

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2015-2018) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

111TH Sitting

Friday, 21ST December, 2018

The Assembly convened at 2.02 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following papers and reports were laid:

1. Annual Report of the Guyana Revenue Authority for the year 2014.
2. Annual Report of the Guyana Oil Company Limited for the year 2017.

[Minister of Finance]

3. Annual Report of the Guyana Forestry Commission for 2017.
4. Annual Report of the Guyana Gold Board for 2017.

[Minister in the Ministry of Natural Resources]

5. Financial Statements of the Guyana Energy Agency for the year ended 31ST December, 2017. *[Minister of Public Infrastructure]*

6. Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture for the year 2017.
7. Annual Report of the Fisheries Department of the Ministry of Agriculture for the year 2017.
8. Annual Report of the Guyana Livestock Development Authority for the year 2017.
9. Annual Report of the Guyana Marketing Corporation for the year 2017.
10. Annual Report of the Guyana Rice Development Board for the year 2017.
11. Annual Report of the Guyana School of Agriculture for the year 2017.
12. Annual Report of the Hydrometeorological Service of the Ministry of Agriculture for the year 2017.
13. Annual Report of the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Agricultural Development Authority for the year 2017.
14. Annual Report of the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute for the year 2017.
15. Annual Report of the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority for the year 2017.
16. Annual Report of the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board for the year 2017.

[Minister of Agriculture]

17. Annual Report of the Guyana National Newspapers Limited for the year 2015.
18. Annual Reports of the National Communications Network Inc. for the years 2013 and 2014.

[First Vice-President and Prime Minister]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTION

NO CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly has no confidence in the Government. *[Mr. Jagdeo - Leader of the Opposition]*

Leader of the Opposition [Mr. Jagdeo] (2.06 p.m.): Mr. Speaker, I rise here today...
[Interruption]

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, let us keep this debate in the manner in which it should be done. We all know what that manner is. Let us make sure that we do that. Please proceed, Mr. Jagdeo.

Mr. Jagdeo: ...to present the motion in my name, that the National Assembly has no confidence in the Government of Guyana. Sometime ago, in this National Assembly, I pointed out to the Members of the Assembly that we are here not as enemies, but that we are here as adversaries.

We, today, are exploring a remedy provided by our Constitution, particularly when you have a Government that has been as incompetent, corrupt, unimaginative and a total failure today. The people out there demand that we pursue this. I know that the 33 Members in the National Assembly who sit on the other side and who have been growing fat on the perks of office, will wish that this motion disappears. They would like to argue that the motion has no chance of succeeding, yet, they want us to withdraw the motion. We can see that all the bluster here is a sign of the intent trepidation in their hearts across there. They are very worried. Just look at their faces. It is what I see. The typical People's National Congress (PNC) behaviour that we see on the streets, we are seeing it manifested here today. It comes out of intense fear, fear that they would lose the perks and fear that they would lose all the benefits they have gotten.

I intend to layout the case today that this Government has mismanaged the resources of Guyana; I intend to layout the case that this Government is untrustworthy and has failed on all of its manifesto's promises to the people of Guyana; I intend to layout the case that this Government is harming our democracy by unilateral actions on its part; I intend to layout the case that this Government, through its incompetent negotiations, is damaging our future prospects and well-

being; and I intend to layout the case that this Government is the most corrupt Government in our entire independent history.

In this relation, the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) went to the people of Guyana and they presented a wonderful manifesto. If this nation was to have a chance to read the manifesto, because, obviously, they did not. A manifesto is a government's promise to the people of Guyana. Let us take a little tour through the *APNU+AFC Joint Manifesto 2015* to see what they told the people of Guyana in 2015 - how they will manage the country. They said on page 5 of the Manifesto:

“Programme of Action

Within the first 100 days of the formation of a Government of National Unity, the following will be done: development and implementation of a sustained national crime prevention plan”.

Until today, except for the dogs and horses, we have not seen the manifestation of this plan.

They said:

“Within the first 100 days of the formation of a Government of National Unity, the following will be done: Adoption of a long-term sustainable economic development plan to realise the vast potential of this country”.

Until now, this Government is aimless, visionless, is trying to foist something called the Green State Development Strategy (GSDS) and pass it off as a long-term development plan. They are clueless about economic management and you will see this manifested in the harm that they are doing to the country.

They said that they would have less expenditure wastage. This Government has increased extravagance by \$31 billion. That is how much more they are spending today than in the past. They said that they will reduce the Value-Added Tax (VAT) and they said that people are burdened by heavy taxation. This Government has increased taxation by \$88 billion per annum since it took office. The VAT alone is by \$17 billion. They lied to the people of Guyana. In their manifesto, they said that they will accelerate land titling for Amerindian people. This is almost the fifth year

in office and what has happened, not a single title has been issued to Indigenous people. Failure again. They said that they will create 2,000 jobs in the 10 Administrative Regions of Guyana from computer assembly alone. What has happened? Zero jobs from computer assembly. They said for young people, on page 20 of the manifesto:

“Youth Policy

...create tens of thousands of new sustainable jobs for the Youths of Guyana”.

They have lost 30,000 jobs since this Government took office. They said free lunch for all children in primary schools. I do not know if the children of Guyana are now all getting free lunches in primary schools, but what I know is that they took away the \$10,000 Grant from the school kids. This is what we got.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Jagdeo would you...

I must remind Hon. Members that no placards nor any form of advertisements must be displayed in this Chamber during the course of any debate. It also applies to recording, which I have laid down, first to guide Hon. Members as if they did not know. No recordings are allowed in the Chamber. I will not say anything more about this. Please proceed, Mr. Jagdeo.

2.17 p.m.

Mr. Jagdeo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They promised, in the Manifesto, within a short period, free transportation for all primary school kids to doctors for biannual check-ups. Not only are the children not transported to get their biannual check-ups, but the health system is just collapsing.

They promised the elderly that they would have inflation-adjusted pensions and that they would provide lower prices for State utilities and health services. What have they done? They have now removed the water and electricity subsidies from the pensioners, contrary to their promise in their own Manifesto. They have now put Value-Added Tax (VAT) on drugs; so, those pensioners who go to the drugstores now have to pay increased fees for their drugs, contrary to their promises.

They promised the teachers of Guyana to develop appropriate non-monetary benefits - free land and duty-free concessions for the teachers. What happened? They refused to even engage them in

the long-term agreement, which already had duty-free concessions for teachers, land, and a fund to assist the teachers to build.

They promised the sugar workers of Guyana that they would expand the estates and that they would maintain their jobs. This is what they promised in their Manifesto.

I think I have made it quite clear here that this Government is totally untrustworthy. All of their promises to the miners, teachers, public servants, soldiers, farmers and business community, they have failed to upkeep all of them. The only thing they have been successful at is increasing perks for themselves; that is what they are good at.

This Government does not even believe in its word to each other and they are partners. In their own Manifesto and in the Cummingsburg Accord, they said that the Prime Minister shall have responsibility for domestic affairs and chairing the Cabinet, recommending Ministerial appointments, appointing heads of agencies and non-constitutional commissions and domestic security.

What we have today is a Prime Minister without a portfolio. I know that the Prime Minister and the Vice-Presidents got titles and high salaries and they are content with that. We are not content with broken promises. They stayed quiet because they are now enjoying the benefits of office. They should stand up for their own rights, but they are unwilling. They do not have the courage to do that because they do not have any integrity. They are totally untrustworthy.

When we talked about mismanagement of the resources, this Government argued that it did not have money and that the economy was bankrupt when it got into office. Yet, they have spent \$1.3 trillion of our resources so far. As I said before, they have increased taxes by \$88 billion per year. That comes from ordinary people - from Guyanese. They have borrowed nearly \$200 billion, US\$1 billion, from domestic and foreign sources. This is almost equivalent to the total debt we left after 23 years in office. And in just five short years, this is what they have done.

Mr. Speaker, you would think that, after spending \$1.3 trillion, the economy would be buoyant. There has been no incentive to the private sector. The miners, as I said before, face a more tenuous situation about their future because they are faced with a new tax environment. The farmers and the people in the forestry sector face the same thing. Every private sector organisation...They have

just decided to tax exports. This Government is harming the future of Guyana. It has no clue about managing the economy. It is just dealing with platitudes.

The incompetence of this Government is phenomenal. It is known internationally. Guyana is known, now, for an incompetent group that manages our country. They have messed up the negotiations with Norway. By now, we would have had a second agreement with US\$250 million more, at least, coming into the economy. The ones that they are using, they messed that up.

Their incompetence in the sphere of the oil contracts has been phenomenal. I have never see people boast about doing nothing. This Government has not brought in a single major investment in Guyana in five years in office, although they have spoken about it. The only thing they talk about is the oil and gas sector and they did not bring ExxonMobil Corporation here. What did they do? ExxonMobil Corporation came here under the People Progressive Party (PPP), explored under the PPP and found oil under the PPP. At that time, we had a chance to renegotiate the contract to bring more benefits to Guyana. That company is a very smart, big company and it looks out for its shareholders. That company walked in with its maximum demands. Our incompetent Government trudged in there unprepared and stuck us with a contract that would harm us for decades into the future. They sold our patrimony and when they were caught with this, what did they do? They said that it was national security reasons why they could not have revealed the contract. They said it was the PPP that inserted a clause and so they could not have revealed the contract. When all of those were proven to be untrue, when the contract was released, after a year and half pressure, what did we discover? We discovered that US\$18 million, which they denied receiving, had been placed in a private account that they were hoping to squirrel away. That is their track record.

Mr. Speaker, I pointed out to you that the corruption scandals are unbelievable. Many of the Members of Parliament (MPs) on the opposite side, when they were in the opposition, failed to make their declarations to the Integrity Commission. They spoke about the Integrity Commission. The law was passed. There was always a requirement for one to file, whether there was the Commission in place or just the secretariat. What they did was disband the secretariat for two years, and now, they have reconstituted the Commission and are insisting that they do not have to file declarations for the first two years of their Government. This is how they are undermining institutions that prevent corruption.

We have seen a routine move back to discretionary incentive. During the last budget, the Minister of Finance came here and said, “I want to decide; people must make a case to me. I would decide who to give tax waivers to and who not to give tax waivers to” - a move back to discretionary incentive, all with a view to squirrel away resources.

This Government is legendary in its breaches of the procurement law. It practically does not exist for this Government - including Cabinet approval of contracts which is prohibited by law. The Hon. Minister, Mr. Patterson, is before the police for one of those breaches. The Hon. Member, Ms. Lawrence, ended up before the Public Procurement Commission (PPC) for several issues - HDM Labs Incorporated, ANSA McAl Trading, all of these, the Demerara Harbour Bridge, the \$500 million that the Auditor General (AG) cannot find from the D’Urban Park. So, all the shouting, all the smiles, all the ties and the green and yellow shirts cannot hide that from the people of Guyana. *[Interruption]*

This is the face of desperation. You are seeing it here in the Assembly today, Mr. Speaker. The desperation was compounded by the walloping they got in the Local Government Elections (LGEs) just recently. I could list the scandals, but it would be too long. My time would expire. They are scandals that they wish would disappear. I would list them. Hon. Member, Amna Ally, I have not even talked about the Hugo Chavez Centre as yet.

This Government professed, in its Manifesto, that it wants to bring our people together; it wants social cohesion. It set up a slush fund in one of the Ministries to promote social cohesion and every act of this Government has been divisive. We have heard some of the most divisive languages from no less than the Chairman of the People’s National Congress (PNC) and a Minister. She wants to beat people upon their heads because they would not listen to her. She sees racism behind everything. She could not even say Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese, or just Guyanese. She had to describe people who look like you and who look like Mr. Jagdeo. This is the language of the past. You are a dinosaur. Dinosaurs cannot manage the future. And I am not speaking about the chronological age of people on the other side when I say dinosaur – although that too could support my point - but I am just speaking about the thinking and the mentality of the dinosaurs. It is dinosaur thinking. When someone says, “you have to be my friend and you have to carry a PNC card”, that is State-sponsored nepotism. How many Guyanese of every race, even their supporters, carry a PNC card and are friends of the Hon. Minister? That is the divisiveness. The vendors are

not their friends and do not carry cards and so the vendors get thrown off the streets. The farmers are not their friends and they do not carry a party card and so they too cannot get jobs. Then, we saw that compounded by the Hon. Keith Scott calling Amerindians “avaricious” in a speech in this National Assembly and there was not a word of condemnation.

How can this bring people together?

2.32 p.m.

These are senior officials of the Government who should have been sanctioned, and they talk about social cohesion. Like their management of the economy, this is another fallacy by dinosaurs who live in a different age and who think they are doing well, but the people out there know differently. If you want to see dinosaur-like behaviour and people who miss key points about what they are in office for, look at the advertisements that they put out.

The PPP outlined its case for the no-confidence motion, and we have it in the newspapers. We spoke about 30,000 jobs lost and no prospect for job creation under this Government. They did not address that. This was their response, and I will come to it in a moment. We spoke about \$200 billion in debt; rapid depletion of gold reserves and other reserves; billions in wasteful spending; no support for the non-productive sector; withdrawal of subsidies to the pensioners and children; over 200 new tax measures - \$60 billion, at that time, has now gone to \$88 billion more in taxes; and Value Added Tax (VAT) on water, on electricity and on data for young people. Imagine, they talk about a digital economy and would put VAT on data, which drives a digital economy. They have increased the cost of living. They have refused to adjust the taxes on gasoline, so the fare ended up going up for people. They have increased the charges, apart from the VAT, that people pay for water across Guyana. Every single day we see the cost of living going up. The crime rate has escalated, as well as the corruption scandals.

There is almost daily violation of our Constitution. We are now on an international shame list. You cannot get away from that; you can find the documentary evidence. The United States of America (USA) Government put out a report and stated that state corruption – for the first time mentioning the word “state corruption” - is a primary source of money laundering in Guyana, now.

We dealt with these issues - issues that affected people.

Look at their response. Look at this pathetic response. They did not address jobs. They admitted that they have failed in the area of jobs. All of the jobs that they told the young people, who helped them in the campaign, about...well, the young people have disappeared. They have disappeared from the Government and from every other place. They are gone; they have disappeared. The dinosaurs and tyrannosaurus rexes over there have all made the young people disappear. They are gone, and where are the jobs?

We were told that if one did not have a job under the PPP/C, it was discrimination. And then there was the recent famous speech at Beterverwagting, where young Afro-Guyanese kids, were told “if you do not have a job, you are lazy. You are lazy, and you are spending your money at the Guinness Bar.” But if they did not have jobs under the PPP/C, it was PPP/C discrimination. That is what the message has shifted to now. That is what they have said. They will address that in this whole response to the no confidence motion, and I would like them to respond to this. Let them tell us about the jobs they have created and let them tell us where. I can tell you about how many people have lost jobs and where, but you tell us what your plans are. You have zero. Zero; absolutely no plans. That is what you should talk about.

They talk about better roads, bridges and airports. Is this the same airport you are talking about, which you said was corrupt under the PPP/C? This is the same airport, but if you want to see corruption now, you should look at this airport and ask the Hon. Minister. We are not getting what we paid for because of the complicity of this Ministry. We were told that the price was inflated in the past, and now we are being told that it is underestimated, and so they have to adjust that. Fallacy again. Which airport are they talking about?

In the response, “Confidence in Guyana”, there is talk about a clean and flood-free Georgetown. The Commission of Inquiry (COI) Report has just come out, and it concluded that, in the past three years under the Mayor and City Council (M&CC), there were not any audited accounts; that hundreds of millions were spent on the friends and families of the A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) people; that they breached every tender rule; and that even the initial clean-up they did was done without regard to any tender. They bankrupted the city and they have turned it into the “Garden City.” We invested over \$30 billion in this city. They are delusional, totally delusional.

Six new regional radio stations were established, and that is why we must have confidence in the Government. The people who have lost their jobs are going to eat the radio stations that they established. They are going to use the radio stations to pay for their children's education and send them to school. That is just to give the Hon. Prime Minister more money to spend, more to squirrel away, and to spread more propaganda in the Hinterland. There is no regard for anything. They can put six radio stations in the Hinterland, but they cannot address Amerindian land titling. They cannot address the 1,762 Amerindians who were fired. They cannot address the issue of funding the village development plans. That is what they cannot do. That is what we hear - six new radio stations established, and we must have confidence in the Government; we would eat radio stations now.

Three new towns were established, and, by the way, we won two of them. You have three in your hands. Your hand is not even correct, you established four. You are right for the first time, Hon. Ms. Lawrence. We won two of them recently. We won the ones that they established. But how does a declaration of a township become a big achievement? How does that become the major achievement? One just signs a declaration and order, and one can establish the township. They are so sparse on getting things that really matter to put in this advertisement as to why we should have confidence in them that they have to do that.

Guyana's territorial integrity: fully protected, as though it was half protected in the past. It is fully protected now. Guyana is stable, strong and peaceful. That is their confidence.

I missed one - street lights everywhere. I went to my village, but my village does not have street lights. You took away the street lights from Bath village. This is rubbish. Rubbish they have put out in an advertisement. It is a pathetic Government that cannot even find anything to say about its tenure in office. And the sad thing is that they cannot find anything to say, but they have spent \$1.3 trillion of our money and have borrowed \$200 billion. They have now increased taxes by \$66 billion. We have a Minister of Finance who gets so caught up in numbers, the economy will fail under the stewardship of this Minister.

If this advertisement had addressed the following things that mattered to people: jobs, crime, cost of living, corruption, squandering of resources, your vision for the future, and the neglect of industries, then one would have said that this is a serious Government. Instead, we are getting radio

stations, new towns, new vehicles for the Prime Minister, and picture framing for the Prime Minister. That is what they are doing.

This is the Government that cannot find time to address the concerns of the vendors. They cannot address the concerns of the miners because they are too busy, but they found the time to increase their salaries almost as soon as they got into office. We must not forget that. We must not forget that.

This is a Prime Minister who is obsessed with getting his salary higher than the Attorney General's salary. It is an obsession. That is what his time was spent on. He advocated for it.

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we must allow ourselves to hear the speaker. We must do that. It is a motion of no-confidence. We must allow the speaker to make the case that he is making. Hon. Members would want, when they are speaking, the same thing. I have permitted a great deal of latitude, but we must not overdo what is happening. Please proceed, Mr. Jagdeo.

Mr. Jagdeo: The Hon. Prime Minister just mentioned the pension that I enjoy. I do not enjoy a pension that is higher than the former President Mr. Ramotar's or former President Mr. Hinds'. We all had one thing in common, which is that we were Heads of State and also Heads of Government. Our Prime Minister will get a higher pension than mine, and he has never been Head of State nor a Head of Government. He just learned that Article 103 of the *Constitution* states that the Prime Minister is a minister too. He just learned that. That is the difference between us.

I think we have made the case that this Government is totally useless for the people of Guyana. The longer it stays there, the more damaging it will be to our future. There is no doubt, today, as often is the case with the Government, that when asked to defend its record, it would go back to what happened under the PPP/C. There is no doubt you would hear today that the PPP/C is corrupt. They will repeat all of the things they said on the campaign trail, that the PPP/C, which they put in their Manifesto, stole \$28 to \$35 billion a year through procurement fraud. They subsequently increased that to \$300 billion. Until now, after 50 audits and after urging them to trace... For two years, I have been asking this Government to hire a specialised firm to trace people's assets abroad. Instead, they put in place the State Assets Recovery Agency (SARA), which now spends \$285

million a year on 18 persons. We can hire 475 young people and use that money. They have put some party hacks to run the SARA. What has happened? They have not discovered anything. Let us assume for a moment that this is true, that the PPP/C stole \$28 billion per annum, then this Government must be stealing a trillion dollars per annum.

We heard about the legendary 15,000 ounces of gold that was smuggled out every week under the PPP/C. So, that rounds up to \$750,000 ounces a year, which is US\$1 billion. That is a lot of money. So, if that is the case, if it was 15,000 ounces per week, and that could be proven, now it is 100,000 ounces per week under this Government.

2.47 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you have ten minutes remaining.

Mr. Jagdeo: They have not been able to prove a single one of these things. We heard from them that the economy was run by drug money and they are cleaning out the drug money from the economy. When asked, the Minister of Finance said that he heard it from a former People's Progressive Party (PPP) Member and he heard it from Professor Clive Thomas. That was their source. If they are cleaning out the drug money, they need to tell us how much money they have cleaned out and who they have charged. In fact, we have drug dealers in our own circles now. Not our circles, but I am looking to the left. *[Interruption]*

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

We heard that the PPP killed 400 young Afro-Guyanese men, which is another rumour. So, A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) put out a list and on that list, there were all of the criminals who were killed, all the policemen who were killed, the victims of the criminals, *et cetera*. 'Fine man' is on that list. People who died from heart attack were on that list. Those were the 400 young black men that they said the PPP killed. They were so concerned about that, I proposed that we do the inquiry to the President - from the time that the prisoners escaped to the killings. They chose to exonerate "fine man" and to select a part of the whole process, like Lindo Creek. They avoided Agricola, Buxton and Bartica. **[Ms. Lawrence:** Lusignan.] Lusignan. Thank you, Hon. Member. They avoided that because of what it would prove.

I googled, last night, the list of the people who had been defending the phantom group, the lawyers for the phantom group, and the lawyers for the criminals, and many of them sit on the other side. Later, I will reveal the names of who have been doing this. That is why they do not want to enquire into what took place for in that period. That is precisely why.

This is hiding from the reality. If ever there was a time for a no-confidence motion, given all of this, this is the time. When they had filed their no-confidence motion, they had filed it on a procedural issue - some \$4 billion to Guyana Sugar Cooperation (GuySuCo) that did not follow the right process. Now, we have thievery, corruption, incompetence, mismanagement and we have no vision. All of these are harming our country.

I will wrap up now. When you come down to the end, who does this Government manage for? It cannot be for the sugar workers; it cannot be for the rice farmers; it cannot be for the miners; it cannot be for the Disciplined Services because they took away their bonus; it cannot be for the teachers or for the nurses, who were promised phenomenal salaries; it cannot be for the pensioners; it cannot be or for our children because from the grant alone, they took away \$8 billion (\$1.6 billion times five budgets would give you that figure of \$8 billion); and it cannot be for the sick people because they have to pay more taxes on their drugs in the hospitals. Who are they managing for but themselves?

On the other side of the ledger, trace the extravagance, fancy meals, \$1 billion more for local travel and much more for perks of office. We have not even scratched the surface of the perks they are getting. For the people outside and who they tried to mobilise to come here today, you are only needed at election time or when they are in trouble. You were not needed during the last three and half years. They did not realise they needed those people because this is an elitist group – the 33 Members here. We are hoping that what I said would touch the conscience of one of them on the other side. We know that it is hard for you all to give up the huge perks you are getting and that is why you are so nervous and shaky.

We hope that one of you would share the views that you have been sharing privately to us, saying “that we are useless; we know that, and we are going to lose the next election”. We are going to elections by May, 2019 or by May, 2020, but one thing is sure and that is that you are going to lose office. The PPP shall be returned to power.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *[Applause]* (2.54 p.m.)

Minister of State [Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon] (2.54 p.m.): #green #yellow #confidence. Today, I rise to speak after the Leader of the Opposition. I believe it is the first time I have had that opportunity because the pattern of this gentleman is that after he speaks, every time he leaves the National Assembly. So, you cannot run today, Mr. Jagdeo.

First of all, let me address some blatant untruths which were told by the previous speaker. First of all, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition said that we are harming democracy. In fact, he started out by saying that we have been in office for five years. So, I am wondering what is going on in his head. We have only been in office for three years onto today, but you are thinking about another five years and another five years for us. That is what you are thinking about. When we speak about harming democracy, we have to look at what the PPP has done. What have they done with Local Government Elections in all of these years? In two decades, what have they done? In the last three years, we have had two Local Government Elections. That is deepening democracy.

[Mr. Jagdeo: What about Mr. Patterson?]

Do not worry about Mr. Patterson. The Member spoke about the \$10,000 grant. We have been dealing with this matter *ad nauseum* in the National Assembly. We said it was a one-off arrangement and it was unsustainable, and their Cabinet document proved that. So why do you want us to do it? We have proof of it.

More importantly, there were two more important issues that the gentleman spoke about. One had to do with the question of radios in the hinterland. Why is it that any leader in this country would want to deny our indigenous peoples their right to information? Unless your intention is to keep them in bondage so that all they know is the 'garbage' that you actually used to take to them. The point is that now our indigenous people are more informed, educated and they can challenge the lies which you say to them.

The other point I want to make is about our borders and why is it that the Leader of the Opposition will say that we are not doing a good job. The point is that this same gentleman was prepared to give a corridor in the Atlantic to Venezuela. We are talking about defending our territorial integrity and you are talking about giving up some of it to the Venezuelans.

The stench that is coming from the exhaust of the engine room of corruption is reminiscent of the smell that I got when I walked in the Office of the President on 16th May, 2015. The first day when

I got in there, the first person I met was the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry. He was like this. *[Hon. Member demonstrated an action]* I said, “wake up, there is a new Government here”. What he was actually demonstrating was the shame and embarrassment of the PPP Administration. He was distressed by it. He was so concerned about what had happened to this beautiful land of ours, that was deemed and described as the most corrupt in the Caribbean, a ‘narco’ state and a failed state that made us a piranha among the world community of nations.

The mood of that Permanent Secretary summed up what was happening at the Administration at that time which was shame and embarrassment that a President, who led this nation to believe that he had a legal marriage, later repudiated that statement. *[Interruption]*

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

I cannot hear myself, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Harmon.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Please take your seat. Hon. Members, a great deal of latitude has been afforded Members, at this point, on both sides, but I must say to you that we must observe the injunction about making personal remarks. Personal remarks were made by the first speaker. I said I must allow a certain amount of robustness to the approach in the discussion. I have allowed, it but now we are crossing the line.

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, there is a mistake here. I am not asking your opinion. I am saying to Members what I require of them here in this debate. I will expect Members to observe it. Please proceed, Mr. Harmon.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Earlier, one of my Colleagues, Minister Trotman, had this to say about a certain gentleman who spoke when he said, “how dare you?” How dare you, Mr. no marriage?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, Mr. Harmon.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes, Sir.

3.02 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister Harmon, I am sure I did not hear you clearly. That is not a subject for discussion here.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes Sir. I am describing what we found on the first day in Government. This is what I am describing. I am describing that shame about our education system, which once was the top in the region, now needed emergency surgery. This is what I am talking about. This is what I have found. I have found and am ashamed at what our Guyanese citizens had to endure at ports of immigration in the region, ashamed to be identified in the wide diaspora, instead seeking to pass off as Jamaicans, Trinidadians and Barbadians. This is what we have found. How dare you?

Our administration ushered in a moral and spiritual revival in this country, bringing back the pride in Guyana. The 'made in' Guyana and reigning supreme has become a refurbished brand under us. This moral and spiritual revival is led by Brigadier David Granger, a devoted family man with a real marriage for over 48 years to his wife Sandra. To Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, that everybody tries to run down, a devoted family man with a real marriage for several years to his wife Sita. Challenge that. These two gentlemen, supported by their Cabinet and their churches, mosques and temples all over this country, have worked and prayed to restore the pride in Guyana. Being from real families, they, as the rest of us, could appreciate the importance of Christmas to families, and why bringing this motion now is destructive of Christmas. How dare you a man of no family?

The cleansing of the proverbial Augean stables is not a simple job. We have thanked all Guyanese who joined in the task of pulling back Guyana from the precipice of destruction under the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C). I wish to address the aspect of what we call the symbols of nationhood, which is integral to this pride in being Guyanese. At the tip of the stack is our national flag, the Golden Arrowhead. Any, each and every Guyanese, everywhere in the world - even the poor '*brother Willie*' in the jail drinking sour ginger beer - but more importantly, the over 50,000 persons who crammed in the D'Urban Park to see our Golden Arrowhead slowly unfurl in the midnight under the watchful eyes of a grateful nation. They could not help shedding tears, and that is Guyana. We were swelling with pride in our chest when that Golden Arrowhead went up. If you could not do so, then you must be a beast. I stood next to the former Chancellor of the Judiciary

on that night and he said, “Joe, my skin is growing, just looking at that flag, that pride which is felt in us.”

Our move from May, 2015 to May, 2016 was nothing short of miraculous. This is what the Members of the other side are trying to dampen. How dare you, prophets of doom? The outcry of the emotion after the coalition’s victory was much more than anticipated. The swearing in ceremony of His Excellency at the foyer of the Public Building, where crowds were gathered, to the inauguration ceremony at the Guyana National Stadium, Providence which filled the capacity 18,000, with thousands of persons stranded on the road, said to us that Guyana had to find suitable venues for large numbers.

A rally organised by a group of persons in New York to celebrate our victory at the polls amassed over 20,000 Guyanese in one place. All of them are proud to be Guyanese. No longer having to bow their heads like this [*Minister bowed his head*]. No longer having to sound as a Jamaican, Bajan or Trinidad, but, they are proud to stand up and say I am a Guyanese and to raise their flags.

In this administration, after we recognise what was happening, we challenged ourselves to find accommodation that will accommodate 50,000 persons. This is something that was an aspiration of Guyanese since 1964, that they will be able to find a venue and host over 50,000 at a flag raising ceremony. I quote from the *Guyana Graphic*, of Wednesday, May 25, 1964, “Ceremony of the flags.” It states that 50,000 persons, it was catering, to flock the park. This was a report written by Ricky Singh – 50,000 persons. When we were now looking at venue that could accommodate 50,000 persons. What did we find? We found in the centre of Georgetown the D’Urban Park. We found a place in which \$90 million had been dumped under the previous administration. All you had to show for it was what Dr. Luncheon called a pristine forest in the centre of the city – bush.

There are some defining moments in the annals of the history of a country. In 1964 this is what the Guyanese said, and they wanted. The *Guyana Graphic* speaks to it, and not the price of the paper that it was then. Now, 50 years after 1964, we have nothing to show for it. We could accommodate nowhere in a single venue in this country 50,000 persons. You cannot accommodate 50,000 persons at the Marriott Hotel. You cannot accommodate them at the Guyana National Stadium, Providence; you cannot accommodate them at the National Park. Nowhere can we do that. What is more diabolical about that adopted administration is that it denied the city of any funding,

whatsoever, to deal with issues of this nature, in particular the citizens of South Ruimveldt, West Ruimveldt, North East La Penitence and the La Penitences. They denied those people of any privileges.

When you are talking now about developing D'Urban Park, you are not talking about preparing catchment areas that could allow for those persons to have health and education. This is what is very characteristic of the PPP/C. They decided that they are not going to fund anything in Georgetown. In fact, all of the moneys coming from central Government to the city was given to the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. Norman Whittaker and Ms. Sooba, that axis of evil, were the ones who actually spent the money. They spent that money to the extent that they... [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, we must demonstrate restraint in what we are saying. Please proceed.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: They deliberately exposed the citizens of this city to harm. In fact, there is a former senior official in the PPP/C, Mr. Kellawan Lall, who said that he had prayed that they would be some outbreak of disease in this city. What was happening here was symptomatic of the way the PPP/C dealt with Georgetown. It was because the people did not vote for them, they decided to punish them for years. Now you are talking about the city is run-down. After three years, we are making the efforts to bringing the city back. You have done nothing for the city for all of these years. Every time the council made a proposal to raise funds, you denied it. The fact that D'Urban Park is built, the fact that we are now able to accommodate at least 50,000 in one place, the PPP/C does not like that. They want to make sure that we run this thing down. It is of no use. What is happening is that they are ashamed that in one year we have been able to move from bush to a proper facility.

The other side would want to make all sorts of claim that D'Urban Park cost this, D'Urban Park cost that. What we are talking about here is the national psyche. What we are talking about here is called symbols of nationhood, where our people could go and assemble and watch their flag unfurled. These are the things we are talking about. This is what we are talking about, the confidence in a Government. This is why, since we came into office, every single year the number of persons coming from abroad to Guyana is increasing. That is confidence. They do not have to be told to be confident. That is confidence.

The Hon. Member earlier spoke about young people, and so on. Two days ago I had the opportunity of addressing 309 persons from the Board of Industrial Training (BIT), young people. In a one-year period, it is going to have 1,600 and for 2019, it will have 2,000 of those young people. These are people who have been trained. They are outside of their regular education system. These are people who are being trained with skills. Why are you saying that we are not doing anything? That is confidence.

The point is that D'Urban Park is an important feature in what is the modern Guyana. They can talk as much as they want about it. It is part of modern Guyana. That is what we could actually accommodate that number of persons. It is not only I am saying that, listening to what some of the persons who have actually used that facility have said about it. This is all part of it, because you all come to D'Urban Park to prove that you are not confident. Do you think we do not know that?

Testimonials from some of the persons who have had the opportunity of using the facility.

Hits and Jams:

“The D'Urban Park facility was a positive move by this administration and, as promoters, we find it very convenient. It allows for all types of activities and we find it very easy to get to because it is a central location. It also has space for a convenient and secured parking, because it is multi-purpose we will host numerous kinds of activities and we intend to continue using it.”

The church community, Bishop Dr. Raphael Massiah said this, and this is a real bishop:

“D'Urban Park has been extremely useful and has benefited the church community, and we have hosted a number of events there. It is easy to get to, and the location is ideal for a number of reasons. Persons living in town could get to and from the park with much ease. The venue is very comfortable, and we have brought audiences from all across the country. The vicinity has been cost effective to the church and the lights are adequate for activities in this event. D'Urban Park is just a wonderful centre for us in the church. We pray for the city and for all within the city.”

3.17 p.m.

Suarez Brothers Circus, the organisers were so impressed with the location and convenience of the D'Urban Park that they have already started to reserve booking for their return in two years' time.

Irrespective of what the other side says, we are confident that we have brought back that pride in being Guyanese in this administration. We are confident that we have restored the symbols of nationhood in the society, and this is what keeps us together. I am disappointed that at this time, rather than bringing a motion of unity, that unites our people together, the Opposition seeks to bring a motion of no confidence to divide our people.

Guyana is now the land of opportunity. Rather than working together with their Government, do not try to bring us down by all of the crazy statistics given by the Leader of the Opposition just now, statistics that cannot be borne out by reality. Minister Jordan had debunked some of those statements that you have made in the budget. Actually, my disappointment is that I had so much appreciation for the Leader of the Opposition, but until you spoke here this afternoon, I think you have gone astray, because you have been scattering all over the place, a little bit here, a little bit there. I was wondering, at one point, whether you were seeing right, because I would be concerned for you.

I would like to say that I support the fact that this motion should be defeated. It is the *Grinch who stole Christmas* from the Guyanese people. The people are out there trying to enjoy themselves, trying to shop. We have actually reduced the time from two o' clock to later on in the morning. The people want to enjoy themselves and you are bringing a motion such as this today. What is wrong with you? You are like the Grinch.

Mr. Speaker, on this basis, I would say that I cannot support this motion in any way and I support the people of Guyana to enjoy a wonderful Christmas. [*Applause*] (3.20 p.m.)

Ms. Teixeira (3.20 p.m.): This motion is based on the premise that the right of the people to choose is fundamental to our constitutional democracy; that the power of our people is what decides the sovereignty of our state and of our country. It is the power of the people that governments and states rely on to exist. It is the power of our people who have spoken loudly in the local government elections in 2018, November 12th, when they actually inadvertently had a referendum on the performance of this Government in the last three and a half years.

This motion is not about D'Urban Park. It is not about who is married and who is not married. By the way, there is a law called "Civil Union" in Guyana that allows people to have common law marriages. I will confess in this House that I was in a common law marriage, not a legal marriage. The law allows for it, so do not get into that thing.

The right of the people - Governments rely on the people and the sovereignty of the people to run a country - give you power to run a country. This Government has lost the sovereignty of the people on November 12, 2018. You can go about and talk all sorts of things. You can even say... I do not know how it is that you are having such difficulty defending your records that you have to go back to our record to defend your record.

The issue of the people and the Government is a contract that is sacred. It is fundamental and it is based on our Constitution. Before I go further, the "Grinch" issue being raised, I remember reading that story to my children and I read it to my grandchildren. The problem of making that analogous situation is flawed, badly flawed. November 12 was local government elections, November 15, the no confidence motion was submitted after it was found that we won the elections by 54,000 votes more than you (APNU), while we beat Alliance For Change (AFC), which decided to run by itself, by 113,000 votes more. We put in a motion of no confidence because it was very clear that the Government had lost its mandate. You lost your mandate. In 2015, May, you barely had a mandate. We are waiting now for three and a half years for the election petition to be heard, but your mandate that you have without the petition being heard is 4,500 votes. You got into office with a hair's breadth, 4,500, This House is 7,500 votes a seat, you could not even make that. You have sat as a Government having won only three of the ten regions, 4,500 of the ten regions.

In 2016, you did not do well in the local government elections, but in 2018 you have got slaughtered. You got completely out of it, that all the local authorities, 58 of the 80 local authorities, we won. We are the only party that ran candidates in every single one of the 80 local authorities. You could not have won because you did not field candidates in every single one of the 80 local authorities. The Members coming after me can bring their own statistics. I am taking the statistics from Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM).

We brought the motion, the Speaker approved it on November 22. We kept asking for the motion to be heard early. We said it should be heard before the budget and, therefore, if the motion had

been approved on November 15, or thereabouts, we would have it be debated on November 28 or 29, before the budget. However, despite the calls, the motion matured on December 4. What was the problem for this Government to delay the general debate from December 3 to December 5? You are so confident that you are going to win. You said that you have the 33, so why are you so hesitant? We then waited and waited, and we suddenly heard that it is December, so do not call us the Grinch. You had the opportunity. You set the date. The Government set the date.

Therefore there was an opportunity between the beginning of the month of Christmas to hear the motion and right through. You ignored that because in your own calculations, you felt that your singing of the song of Grinch will get the people in Guyana mad at us. It has backfired, because today, right now, as we sit here, the people of this country are watching what is going on. They are listening to what is going on. This is a critical period. Despite the offer of the Leader of the Opposition that if it is so, that this motion being debated on 21st December, the date you chose would be problematical, we are prepared to defer it to discuss it in early January. I think 3rd January. Of course, the Hon. Prime Minister has a difficulty comprehending these issues and, therefore, the Hon. Prime Minister interpreted that as a weakness and said we should have withdrawn it. We have not withdrawn it. We are here today. Unlike you my dear friends, we have the mandate of the people. The People's Progressive Party/Civic comes to this House on the backs of the mandate of the Guyanese people who have been given to us in the local government elections.

The problem with the Government is that it has had opportunities and it has squandered the opportunities that had come before us. They did not have an Opposition that did to them when they were in opposition did to us. They did not have an Opposition that created violence on the streets; they did not have an Opposition that boycotted and took away \$90 billion from the budget; they did not have an Opposition in which every time you had to have a meeting with former President Ramotar, that it was either "their way or no way". You walked in with your maximum positions and that was the end of it. There was no mood, no opportunity. We have not been that kind of Opposition. We have been an Opposition that has come to this House with proposals of how to be able to save the rice industry, to save the sugar industry; proposals to deal with suicide, to do away with sloth in the economy and how to reduce the hardships of the Guyanese people. You have rejected every single initiative that we have made to try, on behalf of the Guyanese people, to

improve lives, even though you are in Government, and we will be in Government. This issue, if it is not today, it would be in three months' time or in a year's time.

We are very clear that unfortunately the Government has difficulty dealing with the reality that the proposals, their behaviour, has been determined by this country. The people of this country decided on November 12th to make it very clear to you. In fact, November 12th was the first mass popular movement in this country rejecting A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) as Government in this country when they decided to either not vote at all or to vote against you.

The Government has refused to accept that it has faced a referendum and it failed badly. The results of the elections, measured and exposed the Government for having failed to deliver to the people their needs and expectations. You have failed. Although there have been efforts to help you to see the way, to listen, you have rejected every single initiative. After three and a half years my dear friends, the Government, with all the bravado of your achievements, should have come out the victor. You should have come out the victor in the local government elections. If this is all that you stand for, is this all that you have done for the Guyanese people in three and a half years? Is this all after spending Guy\$1 trillion in five budgets? You have had five budgets in three and a half years, \$1.3 trillion by the end of next year. What have you got to show for it? Yet you come to this House and you go to the Guyanese people, and you go and mobilise your minibuses to go and bring people out to protest when you never went to visit them before the local government elections. You did not go to meet the people. You did not talk to them.

You know very well, my dear friends.

3.32 p.m.

You know very well, in your own assessment, that one of the major complaints of your supporters was that you ignored them. You did not talk to them. You drove by in your fancy cars and sat in your fancy offices and did well with the perks, and the people suffered. This is your track record.

Let me just arbitrarily randomly put my finger and point at one thing – roads. Have you driven down the Main Street? Maybe, your cars, sirens and expert drivers know how to avoid the potholes. If you see the roads in Georgetown, the roads in Bartica, the highway to Soesdyke, three and a half

years, you have seen deterioration in our country. Money has not been a problem. You cannot, as a Government, complain that you did not have money. You had US\$780 million in the foreign currency reserves. You had a country that you took over with eight years of positive growth rate. You had money. What have you done? You have raided the gold board; you have raided the foreign reserves; you have tanked our economy and you have also put us in debt, as the Leader of the Opposition said. Our friends on the other side seem to be living in an ivory tower somewhere.

We have watched this Government. You have had opportunities. You took over an economy that was good, but you came in with such vengeance and bitterness in your heart that what you did was that you threw out the good, the bad and the ugly. You threw out everything and then you found yourself in quicksand because you did not have the power of the base. You did not have the power of the people; you did not have the power of the Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs). You lost the local government election and you cannot function. **[Mr. Bulkan: We have 33 votes in here.]** Live with that for your lives, 33 voters today. That is okay.

This Government has squandered the goodwill of the Guyanese people, especially and including your supporters. What have you done to supporters of other parties? What have you done to supporters of the PPP/C? You talk about social cohesion, but in fact, you have carried out a state-sponsored system of discrimination. You have done it. I have heard the Hon. Prime Minister say, “we must talk.” Talk, when you have eliminated people. You have terminated 1,972 Amerindian community service workers. You have fired a large section of the public service who happen to be a different ethnic group. You have taken the boards of this country, all the boards, 1,063 seats on 98 state boards. Appointed between 2015 and 2017 August: 663 places are occupied by Afro-Guyanese – 62%, 255 by Indo-Guyanese – 21% and 107 – 10% other ethnicities. More shocking is that the most innocuous boards - you talk about social cohesion - that deal with the welfare of the people of this country, National Commission for the Family, the National Commission for the Elderly, National Sports Commission and the Adoption Board, most of these deal with social issues, the Government has made no attempt to be inclusive, no attempt to reflect the diversity of our country.

Persons such as Mr. Ram, “Doing Business in Guyana,” points out that within the first year of you getting into office that you have inflated the size of the public service by another 2,000 persons on contract. You are the ones in the Government. You are the ones who said that you did not want

contract workers. You said, and you attacked the PPP/C in Government, that contract workers were bad, yet you have increased the number of contracted workers. We have just gone through the budget, by hundreds and millions of dollars more for payment of staff.

When the Hon. Member talked about D'Urban Park that in his view is that Guyanese people just drink, smoke and enjoy themselves, because if you are going to drink and sport, you have to get money. How do people get money if they do not have jobs and opportunities, when, in fact, you are taxing them? Let us look at some statistics because you do not like statistics. You want to talk generally. **[Mr. Jagdeo: They want to talk about Jagdeo's marriage.]** Is that the issue, seriously?

If you talk to the businessmen, you will find that business is bad – everything. When businessmen are having a bad time, what do they do? They reduce the number of people working for them. They reduce the number of hours people are working. When there are miners who are taxed heavily and the machinery is seized in Mahdia, when they are trying to make their own thing, when the syndicates that you created are now paying tithes to one of the Ministers sitting in this House so that they can keep their syndicates. Is that the right word – tithes? You come to us..., when the miners are showing in all of the statistics. You do not like the fact that the statistics we used are from Minister Jordan, the Mid-Year reports, and also the annual budget speeches. These are not made up figures. They are figures that we extrapolated and calculated. You taxed the miners and gold production has dropped. The mid-year of 2018 say that it has dropped, and it explains why it has dropped. By the way, it talks about the interior roads. All of these things are poor performance. The Government has all of this money and yet it is underperforming.

The spending of the Guyanese people, how is this economy running? The purchasing power of the people have been reduced. Let us go back with some statistics, because whenever we speak, the Government basically does not wish to hear anymore. Maybe you could read the Mid-Year reports that your own Government puts out and read your own budget speeches. “In 2019, total spending is expected to be reduced by 18% or \$77 billion when compared to 2014.” Let us now translate that into language that everyone can understand. What it means is that \$462,000 less at the household level is available. Do you understand that part? Did that figure come across okay? Good. It is because what is very clear is that people have less money to spend. When you are taxing

people, \$60 billion more a year is less available for them to purchase to survive. Again, and I spoke in the budget, I talked about how difficult life is for people in this country.

The same thing in the health and drug sector. Let us use that as an example because the Minister is *hard ears*. She is not listening to the cries of the people. We have to keep *gotaying and gotaying it*, again and again, so that she will get the message that billions of dollars are spent for drugs and medical supplies in violation of the procurement laws of this country. Up to yesterday, on the television programme I do, people called in. They said that they were at the public hospital's emergency room and there were no drugs. They were told that they have to buy it. These are patients who are diabetics and that have cardiac problems. They are in trouble. No matter how you talk in this place, the Minister does not have to deal with the growing infant mortality, maternal mortality, malaria, human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and tuberculosis. She is living in a bubble somewhere. She is living in a bubble where her main concentration is to "lash people over their heads". That is her main concentration.

There are broken promises and the Leader of the Opposition pointed out a number of the broken promises. I started out talking about your manifesto in 2015. Go back and read it. When I started out talking about the sovereignty of the people, when the people voted for a party and the party makes promises, there is a valid and legitimate expectation that some of the promises will be fulfilled, if not all. This Government, in the 100 days, has filled none of your promises. On these, you are still struggling to..., some of your own. You have not been able to provide jobs. You have fooled a lot of the young people. Do you know what? You cannot fool them any longer. Where are the jobs? In fact, you have done more than any other Government, probably since 1978 to 1980, when the redeployment of the workers began in the public service, when 4,000 bauxite workers lost their job, when 4,000 public servants lost their job. You have now beaten that.

You have now created a situation where 7,000 sugar workers lost their jobs; where the cane farmers, who produce sugar for those estates, which you have sold or which have closed down, also cannot produce and make a living. That is another several thousands more. The bauxite situation is dread, but you are not paying attention to it. You keep promising, every couple of months, that you will do something about it. Nothing is going on in the bauxite area to help the people. As I said, you are destroying gold, which is the main thing holding up the economy. You have played the fool with rice and, therefore, you have created a situation where thousands of

workers have lost their jobs. You have closed companies down. You have chased out companies from this country and the jobs are gone.

You can talk of the Board of Industrial Training. The fact is unless business is growing, domestic, foreign, local, geographic, regional, then there are no jobs for the people. Therefore there is no job creation programme, no job creation plan of how to create jobs. You are talking about plantain chip and dog food. I mean, seriously, are those the jobs you are offering our people?

On top of all of this, there is corruption of no mean order in this country. There is corruption that has never been seen. You all are making Mr. Burnham blush. You are making President Burnham blush with the level of corruption that you have in here. The level of corruption stinks to high heaven.

Without jobs, without attraction of investors, without giving opportunities that will help business to grow - new business, young people's business and women's business - unless you are able to offer and reduce these burdens and measures you brought on the economy, on the business community, on the working people, then, therefore, this country will go further and further downhill.

This no confidence motion is supposed to be, and should be and is in many countries, and many parts of the world, a wake-up call for the Government. However, this Government does not want to wake up. You want to stay sleeping. You want to stay in your sleepwalking state that you do not know anything, you are fine, and you are happy.

3.47 p.m.

The problem is, the people are not happy, and they have indicated that. It is time for the Government to wake up. Obviously, from the contributions so far, they do not wish to wake up; they do not want to deal with the levels of corruption - 50 scandals; they do not want to deal with the level of creating jobs for our people; they do not want to be able to deal with the crime situation and the cost of living. In all of this, and maybe that is why they are living in a sleepwalking state, because there is no vision, they are clueless, they are incompetent and they refuse to take advice from anybody. They refuse to work with anybody because they are *know-it-alls*.

The people of this country, in 80 Local Authorities Areas (LAAs), on 12th November, made their position clear, that you have lost their trust and confidence. This no-confidence motion is saying to you that if you remain in Government and win the vote today, it is not a victory. You may have won the battle, you may win the battle, but you are not winning the war because, in 2020, we will win. By then, with these policies and what you are doing to the Guyanese, this country is going to tank more and, therefore, people will retaliate. There is nothing to stop another no-confidence motion from coming here. This is part of parliamentary democracy. It is our duty to keep you on your toes. If you do not want to keep on your toes, we will keep doing it all the time because you are sleepwalking all the time. You refuse to listen to the people. You refuse to respect the votes of the people that said they do not want you there anymore.

Five years, \$1.3 trillion; three and a half years, five Budgets...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you have two minutes remaining.

Ms. Teixeira: Five Budgets, \$1.3 trillion. Three and a half years in which not one major transformative project for this country was created. If my dear Friend Lt. Col. Ret'd Harmon could talk about Durban Park as a transformative project for our country, Lord God help us in this National Assembly... seriously.

Of course, my dear Friend knows that the \$500 million was missing, plus the \$1.5 billion that was spent from Government money that cannot be accounted for there. I will leave some of those corruption issues for my other Colleagues. You are talking through two sides of your mouth. On this day, 21st December, 2018, whether we win or not, we are signalling to you and the Guyanese people are signalling to you, that you are on borrowed time. If not in three months, in a year's time there will be a new Government and it will be the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C).

Thank you very much. [*Applause*] (3.50 p.m.)

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Williams] (3.51 p.m.): If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker, I must say that, at this time of rising, I am somewhat flat. This is because I have not been warmed up from what I heard from the other side, clearly. It was speaking desultory to tell you the truth – same old same old. What it meant was that, our position that you could not come before the budget, the exigencies, and that is what the rule states, that we give you a date depending

on the exigencies of the budget. They brought it on the eve of the presentation of Budget 2019 and, of course, it could not take precedence over the issue. But, you know, it worked because what they are trying to say today, is what they had said during the presentation of Budget 2019. It does not excite me to tell you the truth, but I will try my best not to let the Members fall asleep, I will make efforts.

In the beginning, let me say that this fallacy that they got a mandate from the people from the last Local Government Elections (LGE), not the General and Regional Elections, it was the Local Government Elections. When you peruse the votes and compare them to 2016, what you actually have here is a great diminution in the votes in 2018. The votes fell by 10%. So, tell us, the real question is, they must tell us how losing votes can amount to winning support. We are not in contention for votes, we have done very well.

You claim to have won Buxton, I am the representative for Buxton, I was shocked to see that, in the newspapers, but not that long, you got zero in one of the constituencies and you lost the other one. You did not make twenty votes. Your position is untenable. What you tried to do is to continue dividing the people of Guyana, but they are not going to listen to you. I am not going to be detained by those things over there because I dealt with them in my last presentation.

I want to say that this no-confidence motion is one of the most mis-conceived, ill-timed, malicious, and *Grinch-like* motions ever conceived, but it would never steal the ‘Spirit of Christmas’ which is a *natural mystic flowing through the air*. Christmas is a time for giving and sharing. It is a time to love your neighbour as you love yourself. I hope that I could apply that principle today and love my neighbours, despite of their records.

In the 49 steps, this phase never escaped me, and I did that as a young child. Bringing this motion at this time is like *cat guts vibrating in the heart*, attempting to wrench from us the ‘Spirit of Christmas. Why? Because it hawks us back to a time which our noble laureate poet, Mr. Martin Carter, described as,

“It is a dark time my love...It is the season of oppression, dark metal and tears...”

That is how he described the period. Mr. Carter, was speaking about the period in Guyana from 2001 to 2008. This is what he said,

“It is a festival of guns, the carnival of misery. Everywhere the faces of men are strained and anxious...”

That is what that period was akin to, a theatre of war on the lower East Coast and in Georgetown. In that period, the ‘rule of law’ lost its way and was replaced by the law of the jungle under this last Government, seated over on that side of this House. We must speak it, we have only been in office for three years, so we do not have anything to compare to 23 years. We have to look at the record of the people who are trying to fix us with their corruption. We have only been in office for three years. When the Leader of Opposition recognised that it is three years, he tried to make it five today, he tried to stretch it out. I have news for him, not only does he have the two additional years coming to us, but he has many more five years to deal with where we will be on this side of the House taking care of Guyanese because they are seeing the true nature of the people.

The period was one of extra-judicial killings by the ‘Death Squads,’ ‘Black-Clothes Squads’, and civilian-led squad, which allegedly operated under the direction of some governmental figures. The ‘Phantom Squad,’ a squad which was the product of the merger of the ‘Phantom Squad’ and an outlaw figure, to whom to Government abdicated its responsibility for the public security of the State. Those squads took no prisoners, they constituted themselves as judge, jury, and executioner. As a result, in this dark age, the killing fields flourished. The spectre of death, never seen before in this country or any part of Caribbean Community (CARICOM), was unprecedented. Hundreds of sons, brothers and fathers were senselessly cut down and killed in this, “...festival of guns and carnival of misery.”

In addition, in this period people disappeared from their loved ones and vanished from the face of this earth after being taken into the custody of the ‘Black-Clothes Squad.’ The cases of Franz Britton also known as Collie Wills and Daniel Jones come to mind. In the case of Franz Britton, it is a wonderful thing, I have the affidavit here filed in response to a *habeas corpus* application by no other than Leon Mark Fraser.

[**Mr. Jordan:** Who is he? Let us hear who he is.]

He was the senior leader of the ‘Black-Clothes Squad.’

The mother of Franz Britton Wills, Ms. Irma Wills of Republic Park, did not see her son for days. She investigated, made enquires and sought an affidavit in which she stated, “My son was arrested and detained on the 19th January 1999...” Do you remember this date? “...at the Cove and John

Police Station, but on Saturday, 23rd January, he was placed on bail in the sum of \$25,000, although he was not charged with an offence. He was rearrested on Monday, 25th January at the Cove and John Police Station where he was asked to report and, again, he was not found. She sought recourse to a lawyer that you know, and who they had to respond to. That is why Leon Fraser... That is my role in that place, to defend the human rights of those people who were savaged. I was the only human rights lawyer in that time, by the way. Mr. Anil Nandlall, do not come in, stay there. Listen, they had no choice but to admit that he was in custody. This is what is important. [Mr.

Nandlall: Is that your record that you are coming with?] Yes, it is a good record. You bring yours. I am not going to be distracted. He said that he arrested Collie Wills and made the necessary diary entries when he uplifted Collie Wills. This is how they operated, members of the Guyana Police Force (GPF) arrested these men and took them to some station and then the 'Black-Clothes Squad' would turn up. When he turned up, he said that he uplifted Collie Wills and took him away.

4.02 p.m.

He did that on the 27th January, 1999 and the man has still not been seen. This is why he had to move, and this is what he is averring, that, "On Thursday the 28th of January, 1999, Mr. Basil Williams, Attorney-at-Law, telephoned me and asked me about the whereabouts of Mr. Collie Wills and I sent him away on Wednesday and the aforesaid Collie Wills was never ever seen again. This is a story that operated with the rights of the Guyanese people under the last Government. My position is that they are in no position to lecture us with the wonderful work we are doing in these three years in Government. [Interruption]

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

We did not take it like. The mother would not have let it rest and so, we had to go to the Inter-American Courts for Human Rights. At that Court, the Court of Jurisdiction evidence led and so it was the Government's time to appear and to try to give some clarification in this matter. Do you know what the Government did? Instead of going to submit to the jurisdiction, which they did and had to do by signing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, they denounced it in order for it to be removed from the jurisdiction of that Court, rather than going to the Court and defending the disappearance of Franz Britton Wills. As a result, the Court decided that, for the

next five years, it would publish at the annual Organization of American States (OAS) meetings, they would call out the name of Collie Wills. That is how they dealt with these matters. That is why there is no way the Guyanese people would never again give them a mandate to govern this country.

In that dark age, many young people were stereotyped and dragged before the Courts to face trumped up charges of murder, some with multiple counts. These youths were largely of one ethnicity and were between the ages of 14-17, all were committed to stand trial irrespective of the level and lack of evidence. Here is what was disturbing about that period, the kids were committed to stand trial at the criminal assizes in the High Court at Georgetown, and all of them had to wait five years in the Georgetown Prison to await their trials amongst the hardened criminals. What was the upshot of it all? All of them, whether they were charged with three murder charges or not, all had jury trials, and all were freed by the jurors and that is what confirms the allegations about trumped up charges.

Hear what the negative aspect of that was. **[Ms. Chandarpal: Why do you not talk about your achievements?]** Those are my achievements. I was the lawyer - me alone. What they did to those young boys was to cause them to spend the quality years of their life locked away in those prisons and they have no rehabilitative programmes. We just did a survey where there is 209% of overcrowding in the prison, but what is more important is that 76% of the population were never represented by lawyers. They did not care about people, they did not care about what happened to young people in this country, and so, they had no problem with throwing charges on them. The stereotyping of these young people was another dark page under the administration of the last Government.

In this dismal and abysmal period, we also had a broken judiciary. Do not let us forget that. A dictatorship of the judiciary. The then acting Chancellor decided to act also as Chief Justice and was only stopped by the decision of his own High Court Judge. He was able to do that when the then Government removed the built-in second balance that divided the administration of the duties and the functions of the Supreme Court between the Chancellor and the Chief Justice. As a consequence of using legislation to remove the protection that the arrangement afforded the people of Guyana. All the powers and functions of the Office of the Chief Justice were transferred to the Office of the Chancellor. That is why this gave the Chancellor the power to appoint who presided

over any matter before the Courts, from the magistracy right up to the Court of Appeal. On appeal of such matters, when they went before the Court of Appeal, and this is very important, when one man could decide who must sit on a case - you got to know because if you and the man is not agreeing and you turn up, you would get fix up.

It was a broken system and despite being rejected by successive leaders of the Opposition, the then Government continued to put up this man for the Office of Chancellor, resulting in the positions of Chancellor and Chief Justice being acting positions for well over a decade. I have to speak on it now because you are trying to attack my President and blame him for people who are acting in office. It is not our fault because we inherited that. We did not fold our hands like timorous souls, we struck out like bold spirits.

We invited the Leader of the Opposition to meet with the express undertaking that the persons who the President was putting up for confirmation as Chancellor and Chief Justice to act, this acting Hollywood/Bollywood scenario, we brought it. What happened? When those names were put up, the Leader of the Opposition (LOO) refused to confirm and make permanent the two names submitted by His Excellency the President of the Co-operate Republic Brigadier David Arthur Granger. We are not taking any blame for any acting Chancellor or acting Chief Justice. We put it up and they knocked it down and so, we have to move ahead, and we have to govern the country the best way we can. We have the assurance that with Brigadier David Arthur Granger, he is showing it – a good leader, already in three years he is a great leader and he will rise again to continue to govern this country of Guyana.

This APNU/AFC Government inherited this broken system in addition to which the Judiciary had no fundamental independence and they had to go *cap in hand* to the Government, but you know who the Government is, to seek salaries and benefits for the Judges. How could that breed independence of a judiciary when one has to go to the Government, one of the other Arms of the State? In the Doctrine of the Separation of Powers it is a breach.

In that case, what had to happen was that there were many other ills affecting the judiciary at the time, but they would not allow me to address this now, but I want to say this. It was the APNU/AFC Government which, among its first acts, restored the independence of the Judiciary by passing legislation to empower them to determine their own budget, without any direction from the

Government. This must rank as a triumph of the restoration of the 'Rule of Law' in Guyana and we are proud of it. I assure you that this Government will continue its work to restore the independence of the Judiciary in Guyana.

Another decadent feature of this period was the killing of our women. What hurts us about this is that these women were killed when they were exercising their constitutional rights of 'Freedom of Assembly', 'Freedom of Expression' and the right to the protection of the law. Therefore, the question is, why in April, 2001 should this mother Donna McKinnon be shot and killed outside of Freedom House in Robb Street. Why? Because she was protesting? She has a constitutional right to protest and she was killed outside of Freedom House.

Secondly, in September 2007 Donna Herod, let the record show that these were indeed the dark days and they must never ever be repeated. Donna Herod went on a midday to collect her child from kindergarten school. She had barely collected her child when there was a hail of gunfire. The 'Black-Clothes Squad' started firing indiscriminately in the vicinity of a kindergarten school. The mother jumped on her child to protect the child and, at last...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member you have five minutes remaining.

Mr. Williams: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am satisfied with this. The mother was destroyed, and she died on the spot.

In the foregoing, in itself, all that occur which I accounted, were only some, but it made Guyana a failed state. I chose to contextualise my presentation to the restoration of the 'Rule of Law'.

4.17 p.m.

The APNU/AFC Government has accomplished a lot in three years. To begin to remove the muck of narcotics trafficking, corruption, another serious offence and to clean our economy of dirty money that characterised those 23 years, we are preparing our economy to receive clean money from our oil and gas and 'green state' sectors, and, indeed, the entire economy,

Where the 'Rule of Law', and I wish to say this, is ensconce, this is to strive as investors recognise that Guyana is a place to do business. That Guyanese have seen change and wish us, the APNU/AFC Government, to continue on this path to the 'good life' for all Guyanese.

I reject this no-confidence motion of the Leader of the Opposition on behalf of the Guyanese people at home and abroad, and on behalf of this side of the House and myself and, thus, cannot support its passage.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Applause*] (4.18 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I believe this is a time when we can put the suspension. We will now take the suspension and we will return... I see some persons are moving at the back. Those persons will retain their seats until such time as the Speaker rises. They will await the departure of the Speaker from the Chamber before exiting.

[*Sitting suspended at 4.19 p.m.*]

[*Sitting resumed at 5.29 p.m.*]

Mr. Nandlall: (5.30 p.m.) Mr. Speaker, I am indeed privileged to be part of a history-making process in this House. This is the first time that we are gathered here in the National Assembly in independent Guyana to debate a no-confidence motion. I will concede at the beginning that this is something that is new to all of us. It has excited attention and it has raised expectations right across this country and, indeed, internationally. As responsible politicians, I thought at least that the Government would acquaint itself with how a no-confidence motion is debated and dealt with in the House. What we have heard so far is obviously a clear manifestation, demonstration and illustration that the Government is absolutely unprepared to debate this no-confidence motion.

It is not that there is not information available. Two weeks ago, there was a no-confidence motion debated in the House of Commons; less than a month ago, one in St. Vincent, right here in the Caribbean; and earlier this year, there was one done in the Lok Sabha in English. They could have followed that. They would have understood, prepare themselves and have an appreciation for the fact that a no-confidence motion has to do with defending their record, their performance and their policies in Government. It is not about standing there and saying how we have performed when we were in Government. We moved the motion and we have moved the motion on behalf of the people of this country to say to you over there that you have underperformed, you have breached your manifesto promises, and you have no policies and programmes to develop this country.

Rather than tell us what the programmes and policies are, tell us how they are going to develop this country, we are hearing about people faking marriages.

We heard about the spectacular nature of D'Urban Park. Imagine, the epitome of the vision of this Government. The high mark of their vision for the development of Guyana is D'Urban Park. That is what you have demonstrated today.

By coming and telling us what we have done in Government is clearly conceding that you are incapable and incompetent to defend your own record and your own policy. My fellow Guyanese at the back there, they came here to listen to this Government defend its record. They tried. They mobilised for one week, eight thousand strong to put in front of the Parliament to demonstrate their confidence in the Government and look at the number out there. It is less than 80. That by itself is a demonstration of the lack of confidence in this Government.

We do not have to wait for a vote necessarily. Half of the debate is already completed. Eight thousand of you have been reduced to 80. Fifty per cent of the speakers spoke already and not a single defence of any sensible nature of their policy. They should not wait for the vote. Do not wait for the vote. Do the dignified thing and resign by walking out of the Assembly. You will win the support and respect of the Guyanese people that way.

My learned Colleague, my elder Colleague, Cde. Teixeira, who is very experienced, far more experienced than me, spoke about the 'hard-ears' nature of this Government. Today, again, they are demonstrating it. After the 2015 fluke, we went to the elections in 2016 and they were beaten. We went to it in 2018 and they were beaten even more. One of them will vote and we will go in 2019 or 2020 and they will be beaten again. Why? The people of this country have given you a fair chance. We have left you a Treasury of money; we have left you sound macro policies; we have left you a healthy economy; we have put Guyana on the world map and look at what you have done? You have squandered it out absolutely.

Politicians go to the electorate and they make promises. They promise that they will implement policies, they will promulgate programmes and they are elected on that basis. **[An Hon.**

Member: For five years.] Yes, for five years. They want to parasite off for a next two years, never mind the people have lost confidence. They want their full five years. You will go

after five years? Do we have that arrangement that you will leave after those five years? Do we have that arrangement with them, Mr. Speaker?

They went to the electorate with a manifesto – this document. This document contains a host of promises, policies and programmes. When one reads it, it is very impressive. Some of the people of Guyana were impressed and they voted. Let us give you the benefit of that, they voted. Forget the elections petition for the time being. They voted. Let us see what they voted for. Let us deal with the internal arrangement – what they promised the people. They said that they were going to have this national unity partnership and that they were going to have a dispute mechanism that they will use to resolve disputes within the APNU/AFC. This is what it states:

“In keeping with parties’ commitment to accountability and transparency, this Coalition will be adjudicated by a three (3)-member Commission mutually agreed upon and appointed by the participating groups. The Commission will comprise:

Chairman - Mutually agreed independent individual

AFC - Non-member executive of the AFC

APNU - Non-member Executive of the APNU.”

Where is this Commission? They have even lied to themselves. They have not delivered a promise to their own selves. What do you expect they will do to the people of this country? I want the people of Guyana to understand because I want to refresh their memories of what they were promised, how they were misled and how they were fooled by this Government.

They said that they will give the Prime Minister the following functions and responsibilities:

“Domestic Affairs and the Chairing of Cabinet.

Recommending Ministerial appointments and providing organisational structures of Ministries for the approval of the President.”

Nothing like that is happening.

“Appointing Heads of Agencies and non-constitutional commissions, subject to the required and agreed democratic mechanisms of consultation and appointments.”

Nothing like that has happened.

“Domestic security.”

Nothing like that has happened. You have fooled the AFC in the partnership. You have not delivered your own promises to yourselves, so how will you deliver them to the Guyanese people.

Let us deal with what they call the “Foundations for development” a big part of the manifesto.

They said this, “An economy will be driven by the Private Sector, the State and Cooperatives”

My God, ask the Private Sector what role it has to play in this economy. What role is the Private Sector being offered in this economy? Nothing. So that is a major violation of the agreement.

“Personal Security: Less Crime...”

5.42 p.m.

“APNU+AFC will confront serious crimes (both blue and white collar), arrest the spread of organized gangs and improve public and personal safety...”

Where is that happening in Guyana? Every day, we have crime increasing. To add to that, you have the highest numbers of prison breaks recorded in the English-speaking Caribbean, over the last three years, taking place in Guyana. That is what you have. That is your record.

They said that they will offer Guyanese equal opportunities.

They said that the policies that they are implementing, they would take it to the Cabinet and ask the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) to prepare and provide an ethnic impact statement on Cabinet decisions. That is what they promised the people of this country. They promised that every policy of Cabinet would be sent to the ERC for them to do an ethnic impact assessment. We begged for any form of an economic impact assessment for Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo). They rejected that, and they are talking about every policy of theirs going to Cabinet. [Mr.

Jagdeo: Who write those things?] I do not know who wrote them. I really do not know.

They said that all areas in the hinterland, the new frontier, Lethem, *et cetera*, shall become Free Trade Economic Zones and shall immediately commence negotiations with the State and Federal

Government of Brazil to pave some road and we would have a hydroelectrical plant. Where are these projects? This is what you promised the people of this country.

This is what they said about our indigenous people: they said that the Coalition Government is proud of our indigenous people and that it would promote their rights, a multifaceted agenda and:

“Indigenous Peoples shall have the right to the protection, preservation and promulgation of their languages...”

And then the Hon. Member, Mr. Keith Scott, when the people asked for their land titles to be regularised, called them avaricious. There is no singular policy that you could point to, which is directed to impact positively on the Amerindian people, [Ms. Ally: Mr. Jagdeo said so already; he talked about that.] It is your performance that we have to review. So, we have to say it a million times if you have not done it.

So, I come closer to home. This is what they promised about the National Assembly now. They said that they would implement the recommendations of the World Bank Fiduciary Oversight Studies and a study by Sir Michael Davies. Where is the implementation, Mr. Clerk? Mr. Clerk, sorry to put you on the spot.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, there is sorrow in what you said. Leave the Clerk out of it.

Mr. Nandlall: I appreciate that, Sir. They said that they would establish fully staffed and equipped offices in Public Building for all parliamentary parties. That is what they promised. This thing is a joke. That is why you could only speak about the People’s Progressive Party (PPP) performance and fabricate stories. Speak about your Manifesto. This is what you promised the people of Guyana.

Let us go on. They said that they would advocate diaspora representation in the Parliament. They went, and they collected moneys overseas from the diaspora and they showed them this one line. It was obtaining money by false pretence. Where is the seat for the diaspora? My Friend over there, look at where he is seated. He is from the diaspora. He is supposed to be here. Then, *to rub salt in the wound*, they demolished the remigrant scheme, the one that the PPP had while in office.

Then, they said this: they would repeal and recall legislation to enshrine independence of the Parliament. Where is that legislation? Where is even the draft? [Mr. Williams: Which Manifesto are you reading?] This is the APNU/AFC Manifesto. They do not even know what they promised. [Interruption]

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

They moved across to the judiciary. They said that they would target the judicial system to ensure that it continues to process and starts to deal with backlog of cases in a timely manner. Where are the measures that they are talking about? None.

They said they would address the delays in the conferment of appointment of members of the judiciary. The Judicial Service Commission (JSC), over the past three years, has been more non-functional than functional. Right now, it has not been functioning for one year and this is the promise that they made to the people. They said this: “rationalise the position of the Chief Justice and Chancellor of the Judiciary”. That is what they promised. Were the positions rationalised? Do we have a substantive Chief Justice? Do we have a substantive Chancellor? No. It is another breached promise.

They said that they would reform and modernise the Deeds Registry. Not a single measure has been implemented. [Mr. Williams: Inaudible] You can say what you want. I am talking to the people who are living the reality. You are dreaming.

They said that they would review the system of penalties and fines currently on the statute books. We have to do it here. Which Bill came here to reform penalties and fines? [Mr. Williams: None.] Exactly. There was none.

There is a good governance action plan that they are speaking about. Hear what they said. The first one: adhere to the doctrine of the separation of powers under our Constitution. I walked with two judgements. Very early in the Administration, Euclin Gomes and the Attorney General, judgement of Ian Chang, granted on the 24th day of June, 2015, just a month after they took office.

“It is by consent ordered...”

The Attorney General is the party here, so it means that he consented.

“I have declared that a letter dated the 28th May, 2015, directed to the Secretary of the Public Service Commission, a Commission established by the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, by Ms. Simona Broomes, a Minister and Member of the Executive, advising that all interviews and meetings of the Commission are to cease forthwith until further (sic) as instructed by His Excellency, the President, David Arthur Granger’s notice, is in violation of Article 226 of the Constitution and is unlawful, null, void and of no legal effect.”

Here is a Minister of the Government, after less than a month in Government, directing the Public Service Commission not to promote public officers because the President said so.

We have another one, where Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon, [Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Hon. Member, put it right.] Yes, of course. You are deeply honourable to me. Rajendra Jaigobin, another citizen, approached the court and got the court to declare that Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon’s letter to the Police Service Commission, upon direction of the His Excellency the President, to halt promotion in the Police Force, is unlawful, null, void and of no effect. This is Chief Justice Roxanne George. This has epitomised the approach of the Government when it comes to separation of power.

They speak about no person being discriminated against. That is a joke. That is what you promised the people of this country. I listened to the Hon. Member, my Hon. Colleague, Mdm. Volda Lawrence’s front page statement three weeks ago. The Hon. Member is still looking for a doctor who is People National Congress (PNC) and who speaks Spanish and Portuguese. I do not know whether the Hon. Member found the doctor, but she was looking for a doctor to hire. The sick people of our country have to wait on a Portuguese trained and Spanish speaking doctor, who also must have a palm tree card. The sick must wait in the hospital until that person is recruited and that is equality. That is what they are promising the people of this country.

They said that they would establish bipartisan committee of the future to advise and guide the policies and programmes of Parliament. Where is that committee? They said that they would encourage accessibility of information to members of the public by an enactment of a freedom of information law. Well, we enacted the law, but they dismissed the Commissioner last week. They dismissed the Commissioner in open Parliament this year.

Imagine, you have forgotten that this is what you promised. I come to the favourite topic - constitutional reform. It states, in the Cummingsburg Accord, that the APNU/AFC is committed to establishment of a Constitutional Reform Committee with a mandate to complete consultations, draft amendments and present same to the National Assembly for approval within nine months. That is what they told the people of Guyana. Four years and now they are trying to get the committee to meet, so that the Prime Minister could sound good for his budget speech. That is what they are trying to do. That is their record on constitutional reform. As a major platform promise to the people of this country, they said that they would reform the Constitution within nine months. The people are listening to me. They heard when you made these promises. Nine months you said. Four years have passed, and you have not been able to even finish the work of the committee.

They said that a permanent constitutional court of three judges would be established. This is *Nancy story*. Do you see why they have to talk about what PPP did? It is because they have done nothing, Imagine, they are calling their own Manifesto a bogus. This was printed from the PNC's website.
[**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** We have the real thing.] You have the real thing.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you have five minutes remaining.

Mr. Nandlall: Youth policy: Let us see what they have done to the young people of this country - what they promised them and where they are now. They promised them jobs; they promised them meals; they promised them lunch in schools; they promised them youth conferences every year; they promised them university reform with interactions with other universities; they promised 2,000 jobs to young people in each administrative region. And when the President was asked on television about jobs for young people, he said, "Look at the Stabroek Market, the plantain chip and cook-up rice businesses are thriving."

5.57 p.m.

[**Mr. Williams:** What is wrong with that?] Nothing is wrong with that. Tell that to the young people. I am glad you are saying that nothing is wrong with that. The Attorney General (AG) is confirming that when you send your children to the University of Guyana (UG) and they graduate, you must send them to sell cook-up rice and plantain chips. That is their policy. I can continue. It is 100 pages of lies. It is 100 pages of undelivered promises.

Again, the Hon. Member, the Attorney General, is speaking about the rule of law. As I was running through my papers last night, I found the attempt to compulsory acquire two plots of land next to the Attorney General's Chamber. It is private property, one of which belongs to a former People's National Congress/Reform (PNC/R) member. [Mr. Williams: What is it that you say about that?] Look, it is here in the newspapers. "Attorney General attempts to compulsory acquire land, Carmichael Street" [Mr. Williams: What is wrong with that?] There is nothing wrong with that, my Friend. That is the rule of law. I do not want to go back to the law school that he had promised the nation. We do not want to go back to that.

He was speaking about judicial conduct. When we do not understand our own Constitution, it is a problem.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you have two minutes remaining.

Mr. Nandlall: Yes, Mr. Speaker. This is what the Constitution states:

"127. (1) The Chancellor and the Chief Justice shall be appointed by the President acting after obtaining the agreement of the Leader of the Opposition."

The President cannot impose, as he did with the Guyana Elections (GECOM) Chairman, unlawfully. There must be two appointees by agreement with the Leader of the Opposition. There must be an agreement. You have not been pursuing that. That is what you had promised the people of this country.

We have already put out there the basis of our no-confidence motion. We have put it in the form of public advertisement. We have spoken about 30,000 jobs. We have spoken about decline in productivity. We have spoken about the economic stagnation. We have spoken about corruption. We have spoken about the taxes that they have imposed on the backs of the people. We have spoken about the closure of the sugar estates. We have spoken about how they have destroyed the rice industry. What are they answering? [Mr. Adams: You had your time.] Why do you not pay your light bill? Listen to them. They have not answered the questions. They have not answered the no-confidence motion. They have not defended their programmes and policies. Hon. Members, we are all patriots and we all want to serve our people, but you have been given an

opportunity and you have failed. So, I invite you to resign respectfully or else we will vote you out later.

Thank you very much. [*Applause*] (6.00 p.m.)

Vice-President and Minister of Public Security [Mr. Ramjattan] (6.00 p.m.): I have been listening very attentively and, quite frankly, that might be my response. You are learning nothing. It is one of the most dismal performances I have seen from a collective over there. It is the most scattered and disaggregated set of argumentations that anybody anywhere in the world could hear. They jumped from one thing, went to the next and mentioned about 30 things in 30 minutes. That is not how you present a no-confidence motion.

Let me indicate, quite frankly, that I thought we would have gotten a little lecture from the Hon. Member, who spoke last, when he said that he got the no-confidence motion that he saw in some island, the *Lok Sabha* and so on. What he did was exactly the opposite of what he saw and he comes here to indicate that we have it all wrong in our defense. Let me say this: the defense of a no-confidence motion will be at the vote just now. That is the defense. So, you could go on and on. You can always talk about how many people were given judgements by Justice George and whatever. That is okay.

Hon. Member, when you were quoting your cases there just now, you were vindicating that we have the rule of law. If the Executive branch does something wrong, one can go to a court of law. Do not ever feel that in a democracy, you would not have people who would be grieved and who would go to the courts to get their judgement. That is what is happening. We learned that at law school, but, you know, he is going to quote two cases and say this is it. The discussion here is obviously just what it is, to show the relevance of the PPP, especially the mover of the motion, at this point in time.

I thought that, by this time, we would have had the name of their Presidential Candidate and when we had gotten that Presidential Candidate named, we would have seen him moving out. It is obvious that he must make space for the new one, but he wants to be the only dinosaur that survives. What are you really doing there, Hon. Member? Do you not want to give any bright youngster a chance? You are behaving like a banyan tree. Nothing must grow underneath you. That is what this is all about.

What is very striking is that some of the top candidates that are well loved by that Party did not even speak. I notice that Dr. Vindhya Persaud and Dr. Frank Anthony did not speak and the very popular, Mr. Lumumba, did not get to speak; none of the *Jaganites* spoke. I want to indicate that what we have here is a lot of polarising talk. There have been insinuations and innuendos from almost every Hon. Member who have spoken across the floor, who have indicated that they want ethnic audits. They want all manner of things to the extent that this Government is now being accused of being a totally one-race Government. That is what it is; it is being more polarised.

That Party over there and the Members that constitute it have been saying a lot of things as to what would have happened today. People must not come to Georgetown. The security of Georgetown will be in disarray and all of that. They were indicating that people must not come and shop. That is hysteria, fearmongering, and provocation. It was an ordinary day. People came, just as the sugar workers came, protested, had their business done with freedom of expression and assembly exercised and enjoyed. That is what we are going to do in this country. That is the rule of law we are talking about. We are not going to allow people to get distressed by whatever nonsense those over there want to speak and bring on this dirty kind of politics that is polarising, racialising, and radicalising. No! We want a situation whereby we can have disagreements and debates, robust debates at that, but do not step across that line in the sand, as you are doing.

Here is what Hon. Ms. Gail Teixeira had to say. This Hon. Member...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I am not trying to help you because perhaps you... but I should. It is Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira.

Mr. Ramjattan: This Hon. Member; t-h-i-s. She said that we knocked people off boards and the boards are now 62% of one ethnicity. What are you getting at there, Hon. Member? What are you getting at? There are many times when the Members of the Opposition are asked to select their candidates to boards and not one of them wants to be on any board. [Mr. Dharamlall: Go

in the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and in the Guyana Defence Force (GDF).] Yes, and they had 23 years of ensuring that more of one ethnic group entered the Guyana Defence Force, Guyana Police Force, and the public service. Did you do anything successful there? You now come as if this is the first time that those are the kinds of soldiers, police, public servants and teachers that we have. This is wholly wrong because it is not going to take us places.

I want to tell you that we are not clueless. We are not without vision. We are here and were elected for five years. You were elected to be over there for five years and that is only in the first instance. Please, do not juxtapose the fact that you did well in the Local Government Elections (LGEs) to mean that we will do badly in the next General and Regional Elections. You had better start getting your act together, please.

A least we allowed Local Government Elections twice in one term. You allowed it once in 23 years. Is that not a shameful thing? That is one aspect of the things we have done that people will be proud of - local democracy. We have ensured that there is a Public Procurement Commission (PPC) now that can be critical of us. Why did you not establish it? [Ms. Teixeira: That is because *[Inaudible]* You did not. Yes, we wanted it; I wanted it, but you did not do it. Now, we have it and it has made some rulings against us, you emphasise that. What is worse? Was it when there was no Public Procurement Commission? Only Cabinet dealt with it and approved it and corruption happened.

We had a stocktaking just after Elections. A number of people, all qualified accountants with Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCAs) from England and other places, did a number of audits. What did these audits prove? It proved that corruption was extraordinarily high. There is a Public Procurement Commission; there were Local Government Elections. We did a stocktaking and whole set of wrongdoings were seen. That is important. [Mr. Seeraj: Talk about crime.] I will come to crime just now. It is important then that people do not feel that we have done nothing. We are learning from every one of the audit reports. As a matter of fact, some that had criminalities were sent to the Guyana Police Force and we have some of them over there being charged as a result.

I want to say something on that because the impression being given is that Ramjattan is the one who is initiating all these things. It is not me. We indicated that we wanted some audits done, the audits then reflected certain things and we sent it to the Guyana Police Force. Even when we sent it to the Guyana Police Force, we wanted special advice, so we got an officer from Scotland to come, Mr. Sittlington. When he came, he advised, and they are saying that we are now directing the man.

6.12 p.m.

This Government will not direct anybody. It will have a hands-off position. A special legal adviser and the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) will prosecute. We will allow the investigators to go where the cases take them and that is what has happened. That is what you call the rule of law. So, when people are talking about this and that, we must especially understand that there has to be a separation in relation to these matters. Our Constitution provides for it and we are ensuring that that happens.

So, you can talk aplenty, but the trouble is that we are enforcing that which the Constitution has provided for. [An. Hon. Member: Talk about crime.] If you want to talk about crime, let me tell you that, immediately after we came into Government, we ensured that the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) was established here. We ensured that the British Security Specialist came here which was for four million pounds or whatever it was, and that person has written a brand-new report. A number of things in that report are being implemented today.

So, do not tell me that we are not doing anything. It has been realised, in the drug trafficking reports, that we have done very well, and we are getting far better reports such as the trafficking in persons (TIP) report. Do you know where the PPP had us? They had us at tier three. We have now gone to the highest tier, which is tier one, and you are telling us about security. Our relationship with the International Crime Police Organization (INTERPOL) has improved and our relationship with almost all of the police forces in the Caribbean has improved to the extent that, today, we do not have as many piracy attacks on the Corentyne Coast as we use to. Almost every week, whilst the PPP was in Government, there was piracy taking place. We have smashed that, and it is because of the fact that we are collaborating internationally with the Surinamese and with so many others and also asking the fishermen to give us information. They have confidence in this Government. They are giving us the information to the extent that piracy is literally negligible today. Full confidence. I want the other side to understand that.

When it comes even to the rates of crime, they do not want to believe it. We have had a reconfiguration of the police leadership which involves a totally new set of arrangements for strategic management, human resource management and a number of other things. The recruitment has to be better, but we are still going to have our problems because of the fact that we have a society, too, that feels, it is a norm to do wrong things. And, I rather suspect it has to do with that generation of 23 years in which it really grew badly. When you can have 'big' people doing

wickedness, as the Audit Report stated, what do you expect? You expect wrong doings from the general smaller population, but we are going to ensure that, with all the recommendations we have, and also all the strategic decisions that we have to make, we are going to get it done.

We have moved now to 'big ones' in the 'narco' trade by arranging that they be caught, and we are also now going after the big hotels. You, on the other side, did not want to do that. You had Roger Khan running around the place saying he supported your Government. Look at you. We had people from gangs saying that they supported the then Government. As a matter of fact, certain people in the Government said, yes, we are getting the support of people to take care of criminals. Do you remember the period from 2001 to 2008? I was there, too, and I knew the inside story. You said someone will take care of it so let it be taken care of by that person. **[Mr. Charlie:**

Security is needed.] Security is on a need to know basis. It is important that we have that. Mr. Cornel Damon wants to know the statistics. He did not want to listen to me on the last occasion.

[Interruption]

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

In 2012, we had 139 murders during the course of that year; in 2013, it was 155; in 2014, it was 149; in 2015, it was 100. **[An. Hon. Member:** You said that already.] Let the record be repeated. Do you not want it to be repeated? In 2016, it was 142; in 2017, it was 115; and we have not gotten to 100 up to now in 2018. Do you know what is the murder rate in Trinidad? It is 517. It is 1,600. When you do the population comparison, in Trinidad, it is almost 38 per 100,000; in Jamaica, it is 56 per 100,000; in Guyana, it is 15 per 100,000; and in Barbados, it is 11 per 100,000. We have the statistics here. It all comes from an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Report called *Homicide Monitor*, but people are not reporting it. It is not a good thing to say it because 15 per 100,000 is still 15 too many, but that is what it is.

In a society, a geo-political space, as I mentioned, the crime rates are higher than even Yemen, Syria, where there are war zones. That is what the articles have been saying. In Venezuela, the murder rate is 120 per 100,000. There were 56,000 murders last year in Brazil. A geo-political space that has so much drugs and weaponry and that is what is causing it. So, if we can manage with all of our efforts all of that, we have to be doing doubly or triply well. Indeed, we have high rates of robberies, but as I indicated to my Commissioner, please put it out. We are going to be

transparent about it. You could not have gotten the statistics from the PPP's Administration. They used to hide it but [*inaudible*]. You could not have gotten it.

Let me say, also, that the Parliamentary Committee on security never operated. During the last Parliament, there was not one single meeting. We have had so many that myself, Mr. Gill and a number of other people went to police stations in the interior to make inspections. That is what we are doing, and it is important that people know that is what a transformation in the security sector is. It is when you would call on the Opposition to get on a plane because we were going to Lethem and Aishalton to see the police station. Only Mr. Gill came because the rest said it was too early – it was that 5.30 a.m. They were sleeping. That was it. And we had spent so much money to charter a plane to get to the interior. For what? It was to inspect and see whether the furniture and the radio system was okay. That is what we have been doing but they do not want to respect that. They want to say that every day, in the newspaper, there is crime. That is true. Although crime is reported in every day's newspaper, it is still on a reduction path; it is declining, and nobody can deny that when compared to the rest of the years.

We had some of the highest crime rates and robberies which totalled 1,531 in 2013; 1,449 in 2014; 1,237 in 2017; and 1,293 in 2016. We report more now because the people have confidence and they have nothing to be fearful of. Yes, people are reporting more. In those previous years, people were living scared of reporting.

That is the information we know about because they were scared but now it a free country. You could pick up the phone and call to say that you just got robbed at Stabroek Market. [Mr. Nandlall: Where are you calling?] Persons could call 911. At least we have a 911 number that works today. Have you ever had a 911 number that worked?

On that score, in relation to the security issue, we are getting a lot more areas, which were very dark, lighted up. That is important too.

More than that, in this security sector, we have a number of social programmes because we know what the root causes are. There has to be families that are functional, families that have young kids not wanting to go into that path and we are training over 1,200 at-risk youths in a variety of things. The IDB has given us couple hundred thousand US dollars to ensure that these kids have training, the ones that were identified in the 20 communities that I named during the Budget presentation.

They are learning a lot of things such as air conditioning repairs and refrigeration repairs. It is a combined effort including the Ministry of Social Protection and the Ministry of Education. It is working, because as soon as they come off, they get jobs. This year alone, over 700 of them who were trained from a variety of training programmes, have become independent, whether it be cake making or repairmen. They are working. They are all working.

When they are over there saying a lot about jobs and more jobs, they must know what they are talking about. We, in this Government, are moving at a pace. We might not have the big fancy firms that would come into the country...because they brought some. They brought Vitarna but how much jobs did they create? They brought Baishanlin International Forestry Development. Did they create any jobs? None of the big firms which they gave big lands to brought anything.

You have to understand, Mr. Speaker, that they love to talk, but we are doing. Let them talk. We are going to walk. That is what is going to take our country to a far and better place. They also talked about a number of things regarding corruption. I am a Member of the Cabinet. Wheresoever there is corruption, immediately some committee is formed. [Ms. Teixeira: *Inaudible*]

You could ask Mr. Rohee because that is what probably used to happen with him or ask Mr. Gajraj.

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member...

Mr. Ramjattan: I withdraw the two names, but the trouble is... [Ms. Teixeira: *inaudible*.]

Why are you calling my name? It is important...

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, we must refer to our fellow Members of Parliaments (MPs) as “honourable” whoever it is.

Mr. Ramjattan: Those Hon. Members across the floor probably just feel that they could say anything wildly. They do not want to say it outside here; they would never say it outside here because they know they have absolute privilege here. That is what they feel.

It is very much important that they appreciate that corruption is always going to be their bugbear. Yes, they knew it. I used to be there in the *belly of the beast* and we used to see it for ourselves.

When you start talking to them that this or that should not happen, the Hon. Member started the expulsion process. You must not speak anything ill of those who are doing the ill things otherwise you are expelled. That is what they are, the Stalinist, communist *et cetera*. That is what they are. Democratic centralism. It is especially important.

6.27 p.m.

I want to say in my final remarks that when we are talking here about having, what is called, harmony, we must have our disagreements on issues and matters of principles. We must robustly disagree with each other, but we must know when we should not cross the line. More and more, I feel that because of this polarising atmosphere that we have, that it is going to be taking advantage of with a no confidence motion, especially in the context when they are aware that they do not have the numbers but working on some magic they feel that somebody over here is going to vote with them. It is venturing into the dark, as it were, and hoping that they are going to get somebody from over here. They are not going to get anybody. People are very sensible, and they are hopeful. I do not know where that would take them.

We want in this country - I hope that we get some of it after the vote is taken, and they remain exactly where they are - some more mutual toleration. I want it to end on that note. We have to have lots more toleration of each other. The rivalries would be there, but the rivalries must not be subversive or create a subversion of our Constitution or our democracy. Otherwise, we are going to enter a very dangerous place. We must not get frustrated at the fact that yes, indeed, these are the things that are happening. Then measure it up with a lot of exaggerations, colour it up and all of that. We want not an extreme partisanship in this country. I must be frank about it, it is that what the Opposition is doing, trying to edge us there. That is wholly wrong. We must also, when we are getting so deeply divided, as responsible leaders in this House and outside of this House, make sure that we do not cross that line. We have to step back, otherwise, this will give way to mutual threats and democracy soon become very troubled by that, which is the guard way of our democracy, and then all are going to fall apart and collapse. That could be very dangerous.

The misinformation, the disinformation, the hysteria that we are getting from the Opposition, even through this none event of a no confidence motion, we must bring to a halt. It is important that we

know what the consequences could be. I want to say that we must ensure that we do not go that far.

Thank you very much. I want every Member to understand that this no confidence motion must not get the support from any of the Members on this side and with better reason, hopefully, we get some of you on that side.

Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

Bishop Edghill: Today could simply be described as a day of reckoning. The democratic process in Guyana is being deepened. As my honourable colleague said in the post independent period, in as much as our Constitution provides for it, it is the first time that this mechanism is being used here in the National Assembly. I would like to say from the onset, I rise in full support of the mover of this motion, the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Every one of us, all 65 of us who will vote in a while from now, will be judged by this nation, if we will stand for principles or we will hold on to perks. Every one of us will be judged, if we offer ourselves as service to the public, or we are interested in personal aggrandisement. Every one of us would be judged in the streets, because from today my honourable colleagues on the other side will have no excuse. Whenever they go out and they meet Guyanese who confront them with dissatisfactions they normally say, "It is not me, it is the other fellows in Cabinet." Now, tonight you have to say publicly what you have been telling people privately. This is a day of reckoning.

All of us are called upon to demonstrate our ability to present ourselves as distinguished and esteemed legislators, and not merely as persons who use the position of privilege for personal benefit. This motion is about the welfare of the people of Guyana.

I would like to respond to my honourable friend Mr. Ramjattan who just spoke about Members of this side who are trying to stir up ethnic hostilities. Let the nation know the last act I did before coming to the National Assembly today was to file a complaint with the Ethnic Relations Commissions about a member of the executive who was stirring up hostilities on his Facebook page, the Director of Youth and Sports. Yes, that is the last thing I did. The publication is there, and I am calling upon the executive. If it is a case where you are not stirring up racial hostilities,

then fire the gentleman and make a public statement. Until you do that, you do not have the moral authority to come here and talk about who is stirring up ethnic insecurities.

The Hon. Vice-President and Minister of Public Security spoke about the right to demonstrate. We on this side of the House have the intelligence of what were the plans. The only reason why we are having a sitting with some amount of decorum is because of the initiatives taken by this parliamentary Opposition. We are aware of the pressure that you are under even from the international community to behave in a certain way. We are aware of the responses you got in the communities when you went with your envelopes and blowing your horns and trying to mobilise the people and they said, “*We aint deh pun stupidity.*” We are aware that when the bus left Linden it was half full and it was supposed to be full. That is why you have an average of 80 people per region and you were looking for 8,000. That is why you are there. It is because of the proactive nature of responsible leaders in the parliamentary Opposition which will soon be called the Government.

I would want to tell the Members of this House and appeal to my colleagues, on the other side the reason, why the nation has asked us and signalled to us why they have no confidence in the Government. I want to talk about three things because I have limited time.

Number one, I want to talk about the issue of trust. The people no longer trust you because you do not ever tell them the truth. Let us talk about it. You raised your salaries, from June of 2015. You denied it at press conferences. It was only when this Opposition brought it to public notice, then you acknowledged, and we had to reveal the secret gazetting of it in September or October. You hide it from the people. In your hundred days plan, you promised them that you will raise their salaries - teachers, nurses, members of the disciplined forces.

The reason why the people do not trust you and they do not have confidence in you is because of your handling of the signing bonus. For more than one year this nation was kept in the dark with denials from the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of State, the President, himself, until documentation presented itself. Do you know what was worrying? I could understand that we never requested, we never received. It is a figment of Mr. Jagdeo’s imagination. The man who signed it, the last paragraph before his signature states that there shall be a signing bonus of US\$18 million. Even if you did not read the whole contract, at least you should have seen

that before you signed your name. That is why the people no longer have confidence in you, because they cannot trust your word.

They do not trust you anymore because of the kind of ill-conceived contracts and undertakings that were done by this Government.

The Hon. Member Mr. Joseph Harmon took 20 minutes out of his 30 minutes to talk about D'Urban Park. Do you know why? It is because that is their signal achievement. It is one of the most corrupted projects. Up until now, they cannot give to the Auditor General the documentation to account for \$500 million. That is why the people do not trust you. The people do not trust you, because they want to know how you entered into a contract with a bond on Sussex Street where a Minister of this Government and the landlord share a relationship by having activities in the same building. This was never advertised. That is why they do not trust you. They do not have confidence in you, because they want to know what is the arrangement that was under the table with ANSA McAL for sole sourcing of US\$605 million for the purchase of drugs at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation's. That is why they do not trust you. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I do not know if I should ask for the amplification to be lowered or whether I should ask you if you could reduce the level.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Speaker, I have to speak above the shouting that is in the chamber.

Mr. Speaker: I will deal with that. If you could do that, it will help. I believe it certainly will help me.

Bishop Edghill: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

6.42 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, if you find it difficult to do I will find some other way.

Bishop Edghill: The ANSA McAL contract Guy\$605 million... **[Ms. Ally:** You said US dollars.] If I said US dollars I withdraw it. I meant Guyana dollars. You do not have to make a big thing about it. It is public. It is part of a report that came to this National Assembly from the Public Procurement Commission.

The Hon. Vice President and Minister of Public Security spoke about the charges that are laid because of audits. Why did you not tell this National Assembly that the parliamentary Opposition had to go to the magistrate court and file criminal charges against sitting Ministers of the Government. The only reason why you are not standing charges is because you hid behind a non-processing process of the Department of Public Prosecutions (DPP) where the Attorney General said in a press conference that he directed it. Why did you not say that?

The people do not trust their word anymore. The first thing I want to establish is why the people do not have confidence in this Government is because of the lack of trust. They do not know if they could believe their word anymore. Last night I listened to a member of the executive in the person of the Prime Minister who was doing Facebook live and he was telling the nation that the parliamentary Opposition is trying to un-elect him because he is performing some of the functions of the President, whether he is in the country or out of the country, when even our letter to the Speaker when we asked that the Constitution be upheld, we outlined that the 33 seats will remain intact. All you have to do, it is to follow the constitutional provision. There was no attempt to reduce your numbers, so why do we not just simply be factual and truthful?

The second reason why people do not have confidence in the Government is because when people elect a Government, they put them there to look after their interest. The people are tuned off because when you got there, before you looked after the people's interest, you looked after your own interest. That is why the people are turned off. I would like to remind us, and I am reading article 13 of the Constitution:

“The principal objective of the political system of the State is to establish an inclusionary democracy by providing increasing opportunities for the participation of citizens, and their organisations in the management and decision-making processes of the State, with particular emphasis on those areas of decision-making that directly affect their well-being.”

People want to ensure that their welfare is taken care of. They have found that Government, since May 15, 2015, that has been taking away welfare from them. Thirty thousand jobs have been lost. A no confidence motion that we brought here tonight is for you to defend your record, reassuring to the nation that 30,000 jobs have been lost. You have taken away welfare from senior citizens; you have taken away the water subsidy and the electricity subsidy; you have put value added tax

(VAT) on water and electricity; you have taken away the cash grant from the children; you have taken away the concessions and all of the benefits from the small miners and. You have interrupted the livelihood of the foresters in Kwakwani, Ituni and the riverine area of Linden. You have interfered with the welfare of people. That is why wherever you go they would say that our welfare is not taken care of. While you have interfered with the welfare of people, you have taken care of yourselves. One of the first acts that you did when you went into office was to take care of yourselves.

The people are simply saying “We cannot keep these people there anymore, because they are just taking care of themselves.” The complaint that they used to tell the people in 2015 and in 2016, they cannot do certain things because Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) is sucking all the money. You are not giving money to GuySuCo, whether it is \$8 billion or \$12 billion so you are supposed to have another \$8 billion. You are collecting \$60 billion more in taxes. That is \$68 billion. You said the PPP/C used to steal \$28 billion through procurement fraud, so you are not thieving that, add all of that. Do you know how much money you are supposed to have to help the people of Guyana right now? It is more than \$100 billion, but rather than giving people more, you are taking more from people by putting more than 200 tax measures in place and you are displacing people’s ability to take care of themselves and their families. That is why they do not have confidence in you.

The third reason why people do not have confidence in this Government is because of its lack of vision. When people elect a government, they expect the Government to lead them, transform the nation, give them hope, do things to ensure that their families are secured. I have spoken, particularly knowing that this motion is being debated, tonight to a young man. For the purpose of this discussion I will call his name Sebastian. He worked for APNU in the last election. His photograph appeared in the newspapers with his wife at the celebration of the APNU. He no longer supports you and this is what he said:

“The budgets that are presented are flourishing on paper and it is stating that the country is blooming, but it is not in actuality the promised jobs for young people are still a promise that young people are waiting on;

decreases in scholarship for young people;

for the longest time, housing is saying that it does not have land, young people are going for land and they are not getting through with anything;

people are living like they are in prison in their own homes because of the rise of crime.”

It is the man who worked for the APNU. It is the man whose picture appeared on the front page of the paper in your celebration said he no longer has confidence in you because of these things. The sixth reason why he no longer has confidence.

“It is a sense of pressure in this country due to everything being stagnated only pushes a young family man like me to migrate for betterment”

The young man is saying that he has no confidence in this country. It is pushing me to migrate.

Seventhly.

“People were more financially strong before this Government took over than now.”

This is an actual fact. This is what Sebastian, one of your own supporters said. I believe that this is multiplied hundreds of times across the nation.

I listened to some of the speeches that were made and I had to conclude that the wise man Solomon was correct when he said in Ecclesiastes 5:5: “It is better not to make a promise than to make a promise and do not keep it.” It is based upon the promises that you made in this document when you walked around the country, that my colleagues have already read out. I would not take my time to do that. The people said, “Give them a chance”. The Hon. Member Ms. Catherine Hughes is on record of telling people “Give us a chance and if we do not perform, put us out.” The people are now saying that we are ready to put you out.

The nice fancy dressing up and the propaganda, the billboards that are appearing will not fool the people. There is a favorite quote. “You are whitened sepulchers... but inside are dead men’s bones.” The grave is nicely painted, but inside there is rotteness. The Scribes and the Pharisees were so described. Do you know why? They did not practise what they preached. The APNU/AFC is being judged tonight in this no confidence motion by the same standards you judged the PPP in the times passed. You told people that you are going to have transparency and accountability; you told people about the rule of law; you told people that they will have good governance. The people

have expectations and they are not having them. They are judging you and they said that they do not have confidence in you anymore. You are demanding of people to do things that you yourself are not prepared to do.

Earlier in the afternoon, we were told about the six radio stations that were given to Amerindian communities, but the speaker who said that did not get the drift. You took away \$700 million from village economies annually and you give them music to listen to. The people were being paid, 1,972. When you check the stipend times the year, it was \$700 million a year that was circulated in village economies. You took it out and you give them music to listen to. Left in the treasury with money from Norway, US\$10 plus million for Amerindian Land Titling and we were told during the budget that not one land titling was completed. How can the people have confidence in you?

When we think about the performance of the various Ministers, it is just a matter that gets people really worried. The Minister of Public Security is more interested in being legalistic about what time you must go home. I am not a person who advocates drinking and smoking, but young people have a right to recreation and entertainment. When there is a Minister who is more interested in legalism than their personal safety, they said we do not want such of a person around. When there is a Minister in an environment where we are developing an oil and gas sector, where every Guyanese should have a stake of it, comes to the National Assembly and said that if the Amerindians continue to get more land they should not benefit from the proceeds of oil and gas. The people said that they do not have confidence in that.

When there is the Minister of Legal Affairs with the performance that he is having and the things that he is doing, come December, he may have no staff left with him. Everyone is leaving his chambers. That is not private knowledge. It is now public knowledge. My honourable colleague has already written two letters.

When there are members of the executive, in the person of Minister Simona Charles-Broomes, who is coming to speak after me, writing to the Public Service Commission giving instructions and the Minister of State writing to the Police Service Commission, the people cannot have confidence in you. When there are members of the executive participating in taking moneys that are taxpayers' money and giving them to a company that they cannot account for and they did not

disclose upfront, publicly, hundreds of millions of US dollars, the people said they cannot have confidence in you. When there is a Minister of Public Health, who was removed from Public Health and turn Minister of Social Cohesion, cannot answer questions and tell the truth in the National Assembly about the transactions of the bond and all of the arrangement. Up until now, the hearing for that has not even started, the people saw that and they said that they cannot have confidence in this Government.

6.57 p.m.

Then there is the Minister of Public Infrastructure who is now facing an investigation at Special Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) because of the dealings of the new Demerara Harbour Bridge, with the feasibility studies. Do you believe that the people are going to have confidence in this Government, when the Minister of Communities has signed and put in place, by-laws to bring a parking meter contract to Guyana, to Georgetown, to put hardships on the people that the courts ruled illegal? How can they have confidence in a Government such as this? How can they have confidence?

I am saying to us, tonight, that when the Procurement Act of 2003 has been thrown out the window and it is no longer being followed at the regional level, ministerial level and at the national level, and sole sourcing is the thing of the day. Friends, families and cronies of this Government are getting their jobs. When that is happening and people are seeing it in broad daylight, how could they have confidence in the Government?

There are expenditure of \$285 million being given to an agency that is created and people who head and staff that agency are political types, who have been at the political hustling, who have participated in political debates, who have been part of the political struggles in this country, and they are saying that they are investigating the recovery of state assets.

When there are relatives of members of the Cabinet are being special prosecutors to prosecute Members of the Opposition, then you cannot have confidence in such a Government. When you have the relatives of Members of the executive conducting commissions of inquiry that have determined the fate and future of senior police officers in this country, people cannot have confidence in this Government.

I know what is going on. The people of Guyana know what is going on. I believe that there are reasonable people with consciences in this room. They might be afraid of the lash back; they might be afraid of what may happen, but tonight, as I said at the opening, it is a night of reckoning and it is a day of decision. Every one of us, when we walk out of this room and we go to the supermarket, the people are going to meet us. When we go to the villages, they will see us. That is why only 21% of the people of Linden came out to vote, four out of every five stayed home. Every week, there are two to three Ministers in Linden, running and going, but still the people are not responding, because they cannot trust you. You are not looking after their interest and you lack vision.

These are the issues that concern the Guyanese and it is with that in mind that we say, on behalf of the people of Guyana, we have no confidence in the Government of Guyana.

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. [*Applause*]

Minister within the Ministry of Natural Resources [Ms. Charles-Broomes]: From the outset, let me say that the Guyanese people have full confidence in the APNU/AFC Government. The world must know that it is the fake that is taking place over there. Before I go into my presentation, I have a lot of rebuttal which I will deal with, but let me just, for the record's sake, mention to the Hon. Member who belongs in Committee of Privilege, that the Petroleum Production Agreement was signed and lodged with the Deeds Registrar.

I will not take time to rebut the Hon. Member who was just before me, because he is not qualified to speak in this House about confidence. When we took office, and from the outset, let me make it very clear that the Opposition is putting up a game in saying, "talk about what you did." I would have expected that sitting here, I would have listened somebody saying from the Opposition, what you would have done in 23 years, but that is lacking in the debate.

I want to say that when this Government took office in 2015, roads had a problem, water had a problem, rice was a problem, health had a problem, education was a problem, miners were a problem, there were sugar and construction problems. Every sector in this country was problems. Do not let me talk about the social ills in this country. When we took office, may I remind this House that under this Government, and the same Minister Lawrence, talking about health, the nurses, who are looking after our patients, failed the exam. The education system, 15% pass rate,

no roads in this country. We took office and people were dipping in drains to bathe and cook, right in Sophia. When we went to Sophia, when a baby was thrown out through the window, people were literally living in faeces. Right in this city, you go to Albouystown, it is flooded. Mr. Speaker, from the outset, what we have done in which you will hear in a moment, let me tell you, it was a lot to be done in three years.

I have lived to see that Mahdia is transformed. Port Kaituma is transformed; Matthews Ridge is transformed; Kitty/Georgetown is transformed; Bartica is transformed. The list goes on and on. Let me tell you about my hometown Bartica. The Hon. Member, Leader of the Opposition, said that we are talking about towns. Every election campaign which the PPP had, when it hit Bartica, said that it would have made Bartica a town, if it had won. It is at every election campaign. At Christmas time, you could have put your pot to the fire, you had no lights, you had no water and you had no health care. Our women in Bartica, pregnant and ready to give birth at 1.00 a.m., in a speedboat, lashing the waves, from Bartica to Parika. How could you come into this House to talk about Bartica? How could you come to say to this nation that you are coming with a motion of no confidence motion? I am happy for this motion, because it shows me that our supporters are of full confidence and we are going to push the full confidence and push you back into 2020.

You come to this House to boast about local government elections, something that you have robbed us of. I am seeing from Bartica to Georgetown, and everywhere, the Sobers and the *Dobers*, all over the place. How could you talk about no confidence?

Street lights, people are walking on the streets in the city, you cannot see where you are going. I thought it was only in the interior you had to get a torchlight, but right in the city, the capital of Georgetown. It is under this Government, even Kitty, that they claimed is a stronghold, the other day, "let there be lights" as the Bible states, and Guyana is full of lights. This Government did that.

You talked about the sugar workers. When we took office, and I visited Enmore Sugar Estate, I said it on camera, where we saw men who were crying. I said what the Enmore Martyrs fought for, where it is. The boilers breakdown. Men were going to a boiler in pants and shirt. When I saw what the People's Progressive Party (PPP) did to the sugar workers, and their conditions of work, it was painful to bear. It was under the PPP Government that the Minister stopped, at the Labour Department, inspection of workplace. All over this country, workers strike, from every sector. It

is under this Government that the sugar workers and sugar factories will be respected in this country, because it is not just about sugar workers, but all Guyanese.

The Hon. Member Nandlall and Hon. Member Bishop Edghill spoke about Charles-Broomes writing a letter to say that we do not employ the people. When we took office, we are in office, and people were coming left, right and centre with appointment, appointing this person here and there. It was chaos. The workers there said listened, how did this person get appointed? The whole place was in chaos. I did write to ask if they can just put it on hold. I did not commit a crime. I did not come into work with blood on my hands. I came with clean hands. With clean hands, I wrote the letter. The records speak for itself. It is this Government which has now workers not being handpicked, going through the Public Service Commission and people can now apply and based on qualifications... Even that area is a mess. Who is not qualified getting more money than who has the qualification. It is chaos in the country. That is what we inherited. That is a fact. We have been working day and night. Yes, our supporters cannot imagine... It was so bad that the public buildings were left there to rot or to sell to a friend and family. Even the Government buildings were left. There was no office space for Ministers. It was a mess. This Government has been demonstrating to this country about governance and leadership. In every area, this Government has been working.

The Hon. Member talked about land for young people. It is this Government that put a policy that young people, 18 years, can own a house lot. The PPP had it that a person had to be 21 years plus a person had to have children, four children. This Government put a policy in place so that a young girl or boy at university can own his or her own homes. By the way, we are not moving into what you call housing. We are moving into communities, Hon. Member Dharamlall. We want to place you in a community, Hon. Member, where you will be safe and have a place to play.

The Member spoke about mining and miners. We took office and I talked about all the *bullyism* and all the “isms”, and this Government immediately moved to addressing it. What we have inherited was a sector full of fear and full of corruption. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition spoke of the Lindo Creek massacre as if it was a normal thing, as if it was just as Liliendaal or Bartica. May I remind Guyanese, and the world, that at Lindo Creek, when that news got to the dredge owner, it was a mysterious call, “we heard that some men died”.

7.12 p.m.

They were beaten with hammers in their heads, it was reported in the press. There was a woman who was four months pregnant. Do you know what? It was alleged, and Mr. Arokium said that it was not done by the *Fineman* gang, but it was done by the Joint Services. He further went on to say that it was not a place that people could get into because the security there was so tight. Mr. Speaker, if you were a miner, to understand that people were in their camps working for their daily bread and had they seen persons who they thought would have protected them that they would have had to face, murdered them, slaughtered, and burnt them. That was not the end of the fear of miners, not even their bones could be identified. They buried the bones of the people's loved ones without even telling them. The family begged, "Just show me which bone is my husband's. I want to see my father one more time, even if it is his bones." They denied miners that and plunged the fear into our miners.

There will be no *Syndicato*, *Baracato* or no *cato* under this Government – nothing like that. It cannot happen, not under the watch of the APNU/AFC Government. That has put a sense of pride and peace into our miners, that we have moved to the extent that the Hon. Mr. David Patterson talked about a dream come through. We have already done the evaluation and all the testing for the bridge at the Puruni River. Who really knows about these feasibility studies? The Hon. Member, Ms. Gail Teixeira is now talking about mining and I want to know where this Member was. Does this Member really know where is Puruni? You could take some notes Hon. Member, Mr. Nigel Dharamlall, because you do not know what I am speaking about here. Just calm yourself down and you will learn. To have a bridge cut there and the type of roads that this Government is putting in, for miners that is a dream come through. To give regular and normal small miners an opportunity to own thousands of acres of lands – thousands of acres that they could own by themselves, and support them to manage it, that is where we are taking a sector.

We are moving from beyond the corruption which will take some time, into the vision. The vision that we are talking about is a green extractive sector. **[Mr. Dharamlall: *[Inaudible]*]**

Hon. Mr. Nigel Dharamlall, do not allow me to remind you that you cannot identify your properties in the mining sector, so relax yourself and leave Broomes alone. I will take you and show you, since you need my help. We came here, and it is as if to paint a picture to Guyanese and the world that we have to debate the Opposition coming based on the Leader of Opposition to say that, Dora,

the explorer - we are exploring, if somebody on this side of the House will vote with you. Hon. Members, something is definitely wrong. I think you all should take a test. To treat Guyanese and put Guyana in the way we came from 23 years, no Government of this land should ever be allowed when people cannot speak. Hon. Minister, Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, spoke about the situation with trafficking. It is a real situation with the same Indigenous girls too, when the Minister of Amerindian Affairs was smiling and the children were out there being taken away from their families. What a label it was upon our nation with trafficking. Children left their homes and never returned. They were trafficked and... [*Inaudible*], and you all were in Georgetown driving your Prados and going to the dentist to have dental care. How dare you all come to tell us that?

This Government has made every effort and continues to protect. That is a national issue and it is a matter that you all slept on and now you are coming to tell us about no-confidence motion. Are we serious in serving this country or are we just playing politics to get some people on a hype on the 21st December - Christmas? The Hon. Ms. Pauline Sukhai, was the Minister of Amerindian Affairs when the miners spoke and beat the woman on the road with the baby and she came to this House to talk about small miners. Where was the Hon. Minister Ms. Pauline Sukhai at that time when the people at Marudi Mountain? Were you at the dentist? How dare you come now to talk and to lecture persons? Hon. Member, you are making no sense. Hon. Member, this Member here has never...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, this is a motion that we are debating, confidence or not in the Government. I believe that, when we move from that to begin to identify Hon. Members, who at the time were doing what they were doing, were doing it because in their idea it was the best, we should not identify Members. It then becomes personal. I do not believe that the purpose of the debate is to encourage personal interventions. I am appealing to all Members to let us avoid the possibility of Members speaking sharply to each other across the aisle. Please proceed.

Ms. Charles-Broomes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I only felt because I was identified. We heard about the Hon. Minister, health and procurement. These are strange words - the word procurement. As if the Peoples Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) in their time... The Hon. Minister of Public Health mentioned it even in her Budget 2019 presentation that they have put in system, for the first time, a Procurement Section at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC). All those were milking cows. We have had business people in this country who were paid 100% and never

delivered a painkiller. People were allowed to bring drugs into this country to give our people that did not meet the standards. How could we then come here and profess about this poor health, poor Guyanese and how we need to listen to our poor supporters. Well, I have news for you. Only this afternoon I was listening to the supporters and they said that the PPP/C has no place in Guyana.

Regardless of what the Hon. Member is saying, the point I am making is that the country has full confidence in the APNU/AFC Government. The things that you have listed to come before this House, to come to this Government with of no-confidence, are all the things that we are fighting to clean up, which we have inherited from you. But the people understand the trick. The trick is that you want to give people the opinion, according to the Hon. Member Khemraj Ramjattan, all the ills that you have done to place them into our laps. Well, oh no, we are happy for this no-confidence motion because, tonight, I want to put it in the record that I stand firm against any motion of no-confidence against this Government.

I want to speak for my Colleagues who, because of time, do not have the mike. All of us on this side of the Government stand in full confidence. I said before that we are mobilised. I said before to not take us for granted as a coalition Government. According to the Chief Whip, "Bring it on." This Government in every area, the Hon. Member. Lt. Col. Ret'd Harmon spoke about it and people think it was a joke, we had lost national pride. People were ashamed to identify themselves. If one was travelling on a plane and was asked, "Where are you from? They would say, "I am from South America, Bartica". The plane would land, and the people would not know where they are from. They were ashamed. Now, we can go all over, to Harvard, Chile, Italy and all over the world and people are saying to us that this is a Government with full respect.

The Hon. Member spoke about how within the sector there were new jobs. We have mentioned even in the presentation about the Mahogany Company. We have talked about the new First Bauxite Corporation (FBX) that is on stream and will be creating jobs. How can you talk about jobs? Where were these jobs.

Education - I come from the country. In Bartica, every person in Bartica, for the past decade, had to abandon their homes and move to Georgetown so their children could be educated in the city. The children who were born in Bartica, returned as strangers. There was no education; no proper secondary and primary education. Everything was focused and centred around Georgetown and

that was failing. What could you come to say? The record shows for itself. The Minister of Education outlined in her budget presentation the improvement that we have made in Bartica. We will continue to push those forward. I already mentioned to you Hon. Member, Mr Nigel Dharamlall, that I am not the ambassador, so do not draw your guns.

I am making a very important point to the Opposition to say that I will agree that we are in office, we are fixing it and we will correct it. I will encourage and advise you to not lose hope. I know that an Opposition seat for you for more than 20 years is not nice, and you are getting frustrated. We encourage you to come and work with us and let us build this country. When the time comes, and we go back to the polls in 2020, the people will speak. The people will make their voices heard, so you will have a longer time in Opposition. It is better for us to come together, if we really have this country at heart.

In full confidence tonight, I invite the Opposition to join us. I know many of you may say that there might not be enough seats over here, but we will accommodate you. We will do something to take you in. We said to you that there are boards, you have your skills and ideas, we respect all the good aspects of you Hon. Members but come with us and work to build this nation.

For those whose hands are on fire, they will not be able to shake. I am sorry, but they have to be shaken off. For those who have clean hands, let us hold hands, build Guyana, move this country forward and make it the place that we all want it to be.

In closing, the people have full confidence in us. It is fake news that you came and say that the people said. The people said that they never told you anything, they do not know you. The people said that they cannot identify you. They do not know you because you were lost. Allow us to introduce you and have Guyanese people know you, by you working with us. Tonight, I want to put it on the records that I stand against the no-confidence motion.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is not even worth a vote. I think that at this time of the debate, the Opposition should withdraw and let us go at this time of the festive season with love, unity, peace, joy, happiness and goodwill in the confident Government APNU/AFC. [*Applause*] (7.24 p.m.)

Mr. Ali (7.26 p.m.): Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight to discuss a very important and serious issue. No amount of noise, shouting, hitting the desk or the grandstanding that we do here, would change the fact of what people think about us out there.

7. 27 p.m.

It is very important for me to correct some inaccuracies. Let me say this, I am hearing Members of the Government talking about being in Government for three and a half years. This is incorrect. Since independence, this Government has been in place for 31½ years, and the People's Progressive Party/Civic Government has been in Government for 22 years. As a matter of fact, this Government has been in office nine and a half years more than the People's Progressive Party Civic. That is a first fact. *[Interruption]*

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

Secondly, my Colleagues on this side would have all pointed out that the no-confidence motion is part of our Constitution and it is catered for in the democratic make-up of our country. Let me remind this honourable House that the People's progressive Party/Civic has an election petition case that has still not been heard. Had that case been heard, I am confident that we would have been back at election a long time ago - another fact. It is also important for us to understand context when we speak about 23 years. One would recall that in 1992, we lost almost one and a half years with political violence and political disturbance. Between 1998 - 2003, we lost two years of our term when we had the Herdmanston Accord. Again, we had two more years of disturbance on the streets. These are facts that we cannot ignore. Then we had the politically inspired violence after 2001. Then, of course, we had the 'slow fire' and 'more fire' campaigns. These are all events that caused the Guyanese people and Guyana severe damage to our image. So, when one talks about the image of Guyana and the image of Guyanese, these are events that were sponsored by you that damaged the image of Guyana and Guyanese.

When we speak tonight, we are speaking to the thousands of sugar workers out there, the thousands of rice farmers; we are speaking to the young people; the public servants; the Amerindians and Disciplinary Forces. Tonight, I ask my Hon. Friends on the other side to let their conscience be their guide. The 17,000 sugar workers and more than 30,000 Guyanese who are without jobs, their problems came because of your actions. Their hardships came because of your actions. Their

ability to provide for their families has been hindered because of your actions. The pain and suffering that they are going through will be on your conscience, and you will have to and must answer for it.

Tonight, we are dealing with the realities. The realities of the taxi drivers who brought their cars under the PPP/C Government, but today cannot afford to pay back their loans every month to the bank and their cars are being seized. Do you think this is not true? Go and check out there. We are talking about the businesses that grew from two employees to more than 300 employees under the People's Progressive Party/Civic Government that are now laying off people because of the actions of this Government, and the bad policies and planning. It is for these reason that we do not have confidence, the Guyanese people do not have confidence in this Government.

At the last Local Government Elections, more than 60% of the people voted for the People's Progressive Party/Civic. They rejected this Government because of economic mismanagement and incompetence and rampant corruption, political harassment, intimidation, and the blatant discrimination practice by this Government.

Many times, in this noble House, the APNU/AFC Government would speak about the economy, but let us look at the economy they took over as against where we are today. In 2014, many independent observers described our economy as one of the fastest growing economies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Unlike today, where two large mining companies carry our economy, the local economy was driven by rapid expansion of all the major sectors, including rice, forestry, manufacturing, construction and services.

Under the stewardship of the PPP/C, the economic growth rate was registered between 2004-2010, between 3.8% and 5.4%. In the last three and a half years, our economy was paralysed with 130 plus tax measures, which were introduced by the APNU/AFC Government, which have extracted more than \$100 billion out of the pockets of businesses and citizens of this country. Poor economic policies have caused Guyana to slide eight places on the World Bank Index's 'Ease of Doing Business'. Massive capital flight estimated at US\$53 million or \$11.5 billion during 2017 alone.

We are not bringing in investments nor investors. In 2017 alone, we had \$11.5 billion of capital flight out of this country. Is that the confidence that you are talking about? Is that the confidence the business community has in you that they are taking their money away, their investments away,

from Guyana? In 2017 alone, \$11.9 billion and you can sing about that. We had the ineffective implementation of the Public-Sector Investment Programme (PSIP).

The Hon. Minister of Finance publicly made statements about the poor performance of Ministers in his Government – poor leadership. That is why billions of dollars in the Public-Sector Investment Programme could not be spent. What you have done by your poor leadership and performance is to rob the Guyanese people of billions of dollars to be spent in the economy creating wealth and opportunities for the Guyanese people. The poor policies of this Government caused the discontinuation of the PetroCaribe Agreement, which saw the export revenue from rice decline by US \$48.5 million between 2014 and 2017. Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan, wanted to know about rice. Since you came to Government, up to 2017, revenue from rice has declined by \$48.5 million. That is as a result of your leadership. That is why, on behalf of the rice farmers, they have no confidence in this Government.

The expulsion of some export companies by the APNU/AFC Government also contributed to more than \$4.2 billion reduction in export revenue. Look at the forestry sector, instead of encouraging investment. **[Mr. Jordan: Bai Shan Lin].** You can call whatever company you want. At the end of the day, Guyana was denied \$4.2 billion of export revenue because of your leadership, your government, your incompetence and your mismanagement. It is because of this that this no-confidence motion must pass tonight, to put you out so that confidence can be restored in Guyana's economy. **[Mr. Nagamootoo: You want the charges dropped.]** Let me disabuse the Prime Minister. Let me help you. I stand here tonight with 19 charges from your Government. Are you happy? **[Members of the Government: Yes.]** Good, let us continue now.

We are in a country today, where there are 37,119 unemployed persons. This Government that is defending its record, could not stand once in this debate and defended. Where are you going to create the jobs? How are you going to create the jobs? Do you not read your own reports? **[Mr. Jordan: Quote your source.]** Go to the *Guyana Labour Force Survey*. You mentioned it in your budget Hon. Minister.

The economy lacked vibrancy – what we see today. The Hon. Minister Ramjattan spoke about crime and the good job he is doing. Only in today's newspapers, look at the headlines,

“Senior Cop robbed while buying two kilos of cocaine”

“One dead, another critical after Agricola shooting”

“Doctor, bodyguard, man shot during robbery”

One day – only today.

7.42 p.m.

The Hon. Minister Ramjattan would come here with a straight face and tell us everything is alright.

The *Guyana Times* newspapers dated 3rd January, 2018 states:

“Two dismissed sugar workers commit suicide”

The *Stabroek News* newspaper dated 11th October, 2017 states:

“Former Wales sugar workers families call for Government’s support due to impact of closure”

The *Guyana Times* newspapers dated 12th February, 2018 states:

“Fired sugar workers describe life of desperation”

The *I-News* news of 6th January, 2016:

“Guyana’s rice farmers facing severe hardships”.

The *Guyana Times* newspapers dated 10th September, 2017 states:

“Hardship facing miners. Government to review gold processing fees”

The best of all, the Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan - *Guyana Chronicle* newspapers dated 10th June, 2017 states:

“High unemployment among youths leads to criminality”.

This is the Hon. Minister who spoke about the great job that they are doing for employment. This is the double-standard. Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? If we allow this double-standard to

continue, it will take us right back to where we started in 1992. The Hon. Member, Mr. Nagamootoo, said to me once:

“If you know what we went through - how the PPP struggled, how the PPP worked hard...”.

Up to when the Hon. Member was in law school, he said to me, when he heard I was playing a leading role in the Progressive Youth Organisation (PYO):

“Irfaan, you are following the footsteps of your grandmother. There is no better place to be than in the People’s Progressive Party”.

Do you remember those words or are you going to deny that?

Tonight, the Guyanese will not only see the light, they are feeling the hardship, they are feeling the pain and the suffering, and they are feeling the confidence of this no-confidence motion. They are all waiting tonight so that their misery could come to an end. That misery would come to an end when we go to elections in May, 2019 and the People’s Progressive Party/Civic is returned to government.

The Hon. Minister Joseph Harmon said that the \$10,000 Grant was a one-off payment. The Hon. Member said that it was not affordable or was unsustainable. Yet, this very Government cannot find the \$10,000 Grant, but it can find \$4 billion to increase food and beverages *via* Dietary; they could find \$1.1 billion for D’Urban Park that is used maybe half a time a year; the \$400 million of inter-departmental warrants that were provided by the Ministry of Communities. Do you remember that Hon. Member, Mr. Bulkan? That they cannot provide any records of this expenditure - \$400 million. That is \$1.5 billion. Then there is a payment of \$33.3663 million to one supplier for items that were priced much higher than the other competitors; the Kato School Feeding Programme, Hon. Minister that takes you \$1.7 billion; overpayment of more than \$300 million – that takes you to \$2 billion. Four hundred and ten billion dollars was expended on the Guyana Lottery fund. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? Again, there is no record to verify the expenditure. We are close to \$3 billion, but this Government cannot account for that. I am not even talking about the increase in Dietary, but it cannot find the \$10,000 Grant for the children of this country. That is a shame. That is incompetence.

Some of the Members are having a topaz moment. Under-performance of the sugar, rice, forestry and bauxite sectors. In these four sectors alone, between 2015 to 2018, we lost \$46 billion in revenue. The under-performance of the four major sectors since 2014 cost the nation in excess of US\$463 million in foreign exchange. Would this Government like the people to have confidence in it? Would this Government like the business community to have confidence in them? No.

Let us look at the Hon. Minister of Finance. He projected a balance of payment deficit of US\$79 million for 2018. This figure has now been re-adjusted upwards to US\$181 million – US\$101 million more. He made an error that is 128%. If the Hon. Minister of Finance cannot properly project our balance of payment, then how could the people of this country have confidence in this Government?

Let us talk about Small and Medium Scale Miners who contribute on an average of in excess of 60% of total gold production. What has happened to them? They are now burdened with hefty tax measures. Tributors Income Tax has increased by 100%. Value-Added Tax (VAT) is now instituted on heavy-duty equipment. Fuel prices are soaring. Hinterland roads are deplorable. There is absolutely nothing in Budget 2019 to help these Small and Medium Scale Miners.

On behalf of the Small and Medium Scale Miners, I want to express no-confidence in this Government. We have to end their suffering, we have to end their hardship and that will come to an end when this Government is removed as fast as possible.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you have five minutes remaining.

Mr. Ali: We also have borrowing. Central Government continues to out borrow the Private Sector. As a matter of fact, in 2019, out of the total lending from local commercial banks borrowing by this Government will increase by 260% or \$73 billion, while borrowing by the Private Sector was a mere 11% of the total portfolio by the banks or \$24 billion. The Government is now out stripping the Private Sector in borrowing from the local banks. Do you not understand this? The Government is now in competition with the Private Sector for scarce resources in the banking sector. What will eventually happen? Interest rates will increase and when interest rates increase, businesses will suffer. This will take us back to 1992 when the interest rates on commercial loans were close to 40%. Could you remember that?

We do not even need to talk about oil. Do you know why? The People's Progressive Party/Civic grew this economy, built this economy and expanded this economy without oil. We did not need oil. Oil now comes. Do you know what? That is all that this Government is seeing. They are all thinking oily. Do you know what? They all talk about clean hands. Every time they stretch out their hands, all I can see are oily hands.

According to the *Consumers' Price Index*, between 2014 and 2018 prices for food, clothing, medical and personal care increased by 13.5%, 11.3% and 9%, respectively. This is the reality. You are talking about a 5 % and a 7% increase for workers while food increased by 13.5%, clothing increased by 11.3% and medical and personal care increased by 9%. Where is the increase going? How is the increase improving the well-being of the family? How is the increase improving the family's ability to acquire assets?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you have two minutes remaining.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Speaker, it is for these reasons that, on behalf of Guyanese people, we ask every Member on that side of the House to examine their conscience tonight. We ask you to think hard; we ask you to consider deeply; and we ask you to join us on the journey of transforming Guyana and taking Guyana forward. I thank you. *[Applause]* (7.57 p.m.)

7.57 p.m.

First Vice-President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo] (7.58 p.m.): I would like to say, from the very start, that this motion of no-confidence is doomed to failure. There is no prospect of its success in this House. Our Government, the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance for Change (APNU/AFC) Government, enjoys the full confidence of the people of Guyana. At the 2015 elections, the combined Opposition, APNU/AFC, received in excess of 206,000 votes, on which basis we have 33 seats on this side of the House, and on the other side, the balance of the seats in the National Assembly.

So, institutionally, two things are important at this point in time. This is the legally-elected Government, elected at a free, fair, transparent and credible elections. The attempt by the Opposition, after those elections, to boycott the National Assembly revealed that the Opposition

is, indeed, a very poor loser and could not accept the fact that it had been vanquished to those beautiful green benches on the opposition side.

When you listen to the rancour, the aggression and the anger that come from some of the speakers on the Opposition side in presenting this motion, particularly the mover of the motion, you get the clear feeling that it is motivated by a malice of having lost the 2015 elections. It is also motivated by very personal interest and ambition.

You have one Member, the Hon. Irfaan Ali, branded “number 19”, parading himself as if he were a hero, vesting in his contribution just the imagination that this motion could be approved by his perception of the decency and integrity of Hon. Members of this side of this House, that they could defect. So, it is a self-interest that is being served that, should the motion, by some fluke, be approved, there would be elections. As he himself said, hopefully they would return to office and the 19 charges would disappear. It is self-interest.

You have on that side, also, other Hon. Members who have been arraigned before the courts for public malfeasance. I cannot comment on the cases because they are *sub judice*. I would say, also, that the motivation behind tabling a motion to unseat this elected Government is self-motivation that they could be absolved, by some method of succession, from the criminal offences for which they are before the courts.

I know, also, that the debate has been characterised by *ad hominem*, personality attacks, reduced to that level. I would try, as best as I could, not to be provoked into a response to these scurrilous allegations that have been levelled against this side because, as I said, there is a motive that is very clearly at work here. It is intended to destabilise the smooth running of our Government; to destabilise the society; to interfere with the confidence level of our people; and, as has been said before, to be able to interrupt, like Mr. Grinch would do, the Christmas festive season, and sabotage business.

We have been told that the Opposition is all innocent in this affair, that they never intended to destabilise the society, they never intended to rupture normal commerce and the orderly lives of people. They said that they tabled the motion in time on 15th November, 2018. They blamed, somehow, the Government for filibustering on the motion and allowing it to come up at this time. But I want Your Honour to refer to a letter, dated the 22nd November, 2018, addressed to the Hon.

Member, Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, MP, Leader of the Opposition, and written by the Clerk of the National Assembly, Mr. S.E Isaacs:

“I wish to refer to my letter on 15th November, 2019, on the abovementioned subject.

Please be informed that His Honour the Speaker of the National Assembly has approved your no-confidence motion. It will be treated as a substantive motion which shall not be placed on the Order Paper for a day earlier than twelve (12) days from the day on which the notice was published in the Notice Paper.

In view of the motion being dealt with as a substantive motion, it will be considered by the National Assembly as an item of Public Business. As you are no doubt aware, according to Standing Order No. 71 (6), the motion of approval of the Estimates shall stand as the first item of Public Business. Therefore, as I see it, the no-confidence motion would not be considered until after the completion of the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 2019.”

Here is the Clerk of the National Assembly giving a guideline as to when this motion could reasonably be placed on the Order Paper for debate. So, the allegation that the Government somehow inveigled Parliament to put this motion at a time when it may be harmful to the interest and the good life of our people is false and misplaced. But the Clerk also went on to say, and he invoked a discretion upon the Government, the following:

“Notwithstanding, the Government, if it so wishes, may suspend Standing Order No. 71(6) to allow the no-confidence motion to be debated before the end of the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 2019.”

Therefore, I want to place on the record this erroneous concept...Yesterday, we had a meeting - myself and Vice-President, Mr. Carl Greenidge – with the Private Sector Commission (PSC). One of the issues which was raised with us was how we perceived the impact of the debate on the No-Confidence motion on commerce and the peaceful activities of citizens in the streets of Georgetown. We assured them that the Government had no intention of interrupting the commercial life or inflicting harm, contrary to what was being pedalled by Opposition Members on Facebook that Indian businesses would be targeted, and people were being advised not to come

into the city. They were using their own motion to instil fear and terrorism in the minds of the Guyanese people. It cannot be placed at the doorsteps of the Government that we would inflict a wound upon ourselves; that this Government that is entrenched, strong and stable, would cause an infliction of a wound upon itself by timing a no-confidence motion that could interrupt the social activities of people in Guyana.

Regarding the issue of when the motion comes up for hearing, we were told that the Government sets the time for it. Well, the Clerk circulated an authority from *Erskine May, the 22nd Edition of Parliamentary Practice of the Commons Assembly in Great Britain and Northern Ireland* which states:

“From time to time, the Opposition puts down a motion on the Paper expressing lack of confidence in the Government or otherwise criticising its general conduct. By established convention, the Government always accedes to the demand of the Leader of the Opposition to allot a day for the discussion of a motion tabled by the official Opposition which, in the Government’s view, would have the effect of testing the confidence of the House. In allotting a day for this purpose, the Government is entitled to have regard to the exigencies of its own business, but a reasonably early day is invariably found.”

[Ms. Teixeira: *[Inaudible]* paragraph.] Madam, you had your time to speak and you are sitting now. You must learn to listen sometimes.

The Clerk has said that, in allotting a day, Government has to look at the exigencies of its own business which had to do, in this particular case, with the tabling of the National Budget. We considered that the Budget is important, and it should have taken priority as a Government Business.

I want to say, very clearly, that Parliament was adjourned. I moved the adjournment on 14th December to 21st December, 2018. The Opposition sat there very mum. ‘Mum’ was the word, and did not oppose the adjournment to 21st December, 2018. They did not say that it was inappropriate or unacceptable or that they preferred another day. You cannot want to benefit from your own wrong, your acts of omission or your acts of commission. In this case, it was an omission as well as a commission because they had an opportunity to say that the 21st December, 2018 was inappropriate and that, in the interest of the people of the country, business, peace and order and

goodwill in the country, they should have another day. So, this propaganda that is going around that the Government has chosen a day to affect the lives of the people is misplaced, false and it should be withdrawn.

We have heard, in all of these talk from the Opposition benches, that the Government has not honoured its Manifesto promises. A manifesto is a set of intention of a political party during a campaign, a declaration of what it intends to do during the entire period of its elected term, should it be elected. It does not say that it has to be in the first day, first week or first month. It makes assurance, but because of peculiarities in the society, which I would deal with, it could only address those issues when in Government... It is an intention, an honourable intention, and it cannot be indicted.

8.12 p.m.

I am happy to see that Hon. Members of the Opposition have taken the time to read that very voluminous, impressive and learned document, scholarly put together, of our intention to develop this country in an orderly and progressive manner, and they have now gotten an opportunity to do so. They are learning a lot of ideas, even though they have brought the black and white version. I would have expected them to see the full colour. But I suppose the only reason they did not bring the full colour is because it has me on the front cover with the President. This is a full colour. The only reason they had not produced... I am sorry. I take back the front cover. There is another version with myself and the President. You could have seen the obsession of several Hon. Members who are focusing on the Prime Minister. The Opposition Leader himself started off by trying to focus on the Prime Minister and then, at the end, trying to say to that there was no intention to unseat the Prime Minister. But I would not be bated into discussing the role of the Prime Minister in this National Assembly because had he not been important to the Assembly and to the country, there would not had been this excessive attention being paid to him and his offices.

But we have not heard any new arguments today that we did not hear during the Budget debate. The Opposition said that they were opposed to the Budget, that it was a Budget that would have brought all harm to the Guyanese people. A \$300.7 billion Budget was intended, they said, to do harm to the Guyanese people. Well, the Guyanese people do not accept that. They do not believe that. They do not see it as credible, not at all. So, they sat there, during the time when the

Appropriation Bill was placed before the House and, instead of voting 'no' - they did not have to raise their fingers, they could have said 'nay' when we say 'yay', but they could not even say 'nay' - they remained mum and did not exercise their right to vote against the Budget. I tell you what, voting on the Budget would have rendered nugatory the need for a debate of the no-confidence motion. Parliamentary practice is that if you vote and defeat the budget of the Government, the Government has to resign and call elections, thereafter, within a stipulated number of days.

Therefore, the Opposition lost an opportunity. If it had felt that the Government was incompetent and inefficient and could not govern in the interest of the country, it could have voted against the Budget to, indeed, signal to the Guyanese people that it was opposed to the Government at that point in time. But, of course, you cannot have it both ways.

You cannot opportunistically want to tell Guyanese...because it is difficult to tell, as I said, 54,000 pensioners, people receiving old age pension of \$20,500 next year, the Budget voted \$13.2 billion for pensioners, that you opposed that Budget for them to have - even if you think it was a trickle, a handout and it was meagre, you could not go with good conscience and tell the pensioners that you were opposed to them receiving a little more money, even if it is a little more. That is why they were mum. It was because of opportunism, trying to play up to the gallery.

They were *cussing* the Government down for the measures in the budget and, at the same time, did not take action that would have logically followed the *cuss* down and the *buse* down, and we saw that here today. Same old politics of abuse, the *cuss* down politics. We heard that over and over again and I do not think that those render their argument in favour of the no-confidence motion credible. It only meant that you have been motivated by a type of politically viciousness that you had to see the Government being embarrassed and the image of the country being affected as being unstable because you have lost political office.

We agree that there are many things in this Manifesto that we should pay attention to and we should, in fact, strive to implement all promises, in due course and within our elected term. But we admit, also, that we made, and we said it publicly, missteps; we made mistakes. But the mistakes that we made did not amount to criminality for the purposes for which I had moved, along with Ms. Catherine Hughes, a motion of no-confidence in 2014.

Hon. Members of the Opposition say today is a day of history. Well, history would have been made in 2014, if, when I had tabled the motion of no-confidence, that side, which was in the Government... **[Members of the Opposition: I, I, I,]** I, Moses Verasammy Nagamootoo; repeat after me; I, Moses Verasammy Nagamootoo; I, I, I; the big 'I'. When the motion was moved, they ran from the motion. They prorogued the National Assembly. They did not allot a day for the debate. They shut down the Parliament. History was created then.

In 1953, the British invaded this country and suspended the Government. It was the first time, under colonialism, that our Parliament was shut down. The PPP, Mr. Jagdeo/Mr. Ramotar Administration, aped the British, in 2014, and they shut down the Parliament. Rather than debating the motion, coming here courageously and facing the music, they threw themselves on their own sword. They prorogued and then dissolved Parliament and they said that they would go to an election. When they went to elections, they lost the elections, and they were condemned to be over there. By their own hand and their own decision, they condemned themselves to the Opposition. But when we talk about the Opposition claiming to have all of this spunks and that they have confidence on their side, they must remember that, in 2011, after the rigging of the internal election process in the PPP to select a presidential candidate, which is likely to repeat itself, they went into election...and they are talking about repeating the 'I' again; the big 'I'.

When I left the PPP and I joined ranks with these Hon. Members in the A Partnership for National Unity and Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC), they were inflicted with the first blow by the Guyanese people, and their majority was reduced into a minority. Even though they sat on the Government benches on a plurality, they sat as a minority. They lost their authority that one would have expected would have flowed from elections.

In 2014, we were dealing with a situation, not the political hustle of criticising this policy, criticising what the Government did here or there, whether they spend five cents here or 10 or 15 cents to nit prick and pin prick. That is what you do when you go at elections time. When you move a vote of confidence in the National Assembly, you do so because you perceive that there has been a serious violation of the Constitution. It must be for a constitutional violation that must unseat a government prematurely because the supreme law had been disobeyed and violated.

In 2014, when were on that side of the House, I was sitting there in the far corner, [Mr. Damon: Watch your heart, Mr. Nagamootoo.] My heart is good. My heart is as clean as my hands. Do not worry with this heart. When it is ready to go, it will go, and it is going to be in the interest of Guyana and the love of Guyana.

When we tabled the motion in this National Assembly, the Constitution states, specifically, that you cannot spend the people's money without the permission of the National Assembly. We came here, and we saw the Government spending billions of dollars without the permission of the National Assembly. We, the majority of the Hon. Members, even disapproved of expenditure by a vote in the National Assembly. It was not Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan who said, 'haul your...' the unmentionable word in the National Assembly. They told us, when they were sitting here as a minority, that we could do that, and that they were going to spend nevertheless.

So, for the violation of the Constitution, we went to the Commissioner of Police. We filed the no-confidence motion, after Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan had gone to the Commissioner of Police to enquire whether criminal charges should not be instituted against the then Minister of Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh, for breach of the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act and for having accessed moneys from the Consolidated Fund without the permission of the National Assembly. It is that context in which a no-confidence motion is moved. After you would have given time and notice to the miscreant to correct his or her fault and he or she does not do so, it behoves a Hon. Member of the National Assembly to protect the Constitution, to protect its integrity and to defend the integrity of Parliament. That is how the no-confidence motion was moved, and they ran from it. I told you and I would say it again, they have now borrowed the 10 words we used, Cathy and I, with the support of my other Colleagues. [Ms. Teixeira: That is international.]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, you referring to Hon. Members of the National Assembly, I take it.

Mr. Nagamootoo: My apology. The very Hon. Member, Ms. Catherine Hughes. We used those 10 words. Whether it is international or not, it fitted into the context of Guyana and what was happening, "that this National Assembly has no confidence in the Government". At that time, it was the People Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C) Government. We believed that the 10 words symbolised, and this is the period of Christmas and Yuletide, the 10 Commandments. We did say

that the violation of the Constitution was not a simple violation of the letter of the Constitution. It had to do with access to funds, contrary to the Constitution. That is why I had said here that the first thing that motivated was one of the 10 Commandments:

“Thou shall not steal”

And that informed, very strongly, why no-confidence motions are being used.

We are told that the no-confidence motion was moved against the APNU/AFC Coalition Government because of corruption. But, in their time, we had reports from international institutions that say that the Government had been infected with pervasive corruption. We had corruption that involved the Sanata Textile Mill, the Colonial Life Insurance Company (CLICO) fiasco, Marriott Hotel, National Industrial & Commercial Investment Limited (NICIL), the Berbice River Bridge, Enmore Sugar Plant, the Amelia Road. We have a list of these matters; the access to funds, private funds, public funds being put into special accounts. The PetroCaribe Fund was raided, the Lotto Fund was raided, the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) Fund was raided and the Wildlife Fund was raided. All over the place moneys had been spent and no account had been given for it.

I come to the point that had been raised by the last speaker, Mr. Irfaan Ali. He referred to economics. He went back into the old speech that he, himself, talked about. My good Friend, Mr. Jaipaul Sharma, the Hon. Member, had referred to borrowing the former Minister words, “sweet lies”. He was speaking about gold. It seems to be that he has a special liking for gold.

8.27 p.m.

The figures that had been mentioned in the National Assembly seemed to have been lost on him. This is not a sector that has been plunging downward. The figures given was that the total export earnings would have increased from US\$1.1 million to US\$1.3 million at the end of 2018, which is an increase of over US\$224.9 million. He gave and catalogued the years during which gold production had been increasing; and therefore, the report that we have here, which states that the mining sector has been affected and it is plunging downward, is not a credible report.

We have been told about the national debt. When I was over there questioning the national debt, and I believe we spent more money trying to bail out the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo), which was bankrupted by that side of the House, then our national debt probably stood at that time.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, you have two minutes remaining.

Mr. Nagamootoo: For his last year as President, the total external debt moved from \$834 million, at the end of 2008, to \$1.2 billion at the end of 2011, an increase of around \$370 million or a 44% increase in a similar three-year period. We know, from the Budget Speech, that the Minister of Finance has brought a Budget that has no new taxes and that we have, in a relatively short period of time reduced taxes. So this phony idea about 200 new taxes cannot be proven. They keep shifting the figure. One of them said 200 taxes and another said 170 taxes, and the figures keep sliding down and up by convenience.

The Guyana Office for Investment (Go-Invest) issued a report, which was circulated here before, which stated that \$45 billion in new investment had been processed by them.

We are saying today, in these closing words, that this Government, the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change Government (APNU/AFC) has restored, in Guyana, the architecture of democracy. We have guaranteed the separation of power. We have ensured that there is no political interference by the Executive or the Legislature in the Judiciary. We have made these bodies into constitutional agencies. We have guaranteed that there is a plural, open and free media. Even the Opposition owns radio stations in this country. The licences have not been revoked, but we have regularised them.

Of course, we have a new landscape of telecommunication. As I will show you, Sir, the number of projects here...I will not bother to read them. I will just lay them over, but it states that there have been 250 achievements of the Coalition Government. I am going to lay this over for those who said that we had not done anything. They tried to compare the three years of this Government with 23 years of the PPP.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, you must wrap up now.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I say, Sir, that the comparison cannot hold. We know, as a statement of fact, that this country is in safe hands and this country has moved forward progressively. I have every confidence in this Government and this motion shall not pass. Thank you. *[Applause]* (8.29 p.m.)

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, if it pleases you, pursuant to Standing Order 44(1) of the National Assembly, I respectfully move that the question be now put. *[Interruption]*

[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we have a motion on the floor. We have not seconded the motion. Hon. Members, I think I will treat with the motion after the next speaker.

Mr. Jagdeo (Replying) (8.30 p.m.): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to reply to the debate on the motion that stands in my name. Maybe, I should address this issue that has been a recurring issue about who wanted the debate on the 21st December, 2018.

In three presentations, we have heard that the PPP is the “Grinch of Guyana” and that we want to steal Christmas and the season of goodwill from the people of the country. We heard it in the Budget debate from the Hon. Member, Joseph Harmon, and then we heard it from the Hon. Prime Minister today. The Prime Minister sought to explain, at great length, how we got to this date. So, the Hon. Prime Minister said (1) that the Clerk of the National Assembly wrote us informing us about the dates for the motion and that the Government could have suspended the Standing Order if it desired the motion to be debated in the middle of the Budget.

Point number two: The Prime Minister made the case that the Budget is so important and, given that the Clerk had written about the exigencies of Government’s business, the Budget had to be approved before the motion could have been debated. Then, the Hon. Prime Minister said that when he moved the motion to adjourn the House to 21st December, we did not object.

After this issue came up in the public domain, I also made a public statement that, should the Government want to defer the debate on this motion to next year, we, in the People’s Progressive Party, would not have had an objection. All that it would have necessitated was a letter from the Government to the Clerk postponing this sitting of the National Assembly. This Government has postponed a sitting in the past. Just recently, on 16th November, we all showed up here. You, Mr. Speaker, were here. All of us were waiting for the Government and there was a no show. So, they

could have, but the Hon. Prime Minister made a public statement that we should bring it on and that we were afraid of debating the motion, and, therefore, the debate will continue on this date. If there is any Grinch or *Grinches*, they are all on that side.

The Hon. Prime Minister said that this motion is motivated by personal issues. Then, he went on to say that some Members on this side are facing criminal charges. So, they are hoping that if this motion were to pass here and we have to go back to elections, then the charges will disappear. We can also look at the converse to say that this Government wants to hang on in office because it is afraid of that eventuality, that the Government changes and many people on that side will face criminal charges. In fact, we have already heard about five private criminal charges that were instituted against Ministers of this Government and how they were withdrawn, firstly, by the Director of Public prosecutions (DPP), and then the Hon Attorney General boasting in the public domain that he influenced the withdrawal of the charges. Imagine, from the benches of the Opposition, we can find evidence of large-scale corruption against this Government.

Mr. Williams: I stand on a Point of Order, Standing Order 40 (a). The Hon. Member is imputing improper motive to the Hon. Attorney General. He must withdraw it.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Attorney General, did you rise on a Point of Order?

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

Mr. Speaker: Please proceed.

Mr. Williams: The Hon. Leader of the Opposition imputed improper motive to me in my office. He suggested that I influenced the DPP, who is a constitutional officer. I am asking that he withdraws that and that he apologises.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I thank you. Hon. Mr. Jagdeo, the Attorney General is saying that you imputed to him conduct which, at best, is improper, and, at worst, is interference with a judicial issue. Now, unless you can substantiate it, I would advise that you withdraw it and proceed.

Mr. Jagdeo: The Hon. Attorney General said that that I imputed that he made this statement in office. I do not know where he was physically, I think it was at a press conference, but I am sure that he made the statement and it was reported in the newspapers. I do not have the newspapers

with me and so, for the purpose of not distracting me from the debate, I will withdraw the statement here, but I urge Guyanese to go and find the relevant newspapers and they will see what I mean.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member. Please proceed.

Mr. Jagdeo: The Hon. Prime Minister also spoke about the Manifesto being policy intentions as though it has no meaning to the people of Guyana. There are an enormous number of promises made in that Manifesto. They secured peoples' votes on the basis of those promises that they made to all the people of Guyana. Now, this Government wants to distance itself from the promises because it has failed so miserably in addressing those promises.

On the other hand, the point has been made already by our side that they did not make some other promises that they hurriedly addressed. They did not tell the people they are going to increase their salaries by a massive amount. They did not state that housing allowances would be increased. They did not speak about the *per diem* to Ministers being increased. They did not speak about the other perks, such as vehicles and assistance, being given to Ministers who earn large sums of money. They found time to address those issues, but the Manifesto promises are promises to be fulfilled in the distant future. They have no relevance today.

I thought the Hon. Prime Minister would have pointed out and defended the diminished role that he now plays in this Government, in contravention of the promises made in the Manifesto, and that he would have sought, today, to say that this Government has acted in a manner in which it has not treated him and others with respect, but the Hon. Prime Minister did not do that. As usual, the Hon. Prime Minister is at the centre of everything and the centre of the universe. He spoke about the process of selecting our presidential candidate in the People's Progressive Party.

8.42 p.m.

It is public knowledge now, that because of the untrustworthy nature of the Prime Minister, at that time, he did not get the support of anyone in the entire leadership of the PPP. The PPP was a great party for all of Guyana. Had the Prime Minister become the presidential candidate at that time, it would have been the best party in Guyana. The moment he lost the bid for the presidential candidate, it became this terrible corrupt useless party. That was it. That is not sign of a principled person who contested and if they lose the contest would become part of the team.

We know the Hon. Prime Minister could tell a good story. He told many of them at Whim in the past when we went on the public platform and promised the world to the sugar workers and to the other workers of Guyana. I am not going to go any further into the Prime Minister's presentation. The Prime Minister also said that because we filed a no confidence motion, we want to make Guyana unstable. This has nothing to do with stability in Guyana. You have the developed democracies of the world. In the United Kingdom (UK) now, it is faced with a no confidence motion there. In fact, it is the second one. That does not make the UK less stable. In fact, it is part of a mature democracy when you could come here and debate it. I agree with him. It is not in the acrimonious way that we have done so far today where the *ad hominem* attacks were so numerous that we miss sight of the policy debate. We are here and we have spoken about the policies. I would wish to return to that.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you are wrapping up.

Mr. Jagdeo: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: You are not presenting new arguments and you are not introducing new elements. That is what you are for now.

Mr. Jagdeo: Mr. Speaker, I am just responding to what the Hon. Prime Minister said here. The Prime Minister said that the no confidence motion is an attempt to make Guyana unstable. My rebuttal is that in matured democracies no confidence votes are filed on a routine basis and that does not make them more unstable.

The Hon. Prime Minister also mentioned the debt and the transformation and maybe how under the PPP we grew the debt so rapidly that at one time we were spending more on GuySuCo than the entire national debt. This is not factual. It is absolutely untrue, but I will not want to rebut that now. I just want to say to the Hon. Prime Minister, since he mentioned the debt, that when the PPP/C took office, we know now by the famous memorandum that was signed by the Hon. Vice-President Carl Greenidge, that the stock of debt in Guyana was 913% of gross domestic product (GDP), but when we left office it was 50% of GDP; that we were using 153% of revenue to pay debts (pre 1992) and now, today, the Hon. Winston Jordon just mentioned that we are using 7% of revenue.

In the 23 years of the PPP/C rule in Guyana, we took a bankrupt country and made it into one of the most viable countries in the region. As a corollary to that, you ask what we did. Many of the speakers asked what we did do in our 23 years in office, the Hon. Simona Charles-Broomes included. At that same time, when we inherited office, interest rates were 37 to 40%. If a person wanted to secure a mortgage and that person went into the bank in 1991, that person had to pay a 40% interest. If you were a businessman, that was the rate. It was impossible to borrow for investing or to build homes. Today, interest rates have fallen steeply, because of the transformation. At that time, we were classified as HIPC country, heavily indebted poor countries. One year after we left office, we had attained the category of a middle income country declared by the World Bank.

The *per capita* GDP, when we took office, was under \$300. It soared to over US\$3,000 by the time we left office. The economy had gone to \$4 billion. At one time we were known - we talk about internationally made - only for Johnstown and rigged elections. Today, we are known for a Low Carbon Development Strategy, Green State Development Strategy, for free and fair elections and as a democratic country. Thousands of jobs were created in the period that the PPP/C was in office. We could demonstrate this. Contrast this with the record of this Government. Jobs are being lost and there is no plan for the future. We heard about the Marriott Hotel, the international airport, the national stadium at Providence, the convention centre, four-lane roads and the Hope Canal, and all of these we hear were corrupted projects, but they were built. They were never there before. We took the infrastructure of this country... When to walk down Main Street... It took 30 minutes to drive from the central bank to the Ministry of Finance because there were huge potholes. That was the state of Guyana. Blackout lasted for an entire week at a time. They are taking us back there. We invested in power plants...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, are you wrapping up?

Mr. Jagdeo: Yes. I am wrapping up, because I am responding to the Hon. Member saying that we did nothing in office, so I do have to respond about the transformative changes we made in Guyana.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, but you need to do it within the context of what we are doing now. It is not a new introduction. You have 20 minutes remaining.

Mr. Jagdeo: The Hon. Member Khemraj Ramjattan said that Guyana had a death rate of 15 per 100,000 and that this was great. I would refer him to a *Kaieteur News* newspaper article of 13th December, 2018. I just googled it. It states:

“Guyana’s homicide robbery and burglary rates significantly exceeds global average, IDB finds. At 19.4 homicides per 100,000 people is higher than the global average which stands at 6.2 per 100,000 persons.”

He said that crime is not under-reported. This is what the exact report states.

“Existing police crime data are not disaggregated by gender, age ethnicity, socio-economic stratum, neighbourhood or correlations and causes. Data from victimisation surveys would help address under-reporting in police records.

All that he told us, all the statistics he read out to us means nothing. This is a report from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) that was published on the 13th December, 2018.

We heard a consultant came in and gave a report, a British consultant. What happened is that the report was given to the Government almost a year ago. That report has not even been debated in the National Assembly. For a very long time it was hidden away in the recesses of this Government. What was it that the Minister did not say? He did not say that 17 persons lost their lives in the worst prison fire. In his tenure, we have had a total breakdown of law and order in relation to the prisons. That did not happen in 23 years. That happened in a Government that prides itself about security concerns.

Mr. Ramjattan quoted a United States (US) Report on Trafficking in Person (TIP), but he did not quote another US report which spoke about the state corruption being the primary source of money laundering now. That is the view. If you chose to quote one US report, you have to choose to quote another US report.

The Hon. Member Joseph Harmon said that I was prepared to give away a corridor, a sliver of the sea, to Venezuela. That is absolutely untrue. I have dealt with this in the public domain already. I do not want to examine publicly their records at New River Triangle and with the Venezuelan’s agreement and the offshore area with Suriname. I could do so at another time.

He spoke about the moral and spiritual revival.

The unbelievable corruption in the issuance of licences for gambling. Every street corner gets a new machine now, counter the law that is there. What kind of spiritual revival is that? It is all across the country. The sale of gun licences and the sale of work permits are unbelievable. I wonder if the Permanent Secretary that he found holding his head there has mentioned all of these things to him.

All of this talk about how the flag is a great symbol of nationhood, we love this country too. We are patriots. We respect our flag. We do not have to build a 50,000-person stadium that is falling apart for \$1.4 billion, and you cannot account for \$500 million of that. That is the issue. It is not the size of the stadium. You have been caught by the Auditor General saying there is massive corruption on the project. Was that respectful of our flag, the missing \$500 million?

The Hon. Member Simone Charles-Broomes spoke about Lindo Creek and how people were beaten by hammers and it was horrific. What took place there was horrific. Our Guyanese people lost their lives. The police investigated this matter. They had an eyewitness. We should examine it at a commission of inquiry (COI). We cannot do it at that COI as was pointed out. What we said was let us contribute to the terms of reference where the father of a sitting Minister was the head of the tribunal and the brother of a sitting Minister was the secretary to the tribunal. How impartial would that be? Why it was not all of the areas? If there was killing with the 'phantom' squad and everyone else, then we must have a COI into all of those deaths. This is what we have been proposing. Why is this Government so reluctant to go that route? We heard about Satyadeow 'Sash' Sawh. The person who is charged for Satyadeow 'Sash' Sawh's murder was called 'Biscuit'. His lawyer was a member of the APNU, Mr. James Bond. Another accessory to the murder of Satyadeow 'Sash' Sawh was a Leander.

Mr. Speaker: No. I think we should wind up. That is what we are doing.

Mr. Jagdeo: I have a right to reply.

Mr. Speaker: I believe the calling of names and weaving of other people into it, you should stay away from that.

Mr. Jagdeo: I know the Government is very touchy when you talk about investigating this. We should look at Garlin Fikker. Who killed Garlin Fikker? Who killed Orin Shultz? We should find out about those people who were killed, as the Hon. Member said “McKinnon.” These are the things. We should do all of that.

8.57 p.m.

I am not going to deal with the rebuttals anymore, because there are so many things that this Government said here today in defence of itself that are totally extraneous, but as I predicted, they will come for the PPP’s corruption, the \$20 billion stolen every year. They will come after extra-judicial killing, but be unprepared to do anything about it. They will talk about discrimination and they are the biggest purveyors of discriminatory acts.

This Government cannot talk about job creation for the people of Guyana. It cannot talk about fighting corruption, because it is the most corrupt Government ever in our history - proven so. It cannot talk about competence. Every day the blunders of this Government are bewildering and perplexing. They are unbelievable. They are of such colossal scale that it is unbelievable.

Cost of living of the people should be the concern, crime and criminality, not excuses. All the things that matter to people, wealth creation, job creation, welfare, cost of living, everything, this Government has failed all and, therefore, I think that the case has been made for the no confidence motion in this Government. They should go to the sugar belt and see mothers who cannot send their children to school, the sugar belts, the rice belts and in Linden.

I will commend a no-confidence motion to the House. I do hope that people would develop a conscience over there and address this.

One last thing, I have an article here that came out of the Walter Rodney Commission of Inquiry. Mr. Sydney James told us where 155 high-powered guns went to in the 1970s. He is the head of SOCU. He now said that they have not been recovered. Maybe, we should find out about this.

Thank you Mr. Speaker. [*Applause*] (8.59 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member for his statement. This exhausts our list of speakers. We will then put the question. I see no request from anyone for rebuttal on anything, so we will put

the question. First, we have the voice vote, then if the result of the voice vote is not satisfactory, immediately thereafter division is to be called, not now. That is how it goes.

I now put the question which is that this House has no confidence in the Government. I think that that is the text of the motion. I am mindful to use the exact words which are in the motion. The text is:

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly has no confidence in the Government.”

Question put

Hon. Member, you will call for a division after I have given my opinion, and it is if that opinion does not please you. We are doing this as it is required to do in the Standing Orders. After the Speaker gives his opinion, then it is if the opinion does not meet you. My opinion is that the noes have it, because I distinctly heard an extra shout after, so the noes have it.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, based on our advice, I, therefore, call for a division. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: It is based on the Speaker’s advice and the leading of the Standing Order.

Ms. Teixeira: Yes Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Clerk of the National Assembly will take the numbers. I would ask for your cooperation so that we could maintain silence so that no mistake is made.

Assembly divided: Ayes 33, Noes 32, as follows:

Ayes

Mr. Bharrat

Ms. Veerasammy

Mr. Gill

Mr. Anamayah

Mr. Dharamlall

Mr. Charlie

Mr. Damon

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Chand

Mr. Neendkumar

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks

Mr. G. Persaud

Mr. Mustapha

Ms. Selman

Dr. Westford

Dr. Ramsaran

Ms. G. Persaud

Mr. Croal

Mr. Hamilton

Ms. Chandarpal

Dr. V. Persaud

Mr. Seeraj

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Lumumba

Ms. Pauline Campbell-Sukhai

Dr. Anthony

Ms. Manickchand

Mr. Nandlall

Mr. Ali

Ms. Teixeira

Mr. Rohee

Mr. Jagdeo

Noes

Mr. Rutherford

Mr. Rajkumar

Aye

Mr. C. Persaud – Yes [*Interruption*]

Ms. Bancroft: No. Correct yourself. Correct it now.

The Clerk: Mr. C. Persaud. Mr. Charrandass Persaud

Mr. C. Persaud: I already said yes. [*Interruption*]

Ms. Bancroft: No. No. Charrandass say “no”. No.

Mr. C. Persaud: I have already voted.

Ms. Bancroft: No. No. Charrandass, no.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member.

Minister of Public Health [Ms. Lawrence]: Thank you for acknowledging me. Mr. Speaker We are asking for a time out of two minutes.

Mr. Speaker: What sort of thing is that? Hon. Member, there is no time out on a vote.

Mr. Charrandass Persaud. You called the name Mr. Charrandass Persaud. That is how you normally called him, Mr. C. Persaud. Let us go through the thing and deal with it.

Hon Member, there is no time out on a vote. A vote is taken to conclusion. Mr. Isaacs, I would say to take the vote from the beginning.

9.12 p.m.

Hon. Members, I have directed the Clerk to take the names of the Government Members from the beginning so that there is no ... [*Interruption*]

Noes

Mr. Rutherford

Mr. Rajkumar

Aye

Mr. Charrandass Persaud (Yes, Yes, Yes)

Noes

Mr. Figueira

Mr. Carrington

Mr. Allen

Mr. Adams

Ms. Bancroft

Ms. Wade

Ms. Patterson

Dr. Henry

Ms. Charles-Broomes

Dr. Cummings

Mr. Sharma

Ms. Garrido-Lowe

Ms. Ferguson

Ms. Dawn Hastings-Williams

Mr. Holder

Mr. Gaskin

Ms. Hughes

Mr. Patterson

Ms. Lawrence

Mr. Trotman

Mr. Jordan

Dr. Norton

Mr. Bulkan

Dr. Roopnaraine

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Ms. Ally

Mr. Williams

Mr. Ramjattan

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nagamootoo

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, you have heard the result of the vote, 33 in favour and 32 against. It means that the motion is carried. What happens here after, Hon. Members, we will continue the work and complete the work of this evening and then we will deal with the consequences of this.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, this brings us to the end of our work for this evening. It remains only for me to express to Members my gratitude for the manner in which this debate took place, very spirited in many respects; not disrespectful as it could have been. Certainly, I think that Members have an opportunity to express themselves in a way which leaves us all with a view that Members were prepared to deal with the motion, and for that, I express my thanks to Members.

It is that time of the year that we must recognise that we are moving into what is called the “Christmas Season”, and it is our last opportunity to see each other for the holidays. I would, therefore, want to wish everyone the very best for the season. Christmas is characterised by the words “peace”, “love” and “joy” and it tells a tale of many things, all of them good, even Herod’s attempt, to have the wise men return to him and tell him where the child was, was unsuccessful. What I will say to us is that this no confidence motion is an exceptional learning experience, I think, for all of us, and for that, we should thank ourselves. There is more to be done in relation to it and, I think, in the coming weeks, if not days, that will be known and appreciated. Thank you all, Hon. Members, for the debate and I will wish you all a very Merry Christmas. I trust that when we gather again, we will be refreshed and energised to continue with the work which will be set before us.

I do not know whether Hon. Members would wish to exchange greetings. Hon. Members are not willing to exchange greetings. We all cannot be unhappy about the end of the year. We are, then, Hon. Members, I will ask the Prime Minister to move the adjournment.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Speaker, I know that we are closing in on Christmas Day and the festive occasion. I want to wish you, Your Honour, and the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, members of the Parliament Office and staff, members of the media and all Members of the House a Merry

Christmas and a Happy New Year. We hope that the peace that has prevailed over Guyana over the past three years, and every year since the last years, will continue, and that the people will learn to share and live as one nation and to affirm our motto, “One people.” These debates here have been, of course, very robust today and the results are historic and unprecedented, but nevertheless, Guyana has to move forward. We have to find ways and means of letting the Guyanese people understand what has happened here today and how we move on from here. Saying all of these words, I would like to once again wish the Members of the National Assembly a happy holiday.

In so saying, I would like to move the adjournment of the House until the 3rd January, 2019.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, I wonder if you would withhold the adjournment until...

Mr. Jagdeo: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to share the sentiments expressed by the Hon. Prime Minister in wishing you, the members of staff of the National Assembly and all of those who have over the years been at the disposal or have served the Members of Parliament here in the National Assembly, to allow us to do our job here. I want to wish them a Merry Christmas and all the best for the new year. I would also like to extend best wishes to all of the other colleagues in the National Assembly on both sides of the House and also to all the Guyanese people who were listening to us, notwithstanding what took place in the National Assembly today, as the Prime Minister said, it is unprecedented, and it is pushing our democracy forward.

We, on both sides of the House, have to now sit and talk about how we move forward over the course of the next few months and over the future. I am doing that on this side, very conscious of what I mean and what implications it would have for the future of Guyana. I believe that I have expressed this sentiment over and over that we both have to constituencies, the People’s National Congress, the AFC, a diminished one – I must take a dig - and the People’s Progressive Party. We have to find a way now to ensure that we maximise all of the national skills; look past the politics of it so that we can, in the upcoming era which can be transformative, present a united face to the rest of the world. This, although it may seem unprecedented and maybe disappointing for Members on the Government’s side, is also an opportunity. I would hope that we all see this as an opportunity for engagement very early, on both sides, and decide how we will chart the way forward.

Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

Mr. Nagamootoo: I now move the adjournment of the House until the 3rd January, 2019.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the House stands adjourned until the 3rd January, 2019.

Adjourned accordingly at 9.26 p.m.