq)

Minister of Amerindian Affairs

*The Hon Dr Ashni Singh MP

Minister of Finance

*The Hon S Rudolph Insanally OR, CCH, MP

Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Hon Harry Narine Nawbatt MP

Minister of Housing and Water

The Hon Robert M Persaud MP

(R# 6 - E Berbice/Corentyne)

Minister of Agriculture

The Hon Dr Jennifer R A Westford MP - (Absent)

(R#7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Minister of the Public Service

The Hon Kellawan Lall MP

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

*The Hon Doodnauth Singh SC, MP

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

The Hon Dr Frank C S Anthony MP

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

The Hon B H Robeson Benn MP

Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

**The Hon Manzoor Nadir MP

Minister of Labour

The Hon Priya D Manickchand MP

- (AOL)

(R# 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)

Minister of Human Services and Social Security

The Hon Dr Desrey Fox MP

Minister in the Ministry of Education

The Hon Bheri S Ramsaran MD, MP

Minister in the Ministry of Health

*Non-elected Minister **Elected Member from TUF

The Hon Jennifer I Webster MP

Minister in the Ministry of Finance

The Hon Manniram Prashad MP

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Mr Donald Ramotar MP

The Hon Gail Teixeira MP

Mr Harripersaud Nokta MP

Mrs Indranie Chandarpal MP

Ms Bibi S Shadick MP

(R# 3 – Essequibo Is/W Demerara)

Mr Mohamed Irfaan Ali MP

Mr Albert Atkinson JP, MP

(R#8 - Potaro/Siparuni)

Mr Komal Chand CCH, JP, MP

(R# 3 - Essequibo Is/W Demerara)

Mr Bernard C DeSantos SC, MP - (Absent)

(R#4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs Shirley V Edwards JP, MP

(R#4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr Mohamed F Khan JP, MP

(R# 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam

Mr Odinga N Lumumba MP

Mr Moses V Nagamootoo JP, MP

Mr Mohabir A Nandlall MP

Mr Neendkumar JP, MP

(R#4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

*** Mr Steve P Ninvalle MP

Parliamentary Secretary

Mr Parmanand P Persaud JP, MP

(R# 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)

Mrs Philomena Sahoye-Shury CCH, JP, MP

Parliamentary Secretary

***Non-elected Member

***Mrs Pauline R Sukhai MP

Parliamentary Secretary

Mr Dharamkumar Seeraj MP

Mr Norman A Whittaker MP

(R# 1 - Barima/Waini)

Members of the Opposition (28)

(i) People's National Congress Reform 1-Guyana (22)

Mr Robert HO Corbin

Leader of the Opposition

Mr Winston S Murray CCH, MP

Mrs Clarissa S Riehl MP

Deputy Speaker, performing duties of Speaker of the Nat. Assembly

Mr E Lance Carberry MP

Chief Whip

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer MP

Mr Anthony Vieira - (Absent)

Mr Basil Williams MP

Dr George A Norton MP

Mrs Volda A Lawrence MP

Mr Keith Scott MP

Miss Amna Ally MP

Mr James K McAllister MP

Mr Dave Danny MP - (AOL)

(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr Aubrey C Norton MP

(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr Ernest B Elliot MP

(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Miss Judith David-Blair MP

(R#7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Mr Mervyn Williams MP

(Re# 3 - Essequibo Is/W Demerara)

Ms Africo Selman MP

Dr John Austin MP

(R# 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)

Ms Jennifer Wade MP

(R#5 - Mahaica/Berbice)

Ms Vanessa Kissoon MP

(R# 10 - U Demerara/U Berbice)

Mr Desmond Fernandes MP

(Region No 1 – Barima/Waini)

(ii) Alliance For Change (5)

Mr Raphael G Trotman MP

Mr Khemraj Ramjattan MP

Mrs Sheila VA Holder MP

Ms Chantalle L Smith MP

(R# 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr David Patterson MP

(iii) Guyana Action Party/Rise Organise and Rebuild (1)

Mr Everall N Franklin MP

OFFICERS

Mr Sherlock E Isaacs

Clerk of the National Assembly

Mrs Lilawatie Coonjah

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES 27 JULY 2007 PRAYERS

[The Clerk reads the Prayer]

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The Speaker: Honourable Members, I would just like to announce that the Honourable Members of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations are reminded that the Meeting which was scheduled for today Friday, 22 July 2007, at 3.00pm has been postponed to a date to be fixed, obviously because we are meeting in between.

PRESENTATION OF STATEMENTS AND REPORTS

The Speaker: Honourable Members, I present to the Assembly Minutes of Proceedings of the 5th Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on Thursday, 12 July 2007.

QUESTIONS AND NOTICE

The Speaker: Members, there is only one question on the Order Paper which is for oral reply. Mr Norton was supposed to ask the question; I noticed he is not here. You can proceed Mr Clerk.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES 27 JULY 2007 PRIVATE MEMBERS BUSINESS

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Government Business

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1 - AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY

WHEREAS the 25th day of March, 2007 marked the bicentenary of the abolition of the Slave Trade Act between Africa and the British Empire;

AND WHEREAS scholars estimate that between 50 and 100 million Africans were either killed or abducted during the existence of European slavery and the slave trade:

AND WHEREAS it is universally accepted that slavery and the transatlantic slave trade were the most inhumane tragedies in the history of mankind:

AND WHEREAS our African fore parents, first as slaves and then as free men and women built the infrastructure of modern Guyana and made unparalleled contributions to the development of Guyana,

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES 27 JULY 2007 BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly unequivocally acknowledges the immense debt that all Guyanese owe to our African ancestors and recognizes the outstanding contribution they have made to the development of Guyana;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That an African Land Commission be established, similar in status to the Rights Commissions established under Article 232G of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, to determine the issue of ancestral land rights of African Guyanese;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly urges the British Government to enact measures to effect reparation to the descendants of the victims of the African Slave Trade and slavery.

[NP 141 (M32 Opp 10) published on 2007-04-17]

The Speaker: Honourable Members, we can now resume the Debate on the Motion relating to the African Slave Trade and Slavery.

Honourable Member, Mr Everall Franklyn, you are next on the list.

Mr Everall Franklyn: Thank you Mr Speaker. A lot has been said about this vulnerable crime that has befallen the Africans in the diaspora as well as on the Continent. This for me, is always a very emotional topic, as I carry myself back to days when we were avid readers of the Mandingo series of books which evoked great emotion, anger and I remember one incident when late into the night, my mother came in and said: "Turn off the light, boy," and I answered her as if I was speaking to Maffra. The slap that I collected brought me straight back to reality. The anger just from reading what transpired stayed with me for a long time. Look at the picture. The devastating effect this Trade has had on Africa and Africans is indeed, a crime against humanity and I want to support the strong language proposed by the Minister of Culture, Mr Anthony because I do not think this is a topic we can dress up or be diplomatic about. It is indeed a crime and crimes should be met with punishment; although that may not be practical in this sense, we are talking about reparation, but indeed something has to be done.

From 1441 to 1896, just four years shy of the twentieth century, 1896 ... that was the time when slavery was abolished in Puerto

Rico over four hundred years. And, if we agree that this definitely was a crime against a people then, we have to find redress; we have to find a way for these people to atone for what transpired.

These crimes were committed and were the basis for the creation of wealth in many European countries, the same European countries many of which are the same we go today for help. If you would permit me, Mr Speaker, just to list some of the countries that are dated, as I said before, 1441 - Atom Gun Calvin, the Portuguese sailor seized ten (10) Africans and that was usually taken as the beginning of the Slave Trade.

I shall skip 1515 - First samples of Caribbean sugar sent to Spain ... The sweet taste of sugar had bitter consequences for the Africans.

- 1662 John Hawkins, first English Slave Trader, captured three hundred (300) slaves in Sierra Leone.
- 1666 Dutch East India Company with monopoly of American Trade bought from a combination of private Companies.
- 1647 first Barbados sugar sent to England.
- 1672 establishment of the Royal African Company to control the British Slave Trade.
- 1698 the private traders, on payment of 10% duty on English goods exported to Africa were given Parliamentary approval to participate in the Slave Trade.

- 1700 Limpo's first Slave ship, the *Liverpool Merchant*, took two hundred and twenty (220) slaves to Barbados and sold them for four thousand, two hundred and thirty-nine pounds sterling, (£4,239).
- 1713: Treaty of Utrecht Haciendo ... The Treaty between England and Spain granted England monopoly of Spanish Slave Trade for thirty (30) years. England promised one hundred and forty four thousand (144,000) slaves at a rate of four thousand, eight hundred (4,800) per year.
- 1750 Parliament that is, the British Parliament gave annual grants to British Royal Africa Company totalling ninety thousand pounds sterling £90,000) to ply trade, as an incentive I would think.
- And then, in 1808, Trans Atlantic Slave Trade abolished in the British Empire and the United States.
- 1813 Sweden abolished the Slave Trade.
- 1821 Spain declared Slave Trade illegal.
- 1863 Holland abolished slavery.
- 1865 Abolition of Slavery in the United States which is known as the 13th Amendment.
- 1873 Puerto Rico abolished slavery and in
- 1886 Cuba abolished slavery ... well, let me correct it, it was not Puerto Rico, it was Cuba, four years short of the twentieth century.

So, Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that the Europeans gained from this horrendous (I find it difficult to call it) Trade. Here at home, before we even approach the British and the other European countries to deal with some form of reparation, and some redress for this great wrong, I think we must do what we can with our own resources, to deal with some of the problems left over by this great crime.

Therefore, I feel that this Assembly, and judging from Mrs Backer's presentation where she alluded to or stated that some Lawyers, free of cost, which is a rarity in this country, got forty (40) if I remember correctly, titles for persons who were on ancestral lands and they got the title.

I feel that this Assembly, to honour the memory of those who have suffered so greatly, could find enough money to pay some Lawyers, including those who give their services freely, to see how many other persons could be helped. This should not be a

political football to be thrown about. We have to honour the memory and the best way in honouring the memory is to fix some of the problems that we can fix.

I would like, with your permission Mr Speaker, just to quote from the official record of the Hansard of the Debate initiated by Lord Giffer Rose in the House of Lords of the British Parliament on the 14 March 1996 concerning African reparation. Lord Giffer Rose asked Her Majesty's Government whether they will make appropriate reparation to African nations and to the descendents of Africans for the damages caused by the Slave Trade and the practice of slavery and I quote, the Noble Lord:

My Lord, the question raises an issue which is being debated with increasing vigour and intensity by African people around the world and by African people I mean of African descent, wherever they live, whether in Africa itself, in the United States, in Great Britain, or in the Caribbean.

The underdevelopment and poverty which affect the majority of countries in Africa and in the Caribbean as well as the ghetto conditions in which many black people live in the United States and elsewhere, (I am not speaking in general terms in respect of the laziness, incompetence or corruption of African people or their Government) they are in very large measure, the consequences, the legacy of one of the most massive and terrible criminal enterprises in recorded human history that is, the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade and the institution of slavery.

He goes on:

The thesis I advance tonight is that, in accordance with international law, and with basic human morality, measures of atonement and reparation are due from the successors of those who instigated and carried out the trade and who profited massively from it to the descendants of the victims of the criminal enterprise who still suffer in many different ways from the effects of the crime.

He concluded

As well as the consequences in Africa and the Caribbean, there is a further element in the legacy of Slave Trade which is the damage done to...

The Speaker: Honourable Members, we have to pause a while. We had some problems with our electricity which is being looked after. We had to switch over.

Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr Everall Franklyn: Thanks.

... as well as the consequences in Africa and the Caribbean, there is a further element in the legacy of Slave Trade which is the damage done within Britain, United States and other Western society, the inhumane philosophy of white supremacy and black inferiority were inculcated into European people to justify their atrocities which were being committed by Christian people upon fellow beings. The philosophy continues to poison our society today.

And he ended by saying:

Today Government and Parties are not guilty of fostering the Slave Trade (which is an argument that has always been presented) but they would be responsible if they did nothing to remedy the injustice, the suffering, the poverty, and the racism

which the Slave Trade and the institution of slavery inevitably engendered into present day.

It would probably be some information for some, that one of the Banks that financed a lot of the slavers, (it was the Haywood Bank which later became Barclays Bank) is poised to be the fifth largest in the world if they merge with another Dutch Bank (ABM Amral) and I think it probably has happened. They had financed one hundred and twenty-five (125) voyages and thirty-eight thousand, six hundred and twenty (38,620) people, six thousand and forty-five (6,045) of which perished. These are the people who we may have to go to get finance from; it is ironic but it is true.

Mr Speaker, in our quest to fight for reparation, I do not think we can leave the Church of England out of the fray. The Church also must be called to account. In the Guardian Limited you can get this on guardian.co.ukreligion. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the issue of Monday, 26 March 2007, the Church owned slaves on Caribbean plantations and did not free them until 1833, twenty-six years after the abolition of the Trade in the British Empire, twenty-six years after.

The British Government paid the Church compensation for the loss of the slave labour. The Bishop of Ectacle and three business colleagues were paying close to £13,000 in 1833 in compensation for the loss of six hundred and sixty-five (665) slaves. I believe if we are to pursue reparation the Church has also to be brought into the fore.

With regard to our CARICOM brothers and sisters pursuing actions, I want to believe that one of the first slave rebellions in this whole hemisphere, took place right here. I think we have an historical responsibility to take the lead as far as the fight for

reparation is concerned. I am not saying we leave out our CARICOM brothers and sisters but, I think they are much more susceptible to pressure from the tourist industry and I feel we owe it to our ancestors to carry that fight; we owe it to them to carry that fight. And therefore, we all agree crimes were committed, we all agree that those who carried out the crime must be brought to bow. What we have not done is to seriously sit down and work out what we need and what we are asking for. What we also have to bear in mind is that although the African Guyanese would have to take a leading role in this issue, it cannot be done without the involvement of all Guyanese, with a clear understanding that a positive outcome would benefit all of Guyana.

I also believe, I see in the Motion, to talk to the British Government. Well, the Government has changed. I believe we should direct our efforts towards the British Parliament which would have a much better effect, to my mind. People hide behind Government is their imperpetuity; they were there when they sanctioned this Trade, when they legalised this Trade and therefore, they should be held accountable, just like the Church of England who blessed the slave ship.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I hope that this Assembly would want to see it fit to find some resources quickly, to deal with the settling of land issues of our African ancestors. It has been proven that some redress and some resolution can be had and therefore, I feel an appropriate amount should be set aside to promote this very noble cause. I hear somebody saying that is relative; time is also relative and therefore, we had a long time, in previous Government also, to deal with this issue and we did not deal with it then so I think (*Time!*) forget the past, let us deal with what we can do now and make sense out of a very tragic... it is a tragedy what happened,

but it is also a tragedy that we did nothing for so long. Mr Speaker, with those words, I thank you. [Applause]

The Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable Member.

Honourable Member, Mr Odinga Lumumba.

Mr Odinga N Lumumba: Thank you. Mr Speaker, I think today represents the most historical and important moment for me in this Assembly and I anticipate that my statements and my position would be universal. I was a little disturbed last night, and I want to say a few things before I get into the meat of my presentation, because I thought that what we would have done in this presentation by either Side was not to cast blame. Do not talk about the aftermath and who was responsible for the aftermath.

Slavery as a weapon, Mr Speaker, was so powerful that the aftermath cannot be placed on the shoulders of anyone. The aftermath has also to be placed on the shoulders of those who caused slavery. It is important to note that I believe also, by some Members of the other Side that the issue of land and the village issues have to be dealt with at some point. They are from Buxton and I was even told that we were large land owners and we would like to see them resolved at some point but, Mr Speaker, we must be concerned about narrow nationalism. The land issue must be separated from this Debate and this discourse but we must not be left aside. We must find the mechanisms to deal with it. This Government cannot share this burden by itself.

I was going through some documents and I found out that the Local Democratic Organ Act of 1980 created ten administrative districts or regions. In those days the people in charge of Guyana were blacker than black; they were Blackman's Spade; therefore it

was an opportunity to regularise those situations but let us not cast blame, let us look ahead.

However, Mr Speaker, if we need to debate this issue, let us separate it and let us spend a week to debate the reasons for all its complications with the village issues. We can do that on both Sides but that is not the way we want to go, Mr Speaker, that is not where we want to go. It certainly would be a backward step to cast blame on each other. I said earlier, we must reject narrow nationalism, we must place the burden on those who initialised modern day slavery, we must find tactics, strategy that will lead to the end result, and the end result is how we are to deal with this old issue of compensation.

This Debate cannot be about some lands to Buxton and Nabaclis and Victoria, this Debate cannot be about lands for black people in Mobil Alabama and Jackson, Mississippi; this Debate cannot be about some lands for some black people in Maypen, Jamaica, this Debate has to be about addressing the wrong that was carried out against African people, this Debate has to be about the millions who lost their lives, this Debate has to be about what Walter Rodney, the noble Guyanese talked about, the underdevelopment of Africa. Why we are here today is to beg the IMF and the World Bank for 2% and a 1% on a no interest loan. That is what this Debate has to be about, Mr Speaker. [Applause]

Some of us have short memory, like the Member of Parliament earlier spoke about some issues we need to address here. At one time he almost sounded like an apologist to the British but I am glad he cleaned it up later. What was or what is slavery when we talk about it. Slavery was a social economic system under which certain persons known as slaves, were deprived of personal

freedom and compelled to perform labour or services free of charge: no cheque, no salary, no bonus, the only payment was more work, more work, more whip on their backs. Slaves were held against their will from the time of their capture, purchased at birth, and were deprived of their right to leave or refuse to work or to receive compensation in return for their labour.

Mr Speaker, in 1926, Slavery Convention described slavery as the status and/or condition of a person over whom all or any who attaches the right to ownership and exercise. Slaves could not leave their owner, an employer or a territory without explicit permission. In recent years, Slave Trade has increasingly been referred to as a holocaust, in particular by African Americans. African Americans have been the forefront of this issue and we, Members of CARICOM, are now becoming part of this global effort to deal with this issue. What has occurred and happened to Africans and Africa, must be compared with what has to be chosen under the National Rule or the original American in the hands of the Europeans.

There are a number of Movements calling for reparation. These Movements are concerned with not just how many people were able to make the journey but, also the impact of the Slave Trade on population growth over the centuries and that is very important, we shall come to that, Mr Speaker. Mr Gibbon Wakefield said about slavery:

The reasons for slavery are not morals but economical circumstances, they relate not to vice and virtue but to production. With the limited population of Europe in the sixteenth century the free labour necessary to cultivate the stable crop,

the sugar, tobacco and cotton, could not have been supplied in quantities and for it to permit large scale production slavery was necessary for this.

We did not become slaves because they did not like us, because of our race or height; it was an economic issue that is why the issue of compensation was so relevant. [Noisy Interruption: ... Attorney Williams, when it comes to ... you are very backward. I never said the land issue should be thrown aside, I said I do not think this is the right place to do it. I agree that it must be debated and it must be discussed. You come first; you should be the Leader because you have more votes than Corbin. You had better let Corbin not hear that ... You could tell Corbin that? I am talking publicly; I want him to hear that ... what is disturbing black people in this country]

Mr Speaker, here again is the origin of Negro slavery, this is by Dr Eric Williams. "Captive and Slavery" and I want to reinforce this issue because it is important in our quest to ask for compensation. The reason was economic, not racial, it has to do not with the colour of the labourer, but the cheapness of the labour. As compared with the Indian and White labour, Negro slavery was eminently superior. In each case, discussed in North Carolina, it was a survival of the fittest; both Indian slavery and white servitude were to go down before the black man's superior endurance, facility, and labour capacity.

As we deal with this issue, Mr Speaker, in particular as we talk about the economic implications, we must also look at what this old entity dealt with the production level, not only of Africa but also of the Caribbean. Walter Rodney, in How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, said:

"However, on every continent, from the fifteenth century onwards, the population showed constant and sometimes spectacular national increase. While it is striking that the same did not apply to Africa, one European scholar gave the following estimates of world population, according to continents:

1650: African - 100,000,000

Europe - 103,000,000

Asia - 257,000,000

1750: Africa - 100,000,000

Europe - 144,000,000

Asia - 437,000,000

1850: Africa - 100,000,000

Europe - 274,000,000

Asia - 656,000,000

1900: Africa - 120,000,000

Europe - 423,000,000

Asia – 857,000,000"

You might want to ask the relevance of these statistics. These statistics show clearly, the depopulation of Africa and the ramification of the population; the loss of brains, the loss of skills, the destruction of families. In 1750, Africa, like it said, one

hundred and six million and Asia five hundred and two million. 1800: Africa 107M; Asia 635M. But, it is important to note that the abolition of slavery and to recent times, you can now see the shift and the growth pattern in Africa.

Today, 2005, Africa now has 887M people, Asia: 3B; Europe: 724M. Just casually calculate and think in terms what would have been Africa's population if it had not been for the European Slave Trade today. Think in term of the level of development of Africa if so many brilliant people, so many Leaders, so many families, were not destroyed. So, we deal with compensation all be it that these are issues that have been put in the equation.

Professor Melford: Consequences of Slavery:

The damage brought by the Slave Trade in slavery, according to the distinguished Jamaican Journalist, John Maxwell (I am quoting Professor Melford) is not to be measured simply by the millions slaughtered by slave hunters in Africa, thrown overboard on the Middle Passage, or beaten to death in Jamaica or Haiti, but in the destruction of important lines of human development, in the triumph of the parasite over the producer in historical truth in human development to advance the interest of small groups."

Mr Speaker, 'the real result of slavery and its child 'Capitalism', Maxwell further insists, and if to take reparation and advocate to save the importance, cannot be measured in damages assessed on some high-fulutin actual basis; they are rather to be counted as losses to civilisation.'

Let us think in those terms; what were the losses to civilisation? Where would civilisation be today if Africa was not destroyed or held back by the Slave Trade?

Rodney again emphasised that

the European Slave Trade was a direct block in removing millions of youths and young adults who are the human agents from which inventiveness springs, from which creativity springs, the basis for knowledge. Those who remain in the areas badly hit by slave captivity were preoccupied about their freedom rather than their improvement in production.

There is a tendency sometimes, to, in some areas of the world, say black people, not African people nor Indian people and coloured people, lazy. But, what Rodney, Mr Speaker, pointed out, that people were so busy ducking and hiding in the bushes, they did not have time to think about other levels of development. They were held back; it is like a hundred meter race. We are all on the same base, the same status but you put 40 lbs steel on one man's back and say: "I want you to win the race." The great Rodney again:

The massive loss to the African labour force was made critical because it was composed of able bodied young men and young women; slave buyers preferred them between the ages of 15 and 35 and preferably, early 20s, the sex ratio being 2:1 men and women respectively, the strength of a community, the backbone of a community. Slave Trade left Africa without backbone.

Again, Mr Speaker, Rodney!

There was no reason for wanting to call upon the European skills: the African economies would have had little room for such skills unless negative types of exports were completely stopped. A remarkable fact that is seldom brought to light is that several African Rulers in different parts of the Continent saw the situation clearly and sought European technology for internal development which was meant to replace trade in slaves.

And that is important because in this discourse, at this negotiation, the Europeans want to tell us we are slaves and our brothers were slaves, therefore it is natural for them to have some slaves and we must refrain to refuse and argue. Europeans deliberately ignored those African redress that Europe should place certain skills and techniques at their disposal.

This was an element in the Congo situation of the early sixteenth century which had already been mentioned. It happened in Ethiopia also: though with the Europeans no trade in captives was established.

There have been several arguments about compensation but it is important that we focus on the economic arguments. African people, according to Thompson, 03 February, 2003 Presentation: *How Slavery Helped Build a World Economy*:

African people were captured and transported to the Americas to work. Most European colonial economies in the Americans in the sixteenth

through the nineteenth century were dependent on the slaves; African labour, for their survival.

According to European Colonial Office, the abundant land they had discovered in the Americas, was useless without sufficient labour to exploit it. Important: *The abundant land in the Americas was useless without sufficient labour to exploit.* Slavery and labour exploitation were preferred but no European or Native American sources proved accurate to the task.

Of the over 6.5 million that survived across the Atlantic, and settled in the Western Hemisphere between 1492 and 1776 only one million were Europeans; the remaining 5.5 million were Africans. An average eight percent of these enslaved African women and children were employed mostly as field workers and worked without pay. There is a checked comment, Mr Speaker, they worked without pay.

More than half of the enslaved Africans, captive in the Americas, were employed on the sugar plantations. Sugar developed in the leading slave, a produced commodity in the Americas. During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, Brazil dominated the production of sugarcane. Mr Speaker, reparation for slavery for an historical issue has its origin in the United States and suggests that the Government apologise to slave descendants for their hardship bestowed on them, whether in the form of money, land, or goods.

There is also a new Movement to secure reparation, particular from Western ex-colonial Proverbs for Africa and African nations. In 2001, the UN sponsored a World Conference against racism: African nations demanded a clear apology for slavery and for slave trading countries but, with no success. 2001, not 1001 Mr. Speaker, the arrogance of the European masters were still in place,

even in 2001 they could not even say sorry. Seven years ago, six years ago, they still refuse to say: "I am sorry."

The arguments surrounding the reparation are based on the formal discussion about reparation and the actual land reparation received by African-Americans, which were taken away. In 1865, African preference States in America were defeated in the America Civil War; General William Sherman issued speciality Orders. Around forty thousand posts were settled on four hundred thousand acres in Georgia, South Carolina. However, President Johnson reversed the Order after Lincoln was killed and the land was returned to the white post.

Mr Speaker, Rodney again! You will know soon. The argument of compensation because of economic stagnation and it goes back to this old issue of development and how it had been affected. Rodney talks about development means 'the capacity for self-sustainable growth; it means that it can be much registered advantages which in turn promotes further practice. The laws of industry and skill in Africa were extremely small; it measured from the viewpoint of modern scientific achievement or even in England in the late eighteenth century. However, it must be borne in mind that they held-back at one stage of developing, means that it was impossible to go to the next stage. You must understand this if you are a revolutionary like you; you must understand that.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to say that you are not a revolutionary too, so please I must apologise.

The Speaker: My descendants were well established, Honourable Member.

Mr Odinga L Lumumba: Alright, thank you, Sir, thank you, Sir. [Applause] Mr Speaker, when a person was forced to leave school after only two years of primary school education, it is no reflection on him that he is academically and intellectually less developed than someone who had the opportunity in school right throughout University. What Africa experienced in the early centuries of trade was precisely a lot of development opportunity and this is of the greatest importance in our argument on compensation; the loss of development opportunity.

'Negro slavery', according to Eric Williams, Mr Speaker, 'was only a solution in certain historical circumstances of the Caribbean labour practice'. Sugar meant labour, at times that labour had been enslaved, and other times free, at times black, and other times white or brown or yellow. Slavery in no way implied in any scientific sense inferiority of the Negro or the Black man. My friend, Basil would not have been inferior in that period, he's brilliant, my friend, he might have been working in a...

Mr Speaker, I think it is important that we briefly look at some historical issues here: Historical international justification for this issue of Reparation. This is not a blow to the sky; this Movement is nothing new and it is grounded in history, it is grounded in history. The principle of reparation dates back to the Anglo-Saxon Court of England before the modern Congress, for those who did history. On the present day English legal system judges must consider making compensation as part of the sentence for crime. Section 130, in England of the Fouls of Criminal Act, 2000 requires the court to state the reason if they do not issue a Compensation Order. Mr Speaker, these are important issues because as we sit with the prince's scholars and their apologies we must be able to provide this kind of information.

Going back to the legal historical issues here, under the, Civil Liberty Act in America, of 1988 signed in the Law by President Ronald Regan, the United States Government apologised to Japanese American during World War II and provided Reparation of US\$20,000.00 to each survivor. Our cause, Mr Speaker, is grounded in international law recent, the precedent has been set. For many years, Native Americans have received compensation for land seized in the United States by signing various Treaties. Other countries have opted to pay reparation for grievances recent reparation, Mr Speaker, recent and, this is important because as we argue this issue we must not get caught up with narrow nationalism. The issue is bigger than a few house lots; this issue is bigger than a few house lots, this is a world issue, this is about millions of African people who lost their lives and we must not get tied up arguing about house lands; those are domestic issues that we must regard if we are intelligent enough to work together.

After the Gulf war, Mr Speaker, Iraq accepted United Nations Security Council Resolution 687...you do not understand the concept. United States Organisation Commission was established and 350B declared was found by the Government. These men are supposed to be bright, Mr Speaker, they do not understand the nexus; it is unfortunate. It is important to note that the British Government set aside £20M to compensate the plantation owners because they let Kunta Kenta, get away, when slavery was abolished. They have the reversed type of Reparation; they got £20M for allowing somebody to be free. What irony! What irony!

If there is anything that we must put our fingers on, as we argue for Reparation, is the German Holocaust, Reparation of 1952. We hear previous Parliament debated whether we accept Holocaust Reparation from Germany in January, 1952. In September, the Chancellor of West Germany signed Agreement which provided one hundred and seventy-five million (175M) in goods and services to the State of Asia as compensation for those survivors and one hundred and ten million (110M) to the Claims Conference of Programme to finance the relief, rehabilitation and re-settlement of Jewish holocaust survivors. There is a law of Agreement on this.

Finally, let me say that I have decided to take the broader approach to this issue to show what has happened worldwide is startling.

The Speaker: Before you proceed on that broad approach, your time is up. [Laughter]

Hon Samuel A A Hinds: Mr Speaker, I propose that the Honourable Member be given to another fifteen minutes conclude his presentation.

Mr Odinga L Lumumba: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I feel honoured. I am hoping and I anticipate that we should be able to work as one on this issue; we should be able to understand that the two hundred thousand or three hundred thousand (I do not know the direct amount) African in Guyana is part of the millions of Africans in the world today who have been affected and, once we recognise that we must understand that we must be on this ship, this ship that is moving towards Europe and America to collect and we must be on the right side of history in this collection process. If we are serious, if we are credible and we are leaders, it

is important we isolate our domestic issues from the international issue in our discourse. But, at the same time, we cannot set aside those historic issues in Guyana that need to be resolved so, we must put mechanisms together, Mr Speaker, to resolve this issue if we are leaders. Like I said earlier, if we decide to cast blames, let us set aside one week by the market where we can argue this issue because I am convinced that the errors made in 1980 by the PNC/R-1G were created (*you gone back there*)... I have got to go back there because I want you not to speak on this issue again (interruption)... no, I never lived there; it is capadulla there; I do not want to go back there, I want us to deal with this issue of African people being enslaved, being killed, being murdered, be working for free, that is what I want to deal with. The other issue, we can deal with it and we must deal with it, like I said, we <u>must</u> deal with.

So, in closing, Mr Speaker, I feel very proud today to be here to speak on this issue and I hope and anticipate that by the end of the day we will find a solution, not only to join our CARICOM brothers in the quest for compensation we will also, at the end of the day, be able to find some mechanism where the Government and the Opposition can come up with a formula to deal with those problems that exist in Guyana. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Member Mr Trotman!.

Mr Raphael G.C.Trotman: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to make a very short contribution this afternoon and to say that, except for some moments where I became confused, I believe that the Honourable Member, Mr Lumumba, captures the passion that we hope to have seen displayed in other Members of his Side as

we debate a Motion which is important to all of us. It pains me to know, Mr Speaker that we are falling over each other in trying to convince each other that we are more interested in this issue than the other.

We celebrate in a few days the 173rd Anniversary of Emancipation of Slavery and in March of this year we celebrated the 200th Anniversary of the abolition of the Slave Trade by Britain. To those who are free, they celebrate, others commemorate. It is a matter of personal choice. What also pains me is that forty-one years after we gained independence, we are now discussing for the first time, this sordid issue of slavery, emancipation, cruelty and inhumanity. In a sense, all of us are being indicted with every word that we utter. Why is it that our fore-bearers in this House did not, Mr Speaker, did not do something about this matter. Nonetheless, we are never too late and so we are debating a Motion today brought by the Honourable Member, Mrs Backer.

My contribution, as I said, is brief, I support the Motion, and I sense despite some moments of confusion that the Government Side also supports the Motion is so far as it calls for one, apology and two, for reparation. I am however, quite, and I shall use the word *disgusted*, by a certain Resolve Clause in a document entitled "New Amendments" and it is that part which says that the University of Guyana I suppose, a University is in the Region, should conduct research to support the demand for both an apology and compensation.

My view is that there is nothing more to be researched on this matter. We do not need to build a further case and I mean no disrespect to any eminent professor or lecturer throughout the Caribbean or in Africa. I recall Professor Ally Massouri. What

more research do we want if we were to use Mr Speaker, Mr Lumumba's presentation in and or itself? That is the research that we need as it detailed the years of cruelty, as it detailed the millions of people who were killed and slaughtered; what more research do we need to refer to Universities? Our Universities have distilled, have discussed and debated on this matter for decades upon decades. Many dissertations, Mr Speaker, have been written, none more pronounced than that by Dr Walter Rodney. What more do we need?

And so, I am disappointed that we cannot find consensus and compromise and that we are asking that this matter be referred once again to a University which has been speaking to us from 1966, telling us what it is we must do, yet we ask them once again to look at the matter. It is apposite to note as well that in times past, not so long ago I recall when we put a proposal before this House when we were debating the Casino Gambling Bill for the University of Guyana to continue its merits and demerits, we were told that there was no need, that our Universities do not need to be looking into these matters. Yet, in a matter that the Law would refer to as *Trite* we now ask the University to look at it again and I am disappointed.

But nonetheless, Mr Speaker, I support this Motion, I believe that as I said, we can find consensus; it is highly disappointing after hearing the speeches on both Sides. As I said, we follow each other, try to prove who is more interested in the welfare of these people yet, forty-one years after we gained independence, we are now for the first time, debating a Motion at this time and it is an indictment against all of us today and an indictment to all of us who sat in this Chamber before we did. And that Mr Speaker is our record, as sad as it is. I, Mr Speaker, have had the fortune of

getting hold of a book in paperback which my father has loaned me and I need to point out that it has been loaned to me, and in it there are some references to Guyana (I have to give it back to him) and I should mention that my father is one of the two lawyers to whom Mrs Backer referred, who has been helping certain villagers in Nabacalis/Golden Grove and in these pages contained some of what is going on or went on and I would like to read from page 67 of a book called *Bury the Chains*: *The British struggled to abolish slavery*.

And it said:

"One final set of grim numbers on the lines the way slaves and sugar plantations like Codrington were systematically worked to an early death."

When slavery ended in the United States less than half a million slaves imported over the century had grown to a population of nearly four million. When it ended in the British West Indies the total slaves imported were over two million but the surviving slave population was only about six hundred and seventy-five thousand (675,000). More than twice as many slaves were shipped to the island of Jamaica alone than to all thirteen North American colonies later combined. The Caribbean was a slaughter house, that is to say, the conditions experienced by our fore parents in the British West Indies were incomparable to any of those that were meted out elsewhere. Even to those experienced by the Honourable Prime Minister when he said he had personal experience of slavery in Greece.

Mr Speaker, when we discuss and debate this matter this afternoon and like we did last evening, it pains me to know we are still fighting each other. Why is it that if there is a request for a

commission on lands, why can it not be introduced? I will be the first to say that we should have a Land Commission looking at the entire issue of lands. A greater part of it has to be for the descendants of Africans yes, but there are many other people in this country without lands, many poor people whose lands have been taken away, whose relatives stole their lands by getting hold of Transport and faked documents. I see no reason why we cannot as a combined group of Legislators agree to a Commission to examine ways in which we may resolve the debt issue of ancestral land and I see nothing sinister about it; I do not know why the Government loathes the idea and I do not know what they are afraid of. All we ask or, all that is being asked for is a Commission to examine the issue and come up with recommendations for the future. That is all; we agree that it was simple; we agree that it was wrong, we agree it was the greatest form of inhumanity ever committed by man against man yet we are told separate the international from the local. How can we demonstrate to the world that we are sincere if at home we are incapable of looking after the problem first? [Applause]

I see nothing wrong with the Motion being in two parts: one that says let us have a Land Commission. I have not read this Motion to mean that we should right now go into Buxton and look at the Stephenson's and Golda's lands or that we should go to Golden Grove and look at the Trotman lands but what I see the Motion to be saying Mr Speaker, is let us examine the issue and I know our Indigenous brothers and sisters also have land issues that they may wish to bring to such a Commission.

It is disappointing that we have been unable to find consensus because, in the words that I hear from both Sides, I hear a desire for a solution and, it is perhaps regrettable that you, in your high Office as Speaker, do not have the additional power to forge consensus, to mediate in issues that are at times ... when we seem to want to come together and we seem to appear to be on the verge of a breakthrough but, because of personality issues, because of past hurts or pains, or past things done or presently said, we are unable to get that breakthrough and so, at the end of today's Sitting, I am going to leave...

The Speaker: Thanks for the confidence.

Mr James K McAllister: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are going to leave this Chamber each with our own idea of how it should be done but, giving up a wonderful opportunity on the 200th day of commemoration or celebration and on the Eve of 173rd Anniversary of the Emancipation of Slavery, without a consensus Motion. When I look at this document which speaks to Amendments, the last Amendment, Mr Speaker, is one of those hairy-fairy things and with your permission, I shall read it.

"Be if further resolved that we, the Members of the National Assembly commit ourselves to make vigorous efforts to educate future generation on the contribution of our forefathers."

We have been doing so from 1838 onward. There is not a person present who is unaware of the atrocities of slavery, rebellion, Quamina, Cuffy and Toussaint; we know it all. What more do we need to do and what legacy do we offer if it is just to tell them what was if not, to be able to say this is what we have been unable to do as recompense, to be able to get from those who are

responsible, some form of recompense and an apology for it; just to tell them what was, in my view, is simply not good enough and I hate to think that we will have to wait another forty years to have a Parliament or a Body that is braver than we are to be able to do so.

I ask, I implore my colleagues, even if Mr Speaker, as we did yesterday, we take another Recess, even fifteen minutes this afternoon and make one last attempt to hammer out a compromise on a Motion of which we can be proud. We cannot separate the domestic from the international. All of us who are here are descendants and, all of them who are out there are descendants; one affects the other and there is nothing wrong in looking at it from two different perspectives. We had slaves, we have those who are freed, we had indentured servants who came; we have all in a sense, been victims and we have all suffered. Let us find a solution and I will not bore this House with stats and regale you with statistics which we all know. Slavery was wrong, our fore parents suffered and they are entitled, Mr Speaker, to the benefits of this Guyana. Thank you very much. [Applause]

Mr Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Member, Mr McAllister.

Mr James K McAllister: Thank you Mr Speaker. It is with a great sense of joy and happiness that I stand to make my contribution to this Debate on the African Slave Trade Motion. My colleagues before me have established the significance and importance of the Motion that is occasioned by the bi-centenary of the abolition of the Human Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

This Honourable House has already been informed of the horrific experiences of our fore parents and the consequential need for

recognition, rectification and reparation. It would appear that there is concurrence in this House with respect to recognition. However, we seem to have difficulty having total consensus on rectification and Reparation. I know that the Government has stated that it supports Reparation but, I wish that we examine together the Government's position on this Motion to determine if there is indeed hidden Agendas.

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member, Mrs Deborah J Backer presented the Motion that calls for:

- (1) Recognition by asking the National Assembly to unequivocally acknowledge the debt this Nation owes to our African ancestors. It appears that we are going to agree on that.
- (2) Rectification, by asking for the establishment of an African Land Commission to rectify the historical wrong perpetuated against our ancestors, be it as slaves or unduly treatment.
- (3) Reparation, by asking the National Assembly to urge the British Government to effect Reparation.

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, the Honourable Dr Frank Anthony in his presentation, signalled his intention to make amendments to the Motion; said in his words: *the Motion is too timid*. It is the Honourable Minister's intention to introduce some *Whereas Clauses* most of which, in my opinion, are mere gratitudes. Whether his amendments are taken as a whole it is clear that they are intended to obfuscate the Government's intention to obviate the essence of the Motion. It is clear that the *Whereas Clauses* do not add in any way, to what we must now do

as a Nation in relation to the most horrific crime against humanity in the history of mankind. [Applause]

I will not spend time addressing these *whereas* Clauses if it is to direct my attention to the Resolve Clauses he seeks either to introduce or delete. The Honourable Member, Dr Frank Anthony proposes to introduce the *Be it further Resolved* Clause that calls the National Assembly to urge the University of Guyana to conduct research in support of the demand for an apology. This is a most dangerous development. The horrific crimes against our forefathers are indelibly inscribed in the annex of history through four hundred years of brutality, destruction of families, violation of women and dehumanisation of millions. What research is Dr Frank Anthony asking us now to conduct? To speak about research on the need for an apology, is a diluted demand for descendants of slaves for an immediate and unconditional apology.

Dr Frank Anthony's research amendment assumes greater gravity when one looks at his Amendment to delete the Clause that calls for African Land Commission. Is this a case where he feels that there is need for researching this case also; is it a case where he feels that this is not justified? The Honourable Member, Dr Anthony stated that the call for African Land Commission has no place in this Motion therefore, the question must be, if on the occasion of the bi-centenary of the abolition of the Slave Trade, rectification has no place on the Agenda of the Government, when will it have its place?

Mr Speaker, I wonder if Dr Anthony conjured these amendments by himself of if he was given them to present to this Honourable House. If the latter is the case, then Dr Anthony, I would deem

this as the classic set up. If it is the former, then you have bared your fangs. The Honourable Minister Agriculture must be somewhere smiling right now.

Mr Speaker, I suggest that the Honourable Minister withdraw these amendments, seeking research on the need for an apology and the deletion of the establishment of an African Lands Commission because we have the basics to be here speaking to this Honourable House as to why we should have the three *Rs*, not only recognition but we must also have rectification and we must have reparation.

Before I move on, and lest I forget, I just want to address a matter that was raised in passing by the Honourable Member David Patterson yesterday, and more substantially by the Honourable Member, Mr Raphael Trotman, today where it is being mentioned that for forty-one years we in this House and, by extension I suppose in the Nation, proceeded with recognising the sufferings and the debt we owe to our African fore parents but I want to point to the great Monuments we as a people have established for this independence: the 1763 Monument, the Monument Damon, the Monument of Quamina. I want to also refer to the great consciousness that exists among our people and in the earlier days of nationhood, the various cultural shows and events we have to really raise the level of the consciousness of the people as it relates to African sufferings. [Clapping]

It is not true to say that we ignored this thing and now we come jumping up two hundred years after abolition of the Slave Trade; it is not true to say so. And in fact, the Honourable Member, Mr Trotman knows that years ago we were in on the West Coast Berbice, talking to residents there about the problems they had

there with land and to see who it is we can help because whole villages there had no documentation; it is what I call documentation loss. He will know that one of the things we are looking at is to see how legally we can advance that issue but, unfortunately we did not have the legal input. So, I just thought I could set that straight, but we have done things but here, on the occasion of the bi-centenary, this is an occasion for us to take an even greater step forward to address the issue of Reparation, to address the issue of Recognition.

The Honourable Minister, in his presentation yesterday, made reference to the fact that Africans enslaved Africans and that other people were enslaved and he also regaled us with his personal experience with regard slavery in Greece. For a minute I thought he was Greek. I was of the view that the Prime Minister's presentation ordered or attempted to dilute the sufferings experienced by our African fore parents, to dilute that pain and suffering. However, I reassure myself that the Honourable Prime Minister, in his broad experience was merely demonstrating his white knowledge of various facts and it was not an attempt to take anything away from the suffering of our fore parents.

But, you know Mr Speaker, this Debate was scheduled for yesterday and it should have been complete yesterday and so, in the newspapers today, given the Motion, the Amendment being raised by the Honourable Member, Dr Frank Anthony, in the newspapers today, we would have had reports of the Government rejecting the call for an African Land Commission. No, today's newspaper has a letter by one Mohamed Khan in the Kaieteur News. It seized the caption, Mr Speaker, *Emancipation of enslaved Africans* and when I read this letter, I noticed some

similarities between the issues raised by the Honourable Prime Minister and the issues contained in the letter and it is a letter that was supposed to coincide with the Report that Government rejects the call for African Land Commission and, I wonder if it really was a coincidence. And here are some of the similarities:

- (1) Africans mate slaves of fellow Africans
- (2) Europeans took Africans as slaves all through the help of other Africans

Not only them though, many then descendants' anomaly over the Greek slaves. Similarity, but this is not what worries me Mr Speaker. Here is what worries me and, again:

Brothers and sisters of African slaves, let us take note that there are signs that the brush of this instant of slavery is running; the tides have been changing; let not our fellow men have any right to say that any son and daughter of African slaves is holding on to the fact of slavery as an excuse for not trying and applying themselves.

You did not say that, Honourable Prime Minister but I am a bit concerned that these sentiments are in a letter that contains so many of your sentiments and I wonder therefore, if it is a lie conjured up somewhere. It is therefore the cause for very, very serious concern because when we hear of the argument that African Land Commission and the issues of land here, have no place in this Motion, well then we wonder what is the real basis for adopting that position. It is a case where there is a feeling the brushes of slavery is not drying hard? Is it a feeling that these people have not been applying themselves; is that the case?

Mr Speaker, my colleagues before me made (it is not working) numerous references to the efforts of the free slaves, the fact that they bought villages, the fact that they paid competitive prices, the fact that on many occasions the money that they paid for the villages were above the bank rate and when the plantocracy recognised that the free slaves had saved their money, they took the prices of the land up. Is not it true that, immediately after slavery these treatments demonstrated work ethic that we would have to seek to emulate any time? It is true, because if you read Pat Dyal he would tell you that they demonstrated a work ethic that could not be questioned [clapping] and if you read... Mr Speaker, I wish to go to an Address made in 1948 by Mr L D Sarboro, one time Chairman of Golden Grove, when he was relating the issue of Golden Grove over the one hundred years, from 1848 to 1948. He spoke about how they came together to buy the land on January 05, 1848. Men pooled their resources and subscribed one hundred dollars each and bought the Plantation Williamsburg. He spoke about education and administration in the village and he also spoke about agriculture and here is what he had to say about agriculture, Mr Speaker:

Golden Grove was always an agricultural district and agriculture formed its background. The proprietor settled in real earnest to agriculture pursuits, resent that there were no slack days; it was all work, work, work. They laboured faithfully from Monday to Saturday to achieve their aims and purpose and soon made Golden Grove a high of farming industry. They manifested great pride in farming because it brought them prosperity and independence and was regarded in their respect as a paying concern. They built goodly two-storied

houses and lived in them in comfort to themselves and their families. It was not the unusual occurrence to see twenty to twenty-five trucks laden with sugar and syrup and ground provision leaving the sightings of Golden Grove every Monday afternoon."

This, Mr Speaker, is a track record of the pre-slaves; they worked to build their villages [clapping] but, in this same Address, Mr Speaker, which was made, I must mention in the presence of the Governors, Mr Sarboro did refer to the fact that, at the closing of the centenary the drainage question have become a problem to be solved. I believe he is being diplomatic seeing the Governor was there because we know that, for economic reasons, as the Honourable Member Lumumba talked about economic reasons, for economic reasons about the economic assault the plantocracy took to the villages, all in an effort to undermine their economy, all in an effort to ensure that the free slaves were forced back on the plantation to work for meagre wages.

We today are seeing the consequences of those actions that were taken since then. How could we want to say that we divorce this from the acts of slavery and the action taken against slaves, the enslavement of African people? How could we divorce how people dealt with them immediately after slavery mainly because they used to beat slaves? How could we want to divorce it? I say that we cannot do that, we should not do that.

Mr Speaker, the Government say they support Reparation. Reparation has to do with making things right, it involves compensation but also making things right. The Honourable Member, Mr Raphael Trotman, said before me, how could we, in

all earnest, sit in this Parliament and say we are passing a Motion, calling upon the British Government to effect Reparation when we refuse to do the little we can do right here? In fact, I wonder if we are really trying to send a message that we want Reparation. When you look at Dr Anthony's Amendment that says we must have a research as to whether we should have Reparation, are we really serious? Mr Speaker, I will hope you are joining CARICOM ...now, you will know Honourable Prime Minister, you will know as far as Greece that in CARICOM a number of people here have different experiences from us; they were freed, some of them years before the people here were freed, you would know that. From that standpoint, (ask the Honourable Member, Gail Teixiera, she'll tell you) and so therefore, even if we have different experiences, there must be something we can do differently. We have the unique experience here in this country whereby our free slaves, almost immediately after slavery, were able to buy millions of dollars worth of land and property and made an attempt to embark on a free society with economic independence. It is true we tried that here and it is true also that there was deliberate effort to sabotage it and that effort, I can say was successful because when you read a lot of the literature you see how a lot of the villages were affected and where the farmland fell into disuse, where the drainage collapsed and people abandoned the land. [That was during the twenty eight years]

Mr Speaker, I just want to, for the purpose of emphasis, point out when Mr Sarboro, in the presence of the Governor, made reference to the drainage... for that matter let me read again the whole Section where he said:

At the closing year of centenary, the drainage question had become a problem resolve and I

venture the expression that with good drainage these same sturdy farmers of Golden Grove will stage a wonderful get-back-to-the-land with the determination to win again the glorious task as we reckon as economic factors of the century.

There was willingness, there was desire that existed then to rise above the obstacles that were placed on their backs by the administration, by the plantocracy but, you will, some of it was beyond them. What do we have today? We have many villages today, right now on the East Coast where there are problems with drainage that flow over since then, in those days. When I served on a depressed Committee, Mr Speaker, we were required to go into Buxton; we went in Nabacalis and Buxton and we spoke with the residents there. We saw the lands abandoned and they took us and showed us the drainage problem, they informed us that unto today, they have problems with GUYSUCO's irrigating, have problems and there are things that were supposed to be done to ensure that those farmers can return to the land. There were people who were there, who were pleading, who were begging for an effort to be made to correct the situation at the back there so they can go back to the land. If you go to the various villages, Mr Speaker, you will see this problem existing and that is just a part of the problem.

There is also the other problem where, a number of persons because of the economic problems placed in their paths, abandoned their lands, did not treat with the lands in the manner in which they were treated and remember, these were people who were recently slaves or the sons and daughters of slaves. How could we in this National Assembly now, reflecting on what they went through, reflecting the determination with which they came

out of slavery to make themselves reasonable men and women in a free society, could come here and say that it has no place in a Motion to deal with slavery. I say it is a shame that we should say so and I heard the Honourable Prime Minister say yesterday that he looks forward to us forcing some kind of consensus on this matter and quite frankly, I hope that before we leave here today, we will have some kind of consensus because it would be sending a very, very serious signal if we walk out of this National Assembly today and the Government says that an African Land Commission has no place in a Motion to discuss the effects of slavery. [Applause]

Mr Speaker, yesterday the Honourable Member, Mrs Deborah J Backer, referred to a letter by ACDA. In the letter they made reference to the work that was done by slaves: sea defences, reclaiming 15,000 sq miles, how one hundred million tons of dirt being moved, the construction of the East Demerara Water Conservancy Dam, about the canals that were dug, all these things, infrastructure, still exist today. This infrastructure, we benefited from it economically, this civil structure, our economy will collapse if we remove some of it; infrastructure created through the hands of our fore parents, working under the brutal whips of How could we today sit down, enjoying the slave masters. benefits of this infrastructure created by these people for which they were not paid one cent and say that their issues have no place in a Motion to discuss the Slave Trade and slavery? We have to think about it. If we do not do that, Mr Speaker, we are going to undermine our very efforts and we speak about Reparation.

I think we all know today that Reparation is no longer a pie in the sky where there are serious movements towards having Reparation addressed. Reparation is no longer a black separatist issue, it is

now a mainstream issue where serious scholars in the Democratic Party have made pronouncements about Reparation and they have actually arrived in some cases at certain figures which they believe should be dealt with. For instance there are some who have condemned it, that African-Americans should be paid twenty four trillion dollars for unpaid wages, for ten million slaves; that is what is being proposed. Therefore, we understand that this issue is no longer a pie in the sky; it is something that is achievable and we in Guyana, we in Guyana must not undermine our efforts to go forward to make a case on behalf of, not only the descendants of African slaves but, on behalf of all of Guyana. We must not undermine our efforts to go forward and make that representation. Let us send a signal to the former colonial masters, let us understand that we view this issue as a matter deserving of rectification and a matter by extension, deserving of Reparation. [Applause]

We cannot throw rectification aside and want to go forward as if we are serious about Reparation; we would undermine ourselves, and how would it harm us as a nation by going forward and trying to address this issue and how would it harm us today, Mr Speaker, it cannot harm us as a nation. I can only ensure that we become stronger as a people, as a nation to move forward into the world. [Applause]

Why then is this reluctance and this resistance to do something that is good; why cannot we do something that is good and do so when it is right, why cannot we do that? I do not want to venture and answer Mr Odinga Lumumba; I do not want to venture and answer but, I believe Mr Speaker, in closing that before we leave here we should work to forge the kind of compromise that ensures we emerge from this National Assembly today, with some kind of

agreement on the issue of Recognition, on the issue of Reparation and on the issue of Rectification in the form of an African Lands Commission. Thank you very much. [Applause]

Mr Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable Members. I think this is a good time to suspend for the usual half an hour.

15:55H SUSPENSION OF SITTING

16:41H RESUMPTION OF SITTING

The Speaker: Thank you. Please be seated Honourable Members.

We can resume Debate on the Motion by Honourable Member, Mr Moses Nagamootoo.

Mr Moses V Nagamootoo: I have been very moved by the contributions made by several of the Speakers to this Motion. I would like, most of those who have spoken, I do not think this is the occasion for academic excursion or a scholastic contribution to a vast body of information and knowledge about African Slave Trade and Slavery. It is universally recognised, as set out by the Honourable Minister Anthony, that it is not simply an abomination but an act of the most massive inhumanity that had man making other men, women and children into slaves.

We all read the classics, most strikingly, the conditions that have been described by C L R James in the *Jack in the Black Jack-o-Bin* which would apply to the situation then, in Haiti but in a general way reflecting the agonies, the pain, the sufferings and also the resistance of Africans who have been enslaved in various territories of the West Indies and in the United States.

For us we know, as it was said in 1824 by Samuel Sharp in Jamaica that the life of a slave was that of a dog and he had said he would rather be hung on yonder gallows than to remain a slave hence, his heroic act of rebellion. If there is anything we can, beyond the statistics of slavery and the toll it took on humanity is that it offers us very important lessons as well as to how our civilisation evolved and how there were people under the most difficult and inhuman conditions who sought to make civilisation better for themselves and for all of humanity.

One American philosopher historian Atica, had written that struggle and resistance are not a pre-essence, it is the core of history. While we would recite the litany of sufferings, the loss of lives, the horrors of the Triangular Trade and the Trans-Atlantic crossing, we also must look at our forefathers, particularly our Amerindian and African forefathers as those who have set some of the finest examples of resistance that laid the basis for modern Guyana. Most of what we have inherited, subsequent to those acts of resistance was in fact a view of the culture of behaviour of us here in this House.

I remember, as my learned colleague and good friend and colleague Donald Ramotar, Honourable Member is rising on his feet, that as young men and, there are some others, we attended the Affaday College. Debbie, on the other Side, I hope you would have taken advantage of the Cuffy Ideological Institute; I say some others: Honourable Member Komal Chand, I can recognise Indra Chandarpal, Shirley Edwards, Honourable Member, Minister Clement Rohee, Harripersaud Nokta; we came out of a fortunate generation, that we were taught the examples of our African revolutionary heroes and we recognise and that is why it is

recognised in our National Anthem that Both bondsmen and free laid their bones on our shores.

We recognise the importance of the resistance that came out of the African and slave experience so, it must be lost on us that we are discussing this matter in an academic way and trying to gain points on the statistics of lives lost and what was done in the past. We all recognise that and recognition can never be enough, that our African forefathers and ancestors, and when I say so I pay tribute also to the fact of Africa being the cradle of our humanity. Those of us who are now reading about the Dravidians and the Gaullists would know how movements of people took place so that some of us, even though we came from the southern parts, our ancestors of India, the India Sub-Continent, they also recognise the movement of Africans from the African Continent elsewhere and in fact, everywhere. So, when I say ancestors, I pay affinity to the affinities that we owe, that would make us all emotional as we relate the experience of slavery and what it meant.

There are writers who have said, like Attica, that there has been in the slave experience, an ideology to change things. The 1763 Berbice Revolt, sometimes referred to as the Berbice Rebellion or Revolution, led by Cuffy and Acrabay, with the involvement of Atta, in fact showed that though the immediate cause would have been or, might have been a struggle for food and entitlements on the Estates in Berbice, that there was a larger passion among the slaves not to accept the conditions under which they existed, the conditions under which they were brought to the Estate and forced to work on the Estate, and were punished cruelly even if they worked, and beside the fact they were sick, they still had to work.

No amount of disruption would have been enough to speak to the sufferings and the pains. I may say this as well: we must never, ever forget that the settlers on our shores, the Indigenous people referred to as Amerindians, were not brought here by any conqueror; they were not part of the cessation of territories or, the conquest of territories. They were here before the arrival of the settlers and they were the first who were displaced, they were the first victims of the imperial assault that led to the conquest of territories and led to the division of our territories: Berbice, Essequibo, Demerara, they were and therefore, I was hoping that we will not, in the Debate on this Motion, seek to quantify suffering and pain and dislodge them.

I was surprised that the Debate was tending to move away from African slavery, Slave Trade, Africans and slavery, to dealing with the question of entitlement and I was surprised that we had not mentioned the fact that our Amerindian ancestors had an entitlement to the lands and that nothing we do or say should detract from the fact that we owe them and that they were in the first set of humanity subjected to holocaust before the holocaust among the Africans; not that it is not important, it is important that we speak about the African holocaust. We speak about the Jewish holocaust but the decimation, the systematic decimation of the Indigenous people in the Americas would make, for example, the Jewish holocaust pale, and therefore, we have to see the historical, as my brother and colleague said as I came in, the dialectics of this, the historical continuity, the continuity of struggles and conquest.

I read somewhere, a story where an old man was telling the little boy the story of the man and the lion and the boy was always impressed with the story and asked the grandfather: "Why is it,

Grandpa, the story always ends with the man killing the lion?" And he said: "When the lion begins to rise, the story will be different, it would end differently." The repetition of the story of slavery and suffering and the price that was paid is never too much, as one Member tried to say, we know it all, we need not go back there! Surely, as the Amendment to the Motion said, our children and our children's children should be made to understand the history for which we respond, the nature of the history, the class basis of our history because we must never forget while we speak in an amorphous way about African slaves and slavery, that it was the imperial power, a system called by its name *imperialism* that sought to use human being as factors for the creation of wealth that was sent back to the metropole to feed the bills of capitalism and later on, the industrial revolution. Why Mr Speaker? ... Because history often repeats itself.

Today, there are new slave masters forged in different chains; they call it globalisation, it has a name yet, there are thousands of millions of people who are victims of the new effort to enslave under different guises, to extort and extract not unpaid labour as in the case of African and other slaves but, cheap labour, cheap produce and to take advantages of the terms of trade for the enrichment of the already rich metropoles and capitals of the world. We have to understand the lesson, that it can repeat itself in many guises. I have heard my friend, my learned and respectable friend on the other Side, talking in a way as if the victims of slavery and the victims of Slave Trade, should be compensated and recompensed by a Government that sits here, here and now, as if this Government were the perpetrator of the evil, crime and inhumanity of slavery hence, the need for this Government to have rectification.

When we invent an enemy, we are trying to avoid identifying the real enemy and this is what I find disappointing about the contribution of some Members, to this Debate, that they are trying to use the Debate as a scapegoat for ethnic mobilisation and for strengthening the appeal to a particular Constituency hence, perpetrating the same division [Applause] the imperialist had perpetrated on us in the first instance. This Debate should inculcate a sense of re-awakening and I will say this Mr Speaker, I will come to that because I want to address this forum; I am a politician, I am not here for the nicety of parliamentary language and decorum. I have to let, those who try to further divide our nation, know that we are missing a golden opportunity here, not only for rectification, not only for reparation but, that we are missing an opportunity that we should have another r: reconciliation for the reconstruction of our country for the benefit of all our people, including the Africans, the descendants of African slaves. [Applause]

Your Honour, I remember when I read Statements in the 1980 Constitution, about land for the tiller. It must had been a recognition about the way its strategic and valuable resource could be utilised in Guyana, because of our colonial past, because of what had happened in the past: the displacement of the Amerindians, because of the manipulation of the plantation system to divide, to give to those and not to others, the means to create an impression of those who are here and those who are recent arrivals. These are part of the evil of our colonial heritage that we must examine in a very critical way, rather than trying to cast blame and find scapegoats for the evils of the past and for the perpetrator of those evils.

We have said very openly, and I go back to my days at the Acrabay College, even if we differ on who Acrabay was, that we thought he was in relation to the 1763 Revolt, a strategist and we knew that his failure of the revolution or the revolt had to do with the disputation between Cuffy and Acrabay. Nonetheless, we recognised the fact that the Indians and Portuguese who had joined with Africans on the plantations subsequently, to the abolition of slavery and emancipation, to lay the basis for modern political movement, they had in fact learnt from the African slaves and the example of the defiance, the courage and resistance and so, when we came to lay the basis for the modern political movement in Guyana after 1948: the Enmore Martyrdom.

I was one who voiced the opinion and the view of my Party, the People's Progressive Party, that the 1948 Enmore Martyrdom was the continuation of the example of 1763 and we must recognise that we have made tremendous gains in this part of the world so that in 1953 we had universal adult suffrage.

In 1968 in the United States the battle was still joined to register Blacks or Afro-Americans to enjoy the vote. They had to fight for the right not to be in segregated schools, Rowe versus Wray, the right to education; they had to fight for their names to be on the voters' list, and the right for them to vote without qualification. Those are things that are now even engaging the United States, the mighty imperial powers of the North, the colossal of the North, while we... abortion, sorry...

The Speaker: The Board of Education ...

Mr Moses Nagamootoo: Thank you very much, Sir. That is what you were trying to do to the Debate. I want to say that we must recognise that there is a continual ... that would have

addressed issues that arose and about which there is so much grievance when people were saying Sir, not a soul will go to bed hungry; there will be free cassava and milk, when people were saying there will be housing for all. This was a recognition and, I come back to the point of land to the tiller, that we were saying that, not only must we enjoy symbolism of freedom of emancipation but, there was a way in which the scarce resources of the State, our State, our country, should be distributed: food, land, jobs, houses, scholarship; these were the things that would constitute for us, a meaningful way of addressing, rectifying some of the hurt because, we are not, ourselves the perpetrators.

We are saying we should have an international case made out so that those who perpetrated, who started the Slave Trade, those who turned human beings into cargoes, those who inflicted a psychosis because of the antecedent of racism and racial inferiority that attended to slavery. In the initial period there were philosophers: I will not remember all the names: Deodora - which such philosophers were talking about; Africans in a particular way, as if you were biologically made to be slaves. Williams described slavery in economic terms and it was addressed by my friend Lumumba. There was more harsh attendance to slavery than simply dealing with scarce resources, the dehumanising aspect of slavery that, even today there are psychological scars.

The perception of alienation and marginalisation is part of that systematic antecedent that says, those who were enslaved and their descendants were not worthy to be as equal with other human beings. We repudiate that and we feel we have a contribution to make to address feelings of alienation, feelings of marginalisation in a meaningful way within this nation State. That is why I say that part of the rectification has to be reconciliation, not division,

reconciliation, not to have political opportunism on an important Debate of this nature, on an important issue to deal with our ancestors and make recognition of the fact that what they suffered was unprecedented. In the same way, we recognise that their efforts of labour are unparallel for the fact, and I support that part of the Revolution Mrs Backer, because it was unpaid labour.

It is important we note that, while this contribution was sterling, outstanding, unparallel, in the laying of the foundation for Guyana's economy, it was based on unpaid labour and exaction of labour through cruel inhuman methods. Therefore, we believe the way we pay tribute to our ancestors on this bi-centennial on the abolition of the Slave Trade Act and, on the Eve of another 123rd Anniversary of Emancipation, is to join with that Body, the universal Body of opinion and conviction that those who had perpetrated this wrong have a moral responsibility to right the wrong. Reparation is the preferred way of righting the wrong. There are other methods that you would never be able to repair.

I read the other day, a very poignant story in the book by *Tony Morrison, The Bluest Eye* where, the main character, a young girl in the book; she was a black girl; all she dreamt was to have blue eyes and she wanted to be like Mary Jane. It was a poignant prizewinning book; the story that lo, after centuries after the abolition, almost now two centuries of the abolition of slavery, the scars felt by successive generations of the descendants of slaves. Therefore, there are some things that Reparation will never address, we must never forget, it will never address those scars; the psychological scars that have been created by this systematic destruction of the human value and human self-esteem.

We must not here, in this Parliament try to divert from the main flak. In the days, there was a time when we had a call in the Caribbean, in contemporary time for Repatriation. One, there are many ways some people thought that this issue, to make up for slavery, the hurt of slavery and the deprivation that was caused by it, was for people to go back to Mother India. different forms; people had said there were different ways to address the issue. Another way was to be self-conscious of our The descendants, when they coined the phrase in the United States in the seventies, the late sixties and seventies, black is beautiful, the Black Power Movement. These are parts of the Civil Rights Movement of Dr Martin Luther King, the Black Power Movement in Guyana, here. The national movement that was started in the nineties, and before that, the negro coloured people and other such associations, even though they were ethnic, even though they were specialised and, the People's Progressive Party of 1950; these were Movements that came out of the bowels of the historical experience that wanted to address issues of colonialism and issues of the residue of slavery and its effects.

I want to say this ... In the 1970s they brewed up a Movement on the East Coast called *The Land Movement*. As a journalist, I covered that Movement, where people were everywhere on the East Coast of Demerara, looking for land. It was violently suppressed; people who tried to claim land Mr Speaker, who thought they had an entitlement to land, were violently suppressed. Lands, were then vested in the different communities and I am sorry Mr Corbin is not here because, I remember him very carefully as one of the architects of the Democratic Organ's Bill, vesting land, state land in the NDCs, taking it away from the villages and villagers and vesting it into NDCs. These are things that have not advanced the Land Movement in Guyana; they were

the antithesis of the Movement to empower people by accessing them to land.

But, what is the record, if this Debate is being hijacked to launch an offensive against the PPP/CIVIC? It is only to let out there, the Constituency feel as if this is an insensitive Government; the Government is insensitive to the needs of an historical necessities of African people and descendants of African slaves.

Mr learned friend, and I congratulate Mrs Deborah J Backer, for bringing a Motion to this Assembly and, I agree with the Honourable Trotman that it spoke volumes of our parliamentary predecessors, that they have not brought a Motion such as this. Even if it was meant to open the dialogue, even if it was meant to open the conversation so that we can speak openly, about the wounds of our society, about the hurt of our society or people, and we can openly recognise the contribution of the African slaves, the fine contribution, unparalleled contributions of African slaves and the descendants of African slaves to the nation building of this society of ours.

For that reason, I agree that we should have had a Motion earlier than now. But, we of course, we came here, and rather than listening to the Body of opinion that we would... after the Debate, contributing to the vast tidal wave of opinion in the world, that the European colonial powers that had indulged in slavery, should have Reparation and an apology, even if that apology was to be inadequate, we have the hijacking of the Debate by turning this Side of the House, into the perpetrators of the evil. So, the land question is now raised, not as an issue to focus on African Slave Trade and slavery as the Motion says in the caption, as the Leader of the Opposition says, he is pointing to the hands of this

Government that had taken away land for housing, taken away land as if the land had been forcibly taken away from the African people. The message is clear, the innuendo is clear, the inference is clear that this must be an unconscionable Government to have done so. This is why I am so disappointed and, if I am emotional, it is because of the lost opportunity that we should join in the World Movement about Reparation and leave the issues that are domestic outside of this Motion to be dealt with at another time. There is something called *colloquialism*. If this were a Pre-Congress Presentation, I would have understood that it was based on an attempt for mobilisation. But, we do not have the Congress anymore: we have a Nation, to unite as a Nation to build and that is why I say it was unfortunate. I have heard the Honourable Member, McAllister refer to Minister Anthony's presentation...

The Speaker: While you are thinking about that, Honourable Member, your time is up.

Hon Samuel A A Hinds: Mr Speaker, I propose that the Honourable Member be granted another fifteen minutes to continue his presentation.

The Speaker: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr Moses Nagamootoo: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Minister had said, in reference to the University of Guyana that, we should urge the University of Guyana; that is part of the CARICOM's position. We are part of CARICOM, a Member State of CARICOM, and the CARICOM, at one time we were saying that the Caribbean was a Pan African conglomerate; at one time it was being said by some Sections that there are slaves in Jamaica, Barbados... well Activists, they were Activists who were

canvassing that view (who are they?) they were Activists canvassing that view.

We recognise that the Caribbean Basin has formed a very big phalange of the reservoir of free labour, slave labour for the imperial powers and, the opinion and positions of CARICOM Heads of States and our brothers and sisters particularly, those of African descent in the Caribbean, must be important for us. We are simply urging our University of Guyana to support the call by the CARICOM Heads of Government to Universities in the region to conduct research in support of the demands for both apology and compensation. How do we know what imperil we have? Is the evidence before us and all the statistics that were traded in the Debate? How do we know what form the Reparation should take? What issue was raised? Land! But that is not the only form. Who should be the beneficiaries of the Reparation?

My Honourable friend Mrs Backer told us in dealing with the land issue, that there were Transports that were outdated, and as I would say, as old as 1928; earlier than that, where there were transported land ... well, we should have views on it. How do we go about ...? ... What mechanism ...? If, through the Commission of Lands and Survey ... If the Land Court should be activated there is already voluntary assistance to provide legal help because legal work is very expensive in this country and many people cannot access legal support. It is required there should be a support mechanism set up to deal with the devolution of land. We have existing Legislation that my learned colleagues on that Side know of, where people have not... they are living on land as she said, for one hundred years, they are descendants and have not owned it. There are mechanisms by which you could deal with that. There is the prescriptive title: Chapter 60:01 of our Laws of

Guyana where they can establish, as someone said, about the combust to some system of Roman Dutch Law, where they established exclusive possession, exclusive and quiet enjoyment over the years. Why should not the Law address that? Why do you need to go by way of a Commission if there is an existing mechanism? What I am saying is, we need not only focus on one aspect of Reparation to deal with an issue of land because we have to deal with the issue of the quantum, the form and how do you calculate it (the Reparation) the Reparation, yes, thank you my friend, coming from you, I take it as an eminent advice. Sir, these are some of the aspects to this Debate that we should not find ourselves sidetracking.

This Debate, this Motion has its work. It has allowed us the opportunity to join in this conscious effort to say to the world that there are people and the descendants in Guyana who ought to be compensated for the historical wrongs, for the evils of the imperial empire. It gives us an opportunity also, to be on guard against any attempt by us to reintroduce any forms. Somebody was heckling the Honourable Prime Minister, referring to the Greeks but, my friends it is not we who brought the Greeks gifts here. It is the Greeks who brought gifts -Trojan Horse. Long after the abolition of slavery, we brought back here the Trojan Horse of International Monetary Fund and we knew it took us so many years to be able to clear off the accumulated debt, the new debt to which this nation had been burdened, that prevented those same descendants of slaves and descendants of indentured labourers from enjoying better standard of life, a better quality of life and, who brought it? They brought in the Trojan Horse, the Greeks were brought in here by them, from 1979, in a Re-Congress that had saddled this nation with a burden of US\$2.1B debt.

If we want to pay tribute to our forefathers, we would not have been forging new chains for them; we would have taken up the cudgel Cuffy and Acrabay and the lessons of the 1763 Revolution to advance the cause of the society and to provide for the liberation of all the people and to provide for their wants.

Today, Your Honour, I say that part of the solution, part of the remedy, part of the rectification and, I repeat this, is for reconciliation and not to use as the base to score political points, not to use as the base for cheap ethnic mobilisation, not to use as the base to foster a division among our people to have a re-carvel of our country and to have new territories. Let us always remember the Amerindians who came here; what would they be saying of us when we start to set up parallel Land Commission and then other people, the Indians, want an Indian Land Commission, and the Portuguese, a Portuguese Land Commission, and the Chinese, a Chinese Land Commission? We would be replicating the history that was thrown in this country by the imperial master and creating disunity. [Applause]

Sir, I conclude, we on this Side of the House have a consistent position in relation to the sufferings and the travail of our African ancestors. We pay tribute to them, we bow reverence to their memory, to their struggle, to their effort, to their contribution and we wish that they empower us as their Representative. Even the spirit of Cuffy, even the spirit of Acrabay, should empower us to be their final Representative, their finest Representative to advance the cause of all the people of this country, to advance the cause of the descendants of Africans, to see that justice is done to them, to advance the causes in a way the descendants discriminatory. I have the conviction, I can say this, the lands that had been distributed to the country hold leasehold, communal title,

under this Government, had surpassed anything that had been done [clapping] the house lots that have been distributed in a non-discriminatory way speaks volumes to what this Government has done. Over there, they have nothing to say except that they have scrapped the Ministry of Housing, the destroyed the Cooperatives, the Pig Farmers, Cane Farmers, Fishermen, Glue Makers Co-operatives, wherever they had...copra and glue and, they destroyed the basis of the co-operativism that we said was the Hallmark of the African contribution, apart from the Village Movement, the Co-operative Movement, they over there destroyed it, denigrated it and brought it to the ground.

We do not want to trade in this Debate because I would be prepared for a bigger Debate to deal, not with the Holocaust of African Slavery but, we shall be prepared to deal with the Holocaust from 1964. From 1964 to 1992 there was a Holocaust that was suffering in this country and therefore, in this Debate Sir, we must come out here united.

I asked my esteem friend Mrs Deborah J Backer, not to take the contention out of this Motion, to agree that this Motion should receive the unanimous support of the House and such reasonable Amendments that could strengthen the purpose of the Motion so that we put a very strong case and join with our brothers in the Caribbean and international community to send a sound message for compensation for African slavery and that we esponge from the Motion the offensive part that tend to be minor and so vicious.

I therefore, in taking my seat, Your Honour, feel privileged to speak to this Motion because I did tell my Honourable friend that I have very strong feelings about African slavery and we will deal at another level that is non-divisive, that is practical, that is common

for us; we could deal at other levels with the issues that are non-divisive and I want to commend the Amendment to the Motion and that this House should support the sentiment of the Motion that we are in full condemnation of the evils of African slavery and the slave system; we are in full condemnation of the exploitation of the labour of our African ancestors, we are in full support of their cause that they should be compensated for their grievances and hurt and we should leave this House, taking in both of our hands, the torches of unity and reconciliation. Thank you. [Applause]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Member, Mr Basil Williams.

Mr Basil Williams: If it pleases you, Mr Speaker, no doubt the tranquillity and serenity of the afternoon's proceedings which attended hitherto, has no doubt, made a bridge, but this is the very nature of this subject matter, this is the very nature of this subject matter. It evokes many things to different people and I too, used to be very emotional though my emotions were directional. So, at this time, I would endeavour to embark on an impassionate discourse in terms of the elements which compose the Motion that is before us, this Honourable House.

Of course, my ultimate destination is in the future, the question of Reparation but I prefer much preamble if only to enter plea to not guilty, the ethnic mobilisation claims on the part of the PNC/R-1GR-1G in bringing this Motion. This whole question of hijacking, this question of lands and this question... It appears to me Mr Speaker, that there is some degree of confusion with respect to the element of land in the Motion but the Motion is speaking to ancestral lands really, it is not speaking to ancestral

lands in terms of Reparation and that is why the Honourable Member is suggesting that we are trying to rivet this present Government with blame for atrocities that would have been suffered by our ancestors in the past. I would attempt to extrapolate in my discourse and maybe, remove this apprehension from the mind of my Honourable brother, Mr Nagamootoo.

Mr Speaker, again we must be in admissibility, that is, the People's National Congress. In respect of this accusation, that we have done nothing to bring about the consciousness of the peoples of this country with respect to slavery and the consequences of slavery in this country. My recollection is that this issue was so pressed under the PNC/R-1G to the extent that the founder Leader of the People's National Congress (Reform) One Guyana, and the first Executive President of this country lost his voice in pursuing such activity, right here at this Parliament, lost his voice because we had introduced a series of programmes designed to highlight this whole question of our history and the history of our ancestors in slavery, Emancipation, Arrival... The Arrival Days emanate from the PNC/R-1G R-1G programme so, I do not know what the allegation is all about.

It is now apposite that the Motion is now before this House and I do not know how people could accuse us in saying it should have been brought ever since but, the time is right, the time is right I[clapping] and therefore, we must take opportunity and advantage of this opportunity to treat with it.

Now, when I look at the mere visual apprehension of this Motion I see the first *whereas* Clause speaks to the abolition and that we are in the bi-centenary year of the abolition of the Slave Trade but, if I could dally a while on this question, the question that really has to

be answered here is: was the abolition of slavery due to the endeavours of humanists like Wilbur Pitt and William Wilberforce or, was it due to the whole energies of the enslaved peoples? This is a question that has been engaged by historians and academics for some time.

Several schools of thought have come about in relation to this question but, if I could regale this august Body with some instances in our history, perhaps they might contribute to the conclusion which, I would suggest at the end. For example, having recourse to the kingdom of the descendants of Africans in work done by this Body and this is the Body of the descendants of manu... in Guyana, we have references of August 20-27, 1823; they described it as the 300th African Martyrs Week, where three hundred slaves were executed during this week by British troops in Georgetown and East and West Coast Demerara. Then, in September of 1823, you have the Quamina's Day where the Leader of the 1823 Rebellion, Quamina was shot dead, albeit by an Amerindian. In October 1834, St Damon had a Day, where Damon led seven hundred to eight hundred in a rebellion and in his apprenticeship, had hoisted the flag of African freedom at La Belle Alliance, Essequibo. He was arrested, brought to Georgetown to Parliament Building where he was hanged, by the British on this occasion. And if we go on, we have the 200 Bush Negroes Martyrs and the 757 Right Arm Day, Mr Speaker, where the British carried out a campaign to rid the country of runaway slaves, bush negroes, that is why we do not have bush negroes in Guyana as in Surinam. And, we come down the line. We have the 23 February, 1763 which we describe as the African Revolutionary Saints: St Cuffy, St Atta, St Acara, St Accrabay. We remember all the revolutionaries by our Ancestors to free Guyana from slavery and we could continue. Thirty-five African

Martyrs Day, 1764: seventeen hanged, eight broken on the rubrack and nine burnt to death by the Dutch. What does this show? It shows that the enslaved African people were unprepared to continue to be subjugated and oppressed. They were not prepared to continue in that type and form of existence.

So is it the humanist William Wilberforce or Wilbur Pitt, Mr Speaker? It is my respectful submission that the abolition of the Slave Trade came about largely because of the efforts of the slaves themselves.

Let us move on to the second whereas Clause which we call the preamble and this deals with the question of how many were killed, murdered, slaughtered or butchered and you have different accounts by different authors. Kimani Negoosie, in his writings The Meaning of Reparation, found that in Euro Centric Apologists for the destruction of Africa and Africans put the figure of murdered Africans at eleven million for the European aspect of this great Holocaust, here contending that a more realistic estimate put this number at over two hundred million. You have also the work done by the United African Front of the United Kingdom and they too have a position on this matter. They believe that linking this whole question of the beginning of slavery of enslaving of Africans, they found that Africans had been victimised by Arabs from around 750 of the current era to the present and by the Europeans, some Romans, Greeks from bondage times and especially from the beginning of parts in Africa from 1455 to this day.

It is estimated that over one hundred million Africans died directly through the actions by the hands of the Europeans, when many more indirectly affected including almost every African born since

the institutionalisation of the system of European Oppression and Domination. So Mr Speaker, we cannot dare say the terrible onslaught of our ancestors in that evil passage and you know stories of our brothers and sisters being thrown overboard live, whether they could swim or not, when traversing the Atlantic Ocean.

So Mr Speaker, the second *whereas* Clause shows clearly that it was really a killing field when it came to our ancestors and the existence over these four hundred years in this region. If I could say, that has had everlasting effect, it has psychologically affected all Africans and the descendants of Africans, Africans in Africa and the diaspora.

The United African Front, in continuing their contentions, said this:

But this tinkering with the over physical aspects of this heinous system left completely in tact its far more defeated, persistent, dangerous and damaging psychological aspects."

The psychological enslavement of Africans was achieved through merely cultural genocide and the falsification of history in the prophecies in which fundamentally, racist values were established, perpetuated and maintained in every institution in Western societies and their colonies: the church, school, police, media, etc. Today, Western institutions are still contributing fundamentally; they are still fundamentally racists and Africans continue to suffer the painful and unjust consequences of a system erected to enforce, by remote control the largest crime in human history. Africans continue to inhabit mental prisons of psychological enslavement and marked sickness characterised by psychological

change of low self-esteem, low self-love, disunity and their presence in the prisons and mental institutions. This, Mr Speaker, is described as the living consequences of the Maffa.

As I continue my journey towards Reparation, the third preamble, whereas Clause in the preamble where it is universally accepted, that slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade were the most inhumane tragedies in the history of mankind. This is so and it is that understood. The United Nations, said it is a crime against humanity and they have also said, not because this crime occurred in the past, that it has no relevance in the present. They have said there is no limitation on the crime of genocide ... no limitation and therefore, Reparation ... There is this Euro-Centric argument that Reparation would be irrelevant now because they only spoke to the consequences four hundred years ago. Of course that is not true because the scholars have shown clearly the lasting consequences of this crime of slavery. Speaking again from the work done by the African United Action Front in their position Paper on Reparation, they said this:

The example of Reparation to the Jews by the German Government, severely undermined this attempt to delink responsibility for past crimes from the living consequences of those crimes.

There are millions of Jews who received Reparation from the German Government, even though most Germans are not Nazis or were not even born when the Nazis perpetuated the Holocaust. On the other hand, many of the Jews were not born when the Nazis run their parents and fore parents but, Reparations are understood as a right and even though many Jews are very successful and wealthy people, they still receive Reparation. This is a living

illustration of the principle that acknowledgement and atonement for a crime has nothing to do with how long ago the crime was committed or whether those alive today were around when the crime was perpetuated or how economically, professionally or otherwise successful they may be and every thing to do with the fact that a crime was committed and the people continue to be harmed by that crime and/or by the consequences of that crime. [Applause] This example shows, Mr Speaker, if that is all and unnecessary, the cumulated effects of crime may continue to hamper the entire people, including unborn generation, by relieving them of their history and by impairing their identity, their psychological, social and spiritual health long after the crime was first visited upon that. We are doing here is laying the foundation for Reparation and Reparation as I said earlier, has nothing to do with land. Land might come in but, it has nothing to do with land especially.

Other Speakers before me spoke about the contributions of our ancestors to the development of Guyana. I am not going to delve too long in that area but, let me say this: Professor Winston McGowan in his work *The African Slave Trade to Guyana* says this:

The vast majority of Afro-Guyanese by descendants of the victims of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the precise origins of the Slave Trade to Guyana, are obscure. It is generally assumed that the Trade began in the early decades of the seventeenth century to provide labour for the insipient Dutch Settlement in the Essequibo and Berbice. Africans were needed to provide slave labour for sugar,

coffee and to derive profits for the European Plantocracy.

That is clear. There is even evidence that this production, to make it short, brought about 67,113,897 lbs sugar, 45, 870,973 lbs cotton, 78,113,729 lbs coffee and, 1,531,572 gls rum. This is for the reported period 1789-1800.

What I wish to highlight, Mr Speaker, is what R.T. Smith states that:

The Institution of Slavery was the cornerstone of the rose edifice of colonial society. The large-scale importation of labour made possible the construction of sea, the sea-wall, sea defence, drainage and irrigation systems.

Let me share with you this letter by the Second-Class Union which was sent to the Dutch Governor in July, 1763. This will illustrate quite clearly, how the slaves were viewed.

The son of the most successful of the new British planters in Demerara presented a Plan to the Dutch Government design to bolster the inadequate supply of negro labour which will make Demerara the most valuable Dutch county in the Caribbean.

In the Plan he stated:

About the year 1752 the first settlement was begun in Demerarie. The inhabitants, as was natural, expected proper encouragement from their mother

country and were even promised it, instead of which they have not to this day, received the least supply of negroes or anything else toward the advancement of their estates.

They have been obliged all along with greatness, to purchase necessaries at St Eustacious, the English island or wherever they could get them at any price. Without negroes, it was impossible for them to cultivate lands so that, without a speedy supply of that article, in particular Demerare, fertile as it is, must dwindle and come to nothing. The African slaves were seen as nothing else but as a chattel and, as my friend said over there, a factor of production.

Like I said, Mr Speaker, Reparations must be the order of the day. I am not going to dwell on the first Resolve Clause, but let me speak a bit to the National Land Commission in respect of ancestral land. I had been hearing a lot of things about this, even at incursion and excursion by my Honourable friend, is a prescriptive title, etc., but my understanding really of this Resolve Clause is, when it speaks to ancestral land, it really speaks to those lands that were held in community by the African Villagers after they had purchased the lands in post-Emancipation period. In addition to their own particular lot of land, they had land in common that were earmarked for playground, or other community buildings or whatever Project. Those were to be for the benefit of every member of the village or the community. What has happened, and one of the Members spoke to it, the Honourable Member, Mr Nagamootoo, when he said about the lands being vested in the NDC, I am not sure what was wrong with that but, let me tell you what is wrong with what is happening now. The lands, having been vested in a neighbourhood Council, what has

happened, is that the Council, Members of that Council are now taking these ancestral lands and giving them out to who they feel like giving them out to; that is the problem that we are having in this country. [Applause]

I do not want to be accused of embarking on some ethnic ... but we have to state the facts ... we have to state the facts, and because some of these lands happen to come under the control of the political Party that is controlled by Honourable Members on the other Side, and they have no problem even though they know that these are ancestral lands, they have no problem in giving these lands out to their own cronies. That is what the vein of the problem is with ancestral lands, these communal lands. I am surprised that the Honourable Member, Mr Lumumba would say that it is not about land.

I recall, when this matter surfaced and Mr Hamilton Greene was leaving off, reeling off on the matter, his right hand at the time was a man name Lumumba who has come through pure, unadulterated from the Ghana coast to now; I call him *Masdingo* new breeding. He was the man who would have crossed the pond to go up into those areas to physically remove the people off those lands. *[Interruption: 'Ow Odinga!']* I do not know what ... all of a sudden he is being ignorant about ancestral lands and trying to plug the issue about Reparation. This is happening on the East Coast a lot. In B/V the communal lands personally have been given away to some man who is parking big trucks on it and doing all kinds of nonsense, and the community cannot get to use it. *[Interruption: 'He's a PNCR-1G']*

Mr Speaker, that is why we need a National Commission to deal with these communities, we need ... for me there should even

have a National Trust dealing with these things because you have to get the title straight back and you need to have them delineated and demarked again and they must be given into the possession of a National Trust, be it a National Commission, which would exercise that type of jurisdiction to ensure that those lands are to be done for the benefit of the community as it was intended by our ancestors. Do not flout the issue. That is simply the case; it has nothing to do with Neclan, Neclecario and all of that. I am sure now that I have elucidated this issue, our Members and colleagues on the other Side of this House should have no problem in signing on in this *Resolve* Clause. [Applause]

Mr Speaker, let me hasten to deal with Reparation which I consider to be my remit but we must add ... [Laughter] I think we first ought to find out or, arrive on some definition or meaning of Reparation. K D'Husie defines (no relative of Kumar ... he's a Guyanese, he's a Professor now) ... Francis Drakes, very good Minister to run for this country). He said this:

Ultimately, Reparation means redressing the poverty of the people of Africa and the African Diaspora." He continues: "The meaning of this term transcends repayment for past and continuing wrong to embrace self-rehabilitation through accreditation, organisation and mobilisation." He continues: "Africans are the victims of the largest Holocaust which has been perpetrated in the history of this planet, save for the latest American people but they have never been given Reparation, not even an apology.

This is what I like about his work. He continues:

"How do we access the damages and count the cost?"

He considers that this role attaches three main aspects:

- (1) Accepting how far Africans would have been developed as a people if these wrongs had not been perpetrated, that is, how much these atrocities have prevented and distorted their development.
- (2) Accepting how much or what it will take to restore Africans to where they would have been if it were not for their miseries. I know, Mr Speaker, you would be very alerted with that one because it sounds quite familiar to us Lawyers.
- (3) Assessing the entire cost of restoration plus compensation for their injuries.

In fact, it is the only work that I have seen in which this attempt has been made to arrive at some formula of getting to Reparation. In extrapolating, he continues:

What action must they undertake to atone for the inhumanities they have inflicted upon us? They must guarantee to seize these injustices totally and immediately. They must pay a sum of money to be agreed upon by us for all the injuries they have including the inflicted upon us. social disorganisation of Africa and the cause of the consequent disruption and the distortion of the rate of development and patterns of development. We were on our continent before their wicked intervention. This sum must include the interest

which would have accrued to the time of payment if the damages were paid promptly as well as a further sum which results from the cause of further injuries sustained as a result in the delay in compensation.

As I said, that is familiar to us.

The sum must also contain a quantification of the negative impact on Africa of the loss of millions of our most virile and productive sons... (Odinga, you would not have incurred a cause, you would not incur a cause there, the virile and productive sons and daughters, in the words of Walter Rodney?)... as well as the positive impact of the labour both physical and mental of the survivors among us in the arms of the European controlled lands. For it is we who built these shining cities of the dam.

He continues and includes:

All the cultural artefacts stolen from us over the centuries must be returned. Damages must be paid for the deprivation of our people of the use of these items."

Damages must be paid for those artefacts damaged, destroyed or otherwise lost as a result of these nefarious interventions. The centuries of lies misrepresentation and distortion of our history and therefore, of World history must be corrected. This process of correction must begin immediately, must take place throughout the world, especially among Europeans who are also the victims but, also among us. They must be permitted to undertake this process

without us; we must do it for ourselves but they must provide the resources.

Finally, Mr Speaker, compensation and damages must be paid for these centuries of lies and falsification and for the loss of positive self-content, for the collective amnesia, the neurosis, the psychosis, and other harmful developments which arose from the conditions of captivity imposed upon us.

Mr Speaker, when we talk about Reparation, that is Reparation, the psychological scars incurred by over four hundred years; there has never been a Holocaust like that, Mr Speaker and so, when we call on the British Government to get their act together and ensure that we receive Reparation. We would hope that, now that we have explained the basis of Reparation and what it means, our colleagues on the other Side would have no problem, Mr Speaker; they would not want us to go back to University in order to get this compensation but they must hold our hands and let us embark on this journey to ensure that Reparation is affected immediately and not some dissent of high dream down the line.

I know, in terms of the proposed *Resolve* Clause about the University, I do not know, but I am sure, most of us in here... I recall when I did GCE 'O' Level there was a question about the Slave Trade and they had asked us to put ourselves in the shoes of a slave, who would have travelled from Africa to a plantation, whether in the West Indies or North America. I jumped on that question and answered it. You know, when I came out of the exam room almost everyone in that room answered that question. If we are talking about consciousness, that we do not know and we need the University to try and get work done, research done so that we could know ..., everybody answered that question and

everyone to a man said they had a nice slave master. They did not want to take the chance to be critical of the slave master they would have had, lest they were marked down since the papers were due to be marked in London. You cannot tell us we do not know about Slave Trade and we do not have consciousness about Slave Trade. I read voraciously; I read from *Mandingo*, *Roots* and I do not think I was singular in that respect. We know one thing: it had a lasting effect on our minds that cannot be erased, it cannot be erased and I am saying that, that type of suffering which had been going on for over four hundred years would have caused our genes, rotations in our genes; those rotations would have been stirred up over four hundred years... you know what DNA means? Deoxyribonucleic Acid, I did all of that too, you know; if you deal with me you would maintain a homeostatic condition.

Yes Mr Speaker, I urge every Member of the Honourable House, this House that had been hallowed by time, not to dilute the true intention and purpose of the Motion. Do not let the world outside get the impression that we are not united against these atrocities and, we need, we seriously need to get this matter redressed. We must move ahead with one purpose, move ahead with one head, one direction and move ahead as one Nation who feel sufficiently aggrieved as to these past and continued wrong on a substantial proportion of our population, the African people. Thank you, Mr Speaker. [Applause]

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member. Honourable Member, Ms Teixiera.

Ms Gail Teixiera: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It has been an interesting Debate and listening to what has been said, I would like to start out by quoting from Bob Marley's *Redemption* song:

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery; none but ourselves can free our minds. Redemption Songs!

Because redemption is about being redeemed, of recovering, of deliverance from sin and damnation. It is also reclaiming what is lost and so, Bob Marley, in all his music captured a conscience of a people who were oppressed and in his music he was able to convey not only pain, and anguish but, also hope and deliverance. This Debate brings to me... I wonder why Honourable Murray likes to mutter when I am speaking; he suddenly gets this habit of mutter, mutter, like a little old man. Mr Speaker, I will not be diverted. The issue, why I am using Bob Marley is because Bob Marley... This Debate is really about emancipation, emancipating us from mental slavery. What we have been discussing today is a whole series of issues in relation to how we free our minds and move ourselves out of the categories and boxes that gloryism, imperialism, had put us in and in which we are perpetuated to our own histories. I shall show what I mean or, try to show what I mean in my presentation.

[Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

One of the issues out of the Motion that has been brought by the Honourable Member, is the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The Amendment that has been made by the Government is to add the anniversary of the abolition of slavery. What we are dealing with is an issue of global conscience, that apart from all the issues to do with apology and reparation has to do about the world, which five hundred years, six hundred years, two hundred years up to the abolition of the Slave Trade; one hundred and seventy-three years after the abolition of slavery in

the British colonies continues to play this 'hold me, lose me' issue, on the issues of reparations and compensation. In fact, people have drawn conjectures and found it amusing; some of the issues we put in the Amendment but let me just give an idea.

When the intercession Meeting of the CARICOM Heads was held earlier this year, Owen Arthur, Prime Minister and current Chairman of CARICOM said it was time for the community to pursue in a coherent and focussed way the legitimate demands for full apology and Reparation. He went on to talk about compensation which should also relate to the noble subjugations, not only of people of African heritage and descent, but that of indentured labourers who were brought to the region. He goes on to talk about the Caribbean's rainbow family with its predominantly African personality and goes on to talk about the absolute need to deal with the issue of reparation.

What comes out of that Intercessional Meeting, which is the Amendment that we are bringing, is that, in talking about reparations and compensation and apology, and I am quoting from the various articles that came out of the Meeting, to give substance to the core for the observance of the 200th Anniversary of the abolition of the Slave Trade. They decided to request the Universities of the region to conduct research in support of the demands for both apology and compensation for African slavery. It had nothing to do with looking at the history of slavery, it was trying and in English, it was trying to say: we want reparation, we want compensation. The Heads were saying: "How do we do this, how de we quantify per country, per group in this CARICOM region what we are talking about?" Therefore, that is what they are asking the Universities to do.

What they said was that they were not looking for any gratuitous handouts from the ex-colonisers: not aid but payment to be utilised for specific people focus, economic, social and cultural programmes and for which independent auditing could be an important factor in the official dialogue to come. In the whole thing too, they did not deal only with the British, they dealt with the ex-European powers and, particularly in the case of Guyana, and there are three: Dutch, French and English, especially English that we had to deal with. In some of the countries there were Spanish and English, in others French and English and other, just English.

In Jamaica, in the Parliamentary Debate on this same issue, both the Government Oppositions came out in support of reparations from Britain for the profits of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. In fact, they called on CARICOM, through academic research to assist in the negotiations and the issues being raised in Britain's involvement in the Slave Trade.

Some people have made fun of the Clause to do with the University but the Heads very seriously needed the skills and the things to be able to quantify and to put up imaginative possibilities for compensation and reparation instead of looking as if we are going begging, as if we are asking for handouts. That was something the CARICOM Heads rebelled against, the thought of that in 2007 is obnoxious therefore, they wanted something to beat down.

The fact too that, in the other Debate, in the other Parliaments, for example, in the Barbadian Parliament, there was a whole discussion too on the issue of reparation and apology and, please note in none of the countries where this issue was debated in

CARICOM, based on the CARICOM Heads Meeting, was the issue raised of the specificities of problems resulting in the countries as a result of slavery and/or post-slavery. They were dealing with the issue of global conscience and they were able to say to the world that this issue of reparation has been going on, has been hooted around as if it is a thing you do not want to hold too much but now, as a region, this grouping of countries is saying that they are putting it on the Agenda now, (how come you are putting in on the Agenda?) they are putting it on the Agenda. In the Barbados formula, in the Barbados arrangement, they also had big Debates on the issue of reparation and they sign differences but, Mr Arthur, Prime Minister Arthur, had called for reparation in the form of fund to educate dozens of Barbadians in British Universities and Capital to establish a joint British/Caribbean Centre for multi-racial studies. Prime Minister said this in one of his visits to the United Kingdom.

The smaller islands, for example, the Virgin Islands, their issue of compensation which has gone even further than any of the European countries, was to talk about... and they are a very tiny country... they want reparation redress for harm caused during slavery and colonisation under the Danish Flag. They were not talking about financial compensation or an apology; they wanted a people to people initiative between the Danish Government and themselves, based on coming to terms with the history, the pain and being able to have a primary focus on how they could (between the two peoples and the two Governments) find ways of compensation, but to have people more enlightened.

The part that we have added to the Motion, the second to last two, are based, on the CARICOM perspective of calling for reparations. I think that is a criticism that has merit. We cannot

lose sight of the fact that our objective in the whole Region to do with the anniversaries of March 25 and August 01, has to do with a global conscience, and regional conscience.

We also have to recognise that there are basically three major Holocausts, there are many smaller Holocausts but, there are three major recognised Holocausts: the first one being that which relates to the Indigenous people of this part of the world, starting from the top Canada all the way down to the bottom of South America in which the Conquistadores, the famous navigators; we all had to learn about Drakes and Walter Raleigh, and so forth, they all came and the unspeakable harm done to the Indigenous People.

We have actually, in some of our programmes, believed that the Indigenous people lived somewhere in the Interior, they are hidden, they occupied the Coast of Guyana in the thousands, thousands, at the time when the British and Dutch arrived here, and the famous conquistadores, and they found what? El Dorado! The myth of El Dorado! Here were a group of people meeting them on boat, who were covered in gold and this attracted... The Portuguese were always navigators and they were involved in the Slave Trade; there is no apology for that. *they are navigators now*) They were part of the whole abominable crimes that were committed on the Indigenous people and on the African Slaves. (What are you apologising for?)

The first Holocaust which hasn't been in disguise, has not in international forum, given due recognition. It comes out in duly rights things, to do with minorities and declarations to do with the rights of the Indigenous people. It does not deal with what happened to Indigenous people and therefore if you are patient, you'll find out we are making the linkage with your Motion. The

Holocaust issue of Indigenous People went on for hundreds of years, hundreds of years. The point that must be made is that is a land issue. The point that must be made is that, Mr Speaker, when we bring a Motion of this nature which unfortunately, a large part of the Debate has concentrated on: ancestral lands and Lands Committees. In fact, what they should have done, and I am sure the move of the Motion could not possibly have desired any such thing but, what it is doing by inference, is the legitimisation of the genocide and the set of Amerindian land in the country. The ancestral lands can become highly disputed in relation to the Indigenous people who occupied the coast of this country.

When the Dutch came and started setting up their Forts in the Essequibo River, they were met by Indigenous People on the islands that are now known as Wakenaam and Leguan. We can get into ancestral land issue and get into a quagmire in which the same villages you are talking about as ancestral land the righteousness of people who bought them after slavery, to get into contentions with people who lived there five thousand, seven thousand years ago.

We have to also, not because of the mental slavery which they inherited from Colonialism, where we are picking one Indigenous people against African people; we cannot be part of that and I will not be part of that.

In the Rupununi, there is a left over of a Dutch Fort, way into the Rupununi, about twenty-nine miles away from Lethem call *Kachoka*. That Fort was destroyed by the Indigenous people in their rebellion against the Dutch who were making incursions into the Rupununi. The people who were on the Coast, thousands fled to escape enslavement. In fact, the first slaves of this country were Indigenous people who were made slaves on the Tobacco and the integral plantations set up by the Dutch, the first slaves.

If we are going to talk history then, for goodness sake, as Members of Parliament, let us do due justice to the history of our country and not try to cut it and paste it how you want it to read.

The Indigenous people of this country occupied this land, archeologically and anthropologically, it is traced by Calvin Datin to no sooner than seven thousand and up to eleven thousand years ago. There are evidences archeologically and anthropologically all along the East Coast, all along the West Coast: anthropological shots and documents that show there were settlements there thousands of years ago, hundreds of years ago and we know that. The marks are there, the discoveries have been made. We must recognise that when we talk about what the Dutch did, enslaving the Indigenous people, when people are talking about the number of people who came here as slaves, particularly in the Dutch period, there were not large numbers because the Dutch were using the Indigenous people as slaves.

That explains why the numbers for Guyana are much smaller than the numbers for Surinam or Jamaica or Trinidad. It was only later (Minister Anthony talked about it) 1796 or 1797, that the numbers started increasing because the Indigenous people ran away, were

murdered, killed, died of diseases and the labour shortage got more acute for production on the plantation.

We cannot, as a people, do a disservice in trying to deal... and this is a dilemma for Guyana, the dilemma for us as Guyanese. How do we give each their due credence; how do we ensure every group in here, ethnically, have their due place in history, that you place in society, that you place in the Constitutional rights, and the order of our society, how we govern our society, how we participate in it? That is the dilemma of this Parliament. It was a dilemma when we did the Constitutional Reform and it is a dilemma politically and administratively and parliamentary wise. It would be with us for a long time.

That is why I said, let us liberate, and emancipate ourselves from mental slavery. This Parliament and this Government would be not part of any attempt to legitimise by bringing a Motion to do with land as proposed in such a way that it ignores and it legitimises those who were killed and their land taken away from them hundreds of years ago. We cannot pit one group against the other, we cannot recognise the Holocaust of the Indigenous people of the entire Americas and in which this part of it, Guyana, suffered also ...

In 1834, expeditions of Robert Shrumburg into Guyana, and he travelled throughout Guyana, into the Oronoco, the Amazon and then later, as the Boundaries' Commissioner of Guyana, which laid the boundaries of our country, and when we had to deal with our boundaries in 1899 with the Venezuelans, those marks were used. But, Shrumburg found that the population had decreased rapidly from what few records they were before that, and he found

fifteen distinct groups which had reduced by the 1960s to nine groups.

Therefore the neglect and what happened to the indigenous people cannot be pitted. The Dutch and the British pitted the Amerindians against the Africans and vice versa. We in 2007 must not be part of that form of dividing rule that took place then as we are perpetuating in 2007.

If there is any group that must first claim legitimacy on land, it will be the Amerindians. I want to ask, there was a Special Select Committee of this House that looked at the Draft Amerindian Act in the last Parliament and why was it the PNC/R-1GR-1G did not propose an Ancestral Amerindian Commission to deal with the land issue of Amerindians, or a National Committee, or a National Commission or a Special Select Committee to deal with the Amerindian land issue? In fact, the Amerindian Act does not call for an Ancestral Lands Commission; the Amerindian Act lays out procedures on how land, its acquisition, distribution and disbursement are done.

This House was also privy to one of the most scholastic, academic and refined presentations by a young woman, Minister Carolyn Rodrigues when we debated Amerindian Act [Applause] and I would really like to ask, Mr Speaker, and I do not know if Minister has done it herself, but that speech and the Debate in Parliament, particularly the Minister's speech, needs to become a little booklet to advise us on the land issue and how it was addressed in the Amerindian Act because it sets a template on how we have to deal with the other land issues that have come up. Those Land Acts went through amazing consultations.

I want to bring the other point forward. Stephen Campbell was a Member of this Parliament and he is always recognised Heritage Month. He was a Member of Parliament for the United Force, right Minister Nazir? The first Amerindian M.P. here and he made a request to Queen Elizabeth II that they needed to deal with the Amerindian land, the need to address it and this was supposed to be done before Independence [Interruption: 'That is right']. It was not done and in 1969, with no Amerindian presence on that Commission, the 1969 Lands Commission presented its Report. It made a number of recommendations to do with land for Amerindians and regretfully, by 1992 only half of the recommendations of the communities to get title from the 1969 Land Commission was executed by the Opposition. We have to say that after the 1969 Report, and up to 1976, sixty-four communities, right, sixty-four communities, received their titles. They amended the 1951 Act to do with Amerindian lands which provided for the Government to take away those lands whenever it could and whether it wanted to. In 1991 therefore, sixty-four communities were granted titles under the State Land Act and they added ten more therefore, 6% of Guyana's land map is now under Amerindian title. In 2007, 14% of Guyana's land map is now owned by Amerindian titles and in the last four years alone, seventeen had been granted titles, additional, and we have also extended the land for six communities and all these resulted from consultation and agreement with the communities.

It is important that I bring this because I believe that the issue of land and the land purchased after slavery was abolished, basically between 1835 and 1850. It is a highly complex issue because, one, the nature in which the titles were dealt with and the communities managed their affairs, the interference of the British Government consistently, from 1841 right through to the 1940s to

make sure that African villages and the African peasantry, would be left destitute and many of the villages would fall apart, also the neglect of the modern period of a Government's post-Elections, post-Independence who did nothing for twenty-eight years on this issue.

The issue of the lands, there is no doubt and I have no doubt of the figures given here by Deborah Backer, to do with the fifty-seven... just a minute, to a point about... I have no doubt that when Deborah said... sorry, the Honourable Member Backer said, 57 of 182 parcels, there is no legal ownership, I do not doubt about that and nothing in my mind makes me think. We have asked the PNC/R-1GR-1G since this Motion was Tabled, can we have the list of villages where these problems exist, let us see what can be done and let us see how we can rectify these issues.

We are saying in this Motion and Mr Carberry, I have said it to you many times, and Mr Speaker, the land issue, in a Motion to do with reparation and apology, shifts the focus on what is a country called Guyana, joining the CARICOM family, which is calling as a region to the British, French, Dutch and Spanish for apology and reparation, we get split on a local, particularistic issue which has to be addressed, which they did not address in their twenty-eight years, and now want to make a jewel in the crown in terms of an issue to ethnically divide people. They are holding to their breasts this 100th list, hundred verses where this issue is a massive problem.

I do not understand what kind of Party we are dealing with, what kind of Opposition Party is this that you have ordinary people, do not have land as they pointed out, and they made no representation to any Minister of this Government for the people of Plaisance,

B/V, Buxton, Dem Amstel or anywhere else to be able to say look, there are some problems here. When that failed and when you say the Minister did not pay attention to you and the Government did not do anything, then you come out with your heavy weights. You are holding the information to your breasts as if it is top secret and you do not want to solve the problem. You are using it as a political tool.

The issue of the Holocaust, the indigenous people Holocaust, the Holocaust of those from Africa and living in our country who were murdered and killed, who rebelled, we also have not dealt... we ourselves suffer from mental slavery. 1763 is a pre-colossal of the Haitian Revolution; it is the only rebellion we call it our historian, our historian called 1763 a Rebellion. It is not a rebellion. It is a revolution because they held power for almost one year. There is no other slave revolution that teaches it, except Haiti. Our intellectuals, our university does not give credence to the fact that, in the whole hemisphere, in the entire hemisphere, the most outstanding revolution prior to the Haitian revolution took place in Guyana and we cannot even take credit for that. We cannot even take credit for our forefathers doing that. One whole year they held power on the Berbice River and they just could not get the rid of them.

Of course, the brutality as the Honourable Member Mr Williams has pointed out... but when we talk about emancipating ourselves, we have to be able to also recognise that we have done disservice to our forefathers, not just come in to Parliament and read from checks, and numbers and things like that. We have also gone through a period prior to independence when no-one could go into certain parts of Georgetown if they were not white, [Interruption: 'You are not white' "No, I am not white ... That is your problem

... I never act white"] Mr Speaker, this same country, when we fought against colonialism, we fought for independence, was to free ourselves, we called it dignity and to be able to move this country forward. What we did is that, we were just as caught up as a people with high colour, low colour, dark colour, brown colour and everything else. I grew up in the city and I knew which was the side of the poor people, which actually, was the side on which I lived and, the side of the middle class, who was high colour, who was not high colour, who was dark colour and who was not dark colour, and those messages still stay with us today, it is still there.

[Speaker resumes the Chair]

It is in India where they choose the Bollywood and the Pageant Queens who are high in colour, lighter in skin. The same problem is in Africa and this is an issue that is fought over all the time: about what is dignity and what is beauty in the eyes of people. If we cannot find ourselves to be a beauty, however we are, whatever we are, then how come we ask other people to accept us?

The emancipation process is not over yet because we are still as entangled as the British and the Dutch put us, into little boxes. We have a Motion here today, that, in the amendments we make, try to bring in a more holistic approach to the issue and to be able to deal with righting the wrong. That is why the issue of the land as presented, we will not support because we will not be pitted against indigenous people and their land rights, whether they are secretive because of the thousands of years and who could prove ancestry or whether it is real.

Therefore the African Holocaust also had to do with reparations and we had to deal with the...

The Speaker: Honourable Member, I have to interrupt you, your time is up.

Hon Mr Samuel A A Hinds: I propose that the Honourable Member be given another fifteen minutes to continue her presentation.

The Speaker: Proceed, Honourable Member ... Speak to the Motion ...

Ms Gail Teixiera: I am speaking to the Motion all the time ... [*Interruption*]

Mr Aubrey Norton: Mr Speaker, subject to these Standing Orders, Debate upon any Motion, Bill or Amendment, shall be relevant to such Motion, Bill or Amendment and that the Member shall confine his/her observation to the subject under discussion. I submit, Mr Speaker, that the Motion did not pit Amerindians against Africans and is improper and incorrect for the Honourable Member to go down the road and to transform the intent of this Motion to suggest that the intention of the Motion is to pit Indigenous Amerindians against Africans. I believe it is the Speaker that has ...

Ms Gail Teixiera: Mr Speaker, I am waiting for your ruling. Can I proceed?

The Speaker: The Honourable Member made a statement that the Motion is objecting to what you are saying, that the Motion is

pitting Amerindians against Africans. Do you have a response to that?

Ms Gail Teixiera: Mr Speaker, I am putting forward an argument that this Side of the House will not support a part of the Motion relating to the ancestral Lands Commission and/or the new Amendment made by Mrs Backer to do with a Committee, National Committee. I am putting an argument about why we will not support it, the grounds on which we will not support it. I think it is relevant.

Mr Aubrey Norton: Mr Speaker, I wish to submit that the Motion nowhere, does that and to now argue that this is the case, to suggest that you would not support the Motion is in fact, bringing an irrelevancy into the matter to suggest you do. I therefore would suggest, Mr Speaker that while there is the right not to support the Motion, it has to be argued in the context of the Motion and it is not correct to change the intent and purpose of the Motion and, that to me is what is happening.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. What the Honourable Member has said, has already been said so I would recommend you do not have to accept it, and that it be dealt with in the Rebuttal. In the meantime, I would urge all Members to please confine themselves to the issue under discussion. Thank you.

Ms Gail Teixiera: Mr Speaker, on the issue of the reparation and on the land issue, I think that we have to look dispassionately at a number of issues. For example, in the argument of reparation first of all, the planters of Demerara and Essequibo - I could not find the figures on Berbice - received \$2 ½ M back in 1835 for their 89,915 slaves so the planters were compensated and the people

who bought the villages (there were many types of villages: communal and propriety land), the totals that were bought acquired 44,000 people moving off the estate into villages and they acquired the cost of over \$1M at the time, twenty-five communal villages and over seven thousand freehold properties in propriety villages.

It is estimated in the 1850s that the investment by Africans on the economic freedom from the planters was over \$2.2M in addition to the \$1M spent in purchasing land. Furthermore, many of the villages, including Buxton, were partitioned, further partitioned, by the British in the number of the issues in the British interference. When the communal lands were bought, they were bought under a joint-stock arrangement and sharing, and they divided upland that was for household and land for public property, and I shall use the one at Victoria as an example, where the lands were divided up and they kept land for public purposes. Some of those lands were taken away even by the 1870s therefore, legitimately, persons who were on those lands, post 1850, who were not responsible for whatever the British were doing, but land was freed up or land was taken over as public land. What do you do with those people who have also been on that land for one hundred years themselves? The issue becomes even more complicated because we are dealing also with new African arrivals that came during indentureship who also purchased land. Therefore, it is very complex and that is why I said, the Opposition, since they have made this an issue, and have never in the fourteen years of this Government, brought one case to show how it could be regularised or what needed regularising, is now wanting to enshrine it into the Motion.

Mr Speaker ... sorry, I did not realise the gender changed between my looking down at my Papers. Sorry, Madam, you are a sight better to look at, I guess. I think it is important that we look at the laws that exist in Guyana and I think Mr Franklyn was hinting at it in his presentation. Mr Patterson in his presentation, talking about this issue being addressed by extra Parliamentary means, it can be addressed by a Proposal I think he was making on the floor, Mr Franklyn, that is, or be able to get a collective of lawyers who could *pro bono*, assist people in the villages who have these problems because, why are these problems in people getting it rectified?

One is the cost of the lawyers. Legal fees cost a lot of money, the filing of the papers cost money, the tracing of historical records and, sometimes there is none, the tracing of the lineage, the lineage issue because of undocumented birth registration. These are the complex issues that do not need a National Committee; it requires action by persons who have these problems being able to get assistance to be able to resolve it, not to make it into a political weapon; that is the issue.

Therefore, I want to support Mr Franklyn in saying, let us get it in this House, we feel strongly this issue needs to be regularised. Do we have a Committee that would seek for the next ten years and two years researching or doing instead out of this Parliament say, ten lawyers, because there are many lawyers in this place, I am not one of them unfortunately or fortunately, volunteer two hours a week, two hours a week; (*clap your hands*) let us put an ad in the paper to say that the following MPs who are lawyers will meet in the Parliament Office for two hours every week, the Speaker will give us her Office and we will receive people that Deborah Backer group that said 57 out of 129 people did not have parcels, they can

be invited to come, let us see the paper work, let us try to help the people get their land. We do not need another National Committee to sit and cogitate the issues... Let us see the lawyers of this House who are willing to give two hours; if two hours a week is too much, two hours a month, two hours. Mr Speaker will give us a room downstairs and sometimes we will put ads up and let people come that have this problem. We do not need much talking, we need to take this seriously, let us take it seriously, let the people come who got the problem and let us look at it, the individual cases, because these are individual cases; it is done case by case. We do not need to go the route of this Proposal.

Mr Speaker, the issue... we do not need more Committees. If it is so that what Mrs Backer is saying, that 57 out of 129 people do not have legal ownership of the land in Buxton, let us reach the fifty seven, the persons involve in the 57 lots to have an opportunity to have legal help to get the matter in the court or whatever it takes to resolve it. Do we need a Commission to try to study what the people must do? We already know where the problem lies in this land issue; it is not the Law. The state lands that provide for these things be resolved. The problems are more in the length the court takes, the lack of historical records; these are the problems which cause these things, as well as the next British with partitioning and re-partitioning villages, incorporating and un-incorporating villages. Then to crown it all, to crown it all, in 1980 we had the Constitutional Amendment and then we had the establishment and the Order #51... sorry Order #12 of 1980 of the Local Democratic Orders and then, Order #51 of 1990 which established one hundred and twenty nine Councils, Bodies and in which (let me get the right Clause) Order #51 of 1990,

Article 2:

The property of every dissolved local authority of the Village Councils, within any Region and the rights, powers, liabilities, obligations of the established Authority shall, under disillusion of that Authority under paragraph 1, stand transferred to and vested in the Neighbourhood Democratic Council and the jurisdiction over the area wherein the property is situated.

This was dealing with property which had already been, in some cases, taken over and in 1980 they were taken over from the Village Councils because, from the Village Movement, the communal lands were held by the community. They set up and elected their Councils, which managed their public property; the common property.

When the British imposed the Local Government among them, they started to interfere with the elections and how many people could come from where. Further down, the PNC/R-1G then started to mess with Local Government Elections. Then we have, in 1990, a new change: they threw out the Village Council in the old village, particularly on the East Coast, and you have now NDCs that bring together many villages and what it does? It takes land from seven different villages that are public property, some of them are communal lands, and they merged them.

In fact, co-ops were formed as you know, and co-ops did take over some of that land. We know too, let us be honest, that your Leaders of your Party, when they were in Government, acquired huge stretches of land huge ... I am sorry, my colleague across the way, I was delighted and enthralled to see his house on the hill that looks down on the Demerara River, just opposite Linden. It is

gorgeous, if you look at the plantation house, you know. I can start calling Leaders who acquired State property, common property, crown property and Amerindian property. But, let us not get too far down the road. All I am saying is that, the land issue is a major issue and that, if you hold it like the sword of D., all you get is. You will not help ordinary people resolve the problem which you say you know about, you say you have the cases.

I want to add because I was very perturbed, that I also went to the Commission of Lands and Surveys and I told them about my concerns to do with the issues that were coming up and what was going on. They advised that they had done regularisation of public land issues on the entire Essequibo Coast between Charity and Supenaam, which would have included Dartmouth and Queenstown, also villages on the East Coast, such as Golden Grove, Nabacalis, Cove & John, Victoria and Belfield. They said they had not completed, they were still doing the regularisation but they had not addressed..., the Commission of Lands and Survey did not address the issue of private land therefore, they expect an interest. If there were cases, they would like to assist in trying with these cases that have been talked about, that we are willing to look at to address, wherever there may be irregularities or people that have experience, no title, no ownership, and so on because these are private issues.

Mr Speaker, the Amendments that the Government have made and Minister Frank Anthony has tabled (he has also mentioned the Indian's presentation which also was an excellent presentation), is that this House, to go on record as:

(1) Condemning the Slave Trade and slavery.

(2) To be able to recognise and say unapologetically and therefore our Amendment is a stronger one to do with this abominable crime against humanity as was stated by the United Nations and UNESCO in the present declarations that they have made based on the issues represented by CARICOM and other countries.

In addition to that, we have also called in the last paragraph where someone said it was flawed. If we do not know our history, we will be forced to repeat it. Slavery was several years ago; we may have felt it could never happen again but, there is different forms of trafficking in slavery, nothing on the scale of what happened in that period.

We as this generation, want to make sure that these terrible, abominable crimes that mankind had committed on one another, we are able to say no as a generation and that we, as a generation, will not in the world, allow these things to happen. In addition to that, our children be culturally influenced by American culture, foreign culture, we need to reinforce, identity as Guyanese which is made up of our cultural diversity of the history of our people for them to know about the drums and the queh-queh and the history of masquerade in this country, and why is masquerade moved from the ... and the African drums to the kittle drums and the pipe. How did that happen? Therefore, we cannot say that say, Mr Williams, that we know it all, we do not know it all! When some of us were in school, we learnt British History and the new generation is learning some aspects but, we are still discovering our history: Amerindian, African, Indian and all, including ... they are still researching and still discovering.

We will support different aspects of Mrs Backer's Motion because we feel it must be supported; she is right. On the issue of land, we are saying that our considerations are being given, and we feel this matter can be and must be dealt with, extra-parliamentarily. Thank you. [Applause]

The Speaker: Before you commence your response, Honourable Member, the time, you would have noticed, has long past when we should have had our dinner... oh! It is seven? [Interruption: 'Yes!'] But, as I am on the floor, so to speak, due to a miscommunication on my part, you regrettably will not be having your regular refreshments this evening, unfortunately and there is nothing we can do at this late stage. If we notice early that we are going to stay late and we did not order from our usual people, we'll try to get something in from other places. Unfortunately, it is only now realised that, as a result of something I said; it was interpreted to mean that refreshment should not be provided. I did not mean that. So, regrettably, refreshments are not nearby. I think we have coffee and other drinks available. I hope that would urge Members to conclude very rapidly this Debate and the next one which to follow, Mrs Backer.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Mr Speaker, could I be bold enough to ask if we will be taking any break for the coffee or...

The Speaker: It depends on what the Members wish; if you wish to have a few minutes...

Mrs Deborah J Backer: A short break even if perhaps either before or after I speak, because I am speaking...

The Speaker: What would you wish, Mrs Backer will have.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Whatever I wish? Well, I would wish that the ... Oh! On this particular thing I thought you meant wish, generally, Sir.

The Speaker: No, no ...

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Sir, could we break now?

The Speaker: You want to have a break now?

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Yes, please, for fifteen minutes, at your

discretion, Sir.

The Speaker: Five minutes, Honourable Member.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Members. Please be

seated.

Honourable Member, Mrs Backer.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. This Motion stands in my name and seconded by my colleague, Mr McAllister, a devout and substantial Debate and as the Debate progressed, the quality and logic of the Debate took a plunge, and for the avoidance of any doubt, it took a downward plunge and, in seeking to find adjectives to describe this plunge, I reminded myself in my actual presentation, I spoke about the idea of Slave Trade and slavery horrifies, their realities nauseate.

Mr Speaker, as I listen to the last two Members of the PPP/CIVIC/Civic make their contributions, namely Ms Teixiera, Honourable Member, and Mr Nagamootoo, also an Honourable

Member I was horrified and I felt nauseated at the level of bigotry, racism both veiled and unveiled ...

The Speaker: Honourable Member, I do not think I can permit you to accuse other Members of bigotry and racism in the House.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: I withdraw, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, perhaps if I can quote ... Mr Nagamootoo spoke, and I quote:

Cheap, ethnic mobilisation on the part of the PNCR-1G in bringing this Motion."

Mr Speaker: And you can use 'equally strong'.

Mrs Deborah Baker: I will use his own. I will use his own and said that once it is coming from that Side, "it is cheap, ethnic mobilisation" and the phrase that I want to borrow from Ms Teixiera when she spoke about this Motion trying to "ethnically divide people". Mr Speaker, I am bound by your ruling but, if that is not what I said before and I am now prevented from saying again, then I do not know what else. Sir, how can the legitimate rights of one of our ethnic groups, how can the legitimate right of one of our ethnic groups be seen as seeking to ethnically divide this country? We cannot talk about the Portuguese slavery because they were not enslaved ... [Applause] We cannot talk about the Indian slavery because they were not enslaved. If they were, they were not enslaved here. The bicentenary is about the abolition of the Slave Trade [Applause] and in a few days' time we will commemorate the union on that day. The Prime Minister is all dressed off and dressed up or dressed down or dressed around, however it is, in his African gear and that is only right but

he does not put on Indian gear then because we are observing African Emancipation. It does not mean that we do not recognise Indian Arrival Day, 5 May but, that is not what we are about now. If there was a Motion about the Berbice Bridge, as Mr McAllister says, it is not the time to talk about a road to Brazil.

If the PPP/CIVIC wants to bring a Motion to do with Amerindians, our indigenous people, to do with our Indians, to do with Portuguese, to do with our Chinese, nothing prevents them from so doing.

I want to explore immediately, this myth about it is a shame that it took us forty-one years to bring it here. I agree but, a Motion can be brought by either Side of the House so, even when the PPP/CIVIC was on the Opposition Side, nothing stopped them from bringing a Motion. [Applause] They blame us, they say: "Why you now bring it?" And we are saying: "Thank God we brought it." Even if it was forty-one years later, thank God! The one who has been brutalised for years, and usually when I say that I know Neil Kumar gets worried, I do not know why, even if after forty-one years she has stopped being brutalised, she is grateful, and the man who stopped after forty-one years must be credited for stopping.

The AFC, I know, they are not here but I just want to say one thing. Poor Mr Patterson, obviously at night, he is not at his strongest; that is all I would say about his presentation: night time is not his time. He is not a night person, Mr Williams is saying, and I like him. But Mrs Holder, [Laughter]... it matters not who is disciplining who, we can still talk. But Sir, Mrs Holder at some Press Conference spoke glowingly about the AFC. She said the AFC had raised the bar. She said the AFC bringing a lot of

questions, the AFC bringing a lot of Motions. Why did not the AFC bring this Motion? They can find time to bring a Motion to change the hours of Parliament but they did not see it fit but, we have brought the Motion and we have been crucified for bringing the Motion. What next! What next! No, no, they said that: it took us forty-one years, we should be ashamed and I am saying and I want the records to show that, however you twist it, and you turn it, it is the People's National Congress Reform-1G who has brought this Motion. [Applause] You could swim high, you could swim low, swing left, swing right, you could try to emasculate it, you could try to dress it up or dress it down, it is our Motion, and it will remain our Motion.

Mr Speaker, as I started yesterday, I was a bit emotional because, like I said, and I said it very honestly, reading about slavery brings back... it evokes very emotional feelings in me but I have a different set of emotions this afternoon. My emotions are emotions of anger, which I am in fact better capable of dealing with, and my emotion of unfairness as to what the People's Progress Party is trying to change this Motion into. This is not about African Guyanese versus Indo-Guyanese or even more contentious suggestion by Ms Teixiera, African Guyanese versus Amerindian Guyanese. That is one of the lowest, one of the lowest ... [Applause] that I have heard from that Member and I can see them going about into the Amerindian villages, trying to peddle that kind of propaganda and if there is a God... and I say no more! I know many of you all are atheists and that is why I say if there is a God ...

But, Mr Speaker, Mr McAllister spoke about a letter in the Kaieteur News. Well, everyone in this House know that I deal with the Stabroek News. The Stabroek News Editorial, the

Heading is *Talk is Cheap*. They were dealing with my Honourable friend, Mr Rohee's Ministry but I am not dealing with Mr Rohee's Ministry today but it just said *Talk is Cheap* and that is what we have today. I want to entitle my little wrap-up *Paranoia gone Mad [Interruption: 'That is you ...']* because it appears as if the PPP/CIVIC/C... I could never in a million years have thought that, even with their cute sense of reasoning, they could read into this second *Resolve* Clause all these things. It is unbelievable ... it is unbelievable.

What the PNCRR-1G is asking for is very simple. We are saying, bicentenary of the Slave Trade and around the world it is being recognised primarily as a result of the initiative taken by Jamaica, and supported by CARICOM and we should be proud. We are saying, and nobody had disagreed with this, nobody on either Side of the House, that our African fore-parents, referred to as Slaves and then as free men and women, must be recognised for what they had done to humanise this country, what they have done to humanise this country. No-one has a problem with that. Everybody... it is not about Amerindian, you bring a Motion. [Interruption: 'I shall deal with you later']. I am not sure who is speaking, there is a murmur. Sir, the issue of recognition has caused no problem, no serious problem. In recognising them, we have to recognise, whether we like it or not, that the villages that are along the coastland of Guyana, most of them, were bought by freed African slaves and the origin of the Village Movement, as we know it along the coastline, lies in that period immediately after emancipation. No-one can doubt that. They did not steal the land, they did not go and squat, they earned the land by paying for it; they went around in wheelbarrows of money because they saved it. They said many of the money (they were coins) were with dirt because they had to bury it. They dug it up and they

were so much, they went with wheelbarrows of money to buy. They did not go and squat because the plantation owners would not have allowed that, they had to buy it and as Mr McAllister said when they realised miraculously that these freed slaves had money, they kept upping the price because they wanted to keep them out but they were able to buy.

Dr Anthony needs... the way he went on with this hundred villages, he seems to need to find another type of doctor because the reality is, whether he likes it or not, there are at least one hundred villages along our coast that were bought by freed African slaves. That is a reality, Dr Anthony, you could wish it away, you could say Ow! God, how these people could do these things in such a short time, these people that we say lazy? And it was not drugs money, as my colleague is saying. There are a hundred villages. Sir, it was only out of respect for you, that I would not name all hundred, I may stop at ninety Sir: Abary, Agricola, Airy Hall, Alnest, I am going to skip now; Calcutta, and despite what you may think on that Side of the House, it was an African village.

For the information of Ms Teixiera, Calcutta, they are very, very... in fact, the G.O. Broomes who is the other person along with Mr Trotman's father who is doing voluntary work in Nabaclis, has informed me today that in Calcutta, no-one has registered title to their land, <u>-one, not one.</u> Ms Teixiera can add that to her list because if she feels that the fifty-seven I mentioned is the totality then that is not true because we have even more than fifty-seven villages and she has a copy and that is the copy that says the doctor is so frenzy. I can imagine what his pressure is. Ascension, Soesdyke, Stanleytown, Trafalgar Union, Victoria, Woodlands, Ithica, Hopetown, Fyrish, Golden Fleece, Paradise,

Parika, Perseverance, Moca Arcadia, which is now a part of Greater Georgetown, these were villages... no, not Moca Arcadia, sorry, Rome which is now Agricola. You should not speak about knowledge; you and knowledge are strangers to each other. They are not even related. Mr Speaker, I really want to remain as unemotional as possible. As I said, recognition is not a problem but you see, as I said, talk is cheap. It is easy to say we recognise.

We go to reparation. You see, reparation, we are asking someone else to do something so we do not have to do anything. We want to say our ex-colonial masters gave us something. We want to ask people and asking is okay, so the Government has no problem with that and it is right, do not get me wrong; it is right that we should ask, request, demand, lobby for reparation and we said so in our Motion. We agree with reparation but, when it comes to the situation, you the parents, you have the capacity, even if you do not have it in your pocket, to give your child a new pair of shoes, to say no, do not worry with that, go next door and ask. You are not prepared to make any sacrifice in the term of this committing money because we are not going to take away land from Vic and give back people or anything like that or any of the chosen few; you do not have to worry.

We are not talking about taking away transported land from anyone however they may have gotten it, or Buddy's or whoever. We are saying land that has no ownership, as we stand here today or land whose ownership resides in Mary Jane who died since 1908 and no-one else had acquired lawful title. We are saying those lands are lands that could be the subject matter, that ought to be the subject matter of the Commission that we are speaking about. I have no apology for saying that when - I have not called the names before but it seems that name calling is the order of the

day – Mr McAllister and I met with Dr Anthony and Ms Teixiera they expressed reservation about the Clause as it was originally tabled by me and we agreed. They convinced us; they said do not worry with this Constitutional Commission.

We then started to speak about a National Commission and I remember Ms Teixiera formerly my Honourable friend, (the jury is out as to her present status) we agreed, but I want to show her I expect a favourable consideration will be given, we agreed with them that look, the African Lands Commission established similar status to Article 212 (d) may not be the best way to go. We agreed with them and we said we will then deal with it as the issue of a Commission, at the level of a Commission. You know what Ms Teixiera said? Either herself or Dr Anthony, I cannot remember who was the lead player, but one of them or perhaps both of them said: "It is only a little over ten villages." Mr McAllister said: "I think it is more." But that is not the issue, it does not matter how much it is, what is important is the principle because if it turns out that it is only fifteen or ten villages that are affected and could be rectified at this time, then that is what we have to deal with. When they got this figure of one hundred, I know one hundred is a big thing in cricket and we do not have any West Indians making one hundred now so this hundred seems to excite Mr Anthony, Dr Anthony and all of a sudden there is this big... because Mr McAllister said if it is ten, let us go with the ten. So, they had nothing to fear. I do not know why this hundred has excited them because if they look at the hundred, they may realise that some of the hundred villages are no longer villages so, obviously they will not be the subject matter of any Commission.

Sir, it continues to bother my mind and the mind of the People's National Congress /Reform-1G as to why they would have an

objection and while it is tempting, and sometimes the only way to deal with temptation is to yield to it, one is tempted to come to the conclusion that the People's Progressive Party/Civic had some sinister motive to rectify lands where they can be rectified of our African foreparents. That is the truth. [Interruption: 'Shame on you!'] That is what this is saying and I am saying, you can say here now shame on me the people out there will say shame on you, they will say shame on you.

They spoke about pre-Congress and post-Congress, lobbying and all kinds of inaccuracies, Sir, but it is obvious that what they want to do is to detract from a very simple and straightforward Motion, very simple. I want to read it because I suspect it is either that they are not reading it, they feel it is the original one which calls for Constitutional Commission and Sir, with your leave, I would like to read the second *Resolve* Clause as amended by me as I propose to amend:

Be it further resolved that this National Assembly calls upon the Government to establish a National Commission to make recommendations and actions to be taken to rectify and regularise as appropriate, as appropriate.

If it is not appropriate to rectify because someone else has transported owner, we have to move on:

... action that is taken to rectify and regularise as appropriate, the ownership of village lands based on the examination of the historical and legal tenor (because legal tenor may be my great-great-great-grandfather) on the villages which were purchased.

Not stolen, not squatted, not by moving the Amerindians out as Ms Teixiera would have us believe. If one listens to Ms Teixiera, one would get the impression that it was the freed African slaves who pushed the indigenous people into the Interior. You did not say that nor did we say that this had anything to do with Amerindians. You brought the Amerindians into it. You cannot take it out. So, sir, the Clause is... it goes on to say:

Actions that are taken to rectify and regularise as appropriate, the ownership of village lands based on an examination of the historical and legal tenor of land in the villages which were purchased by the freed African slaves.

We heard that Victoria had about five hundred acres; we heard that other villages had three hundred and eight and the documentation is there. That is what we are speaking about, we are not speaking about the whole of Guyana; we are not speaking about other places that are no longer villages. We are saying, wherever villages that were brought by freed African slaves still exist and where in those villages their title does not reflect who is actually on the land and the people who are on the land are ancestors of our freed African slaves, we as a people...

The reason why we asked the Government to do it is because you sit in Government, we cannot ask the Opposition to set up a National Commission. A National Commission has to be agreed by and sworn in by, the President of Guyana who at this moment is His Excellency Mr Bharat Jagdeo. So, we cannot call on the Opposition to set up a National Commission. They do not have that authority so we are saying to the Government to set up a National Commission. What is sinister about that? What better

tribute could we pay to our ancestors as we look back on the bicentenary on the abolition of the Slave Trade and as we look forward in a few days to the 173^{rd} Anniversary of the Emancipation to say to them because everyone mentioned all the names: Accra, Cuffy, Damon and so on but, when it comes to really making a statement, a tangible statement, to their legacy, to their spirit, to their blood, to their sweat, to their very lives. We do not have... I nearly said guts but I will go with guts Sir, we do not have the guts to do something and this is why as I say, this whole exercise by the PPP/CIVIC/C is *talk is cheap, talk is cheap.*

Sir, it is late in the night, we have spent a long time, this Motion has had a long period of gestation, a long period of debate and I am about to take my seat, I have a couple of other things to say. I am saddened, in fact Sir, as I had indicated, I am both horrified and nauseated, that the Government of Guyana, including people on their Side, who are ancestors of our freed African foreparents, who are descendants, sorry, who are descendants seem either to be ashamed that they are descendants, want to disassociate themselves from being descendants and want to feel that if they stand up ... [Interruption: they 'will lose their positions'...]

Mr Odinga L Lumumba: Mr Speaker, that is a serious insult, I am an African and that is a fact. She did not question my ability to be African. [Interuption: 'Strike the Standing Order'] She does not have the capacity to show that I am African since I was born. If she will show that she cannot comment on my struggling with black people in this country of the world. She has to be careful with her statements. She has a big problem but we can go on like this and get all of us crazy. I never stole an air condition from the Minister...

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. Thank you Mr Lumumba. Thank you, thank you. Mrs Backer, I do not think it is fair to ...[Interuption: 'Shhh!'] I do not think it is fair to accuse anyone, including the Objector [Interuption: 'The Objector'] of the ... you did not use the word betraying but you came a bit close to that: their own race and that is a very serious indictment. I know it is blatant. It is a long Debate and tempers are sharp, you have to be careful.

Mr Deborah Backer: Sir, if I offended anyone that was not my intention but it is example of paranoia gone mad, as I indicated earlier, but we have been subjected on this Side of the House to some of the most ridiculous statements: *ethnic mobilisation*, I mean ... do not even get up because it offended all of us and I would think it offended even some people over there but I am tempted of another Bob Marley song, about the cap and fitting and wherever. Sir, I say no more about that and I move on.

Sir, the other thing I want to say; I want to mention very briefly Dr Anthony's Amendments. Sir, this is what we call *puff*, this is what we call *fluff* because when you look at it, what it is? It just has words. He is saying that after the first *whereas* Clause add:

Whereas the National Assembly acknowledges the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the 173rd Anniversary ..."

I mean, the Motion is dealing with slavery, this adds nothing to my first *Resolve* Clause but it seems that the Government obviously are annoyed that the PNCR-1G got there first and they are trying, even if it is forty-one years later we got there first and they now want to come first but, they cannot come first when we are already there first. When you look at it Sir, in all seriousness

add a fifth and sixth *Whereas Clause*. This is what the fifth *whereas* Clause says:

Fathers of freed men and women of August 01, dedicated themselves to building a better society based on the principles of democracy, quality and freedom.

That does not add or take away from our Clause; it is just our Motion, it is just *puff*, and then he goes on to speak of this Resolve Clause about the Intercession Meeting. We have no problem with Intercession Meeting, we of course, have a problem with the University of Guyana and that was dealt with by Mr McAllister.

They now want to also put in about the 1763, (they say Resolution but, it is Revolution). We are not saying that perhaps there is no merit in that but, it does not add to this Motion which is dealing with recognition, which is dealing with rectification and which is dealing with reparation. And if they are suddenly so guano about righting all these wrongs, perhaps they should do something about the Son Chapman Martyrs also. [Applause]

If we suddenly want to build shrines and recognise people, let us deal with the Son Chapman also. But Sir, you know for some strange reason, people like to quote laws and when you quote laws you sound impressive and Dr Anthony quoted 60:03 and 59:04. When you look at 60:03, what is 60:03 speaking about? The long Title is:

An Act to provide - and this was passed on June19, 1926 - An Act to provide for the partition of lands for the reallocation of persons for the issue of Titles

thereof and to render occupation thereof more beneficial.

When you glance through the Act you see they deal with people who already had title but who want to divide it in a certain way. So, this Act does not address the question that we are speaking about: of rectifying people who have no Title but he got carried away and he then went to 59:04 and 59:04 is entitled *The Surveyor Special Provisions Act* and this is the intent: it has two Sections: One is the short Title and... no, sorry, the long Title is about ten and the short Title has one Section and this is what the long Titles says and remember, Mr Speaker, this is the Act that the Honourable Minister quoted with such glee that will help the descendants of freed African slaves who bought land, to have their land rectified and this is what it said:

"An Act to authorise the surveying of land by means of aerial photography."

And this is speaking about surveying by low flying aerial photography. What does that have to do with people who are on the land and just need the Title to the land? But, they go and they do an aerial survey but you see, it sounds nice when you hear 59:04 and 60:03 or 60:02. so, no-one can deny and I think when the Honourable Prime Minister, in between his sojourn to Greece and back as he spoke to us, he mentioned that we have existing laws. No-one can deny that we have existing laws but the reality is, we have too many existing laws in this country and they are observed in the breach. We have many existing laws of the country but the average citizen does not have the means to access those laws and what we are saying, as a contribution to our fore parents, we must facilitate those people who do not have the

means by making the lands and Titles available to them without costs to themselves. It is contemptuous or burning with contempt for the Honourble Ms Teixiera to say:

Get a little band of lawyers together and they are going to come to our Parliament two hours a week or, if that is too much, two hours a month to help these people.

She has reduced to, you know, just contentious of the plight of hundreds and thousands of descendants of our African fore parents. They must come to think and see and then, if I am one of the lawyers or either Nandlall, if the police allow him to come, is one of the other lawyers and we cannot come, Sir, we cannot come because we are held up in Court. The people will come and say: "You see, they do not have any interest." That onus surely cannot rest on the individual lawyers to right the wrong and, before I sit I want to say, (please sit) we are not blaming the People's Progressive Party for the situation now. I mean, it is tempting to blame them but we are not blaming them. We are saying though, these are the facts, how can we together ... yes the PNC/R-1GR-1G should have done it and did not? That is now your yardstick ... the PNCR-1G should have done it and did not do it, so we are not doing it either. How can we progress as a people if we continue with that?

We are saying it is a Commission we are prepared to be associated with. We cannot set it up because it is not within our power as Opposition to set it up. We are prepared to work with you, we are prepared to sit in a Committee and work up the modalities. What we are saying, do not let your suspicion, do not let your misguided... is it pride? It cannot be pride! But, whatever it is,

your egos, that we are attacking you? Nobody is attacking the PPP/CIVIC/Civic on this but when you vote against it that will be a different thing. You have it within your means... it is not a threat, it is a statement of fact, but you have it within your means to set up a Commission and that is what we ask Sir, that is all we ask.

As I sit, we are confident that the People's National Congress /Reform-1G Side, that this Motion is simple, it should cause no concern and Sir, I commend it to this House, unequivocally. Thank you! [Applause]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Members, we have a series of Amendments, a large number of Amendments. I want to remind the Honourable Members, I hope these Amendments have been discussed among yourselves and you know how you are voting. I need to remind Members, this is a voice vote; it depends on what I hear. I will put the Amendments in the order in which they were handed in. First, there were three Amendments by Mrs Backer which I shall first put and I will also add for Mrs Backer, an Amendment to the second *Resolve* Clause which came very recently but, since there are other Amendments to the *Resolve* Clause, to that same Clause, I think it would be most convenient to put that at this stage, then I shall put...Yes?

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Mr Speaker, I rise to respectfully indicate that I am seeking leave to withdraw the Amendment to my second *Resolve* Clause.

The Speaker: Is that the most recent one submitted?

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Yes. In other words, the second *Resolve* Clause which is the first *Be it further resolve* Clause, I would like to proceed as is printed...

The Speaker: With the original one, okay.

Ms Deborah Backer: ... which deals with the African Lands Commission.

The Speaker: I understand. Thank you. Honourable Members...

Mr Brindley H R Benn: Mr Speaker, on clarification, the second *Whereas* Clause speaks of:

And whereas it estimates about fifty and one hundred million Africans who were either killed or abducted during the existence of European slavery and the Slave Trade.

I am not sure if this is the correct terminology or what we should do. The second *Whereas* Clause...

The Speaker: Where is that? Well, that is a matter for Mrs Backer.

Mr Brindley H R Benn: I am seeking clarification as to whether, if it is this, what she means with respect to this whole Motion. Maybe she wants to clarify it.

The Speaker: Well, I do not know. Mrs Backer, you heard Mr Benn.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Sir, the Clause speaks for itself.

The Speaker: The Member does not wish to say anything about the Clause. Honourable Members, I shall therefore put the Amendment. The first Amendments, I shall propose and then put. After the first, we need to have your Amendments seconded, Mrs Backer, we need a second to your Amendments. Mr McAllister!

Mr James K McAllister: Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Amendments, standing in the name of Mrs Backer.

The Speaker: Thank you. In the second *Resolve* Clause...

Ms Gail Teixiera: As there are so many Amendments, could I suggest that we go from the top, Clause by Clause by Clause from the original Motions on the Amendments on both Sides?

The Speaker: I do not want to confuse me in order if ...

Ms Gail Teixiera: Yes, it is going to confuse us if you read because I am not sure which paragraph you are dealing with.

The Speaker: I am dealing with Mrs Backer's Amendment. This has been circulated in the manner in which it was received by us. So, if you look at Mrs Backer's Amendment, it contains in a letter to Mr Isaacs dated 10 May; that is what I am dealing with.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Sir, I propose in the second *Resolve* Clause... so we are going to go...

The Speaker: I am going to put the Amendments, you do not have to put them. I am going to put them on your behalf. I propose the question that the word *African* in the second *Resolve* Clause ... Honourable Members, these things are very simple

except these are many Amendments; this is the way they are normally put. We are dealing with it in a manner in which it was received by us in the National Assembly and you have all those documents. You may not have brought them today but you have received them, so you cannot blame us for your not having them.

The first set of Amendments is contained in a letter to Mr Isaacs, dated 10 May. You received that letter and the first Amendment proposes an Amendment to the second *Resolve* Clause. I therefore, propose the question that the word *African* in the first line in the second *Resolve* Clause be deleted.

Mr Winston Murray: No. Mr Speaker, forgive me but I thought Mrs Backer had gotten up and said that in the second *Be it Resolved* Clause, that she was withdrawing the Amendment she proposed and was referring to the original....

The Speaker: No, no, I understood Mrs Backer to be saying that the Amendment that she proposed on July 24, proposing a new second *Resolve* Clause, that is the one she is withdrawing. Did I understand you correctly, Mrs Backer?

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Mr Speaker, I am seeking ... you are quite right, that is what I indicated to you but, Sir, I am seeking to withdraw the two Amendments because I made an Amendment, I tabled an Amendment dated May 10, as you rightly said, and I have also tabled one ...

The Speaker: 24th July.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: 24th July. I am now seeking to withdraw both Amendments, Sir.

Mr Speaker: You are seeking to withdraw both?

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Both, and I ...

The Speaker: Hold on. On May 10, you proposed three Amendments: two to the second *Resolve* Clause; two to the third *Resolve* Clause; that is on May 10.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Yes. Sir. I am dealing with the second *Resolve* Clause now, only.

The Speaker: I thought you were withdrawing the Amendment of the second *Resolve* Clause.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Yes, the second *Resolve* Clause.

The Speaker: You now have me totally confused.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: No Sir, I am seeking to withdraw the Amendment that I put in to the second *Resolve* Clause.

The Speaker: All Amendments, including that one dated 10 May, and the one dated 24 July?

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Yes, in respect of the second *Resolve* Clause, is the one dealing with the land.

The Speaker: You are taking out the Amendment you made on 03 May to the second *Resolve* Clause and the Amendment you made on 24July to the second *Resolve* Clause?

Mrs Deborah J Backer: That is so, Sir. It would be the original as printed in the Order Paper, the second *Resolve* Clause.

The Speaker: You have Amendment ... the only Amendments remaining for you there is the Amendment to the third *Resolve* Clause. Honourable Members I propose the question that the words in the third *Resolve* Clause be deleted, the following words: *British Government to enact measures to effect reparation to* and the words to be inserted are ... I am not putting that out yet, I am just putting the Proposal that the following words be deleted: *British Government to enact measures to effect reparation to*. Those in favour say *Aye!*

Aye!

Those against say No!

No!

The *No's* have it, the Amendment is deleted. I propose the question the following word ... well, if there is no Amendment, if they are not deleted, there can be no insertion to that Amended Clause and the Amended Clause will read as follows if that goes well. Are you following me, Mr Murray?

Mr Winston Murray: Mr Speaker, as I understand it, the original *Be it further Resolve* Clause now stands in respect of the calling on the British Government.

Mr Speaker: Is that the second *Resolve* Clause?

Mr Winston Murray: The third one which we just dealt with. It is stated in the original Clause. (As printed) Sir, I do not understand but I shall find it out. [Interruption: 'You aint want it now?'] [Pause]

The Speaker: Honourable Members, I shall now propose the Amendment as suggested by Dr Anthony.

Mr Winston Murray: I have a point of order which I'd like to raise on these Amendments. Mr Speaker, I would like to refer to Standing Order No.37:03 on Page 7 of our Standing Orders Booklet and Standing Order No.37:03 says very clearly:

"An Amendment shall not be ruled which has merely the effect of a negative vote."

Mr Speaker, we have just confirmed that the two Resolve Clauses now in the Motion, one of them speaks about an African Land Commission being established and the other calls upon the National Assembly to urge British Government. These Further be it Resolve Clauses, Sir, are not clear to me that is the first point, whether these are intended to replace ... because they simply say they are amended but, reading this sheet of paper, nowhere does it say that they are intended to replace it. Is the Be it further Resolved new Clause to be added? One says that but the one before does not say Be it further Resolved and these were from my existing Amendments. It is not clear. But, what I would like to say, Sir, if these are intended to replace the existing Be it further Resolved Clauses in the Motion Tabled by Mrs Backer when they have the very clear and unequivocal effect of being a negative vote in relation to the Land Commission that Mrs Backer's Motion seeks to have established. That is the heart and soul of this Motion, that is the heart and soul of the Motion.

The Speaker: Honourable Members, Mr Murray is making a point of Order, please allow him.

Mr Winston Murray: Some have now gotten enlightenment Sir, and if this comes out, this result, in a completely different Motion and has nothing to do with the essence of the Motion Tabled by Mrs Backer, in those circumstances Sir, I would invite you to rule that these Amendments would be improper to amend this Motion and ought to be in a different Motion on their own. Thank you, Sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr Murray. Anybody wants to say something?

Ms Gail Teixiera: Speaker, I am sorry, I may be on the border. To attempt to answer what Mr Murray is raising, is that Minister Anthony sent a letter some time in May, I know and he put in his Amendments some of these are reflected and repeated on his sheet that has been circulated and those were since ... (I am looking for the date). There is only one paragraph that is requesting replacement which he has indicated in discussions. So on Minister Anthony's new submission to do with replacing the one on abominable crime against humanity we had in an early discussion in June with Mrs Backer and Mr McAllister indicated and we had actually worked this Draft out and the Prime Minister sent it in, that is, the stronger version we did in June.

As far as to answer Mr Murray's question, we are not removing Mrs Backer's Clause; that would have to be put to the vote like the other Clauses. What we are doing is adding Clauses to add more substance to the Motion.

The Speaker: I do not agree with you, Mr Murray. A negative vote does not mean what you say it means. This issue has arisen at some time, previously and I think your colleague Mr McAllister is familiar with some of the researches which we had done. A

negative vote means, not the removal of the Clauses of the Motion but the transformation of the ... not even, if you permit me to use the word *hiccupping* the Motion but it does not mean that. It means transforming the Motion into the exact opposite of what the Motion is saying. In other words, the *Resolve* Clauses will be transformed to the opposite of what we mean, that is what the negative vote means, as far as I recall. It is rather a complicated issue but that is what it means.

Mr Winston Murray: It is now two sentences but that is exactly what this Clause does: it transforms it into the opposite because there will be no Lands Commission.

The Speaker: No, no, no. Negative vote means to say to replace these Clauses here with the exact opposite; not to say that there will be no Lands Commission but to reverse what is being said here. In other words, it does not mean merely that these Clauses are to be omitted; that is not a negative vote. I heard Mr Murray, Mr McAllister. There is nothing further that I think I can add, if you just want to repeat what Mr Murray has said.

Mr James K McAllister: No, I do not want to repeat what Mr Murray said.

The Speaker: Or you want to make a separate point of order.

Mr James K McAllister: Yes, well, not on a point of order, Sir, but if you can remember I raised that with you since yesterday.

Mr Speaker: You did and I have to apologise. You had asked me to bring the text we use.

Mr James K McAllister: I can recall Sir, a number of examples of what can really result in making negative a Motion and I really wanted to have that available in the House to be able to present the examples that are there and we believe if that document is available I think it will bring a lot of clarity in Mr Murray's position, it will be clarified.

The Speaker: Mr McAllister, I am pretty confident in what I am saying. If you go to the Australian Parliament, I do recall when we look ... the Australian Parliament allows the most expensive Amendments to Motions, including the *Resolve* Clauses but that does not of itself mean a negative vote or mean a negative vote in response to the Motion. I am pretty confident in what I am saying and we had looked at the matter quite extensively so I do not need to have it postponed to determine that.

Hon Samuel A A Hinds: Mr Speaker, I have been looking at 26(a) at *Disability of Motions*:

In order that the Motion to admissability itself satisfy the following conditions, namely shall merely have substantially one definite issue ...

A problem I have with this Motion ... and it is growing on me ... A short while ago Honourable Member Murray pointed out that the *Be it further Resolved* Clause about the Lands Commission was the main trust of this Motion. I would expect therefore, that some of the *Whereas* Clauses would have been directed to this issue with the problem with the African land ...

The Speaker: Prime Minister, I cannot allow another Debate on what you had expected with the voting stage now. If you have a

point of order, if you have an objection to any technical issue, any rule in the Standing Order, I shall allow it.

Hon Samuel A A Hinds: Thank you, Mr Speaker. If you could spend a few minutes and reflect whether 26(a) is satisfied in this Motion ...

The Speaker: Prime Minister, I recall Motions from the Government which have many issues, some of them probably on this Order Paper, which have many issues like this. I do not think 26(a) is a breach in any way. The Motion deals with the African Slave Trade.

Mr Winston Murray: Given what I understood by Ms Teixiera's intervention, am I now to understand, Sir, that the *Be it further Resolved* Clauses in Mrs Backer's Motion are not removed by the Amendments of the Honourable Member Dr Anthony but they are simply in addition to? That is the clarification I am speaking about. I am asking whether as of now Mrs Backer's two *Be it further Resolved* Clauses remain in the Motion and that Dr Anthony's Amendment are not removing them since they are in addition to them?

The Speaker: Let me explain to you what I have, Mr Murray. I have a letter from Dr Anthony which proposes an Amendment to the third *Whereas* Clause and a second Amendment proposing an Amendment to the fourth *Whereas* Clause by adding a substitution of words and a third Amendment which deletes the *Resolve* Clause relating to African Lands Commission; I have that in the first document. I have in the second document a series of Amendments making additions to the first, second, fourth, fifth and sixth *Whereas* Clauses and which also add a new *Be it further Resolved* Clause.

Mr Winston Murray: Does that second letter supersede the first?

The Speaker: No, no, no, I am taking them as together. Well then, that second *Resolve* Clause is no longer there, according to those Amendments? No, according to those Amendments, the second *Resolve* Clause is to be deleted. Honourable Members, we will now proceed with the second set of Amendments. In the third *Whereas* Clause, the following words [Pause] be deleted:

... demotes inhumane tragedies in the history of mankind.

Those in favour, say Aye!

Aye!

Those against, say No!

The *Ayes* have it, the words are deleted and the following words are substituted therefor:

"Crimes against humanity of global proportion..."

Those in favour say Aye!

Aye!

Those against say No!

The Ayes have it, the words are substituted.

In the fourth *Whereas* Clause, the word *built*... the typing is very bad, I do not know what it is ... *built* is substituted with the phrase

laid the foundation of. The word *built* is deleted; it is proposed that the word *built* be deleted. Those in favour say *Aye!*

Aye!

Those against say No!

The *Ayes* have it, the word *built* is deleted. Substituted therefore, are the following words:

"Laid the foundation of."

Those in favour say Aye!

Aye!

Those against say *No!*

The *Ayes* have it, the word is substituted. I now propose the **Amendment** that the second *Resolve* Clause, that an African Lands Commission be established similar in status to the

Rights Commission ... (This typing is very atrocious, I must say) be deleted. You left out part of the Clause, Dr Anthony. I suppose you mean the whole Clause to be deleted, yes? It is proposed that the second *Resolve* Clause be deleted. Those in favour say *Aye!*

Aye!

Those against say No!

The Ayes have it, the Clause is deleted.

I suppose the next Amendment means that the third *Resolve* Clause should be deleted. All it says here is *Replace original final Be it further Resolved* Clause with a new *Be it further Resolved* Clause as follows. So I am putting the question that the third *Resolve* Clause be deleted. Those in favour say *Aye!*

Aye!

Those against say No!

The Ayes have it.

I now propose that it be replaced with the following:

... that this National Assembly join with the Caribbean Community to call the Caribbean Court in 2007 aiding Intercessional Meeting in St Vincent for apology from the ex-European colonial put forward in reparation to findings to the abominable crime of slavery.

Those in favour say Aye!

Aye!

Those against say No!

The Ayes have it.

I propose that the following be added at the end of the Motion:

Be if further resolved that this National Assembly urges the University of Guyana to support the call by CARICOM Heads of Government to Universities in the Region to conduct research to support demands for both an apology and compensation.

That is proposed to be added. Those in favour say Aye!

Aye!

Those against say No!

The Ayes have it. I now move to the next document.

After the first whereas Clause add the following:

Whereas the National Assembly acknowledges and applauds the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the 123rd Anniversary of the abolition of slavery in British colonies ...

Those in favour say Aye!

Aye!

Those against say No!

The *Ayes* have it, the Clause is added. After the second *whereas* Clause add the following:

And whereas our ancestors who were brought here as slaves rebelled on many occasions over the more than two hundred years subjugation, oppression and seize control over a large portion of then Dutch colony for almost a year, making the sign 1763 Revolution, the discourse of the Haitian Revolution..."

Those in favour, say Aye!

Aye!

Those against say No!

The *Ayes* have it, it is proposed that the fourth *whereas* Clause be deleted.

Those in favour say Aye!

Aye!

Those against say No!

The *Ayes* have it, the fourth *whereas* clause is deleted. It is proposed that the following be substituted *therefor*:

And whereas we the descendants of slavery and indentureship unanimously condemn slavery as the most

abominable crime against humanity as no other in the annuls of history which was a global proposal perpetuated constantly and consistently for over three hundred years on millions of people from Africa.

Aye!
Those against say No!
The Ayes have it.
Add a fifth whamaga Clause
Add a fifth whereas Clause
Mr James K McAllister: Add the fourth whereas Clause, I want

Those in favour say Aye!

read now:

And whereas we the descendants of slavery and indentureship and Amerindian Peoples unanimously comdemn ...

to add three words after *indentureship* and that is ... so it will

The Speaker: Honourable Members, you've heard the Amendment to the Amendment *and Amerindian peoples* after the word *indentureship*. Those in favour say *Aye!*

Aye!

Those against say No!

If I do not hear you I will not rule in your favour; this is a voice vote. I have to hear. There might be Members here who disagree with the Amendment. I cannot say.

Add a fifth whereas Clause.

I propose the question that the fifth *whereas* Clause be added as follows:

And whereas our forefathers as freed men and women on August 01, dedicated themselves to building a better society based on the principles of democracy, quality and freedom ...

Those in favour say Aye!

Aye!

Those against say No!

The Ayes have it.

Add the following sixth whereas Clause:

And whereas this National Assembly recognises that these ancestors "laid the foundation for the transformation of this land together with other

people's business, social, economic, political and cultural infrastructure of modern Guyana."

Those in favour say Aye!
Aye!
Those against say No!
The Ayes have it.
Another <i>Resolve</i> Clause to be added as follows:
And be it further resolved that this National Assembly unanimously agree that the 17
This was said before:
the 1763 Resolution <i>Revolution</i> that should be
by our forefathers be given its rightful recognition both in Guyana and this hemisphere."
Those in favour say Aye!
Aye!
Those against say No!

The Ayes have it.

Another Resolve Clause:

Be it further resolved that we the Members of the National Assembly commit ourselves to make vigorous efforts to educate this generation on the contributions of our forefathers and uphold their principles of freedom and equality and to ensure that due recognition is given in all efforts to build this cultural diversity in a unified force to develop this nation of Guyana.

Those in favour say Aye!

Aye!

Those against say No!

The *Ayes* have it. Honourable Members, I put the Motion as amended. Those in favour say *Aye!*

Aye!

Those against say No!

The Ayes have it. The Motion as amended is carried.

Honourable Member, I have listed, Mr Franklin, a Motion by you. Are we proceeding with it?

Mr Everall N Franklin: Mr Speaker, in light of the Government ... no, I withdraw.

The Speaker: Oh! You are withdrawing the Motion?

Mr Everall N Franklin: I withdraw to enable the Government to present their own Motion on this issue. [Applause]

The Speaker: Thank You. Honourable Members, we can now move to the last item on the Order Paper.

(II) <u>ITEM 2</u> - <u>NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE</u>

At a request by Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P., the following motion was <u>withdrawn</u>:

WHEREAS all national stakeholders including, the Government, and Opposition parties, have all expressed a desire to work together to address the threats and challenges of crime and security in Guyana;

AND WHEREAS various studies and reports including the Border/National Security Committee Report; the Disciplined Forces Commission Report and the CARICOM Task Force on Crime and Security Report have all recommended the establishment of a Standing Parliamentary Committee on National Security to provide an oversight function to review all aspects of security and national security including, but not limited to, review

of policies and reforms, budgetary allocations and expenditures and a national security strategy and doctrine.

IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The National Assembly agrees to the establishment of a Standing Committee on National Security to review all aspects of national security including, but not limited to, the review of policies and reforms, budgetary allocations and expenditures and the implementation of a national security strategy and doctrine;
- 2. Standing Committee on National Security deliver to the Assembly National bi-annual reports of its work including made in the progress implementation of policies and reforms;

3. The Members of the National Assembly identified to be Members of the National Security Committee be subject to and be bound by the provisions of the Official Secrets Act.

[NP 170 (M39 Oppl2) published on 2007-07-03]

(III) COMMITTEE BUSINESS

MOTION

FOR THE NOMINATION OF FOUR (4) MEMBERS TO THE POLICE SERVICE COMMISSION.

Ms Gail Teixeira, MP., Chairperson of the Committee on Appointments moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the Standing Committee, to address matters relating to the appointment of members of Commissions established under the Constitution appointed by the Committee of Selection on 14th December, 2006 and pursuant to article 119C of the Constitution, met on eleven (11) consecutive occasions for the purpose of identifying such bodies, as appear to it to "represent the majority of the members of the Police Force and any other such body it deems fit" for consultation in the nominations of four

Members to the Police Service Commission to be appointed in accordance with article 210(1) (c) of the Constitution:

AND WHEREAS the majority of the members of the Committee of Appointments, comprising of the PPP/C and AFC members, are of the view that the National Commission on Law and Order and the National Executive of the Community Policing Groups appear as bodies it deems fit to submit nominees for consideration on the Police Service Commission by the Standing Committee of Appointments of Members of Commissions;

AND WHEREAS the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana does not accept that the Terms of Reference of the National Commission of Law and Order allow for their inclusion in the consultative process nor does it agree to the inclusion of the National Executive of the Community Policing Groups;

AND WHEREAS the Committee in its Special Report to the National Assembly has reported on the differences of views on the matter of the inclusion of these two bodies in addition to the Police Association and the Association of Former Police Officers in the consultation process to submit nominees for the consideration of the Committee of Appointments to the Police Service Commission;

AND WHEREAS the Committee has referred the matter for consideration and guidance to include the National Commission of Law and Order and the National

Executive of **the** Community Policing Groups to the National Assembly,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly determines whether the National Commission on Law and Order and the National Executive of the Community Policing Groups are among the bodies that appear as bodies it deems fit **to** submit nominees to the Police Service Commission.

Honourable Member, Ms Gail Teixiera ...

Ms Gail Teixiera: As Members of the House are aware, we Tabled our Report on the Committee at the last Sitting and the Motion is now Tabled here. You can see from the Report, Mr Speaker, the Committee went through examination of the Police Service Commission and which entities we should consult. We began with approaching the Police Association, the Officers, also the issue of former police men and women and we agreed to go ahead with that. We then, as a Committee, decided to approach the National Commission of Law and Order and the Executives of the National Commission of Policing Groups. Subsequently, Mrs Backer asked that the matter be reviewed in mid-April and we had discussions on the issue of the NCLO. The Committee by a majority, supported by the AFC were of the view that the Terms of Reference of the Law and Order Commission did not prohibit it from being considered as one of the entities but of nominees.

We did have unanimity on the National Executive Committee of Policing Groups. The letter had gone out and then got lost and then again, in the interim, the matter came back to the Committee and it was at that point we realised that the PNCR-1G had asked

that, not only the NCLO but also the National Executives, that we agree as a Committee, that it would be better we seek the guidance of this House and how to proceed, to include with the Police Association, the Association of Former Police ... Former Members of the Guyana Police Force, sorry, that we include two new entities in this discussion.

The premise of the whole issue in the Committee was a difference in principle in terms of the Government and the Opposition, then the AFC, felt that the Committee should not be restricted and I asked you to look at the Report in relation to the views of the Committee.

Paragraph 2: That the PPP/Civic and the AFC were of the view that the Committee should not restrict itself in its consultation and should therefore seek wider consultations from entities relating to the Police and Law and Order issues. It clearly understood they would not include any entity extraneous to such areas of interest when seeking Bodies to consult. For example, it would not go to an entity to address the issue of Fisheries when seeking nominees for Service Commission dealing with the Police.

Therefore, in the letter that was sent we specifically said that the entities could choose Members of the Police Force, recommend its nominees and/or persons from within themselves who had a familiarity with the Police and Law and Order issues.

Sir, we are seeking your guidance. We have tried as a Committee to carefully replicate the levels of discussion in the Committee, not to do disservice to anybody and that this Report that was Tabled, when it was gone through, paragraph by paragraph by all the

Members of the Committee, Opposition and Government, was unanimously approved for laying in the House, including the Motion that was approved by the Committee. We now look forward to the discussion on this issue. Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Member, is it your Proposal that the National Assembly determine that the National Commission on Law and Order and the National Executive Committee of Policing Groups be among the Bodies? Is that the Proposal because ...

Ms Gail Teixiera: I am sorry Mr Speaker, I did not hear you.

The Speaker: Are you asking the Parliament to decide who wants to support the proposition that the National Commission on Law and Order and the National Executive of the Policing Group, be among the Bodies that are fit to submit nominees? Is that the Government's position? You are asking that these two Bodies submit nominees to the Public Service? Is that what you are asking? You have to make..The *Resolve* Clause is not clear, if that is what you are asking so you will have to make the necessary amendments. Mrs Backer, are you aware that that is the ... you are the spokesperson on this issue.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Yes, Sir, I understand ... What you are saying I think is what the Government would like you to have, but that is not what they said.

The Speaker: That is not what is here because, you see, we have this problem. If the Motion says that you are asking that the National Assembly determine *whether* ... How do we determine *whether*? We have a problem in determining *whether* ...

Ms Gail Teixiera: Can we amend that? This is not one ... You know, Mr Speaker, we do not have the expertise in drafting Motions, we are guided but this is not the ... no, I am not ... Mr Speaker, we are not experts. This is a Draft that was done with the help of the Parliament Secretariat because they know these issues and we approved them. So, we are all in it together. I would like to therefore seek to have an Amendment that the National Assembly determines that, rather than the National Commission. I think that would be the only change.

The Speaker: I only needed to understand you. Well then we shall make the amendment after. Yes, Mrs Backer ...

Mrs Deborah J Backer: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The Police Service is provided for in Article 210 of the Constitution of Guyana. The Article that concerns us is 210 (i(c)) which says and I read, *four members* - they are talking about the composition here of the Police Service Commission and 210 (i(c)) says:

Four Members appointed by the President upon nomination by the National Assembly after it (being the National Assembly) has consulted such Bodies as appear to represent the majority of Members of the Police Force and any other such Body it deems fit.

Mr Speaker, in keeping with this Article, in February 2007, the Committee, and by Committee of course I mean Committee on Appointment, the Committee agreed to write the Police Association and the Association of former Members of the Guyana Police Force, having determined that they were the Bodies to consult. Those letters went off on 28 February 2007. On

March 12 and 13, 2007, the two aforesaid Bodies, namely the Police Association and the Association of Former Members of the Guyana Police Force replied and they both, by their letters of reply, nominated the same four persons, those four persons being Henry Chester, retired Deputy Commissioner of Police, Harold Martin, retired Assistant Commissioner of Police, Ivan Crandon, retired Deputy Commissioner of Police, Sandra Henry-Duncan-Clarke, retired Assistant Commissioner of Police. Both Associations nominated the same four persons.

The PPP/Civic of course, Sir, is very well aware that of the Service Commissions, the Police Service Commission is the only Commission where it is likely that they may not have control of and when I say control, I speak about numerical control because this is a Commission comprising six (6) persons and of those six persons, four of them have to come from nominees coming from Bodies that appear to represent the Members of the Police Force and any other such Body it deems fit.

When the letters came back from the Police Association and the Association of Former Members of the Guyana Police Force as I just said, four people were nominated. The Committee then took a decision and we of the PNC/R-1G had no problem with that decision because we feel there must be balance in all; people must address their minds to balance whether it is ethnic, whether it is gender as we set about doing things. And the Committee sent off a letter back to the two organisations, namely the Police Association and the Association of Former Members and this is what it said and I quote; Ms Teixiera should have this at hand because she did say she was fanatical about keeping records so, she should have no problem to vouch for the authenticity of the letter and I quote:

The Committee, at its Meeting held on 20March 2007, examined the nominees and whilst having nothing against the nominees themselves expressed concern that the nominations did not reflect a balance or sensitivity in the nation's Agenda, ethnicity, geography and/or religion as is provided for in the Constitution.

And this letter went on to say:

It is requesting that you review your list of nominees in order to address the concerns."

The Associations replied ... I want to share with this National Assembly part of the letter sent by the Office of the Police Association. And it is signed by one Amanda Hermanstine and it says here, Sir; it was a very, very, very well-written letter and I quote from Paragraph 2:

The Police Association represents the rank and file of the Guyana Police Force and its composition include (this is the composition of the Police Association) males, females, Afro-Guyanese, Indo-Guyanese, Amerindian and those of mixed races. The Members of the said Association are also of diverse religion and they come from all over Guyana. The Association of Former Members of the Guyana Police Force share a similar composition. Thus, the same nomination is a result of the collective expertise, experience and wisdom of the Membership of both Associations which is exemplified by diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender, geography and religion.

We laud the aspirations of the frame of our Constitution for its commitment in informing citizens that ethnicity, gender, religion and geography should be considered when making decisions but they were tabled not to make it a fundamental right that the appointment to Public Officers must be so based.

Importantly, the Article under which Members are appointed to the Police Service Commission does not require that the said Members reflect the ethnicity, religion or gender composition of the population or that they be geographically balanced. Notwithstanding this, we did consider the issues of ethnicity, gender, religion and geography. In light of the above, I wish to respectfully inform that, after deliberating on all the issues, the diverse Association nominated the four persons based on merit in their collective opinion.

(Remember, this opinion is coming from both genders, ethnicity, geography). Everything it caters for in their collective opinion, the said four persons are the most suitably qualified to be nominated as Members of the Police Service Commission and we would be dismayed if persons base their objectives on them, solely on their ethnicity, religion, gender or where they happen to live or where they were born.

Sir, this was a very well drafted letter and more importantly it said, we have taken these things into consideration and they concluded by saying that having taken those things into consideration, we stand by our four nominees.

A particular Member of the PPP/Civic made what I consider to be a very unfortunate statement about the fact that it is only one type of people on this Committee. That person, Mr Benn, knows who that person is. Sir, what followed thereafter ... you remember, if I could remind you, we are at 03 April 2007, [Interruption: 'It is your birthday or what?'] What happened next was that, at a Meeting, after the four names were sent back, the Association having said they looked at the gender, ethnicity, geography and everything ... On 21March ... sorry, they replied on 03April, it was after that when the Member obviously went to consult, when I say the Members, I said the PPP/Civic Members, that at a Meeting of 24 April, the decision was taken to write the National Commission of Law and Order because it came out before but we did not pursue it. We decided we were going to write these two but when they realised that the two Associations were, for want of a better phrase, sticking to their guns, they suddenly said, the Constitution speaks about any other such Bodies it deems fit. We are saying the National Commission of Law and Order and the Community Policing (I shall get the right phrase)... the National Community Policing Executive ... Policing Group are proper people to consult. That decision was taken at a Meeting of 24th and the People's National Congress Reform-1G supported it.

I realised something was wrong and I immediately consulted with my other two colleagues as a Party and on the next day, the very next day, having spoken to Ms Teixiera, we wrote Ms Teixiera saying, having looked at the Terms of Reference of the National Commission of Law and Order ... I wish you would be quiet, yes. Sir, I wrote Ms Teixiera which I copied to Mrs Sheila Holder indicating to them that having reviewed the Terms of Reference, which I did not have with me on that Meeting of 24th, having reviewed it, the PPP/Civic was of the opinion that it was outside of

the scope of the Terms of Reference of the National Commission of Law and Order for them to nominate people to sit on this Constitutional Body.

Sir, the Terms of Reference of the National Commission of Law and Order, of which I am a Member, is eight fold and nowhere, it speaks about it being:

- (1) An Advisory Body to review and make recommendations to the Government of Guyana.
- (2) To treat with high crime rate and violence.
- (3) To take into consideration the various reports and consultation on crime.
- (4) To examine the status of the National Drug Strategy Master Plan (205/209).
- (5) To review and identify problems of weaknesses in the Legislative organisational and administration of Law and Order. It speaks about the Commission:
- (6) Utilising creative intervention, to enable them to consult and educate the public, to evolve greater awareness in the wider community of the multi-dimensional approaches required to fight crime.
- (7) To make Annual Reports to the Government and, of course the Commission to have a Budget.

The objectives of the National Community Policing Executive speak about:

- (1) Monitoring the operations and give relevant policy direction to community policing.
- (2) To oversee community policing
- (3) To ensure that relevant training programmes are prepared and executed in each Division.
- (4) To strive for the fostering of good relationship between Members of the groups and the Force.
- (5) To seek legal assistance to all forms of support for registered Members.
- (6) To assist with the resources towards the development of policing.

Sir, the People's National Congress Reform-1G is of the opinion that to go to these two Bodies is to open the proverbial *Pandora Box* and, in fact when we get with the Ethnic Relations Commission, we drew to the attention of the Government that it spoke about nominating entities, including entities representatives of religious Bodies, Labour Movement (and this is the Ethnic Relations Commission); it spoke about nominating entities including, and it specified certain entities. We at the level, when we deal with the Ethnic Relations Commission, sought to bring in professional Bodies as an entity to be consulted in addition to those identified. They said no, if we open that, we shall open a *Pandora Box* then the Cultural Associations will want to get involved, whatever other Associations, other Groupings will want to get involved as an entity so let us leave out the professional bodies as an entity.

I want to note, the professional entities, they are certainly very strong Associations, like Guyana Association of Professional Engineers, the Doctors, the Lawyers, the Pharmacists, they are very strong professional Bodies but the PPP/Civic took the position although the Constitution said including entities and it just gave us directions what it must include, but not to close this. They said let us not open this, let us stick to this but when it came to the Guyana Police Service Commission, they did not want to open it either; they were prepared to go to the two Associations and they did that. But, when the two Associations sent back the four names, they did not like the four names so they wrote them. We and other Members of the Committee, we said deal with gender, deal with ethnicity; look at those things. They wrote back saying they looked at those things but we still feel that those four people are the best. Well, that did not please the PPP/Civic. So, the Pandora Box they did not want to open with the Ethnic Relations Commission, they said it was dangerous, they said to open it for these two organisations.

But, Sir, if we are going to open it for that, then we should open it ... If we want to say the National Commission of Law and Order, which we disagree, is a Body then we have to go to the Guyana Bar Association because truly and surely they must come under the phrase *any other*... it is gone to pieces Sir... *any other such Body it deems fit.* The Bar must then be one of those organisations, the Association of Private Security Firms and we can go on and on.

The point is, and at the time, I will make the necessary amendments to include those other Bodies if they go ahead but Sir, we are of the view that to open the *Box* at this time is not the best thing just as how it was not the best thing with the Ethnic

Relations Commission because if we want to open the *Box* we have to open it. We cannot open it when it only suits us and that is what they were doing. If either of those Associations namely, the Police Association or the Association of Former Members of the Guyana Police Force had come back and changed one or two names, they would not have gone for the Clause *and any other such Body it deems fit*. It was because it did not like and they still do not like, the four people and they cannot say because they served before because the two people that are on the Judicial Service Commission have both served before. Mr Brinmoore Thorton Ignatius Pollard (*Innis*) Innis Pollard, sorry, thank you for the correction, Sir, and Justice Prem Persaud; they were both there before and they are both back so, they cannot use that argument; I am closing that door firmly on their noses.

Sir, here again we see the double-standard of the PPP/CIVIC and the danger is this: because the National Commission of Law and Order, as a result of the request made, at a Special Meeting they nominated two people. I placed on record the objection of the PNC/R-1G and they nominated, they went ahead and nominated Mr Dennis Morgan, A.A. and Mr Roshan Khan as two Members ... that does not matter. It is a fact, it is there, yes. Sir, those are the two names that have been proposed and their documentary evidence is there. I am not going to the Press or anything; I am here in this National Assembly. But Sir, the danger is this: *and any other such Body it deems fit*.

Let us presume that the National Commission of Law and Order proposes four people and the other Association, the Community Policing Group appoints four people or nominates four people, you can have a situation where the Committee recommends four people, none of whom are nominees of the Police Association and

the Association of Former Members of the Guyana Police Force. You see, Sir, it says we must consult Bodies that appear to represent the majority of the Members of the Police Force *and any other such Bodies*.

We can have a situation where the *any other such Body* can end up with having all four of those nominees there and the four nominees from two of the Associations that represent the majority of the Police Force have no representation whatsoever. Sir, that would be a gross miscarriage of justice and it would be to turn this Constitutional Provision on its head. In fact, it says here *and any such Body that it deems fit* so if we want to be literal, it could only be one Body; it did not say *and any such Body it deems fit* and it may well be Sir, that the reason it says *any other such Body* because they want the Body that represents the Police to be in the majority so they say *any other such Body*.

We are against the inclusion of the National Commission of Law and Order [Interruption: 'You going there again?']. We are against the inclusion of the Community Policing Groups being Bodies from which we should seek nominations, on the ground that the Constitution could well be turned on its head where we find all four nominees coming from outside of the recognised Bodies that represent Police. What does the Police Service Commission do? It appoints Police, it disciplines Police (men and women), it promotes. How can you possibly open the arena where you have a situation where none of the four people on the Commission come from Bodies that represent Police who have to do with Police appointment? If that is not a miscarriage of justice I do not know what it means.

Sir, in addition to that, any other such Body it deems fit, we respectfully submit that it must be interpreted to what it says: any other such other Body and that means one Body and if the House is inclined to interpret Body to mean Bodies then, at the necessary time, I will move Amendments to include our Bodies in addition to the National Commission.

Before I take my seat, I would want to say in fact, that the Commissioner of Police (Acting) he is one, we have him for a while, but he is still acting Sir. He had indicated, and I am going to find, before the other people speak, other people who could be other Bodies that could be associated: Police, Credit Union and so on. At the appropriate time Sir, I am going to move that all these other Bodies, if we want to go that way, be invited. Either that Sir, or we will just vote against the Motion because the trust of this Motion is to get rid, and I say so advisably, to get rid of a couple of those people so that other people who have no experience in appointment, in what discipline in the Guyana Police Force means, and all of that, will be able to go in there and turn an already upside down Police Force, upside down again, that is what is going to happen. We shall keep going around. For those reasons we cannot support the Motion and we say that the proper thing to do is to leave the nominations to the Police Association and the Association of Former Members of the Guyana Police Force. Thank you Sir. [Applause]

The Speaker: Honourable Member, Dr Leslie Ramsammy.

Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy: Mr. Speaker in keeping with my promise to you and others I would be very, very short. Let me just say I stand to support the Motion moved by my colleague, the Honourable Gail Teixiera. I just want to say that the Police

Commissioner (Acting) had written to us and suggested that a number of organisations on 20 March, the Committee unanimously supported that we should invite the National Commission of Law and Order and the National Executive of Community Policing Groups that was on 20th after receiving, after receiving the letter from the Police Commissioner (Acting). What the Honourable Member Backer and others could have suggested at that Meeting was to include others. They did not. supported the inclusion of these two and that suggestion came, they know, because we had all read and we had all agreed that Members of the Police Force had expressed concern because they had gotten wind of nominees that were made. That is why we went to desk, using the Constitutional Clause that the Member read: 210(i(c)); there was no objection on 20March, none. On 24 March it came up again and we unanimously, we unanimously, all the Members on the PPP/Civic Side, all the Members on the PNCR-1G and Members from the AFC, supported us doing this.

It is true that subsequently, I think May 03 or April Meeting ... I am talking about Meeting, I am not talking about personal communication... at the Meeting after the 24th the Honourable Member Backer then decided that she no longer supported the National Commission of Law and Order and raised the point she did. At that point in a discussion we had by a majority vote, including the support of the AFC we decided we would like to consult more Bodies and this is the decision we took.

I think, even if we want to come here, Mr Speaker, and now change our mind and object to it, that is okay but, up to that point and the way we were going, there was agreement on both Sides that we needed to go to other Bodies and that is the important thing, that we needed to go to other Bodies. So, even when the

Honourable Member objected just afterwards, to the inclusion of the National Commission of Law and Order, there was no dissent on the National Executive Policing Group. In fact, up to the time this Report was prepared and agreed, the only objection was to the National Commission. It was not to go to other Bodies, and the only two other Bodies that were ever considered and no-one made any different proposal, they did not make any other proposal, but for these two Bodies and that is why we come here. I say to this National Assembly, in order for us to get on with this appointment of the Police Service Commission, let us support the National Assembly, consulting with these two Bodies. Thank you. [Applause]

The Speaker: Thank you very much. Yes? Are you joining the Debate in place of Ms Amna Ally?

Mr Winston Murray: If I may ,Sir. No, Sir I was not joining in place of her. I wish to take my third Act for her, if you did not mind me joining.

The Speaker: Well, I have Mrs Holder in place ... she is not here, Mrs Holder is not here.

Mr Winston Murray: Then, may I apply for that? [Laughter]

The Speaker: Will you be brief, Mr Murray? If you will be brief, I shall agree.

Mr Winston Murray: Sir, I just wanted to make a couple of points. First I would like to say that on a strict interpretation of this Constitution, I believe that what is being done here is a violation of it and I want to say why I come to that conclusion.

Article 210(i (c)) which is the relevant Article, talks of consultation with such Bodies as it appears (it being the National Assembly) to represent the majority of Members of the Police Force and any other such Body, any other such Body. Such Body there is referable to somebody that represents the majority of Members of the Police Force. The Law that they use, that is their general rule what says that what has gone before by adding of the words and such Body must be of the same ilk as what is referred to earlier.

Given that interpretation of the same species, and therefore representing the majority of Members of the Police Force, I respectfully submit that neither of these two Bodies satisfies that condition.

In the case of the National Commission on Law and Order Sir, Mrs Backer read very fully the Terms of Reference to that Body. None of the Terms of Reference includes representation of the Police Force as part of the function of the National Commission of Law and Order.

Secondly Sir, the composition of this Body, the National Commission of Law and Order, includes politicians: representatives of the AFC, of the People's Progressive Party /Civic and of the People's National Congress Reform-1G. Are we now saying we are importing, for consultative process, a Body comprising politicians? I thought the intention in the Constitution was to consult with non-political organisations, and now we are introducing politics into the Commission of the Police. I want to say that if that is down the road, and the fact that this has nothing to do with representing Police, this organisation would not qualify, constitutionally.

Also, when I look at the National Policing Terms of Reference, nowhere does it speak about ... In fact, they are not technically legally a part of the Guyana Police Force, they are not legally part so, therefore if they are not part of that Force, there is nothing that their Executive can do in terms of representing the majority of the Police Force. How are we going to import a Body that has no place? Constitutionally it cannot be interpreted to be representative of the Police Force to be included here. I suggest that both of these Bodies do not qualify constitutionally and neither of them represents the majority of the Police Force. Thank you very much, Sir. [Applause]

The Speaker: Honourable Member Ms Amna Ally.

Miss Amna Ally: Thank you Mr Speaker. I rise to make some very brief remarks on this Motion that is before us this evening. There is no doubt that it was well-intentioned when Parliamentary Committees were established to a large extent and refers to in the Manual For The Operations Of Committees. It is intended that their Membership should be carefully designed to minimise undue influence by the Executives and the consequent public perception of partisanship in their functioning. While that guideline is established, the practical situation in these Committees is not in keeping with such procedures, rather, in these Committees, the PPP/Civic uses its majority to determine and achieve its desired objectives. Once the Proposal does not meet their favour, they invoke their majority Membership and make the decision

Mr Speaker, let me say forthrightly, that at no time it is the intention of the PNCR-1G to tidy in any process rather, we on this Side of the House, wants to see fairness. We believe that the outcome of the process must be in the best interest of our country.

We want to see genuine development, not for one set of persons, occupying all the space, whether competent or not. We want to see equity at the dispensation of opportunities to serve. [Applause]

Mr Speaker, let me just put on the Table one example of this Committee's operation. As you know, we have some Service Commissions and some Constitutional Commissions. When it comes to the Judicial, Public and Police Commissions, the majority of the Committees' Membership is used to get their way. To substantiate this, let me give you briefly, some details. When the Committee of Appointment was dealing with the Judicial and Police Service Commissions, the Members of the PPP/Civic posited that gender, religion and ethnicity must inform our decision. We agreed Sir, hence we came up with Proposals for the Commissions. The time came for the Public Service Commission. Here the PNCR-1G raised the question of the very principle on gender and ethnicity. Well Mr Speaker, this did not find favour with the PPP/Civic so, they used their majority again, railroading their decision, so the principle established railroaded because the PPP/Civic Members wanted to have their own way.

A little earlier in another Motion, the Honourable Member Gail Teixiera spoke and said we cannot pit one people against another but Mr Speaker, this is so evident in the Committee of Appointment. The people out there must know the truth: the PPP/Civic has not Titled the process. It is not right to come here and say one thing and do something else. [Applause]

There are many ways in which we co-operate in these Committees but Sir, today's Motion speaks for itself. We were at pain, trying to reach a consensus on the Police Service Commission but what

was the end result. Honourable Members, my colleague Mrs Deborah J Backer, in a very detailed way gave lots of information this evening to this House as to what happened, using letters and so on. Honourable Member Mr Ramsammy spoke about our support. Mr Speaker, Mrs Backer spoke to the situation where, the day after the decision or the consensus was arrived at, she spoke with Ms Teixiera. She outlined the Terms of Reference as she did tonight, and we revisited our position and made it very clear to the Committee.

Mr Speaker, sometimes you hear, bring your Proposal in writing, come with Proposals on the way forward. Mr Speaker, sheep in wolf's clothing. [Applause] Sir, I submit, we must be able to enjoy that spirit in the Committee which allows for a healthy Debate and coming up with a decision that will indeed minimise the public's perception of partisanship.

Mr Speaker, in this modern age, my counterparts on the other Side must begin to understand that they should remove themselves from this kind of behaviour. Every time you go to the Committee of Appointment Meeting, there is deliberate effort to have manoeuvring of vital issues. Is that what our Committees have come to?

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I wish to say that I have no doubt that despite our efforts this evening the PPP/Civic will again use its majority to fulfil its Agenda, but maybe, on the bright side of thinking, they will not.

Finally Mr Speaker, we cannot subscribe to include the National Commission on Law and Order nor the Community Policing Group. Thank you[Applause]

Mr Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member Miss Ally.

Honourable Member Miss Teixiera ...

Ms Gail Teixiera: I believe that I would have to appeal to your good, kindly self to help me figure out what more to do in the Committee of Appointment because if my removal would have caused ... certainly I would not have done that, Sir, but I am well aware that the Minutes are carefully kept and that we have ... Sir, Mr Speaker, I do not know what more to do. We sit in Committees, and there are weaknesses not just on the Government's Side, we have weaknesses that show that we have come to an Agreement, we have agreed, we take a step forward, we do it, then there is a reconsidering and then we spent three (3) weeks discussing an issue.

The Service Commission allow for a majority vote. In the Committee of Appointment, Mr Speaker, it is not just one Opposition we are dealing with, there are two Parties on the Opposition and I believe they have votes and they have a Constituency too. They are not puppets of the PNCR-1G. I would hope that the smaller Parties are not puppets of anybody and therefore the Government and one of the Parties, sometimes it might be AFC, sometimes it might be PNCR-1G, sometimes it might be GAP, sometimes it might be nobody. In the instance of this, the AFC supported the view that the Police Service Commission, because of the whole approach to the modernisation and the role of civilian participation in many Service Commissions to do with the Police all over the world right now, that we propose an inclusion, it was agreed to.

At no point, it was at an early stage of the ERC, we made an agreement, we came here and then Mr Murray pointed out our Page 160

problems and whatever Constitutional Amendments but nobody saw it. So we accepted that we were new, and that our friends on the other Side did not see it, we did not see it, but it cannot be happening every time we come to this Parliament. It cannot be happening every time. Either I am too trusting of the Opposition; when Mrs Backer makes her position, I accept and listen, and we go and talk and talk and talk. Maybe Mr McAllister is right, maybe Mr McAllister is right but, standing as a new Chairperson I shall put my hand down but, anyway, we did agree to go this way and as Dr Ramsammy had pointed out, and the report points out, it is true as the Report pointed out under the correct Clause so I do not doubt what you and Mrs Backer are saying. She wrote a letter the next day. The Committee took three Meetings to discuss the matter and at the end of the three Meetings to discuss the issue of the NCLO we then took a majority view, which included the AFC and the Government Side and then we said NCLO that is unconstitutional no, that is not unconstitutional and then, Mr Speaker, because we went through the ERC experience, as now call it the Committee of Appointment, we now have had the ERC experience where ERC Motion had unanimous vote of the Committee and came with the results and was defeated because they could not get the two-thirds majority.

On the side of caution, as the PNCR-1G did not agree with the Opposition on the NCLO, we said alright, you know what? Let us go to Parliament and get the guidance of Parliament on whether we are going in the right direction and that we are asking Parliament to guide us, so the Committee drafted the first Draft. The first Draft only had NCLO and then, when on 22 May there was an inclusion: well, as we were doing NCLO, the Opposition proposed, threw the National Executive Policing Groups and we agreed. We went to the Draft and we went through this and that

and it ended up in this House. Now my learned friend, Mr Murray, having had this Report for two weeks, is now using the opportunity to say, revise the Constitution.

But, Mr Speaker, it is disingenuous of Mrs Backer, just ingenuous on her part to be able to come here and have dispersions and poison people's minds in a sense by saying, particularly to the Press that is here, we want to get the rid of the men who are already there and we want to bring new people in and all this kind of stuff. What we agreed to is that, we needed to include new Actors; it did not come to the conclusion and if you look at the Report, we said we would put aside the nominations of everybody. It is also unfair to the Committee when we in our Report excluded the names of the nominees we received to get guidance of the House first because why would we draw out names like you did just now of one of the Bodies that we are now talking about, whether they were included or not. In fact, suppose we decide that we are not supporting that, Mr Murray is saying winds or whatever, and therefore we are back at square one. It is a disingenuous move on the part of the Member of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I know that you personally gave your heart and soul during the Constitutional Reform Progress and we were dreamers. I was not in the heart of the thing but all those people: Mr Alexander, Mr Rupert Roopnarine, Moses Nagamootoo, Dr Luncheon, all these people who... and Nadir, Leslie and everybody... Dr Ramsammy, sorry. All these people used the opportunity of the Constitutional Reform Process to dream a little, to be visionaries a little bit, to create democracy *alla* Guyana in a different way and now, Mr Speaker, we changed this Constitution where the President used to set up the Police, Judicial and Public Service Commissions ... what we did as a Parliament, Government

and Opposition - we stripped all of that away and we said, you know what, this Parliament will do it and we will do the list of entities.

The President can only get a nomination (I am talking about Service Commissions now only) that the Service Commission ... the President ... the nominees with the Leader of the Opposition. On the Police Service Commission we have to bring an Amendment because when you check the record of the Constitutional Reform Process, the Drafters made a mistake and they left out the Presidential Appointee. So, in the Police Service Commission, the President has no Appointee of his own, none, he has only one with the agreement of the Leader of the Opposition. The PNCR-1G knows this is a two-thirds majority business to change that Constitution.

So, you know what? Mr Speaker, the dreamers and visionaries that we were and the positive energy that was created in that period in this House has ended up, has ended up in a position where the Committee, a Standing Committee in the Constitution of the Committee of Appointments to the Appointment of a Commission is stymied. Every time we put a foot forward, we have to step back.

The ERC, we came here with a majority, we came here with unanimity and we are now in a position (he has to be recognised, not me, I am speaking) so that the ERC issue ... So Mr Speaker...when he is speaking he recognises me.

Mrs Deborah J Backer: On a point of Order, Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member just spoke about the composition of the Police Service Commission and she said that the Chairman is appointed by the President after he has gotten the agreement; he

has obtained the agreement of the Leader of the Opposition. I am just drawing your attention on a point of order. That is incorrect. The Chairman is appointed by the President (Acting) *after meaningful consultation*, not having... no, no, no, it is not... Sir, I am on my feet and I am seeking guidance. I am saying on a point of order, *acting after meaningful consultation* is not the same and that is the correct question I would like ...

Ms Gail Teixiera: Mr Speaker, it is with great frustration here that with the ERC, we failed, and the big issue that would link ... no, no ... the linkage with the ERC was the Judicial Service on a Court issue and it has come to notice now that the Courts of this country moved on that issue since November 2006; on the issue which led to this same Opposition deciding not to support the Judicial Service nominee and therefore, use that linkage to the ERC Motion now passing here with the two-thirds majority.

Mr Speaker, on this basis, in relation to the point made by Mr Murray, I am neither a constitutional person nor a lawyer. I know that when we drafted it we had *any other Body*, and it was only the NCLO. When the PNCR-1G asked, well, please include also at the last minute, we said sure, and obviously no-one recognised the point if it is correct what he is saying; it was not a deliberate attempt to be unconstitutional. I am not a fool to bring to this Parliament a matter that is unconstitutional. We cannot, in the Committee of Appointment continue like this.

The Human Rights Commission has to be appointed. The Service Commission, the Police Service. In the Committee we can make decisions. It did not say we cannot and this is why... Mrs Ally referred to the Manual on the Rules of the Committee as in fact a matter before a Special Select Committee. That is not a rule; it is

a Draft document which therefore does not rule to us right now. Her reference to the criteria court system that is in that Draft document referring to the Committee of Appointment had never been an issue, was ever discussed at the Committee of Appointment since it was set up in 2003 and henceforth. Please, I am just cautioning Mrs Ally that the Draft was done by a consultant who may not have been aware of the history of the Committee of Appointment and that the issue of courts and the criteria and percentages were never discussed in the Committee of Appointment.

I therefore, Mr Speaker, put the matter to the vote, the Report to the Committee and ask that this House guide us in relation to the matter. Thank you.

The Speaker: Mr Carberry, you want to say something?

Mr E Lance Carberry: I want to make two observations, very quick observations. One Sir, is that one of the rules in the work of the Appointive Committee is that in some of these Commissions, we have established what is called *consensual mechanism* and what I am observing, and you know what consensual mechanism is, in many cases, this consensual mechanism is being bypassed, being observed by me. That is the first observation.

The second point I want to make is that we have had a long tradition of trying to resolve matters by consensus and I notice we are now into an era where we see m to be importing things through by a majority. Thank you Sir.

The Speaker: Honourable Members, I shall put the... Honourable Members, it is getting late, I can understand Members are tired, we are in the last lap. Please allow me to put the Motion.

Honourable Member Ms Teixiera, you have to move an Amendment to the word *whether*, substitute it for the word *that*. Honourable Members, I put the question that the word *whether* be deleted and that the word *that* be substituted therefor. Those in favour say *Aye!*

Aye!

Those against say No!

No!

The *Ayes* have it, the Amendment is carried. I propose the question that the word *are* be deleted and substituted with the word *be*. Those in favour say *Aye!*

Aye!

Those against sat No!

No!

The Ayes have it.

The Motion as amended was put and carried.

Honourable Members, that brings us to the end of our Session today.

Honourable Prime Minister ...

Hon Samuel A A Hinds: Mr Speaker, I move that the House be adjourned until next Thursday, 2 August.

The Speaker: Thursday 2 August ...

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Thank you very much.

Adjourned Accordingly At 21:30H