

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2012) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

26TH Sitting

Monday, 30TH July, 2012

The Assembly convened at 2.19 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Speaker's apology for the delay of the commencement of sitting

Mr. Speaker: Good afternoon everyone, my apologies for the delay. We were waiting on the list of agreed speakers for today's sitting. That is still being prepared, but I thought that we should start and await that in a minute.

Apology for traffic arrangements

Mr. Speaker: I need to apologise to all Members and members of the public who might have been inconvenienced by the traffic arrangements put in place. I understand that the barricades were there since 7.30 this morning. I continue to interface and to engage the office of the Commissioner of Police to see whether those restrictions could be relaxed to make life a bit more tolerable for not only those of you visiting, but also for members of the public in general.

Congratulations to the Members doing well at party's election

Mr. Speaker: The only other announcement I have, I believe, is to congratulate Members of the House who seem to have done well at their party election. I refer to Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger on

being elected leader of the People's National Congress Reform (PNCR); Mr. Basil Williams on his election as chairman of that party; Mrs. Volda Lawrence on being elected vice chairperson and to Mr. Bulkan on being elected as treasurer. I believe the entire Assembly congratulates you. Dr. Norton, congratulations on your election. I had always thought that Mr. Bulkan was a member of the Working People's Alliance. When I saw the news this morning I was taken by some surprise. Congratulations all.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper and Report were laid:

- (i) The High Court (Family Proceedings and Procedure) Rules 2012 – No. 2 of 2012. *[Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs.]*
- (ii) The Annual Report of the National Industrial and Commercial Investments Ltd., for the year ended 31st December, 2005. *[Minister of Finance.]*

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Written Replies

Mr. Speaker: The two answers from the Minister of Education have not yet been received but we would be grateful, Minister, if you could say when this House would be in receipt of your answers to those questions.

Minister of Education [Ms. Manickchand]: Mr. Speaker, as Your Honour has said so many times, there is no obligation or directive that we must answer. The fact that they remain on the Order Paper...

Mr. Speaker: I never would have said so. Sorry. There is an expectation that if a Member asks...

Ms. Manickchand: There is an expectation, but...

Mr. Speaker: If the Government side sees it as not as its duty to answer, that is a different matter, but it is not something that I would counter.

Ms. Manickchand: Mr. Speaker, the fact that I have left them and asked specifically that it be kept on the Order Paper is because we have every intention of answering that question.

1. LEVEL SEVEN STUDENTS PROVIDED WITH TEXTBOOKS IN THE FOUR 'CORE' SUBJECTS

Mrs. Hughes: Can the Hon. Minister say how many Level Seven students have been provided by the government with individual textbooks in the four 'core' subject areas?

2. ACQUIRING LEVEL SEVEN TEXTBOOKS IN THE FOUR 'CORE' SUBJECTS

Mrs. Hughes: Can the Hon. Minister say how much money was spent during the period January 1, 2007 – December 31, 2011 on acquiring Level Seven textbooks in the four 'core' subject areas?

No answers provided for questions 1 and 2.

3. AIR QUALITY MONITORING, NETWORK AND OVERSIGHT AT BOSAI

Dr. Roopnarine: Could the Hon. Minister provide to this House:

- (i) Is there air quality monitoring being done in Linden, and if so, what are the results?
- (ii) Does the Environmental Protection Agency plan to have Bosai deploy an air quality network in Linden? If not, please indicate why?
- (iii) Who at the EPA is qualified to provide regulatory oversight for air quality? Please indicate both the qualifications and experience in regulatory oversight for air quality.

Minister of Natural Resources and Environment [Mr. R. Persaud]:

- (i) Is there air quality monitoring done in Linden, and if so, what are the results?

The particulate matter is the primary issue, specifically fine particulate matter that is generated from combustion due to bauxite processing. In order to effectively monitor the quality of air in Linden, the EPA would be required to erect monitoring stations at strategic locations to acquire data in a timely and cost effective manner. Efforts have commenced to acquire the appropriate

equipment to execute an air quality monitoring protocol at a local scale for Linden, which will be prepared shortly.

However, it is being monitored by Bosai twice per year. The last occasion was during 3rd to 30th January, 2012. They have started monitoring for the second period starting of June to present time.

It must be noted that under the Project “*Institutional Strengthening in Support of Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS)*”, a total of USD 3.28 million is budgeted to strengthen the institutional capacities of the OCC, PMO, REDD-Secretariat, GFC, GGMC and EPA. For the EPA and GGMC, institutional diagnostics of these institutions will be conducted and, it is expected that the EPA will benefit through the establishment of a clear and structured framework for the achievement of effective implementation of environmental safeguards, including monitoring activities for air quality, among other parameters.

- (ii) Does the Environmental Protection Agency plan to have Bosai deploy an air quality network in Linden, if not, please indicate why?

With the imminent installation of two dust collector systems by Bosai, to mitigate dust pollution in Linden, plans are afoot by the EPA to set up an air quality monitoring protocol in Linden utilising officers of the EPA. The main objectives of this monitoring protocol are to observe the concentration of emissions occurring before and after the installation of the dust collection systems so as to verify that the technology is functioning effectively and to its optimum and to develop air quality monitoring data for Linden.

- (iii) Who at the EPA is qualified to provide regulatory oversight for air quality? Please indicate both the qualifications and experience in regulatory oversight for air quality.

There is no officer at the EPA with specialised qualifications in Air Quality Management. Such expertise would have to be sourced, internationally, by the Agency since the University of Guyana does not provide studies in such a specialised area. We are examining possibilities for specialised training overseas for some of our officers. The members of the Air Quality Unit all have first degrees, namely chemistry and environmental science. In addition, the Unit is

supported by other members (Director EMD and SEOs) of the Division who have master's degree in Environmental Studies, Science and Engineering.

However, I am aware that Bosai has presently completed two dust collector systems, one of which is now under trial for Kiln 14 and the second which is about 60% complete for Kiln 13 will be operational by October 31, 2012.

The first unit for kiln is expected to be fully operational and commissioned on July 28, 2012 when we hope to see eradication of the dust nuisance starting with Kiln 14. This will be a very significant achievement and satisfies a commitment made by the company as well as the needs of the community.

This achievement comes after some 50 years following DEMBA, Guymine and Linmine without any attempt to satisfy this environmental duty, save an aborted effort to introduce an ESP Unit.

4. AGREEMENTS SIGNED WITH GUYANA GOLDFIELDS, FIRST BAUXITE COMPANY AND SANDSPRING RESOURCES

Dr. Roopnarine: Could the Hon. Minister kindly provide the feasibility studies for the ministerial agreements signed with Guyana Goldfields, First Bauxite Company and Sandspring Resources?

Mr. R. Persaud: Having regard to a clause of the mineral agreements executed among the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission and related parties stipulates that:

“The Parties shall treat all information relating to the Project including, without limitation, any report required to be filed by the Company hereunder, as confidential and shall only disclose such information to third parties in accordance with certain provisions.”

Therefore, given that the feasibility studies contain significant confidential information, these should not be disclosed without first obtaining the written consent of the companies.

Further it may be important to mention that in preparing their feasibility studies (which have been copyrighted), these companies are required to adhere to the guidelines of the Canadian

Securities Administrators' National Instrument 43-101 (Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects) once information related to mineral properties held by them are reported on stock exchanges within Canada.

Oral Reply

5. NEW CHAIRMAN OF GUYSUCO'S BOARD

Dr. Roopnarine: I beg to ask the Minister of Agriculture Question No. 5 on the Order Paper standing in my name:

- (i) Could the Hon. Minister say, who is the new Chairman of GuySuCo's Board, since Dr. Nanda Gopaul demitted office?

Minister of Agriculture [Dr. Ramsammy]: The new Chairman of the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo's) Board is Dr. Rajendra Singh.

Dr. Roopnarine:

- (ii) Could the Hon. Minister say whether the incumbent is resident in Guyana?

Dr. Ramsammy: The Chairman, Dr. Rajendra Singh, is a resident in New Jersey.

Dr. Roopnarine:

- (iii) If the Chairman is indeed a resident in New Jersey, could the Hon. Minister say what arrangements are made for the Chairman to discharge his responsibilities?

Dr. Ramsammy: The Chairman does visit Guyana once per month. In addition, the Chairman is in daily contact with the Minister, other Board members and the management through emails and the telephone.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplemental question?

Mr. Speaker: Go ahead.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Minister, through the Speaker, could you kindly tell us whether you exhausted a particular list of persons, who are resident in Guyana, who were not competent to fill

the position and then you had to go to New Jersey, and whether the people of Guyana will be billed with a return fare for the twelve months, in the year, for the Chairman to attend Board meetings?

Dr. Ramsammy: I am sure that there are many competent persons who could serve as Board members and as Chairman. Dr. Rajendra Singh has been serving on the Board for several years. Dr. Singh is afforded, through GuySuCo, an economy class ticket.

Deputy Speaker [Mrs. Backer]: Just a follow-up question for clarity. Is it an economy class ticket monthly, Hon. Minister? I just want to be sure about that.

Dr. Ramsammy: It is for whenever he visits.

Dr. Roopnarine: May I ask a...?

Mr. Speaker: Is it a supplemental question?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes, please.

Mr. Speaker: By right, only two is allowed. Seeing that you are the originator for the initial question, I will allow one from you.

Dr. Roopnarine: Thank you Mr. Speaker. In addition to the expenses incurred with travel, are there other expenses, having to do with lodging, and so on, that are attended on this?

Dr. Ramsammy: Yes. There is lodging cost that is paid through GuySuCo.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The following Bills were introduced and read the first time:

1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2012 – Bill No. 12/2012

A Bill intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Local Government Act.”

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION BILL – Bill No. 13/2012

A Bill intituled:

“AN ACT to establish the Local Government Commission, as provided for by Article 78A of the Constitution, to provide for the Commission’s functions and procedure, and for connected and incidental purposes.” [*Minister of Local Government and Regional Development.*]

The Bills were referred to a Special Select Committee

PUBLIC BUSINESS

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

MOTION

CONDEMN THE KILLING OF AND THE INJURY TO SEVERAL PERSONS AT LINDEN, UPPER DEMERARA-BERBICE REGION, ON WEDNESDAY, 18TH JULY, 2012 AND TO DEMAND THE RESIGNATION OF HON. CLEMENT ROHEE, M.P., MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS

WHEREAS in accordance with Section 138(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Guyana no person shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of the sentence of a court in respect of an offence under the Laws of Guyana of which he has been convicted;

AND WHEREAS three unarmed persons – Shemroy Bouyea of Wismar Housing Scheme, Ivan Lewis of Wismar Housing Scheme and Ron Somerset of Amelia’s Ward – were shot and killed by Police at Mc Kenzie, Linden during a peaceful protest on Wednesday, 18th July, 2012 in which minimum force was not applied by the Police to disperse the crowd but, rather, lethal fire was opened causing death and injury to several persons;

AND WHEREAS it seems evident that, contrary to conventional police training doctrine, with particular reference to the control of crowds, the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Clement Rohee, M.P., is reported by the Government Information Agency on 23rd July, 2012 to have stated:

“tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons could have been used to restore order, however, live rounds is a deadly response that is not catered for nowhere (sic) in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), in a situation such as this...”

AND WHEREAS the National Assembly is the supreme legislative forum of our Republic wherein the people's elected representatives discuss and determine matters of national interest and in which Ministers of the Government, in particular, have a dual obligation to both direct the executive arms of the state and to account to their electors for their governance and in which the National Assembly requires that every Minister discharges his or her obligation to the nation, be held accountable and accepts responsibility for the performance and behaviour of his or her Ministry;

AND WHEREAS the Honourable Clement Rohee, M.P., is Minister of Home Affairs and is authorised under the Police Act, Chapter 16:01 to issue "general orders and directions" to the Commissioner of Police for the command and superintendence of the Guyana Police Force;

AND WHEREAS if the Police Force performs in a manner so egregiously incompetent that the Administration is likely to be brought into ridicule or contempt, the Minister in accordance with the doctrine of ministerial responsibility that not only binds the Minister to the Administration's policies but, also binds the Administration to the Minister's performance, thereby requires that he must resign if his conduct undermines public confidence in his ability to hold high office with competence;

AND WHEREAS this country has witnessed a pattern of threats to public security in the form of the failure to stanch the spate of criminal violence – including banditry; execution; extra-judicial killings; murder; narcotics-trafficking; piracy; torture; the shooting of peaceful protesters on 6th December, 2011 and various corrupt practices in the Guyana Police Force – while, responsibility for public security rested with the Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Clement Rohee, M.P.;

AND WHEREAS this Assembly is obligated to consider the evidence of mismanagement and maladministration of any Ministry of the Government which could have been avoided or prevented by prudent administration, especially in light of the decision of the Minister of Home Affairs to act only after the shooting as expressed in a statement published in the state-owned Guyana Chronicle Newspaper dated 19th July which reads, inter alia:

"...the Minister of Home Affairs has, within the meaning of the Police Act Chapter 16:01, issued general and specific directions to the Commissioner of Police (ag) to effect immediate changes at the command level at E&F Police Division of which Linden is an integral part."

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly condemns the killing of three persons and the injury to several others by the Guyana Police Force in Linden on Wednesday, 18th July, 2012 and extends sincerest condolences to the families of the deceased and sympathy to the injured persons;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly censures and expresses ‘no confidence’ in the Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Clement Rohee, M.P., over his inability to discharge his responsibility for public security and calls for the immediate revocation of his appointment as a Minister of the Government and for his dismissal from office.” [*Brigadier (Ret’d) Granger*]

Assembly resumed debate.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the first item of Public Business today, of course, would be the resumption of the debate on the motion to “CONDEMN THE KILLING OF AND THE INJURY TO SEVERAL PERSONS AT LINDEN, UPPER DEMERARA-BERBICE REGION, ON WEDNESDAY, 18TH JULY, 2012 AND TO DEMAND THE RESIGNATION OF HON. CLEMENT ROHEE, M.P., MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS” . I am still not in receipt of that list but I will invite the first person slated to proceed with the debate. I recognise Minister Robert Persaud, Hon. Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment to commence this afternoon’s proceedings, *vis-a-vis* the debate.

Mr. R. Persaud: I am quite sure that all of us in this National Assembly, on this particular motion, do carry a heavy heart and a sense of sadness. In any law based society, in any society in which we value human life, human rights, and also in which we protect the constitutional right of our people to protest, the loss of life during those activities is certainly one in which it is tragic, regretful, and one in which it demands that the entire society, the entire nation, should take a step back and reflect. In that spirit, Mr. Speaker, you would recall that, even on the evening of that tragic event, the Government of Guyana, on July 18th, issued a statement, just to recall, and the opening paragraph reads:

“The Government of Guyana sincerely regrets the loss of life and injuries as events took an unfortunate turn for the worse this evening in Linden. The Government extends

condolences and sympathies to the families of those who suffered injuries and the loss of life.”

That was also followed by an address to the nation by no other than His Excellency the President, Donald Ramotar, who in his address stated:

“It is with a heavy heart that I address you on the tragic developments in Linden over the past week which has resulted in the deaths of three persons, injuries to others and the destruction of property. I am deeply distressed by these developments. To the families of those who lost their lives, I extend my heartfelt sympathies. I am all too aware that nothing that I say or do can replace your loss but I want to let you know how greatly pained and grieved I am about what took place.”

The President went on to state:

“My Government will do whatever it can to see you through this most difficult period.”

In that address, the President initiated and gave his firm commitment to a Commission of Inquiry as well as to other mechanisms to have the concerns addressed.

Then, too, persons would want to know what the view of the People’s Progressive Party (PPP) is on this particular tragedy. Again, I wish to quote a press statement that was issued by the People’s Progressive Party on 27th July, 2012. It stated:

“The People’s Progressive Party condemns the political unrest in Linden which led to the deaths of three persons and injuries to others. Our sympathy goes out to the relatives of those who died and wish those who were injured a speedy recovery.”

Also, in that statement, the People’s Progressive Party reinforced the commitment of His Excellency Donald Ramotar to a Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the shooting events in Linden.

I state, and I recall these statements by the Government, by the President, by the PPP, to make it absolutely clear that on this side of the House there is absolutely no attempt to justify the deaths or even to condone what happened, but rather it is to give due process its time for us to determine what actually happened.

We must ensure that in our deliberations here in the National Assembly, as was pointed out by other speakers, we are not prejudicial or are we pre-emptive. That is why in the Leader of the Opposition... Mr. Speaker I wish to join you in congratulating the Leader of Opposition on his election as the leader of the People's National Congress, and also Mr. Basil Williams, Mrs. Volda Lawrence, Dr. George Norton and Mr. Bulkan on their positions respectively, as a result of last night's elections (PNCR).

We must not allow ourselves to agree to due process and then, on the other hand, here being the highest deliberative body in the land, trying to undermine that particular principle. That is why I wish to speak on the amendment, which has been tabled in the name of the Hon. Prime Minister, to the motion which we are debating, which was tabled by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. Before going into that motion, I must say that not only are we, as a nation...

Mr. Speaker: One second, Hon. Minister. I would just like to ensure that every Member has a copy of the amendments tabled in the name of the Hon. Prime Minister which is probably before the House.

Mr. R. Persaud: Before I go into the particular amendments by the Hon. Prime Minister, I wish to state that not only are we aggrieved at the loss of life, but also with the resultant blockades that have taken place in the arteries that give us access to our hinterland has also affected many ordinary Guyanese. It is not only the people of Linden, ordinary citizens, and residents of Linden are affected economically, socially and otherwise, but that impact has been felt and, in fact, it is intensifying right across the country. In that regard, I just want to provide a brief update on the impact so that we understand the extent to which those activities are taking a toll.

In terms of the forestry sector, nearly all of the operations within the Region 10 area...I must say that Region 10 accounts for close to forty-six per cent of all community forestry operation in this country. It is unique. Across our forest estate, there are large Timber Sales Agreements (TSAs), there are also State Forest Permit Holders and, which was developed over the last couple of years, Community Forestry Organisations, whereby persons who, due to the lack of access to forest areas, would have gone about and engaged in illegal forestry. What was done is: that we brought them together, formed an organisation and made available to them forested areas for them to conduct their activities. Region 10 is the area in which there is close to half of the

country's community forestry organisations. We are talking about a number of community forestry organisations that are currently on standstill. They have produce that cannot be taken to the point of export; they have buyers who are cancelling orders, not only external buyers, but also right here in Georgetown and along the East Bank of Demerara where a number of sawmills were forced to close operation. That impact is already being felt.

In some regard, also, some of the operators have had to use aircraft. Some of the chartered flights have cost close to \$250,000 just to shuttle in emergency food ration, five hundred or seven hundred pounds, and that certainly would have taken a financial toll and it has brought many of those operations to a standstill.

The next area of impact, which is direct and immediate to Linden, is the issue of bauxite. As many of us are aware, Bosai plants has been shut down; its mining operation has not been in action for the past nine to ten days. There are two ships which are coming in for Bosai. It will only be able to fill one of those ships and that means that the demurrage cost, and even its obligations to buyers, is certainly in jeopardy. Already the company has indicated that its loss is close to US\$1 million or G\$200 million. There is close to five hundred workers who cannot go to work and whose income... and there is certainly some level of uncertainty for them and their families.

Regarding the gold mining sector, it is the same. There are three mining districts which are directly affected. There is a lot of mining taking place in Frenchman, Mahdia and Siparuni – just to name a few of the areas. There are close to two hundred dredges that are affected and close to two thousand miners who have had to stop or reduce their operation.

I say so because we need to understand the social as well as the economic impact of what is taking place in Linden. We have been meeting with stakeholders and we have been looking at ways in which we can ease the burden, but, more or less, the expectation of all stakeholders is that we have an early resumption to normalcy.

In that context, Mr. Speaker, I wish to come to amendments which were made and presented to the National Assembly today by the Hon. Prime Minister. We do not disagree with the expressions of sympathy. I think everyone in the National Assembly can agree on that. We do not disagree with the need for a process. Certainly we should not and we ought not to disagree on

a process in which all of us will have the confidence that will bring the facts to the table and, as it were, get to the root of the issues that took place in connection with 18th July.

I think that all of us, any reasonable or any sane Guyanese, would want us to, at least, give that process a chance before we find who is guilty and who is not guilty. The fact that the political parties, the fact that many stakeholders themselves, have given that commitment to a Commission of Inquiry as the mechanism through which we can ascertain what took place, who is culpable, what led to what took place, I think, it is logical. It is a reasonable position that we give that a chance to work before we go in this mode of pointing fingers, or certainly as the motion seeks to do, tabled by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, to have the Minister of Home Affairs removed from office.

If we go to the amended motion tabled by the Hon. Prime Minister, we will see that perhaps there are various strands of commonality between what was tabled by the Leader of the Opposition and what is now being proposed as an amendment. There is a recognition that we need to condemn what took place. We also need to sympathise with those who are bereaved. And we also need to ensure that those who were injured are, in a way, treated well and they have an early recovery.

Also, there is that common recognition that we are all pained as a society. I think in our country we need to put a higher premium, a higher value, in terms of peace, in terms of love and in terms of having affection for our society. We need to recognise this because too often in our history as an independent nation...Just recently, if we look at Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica they celebrated their 50th Anniversary as independent nations. In Guyana, very soon, in several years, we will be doing so. Even those societies, those countries themselves, we have seen that they continue to be stalked, continue to be afflicted, as one can say, by this culture of violence.

Whenever there are incidents and tragedies such as this, it gives us that opportunity to rethink. It gives us that opportunity to step back and look at this whole concept of a culture of violence and whether what we do by acts of omission or what we do not do as acts of omission or commission, we do not contribute in any way to this culture of violence.

I think that what we can draw from this episode, and we hope that the Commission of Inquiry perhaps will point to some facts, are things that we need to do as a State and things that we need

to do as stakeholders too, when we lead people, when we organise people, when we mobilise people, the type of messages we give people and see whether or not we are contributing to this culture of violence...

Mr. Speaker: You need to add to the list when you instruct people, as well.

Mr. R. Persaud: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker...because there are ramifications. I want to use this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the amendment tabled by the Prime Minister, it is one in which we are trying to promote a culture in which we reject violence, a culture in which we promote tolerance, a culture in which we enhance a law based society. I do hope that as the representatives of the people, sitting in this National Assembly, we will use this defining moment to rethink, to re-engineer and to reassess where we want to take our country.

Anyone who stands up and justifies violence, anyone who stands up and justifies killing in any form or anyone who stands up and justifies, as it were, the restrictions or, as it were, decant of any human rights of our people, certainly would be doing injury to this whole process of promoting a culture of non-violence. I do hope that in our deliberations, in our consideration of this moment, we will reflect. We, on the Government side, through the amendments that are tabled here, it certainly gives us that opportunity to reflect, but it is not only to reflect, but when wrongdoings and where errors have been identified, we will use the opportunity to correct for the future - for the stability of this nation.

All of us, no matter which side we sit on, or from what persuasion we come, when we hear the news in the United States of America, Canada and elsewhere... When we make the news is only when there is some unrest, violence or disturbance in our society. That, I think, is not what we want, as Guyanese, for the international community to view us for. We must think about what all of us, each one of us – political parties, religious organisations, and social groups, no matter which organisation we come from – can do to continue to develop and continue to construct and reinforce a society that gives us that positive image.

2.49 p.m.

I do hope, based on the amendments to the motion that has been tabled by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the amendments tabled by the Hon. Prime Minister, it will give us that

opportunity to signal and to send that level of maturity, not only to the people of Guyana, but also to the wider society.

In my brief presentation I wish to say, and I wish to submit, that I think it is apt, very relevant, I think it is very constructive, and in the spirit of ensuring that there is a prevailing sentiment, but also for us to create that atmosphere of understanding and of doing things in a way in which we give recognition to due process, that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, now leader of the PNCR would give serious thought to the amendments, as well as other Members of the Opposition, tabled by the Prime Minister, so that there can be some consensus, some understanding in terms of moving forward and that we can get the commitments that were made by the President. I do know that even up to today there was progress and work taking place on moving forward the Commission of Inquiry so that we can have the entire society be aware of what took place and what needs to be done to prevent such incident from taking place.

With these remarks, I wish to submit that the amendments by the Prime Minister be supported by the Members of the National Assembly.

Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

Minister of Human Services and Social Security [Ms. Webster]: I rise in this honourable House in response to the motion tabled by the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Member Mr. David Granger.

First of all, let me extend sincere condolences on behalf of the Government of Guyana and on my own behalf to the families of those three persons who died in Linden during the protest action on July 18th last. Also to offer my heartfelt sympathies to those persons who were injured and are currently hospitalised as well as those who are traumatised by this event. This incident is most unfortunate and, more so, at this particular time in our country. Like my colleagues on this side of the House, I wish to condemn those actions which led to the death of those three persons. All the citizens of Guyana are paying attention to this issue. This is a national issue and we, as leaders of this country, have been elected by the people of Guyana to address their concerns which ultimately could hinder our country's national development. It is therefore important and necessary for all of us to accept that we must provide leadership in the interest of all of our people. His Excellency President Donald Ramotar recently give a commitment, via a press

statement, for a full and independent investigation to be held into the events which occurred on July 18th, including the deaths of those three persons. In fact, His Excellency President Ramotar, based upon discussions held with the Opposition political parliamentary parties, national and regional stakeholders, agreed to establish an independent Commission of Inquiry to examine the events which occurred in Linden.

I stand today by my colleague, the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Clement Rohee. I also support the initiative of His Excellency President Donald Ramotar to initiate a Commission of Inquiry. I am therefore confident that our Government will follow the recommendations which will result from that inquiry.

This motion is premature and I would therefore say that I am not in agreement with this motion in its current form, but I wish to offer my support for the proposed amendment being proposed by the Hon. Prime Minister, in this House, today.

It is with these few words, I thank you. [*Applause*]

Mr. Felix: We cannot deny that the incident on the 18th of July was most unfortunate. I would wish to put on record my sincerest sympathies to the relatives of Ron Somerset, Ivan Lewis and Shemroy Bouyea, all of whom were murdered by the men who took the oath to protect and serve them. That is why the A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) has brought this motion, mainly to point out to this nation that the Minister of Home Affairs has ministerial responsibility for the work of his Ministry, not just for his work, but for the work of his Ministry, so that in event of failure of it to execute a policy of Government, or if there is a complete breakdown in the performance of it, the Minister cannot cast the blame on the other operatives in the Ministry. He has to take responsibility.

We have heard the Hon. Member Mrs. Catherine Hughes expounded on the doctrine of ministerial responsibility and what action is expected to flow from it. We have also recognised in this House, based on the presentation by the Leader of the Opposition and Mrs. Hughes, that if the Minister is to accept responsibility he should resign. What we are asking here is not for the President to fire him, as was outlined by the Hon. Attorney General. We are saying that he must be moved by his moral conscience and go, so as to save this country from unnecessary deaths which have occurred ever since the PPP came into office. I will deal with that later.

The Constitution gives citizens of this country, article 147...

Mr. Speaker: One second Hon. Member. I am looking at the resolve clause of the motion. Are you varying it? Because you said that you are not asking for the Minister to be removed but that he should be moved by his conscience to resign. But the motion does say that there should be an immediate revocation of his appointment as a Minister. That is still the motion the extant motion on the floor.

Mr. Felix: Yes. There are two parts.

Mr. Speaker: One is to condemn the killings and the other is that the President revokes the appointment of this Minister.

Mr. Felix: But, he can also...

Mr. Speaker: He can.

Mr. Felix: He can also, by the exercise of his conscience, resign.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed, but I am saying what the motion says.

Mr. Felix: Yes. I agree.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Proceed.

Mr. Felix: Citizens of this country have the right to the freedom to assemble and the freedom of associations to form political parties and to belong to trade unions. The people of Linden, faced with a crisis of having to pay increased electrical rates, had decided to protest against the imposition of those rates. They applied for and got the requisite permission and in the process of executing a lawful function they were cut down by bullets. The Guyana Police Force is a trained organisation to deal with crowd control issues, as I know it. Based on what I have seen, or we have all seen on the television, it does not appear to me that there was adequate preparation to confront the issues at Linden.

Let us look at their dress. A unit deployed for crowd control duties ought to have, with it, adequate tear smoke, respirators and shields so that it can deal with violence in a graduated way. I did not see any shields and there was no need...

Mr. Speaker: When you demitted office, have you left any shield?

Mr. Felix: I left shields there. As a matter of fact, in my term we bought modern shields and we had rehearsals and practice sessions on the East Bank of Demerara with those shields.

[**An Hon. Member (Government):** What about the National Park?] At the National Park, another set of rehearsals were done there, but it was mainly on the East Bank of Demerara. The force has shields. I know that. The Guyana Police Force went way beyond of what it was required to do, to disperse the crowd. Those were unarmed people simply marching to express their feelings and frustrations with respect to the cruel rates which are being imposed on them and for that they were repaid with bullets. That was quite unprofessional. It speaks to the need for the Minister concerned to say what instruction, what advice, in accordance to section 6 (1) of the Police Act, which requires to give general orders and direction, in relation to a brewing problem. That is what we are after, but what we have seen with the Ministry of Home Affairs, since this Minister took office, is a series of killings - a series of brutal acts committed on our citizens. Since January, 2008, Guyanese at Lusignan suffered a massacre, what was the result – nothing, no inquiry. We do not know what happened there up to this date.

Mr. Speaker: Some charges were laid though. Were they not?

Mr. Felix: Pardon me.

Mr. Speaker: Were charges laid for there?

Mr. Felix: By the time we could have come out of the Lusignan massacre, there was the Bartica massacre. In June, 2008, eight men died at Lindo Creek.

[**Mr. Neendkumar:** You were the Commissioner.] No. Again, no inquiry was done. In October, 2009... [**Interruption**]
Mr. Speaker...

Mr. Speaker: We were going well. Go ahead.

Mr. Felix: ...while a teenager was in police custody at Leonora Police Station, his genitals were burnt. We still have the issue of the pirates which cannot be sensibly tackled. Fishermen are still being beaten and robbed when going about their lawful business. What I have chronicled here has been a litany of failures by the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs and that is why we call for his head to roll.

Mr. Speaker: Metaphorically.

Mr. Felix: It is metaphorically and not literally. How can this nation survive such neglect? How can this nation survive with incompetence at its head if we cannot sensibly deal with these issues and bring resolution to them? But, yet, there is more. The Hon. Minister, in overlooking the Guyana Police Force, allowed a purchase to take place of a boat at a cost of \$16 million dollars, and do you know what has happened? He called upon it to pay back. The Government money has been replaced, but the offence has not been punished. It looks as though, in this country, wrongdoings, on the Government side, have a cover-up – plastered over. Then there was the infamous I do not know what to call it. I cannot describe it. It is not a water cannon, as I know it; it is a water can, at best. The cannon went away from it, Mr. Speaker.

In today's newspaper, and I am looking here at the *Kaieteur News*, page 14, it states that the water cannon had to be taken to Linden on a low bed truck. It could not make the highway on its own. On its own independent motor force it could not make the highway. Then, when the water cannon was there and it was attempted to be put into operation – distress - it could not have worked. It was spilling water anywhere other than at the crowd. These issues sound humorous, but it is our moneys wasted. First of all, we heard it cost \$37 million and when I asked the question the Minister response was \$20 million, but we know that it can buy a Prado, or a good 4x4 jeep would cost, in Guyana, about \$20 million. My thing is, if that cost \$20 million, it had to be resurrected from some rubbish heap in China, polished up and brought here. That is what we have there. The issue here...

Mr. Speaker: Is it of Chinese origin or...?

Mr. Felix: That is what the Minister said in his response. I would have been pleased to be associated with the purchased of the water cannon, because in exercising the use of force, or deciding on the use of force, you need to start from the least and then traverse to the highest, depending on the circumstances at that time. Here, there is a water cannon, which was intended to save lives but it cannot help, so the poor policemen, in which the Hon. Leader of the Opposition had been calling for more training and equipment of the police, are still without an essential piece of equipment to be efficiently functioning and to help them in the discharge of their duties.

The rules of engagement, all over the world,...There were battle shields to tear smoke to firearms. There is now in place rubber bullets; there is the water cannon. My question to Hon. Minister earlier was to ensure that there are proper protocols for these two areas, more particularly the water cannon, for the use of force. I do not think that part of the question was answered, but at any rate what we have cannot be used.

These failures on the part of a senior Government functionary must be taken into context of the doctrine of ministerial responsibility. We do not want to pick on the Government Minister at any slight failing and ask for his resignation. What is being done here is assigning responsibility to the relevant Minister for a series of failures since he became the Minister of Home Affairs in 2006. That is what this motion is all about, because we cannot carry dead weight. This nation should not be allowed to carry dead weight. A Minister appointed to office must deliver. The Minister responsible for national security must take steps to ensure that safety is assured under his watch.

Look at this situation: When the PPP/C came into Government there was Minister Feroze Mohamed – no problems. He did what he was supposed to do; it removed him. It brought another honourable gentleman who sat in this House. [Ms. Teixeira: The Prime Minister was the next Minister of Home Affairs.] Yes. We know that. We do not have any problems with him, or you.

Mr. Speaker: Stand by Ms. Teixeira.

Mr. Felix: You did not cause deaths. The Prime Minister's stint was so short that we could hardly remember. There was the issue with Minister Gajraj – dead bodies all over the place. The only reason that he might not have ended up as a guest of the State is because of the inquiry. Then there was Minister Teixeira, great person, but the PPP/C was not satisfied with her because she was not delivering dead bodies, so it brought...

Mr. Speaker: With great respect, I will have to add that that insinuation I would not allow.

Mr. Felix: It is withdrawn, Mr. Speaker, and respectfully so.

Then with the current Minister of Home Affairs, again, dead bodies are all over the country. I am saying to you, Sir, that our issues need to be resolved in a much safer manner when the State's

law enforcement agencies engage our people. The police force should not be seen to be at war with its population. The police force must be seen to be protecting the public rather than gunning it down.

Mr. Speaker: Could you then respond to the previous speaker's statement about the culture of non-violence?

Mr. Felix: I was about to say that I would like to join Hon. Member Robert Persaud in that call because the violence seems to be pervading this country, but I saw Minister Manickchand attempting to deal with one part of it on the national scheme, domestic violence and violence in other forms. I am talking here about the police needing to resolve matters safely, but they cannot do so if they are not well equipped. They cannot do so if the requisite equipment that they need is not provided, or provided in a timely manner, or in good quality. We have a Minister who interferes with the work of the police. I knew that from the time he moved into the complex of the police's headquarters that trouble was coming. [Mrs. Backer: The trouble is here.] Yes, Hon. Member Backer, the trouble is here. The Minister, first of all, got involved with the Commissioner's work, with Mr. Ramnarine, but I will show something as to why they had wanted to kill Mr. Ramnarine. Well, I meant metaphorically.

Mr. Speaker: Did you mean his career?

Mr. Felix: It is his career.

Mr. Speaker: This is a motion about people being killed and so you have to be careful about...

Mr. Felix: I am showing you that this Minister is not doing his work. He is paying more attention to the work of the Commissioner. That is what I am coming to, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, I beg your indulgence. The Member is violating the Standing Orders, over and over again. I am appealing to you to please keep order. This is not a public meeting; this is not a rally. This is the National Assembly of Guyana, let us have some respect. The allegations are made, with no attempt to even put an example, making scathing attacks on people's personal lives and their political lives. I think it is unacceptable in this House.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, the Minister of Home Affairs is under scrutiny and there are going to be references to his tenure of office. I am monitoring Mr. Felix very closely, as you could see

and hear. I have asked him to put the last word “kill” into its proper context because of the nature of what we are dealing with. Mr. Felix is about to make a statement and I see him waving a piece of paper.

Mr. Felix: It is two pieces, Mr. Speaker. When I spoke about the Minister’s interference in the Commissioner’s work... Let me read a document. As a matter of fact, as I was leaving my home this morning I got a mail and when I opened that mail...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, let me say something. Have a seat. We are debating a motion on the Minister’s involvement, if at all, with regard to the killings, or the shootings, and the deaths on July 18th, so you have to be careful about introducing extraneous matters about interference in the office of the Commissioner. Those may very well be the issue of a substantive motion. I may allow you to make a reference, but I am not going to allow you to go into any debts because it has no bearing on the motion at hand. If so, it is the Minister, we will keep going on and changing the goalpost to get him on this and that. We are dealing with the issue and incident surrounding July 18th. I have no doubt that the file against him or against any Member may very well grow in thickness, but we have to be careful to what extent we move from July 18th into matters that have nothing to do with that date or incidental to it. Is that letter or that mail you have received today is a reference to something surrounding July 18th, either the leading up to the day itself or after, or is it something completely different to that?

Mr. Felix: It would not, Mr. Speaker, be leading up to July 18th, but it clearly shows the Minister’s behaviour in office.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Well let us hear it.

Mr. Felix: I am reading what is on the letterhead – Ministry of Home Affairs, Office of the Minister, addressed to Mr. Leroy Brummel.

“Dear Commissioner,

Application for firearm licence.

Reference is made to application for firearm licence submitted by...”

And that is omitted. The application is supported by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

“You are hereby requested to address this application in a specific manner, i.e. process expeditiously and in favour of the applicant in respect of a hand gun.”

The other one is just as similar to it. [Mrs. Backer: Signed by whom?] Signed: “Clement J. Rohee.”

Mr. Speaker: As you know, Ms. Teixeira, it was going to pass. In law, sometimes you ask a question and get the answer. It was going to pass without the signee. Go ahead.

Mr. Felix: I would not make the other comments. I am subject to your caution, Mr. Speaker, so I am going to hold the other comments probably for another time. This is why an officer got himself in problems.

Mr. Speaker: Was there not another regime for the handling of firearm licence, approved within recent months, where there was something done?

3.19 p.m.

Mr. Felix: Well, there is none that I know of. I heard of something else being introduced. We want a Minister who knows his role and who does his role.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Felix is not aware that the regulations concerning the firearms, which came out of the Commission of Inquiry and the Report of the Disciplined Forces Commission, were tabled in this House in 2009 and those govern the way the firearms... I am just elucidating as Mr. Felix seems to be unaware... [*Interruption from Opposition Members.*] Be quiet.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I need for my own edification... I know that there was something published recently on the grant of licences in which the Minister has some involvement, rightly or wrongly. There was something done. I just want to get a copy of it, if it is available, but I know that there is something.

Mr. Felix: The point I was about to make is that the Minister should focus on substantive areas of responsibility. I am saying here that there are very many other issues which need his attention but which apparently are being allowed to flounder without any proper attention.

The call by A Partnership for National Unity for the Minister to either resign is fully supported by me. The Minister should do the honourable thing and resign and do not wait for anything further. This is too much of a strain on this nation and we can do without him.

I thank you very much Mr. Speaker. [*Applause*]

Dr. Persaud: I rise to speak to the motion as presented by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. I do so with a deep sense of sadness, sadness at what transpired on the 18th of July and what continues to happen in Linden and throughout the rest of the country. This sadness is tempered with a bit of optimism today as I saw the amendments tabled by the Hon. Leader of the House, the Prime Minister.

I sit in this august House, like each one of the Hon. Members, carrying the sometimes difficult burdens of responsibility - responsibility for what I say; responsibility for what I do - and ultimately knowing that the responsibility for the decisions taken at this National Assembly of which I am a part will affect every single Guyanese in our country.

On entering this hallowed chamber, on entering this National Assembly, each one of us lost the privilege of making judgement based on emotion, on political agendas, personal gratifications, rather the people of Guyana, each one of the citizens of Guyana, expect from us rational, reasonable, intelligent outcomes which will benefit not some Guyanese, but all Guyanese. It is intelligent outcomes which will benefit Guyanese not today, not tomorrow, but for the future and also decisions that will inspire and influence parliamentarians and every aspiring parliamentarian in the future. At this juncture of our country's history, we all have a chance, as the highest decision making forum, to walk together unfettered by anything, save the welfare of the people of Guyana. I am asking this House to consider those amendments placed by the Prime Minister.

A motion has been brought to this House by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. This motion has flouted the norms of parliamentary procedures in a number of ways, in its presentation, and seeks an end result in one of the resolutions as beyond...

Mr. Speaker: One second Hon. Member. You said that this motion has flouted parliamentary procedures and that would mean that the Clerk and I allowed the procedures to be flouted. Just to say that there was extensive discussion - analysis. The Clerk even consulted with his counterpart

in Trinidad and Tobago. I spoke to the former Speaker of Grenada. We consulted experts, past and present, on this motion to ensure that everything correctly was done. Maybe it ought not to have been brought in the opinion of your party, but in terms of the procedures, I am saying that we did everything possible to ensure that it was properly before the House, if at all it was to be heard.

Dr. Persaud: Thank you for that clarification Mr. Speaker. But I would like to dissect this motion and pay attention to key phrases that were used within the motion. One of those was, I would just like to quote it:

“...censures and expresses a ‘no confidence’ in the Minister of Home Affairs,... over his inability to discharge his responsibility for public security and calls for the immediate revocation of his appointment as a Minister of Government and dismissal from office.”

The Constitution clearly stipulates no confidence can only be invoked in two instances, and I would like to state them.

Article 106 (6) of the Constitution clearly states that the Cabinet, including the President, can be asked to resign with a vote of no confidence by a majority vote by the National Assembly, but then... [Mrs. Backer: I hope you understand what that means.] Of course, I do. Thank you.

The other case in which that no confidence can be invoked is against the Leader of the Opposition, in article 184, if he does not enjoy the confidence of the National Assembly. If we look at articles 108 and 183 of our Constitution, it is pellucidly clear that the Minister can only demit his office if he resigns or it is directed by the President. In terms of asking it to be done by the National Assembly, it cannot happen.

Speaking of the Minister of Home Affairs responsibility and I quote from the Police Act, chapter 16:01:

“The Commissioner shall, subject to the general orders and directions of the Minister have command and superintendence of the Force, and he shall be responsible for peace, good order throughout Guyana...”

The power of the Minister is confined to general orders and directions of an executive nature to the Commissioner and those that would be seen as internally supervising or micromanaging any operation by the Guyana Police Force. In other words, the Minister may give general orders or directions as to what functional operations should be carried out, but not necessarily how they should be carried out.

I am not immune to the pain of those who have lost their family members or a loved one on the 18th of July through lethal gunfire in Linden. In fact, working in an emergency room has given me an unwanted familiarity with death by various types of trauma and the grief of the surviving family, subsequently. I listened to reports and presentations made by all those who sit in this National Assembly and emanating from the media. I listened to those reports of those who experienced traumatic moments and understand their pain, their sadness and, yes, even their anger. No one and no one should lose their life in struggling for what they believed in. We all would have struggled and even protested, for what we believe in, at some point in time.

It would be reprehensible of me to condone those fatal shootings. It would be remiss of me if I did not recognise the commitment of those health workers who fought tirelessly to save life and limb and the courage of those in this House who rendered assistance to those who were in dire straits. To those families who have lost their near, dear and love one, I extend my condolences, my prayers and my sympathy. To all the leaders who sit in this National Assembly, in the wake in the sequence of events which transpired, I say this: Reason and responsibility must be foremost in our mind and in our actions. We should not be cavalier in our statements, nor in our actions without regard for implications and consequences that may follow there on. Every citizen of this country has the fundamental right to life and the loss of life should not be used - I am going to borrow one word - as “collateral” to fuel political agenda.

If we look at article 38 of the Constitution it talks about the right to life and how life can be lost, what is constitutionally allowed in terms of taking life. I am sure that all Members are fully aware of this article in the Constitution. I merely draw from our Constitution. No one in this House should or is dismissing that people have died; no one is taking the enormity of those deaths lightly. We are a country with laws and with a Constitution. These instruments govern the way forward. There are initiatives by the Government and the President, objective evidence-based initiatives and means of establishing what transpired, and these have been implemented in

the form of post-mortems involving independent personnel, such as pathologist, and a Commission of Inquiry has also been one such initiative. These should be allowed to determine the way forward, how we should proceed within the ambit of the law, as the findings, unearthed through these media, will determine who is culpable, who bears responsibility, and I have no doubt in my mind, once this is revealed, the penalties will be just.

Every action in life brings with it consequences and more so responsibilities. We have a responsibility that our actions do not worsen an already volatile situation. We have a responsibility to every citizen in Guyana that our actions do not in any way encroach on their fundamental rights. I want to quote again from the Constitution, article 40:

“Every person in Guyana is entitled to a basic right to a happy, creative and productive life, free from hunger, ignorance and want. That right includes the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual.”

Blocking the access bridges, haranguing and harassing others not involved in a cause deny them this fundamental right. People are hungry; people are suffering; blocking those bridges is not allowing them food and fuel, but we should not contribute more to it. I must say leaders in this House, in the truest sense, should be with the people they are leading in to action at all times, to be recognised as the tempering authority, to channel their followers’ energies, to protest peacefully and to ensure that a cause is not misused as an opportunity to lute, attack or damage public or personal property or harm other citizens. Peaceful protest does not encompass any of these things.

Article 32 of the Constitution states:

“It is the joint duty of the State, the society and every citizen to combat and prevent crime and other violations of the law and to take care of and protect public property.”

I scoured the reports and did not see many leaders on the front line that sad day. Maybe things would have transpired differently.

The AFC, where was its leader? The one person I saw and heard of is Ms. Vanessa Kissoon. She was there. We also talk that we want... [*Interruption from Opposition Members*] Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that I am addressing the National Assembly with all its decorum and not a

street corner. I also feel if we want things to happen and we want things to happen the right way we must provide those conditions for those things to happen. Continuously blocking bridges, continuously causing unrest, what kind of conditions are we putting in place for anyone to go there? Do you not think that each one of us want to go there? I looked at one of the headlines and I saw that the joint forces advised people not to go there.

Dialogue, in which agreements are honoured, is the way forward. If it is perceived that things have gone irate on both sides of the House as the old adage says: “two wrongs do not make a right”. I say to the leaders, all leaders, let us exhibit those qualities expected of us by the people of Guyana - maturity, reason, intelligence, sincerity and of paramount importance concern for the welfare of all of our citizens and our beloved country. That is why I am here; that is why you are here; that is why each one of us is here. Do not let us descend into the quagmire of injudicious actions in our haste to appear as champions of justice. As Guyana and the world watch us, I would like to quote Mahatma Gandhi. He believed in *ahimsa* or non-violence:

“We may never be strong enough to be entirely non-violent in thought, word and deed, but we must keep non-violence as our goal and make strong progress towards it. The attainment of freedom whether for a person or nation or a world must be an exact proportion to the attainment of non-violence for each. Non-violence is not a garment to put on and off at will. It is a seat in the heart and must be an inseparable of our being. Violence breeds violence, pure goals could never justify impure a violent action. They say the means after all is just the means. I will say the means after all is everything. As the means, so is the end. If we take of care of the means we are bound to reach the end sooner or later.”

I am not in support of the motion as it is. I beg of this House, I beg of all of us sitting here, let us consider, let us deeply consider the amendments proposed by the Prime Minister which clearly delineate a sequence of events which have unfolded after the 18th of July. Let us vote with a conscience; let us vote for the welfare of the people of Guyana.

I thank you Mr. Speaker. [*Applause*]

Mr. Speaker: Go ahead Ms. Selman, I made a mistake. It should have been Mr. Hamilton, but I am sure he would not mind speaking after you.

Ms. Selman: Mr. Speaker, could I humbly request that the Hon. Member Mr. Hamilton go before me?

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Nandlall]: Sir, before Mr. Hamilton begins, Your Honour raised a question about the new regime of the firearm regulations, because of the question raised by former Commissioner of Police, Mr. Felix. The Minister has a role to play in the new dispensation. Rule 7 states:

“The Minister on receipt of the recommendations from the Firearm Licensing Approval Board shall consider the recommendations made and shall accordingly advise the Commissioner.”

The letter that my friend may have been referring to may have constituted the advice that the Minister was rendering to the Commissioner pursuant to these regulations.

Mr. Speaker: Alright. We will be grateful for a copy of that. Just to say that the point that Mr. Felix was making was that whilst Rome was burning, proverbially in a sense, the Minister was involved in other matters. He was saying that there were national crises or situations. I do remember that there was something and I will be very grateful for a copy of it. Thank you very much.

Mr. Hamilton: Let me begin by saying the issue in Linden, regarding the killing of three persons on the Wismar-Mackenzie Bridge, is not politics for me or political rhetoric, because I had family on the bridge. As I speak, I have siblings who live in Linden, part of my young life I lived in Linden, so the issue in Linden and the aftermath of the killing of the three persons are not politics or political rhetoric. It might be politics and political rhetoric for many political leaders, but the same way how the families of the three young men got word that they were killed, perhaps I and my family could have gotten those same words because, as *Lindenians* were protesting, as I said, I had families also in Linden who were protesting the hike of the electric tariff.

The motion as presented by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, for me, I have no difficulty with the first resolve clause and do not think that any Guyanese or any Member in the National Assembly would have a difficulty with it calling for the condemning of the killing of the three

persons. The tragedy that we are debating and we are condemning - sometimes when there is a situation we must pay attention as to how we got to the bridge and part of how we got to the bridge - in my humble opinion, is that as I recall during the budget debate the National Assembly was held up for some hour and a half and we were told by the Speaker of the House that we were waiting for the negotiators to return, that is, negotiators from the PPP/C Government and negotiators from the main opposition party, APNU. When the negotiators returned I recall the Prime Minister standing up and he read a statement as to what was negotiated and what was the state of the negotiations. In the presentation he made he indicated that there was discussion about the raising of the tariff in Linden and further he went on to state that the parties concerned were in agreement, as regards the raising of the tariff. The only difficulty I recall him saying was the timing and how the tariff structure will go forward. The negotiators on the APNU side were sitting in this National Assembly and neither the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, nor Hon. Member Mr. Carl Greenidge, or anyone of the other persons who were in the negotiation, stood up to say what the Prime Minister stated was untruth; that was not the state of the negotiations.

The statement indicated that the two parties which were discussing the matters surrounding the budget, old-age pension and the tariff and other issues, there was an agreement and, as I said, the Opposition did not object to the statement made by the Prime Minister.

The AFC, which was not in those negotiations, we will recall, took the position that it was betrayed and took the position that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and APNU had sold out the *Lindenians* and from that day and that time all hell broke loose as regards the tariff. Before the Alliance For Change comments, especially by its Chairman, Mr. Ramjattan, hell was not taking place in Linden. It was after the AFC accused the APNU of selling out the people of Linden and indicating that they were betrayed because the opposition party, APNU, had sought to get involved in discussion with the budget matters without the AFC being involved.

Mr. Speaker, you would note that I hit a chord. Subsequent to Mr. Ramjattan comments, Mr. Granger and Hon. Member Dr. Roopnarine ran up to Linden to try to gain ground, tried to explain the position and the situation because the *Lindenians* were told that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and APNU had sold them out.

What there is presently in Linden is a fight for the heart and soul of Linden and Region 10. There are two battles. One was completed last evening but there is another battle still raging. The battle in Linden is the Alliance For Change trying to fight for the heart and soul and the votes that it had lost and APNU seeking to retain... [Mrs. Backer: Is that the motion?] Yes. It is the motion.

We must recognise that the situation in Linden goes beyond the tariff because, as you know, last night I saw two of the chief protagonists in Linden on the television and they took the position... [Mr. B. Williams: You and Odinga.] No. One David Hinds and Frederick Kissoon and they took the position that the protest and the activities in Linden must be exported to Georgetown and all across the country. They took the position that we must push the Government in a position whereby there is a Government of national unity established and therefore it is not just about tariff. The issue is beyond that. That is the reason why in the presentation of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition he indicated that the motion is not all about politics. I submit that the second resolve clause is all about politics. The resolve clause calling for the head of the Minister of Home Affairs is all about politics.

This, as I see it, is an attempt to, after the protest comes to an end, and the protest must end, try to establish and set a limb in place for another protest. That is what this second resolve clause is all about. It is putting in stage an activity and that activity will be called "Rohee must go". Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I stand here to say to you that last Wednesday we heard the chant that "Rohee must go."

3.49 p.m.

Well today, Monday, as I speak, the chant is, "Rohee must stay!" because the Resolve clause is attempting to open a political door. It is attempting to, as I said, create different conditions as articulated by one Dr. David Hinds and Mr. Freddy Kissoon. They want this to graduate into something further than Linden, away from Linden, encompassing the whole country and seeking to either have a government of national unity or as some commentators on the opposite side have said, "We are attempting to seek to bring the Government down."

Mrs. Backer: Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order, is Mr. Hamilton, who is well known to be on record in this House as supporting a government of national unity, now saying that he no longer supports such...

Mr. Speaker: That is not a Point of Order. That is a matter that could be rebutted by the speaker coming next. You can send your notes to Ms. Selman to rebut Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Speaker, what is happening is that apparently I am striking the right chords. That is creating the excitement.

As I said, the Hon. Attorney General dealt with the constitutional and legal aspect of the matter. I am attempting to paint the big political picture and the big political picture is not just Rohee, the big political picture goes beyond the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

I recall in the early stages, the next day or so after the killings of the three persons on the Bridge, that the call was not just for the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs to go, but also for the Prime Minister to go.

Hon. Member Mr. Felix spoke earlier about the fact that he is going beyond the present situation in Linden and he is paying attention to the series of failures of Minister Rohee. If one came from space, he or she would think that the Hon. Member Mr. Felix was not situated anywhere around these failures. If one arrived through satellite in Guyana, lived nowhere in this universe, he or she would believe that the man, Hon. Winston Felix, who was speaking, was not situated anywhere in the failures that he was articulating. The fact is that during most of the period the Hon. Winston Felix talked about the failures, he was the Commissioner of Police under the Hon. Clement Rohee.

Mr. Felix: I proceeded on leave on the 24th July, 2006. I think the elections were held in either July or August. I was not there. My last Hon. Minister and really Hon. Minister was Ms. Gail Teixeira.

Mr. Speaker: On a Point of Clarification, I believe it is under Standing Order No. 38 that a Member is allowed to clarify. You did give a litany of what you said; I believe you used the phrase “a litany of failures”. You spoke of Lindo Creek. You spoke of Lusignan. You spoke of

Bartica. You spoke of the mutilation of the young man, Twyon Thomas, at Leonora. Did all of those occur after you demitted office, Mr. Felix?

Mr. Felix: That is correct.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, take note that all of the matters Mr. Felix spoke about in his litany of failures, as he described them, occurred after he demitted office as Commissioner of Police.

Ms. Kissoon: Mr. Speaker, before the Hon. Member continues, he gave information that the confusion broke out in Linden after the announcement by the Prime Minister of an agreement. However, I would like this Hon. House to know that on Wednesday 18th April, 2012 before this announcement or statement was made by the Prime Minister, there was a shut down in Linden and before that there were public meetings and protests after the Minister of Finance announced the increase. I would like to make this clear to the Hon. House.

Mr. Speaker: That I allow as well as a Point of Clarification that the unease did not commence post the pronouncement by the Hon. Prime Minister. Thank you. Proceed Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the motion as presented, the first Resolve clause, I have no difficulty with. It is the second Resolve clause that I have a difficulty with because of the political nature. This is because, as I said earlier, is all about politics. It is seeking not just to deal with Minister Rohee; it is seeking to deal with the Government and it goes beyond the issue that presently is in Linden as regards the tariff.

I indicated that the genesis of the situation in Linden started after an intervention by the Alliance For Change (AFC) and most especially Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan. As we look forward beyond today and tomorrow in Linden and in Region 10 as to what we will do, I would want to think that one of the Resolve clauses would have been how the National Assembly...what recommendations we can bring forward, how we can support the discussions as regards the economic development of Linden, as regards the issue, as the President indicated, the team of persons to study the implementation of the tariff and such like. I cannot and will not support the second Resolve clause because it is all about politics. It is all about getting to an end as articulated by one David Hinds and Freddy Kissoon. They are very much involved in the activities in Linden; they are giving leadership in Linden.

I support the first Resolve clause and taking it as I see it I say that I am strongly opposed to the second Resolve clause. Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I note the time but I have just been advised that the caterers have not yet arrived. If it is that they have not yet arrived, it would mean that by the time they get here to set up, it will take some time. As such, I am asking that we utilise available time and proceed with the debate pending the arrival rather than wait and have a protracted suspension.

Ms. Selman: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) to support the motion standing in the name of the Hon. Member, Brig. (Ret.) David Granger, which seeks to condemn the killing of and the injury to several persons at Linden, Upper Demerara Berbice Region on Wednesday 18th July, 2012 and to demand the resignation of the Hon. Minister, Mr. Clement Rohee, Member of Parliament (MP), Minister of Home Affairs.

The Hon. Minister Robert Persaud, MP, quoted extensively from His Excellency, President Donald Ramotar and indicated that the President undertook to do everything within his Government's remit/power to assist the residents during this difficult period. One would have thought that a natural concomitant to this pronouncement would have been the announcement of the immediate cessation to the imposition of the draconian increase.

These times are reminiscent of the dark days of our past, immortalised in the writings of our national poet Martin Carter:

“This is the dark time...

It is the season of oppression, dark metal, and tears.

It is the festival of guns, the carnival of misery

Everywhere the faces of men are strained and anxious...”

This is a true reflection of the current, objective situation in Linden. I wish, on behalf of A Partnership for National Unity, to convey our deepest sympathy to the families of Shemroy Bouyea and Ivan Lewis, both of Wismar Housing Scheme, as well as Ron Somerset of Amelia's Ward- the three unarmed persons who were shot and killed by police at MacKenzie, Linden during a peaceful protest on Wednesday 18th July, 2012 in which standard operational procedures were not followed by the police, including the use of minimum force to disperse the

crowd, but rather lethal fire was open causing deaths and injuries to several persons. May the souls of the persons who were shot and killed rest in peace.

It was a sad twist of irony that these actions occurred on the birthday of that great fighter for peace in the world, Mr. Nelson Mandela. While in other parts of the world peaceful protesters are the new faces of change and the voice of enlightenment and indeed have brought about many changes in Governments. In Guyana, these hapless persons are gunned down and wounded like wild animals.

In 1948, sugar workers were killed by the colonial police and today, in Guyana's history, they are referred to as the Enmore Martyrs fighting as they were for their economic rights. I submit to this National Assembly that our three brothers in Linden who were also fighting for their economic rights shall, from this day onwards, be described as the Linden Martyrs and thereby occupy a prominent position in our ongoing struggle and history.

In 2011, protesters did not just voice their complaints; they changed the world. In 2011, the Times Magazine named the protester as person of the year to emphasise the prominence and special status accorded to such persons, a decision that honours Middle East protesters who toppled governments as well as the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street movements. The magazine depicted its person of the year as a protesting silhouette on the front cover of the issue. The article also devotes a large chunk of space to the Occupy Wall Street movement that began in Manhattan's financial district that summer. Protests have fallen out of fashion as an effective political tool the last 20 years according to Times writer, Kurt Andersen, who wrote the article in an interview posted on the Magazine's website. Not only did protest come back in this big, globally contagious way in 2011, but we saw two regimes and counting coming down.

Anderson, and Times Managing Editor, Richard Stengel identified the Arab Spring as one of the first events that gave rise to a trend:

“It's remarkable how much the protest vanguards share. Everywhere there are disproportionately young, middle class and educated. Almost all the protests this year [in 2011] began as independent affairs, without much encouragement from or endorsement by existing political parties or opposition bigwigs.”

The magazine goes on to predict that the protest movement would not stop with the conclusion of the year. We, in Guyana, must take serious note of these developments. What should also be of grave concern to us are the twenty-odd persons who were injured, who must be suffering severe pains and a concomitant of this is the many family members of these twenty-odd persons who must also be suffering. What is even more tragic is that some of the persons shot were on their way home from work and, as such, were not even involved in the protest activity. The use of excessive force by the police must be condemned.

On 22nd November, 2011, the United States condemned the police excess of force in Egypt following deadly clashes with protesters that threatened the country's legislative elections. State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland said:

“We condemn the excess of force used by the police, and we strongly urge the Egyptian Government to exercise maximum restraint, to discipline its forces and to protect the universal right of all Egyptians to peacefully express themselves.”

She further added:

“While all parties in Egypt need to remain committed to nonviolence, we believe that the Egyptian Government has a particular responsibility to restrain security forces and to allow the Egyptian people to peacefully express themselves.”

The taking of human life has been strongly condemned by most world religions and philosophies over the centuries. International human rights law has in turn sought to uphold this most sacrosanct of rights in a number of treaties. The right of an individual is clearly protected from being arbitrarily taken by the states. This is enshrined in Article 138 (1) of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana which states:

“No person shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of an offence under the law of Guyana of which he has been convicted.”

The execution of those unarmed civilians certainly violates the spirit of the Constitution and, in my view, those actions were *ultra vires* and the perpetrators and their superiors must be held accountable and responsible.

Every citizen has the right to freedom of expression as enshrined in Article 40 of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 states:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Today, freedom of expression or freedom of speech is recognised in international and regional human rights law. The right is enshrined in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Any form of killing is unjustified. No one deserves to die in such circumstances. In addition, international treaties, declarations and committance determine standards for the protection and the right to life, and these include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, Article 3, which upholds the right to life, liberty and security of the person, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966, Article 6. This main international treaty on civil and political rights is very specific about the right to life and the death penalty. Article 6 (1) states:

“Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.”

Violence used by police can be excessive despite being lawful, especially in the context of political repression.

Guyana has a population of less than one million persons and it appears as though Guyanese’ right to express themselves is under siege by some members of the Guyana Police Force and under this Minister’s watch especially. Excesses by unprofessional members of the Guyana Police Force under the Hon. Minister Clement Rohee are not new. This is the very Minister who appeared ambivalent in dealing with the issue of torture of a citizen while in police custody and this included torture by members of the Guyana Defence Force on a 14 year old young man. It took the media and the joint Opposition to nudge them into action. This is the same Minister of Home Affairs, Minister Rohee, under whose watch the shooting took place of the APNU protesters after the 2011 General and Regional Elections and who has since done nothing to assure citizens that these excesses by the police will be mitigated. It was left to the then injured

protesters to file private criminal charges. Until a Commission of Inquiry pronounces on this matter, it will not be known whether the police action was bad policing and misjudgement or whether this was part of a carefully orchestrated plan to ferment a crisis in Linden and disturb the peace and stability of our country.

Consequently, the People's Progressive Party/ Civic (PPP/C) Administration should not object to our conclusion that it condones and/or approves the shooting of citizens engaged in peaceful protests. How could it be explained that the Administration sent to Linden the same ranks who shot the APNU marchers a few months ago in Georgetown. It is abundantly clear that those ranks went to Linden to do exactly what was done in Georgetown. How else can one explain the findings revealed by the pathologist that bronze, coated bullets were extracted from the bodies of the three murdered martyrs and not rubber pellets as claimed by the police and the PPP/C Administration? Is the Minister responsible for what transpired on Wednesday 18th July, 2012? Is the Minister aware that it is the same officer who is linked to the killing at Lindo Creek? Did the Minister of Home Affairs give the directions that men be shot? I have heard these things and it is for the Minister to disprove or shed light on these. People are saying that the Minister of Home Affairs gave the directions. However, Minister Rohee is a Hon. Member of this National Assembly. That notwithstanding, the doctrine of Ministerial responsibility...

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, the questions and issues being raised by the Member are not in this House. We are not before Commission of Inquiry. The issues being raised have no place within the motion. The motion is saying – as I understand Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger's motion – that he is asking for a vote of "No Confidence". If the House wishes to have inquiry powers, then the House itself could form a special committee to investigate. The questions being asked and the issues being raised point as if this is a trial and this is not correct.

Mr. Speaker: I will not uphold that as a Point of Order. The speaker was voicing questions that exist. I will say this as an observer: they are actually, in my mind, raising – I was pointing out to my assistant – the answer. Perhaps these questions should be left to a Commission of Inquiry, but there is nothing stopping the Member from asking those questions and there is nothing stopping the person doing the rebuttal to point out that the very questions should form part of the Inquiry and indeed need to be asked and answered. I see nothing wrong with the Member asking them.

Ms. Selman: That notwithstanding, the doctrine of ministerial responsibility or individual ministerial responsibility is a constitutional convention in governments used in the Westminster system - that a Cabinet Minister bears the ultimate responsibility for the actions of his or her Ministry or Department and the Minister of Home Affairs is authorised under the Police Act, Cap 16:01 to issue general orders and direction to the Commissioner of Police for the commanders and superintendants of the Guyana Police Force. Where there is ministerial responsibility, the accountable Minister, and in this case Minister Rohee, is expected to take the blame and ultimately resign. This means that if corruption or any other misbehaviour is found to have occurred within his Ministry or under his watch, Even if the Minister had no knowledge of the actions – I am not saying here that the Minister did not have any knowledge of what took place in Linden – this does not abrogate or negate his responsibility.

4.19 p.m.

The Minister is ultimately responsible for all actions, because even without knowledge of an infraction by subordinates the Minister approved the hiring and continued employment of those civil servants.

If indeed misdeeds have found to have occurred in that Ministry, as I said before, I would call on the Minister to resign. It is also possible for Ministers, when they fail to carry out their responsibility, to face criminal charges for malfeasance under their watch. The principle is considered essential as a guarantee that an elected official is answerable for every single decision within his/her portfolio. This should motivate all Ministers of the Government to closely scrutinise the activities within their departments or Ministries.

The APNU wishes to put the PPP on notice that A Partnership for National Unity will not stand idly by and allow these excesses to continue without proper redress. I wish therefore on behalf of A Partnership for National Unity to support the Motion to condemn the killing of the three persons and the injuries to the several others by the Guyana Police Force in Linden on Wednesday July 18th 2012 and extend sincerest condolences to the families of the deceased and sympathy to the injured persons, as well as to sense and express no confidence in the Minister of Home Affairs, the Hon. Clement Rohee, over the inability to discharge his responsibility for

public security and call for the immediate revocation of his appointment as a Minister of the Government and for his dismissal from office. Thank you. [*Applause*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, notwithstanding the non-arrival of the refreshments, I think this is an appropriate time for us to take the suspension.

Sitting suspended at 4.22 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 5.39 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Hon. Members. The session is resumed. Thank you Hon. Members, we will proceed to hear from the Hon. Member Mr. Persaud.

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development [Mr. G. Persaud]: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I wish on behalf of the PPP/Civic and myself to join with my colleague Members of Parliament in expressing sincere condolences to the relatives, families and friends of the persons who died as a result of what took place in Linden on July 18th, 2012. I wish to also express sentiments for a speedy recovery to all those who were injured as well as all those who were traumatised by the incident of July 18th.

Further, I wish to express my sympathy to all the persons who have lost property and valuables due to several reported acts of arsons and other unacceptable incidents that occurred on July 18th and thereafter. I wish also to express my sympathy to the residents of Regions Nos. 7, 8, 9 and 10 who are denied access to and from the city of Georgetown and also, for the inconvenience and discomfort they are enduring due to the blockage of the main roadways and bridges leading into these Regions.

I listened to several statements made by Hon. Members of the Opposite side of this House who have spoken on this motion before this House. I have noted numerous contradictions and conflicting information shared by these Hon. Members as they seek to position themselves in Linden on July 18th and thereafter. Two quick examples are that we learnt from one speaker that the three deceased were shot in their hearts and we also learnt from another speaker that two persons were shot in their chest while another was shot in his head; that is one instance of where we had those contradicting information. We heard from another speaker that no warning was

issued before fire opened on the protesters and we heard from another speaker that the warning was not loud enough and secondly that tear smoke was used before the fatal shooting.

We have several professionals who are members of the legal profession as well as Members of this Hon. House. It is my humble view that if any matter which was engaging the attention of the Court had so many contradictions and conflicting information that such a matter would have been thrown out by the Court. Hence, I wish to appeal to all Members of this House, that this Motion should be amended as proposed by the Hon. Prime Minister and that we should support a full enquiry so that decisions that are made here would be based on empirical data and evidence of what actually took place.

This motion is requesting this Hon. House to take a decision against a Hon. Member, Mr. Clement Rohee, on the basis of inadequate, contradicting and conflicting information. This is a dangerous road that we are setting out on. It is my view that the only way we can have an objective unbiased assessment of what actually took place and the events which surrounded July 18th and thereafter in Linden is through the proposed Commission of Enquiry. We should direct our energies to support the early establishment of this Commission and await its findings and recommendations.

Listening to my Hon. Colleagues on the other side of this House, I am getting the impression that the Hon. Members on the Opposite side of this House are not interested in engaging in a debate on this Motion and the issues contained therein, but rather only waiting for it to end so that they can vote and once again remind this House that thirty-three is more than thirty-two. I say this because if we recall what took place last Wednesday in this House, the Hon. Member Ms. Gail Teixeira informed this House that there were several speakers on the Government's side who would wish to speak to this Motion. She also said, and it was agreed, that preparation time was a necessary ingredient if we were to effectively debate this motion, a view that you also shared Mr. Speaker. It was very surprising that when the Hon. Member, Mdm. Gail Teixeira, sought to have an adjournment of this House the Hon. Member, Ms. Amna Ally, requested that we should have the vote. That in itself confirms what I am saying, that we are not interested in discussing this issue here; this is clear from the opposite side of the House.

There is a pre-drawn conclusion, and that conclusion is that irrespective of what is said, there will be no room for reasoning, save and except that we vote and put this motion through. It is a known fact, and history can attest to this, that it is the People's Progressive Party which fought relentlessly for the right to peaceful protest. These rights are now enshrined in our Constitution, largely because of the agitation and efforts of the People's Progressive Party. So, it is a fallacy. It is clearly an act to seek to rewrite our history when we attempt to accuse the PPP/Civic Government of seeking to be anti-peaceful in relation to protests.

Mr. Speaker: Is there a dispute that I need to get involved in? Members on the Government side are doing their speaker a disservice, because we cannot hear him. Proceed Minister.

Mr. G. Persaud: I listened attentively as Hon. Members of the Opposite side of this House seek to describe how peaceful the protest was and they reinforcing and reminding us of the enshrined right to protest as Guyanese, as view as I said earlier, I share totally.

With every right there is also responsibility. Hence, in expressing one's right to protest one must not infringe on the rights of others of freedom of movement and access. Everyone has rights and in pursuing one's right, we should never seek to trample on the rights of others. Every Guyanese has equal rights. We must not practice what Mr. George Orwell would have said in his book, *The Animal Farm*, "...all humans are equal, but some are more equal than others". The leader of any protest must recognise the rights of others and ensure that they lead their followers with such authority and responsibility that the rights of all are maintained. What has happened on July 18th and up to yesterday in Linden is not reflective of responsible leadership, rather it is the reverse.

There are many reports that main highways and connecting bridges are blocked and denying citizens of Guyana access through these main roads and highways. Vehicles are stopped and contents illegally removed, persons are forcibly relieved of their valuables, tolls are being extorted from some persons in order for them to have access. The worst of it yet is that the residents in Regions Nos.7, 8 and 9 are denied access to basic food items and other necessities of life. Fuel in itself is denied entry into Region 8 and 9 to the extent that the Regional Administration of 8 and 9 will find it extremely difficult to continue to provide electricity to those communities.

What wrong have these citizens in Regions 8 and 9 done? Why is it that these citizens of Region 8 and 9, Guyanese may I remind ourselves, what wrong have they done to these people in Region 10 that they are made to suffer as a result of some of the people in Region 10. The people in Region 10 are also encountering seriously hardships and difficulties, not because of Government policies at this present moment, it is because of irresponsible action and irresponsible leadership provided by those who acclaim to the high status of leaders. I ask us in this Assembly, what have the citizens in Region 7, 8...

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, I beg your pardon. I am hearing persons on the other side saying the word “murder”. I have heard it several times in the last few minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Could you identify them for me?

Ms. Teixeira: I really believe that the word “murder” is an extremely strong word. I am not aware that the motion is accusing anyone of murder.

Mr. Speaker: Statements made are what we call in the legal profession as “sotto voce” are not actually made and spoken into the record. I can only ask Members to mind their manners so to speak. I have heard the word used before. It is the opinion of some that it was murder. I have noted the words of the Minister himself who said that the ranks breached all known operational procedures and the outcome has been death. I do not know that the word “murder” or the finding of murder has been made. I do not know that I have the any authority to stop anyone from making any finding if they so desire, rightly or wrongly. Only a Court could make a finding that there has been murder. [*Cellular phone rings*] What is that? That is a murderous phone. Members please understand that we are still to set up a Judicial Commission of Inquiry and we are miles away from charges being made because there have been no findings. Bear in mind that these are just your opinions and not the opinions of the Assembly. Thank you very much.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a very serious situation that would have occurred in Region 10 - the loss of lives. I feel that we here as Parliamentarians are responsible people and that we should be able to deliberate on issues and problems and to find ourselves as part of the solutions. In so doing, I am hoping that we would recognise our responsibility to this Nation, and that we should all act and act in a very responsible manner both in and out of this Chamber. When we offer guidance and leadership we must do so in a responsible manner so that

when we come up here and we speak, we will not raise eyebrows of others in wanting to know where was the person who we saw on the television the night before, or whether this was the person who made those statements that we saw in the newspapers. Our responsibility does not end here in this Chamber.

I am hoping, as I said, that good sense would prevail and that those leaders who have or who have made claims to having influential bases within the mining town, that they will seek to help us to have the main access roadways returned to unhindered traffic so that all the people in Regions Nos. 7, 8, 9 and 10 will enjoy Guyanese comfort to which they were accustomed to before July 18th. That is an entitlement; it is a right of Guyanese wherever they exist, to have unhindered access in this beautiful country of ours. Those of us who can contribute to that will be making rightful claim to purposeful leadership.

In concluding, I wish to reiterate my condolences to the relatives, families and friends of the deceased as well as my sympathies to all those who have suffered injuries and losses. I am calling on the Hon. Members of this House to reject the motion in its present form and to accept the amendments to this Motion so that we can pay our respects to the persons who have lost their lives and to those who have suffered injuries and loss of property and to those who are confronted with difficulties not of their own making. At the same time, I wish to reassure all of Guyana, particularly those persons who were directly victims of these recent incidents, that our Parliament's commitment is strong and firm to support the full inquiry into this very unfortunate period in our country's history. I thank you very much Mr. Speaker. [*Applause*]

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Hon. Minister.

Mrs. Chandarpal: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak on the motion by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger. I firstly would like to express sympathy to the relatives and friends of Shemroy Bouyea, Ivan Lewis and Ron Somerset who were shot and killed on Wednesday 18th July, 2012.

It is indeed unfortunate and regrettable. In looking at this issue, I would like to go back to the issue that created the event at Linden. The electricity issue has been a challenge for us for a very long time. Every effort was made and has been made to come to grips with this issue. The Hon. Prime Minister himself has spoken extensively on this. He spoke about the decline of bauxite and

the impact it had on the community. I can recall my earlier period in the Cabinet when the question of electricity and the implication and the impact for Linden was raised. It has always been a question of affordability; it was then and it still is now.

However, when this matter was brought to the Assembly and indications were given that the time has come and that we have to deal with this matter in a progressive way, meaning that people at a certain level will have to pay a smaller percentage and so on, the indication or the mindset was one that said, “no, we are not going to pay”. As such, the dilemma we have is that Linden for the longest while has had a difficulty in terms of electricity and bauxite and the decline in the industry itself. We know that in all extractive industries, not only in Guyana but all over the world, there comes a time when you have these problems and you have to be looking at alternative ways of finding employment for the people there. That is what the Government, in looking and assessing the situation, came up with the realisation that they need to intervene in Linden. Thus, leave and leap and lend and the interaction with BOSAI were all intended to help to alleviate the problems, because the Government recognised that the people needed help and that was their way of providing assistance.

We recognise that not only Linden is affected by poverty; all over this country there are pockets of poverty where people are unemployed. It is not a situation where only Linden is affected by all these problems. All over this country is affected by these problems, but at the same time, there are many communities which even though they were poor and depressed have still taken care of their electricity bill. I want to ask that the engagement with the people in Linden and the Government must continue so as to find ways and means of seeing how we can reduce the impact of electricity on one hand, recognising that the people have problems. This is the engagement I know that the Prime Minister is committed to.

The other issue I want to raise, and I have gone to Linden many times, and I am always amazed that people have their lights on during the day. I have spoken to many people and asked, “How is it that you can afford to have your electrical lights on when those of us who live on the coastland have to exercise responsibility in ensuring that we take off our lights?” A lot of people have said that we have been accustomed to it and that it is okay. It is no longer okay, because it is the question of affordability. Therefore, we need to change the attitude and the mindset of people as to the way that they will utilise electricity. Somebody has to pay for it and it is unfair to ask all of

the people who are exercising discretion to pay while others are wasting. I am not saying that it is everybody, but there are people who are wasting.

I also want to say that reference was made by the Hon. Minister of Natural Resources, Robert Persaud, when he spoke about the impact of what the present situation in Linden or its implication on different sectors in our country. It is for the people of Linden to analyse what they are continuing to do and whether they will disengage from the process and the impact of what they are doing presently will have on their wellbeing. That is the responsibility of the leaders who are giving guidance. If you are unable to disengage in a timely way, it means that it will have economic implications for the people of Linden; that is something that I believe we need to consider.

Hon. Ms. Africo Selman and the Hon. Member Winston Felix spoke about 1998 and went on to sight all the different transgressions. Hon. Member Africo Selman referred to the “dark days”. My dear, we do not live in the “dark days”. We on this side have lived under the “dark days”. I go to Linden and I know – I have many friends in Linden – what is happening in Linden. I live in Guyana so I have a right to know. The question of rights and responsibility- for those of you who do not know and are here for the first time and you pretend as though you do not know about the past- the people of Guyana did not have the right or the freedom to travel. They did not have it, because many of us who live on the coastland could not have gone into the riverine interior communities. [*Interruption*] No, I am talking about this motion. The two Hon. Members referred to the question of rights and responsibilities. You are talking about lack of freedom? Today, we have more freedom. There was a time we did not have the right the vote, we did not have the right to travel and we did not have the right to even print a newspaper! We did not have the right to eat what we want! We did not have the right to take out a little pittance out of this country! Today we have those rights!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

6. 06 p.m.

Mrs. Chandarpal: We have those rights! Today we have those rights. [**Ms. Ally:** Yes, punish them. Kill them.] I am not saying to kill them. I believe in democracy. We on this side believe in democracy. We fought for those things that you are now talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind Members of the last Parliamentary Management Committee (PMC) meeting that you chaired. Hon. Member Backer will recall the discussions we had when we were talking about what we can do collectively as the PMC to show unity in the country. I want to remind us about that discourse. The 18th July was the same day we discussed what we can do collectively to unify our people. We took some decisions. Hon. Member Backer and I decided we will take up an initiative to lead this process so that people can see that we are unified. I believe that is something we still need to work towards. I still believe it is something we need to work towards Mrs. Debroah Backer.

I want to conclude by saying that I support the amendment by the Hon. Prime Minister. I also want to say that I do not support the call for the Minister of Home Affairs to resign.

I thank you. [*Applause*]

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Speaker, we have all been looking at the mini crime series featuring Jessica Fletcher entitled “*Murder She Wrote*”. Today, as we remember the fallen martyrs of Linden I am sure the question on the lips of every man, woman and child of conscience is “who wrote the murder at Linden”?

I say murder because I stand here as an elected Member of this Parliament with full knowledge of my rights and privileges. I have unqualified privilege and absolute privilege to say what is my opinion and give my views within the rules of this National Assembly and not to be obstructed along the way by unsolicited advice as to how I should conduct my address to this Assembly.

Much of what I just heard from the Hon. Indra Chandarpal, my good friend, and the Hon. Minister Ganga Persaud, I would think was a very feeble attempt firstly to demonise the victims of the atrocities of 18th July, 2012 and secondly, to shift the focus of this debate and the content of this motion to the issue of electricity. When the time comes we should be willing and ready to debate all the ramifications of this horrendous hike in the electricity for a section of the people of this country. In one swoop, a 300 % increase in the basic average in the electricity rate for a service that is not provided by Guyana Power and Light (GPL) and as an oppressive economic imposition to help bail GPL of an estimated \$27 billion dollars debt in order to satisfy the requirement of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) with regards to Amaila Falls. When the time comes we hope the Hon. Prime Minister will give us the reason as to why there is the

haphazard imposition of the economic hardship on Linden which we all recognise was the immediate causal effect for the unrest. Shemroy Bouyea, Ivan Lewis, and Ron Somerset have entered history as the Linden martyrs. The dozens of wounded are victims of the cold blooded shooting of unarmed, peaceful, protesters.

We all seem to remember that the people have a basic right to peaceful protest. It was not a gift, it was fought for and it was won by all the peoples of this country. We do not condone the use of violence against peaceful protestors because we believe it is an inalienable right of our people to give self expression as part of the struggle for self emancipation. I have been a part of that long struggle against the British colonialists. I remember riding in the 1960s – “Free Detainee Ride” - before we became independent. I was not shot at. I remember participating in the country-wide marches for free and fair elections, dating back to 1968, against overseas and proxy voting. I was not shot at. I stood by the side of Dr. Jagan on the Corentyne when blockades were put up and guns were drawn, but not a bullet was fired. And that was in the “dark days” as they are saying; the difficult days, as we seem to be saying, of dictatorship. But the dictatorship behaved with equanimity that I see the dissidents to authoritarianism on this side has failed to live up to.

I have marched and participated with the people of Corentyne against economic hardship by way of the three toll stations which had become oppressive, particularly on rice farmers. We protested, but not a bullet was fired; not a protestor was killed. So the people of Corentyne understood that it was out of their struggles that the toll gates came down. They won. Do we now, today, deny the right of Lindeners to protest against economic hardships? Do we greet them with a hail of deadly fire and cold blooded murder because they dare take to the street in defence of their economic livelihood and against economic oppression? [Mr. Neendkumar: You forget the Ballot Box Martyrs.] When the Ballot Box Martyrs were cut down for free and fair elections, I was one of those who stood solidly in condemnation of the use of excessive force on peaceful protestors fighting for their rights. It was wrong then and it is wrong today. It is even more wrong today that we see those who claim to be defenders of freedom infracting the same freedom for which they claim they have fought. It is not their god given right over there to decide on the right to life or who should remain whole, free from injuries.

My learned friend has said enough; that in the forays in Linden Minister Rohee admitted that non-lethal force could have been used. The use of live rounds is not allowed in the Standard

Operating Procedures (SOPs). That is an admission. We are not now here inventing a situation. We are not saying that the Lindeners called this upon themselves. We are saying a situation had arisen and the people who were sent there to so-called protect lives and limb, to ensure also that people protest peacefully and are inviolate with regards to their lives, opened fire and did acts that were contrary to the Standard Operating Procedures.

They are in violation of procedures and this is incontestable. No one should try to invent and use as comparisons events of history. We should not go back there. Anytime we do that it shows the falsity of all or some of the concerns - the breast beating, the crocodile tears that have been shed - of solicitude for the people of Linden, the victims and the survivors of the dead. Anytime we try to justify the use of force in other events we are trying to, as one member said, invent a kind of “karmic vengeance” to visit upon Linden because of some other events that happened years ago in an Indian community. This descent to racism is the most heinous of all the inventions. The moment we harp on ballot box martyrs...

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, can I please ask that you caution the Member on the floor. The Member has a habit of referring and making and deducing things that are racial which nobody has said in this House. I am asking you to caution him.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Nagamootoo, you are cautioned not to take a racist route in this debate bearing in mind that indeed there has been no direct statement made that is racial, neither have you made one, but I am just saying that you bear that in mind.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Your Honour, the innuendoes, the inferences that could be drawn are unmistakably clear. Among the things that have been told to me by people from the People’s Progressive Party/Civic is that I should keep out of this. I am not inventing this thing about “karmic vengeance”. I am not.

Sir, this motion is straightforward. It deals with the killings in Linden and it also calls for this National Assembly to express no confidence in the Minister of Home Affairs over his inability to discharge his responsibility for public safety, and calls for the immediate revocation for his appointment as a Minister of the Government and for his dismissal from office.

It has been canvassed here that this Assembly can do no such thing. We are not disputing the concept “he who hires fires” or “he who appoints disappoints”. We are not treading on the jurisdiction of the President. We are saying that Cabinet, once appointed, is collectively responsible to this Parliament and this Parliament has the power of censure over any Member of the Cabinet once that Member is a Member of this House. We are only doing what in our belief and strong view, un-rebuttable that is, are within the powers of this House. We have the right to pass a no-confidence motion and it for the President to direct, if he so wishes, that the Minister resign.

There is the constitutional convention, whether or not we have a written constitution - and we seem to have a hybrid of written and unwritten constitution –that says this Parliament can move a vote of no confidence against the entire Government. If the motion is passed by a majority then constitutionally there is a requirement of the President to have the Cabinet resign and to call elections within three months or such other period as this Parliament shall dictate. So let us be clear about this. There is collective responsibility, but we have chosen at this time not to go there. We have chosen instead to deal with the concept of individual ministerial responsibility.

We are saying that if a particular Minister puts the Government at risk then one does not seek to remove the entire Government, one seeks to remove the Minister. That is the basis of this doctrine of individual ministerial responsibility. This is why it has been canvassed here by many speakers. We have seen examples of where people resign. I have just read in the *Catholic Standard* of Friday 27th July, 2012 a letter on constitutional propriety, where the letter writer says:

“When Lal Bahadur Shastri was the Railway Minister in 1956, 144 passengers died in an accident. It was recognised by all that Mr. Shastri was in no way responsible for this accident. However, he felt he could not escape the moral and constitutional responsibility for them. So strong was his sense of responsibility he submitted his resignation letter to Prime Minister Pandit Nehru.”

While speaking in Parliament on the incident, Nehru stated he was accepting the resignation because it would set an example in constitutional propriety and not because Shastri was in any way responsible for the accident.

This concept of individual ministerial responsibility has to be seen in context. It is not that we say Minister Rohee is at fault, but if the people feel that he is at fault then he has a moral obligation to tender his resignation in order to save the Government from the wrath of the people. If the wrath of one community is replicated throughout Guyana, then it would become an indictment for the Government and the call for the Minister to go, will be elevated to a call for the Government to go. This has nothing to do with “risk” because it was the risk that they took on 28th November, 2011 that got them there in a minority. It is a calculated and reckless risk. Try again to do that. That is the concept. People try to explain this away. I want to be understood that it is not I who say Minister Rohee is guilty.

One Member says that we must have due process. Well, due process is facilitated when people have strong feelings of some miscalculation, misjudgment, even an error or mistake in someone. If many people feel that way they will come to the conclusion that holding onto a portfolio at a time when they want to investigate wrongdoings and killings by Members of the police force that is, in fact, an interference with due process. The withdrawal of a Minister in these circumstances will facilitate due process and will remove the finger of indictment upon him and upon the Government. That is what we say should happen here.

In 1982, in England Lord Carrington, the Home Secretary, then said to the Parliament that he did not anticipate there would be an invasion by Argentina of the Falklands. Within days Argentina invaded the Falklands and renamed it Las Malvinas and Lord Carrington tendered his resignation - of course under pressure - because the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said it was not the fault or mistake of her Government; it was a departmental failure. It was a failure of someone who was in charge of protecting the security interest of England, someone who had misinformed them. Therefore, rather than placing the Government at risk, rather than allowing the Government to fall, they persuaded the Minister to resign and he did. This is not a matter now of circling the wagon; this is not a matter, as one member stood up here to say, that the Opposition is trying to come through the back door to power. This is not about closing doors and opening doors. This is about a fundamental issue, the quality and nature of a democracy, of our civilisation. If someone feels that he is liable to be faulted then that person has one obligation, and that is to go. If not, the President has that responsibility after a no-confidence motion would have been served on him to abide by the wishes of the majority of the House. When the Hon.

Member Mr. Felix was speaking saying that he thought the right thing to do was to resign, he was giving an option that was more generous, an option that was a way out. Therefore, we feel that would have been pursued.

I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker; there is a precedent or an antecedent for what happened in Linden. Minister Rohee was questioned in this National Assembly by the Hon. Member Felix on 23rd June, 2012. He was quoted in *Demerara Waves* as announcing a reduction in leave for senior police officers. He then had the foresight in asking that the leave be cut to see what he described as a potentially delicate period of national security. That was the antecedent. He knew; he had foreseeability. How did he get it? On 27th June, 2012 the Hon. Member Felix asked in this House what did the Minister mean by potentially delicate period of national security.

[**Mr. Neendkumar:** What you think?] I am not on trial here. Minister Rohee in an unabashed and unrestrained manner announced he was on a nation watch on behalf of the Guyanese people. At no time should we be found wanting because if we are then the consequences, I believe, could be disastrous. He did not want to be found wanting. What did he do? He made a foray into “advisement” (that is his word –“advisement”). He was being advised by certain statements made by some Hon. Members of this House and all statements including my dear brother and Hon. Colleague Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, the AFC Chairman, who made specific reference to Linden. Then Minister Rohee quoted him as saying, if there is an increase in the electricity rates it could create a crisis in Linden, it could create demonstrations in Linden. So there was Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan warning of consequences that could flow. *Take Warning* is the song by Eddie Hooper. Then Hon. Member Vanessa Kisson’s remarks along with those of Hon. Member Catherine Hughes have really opened the wounds and the hurt of Linden in their narratives in this National Assembly. It is horrendous to think that a Member of this House on her own two feet, one of the Members on the rampart fighting oppression, that an attempt was made to assassinate her because she is a Member of this Parliament. She told this House, “A bullet was fired at me”. Someone aimed a gun and fired it at her. That is what deserves condemnation in this House; that a colleague of ours there with her people was fired upon. [**Interruption**] She said that. On the 25th April she had warned and the Minister was quoting her from the Hansard, that demonstrations will continue against electricity rates and each person must walk along with ten persons.

Well, others were talking about picketing, demonstrating, protesting. However, the Hon. Minister did not recognise in those words cherished values of human rights and the right to freedom of assembly, freedom of association and the right to protest peacefully. He said those were serious statements which have implications for public safety and security. It is in that context - we were doing the budget cuts - he decided to borrow the scissors to do a mischief and that is to cut the leave for senior police officers, because they had to be rehearsed for combat. Then we saw the riot policemen with SLRs in full battle gear coming up behind one water cannon or water can, or may I say, the armada of one water cannon.

6.36 p.m.

They were armed to the teeth and rehearsing under the watch of the Hon. Minister to deal with the serious statements that were made. So we know that that was the antecedent for the deployment for a pre-emptive strike in Linden. It was nothing else than a pre-emptive strike and it was, sadly, against peaceful unarmed protestors. [*Interruption*]

On June 20th 2012, I gave an interview after I heard the Minister. I said that the police were being rehearsed and that it appeared as if the statement made by the Minister was, I construe, as stirring up instability because you are stimulating a false sense of unrest in the country, [**Mr. Ramjattan:** And insecurity.] thereby creating instability and insecurity. I said then that he was exhibiting a barrack room mentality. When I was in the plane - and he quoted me, I will show you, Sir, I have the clippings here - he said, I further warned and these were my words:

“The administration is preparing for some kind of offensive against the people and that the administration is tilting in the direction of authoritarianism and the creation of a police state.”

On July 13th, just two weeks before the faithful event in Linden, Minister Rohee fired back - literally fired back at me -and he accused me of scaremongering and I had no evidence to validate my claim, which he said were outlandish and spurious. He ended up by saying these fateful words that I was suffering from political hallucinations and delusions of grandeur, which he described as red carpet or Potomac Fever. [*Interruption*] What self prophecy, the type I have never ever witness anywhere else in any Parliament and anywhere in the world and from any politician, who claims to be a politician, in charge of National Security - Potomac Fever- because

when the bullet started and people ran *helter skelter*, even now he could not visit the victims, he could not visit the scene, he got “red carpet” and “Potomac Fever” even on to now. That is what is tragic about this whole situation.

I say that Minister Rohee had reasonable foreseeability of unrest. He was prepared for it and in the same way he had given *post facto* instructions and directions, to the police to remove ranks from Linden, if he had used his foreseeability he could have avoided the tragedy, then he had done what he ought to have done, which was to give the right direction and supervision, that force should not be used against innocent victims. That is one, you cannot have a *post facto* to do a *post facto* what you could not do before and that is what is tragic about this, that this is a failure of responsibility.

In law and I am treading on dangerous waters, a pedestrian in the profession, we often talk about *mens rea*, the requisite intention.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, your time is time up.

Mr. Ramjattan: Could I ask that the Member be given 15 minutes to continue?

Mr. Speaker: Proceed Hon. Member.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I am not going to go there in terms of the requisite intention. All I want to say is that Mr. Rohee had a responsible and he did not live up to that responsibility.

This is not talking about culpability. We all know he was not there, he did not pull the triggers, but in all the preparation, the circumstances of the preparation and the deployment to deal with the Linden situation, it was, to use his own words, “It is like throwing a lighted match at a leaking gas bottle.” To send people there armed to the teeth with live rounds and much more, Sir, they have not sent the famous or infamous or still untested, water cannon. [Mr. Speaker: No, it did go yesterday apparently.] No, they had not deployed it then. It was not there at that time. It went *post facto*; it went to pour water....

You honour, I said before that it is part of the tragedy that we try to filibuster over this important motion that is trying to bond our feeling with the people of Linden, particularly the victims and also to deal with the issue of the responsibility of a Minister. All kind of attempts have been

made here. You have heard I said about the “Circling of the Wagon”, the so called Cordon Sanitaire wrapping around the embattled Minister out of fear of the domino effect.

I was heartened this afternoon to hear my good friend and colleague, Robert Persaud, the Hon. Minister, standing up there in defence of his embattled brother. They say, “*When your mattie house on fire you throw water pon you own.*” That is what they are afraid of, the domino effect; “today for you, tomorrow for me” and so they are all literally afraid. This has nothing to do with the issue at hand; it is what is coming from their lips, “Who is next?” That is the reason for what might be an apparent filibuster. But we are not afraid of that, we will debate here until the cock crows, because the longest rope has an end. At the end we will reject the amendment and we will affirm this motion, because we believe that: One, we should identify with the people of Linden and condemn the atrocity and the murder - the killings and secondly, we should express our view and vote on a no-confidence.

More important what reminds me here, is that I want to say this: the People Progressive Party, with which I had laboured for so many years of my life, has found itself at a dipping point where it can no longer rule in the old way, because it recognises that the people are unwilling to be governed in the old way. This is part of the dialectics that they ought to have learnt that there comes a time when you cannot rule in the same old mamaguying way and think people would accept it. So they have to now resort to some of the very practices against which they fought, and we fought, when I was on that side, against the force and fear.

In this regard, the PPP has departed - the post-Jagan PPP - from its revolutionary tradition that prohibits it from turning its gun on its own people. Revolutionaries do not turn their guns on their people. In this regard it has surrendered its creditability and its revolutionary legitimacy.

One Minister over there described Minister Rohee as an internationalist. Well, if Minister Rohee were in fact an internationalist he would well understand the agony of Nicholas Guillen, the Cuban poet laureate, after Che Guevara was murdered in cool blood in the jungles of Bolivia in 1968, when he wrote his poem that his guitar was draped in mourning major. Why? Because he has always believed that “one does not kill a brother”. Even if it had been soldiers in Bolivia killing an Argentinean/Cuban revolutionary, he still believed “one does not kill a brother”. We have three brothers killed in Linden and it is the same rage that I wish to invoke, Nicholas

Guillen, that one never kills a brother and retain the appellation of an internationalist or a revolutionary. Internationalists lay down their lives; their own lives, for a cause, a similar cause as that for which the lives of the Linden three were taken.

He would have remembered when Victor Jara, the famous Chilean folklorist, was assassinated and then after that Salvador Allende, the President of Chile, in 1973. It was Pablo Neruda, poet laureate, who spoke about those who had committed the heinous crime, describing them as satraps, as jackals, as a pack of wolves and he said:

“I demand punishment right here in this square! I do not want them to be sent away as ambassadors overseas and sent to foreign postings. I want punishment *aqui, en esta playa!* I want it right here and now.”

So we must understand when we decide to shelter under the umbrella of being “internationalist” that we have to conform to international standards of behaviour or morality, or else we would earn the same trepidation and condemnation as others who have violated those standards had earn.

Our own Martin Carter, (my sister had quoted Martin Carter’s, “*This is the Dark Time My Love*”) where he wrote about the British jack-booting in our territory. What were they doing? They are watching us sleep and aiming at our dreams. Bouyea, Somerset and Lewis will never dream again, they were cut down.

I wish to condemn the attempt outside of this House to paint a picture that this motion is all about bringing down the Government and all about entering power through the back door. I want to caution against that line, because it would further infuriate people. Right now the front door is shaky; the front door to power is shaky and those who are in the house, if it is decided to lock the back door, they will have only themselves to blame; if the front door, the electoral door itself is shut to them. They should not talk that way, which is scaremongering and fear-mongering, that we come here to get Government through the back door.

This is a legitimate peoples’ protest, this is a Linden protest. Anytime you try to transpose responsibility for the peoples’ struggles to others, you are trying to invent an enemy, because you

do not want to solve the problem, the real problem, hence, why no visit by the President, even up to now I'm told, to the troubled area.

We do not want any arrogance to be displayed here. All it takes, as the Hon. Minister has said, is a clear conscience to douse the flame of anger over the killing. This arrogance of power should not be allowed to run wild. I read today in the *Kaieteur News* on page 3, the Head of the Presidential Secretariat, Secretary to the Cabinet, Dr. Luncheon, attempting to emasculate, some people in the street may said "castrate", the Parliament, by saying that even if we pass this motion there is no way that it could be put into action, so that we are labouring in futility.

This kind of arrogance of power cannot resolve conflicts in Guyana, it will not do that, if you stand up against the entire Parliament; the entire people.

In the *Peeping Tom* article, again, on page 19, it said that all the Minister should do in Parliament is answer questions about his department and take remedial actions to correct any deficiencies. Here again, we are being delimited, others outside are peeping in at us. The peepers are telling us that we do not have more powers than simply asking questions. Well I do not know if they could correct the deficiency of life, if you simply give an answer or what remedial action you think the Minister would take to restore a life. What remedial action if we ask the question: "Who killed the Linden three?" What answers do we take back to the mothers and wives and the sisters and the relatives of these dead men? It cannot bring a remedy and therefore the remedy lies in insisting that the Minister has a ministerial responsibility and not only to answer the questions, but he has that responsibility to us to tell us that I believe that I am somewhere implicated for omission or commission and therefore I could step aside, if not I will have to go to the vote and you know how the vote will be taken at that point in time.

I wish to conclude here on this note, that if we are saying that the Minister, as the second part of the motion speaks, that there could have been misjudgment, the Minister could still insist, as I said before, that he is not at fault, that the preparation and the way he did it and the way he announced it and the way he packaged and PR it, was a monumental folly. He may say he never intended to display the might of the State to be deployed against innocent peaceful citizens, doing their legitimate right to protest. Even if it were a blunder, for which he feels he should not

be held individually responsible, I believe he should do the right thing, he should vacate office or alternatively, we will have to pass the motion asking the President to replace him.

We of the AFC support this motion. We condemn the fatal shooting in Linden and we, in expressing a no-confidence in Mr. Clement James Rohee... [Members: James?] Yes, James. In expressing no-confidence, we say that we cannot agree with the amendment and that we are in support of this motion as printed and circulated. Thank you. [Applause]

Mr. D. Trotman: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I stand here to support, unapologetically, the motion standing in name of the Leader of the Opposition. I believe that it is the motion which aptly describes what the situation is and where we should go. In supporting the motion, I want to make it clear that I do so as a person, who on July 18th witnessed some of the events that took place and will speak at firsthand about some of those events. I want, before going into my detailed explanation of what I witnessed, to say this that I am prepared to stand before a Commission of Inquiry and give evidence on what I saw on July 18th. What I saw, in my opinion, amounted to murder and cannot be described any other way. I want, however, to offer deepest condolences to those Linden Martyrs who lost their lives on July 18th. I want at the same time to express best wishes for a full and complete recovery to those persons who suffered injuries in the day of mayhem that occurred.

Murder cannot be excused and should not be excused and cannot be justified. Murder is murder and on July 18th murder took place in McKenzie and as I am being reminded here by the Hon. Sister, it was cold blooded and it is the best way we can describe it.

I went to Linden on July 18th to lend my support to the Linden community. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I did so unapologetically because I believe that the people of Linden were involved in a just exercise. It was just because for a community that was facing economic hardships, the attempt or the imposition by Government of the electricity rates, which Government was fully aware would provide untold burdens to that community, had to be resisted. I believed that the people of Linden were within their rights to express their anger had the imposition and to demonstrate how they felt about the imposition. I want to say that what I witnessed was the most peaceful of demonstrations by a set of people who were very concern that they were being trample on by the rootlessness of a Government who believe that they needed to settle scores.

When I arrived in Linden I joined the march of thousands of people which was coming from the Palm Tree Cinema I believed. People marched and they were chanting, but they were peaceful. They met up with another march that was coming from, I believe, One Mile. When they got to the bridge, some moved across, some stayed on the bridge and some stayed on the Wismar side. Throughout the day that was the kind of exercise that was going on. I was moving from one side of the bridge to the other talking to people, finding out how they felt about what they were engaged in. One of the things that really struck me was that they were hoping that the Government would have responded to their entreaties to meet with them and to discuss finding a resolution to the problems that they were faced with.

When I hear Ministers lamenting the facts that the protest is creating hardship in other places, those Ministers must come to understand that the way in which it is, the Government's approach to this situation, they have to accept the blame for what ensued. If the Government had taken the time to go and meet and talk to the people when they asked them to, what had ensued would not have ensued and you have to accept the blame for that. *[Interruption]*

The situation throughout the day, as I said, was peaceful, but if it was left to the police, by 10 O'clock that day a serious situation would have arisen. What is the situation that I am talking about? On the McKenzie side, Commander Hicken, if that is his name, had under his control a set of black clothes policemen in a pickup truck. He ordered them to load their guns, note the time. At 10 O'clock he ordered the police to load their guns and instructed the police to drive at a rapid rate into the crowd of people, who were standing there, doing nothing, but talking to each other. *[Interruption]* Under those instructions the driver took off heading straight to the crowd, but when it was he realised the crowd was not moving, he, on his own, swerved and braked-up.

I went to Commander Hickens and I said to him, "What do you hope to prove by this act of intimidation? Why should you instruct your men to load their guns and to drive into a crowd?" I said, "All that these people are doing is protesting peacefully."

7.06 p.m.

And he smiled and he smiled and for me that signal that the police were prepared to do the worst at some point in time during the course of the day. Mr. Speaker, if you were there you would have been impressed by the lawful behaviour of the citizens. In fact, I described what occurred

that day as a *culture-fest*. People were on the Wismar side of the bridge, jukeboxes blaring, people drinking, eating on the bridge itself. African drums were beaten; people were dancing; poetry reading was being done; hymns singing and there was no sign that those people were prepared to go to any form of violence.

When the forces from Georgetown arrived at about 1.40 p.m. and they began to move towards the crowd the people stood there and some of them were begging the police, “If it is you all come to shoot, do not shoot. Do not shoot my black brothers, do not shoot. We are protesting here peacefully. Some of you are affected by this. Your relatives might be affected by this. Do not shoot.” At a certain point in time they retreated and went some place. At about 5.30 in the afternoon they began to make their way back towards the scene of the protest demonstrations. Mr. Speaker, lest I forget, let me tell you that in that crowd of people there were women and children in large numbers - women and children in large numbers. They were there as part of the protest, in all colours and shades, because there were not only APNU supporters who were protesting; there were AFC supporters and there were PPP supporters also. What eventuated should be something of concern to the Members of this House on the other side.

When the police came back they hoisted something white in the air and the people said, “Look, they came under a flag of truce. They came not to harm anybody, but they came under a flag of truce.” Then they began to advance and there was the use of the tear gas, pellets and then the bullets. I want to say to Minister Ms. Priya Manickchand, who wants to believe that people want to use that opportunity to get into power through the back door, that I have lost every vestige of respect that I have had for you because if you were there...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Trotman, let us not descend into that personal onslaught. You may say so to a person, if you wish, when you meet that person privately. Please move on.

Mr. D. Trotman: Mr. Speaker, if you have seen women who had to resort to protecting their children the best way they could in order to get away from the tear gas and the bullets you would understand my anger at the Minister’s statement. I saw young children vomiting their insides out from the tear gas. I saw young children vomiting their insides out and when I heard this nonsense about people were attempting to use that opportunity to get power through the back door I understand that the advocacy which people speak of, used to advance on behalf of women and

children, was not true. It could not be, because if she had any semblance of feelings she would understand...

Mr. Speaker: I think that the point has been made about your feeling about the statement made and I am asking you not to dwell there. Let us move on please.

Mr. D. Trotman: This motion, I believe, is a motion which must be supported. My colleague, the Hon. Member Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, made reference to the answers which Minister Rohee made on 27th June in this House in response to the Hon. Member Mr. Winston Felix's questions. When those answers were perused, the impression, which was got, was that the Minister was flaunting his intellectual capacity when it was that he posed his answers. He talked about statements which people made and gave the impression that he was on top of the security situation and was well prepared for any eventually that would have taken place.

I have an explanation for what took place on 18th July, because I believe that the event of 18th July was not an accident. It was not an accident. It was an act carried out by policemen, I believe, under the instructions of the political directorate. That is my belief. I believe that the political directorate on 18th July found themselves in a quandary. I think that they thought that they were losing control of the Mackenzie situation. They felt that the Mackenzie situation may spread to other parts of the country and they took a decision, I believe, to break it even at the serious cost that it could have had. I think they felt that if it was that they gave the order to shoot and the police went up and shot people there would be a furore that would last for a short time and after that it would have died away. They took that decision believing, as I said, that response would be one of anger, but would only last for a short time. We have to understand that when a Government acts in that way the people have to be worried about what and where their future lies.

This motion, as I said, amply addresses the situation and it must prevail and we must vote solidly for this motion and we must reject the amendment proposed by the Hon. Prime Minister because it fails to address what the true situation is.

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

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I believe that it would be good for us to take the suspension now, half of an hour.

Sitting suspended at 7.17 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 7.54 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Good evening again, Members. Please be seated. This session has resumed.

Mr. Neendkumar: I believe in the Olympic movement and today being the third day of the thirtieth Olympiad I think that we should stand by what the Olympic movement believes in, and that is in peace – no fighting, no war.

I am quite certain that comrades know that we grew up in the struggle in this country and we have the passion to say things the way they are said. I have marched with Mr. Trotman from Buxton Railway Line to Georgetown. I have seen many struggles. A tear came to my eyes when Mr. Rodney was killed and I could talk about the Enmore martyrs and what the father of the nation was inspired by, but I choose to stick by the peaceful way today.

I am deeply disappointed and I am grieving from the loss of innocent lives during Wednesday, 18th July, 2012, protest by *Lindeners* that turned deadly. The genesis of the process came about because of the administration's effort to put the entire country's electricity consumers on an equal and appropriate tariff paid by all Guyanese. The Hon. Prime Minister, Mr. Samuel Hinds, had collaborated with the leader of APNU, Mr. David Granger and Dr. Roopnarine to craft a letter which was read in this National Assembly during the deliberations about an arrangement to begin the reduction of the subsidy for Linden. Both of them supported the Prime Minister's position on the issue.

Leader of the Opposition [Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger]: On a Point of Order, did the Hon. Member say that we supported something?

Mr. Speaker: Is it that you supported the motion?

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger: Did we support something the Prime Minister did?

Mr. Speaker: Please put the context of that statement, Mr. Neendkumar. Is it by silence, non-objection?

Mr. Neendkumar: Nobody corrected it when the Prime Minister read the statement. The Prime Minister showed both of them the statement. The Prime Minister read it and none of them stood up to correct it. [Ms. Ally: Who is “them”?] It is the Hon. Members.

Mr. Speaker: I think by “them” he meant the parties in the Opposition.

Mr. Neendkumar: Despite the criticisms levelled against the Government about the increased electricity tariff to Linden, *Lindeners* and the Government could have negotiated and a compromise could have been arrived at that, which would have been mutually acceptable to all. We could have had a compromise. I want to assure all of the people of Linden that President Donald Ramotar and his Government are working assiduously to resolve the situation in Linden. The truth will be revealed and all Guyanese will learn about the circumstances surrounding the shooting of the protestors. It was indeed unfortunate; however, those who are really responsible must be brought to justice. I want to join with the Prime Minister and call on the Commission of Inquiry, when it is set up, to get on with its work so that all Guyanese will sooner than later be aware of the truth.

Today, while we mourn the loss of three lives, we also have to live the reality that the burning of Linden Mining Enterprise (LINMINE) Secretariat is a tremendous loss to the bauxite industry. All the research and the rich documented history of the industry have all been lost. In this process I am quite certain that the situation and the economic situation in Linden will suffer. The burning of the excavator and backhoe, which have been used to lay the pipes for residents of Linden to receive potable water, was a disgrace. The persons who did this must be aware that they are responsible for the further sufferings of *Lindeners*. The burning and wanton burning of the PPP’s office in Linden was vindictive. In this modern world there was no need for that to take place. The truth will be a revelation. It was all cheap politics.

President Ramotar and his Government are working to design the actual process to:

- (i) Be adopted by both sides towards ending the electricity subsidy to Linden and

- (ii) Planning of the Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the shooting to death of persons during the protest

We, the Members in this honourable House, must be fully cognizant of the fact that the meetings with the Government and the Opposition and stakeholders in Region 10 are cordial; the consultation and dialogue are also encouraging. I am not happy to let the people of Linden know that the call centre at Linden, which was the first of its kind in this country, is not operating. The facility provided bread and butter for more than one hundred and twenty-five young people. I urge that good sense prevail so that this centre can start operating very soon. BOSAI is not functioning, as usual. RUSAL is under unnecessary pressure, its workers cannot function easily. The agricultural and forestry sections are unable to function, to say the least.

Under all these very unfortunate circumstances the people in Linden are under very severe pressure. Their homes are without basic items to prepare meals for their families; children cannot get medical attention. We must understand that our citizens of Linden are under severe pressure and now is not the time for people to play politics. Let us sit and have dialogue. Let us solve the problem now.

A properly constituted Commission of Inquiry must also examine the relationship between the Minister of Home Affairs and the Guyana Police Force. In this regard, an examination and an interpretation of Section 7 of the Police Act, Chapter 16:01, is a prerequisite. At an engagement between the President and the joint Opposition it was agreed that the Commission of Inquiry will be established; that the term of reference will be jointly crafted to ensure that it is broad enough to cover the relevant facets of the incident; that the Commissioners will consensually be selected; that the time within which the Commission will commence and conclude its tasks will be agreed upon; that it will be financed through a supplementary request which will be laid in the National Assembly and supported by all of the parties.

Mr. Clement Rohee is a senior Minister in this country. He is a man of high moral integrity, hence, no one should be allowed to pre-empt, prejudice or undermine the processes of the Commission of Inquiry. I call on all of us in this Assembly and all honest and peace loving fellow Guyanese to let us work together for Guyana where we could live in peace and harmony.

I honestly feel that in view of all the dialogues and deliberations between the Government and the Opposition we should support the motion as amended by the Hon. Prime Minister.

Thank you. *[Applause]*

Mr. Bulkan: I rise to speak on the motion before us, the one in the name of the Leader of the Opposition which seeks to condemn the barbarity visited upon citizens of Guyana and, in particular, the killing of and the injuries to several persons at Linden recently and for this honourable House to censure the Hon. Member Mr. Clement James Rohee, Minister of Home Affairs.

In American history the date 7th December, 1941 is known as a day of infamy. This was the day that Japan attacked the United States of America's naval base at Pearl Harbour and which led to the United States of America entry into the Second World War. The date 18th July, 2012, will henceforth be similarly known in Guyana as a day of infamy. On that day three unarmed civilians, Roy Somerset, aged seventeen, Shemroy Bouyea, aged twenty-four and Ivan Lewis, aged forty-six, who were participating in a peaceful, lawful and legitimate protest activity were cold-bloodedly murdered by agents of the State and at least twenty other persons were injured, some seriously so. To date, no one has been charged for this heinous crime.

The Hon. Member Ms. Vanessa Kissoon has already read out the names of the many injured persons, so they already form part of the record of this House, and in the interest of time there is no need for me to repeat them, save and except to say that their names are etched in our hearts and minds and will forever live in our memory.

Can I respectfully ask that we pause and observe a few moments of silence as a mark of tribute to those martyrs?

Pause for a moment of silence.

It will be the actions of this legislative body, the highest forum in our land, which will determine how we honour the memory of those whose blood was so callously spilled, as well as those who have suffered injury and gave meaning to their sacrifice. Are we going to merely howl in indignation, righteous or otherwise? Or are we going to take meaningful and concrete actions to stem the tide of nihilism that threatens to engulf us? We, on this side of the House, say that

someone has to take responsibility for the unwarranted and unjustified taking of human life and this is why this motion is before us.

This motion is not about prejudging, pre-empting or prejudicing anything as the Hon. Attorney General said on Wednesday, last. No Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members and Attorney General. We on this side of the House are not engaged in posturing or as you said “making a finding”. We are not speculating that we are in the midst of murder. No Mr. Speaker and Attorney General. The findings of the pathologist have established this. We are but discharging the mandate given to us by the electorate and citizens to represent their interests and their rights.

We are not proceeding in a vacuum, as the Hon. Attorney General suggested. The facts, footage and eye witnesses are there for those who want to see. The facts are that the policemen, who were at Linden that fateful day, did not go there to monitor, supervise or to exercise control over what was a planned demonstration as they were sent there unprepared. They were not equipped with protective shields, helmets and batons. They were sent there to convey a message, as my honourable colleague Mr. Trotman said, which was of driving fear, terror and intimidation into the hearts of the protestors and any others who might have entertained the notion of opposing this administration. They were sent on a mission to kill. The autopsies had revealed that all of the victims were shot either in the heart or in the region of the heart. This was no act of random or spontaneous shooting. It was plain murder - execution style. I submit that if we fail to act now then none of us will be safe, as it is clear that we are in the midst of monsters.

Margaret Somerset, the grieving mother of Roy, is pleading for justice. She cannot understand why her seventeen year old son’s life was taken away. He was guilty of no wrong, of no crime. The relatives and love ones of Shemroy and Ivan are similarly asking the same question. We have to act now.

The protest activity at Linden/ Wismar, on 18th July, 2012 was not one that the authorities did not know about. The planned five days of protest was announced long in advance and the authorities had ample time to address how to respond to it and they would have done so. Recall that permission was sought for the planned days of protest.

The Guyana Police Force, which has the principle responsibility of maintaining law and order, ensure public safety and security, and which comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs, headed

by the Hon. Member Minister Clement Rohee, cannot claim to have been caught unaware or off guard.

The subject of this motion, the Hon. Member Mr. Clement Rohee, is no neophyte, having served as a Minister of Government since 1992 - I believe, together with the Hon. Prime Minister, they are the two longest standing Members of this House and of the Cabinet – and of this particular Ministry since 2006. Further, he recently took this House on a self-described *tour d’horizon* in answering why he had issued orders for the curtailing of scheduled leave for senior officers of the police force. In this excursion of his, the Minister revealed what he considered to be important issues of national security consideration – we were just reminded by Hon. Members that he said he was on a watch for the nation – which he felt duty-bound to take into account as a reason for his directive and one of those had to do with planned disturbances at Linden arising from the announcement of steep electricity tariff increases in this month.

8.12 p.m.

Minister Rohee named who he considered to be instigators or troublemakers and these included Mr. Lincoln Lewis, Dr. David Hinds, Ms. Lurlene Nestor - I was just reminded about the Hon. Member Mr. Ramjattan - and others. In this regard, Hon. Member Clement Rohee stated that the Government had a duty, and he in particular, to assess national security threats, and he led this House to believe that he, as Minister, was on top of his portfolio or, if I may resort to the vernacular, was *large and in charge*. Minister Rohee established that he was proactive, not passive.

The time has come, in fact many believe that it is long past, for us as a nation to draw a line in the sand and say to our Government, whoever forms the Government, that we will not allow them to use those whose duty it is to serve and protect citizens to become their abusers. The cases of police abuses are so numerous that they can be properly described as pervasive, widespread and as an epidemic, even. If I may make an observation, in passing, and it relates to what I have just alluded to, which is the motto of the Guyana Police Force, “To Serve and Protect”, this question is very relevant, apposite I would even say, to ask: Serve whom and to protect who?

We were given a list, two lists in fact, at the last sitting of this House – today I see that a third list was given to us – of persons who are on the payroll of the Office of the President – note I say payroll and not employed there – and the emoluments that they receive. There are many names of interest or interesting names on this list as well as the designations of this privileged bunch. Some being Joseph G. Singh, Mahendra Roopnarine, who is being paid a salary of \$395,000 monthly; David De Groot, who was described as a Media Monitor, earning \$160 thousand-plus monthly; Jason Abdulla, described as Special Projects Officer, receiving close to \$100,000; another Media Monitor, Phyllis Samaroo, she is based in Berbice and Rupert Singh, a Research Officer. But the one that truly stands out is that of Mr. Desmond Kissoon who is listed as a Presidential Political Liaison Officer for Region 9 at a base salary, according to these documents, of \$1.35 million monthly and a grand total of \$1,747,000 monthly when the allowances are taken into account.

The documents are here; they were circulated to us.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker... [*Interruption from Opposition Members*]

Mr. Speaker: There is a Point of Order and I need to hear it.

Ms. Teixeira: I believe that the Minister had a corrected version that was put in the House last week and is attached to the Members'...and so he is incorrect.

Mr. Speaker: Several versions were provided by the Government to this House. It is up to the Member to decide which he wishes to rely on. What I would have thought...

Minister of Finance [Dr. Singh]: Mr. Speaker, if I may, Sir...

Mr. Speaker: One second Dr. Singh. As a lawyer – Mr. Williams in particular will bear me out on this – if a witness gives three answers while under cross-examination, Mr. Ramjattan agrees, it is for the court to decide which one of the three it accepts.

Minister of Public Works [Mr. Benn]: He is not a lawyer or a judge.

Mr. Speaker: He may not be a lawyer or a magistrate but I am just saying... But in any event, I think the more pertinent Point of Order should have been that the matter raised by the Member was not in consonant with what is being debated tonight.

Mr. Seeraj: You could have ruled on that.

Mr. Speaker: I thought I would have ruled on that. It has not counted.

Dr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, let me say that it is not accurate that several versions were circulated. What, in fact, transpired was that an initial response was tendered and circulated. Immediately upon certain matters being brought to my attention, which clearly highlighted that the response contained errors, I alerted two persons. I alerted the Clerk and I alerted the person who had asked the question, Hon. Member Mr. Joe Harmon who readily said... **[An. Hon Member (Opposition):** He is not here today.] I am saying that I readily alerted Mr. Harmon and he is an honourable man and would be happy to confirm that I said to him that the answer required correction and I indicated this to the Clerk. I asked the Clerk to arrange for the responses to be withdrawn and for the corrected version to be circulated. Later that evening, during the same sitting, a corrected version was circulated with a cover sheet which quite clearly stated “Corrected version replaces version previously circulated.”

I also, myself, spoke to the persons of the media bench and indicated that the corrected version would be circulated and they received that corrected version too, Sir. So it was quite clear that there were not two versions. A document was circulated and a corrected version of that document, clearly marked as such, was circulated subsequently.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, thank you. I accept your explanation. If, in fact, the Minister did indicate contemporaneously that what was presented was an error and asked the Clerk to retrieve it and another one was issued, well then I believe the issued corrected version should stand as the official document.

In any event Mr. Bulkan, Hon. Member, could you go forward with the motion please?

Mr. Bulkan: I hope I will be given the time that was lost due to the interruption. However, the document to which I referred, I received here in this National Assembly, was not something which was clandestinely obtained. I believe there are sufficient question marks so as to get to the bottom of the validity of this document.

Mr. Speaker, I have noted your comment and if I may be permitted to just briefly...

Dr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, if I may, Sir, also point out that the Minutes of the proceedings of this National Assembly constitutes the official record of what transpired. There are official Minutes of the last sitting which include the official final answers tendered to the questions asked. The Minutes to the last sitting has attached to it the corrected answer as tendered to the Clerk. That constitutes the official record of what transpired in this House.

Mr. Speaker: That I accept. That is correct.

Mr. Bulkan: Whether the remuneration is the figure that I have given or it is a reduced figure that we are now learning about, my observation is still valid and pertinent.

The person to whom I have referred is well known as a coordinator and activist in Region 9.

Mr. Speaker: I have met him a few times; we had some encounters.

Mr. Bulkan: I have never had the privilege of meeting him. He is recognised as the party's commissar in the Rupununi and he receives... Whatever his monthly package is, we are yet to find out. It is the courtesy of the taxpayers of this country.

Mr. Speaker: Let us get to the motion.

Mr. Bulkan: I think we are beginning to see whose interest is being served and who and what are really being protected.

Let me turn to the cases of allegations of police brutality and other unlawful actions. Before Minister Rohee's assumption of this portfolio, there were numerous cases. Those included, and are by no means exhaustive, Donna Herod, Donna McKinnon, Shaka Blair, Joshua Shafeek, Yohance Douglas and George Bacchus. It included the following as well: Colin McGregor who, on 14th November, 1999, was gunned down and wounding of his brother in their parents' home at Number Sixty Village, Corentyne. Nothing was heard of the promised inquiry.

Mr. Speaker: Who was that?

Mr. Bulkan: It was Colin McGregor of Number Sixty Village, Corentyne, on 14th November, 1999.

There was, in December 2001, the case of twelve-year-old Vincent Griffith – many will remember him – who was shot in a most cruel and irresponsible manner. He subsequently suffered the amputation of a leg. In January, 2002...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, the motion is to condemn the killing of three persons and to point to culpability and responsibility of this Minister of Home Affairs. As you have would noted, Mr. Felix, the Hon. Member, when he spoke, made reference to matters only during the tenure of office of this Ministry of Home Affairs. For you to go back, I do not think it would be appropriate.

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I have respectfully noted what you said, but I am merely seeking to establish that the Ministry of Home Affairs was the subject of many and serious allegations at the time when the Minister assumed responsibility and I think it is relevant to the case that I am seeking to make.

As I was saying, there was the case of Mr. Brian King, who was shot to death by elements of the Guyana Police Force in January of 2002. One placard at his funeral read: “We want policeman not murderers”. That sentiment is very valid today, Mr. Speaker. In 2003, also, there was the case of Yohance Douglas...

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Bulkan, with respect, that point has already been made. I am inviting you to fast forward a bit. If you want to go into a list, let us go to the Minister’s tenure.

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I will move on.

The cavalier and contemptuous attitude of Minister Rohee was on full display when he gave a report on his stewardship at the Ministry of Home Affairs at the end of 2007. Speaking, in particular, on the issue of torture being practised by the police force – that is what I was seeking to establish – this is what the Minister said:

“It is the media, not the general public, who are pushing the issue just to sell newspapers.”

That was reported in the *Stabroek News* on 1st January, 2008. This was the New Year’s gift to the nation from this Minister, disrespect and gross insult to their sensitivity and their intelligence.

In a swift response to the callous attitude of the Minister, Colin Bascom, writing from the United Kingdom (UK) where he resides, and as a member of the Campaign for Justice in Guyana, immediately wrote a letter to the said *Stabroek News* which was published on 3rd January under the caption, “Minister Rohee has shown an ambivalent attitude on the rule of law.” In this letter Mr. Bascom said:

“With all due respect to the Hon. Minister, what planet does he live on?”

He went on to say:

“Even allowing for his proclivity to speaking rashly, this statement literally borders on the preposterous.”

There are many other adjectives which would have been appropriate, but Mr. Bascom was being measured. He also said:

“More than ever before the disciplined services need to be seen to be upholding the very laws they purport to enforce. This is a fundamental prerequisite to regaining the trust and confidence of the general public which is necessary. On the question of torture, extra-judicial killings, police brutality and the denial of due process, the record of the police force under this Government is woeful.”

While the echo of the Minister’s words was still ringing in our ears, a twelve-year-old boy accused three police officers of slapping, beating and kicking him - it was in January, 2008 – an allegation that he repeated at the Leonora Magistrate’s Court. The brutality allegedly occurred while the boy was in custody at the Den Amstel Police Station. The minor, who was found guilty of break and enter and larceny, said that one of the ranks “benched” him with a belt while another made him kneel and kicked him in the back. Another rank, he said, slapped him. Magistrate Fazil Azeez was reported as saying: “I am not going to sit here and let it go unnoticed in this court...” Though he noted that what the child said was only an allegation at that point.

Later in that same year, in October...

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Bulkan, I think that the point is made. We need to get to the motion. We are not debating a substantive motion on police brutality. We are debating two specific resolutions

that have been put by the Leader of the Opposition. One, to condemn the killings and express sympathy on behalf of this Assembly and the other to ask the President of Guyana to remove a Minister, as Minister of Government, for what happened on 18th July, 2012. I understand the context. What I am saying is that I think the foundation has been laid, and it is if you can move a bit.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Speaker, are you saying that any other cases or examples that took place under this Minister's watch need not be repeated at this stage?

Mr. Speaker: I am saying that we can take notice of many things. What we are concerned about, specifically, is what happened on 18th July and the foundation has been laid that under his watch things have happened. I am not saying that you cannot refer to any. You have referred to some already. It is not as if you are not allowed to refer to anything. I am just saying...

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Speaker, the cases that I wish to cite, as I said, are by no means exhaustive and they are indeed selective. I believe that in every single instance of police brutality, for the victim who so suffered, none is more important than the other.

Mr. Speaker: I agree with that too.

Mr. Bulkan: May I be allowed to refer to a few more examples?

Mr. Speaker: Go ahead.

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. In October of that same year, James Nelson, also known as Jimmy Nelson, was discovered dead in the Brickdam Police Station lock-up from serious injuries which also included a ruptured spleen. There is a lengthy article in the *Stabroek News* which reported on that particular incident but I will not go into much detail. **[An Hon. Members (Government):** Read it.] I will give a short quote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: What I can tell you, Mr. Bulkan, is that the urgings to "read it" are part of a plot to get us going. You are already twenty-three minutes into your presentation.

Mr. Bulkan: Two weeks after the unfortunate death of Mr. James Nelson in the Brickdam Police Station lock-up, there was the case of Ryan Couchman, a detainee in custody at the very

Brickdam Police Station lock-up, who had to be rushed to the Georgetown Public Hospital after he was allegedly beaten during an interrogation session. The *Stabroek News* reported on that.

On 5th June, 2010, there was the case of Mr. Winston Miller, an elderly person, in Bartica, in fact, he was a sixty-nine-year-old businessman, who was the victim of police brutality when he refused entry to a police officer who refused to pay a \$1,000 entrance fee to see a pageant which was going on there. Mr. Miller alleged that when he refused to comply with an order from the police to report to the station he was assaulted by the ranks and had a gun pointed at him. He also recalled being thrown to the ground and trampled upon while being commanded to get in to the police vehicle. He alleged being kicked in the belly and to the temple and he eventually lost his sight in one eye.

The Police Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) investigated the matter and sent the file to the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP). In a twist of irony, Mr. Miller was subsequently charged and placed before the court for resisting arrest.

In November, 2010, there was the case of thirty-one-year-old Warren Welcome of Port Kaituma - perhaps my colleague, Hon. Member Allen, knows of that case – who was another victim of police brutality.

In April, 2011, there was the case of Kelvon Niles, aged twenty-three, of Sophia who accused two police Corporals of gun-butting him to his head and his face. One week later, there was the case of Yannick Willis, an eighteen-year-old of Bachelor's Adventure (I believe that Bachelor's Adventure is not far from Golden Grove, Mr. Speaker, and you might be familiar with the geography of the area) who was shot by the police, who were on patrol in that area, in an act that relatives and outraged residents alleged to be police brutality. Apparently eighteen-year-old Yannick was riding his cycle without lights and attempted to flee from the police when he saw them, but he was shot. He was not stealing a bicycle; he was merely riding one without lights. The police claimed that they saw him throw a gun into the trench, but none could have been found when a search was done.

The following month, that was in June 2010, there was the barbarity of the killing by the police of sixteen-year-old Patentia schoolboy, Kelvin Fraser. The *Stabroek News* reported on that sad event under a caption, "Slipping into darkness: The Guyana Police Force and the killing of

Kelvin Fraser.” One of the things that was said in that article is, as has happened there, when no official report of the police killing of a sixteen-year-old schoolboy is forthcoming almost two weeks after the incident the authorities can hardly expect the citizenry to hold the police in much more than considerable contempt.

In closing, that article stated:

“Whether or not the killing of Kelvin Fraser will now compel the legal system to take an incisive inward look on the flagrant laws that have come to characterise policing in Guyana, it is difficult to tell. Precedent hardly gives rise to a great deal of optimism.”

Then there were some other cases. In June, 2010, there was that of Kwame Caldeira. A bit later, there was the case of a hire car driver in Berbice, Chatterpaul. Just a week ago, there was the case of Alvin Singh in Lethem who was alleged to have been severely beaten by three policemen and is calling for disciplinary action to be taken against them.

Between all of this...

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, we have listened for quite a while to the Hon. Member with great patience, I assure you, because we are trying to see where the Hon. Member is going. In terms of Standing Order 41 (1), he has drifted far away from the motion on the floor. Could he please get to the point? Maybe, the Hon. Member may want to bring a motion on police brutality, which he is free to do, but that is not what we are discussing here today.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Bulkan, you have spoken for twenty-nine minutes and thirty seconds. I am asking you to please come to the motion at hand. Could someone please ask for an extension of time for the Hon. Member to continue or conclude his speech? In the time afforded, I am going to ask you to speak on the motion. Half of an hour has passed and we have not got to the motion on Linden as yet.

Ms. Ally: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member be given five minutes to conclude his presentation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Bulkan: I believe that we have seen enough to recognise why this Minister should be sent packing if he is not prepared to do the honourable thing, which is to resign. In defence, the Hon. Minister is on record as saying that he was not there – that was at Linden on that fateful day – and he did not give any orders to shoot anyone. He is also on record as saying, in a special television programme, that he was not communicating with the officers on the ground at the time. “This is a fabrication,” he said. His actual words were: “You cannot be in Georgetown and talk with someone in Linden. It is impossible.”

Mr. Speaker, in today’s day and age when literally every child has a cellular phone and can communicate with any part of the country and internationally and I believe that you will agree with me that it is an absurd statement.

There are no kind words that I can find to describe such an attempt at a defence and, therefore, I will not bother to try.

I will, though, borrow the words of someone else and these words were uttered in response to the Government’s refusal to bow to the demands of the combined opposition for an international investigation into the actions of the phantom squad and extra-judicial killings. Calls that were made by the Governments of Canada and the UK following the report of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, one that I would have liked to refer to, but which time does not permit. The speaker’s words were:

“Firstly, in as much as we are disappointed in the Government’s reaction and response we are not surprised. A perpetrator of an offence rarely breaks down and confesses or willingly submits to an investigation or sanctions,” he said.

He further went on by suggesting that:

“Opposition parties should refuse to participate in any elections until the investigation is done.”

[Ms. Teixeira: Who said that?] I will identify the speaker in a short while, Madam, and I will give you the source.

“To do otherwise would be to provide a validation of everything that happened and we would have no right, moral or otherwise, to say anything in the future and the world would be encouraged to scoff at us as not being serious and patriotic.”

The very speaker said:

“I believe that we owe it to the relatives of those who lost their lives at the hands of bandits, terrorists, and by phantoms, to bring a complete closure to this dark chapter of Guyana’s history.”

Finally, he said:

“For the world to finally recognise our call and for us to do nothing would be the ultimate act of abdication and betrayal which should lead to the condemnation of all persons, groups, organisations and political parties who fought for justice and recently compiled the dossier.”

That was the dossier of the many victims of extra-judicial killings. I believe, Mr. Speaker, you will recognise those words. They are yours, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, the Hon. Member Minister Priya Manickchand said here, in this House, that this motion is not about Minister Rohee; it is about trying to weaken this Government; it is about breaking the Government; it is about getting into the Government by the back door. This is truly a sad position to take and in advancing such an argument the victims I submit have been killed for a second time.

8.42 p.m.

In closing, therefore, I would say that while it may be too late for the Hon. Members who have already spoken in defence of their colleague it is not too late for the rest of the Hon. Members on the opposite side to join us and support this motion.

“How many more?”, the singer John King plaintively asked. We say not a single life more. Thank you. [*Applause*]

Mr. Nadir: I rise to make my contribution to the motion moved by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and to join in the expression of sincere sympathies to the families of the three persons, Shemroy Bouyea, Ivan Lewis and Ron Somerset. Also to those who were injured on that eventful day.

We listened to many speakers on this motion. When I listened to the Members of the Opposition, in particularly two of them, who we recently heard from, one talked about what had happened in Linden was because the Government wanted to settle scores. I think that was the words used by the Hon. Member Desmond Trotman, that this Government had scores to settle - that is what he said - and so the Government took this route because it wanted to settle scores with the people of Linden.

I have been around a little while, long before spending ten years in the Cabinet and I try to search my memories to see what kind of scores this Government has to settle with the people of Linden. These were the scores I found. I found that we are settling scores by building and rebuilding roads, industry, lives by training young *Lindenians* and residents of Region 10 for better jobs. We are settling scores by investing in water, health and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for Region 10. We are settling scores by ensuring that developmental initiatives for Guyana pass through and not bypass Linden. I am speaking of the road to Lethem, the hydropower and the fibre-optic cable coming from Brazil, passing through Linden and not bypassing – a settling score.

We are settling scores when we invested, subsidised and ensured that when Linden and the mining communities of Region 10 needed Government support... I referred over and over again in this National Assembly to the time when I was in Cabinet and the Hon. Member Mr. Benn, came for US\$10 million in subsidies for Region 10.

The issue of normalising electricity rates throughout Guyana has been on the agenda for a long time and many speakers here have spoken for it, but settling scores by killing people reminded me about the post-1997 elections period. It was in the month of Ramadan too and when the protesters finished they were marching back to Sophia, Congress Place, and just in front of there, there is the Sunatul Masjid, Prashad Nagar, and the comment was heard: “We preferred to rule over ruin and it must be slow fire and more fire”. This Government does not practise that. This

Government practises... [Mrs. Lawrence: Were you there?] Yes. ...and so I referred to all those good initiatives which this Government has undertaken to ensure that the residents of Region 10, that the people of Linden, can enjoy the same access to opportunity, to education and to a better standard of living as everybody else within the country. That is the score we are settling.

The Hon. Member Trotman made my stomach turn, when he said - it was his opinion - that the Government thought by killing a few the matters would be laid to rest. We could go back to the verbatim. [An Hon. Member (Government): Sickening.] It is very sickening. I have been... [Interruption]

Mr. Speaker: Okay Hon. Members, both sides. Members are allowed to put their opinions. Mr. Trotman, all Mr. Nadir is saying is that it was your opinion. He is entitled to his. You had your say with your opinion.

Mr. D. Trotman: I am expressing...

Mr. Speaker: Well, you have had a chance to speak.

Mr. Nadir: I have been around a long time and one thing I am certain of, and one thing I know, is that within the People's Progressive Party/Civic Government, and its party, it has people who understand that politics is working for the betterment of the people who they serve. They have been around long enough to know that in such situations any loss of life does not go to the credit of the Government. It brings down Government. I ask myself, who is to gain? Those killings... (I do not know about murder because on this side of the House and close to me... I know of one person who said that in our British Common Law system with murder it has to be proved with intent). I know about the killings that happened in Linden that all of us regret. To ascribe and prescribe, and to assign, a motive for those killings directly to the Hon. Minister Clement Rohee, I think it is most atrocious and that is the reason why I cannot support this motion.

I have known Minister Rohee long before he and I entered this House in 1992. One thing I know about him is that he is a person, while he may have his mask up, who has humanity at heart and he would never issue an instruction like that to the Commissioner of Police.

The second to last WHEREAS clause of this motion speaks to a litany of accusations level at Minister Rohee under his watch as Minister of Home Affairs, but on the other hand I know of these: I know of a Minister who has seen the implementation of the Citizens Security Programme, US\$27 million, to revamp the police, to ensure that our justice system... to ensure that a greater level of justice can be carried on in this country and he has done that with great proficiency and excellent leadership skills.

I have seen a Minister of Home Affairs who oversees the implementation of the new machine readable passport that ensures today that more than five hundred thousand Guyanese can travel as first class travellers throughout the entire world. I see with the level of interest, care and concern with which Minister Rohee has followed for the training of over four hundred out of school youths from very depressed areas so that they can turn around their lives. I have seen a Minister who has led the Ministry of Home Affairs, as his predecessors, with a great amount of efficiency and effectiveness.

I have said, long ago, that I will enjoy retirement and I am enjoying it, but to use one incident and to now pin everything on Minister Rohee, I said before, was most atrocious. Prior to Minister Rohee assuming the Ministry of Home Affairs he had served in other capacities, and the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs would testify when she travels around the world..., and Minister Ali mentioned what a great contribution Minister Rohee has made as an internationalist. I have had the opportunity to lead some of those delegations and wherever I went there was much reference to the good works that Minister Rohee had performed on behalf of Guyana.

[**Mr. D. Trotman:** Nancy story.] I do not know about nancy story, but I know about bringing back from one of the Foreign Minister of Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) a book that he had written during his stewardship and in no less than three places in that book was Minister Rohee mentioned and even some very younger looking pictures of him are included in that publication.

Perhaps the work of Minister Rohee, as Minister of Home Affairs and as Minister of this Government, has paid the greatest tribute when in the World Trade Organization's negotiations, a few years ago, Guyana, represented by him, was included to sit in the green room of the WTO. The green room was not only about the environment. It was the room where all the decisions were taken with respect to the whole plenary. Guyana's Delegation led by Minister Rohee, and

because of his skills he was there. This is the person, today, for pure political reasons, that the Opposition has tabled a motion for this National Assembly and it will use its majority of one to pass this motion and send to the President to ask that Minister Rohee be removed. [Mrs. Backer: Why do you always speak of majority?] That is the British system. The majority will have its way while the minority has a say, but the National Assembly, and pregnant in this motion, as many of the other motions, is that majority of one trying to assign executive authority to it.

What I have seen in this motion, while we all are very saddened by those killings, is not the issue of calling for Minister Rohee's head, but it is more like the politics of the moment.

A mechanism has been set in place and that mechanism was not given an opportunity to work. I do not agree with the call from the Opposition that this particular debate is not going to prejudice that inquiry. I do. [Mr. Greenidge: Who cares?] I know. You could care less. Some people on the other side have just lost and my congratulations are to those Members who won executive positions of the PNCR. This motion has more to do with politics.

I am in full support of the rational amendments made by the Hon. Prime Minister and would not support the motion as originally tabled.

Thank you very much. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker: I now invite Hon. Member Ms. Ferguson. Let us see if the House gets quiet now.

Ms. Ferguson: I hear the sound of this nation crying. Oh yes, this nation is crying for their constitutional protection of fundamental rights and freedom of individuals to be respected by our nation leaders.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member one second please. The person in the gallery with a video camera, if he is not a journalist I will not permit that. Please put it away if you are not an accredited journalist or a recognised journalist. Continue Ms. Ferguson.

Ms. Ferguson: Mr. Speaker and Members of this honourable House I have meticulously examined the life of a failed leader from a widely used religious book that I can draw parallel with the present Minister in charge of security.

The character King Saul, a leader of the nation of Israel who failed his God and his people, I have mainly examined. Factors that contributed to Saul's failed leadership: King Saul defied the orders of the spiritual leader his God brought council through and functioned without godly prudence. In other words, he did what was pleasing in his own sight. Saul lost control of his followers. He failed to carry out God's instructions. Now Mr. Speaker, after tirelessly examining the failed leader of this religious book called the Bible, quote and unquote, I am eager to draw a parallel with the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Clement Rohee's leadership and King Saul.

To date, since the Hon. Minister has assumed the office of Minister of Home Affairs in September 2006, to present, his track record has been saturated with question marks. I rise this evening to make an invaluable contribution to the motion before this honourable Assembly for deliberations by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Member Brigadier (Ret'd) David Granger. On July 18th, 2012, innocent citizens in Linden were attacked by law enforcement officers, who I deemed as callous and who do not have respect for human lives. The citizens were acting within their constitutional rights since they regard the increase in electricity tariff bestowed on them as not being given proper thought and attention by this Government. It would be remiss of me if I failed to extend my condolences to the bereaved families of Messrs Shemroy Bouyea, Ivan Lewis and Ron Somerset. Therefore on my own behalf and, by extension, the A Partnership for National Unity, I would like to extend our deepest sympathies to the families. I would also like to wish those who were suffering from shock and trauma, after witnessing such a erroneous act, a speedy recovery.

On that fatal Wednesday, I travelled to the mining town of Linden to give support, not in the capacity of a Member of Parliament, but of an ordinary citizen who feels what my brothers and sisters are experiencing in that Region. While there, comforting words were given to citizens. At no point those citizens were behaving unruly, rather they were demonstrating peacefully and they were chanting that they would like to have the presence of President Donald Romotar. Not realising what was coming before them later that day, the region was plunged into a state of chaos when innocent young Guyanese lives were taken at the hands of law enforcement officers who swore to an oath that they will serve and protect the citizens of this nation - not to take innocent lives. According to Guyana's Constitution, article 147 (1), page 92, and I quote:

“Except with his or her own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his or her freedom of assembly, association and freedom to demonstrate peacefully, that to say, his or her right to assemble freely, to demonstrate peacefully and to associate with other persons and in particular to form or belong to political parties, trade unions or other association for protection of his or her interests.”

Let me remind Members, sitting in this honourable Assembly, what transpired on December 6th, 2011, when innocent and unarmed citizens of Georgetown took to the street in a civil manner to exercise their fundamental rights. On that day Hon. Members Mr. James Bond, Joan Baveghems and other citizens became victims of police shootings when they used rubber pellets. The Hon. Member, Leader of the Opposition publically denounced the police actions and asked for an inquiry to be conducted into those shootings. An ultimatum was given for the reports to be submitted on or before the ending of December, 2012. It is merely eight months and to date the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Clement Rohee, has failed in his capacity, as having ministerial oversight of the Guyana Police Force, to ensure that an independent inquiry was conducted and a comprehensive report was done.

I would like to endorse the remarks made by Hon. Members, Mr. David Granger, Leader of the Opposition and Mrs. Catherine Hughes, when they spoke extensively on ministerial responsibilities. It is quite distinct to this nation that the Hon. Member Mr. Clement Rohee is incompetent - and I emphasise “he is incompetent” - in having oversight of the Guyana Police Force and the implementation of policies that will aid in improving the image of the force. My reason for saying this is that during his tenure as Minister of Home Affairs we have seen the following atrocities: Killing of a former Minister, torturing of a teenager, that is Tyrone Thomas, the Lusignan and Bartica massacres in 2006.

Hon. Members (Opposition): Under his watch.

Ms. Ferguson: Lindo Creek murders in 2008.

Hon. Members (Opposition): Under his watch.

Ms. Ferguson: Police brutality.

Hon. Members (Opposition): Under his watch.

Ms. Ferguson: Corrupt practices of senior police ranks.

Hon. Members (Opposition): Under his watch.

Ms. Ferguson: Countless exportation of illegal substances through our borders.

Hon. Members (Opposition): Under his watch.

Ms. Ferguson: High crime rates.

Hon. Members (Opposition): Under his watch.

Ms. Ferguson: Silencing of Assistant Commissioner, Mr. David Ramnarine

Hon. Members (Opposition): Under his watch.

Ms. Ferguson: And more recently the boat scam.

Hon. Members (Opposition): Under his watch.

Ms. Ferguson: We have witnessed street demonstrations globally. Even though, in some cases lives are lost, that is, due to rioting and unruly behaviour of individuals, while in other cases demonstrations are done without the use of excessive forces causing fatalities. The world is watching to see how leaders in this beautiful land will deal with this situation currently before us. Our religious and political leaders, and the ordinary man and woman, have strongly and publicly condemned the atrocities meted out to the people in Linden under this incumbent Minister of Home Affairs, the Hon. Member Mr. Clement Rohee.

In concluding, just as my previous colleagues alluded to and the factors outlined earlier, I endorse the support of the motion before this House in the name of the Hon. Member and Leader of the Opposition, Mr. David Granger, and call on you, Minister of Home Affairs, you, Hon. Member Mr. Clement Rohee, to do the decent and honourable thing, to submit your resignation in good faith.

Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

Minister in the Ministry of Finance [Bishop Edghill]: On July 18th, when Shemroy Bouyea, Ivan Lewis, Ron Somerset and hundreds of other *Linden*ers came out for what was supposed to

be a peaceful protest, none of us in this House anticipated death or injury. As a matter of fact, the pastors and the churches in Linden, which participated and mobilised their members, made it very clear to the organisers of this activity that they will not be a part of anything that will be violent and can cause mayhem. It was with such an agreement that they participated. The Hon. Member Mr. Morian is a member of such a group of pastors in Linden and he could attest to that. At no time was there any arrangement, agreement or understanding that a bridge would be blocked and that insults would be thrown at persons who did not agree with the cause. At no time was it established that this process or protest would be anything besides letting voices be heard about the proposed electricity tariff increase. It is with that context that when I got the news that there were individuals who lost their lives that I was deeply pained. I take this opportunity to join the voices of His Excellency the President, Members of this Government and Members of the Opposition and the many members of civil societies and the voices of those who are unable to be heard, because, perhaps, the media will not listen to them, to say how deeply pained we are by these circumstances.

The motion before us is one that calls for the condemnation of the killings that took place. I have noticed that we would have gone specifically and put an individual on trial and have already concluded that he is guilty and that he has been sentenced. I have listened to persons in this House, during this debate, saying things that were told to them by *Lindeners* and I would say what *Lindeners* told me. *Lindeners* told me that they are not assured that gunfire only came from the police.

9.12 p.m.

Lindeners told me that. I dare say, Sir, this came from persons who were part of the protest who mobilised members of their congregations to be part of that protest. They cannot honestly stand and say that gunshot fired only came from the police.

Mr. Jones: Comrade Speaker...

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

Mr. Jones: It is of correction, rather. On Wednesday the 18th of July the police issued an official press release and at no point in time, in that press release, it was stated that the police were fired upon, so the Hon. Member is misleading the House.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Speaker, at no time at all did I say that anyone fired at the police. I said persons from Linden, who communicated with me on the evening of this dreadful and dark day, cannot be convinced, having been present and seeing what was taking place, that it was only the police who used gunfire. I would like that to be recorded in this National Assembly. I will not back away from what is essentially a view that is held by a number of *Lindeners*, Sir. We have to be very careful in this House, we have to be very careful in this country, about the way we rush to judgement. While I am aware, Sir, that I have many admirers in this House, I will not be distracted by their words of admiration.

When things go wrong questions must be asked, and certainly the 18th of July is a day when things went wrong. Last week I sat here and I listened to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition when he said, "Linden is listening; the people of Guyana are listening." I will like to say that is true - the people are listening - but the people are not only listening, Sir, the people are looking, because in this honourable House where the seriousness of a motion that is calling for the condemnation, as it relates to the killings of innocent lives who were in a peaceful protest, where this motion is also calling for a removal of a responsible elected official, in the person of a Minister of Home Affairs, the people are seeing that we have individuals who are genuflecting at the altar of political opportunism. The people who are genuflecting at this altar, Sir, cannot use the pain and grief of sorrowing families and hurting individuals to score cheap political points.

This motion seeks to make conclusions before the facts. I want to know, as a citizen of this country, who fired those fatal shots. I believe that is something we all in this House want to know; we want to know who behaved in a reckless manner. We want to know who behaved in a manner that was not in keeping with what could be described as civil behaviour because here, in Linden, what was organised as a peaceful protest, something went wrong and the question must be asked. Let us find out what went wrong; let us have the Commission of Inquiry; let us have the investigations. It is strange and I cannot help about expressing this opinion in this honourable House that all the individuals who were there, in the age of cell phones, video cameras and where there are members of the media, who pride themselves in bringing to public notice act of

in discretions that are being discovered and exposed, that up until this day, Sir, some twelve days after the shooting, not one piece of footage of what happened is being aired on the airwaves that led to the death of those individuals. Something is fishy here, Sir. I would think that the environment needs to be created where all and sundry must be able to come in a safe space and provide the information that is available to them; that this will not be one in a series of events in Guyana where we keep pointing fingers and blaming each other, but we must know conclusively who is responsible. That is why I cannot support the motion as presented by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and I am asking this honourable House to consider the amendments as put with by the Hon. Prime Minister.

What transpired in Linden is essentially about leadership and while there might be those who do not want to hear about it, Sir, I will not be silent, because my responsibility is to do what I am doing here, and that is to speak the truth. It is about leadership. Local leaders in Linden, who had a feeling and a view that there issue of the electricity tariff must be addressed, the voices must be heard, in what is allowed in any democracy, mobilised their people to make their views. I cannot stand in this honourable House tonight and say that the people who started this are in charge of what is taking place right now. Somewhere along the line new leaders took over the issue. I spoke to people in Linden when the protest stopped on the bridge and it was never a part of the game plan for anybody to take over the bridge as discussed with the stakeholders in the planning meetings. When the people stopped on the bridge it meant that somewhere along the line the local leaders had handed over leadership to a new kind of leaders. I have noticed quite recently that a former Leader of the Opposition has warned about wild men.

The Commission of Inquiry would tell us between the starting point and why we never got to the place where the rally should have been held, where the speakers were supposed to deliver their speeches so that representation of the people's views, concerning Linden and how the Government should have address this matter, could have been heard. The Commission of Inquiry will bring that out.

What is needed here is strong and decisive leadership, not leadership that is playing to the gallery. What is required here is sensible leadership. A number of the stakeholders, who agreed and participated in the mobilisation of the planned five-day activities, abandoned that process by one o'clock that day. They had left the bridge and gone to their homes. They had publicly said to

the other leaders that they want nothing to do with that; that was never a part of the game plan, because certain people inserted themselves and leadership was no longer at the level of the community. It was taken over, and that is a fact that cannot be disputed. We can make fancy speeches, but the reality is that is what transpired.

We need visionary leaders in this country. People who know exactly what they want and will not be manipulated would not be cajoled into going into directions that are not in keeping with their conscience and upholding their integrity. I heard the Hon. Member Ms. Annette Ferguson in her presentation, just now, quoting from scripture, and it would seem that in this House only some people are allowed to do that, but I am allowed too, Sir. I would like to say when the “blind leads the blind they both fall into the ditch” and what we saw on the 18th of July was blind men leading blind people to their death and injury and hurt, because there were local leaders, like Ms. Vanessa Kissoon, the Hon. Member, who mobilised her people to deal with the electricity, but then there were leaders who inserted themselves, who did not have a vision for the people of Linden; leaders who have a vision of their own political agenda; leaders who had their axe to grind and the people of Linden were made sacrificial lambs of which we condemn in this House tonight. It must never happen again in Guyana, we need strong, decisive sensible and visionary leadership, and this issue is about leadership.

If in this honourable House, Members of this House could vilify... [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, it is becoming impossible for this debate to carry on like this. I could just rise and we come back on Thursday and see what happens, but I am not prepared for us to spend the rest of the evening like this. I cannot hear anything. We are just pretending to be having a debate like this. It is either we allow the Minister to finish, so that we can go on to the nine other speakers and get through sometime tonight or we continue like this up to about another five minutes and I will rise.

Bishop Edghill: I am not surprised that in this honourable House, where we are supposed to treat each other with respect and uphold high ethical standards, that we will vilify each other based upon religion and use religious bigoted remarks against each other. I think it is something that must be condemned. If it is happening in this House, Sir, could you imagine what happens in the yard? Some of the same people, who behave like that in this honourable House, stand here

and say we have peaceful protest when we are vilifying, using some of the vile language to describe human beings.

The role of leaders in civil society, the role of religious leaders, is here under review, because while we are asking sanction against the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, it would appear that we would only like to examine the role of political leaders and policymakers in this fiasco, but it would seem that we do not want to examine role of religious leaders and civil leaders who created an environment that took place on the 18th of July. Leadership is under question here and the Commission of Inquiry must include that.

Religious leaders and civil leaders cannot be agitators, cannot be exploiters of people's pain. We are men and women of conscience and we ought to be symbols of truth. I have read in today's *Kaieteur News*, page 2, "Churches show support for Linden protest". In this newspaper there is an article that states that there is a thirteen-point plan that has been submitted to the President from the church leaders. We have checked with His Excellency, his office, his advisers and his support staff and no such document is available to us. [Mrs. Backer: So they are lying to you.] Maybe, it is *Kaieteur News* then because I am reading from it.

Listening to this debate I think there is consensus in the House in the midst of all that is happening. I will like to highlight where I find there is consensus. There is consensus in this National Assembly that the killings of the 18th of July must be rejected. It must not be excused in any form or fashion. It must not be and it must be rejected. We all agree on that. I think there is consensus in the House, that those who are culpable, and this must be determined by due process, must be held accountable for their actions. I will believe that in any civilised society "due process" is an important ingredient of a progressive democracy. We must give people a chance to be heard.

I offer to this House, my considered opinion that the motion, as presented by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, is premature. If the Hon. Minister is responsible, let that finding be made through a process that is fair and, as I understand it, all of the parties have agreed with the President's position of having a Commission of Inquiry. I was extremely surprised having learnt of that agreement and consensus that we are now having this motion before the House.

The question could be asked: What do we do now? July 18th, dozens of persons were injured, who ought not to have been injured; three persons died; valuable properties were lost to arsonist, businesses were destroyed; individuals passing through or attempting to pass through the town of Linden were traumatised, in some instances robbed, and in some instances exploited by actually having to pay toll. All were undesirable events that took place. What do we do now? We have choices to make. Certainly, merely, putting the plaster on the sore by using a majority vote to move a motion of no confidence against the Minister of Home Affairs does not essentially solve the problem. We have to make a choice between political posturing and patriotic action. The men and women, who sit in this august House, Sir, would be judged by what we do now. Our children and our children's children will look at us and have different things to say depending on how we act in this time, because somehow the truth will be known.

We could continue to blame and criticise or we could be mature and provide leadership, because the reason why the President could not have proceeded on Saturday was because the people lack leadership. They are now in the streets as sheep without shepherds. We could continue to blame and criticise or we can provide mature leadership. We could be caught up with personality and seek to vilify and ostracise or we could address the issue that is at hand, because Mr. Sharma, the Regional Chairman, a local leader, and the other local leaders are still concerned about one thing - electricity tariff. We can keep adding, but the issue that brought the people out in the streets was electricity and that still needs to be addressed. We could act in haste; we could play to the gallery; we could steal the headlines by playing up to the media or we could act in a sober reflective manner that will cause us to be remembered as people who made decisions in an objective manner.

It would appear to me that if there is an emotional response to what could be considered a grave human right violation, it will be insufficient. It might cause people to view us, maybe, as champions of their causes for the moment, but any person who understands leadership, it requires that one just does not follow the crowd, it has to be able to point people into a direction of safety and progress and future. I am calling upon the honourable men and women of this House, not just merely to act with an emotional response. We have expectations out there to be satisfied so we have to do certain things, but that we act in a very deliberative manner, sober, reflect on all of the issues and we do what is right.

The Hon. Attorney General, in the very opening night of this debate, already articulated as it relates to the constitutionality - or I should say the unconstitutionality - of the motion as presented, as to how a Minister can be removed from Government. He has already ably articulated that this is just another attempt to create an image and an impression. What is going to happen at the end of the vote? We tell the people that we have voted for the removal of the Minister, but the issue still needs to be addressed. As a country, we still have to heal; we still have to go forward; we still have to work together, and the issues of the people of Linden still have to be addressed.

While calls are being made for persons on the coastland to show solidarity with the people in Linden, let the people of Georgetown come out and protest, let the people here come out and lend support... [Ms. Wade: Do you have a problem with that?] I do not have a problem with that, but let me tell you what I have a problem with. While we are calling for solidarity, what happens to the people of Regions 7, 8, 9 and 10? Are they not human beings as well who have rights to receive goods and services, and food supplies, and medical supplies and to be able to come to the coast to transact their businesses? They have rights too and I would think...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, your time is up.

Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs [Mr. Hinds]: I move that the Hon. Member be given another ten minutes to conclude his presentation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bishop Edghill: We need to analyse this situation and I look forward, Sir, in the midst of all of the feelings that are here, that we are hearing in the exchange, when all of us as Members of this House will uphold our oath and we will act without ill will or malice as we consider this matter, I cannot support the motion as put and I ask that the amendments offered by the Hon. Prime Minister be considered or the mover of the motion probably withdraw the motion as well, that we will be able to find a mechanism that we all can agree on without making judgement prematurely and let us work to ensure that the Commission of Inquiry is put in place and those who should be held accountable are found through a process that is fair and the necessary actions to be taken.

I thank you very much Sir. [*Applause*]

Mr. Morian: It is very important for me as a resident of Linden to support this motion in its entirety. I want to use my time to do two things: to bring some insight to what happened on the night of the 18th of July and to respond to some of the conjectures and innuendos that I have heard, but, most pointedly, I would refuse to respond to the honourable Bishop. It is difficult for me to invoke a mind of mental instability, a maniac of depression to respond to his submission. I will treat it as a bend in the road, or a bump on the road, and move on.

9.42 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, in such a debate when charges are laid against the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, one looks for his colleagues to respond to show how his stewardship has improved the security situations in Guyana. One would have felt that his colleagues would have shared with this House that the people of Guyana are satisfied with security measures here. Instead, I got the distinct impression that the Hon. Minister was now applying for this job and they are all writing references on his behalf. Hence their submission has really failed to bring the whole debate into proper context.

On the night of the 18th July 2012, I was there. The Hon. Bishop was not there; he got second-hand information. The procession was led by local leaders of the church. The demonstration was supposed to be completed at the square of what was once the Guyana Stores building. When the church leaders and community leaders passed over the Bridge, we were in the rear with a vehicle, a truck, and when the vehicle met in the middle of the Bridge, a young lady on that vehicle said, "We will take a pit stop for water." I guess the Bishop did not know that. After about 45 minutes, the organisers at the front of the demonstration came down the Bridge and said that it was time for us to move. The persons on the Bridge said, "We will not move now. We are still drinking water." Somebody requested, where are the pictures? The pictures will be brought out at the time of the inquest, but we have them. The people were singing hymns and another set of people were singing patriotic songs. I was walking on the left hand side of the Bridge; the Chairman was on the right hand side of the Bridge and I am availing myself for any investigation - availing myself.

The sad thing here is that the policemen from Linden were all on the Bridge. I showed some of the pictures that I captured on my phone to some Members of the opposite side, that the policemen were there being sheltered with umbrellas by the very people who were supposed to be making trouble. When the black clothes police arrived in the vicinity, and they took up formation that years ago we used to call pepper pot, where five policemen would be in front and four would be behind filling up the slots, they advanced towards the people who were standing and singing. The people themselves, those who were sitting, stood up and the police, as somebody said, withdrew. The singing continued. While we were singing, without warning, the policemen, as somebody said, had a paper lifted. The writing was so small, but the fact that I have been in a number of protests before and have seen protests, I can imagine it was some statement saying that it was time to disperse from the Bridge.

The Hon. Minister of Home Affairs said - I listened to him on the television - that it was impossible for the policemen to be using handsets to talk to people in Georgetown. He dropped in handsets. They were talking on their phones and I would swear under oath that the policeman in khaki clothes said to somebody, "Sir, we have this thing under control. The people are peaceful." Twice he said that. I heard that. Twice he said it. These were the policemen from Linden. The black clothes policemen advanced toward the crowd. I never felt that it would have gone to shooting. I turned my back walking to the Wismar Shore and before I knew it, was tear smoke. What made this thing so deadly is that it was not tear gas, it was tear smoke so people were running blindly in the midst of gunshots. When I cleared the Bridge and turned back, a youngster fell next to me dead. I helped to lift that youngster and put him in the minibus. Shots were being fired in the smoke, hence one was running blindly. The "good" Bishop was not there.

I saw pictures that reminded me of the Russian Gulag when there was riot in the Russian Gulag, and what took place in places like Bergen-Belsen, Auschwitz and Stalingrad Luft 3 at a time when we would want to forget. I saw human beings – mothers, children and young people - turn their backs and were shot in their backs. Under no convention, Sir, would policemen be allowed to shoot at fleeing people, even if it were with rubber bullets and pellets. These are the things that I saw. If the question could be answered why I was not shot, then you should ask why the thousand were not shot. Some people were shot.

I heard one of the Hon. Members speak concerning the effects on forestry and the Hon. Member did state that a high cost is being exerted everyday as it relates to the activities in the forestry sector. I am still awaiting that Minister to ascribe a cost to the lives of the people who were murdered and those persons who were wounded. At this point, I am laying claim that the families of the members who were killed need to be compensated and compensation is also due for the persons who were injured in Region 10. Someone said that the bauxite industry is not functioning. What that person should have done was to go and see that the workers were part of the picket line everyday. It is easy for the Hon. Member on the other side to trivialise situations that have caused the death of human beings and the maiming of human beings. I remember some people were being nostalgic as they were looking back, but I remembered Rosa Parks who entered that bus. She recognised that it was her right and that she was tired and would sit in front. She recognised also that it was just for her to do that. We at Linden recognise that it is our right and justice, when a force that feels greater than ourselves would want to legislate on us prices and tariffs beyond our reach, for us to stand up and deal with such a force.

In the midst of all of the pain and hurt in Region No. 10, we had a respite for a comedy when the water cannon came to Linden. In the midst of all the pain and hurts, I look at the most serious issue that it is not just for the moral and killings that the Minister should go, but to spend \$37 million dollars of taxpayer's money on such a travesty, a relict or derelict vehicle, I think he should go. It is important for me to, for those persons who were not present, share that at length and at last this derelict structure reached the Bridge and try as they might the water was not coming through the cannon at the top; it was coming from the bottom of the vehicle. Hence, in the midst of the pain, this provided a brief respite as I said.

One of the Hon. Members spoke that we could have found a way to negotiate and to talk on this issue. What is noteworthy here is that we have tried numerous times to engage the Hon. Prime Minister on this issue. I want to take our minds back to about three years ago. About three years ago, the Hon. Prime Minister brought to Linden - and he said it was a gift from Cuba - over 5,000 energy saving bulbs. When these bulbs were utilised in the homes of the residents, what was noted at the bauxite company was that one of the generators had to be turned off because of the volume of electricity that were being consumed. We engaged the Hon. Prime Minister and said that this is the negotiation: the Government could either give the Linden Utility Services Co-

operative Society Limited (*LUSCSL*) an import licence to bring in these bulbs or you bring them in. The Prime Minister engaged us to the extent that we were told to identify shops at Wismar and McKenzie that will sell these bulbs. So to say here that we never utilised the opportunity to negotiate is falsehood.

A plan for economic development was submitted by the Regional Democratic Council (RDC). We boast of being one of the only RDCs in Guyana that provided and submitted to the Government, through the Hon. Prime Minister, a five-year development plan. Hence, the point I am bringing here is that we of Region No. 10, at every opportunity, strive to have dialogue with the Government, looking for alternative route to move past this whole situation of high tariffs for the people of Linden. Every step of the way, nothing was done on the part of the Government. I submit today that the call for the resignation is just. The buck stops at the Minister of Home Affairs.

Someone spoke of the Government Intervention and Development Plan in Region No. 10 and spoke of the building of roads. I submit to you that 65% of all the roads in Region No. 10 are in a state of disrepair. As we speak, the Global Women's Strike is protesting and speaking out on our behalf in Region 10. The Caribbean Labour Solidarity is speaking out about the atrocities committed in Region 10. Chhattisgarh Women's Organisation of India has lent its voice to condemn the actions that took place in Region No. 10. Groups from Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Argentina, Bolivia, the Congo, Cyprus, Italy, Nigeria, Peru, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Sweden and Zambia yesterday and today were and are speaking out against the atrocities that took place in Region No. 10 and they are all calling that where ever the buck stops, such a person or persons should be removed.

Mr. Speaker: One second Hon. Member. Hon. Prime Minister, could I ask that you move the motion for us to continue beyond ten O'clock until we complete the debate on this motion please.

Mr. Hinds: Yes Mr. Speaker. I move the motion that this honourable House proceed to have this debate concluded this evening.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will be proceeding. It looks like we have about seven speakers to go. It will take us to about midnight or a little after. I will, after the Hon. Member finishes

speaking, break for five minutes for a stretch. We have asked the Clerk and he has ensured that there is coffee available for those Members who need it. But we will be going through. Thank you.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Mr. Morian: Mr. Speaker, the question was asked: what got us to where we are? I submit tonight that we all live in Guyana and over the past five years the murders, police brutality, and the killings went on unabated. We all look to the Ministry of Home Affairs for the kind of leadership and guidance that will chart a new course in Guyana. Install national security so that all citizens will feel safe. The fact that this has failed has contributed to what took place in Region 10 where the policemen felt that they will not be censured if they murder Guyanese because they have done it once, twice, thrice, et cetera.

The other thing that got us here is that the people and their leaders have failed to have an audience with the Government to discuss this whole business of increased tariffs. And when a people have reached the place where no one is listening, then people will march looking for equal rights and justice. We at Region No. 10 recognised that we are all part of Guyana and equality is part of human life. And if we are equal, it is important that we have audience with the President and the Minister of Home Affairs as we discuss matters of importance to Region No. 10.

In conclusion, I support, again, this motion in its entirety and I close by encouraging my good brother, the Bishop, that when we are speaking about the loss of human lives, it is important for us to go past political jargons, innuendos, conjectures, grand standing and understand the pain that mothers, fathers and families are enduring right now. And even before the killings, Region 10 was enduring tremendous pressure because of the economic situation there. This is added burden. Hence, I submit to you, my brother... [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: A Bishop and a Pastor have the same connotation. The Greek word has the same origin.

Mr. Morian: They do not know that. Thanks for the edification. I submit to you, St. John 10:10.
It says:

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.”

Jesus said:

“I am come that they might have life [not murder, life] and that they might have it more abundantly.”

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Hon. Member. Hon. Members, we will suspend for five minutes for a stretch and resume with the titans who will speak next.

Sitting suspended at 10.02 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 10.27 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: I call on the Hon. Member, Mr. Carl Greenidge, to address us please.

Mr. Greenidge: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I stand to support the motion before us in the name of the Leader of the Opposition and would like to start by reminding the House about the essential Resolved Clauses of the motion.

First of all, the first of the Clauses condemns the killing. I think it is very important that we focus upon what it is that we are supposed to be discussing, a condemnation of the killing and, of course, the question of condolences. I take the opportunity, at this point, to extend condolences, as per the motion, to the family, friends and those who were at the event and were either injured or traumatised by it.

In addition, the resolution Clause seeks to censure and express no confidence in the Minister of Home Affairs, Minister Clement Rohee, as regards his inability to discharge his responsibility for public security. I think it is important to stress those and in contradistinction to the points being made by both distinguished Members, Bishop Edghill and Mr. Manzoor Nadir, that it is not about whether the Minister is nice, whether the Minister was good in providing or managing projects to do with youths, whether he had a ball together on foreign visits or anything like that. It is about actions, policy directions given by the Minister, that may have contributed to

the unnecessary loss of life and that may be termed irresponsible or poor abuse of power by the Minister himself.

Police behaviour, wrong turns of leaders or the role of religious leaders, all of this may be relevant in a general examination of the issues, but they are not relevant in the circumstances of an examination of whether the Minister should be censured by the House because they are neutrally exclusive. The investigation may show that a particular police officer acted wrongly, but there are more general issues pertaining to policies. Did the Minister give policy direction that caused other problems which may have subsequently led to the unnecessary deaths? That is the issue. We have to separate them. The attempt to say that we have to wait on the investigation, I am sorry Mr. Speaker, is absolutely irrelevant. The House has a responsibility to look, approve, find funds for and to censure Ministers for policy responsibilities and that applies to Ministers and actions that may be perceived by the public as being undesirable and that is the context in which the motion has been cast. The excesses which took place on the McKenzie Bridge on 18th July, 2012 in Linden were a disgrace. Under the United Nations' (UN's) definition, the shooting of unarmed individuals without proper warning as to the intent to use lethal force constitutes a crime against humanity. That is the seriousness of the issue that we are facing. Therefore, we must not be carried away by being diverted by odd or funny stories about foreign visits and so forth.

The question is: why did this occur? In the face of no threat to property of life, why would the police shoot to kill? You know it seems, Mr. Speaker and colleagues that the team, as our distinguished colleague indicated, had neither batons nor shields, so there could not have an intention to use the normal rules of engagement by escalation. There could not have been intent to use a range of, if you like, measures if most of the non-lethal measures were not available to the policemen. I mean the mode of approaching crowds, therefore, seemed to have been intentional. I would like to emphasise that the Hon. Mr. Nadir's observation about whether there was an intent... it is not a trial of an individual act of murder, but the issue of intent is important here. If one did not intend to shoot a crowd, why would one have assault rifles and not have available other non-lethal weapons?

This has to be the strangest jurisdiction in the world. The only jurisdiction in which the Administration takes the trouble to buy a water cannon and send troops or policemen to deal with

crowds with assault rifles and revolvers and then send the water cannon afterwards. In every other jurisdiction I know, they start with shields and then eventually they get to water cannons somewhere along the line. What is really going on? That is a policy problem. I will remind the House that on 6th December, 2011 unarmed civilians were shot again without cause. On that occasion, bullets were not used, but what I think it suggests is that shooting at protestors seems to be the PPP's first response to our rights, whether it is civil disobedience or demonstration and so forth. It cannot be that one is shooting at demonstrators, many of them in the back, some of those who were killed were shot in the back and clearly there was no attempt to shoot them with the aim of maiming them. When one shoots at someone, there is quite a significant area to aim at and when one shoots people and shoots them through the heart; it clearly is an intent to kill. Clearly it is an intent to kill. If it is the case that the pattern that we are seeing in terms of shooting at demonstrators who are not rioting reflects or revises our new rules by the Government, then the Cabinet Members must take responsibility and, in fact, they should resign. If the Minister, as the English would say, did this off his own back, that is changing the rules of engagement, then he should resign and if he does not resign then we should call upon him to resign and have the President make him resign.

What makes this question of the rules of engagement pertinent and realistic is the behaviour of the Minister himself. If I might just cite my colleague and some of the expressions that the Minister has been reputed to make, he seems to be trying to relive his youth in some ways by...you know what we used to call "*play, play*". You now have the opportunity to be a policeman and you find yourself in the buildings next to the police compound and you start giving instructions to the Commissioner; you start giving directions that are really the Commissioner's directions, and we seem to be in this play dough, "*play, play*" type era. It is serious business. If you change rules and regulations and you are instructing people to issue firearms as happened to his predecessor and was so carefully tabulated by the Commissioner, then you are playing with trouble and you deserve anything that you get by way of censure. I am saying that this is wrong before I am accused of being unreasonable as to rules of engagement.

10.37 p.m.

Let me just remind you that the Minister's former colleague and our former President, Mr. Jagdeo, did at one stage instruct the armed forces that was looking for men who had robbed the

bank, to shoot to kill. It is not a farfetched assumption that somewhere along the line the Minister may have been in this Rambo-style policy or giving instruction to come out with all guns blazing. I do not believe that was Mr. Jagdeo's expression; I believe that originated somewhere in Eve Leary when the Minister was present. At least that is what the papers reported.

Therefore, one has also to conclude that illusions are taking place here. The Minister does not, as far as I am aware, wield a weapon himself, but he seems to be seeking to carry out these functions, vicariously. Lethal force is not to be used likely; these are lives that are involved. When there is an intention to constrain a crowd I find it difficult to understand why you would equip the policemen with assault weapons. If, therefore, the Minister has given instructions against which the officers could properly act by shooting in the first instance without any other attempts to constraint then he should take the responsibility and we should not be left to spend time seeking to find out whether the police officers were by themselves acting as mavericks.

The question here is that the Parliament has a right for a Minister to be censured if he takes action in that way which is not consistent with our general understanding of how he is supposed to carry out his work. Let me go on to say that we are to establish it here, it is not a court matter; I am saying that it is policy matter and that the House is capable of analyzing policy. We do not have to have the Court inform us about that. It is not an interpretation of the Law; it is policy. We seem not to understand the difference between the two.

May I also go on to say that for all the messages of sympathy which the Government, Ministers and speakers have articulated tonight the President has not visited Linden until today. Indeed, and I would like to emphasise this, that he only met the Chairman of the Region as a result of the crisis. Dialogue for the Government is a last resort or a device for diversion, not for policy making or any attempt of collective or cooperative decision making. That, I think, is where the essence of the problem lies. If for the purpose of the exercise the Government wants to solve this problem in Linden then they have to acknowledge that dialogue has to take place and they have to speak both to the other side of the House and to those who are responsible in Linden. We have to move away from this attempt and this constant resort to confrontation at every point. Without dialogue you are going to end up in confrontation and in the face of confrontation brute force is a very easy resort.

We have also a Government that has a tendency to look at policies, and having decided to implement the policies, any objections to the policy is regarded as illegitimate, unreasonable, unwarranted and unacceptable. We had discussions with the President, which is true, on Linden and at that time it was clearly drawn to the team's attention that Linden had difficulties in the sense that it did not accept the credibility of the Government and promises that it makes. A lot of the discussion took place around that. I do not have to go back and cite the House on the occasion on which President Jagdeo, together with a Minister of this House promised Linden a list of things that they would do to deal with the difficulties which Linden face. I have a list of about ten. I have cited it publicly before. I know we are short of time so I would not cite the list, but I have it here. It is in the face of the failure of the Government to implement a single one of these promises that you have difficulty persuading Lindeners to believe any promise or pledge which the Government makes. That is what has to be understood.

When it is explained to the President that these people are facing difficulties he does not seem to understand that a bauxite company supplying 500 jobs in 2012 cannot be substitute for a bauxite company which a decade or less ago employed 6,500 or more persons. No specific institution provides...

Mr. Hinds: Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point of accuracy here. It was at 1983 that the bauxite company had 6,500 persons and implemented a programme to lay off one-third of them and did so.

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Speaker, there is a big difference between 500 employees and 2,500, that is what I am saying. If you pretend that there are no problems after 2000 people have been employed then you are going to have difficulties. You have to recognise that unemployment is an issue and it is problem here to the extent that people are attempting to make contrast with the rest of the community.

Let me just make this point clear, it is an economic one, whether an increase carries a consumer or an income earner to the same price bill as somebody else is irrelevant. If you have been earning ten dollars a year for 50 years and you suddenly find yourself required to pay out of that ten dollars an additional three dollars, it requires an adjustment that usually cannot be effectively made overnight. There is a whole thesis in economics about so-called permanent

income hypothesis and the implications it has for savings income and so forth. That is what has to be taken into account.

The fact that somebody else is paying something different from you for a particular item is completely irrelevant as regards your adjustment of price changes. We must not use that as a bogie, it is irregularly and it is irrelevant, just as the idea that tariffs across the country economy are required to be the same. If you are driving a Prado – I believe this is a vehicle that our colleagues are fond of on the other side – or a Porsche, although I would recommend the Porsche because the petrol consumption is not as extravagant notwithstanding the power, the fact is that the cost of running the vehicle is completely different from if you were running a Morris Oxford or a Tapir or perhaps a more current vehicle. The costs are different. The plant in Linden is a separate plant from GPL's. They are not on the same grid or system. Therefore, to be constantly speaking about aligning tariffs on the coast and in Linden is not satisfactory.

On top of that let me just remind you that we have been given a document today, a document which we have punished so long to get the Minister to admit was not with us. You remember one claimed that it was already with us. This is the document of National Industrial and Commercial Investments Limited (NICIL)'s 2005 annual report which was just prepared. Can I refer you to two pages in it, pages 40 which is the consolidated financial statements and the notes in the statements which has an entity at the top called the Linden Electricity Company Inc., place of incorporation being Guyana; it has the portion of ownership and the interest set at 100%. The portion of voting power held is 100% that is by the state. So, it is a fully owned state company. The interesting thing about this is that it is part of one of the entities that has powers to hold on to resources that are state resources. It holds on to billions of dollars worth of resources. In this particular year, whilst it is showing a profit of \$199 million, it transferred resources to the state of over \$1 billion. It is making money and yet we have a system, here I am speaking of NICIL and its resources. If you have an entity it is a holding company, it has a set of entities, and you do not see it fit to hand over resources to the state as we have been demanding, then you should not be requiring subsidies for individual elements of the holding company. I hope that is clear. The argument of the need for subsidy because of this or that is to be unacceptable. The process by which the electricity operation runs also needs to be looked at. I believe that Bosai itself supplies electricity at a negotiated price. That also provides scope for varying the cost for electricity to the

consumer. We are in a situation where we are told a whole set of stories that facilitate a particular line. That is not often sufficient to give us a full picture of what is actually taking place. The bogie put out by the other side about the need for standardising tariffs and so forth, I find completely unacceptable.

Also unacceptable are the issues raised about protestors rights. I do not understand this. You are saying that your citizens have a right to protest. When the PPP speaks to this matter they tell you how badly treated they were, how much of their rights were denied, and how brutalised they were, but when Lindener protest on a bridge and they have not burnt the bridge you shoot them. When in 1976 in the 135 day strike and other times sugar workers burnt the national assets or blocked roads they did not somehow infringe other people's rights and once seen as problem. I do not want to say that they do not have those rights; I am saying that if citizens protest, it is almost inevitable that their protest is going to have an impact on the rest of the community, because that is part of the object of the exercise. To tell us about Region No. 7 and Region No. 8 is hogwash, of want of a better word.

What I am saying is that the shooting of demonstrators in the circumstances that we understand, whether or not warning was given three or four times, it was not given in respect of lethal force, it was premeditated. You could have used the water tender or something else. It was unjustified and it is crime to all intents and purposes, that is what I am saying. That is why the Minister must answer for it. If his policy caused the policemen to act in that way, for innocent people to lose their lives, he has to be responsible and not cower behind somebody else's uniform.

As far as I am concerned we need also to see the Minister's performance in a wider context. Policy making needs to be seen in a wider context. Under the Minister's domain or suzerainty, we have had a number of things. Part of his tenure included the unexplained or the end of the era of an unexplained judicial killings, collaboration with self-confessed narcotic traffickers, you had problems on the East Coast; there had been fresh allegations of torture. Coercive arms of the state have been carrying out acts of torture. In spite of widespread complaints of all of that, the administration has failed to put in place investigations what will give us satisfactory explanations of what is going on and secondly, the means to deal with these things and stop them in the future. This is an important part of policy. You do not wake in the morning and decide that you are Rambo and send a note to the Commission of Police, hand a gun to this person or give a gun

licence. The idea is for him to manage a policy team. The team would look at the issues and make recommendations as to how to fix them. That is the challenge for any Minister. This one is involved in other activities other than that.

Mr. Speaker, if you think I am being melodramatic, let me just remind you that when the Minister was asked questions about torture he gave responses that were almost flippant. We had comments about roughing-up and so forth. Let me also say something else, the Minister have himself been accused, and I do not want to seem to be singling out the Minister, but we are looking at a policy area and the way the security system and the police system is being managed from the top. You have to look both at the Ministers own activities and the instructions he have given to those that carry out his activities. There have been allegations in February of 2009 by a certain Mr. Balwant Persaud. Do I need to say more on that? It is alleged that he made charges against the Minister. These are charges to do with criminal activities. I am not making a pronouncement upon it, but can I say to that they were also complaints about harassment by the police on behalf of the Minister in 2011. We had at the same time, while all of this was going on, a teenager jailed for no good reason, an actor arrested and jailed under completely spurious and unacceptable circumstance. As regards the matter I mentioned just now, in sworn testimony accepted by a Canadian Judge on September 9th, 2009, a man claimed that he was asked to bring down a number of websites. When he refused to continue this, which is not a consensual and legal exercise he was subjected to a number of things. He listed a number of people whose websites and emails were supposed to have been hacked into, Robert Corbin, Kemraj Ramjattan, Raphael Trotman. I am sorry Mr. Speaker do you want me to continue with the list?

Mr. Speaker: I think Guyanese need to know about that list, as it was evidence in the Court in Canada.

Mr. Greenidge: Even Mr. Freddie Kisooson's name appears on this list. There was request to actually see the emails. You almost seem to be having voyeurism as well. These are serious matters. The matter gets even a little salacious. The man claims that his wife was kidnapped and taken to a certain resort called "Celena's". This was alleged by the man, and he told this to the Court that the wife was stripped and threatened and so forth. It might get our colleagues too excited so I would not read the rest. Judge Walters on March 31st 2011 ruled that the refugee

protection division believed the story from two independent witnesses and they granted them refugee protection status.

I am inviting the House to support the Motion and to do so for a number of reasons, firstly to support the motion in its own right rather than depending or believe that it has to be related to a separate investigation. We are looking here at the Minister's management of policy, at his influence on policy, at the consequences and impact of his influence. In that regard we see the security situation not improving, we see growing instances of torture, we see narcotic trafficking and links between the administration and narcotic trafficking. In all of these, whatever the Minister wants to say about them, the investigation which the President has agreed to has only been acceded to under pressure. The Minister himself seems not willing to do anything unless it is under pressure. Unless you do the investigation you are not going to be able to deal with the Police, improve their capability, deal with some of the problems that we see highlighted for the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and elsewhere or to bring a better life and a more secure life to the citizens of Guyana and the stop the tremendous flight of persons out of this country which my colleague who is not here likes to refer to when he is talking about how wonderful life is and that it has never been better. In fact, the reality is that on many counts, certainly on the security front, it has never been worse. Thank you. *[Applause]*

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Hon. Member. Ms. Teixeira, Government's Chief Whip...
[Mrs. Backer: Fireball]

Ms. Teixeira: No, fireball is Philomena-Sahoye. I am not in that category. Death and death by violent means is even more traumatic. The death of the three men at Linden is painful for all of us and the families. We must find a space to try to find the answers for our country that would lead us down a path that could help us to come to terms with some of the major problems in our society and not to milk this for narrow interest.

I speak tonight with a very heavy heart. I was a former Minister of Home Affairs. I oversaw the Ministry of Home Affairs in the most violent criminal wave that this country has ever experienced. I did so when a colleague, Minister Gajraj, was before a Commission of Inquiry and when the Disciplined Forces Commission for which Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger was a part of and Mr. Nandlall. It is six years later since I held that post. The death and violence I saw as the

Minister and the person ultimately responsible to the people of this country, I was haunted and still am by the violence and the death that took place in that period. In 2004, upon assuming the post and I must say with great trepidation that there was the Eccles shooting of the guard at the Eccles gas station, people who were burnt in their houses at Agricola and there were people who were gunned down and some killed on the East Bank Highway. It is in my period of tenure that the Kaieteur News murders took place and the criminals ran through Agricola and where people were killed. It is under my watch that my colleague from Toronto, Minister Satyadeow Shaw, was murdered.

My Commissioner of Police is now the former Commissioner of Police, sitting on the other side of this House. I never thought at that time that any advice I was given had a political overtone. I accepted that I was given professional and technical advice and I operated on that basis. I will say this, I watched what happened on the Eccles corridor and where the Police were incompetent, incapable and ineffective to stop the shooting down that took place on that night. Yes, some of the newspapers said that Teixeira should resign. No one came to this House to say that Teixeira should resign. Maybe, having listened to this side of the House, for every death that takes place under a Minister of Home Affairs should resign.

It is not about whether I am a nice person or not, or whether I am a nicer person than Mr. Rohee. The holding of the post of the Minister of Home Affairs, the crown is heavy on the head. I have heard Mr. Greenidge talk about policy. The Standard Operating Procedures under which the police operate are not designed by any Minister; they are written by the technical professional people in the Guyana Police Force. The Standard Operating Procedures for the Fire Service and the Prison are also written by those persons.

There are many unanswered crimes in this country. There are many unanswered court cases in this country. There are also commissions of inquiries that have been held. The Commission of Inquiry that was held on Dr. Walter Rodney before 1992 is a sham. The Commission of Inquiry that was held on the Disciplined Forces Commission also faced many problems. The Disciplined Forces Commission presented the recommendations to this House in the Eight Parliament and in the Ninth Parliament. In the Eight Parliament we did not conclude the examination of the 168 recommendations. It came back in this House and a number of those issues, even when the report came out were being acted on by the Police, Prison Service, Fire Service and the Army. I know,

because I remember being a member of that committee, the Committee asked the then Commissioner of the Police of that time to present it with its views on the recommendations and what actions were being taken. That was tabled in this House in the Committee and the former Commission of Police is well aware of this.

When we look at the motion there are a number of issues we need to examine. In any situation, and I remember in a number of the shootings, included in Buxton, the horror story of people being beheaded and shot down, young boys being killed by gangs and I remember those who were thought to be informing with the Police and the horror they were subjected to. Part of the horror was that people did not give evidence.

11.07 p.m.

There cannot be a case unless somebody makes a report. That is why in the whole Citizen Security Project we developed new police stations and the idea of the one-way mirrors and such like, to make witnesses feel more secure so that they could give information.

One of the issues that we have to face as a country is the issue of trust and confidence. How do we build trust and confidence as a people, as political parties, when the issue of trust... **[Interruption]** I come to trust because it relates to this motion - trust and confidence of the Police Force. When the Police Force did not act in the way people felt they should before 2006, the people felt the Police were powerless and lacked trust in the Police Force. When the Police Force went too far on a limb, they felt betrayed - the trust between the political parties and Members of this House on both sides. This motion brings out the issues of honor, principles and good faith.

This Parliament and on this floor, on the general floor, we have no competence whatsoever to address evidence and information of who did what, when and where, who did what, when and where. The issues of policies that Mr. Greenidge talks about is very hairy-fairy. The policy issues are, did the police have the Standing Operating Procedures (SOP)? Did they follow the SOPs? Who were the persons that fired is not policy; that is not policy Mr. Greenidge!

Mr. Speaker, we talked a lot about human rights in this House on 25th July and today. I believe that we are still a country that upholds democratic principles and human rights. Therefore, a person is innocent until proven guilty; a person has the right to trial. If one does not hold to these two principles, these two rights, we descend into anarchy. This House has no competence to deal

with being the investigator. This House in this form here, in this large gathering here, has no competence to investigate, to be the judge, the jury and the executioner. We have no such competence.

The Attorney General has spoken about the constitutional issues; my colleague Minister Ganga Persaud has spoken about the humanitarian issues. Mr. Speaker on the 18th July when the report came in we were first told all different numbers to do with the dead and injured. An immediate statement was released to call for a full investigation; a full independent investigation. On the following day there were meetings with the Chamber of Commerce from Region No. 10, Linden, with the Leader of the APNU, Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger, Mr. Trotman as leader of the AFC, and his delegation. The issue was raised to do with the electricity tariffs by the President and both parties said, "this is not the time to talk about electricity tariffs; this is a security problem, and let us address the security problem". There was a discussion about a Commission of Inquiry to get to the bottom of what happened; who is responsible and anybody who has been responsible will face the full letter of the law.

I believe on 19th July there was an honorable agreement among gentlemen and gentlewoman, being myself of course. Mr. Hughes was there. Sorry, gentlewomen. At that meeting we had come to an agreement that this was the best way to go, to find out what happened and to take action to make sure that all those who were guilty, responsible and culpable would have the full letter of the law thrown at them, and that whatever remedial action needed to be taken to rectify it will be done.

I have talked about trust and honor. Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger I have a lot of respect for you. I have not known you before until after the elections, and I work with you as my Government does, as a man of honor; and I believe that you are a man of honor. But we cannot sit as we do in the inter-parliamentary Party dialogue and agree on a course of action, agree on sub-committees, and in the midst of the sub-committee looking at an issue there is a motion before the House, such as the one moved by Mr. Ramjattan on the Independence of Parliament.

We had a discussion on another issue in the April budget talks. There were a series of issues in which there is a document, and we went through the eleven points raised by Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger. We reached agreement on some, some we did not, others were postponed, some were deferred and a whole range of deadlines were set on some.

The Commission of Inquiry is one such that we agreed to. When we agreed to this on 19th July, Mr. Harmon and Dr. Luncheon were designated to meet and talk about terms of reference. Mr. Speaker you may not know that as of today, they were meetings that went on between the Government and the Opposition to do with those terms of reference. In other words, that this is not a pie in the sky, this is something that we are genuinely, I believe, working on. We believe that this is the way, with an independent Commission of Inquiry. The AFC insisted on the Commission being international but the agreement between the APNU and the Government is that there would be an international presence. When those parties talk this issue would be addressed. It was not understood.... in fact when we were coming to meet on 25th July the issue as about an adjournment motion, and that could be well understood. It was to be an adjournment motion to deal with the events in Linden - the killing of three people, the injured, the loss of property and all these things.... that the motion was changed into a motion of no confidence. I do not know what triggered this. I do not know what caused a switch in course. But the motion is calling for the Minister to resign and or to be removed.

Let me now deal with this issue. I do not understand why this switch in course because the Commission of Inquiry would deal with all of this. If it were found that the Minister of Home Affairs gave a direct order or was implicated his head would go - we have said that as a Government already - and anybody else that is involved. However, you in this House have brought a motion...

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger: Mr. Speaker, a Point of Order.

Mr. Speaker: Point of Order?

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger: Just to clarify; just to make a Point of Order. At the meeting that I attended on the 19th July with the AFC and the PPP/C - it was a tripartite meeting - I made it clear that I did not have confidence in the Minister of Home Affairs and I will take measures for him to leave, to go. The Minister of Home Affairs was present, I said there was nothing personal but that I did not have confidence in his competence. It is not a question of honor, and I do not think that the speaker should impugn my honor. I made it clear at the meeting of the 19th that I did not have confidence in the Minister of Home Affairs to look after public security.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker the Hon. Member has a right to express his views on what he thinks the Minister is or is not. That does not mean it went into the discussion on the terms of reference

Mr. Speaker: One second. I believe what the Leader of the Opposition is saying is that what he has done here was not a sleight of hand. He did state at the meeting at the Office of The President at which I was present, that one of the four demands being made by the APNU was the resignation or the removal of the Minister. The Minister was present and he listened. That demand was repeated by the AFC at the time. Maybe Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger will explain what led to this action being taken. Perhaps he anticipated that some action may have been taken by Government, I do not know, but the point is that he did list as a demand the resignation or removal of the Minister, in that meeting, as a condition precedent. Thank you.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker we all have our notes, I assume. The issue is that there was never the understanding on the part of Government that there was any linkage between the two issues, or was this going to move to a motion in this House. What was a clear understanding of good faith was that the Commission of Inquiry would address the events that led up to what happened in Linden - the shootings - and get to the bottom of who killed these people.

This motion before us we have amended. And I appeal to Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger to support the motion that has been amended. He is now elected as Head of the People's National Congress (PNC), he is now Head of the APNU and he is now Leader of the Opposition. As I said, the crown is heavy on the head that wears it. So the amendments we made on the motion uphold the main points in relation to the condemning of the killing, the sympathy to the families, and includes a request to this House to endorse the Commission of Inquiry being set up with suitable and agreed on terms of reference. I understand up to tonight that there has been some movement. We need to get on and do this. Therefore, I am saying to Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger in particular, that the amendments we have made offer an opportunity for this House to reach agreement on this motion and to move forward. If this is all about showing who has got the votes then I should have been removed as the Minister of Home Affairs. In fact the Commissioner of Police then should have been removed too. I remember well... **[Interruption]** I am talking about the principles you laid down. You have laid down the principles not me. **[Mr. Ramjattan:** ... ministerial responsibility.] Let us get to ministerial responsibility because you do not understand what you are talking about. Ministerial responsibility is being bandied about. Ministerial responsibility is a principle, it is not a legal instrument; it is a principle and is always based on the recognition of the duality between the Executive and the Parliament. Always recognize that. The moving of a no confidence against the Government is completely different

from a no confidence against a Minister. Therefore it is also when one brings censure motions against Ministers. I am quoting from “*Responsible Government, Ministerial Responsibility, Motions of Censure, No Confidence*,” by David Blunt, The Australasian Parliamentary Review Spring 2004:

“Ministers (in response to the things that he must resign) very rarely resign for failings on the part of the administrative units under their authority. This has to do with the ministerial responsibility. In the circumstances when Ministers do resign they fall into a number of categories. Where the Minister cannot support government policies, that is collective responsibility; where the Minister is involved in unethical conduct or some sort of scandal.”

Like the sex scandals of the British Government in the 1960s which some of you might be too young to know about.

“Where the Minister misleads Parliament, and where the Minister is directly responsible for major error; where there is direct personal culpable evidence.”

Now Mr. Speaker, “direct culpable evidence”, but nothing has been said in this House that there is any direct culpable evidence against the Minister. I have heard subjectivism; I have heard all sorts of things, but whether we believe in it or not, whether we feel it is right or not, we must uphold the principles of ‘innocent until proven’ and ‘the right to trial’.

Mr. Speaker, the Members here... [Interruption by Mr. Ramjattan] No I do not understand anything Mr. Ramjattan; you must you must take the job of the Minister of Home Affairs and let us see how you do. [*Interruption*] Including pepper sauce and every else; let us hear about the pepper sauce.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, let us get this debate completed. I need to hear Ms. Teixeira address this House. I need to hear her. [*Interruption*]

Ms. Teixeira: I am provocative. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Many provocative and emotive statements have been made during the currency of this debate on either side. Let us accord her some respect; let us hear her, please.

Ms. Teixeira: An example that I want to bring into the debate is the issue of the Tivoli Gardens in Jamaica in 2010 were the Joint Services or the equivalent of that in Jamaica, invaded Tivoli

Gardens in relation to crime and gangs. 73 people were killed, including children, by gangs and by police in the crossfire. There was a whole debate in the Jamaican Parliament about a “no confidence motion” against Prime Minister Golding. In fact, in his- own Party there were two different views. One Member brought a no-confidence motion for Prime Minister Golding to resign, and the other felt that if that was done it would embolden the criminals who were for the first time retreating. Instead there were proposals on how to improve the crime situation. The motion against Prime Minister Golding was taken to a vote and the no-confidence motion did not win. Of course afterwards there was the Dudus Coke affair and Prime Minister Golding called an election.

This was a case where 73 people were killed in crossfire; if you saw the footage and the heavy armory that was used!

Mr. Speaker let me go back to my period because I see the motion talks about only under Minister Rohee... [Ms. Backer: Because it is Mr. Rohee that we are dealing with.] Well, yes, because you all decided that you did not want to deal with me because you had other people whom you want to keep in the Force. Therefore, you did not want to point a finger at me. You were happy with the arrangements. As the Americans said, and as the Wikipedia said, I was lightweight.

However, Mr. Speaker, this House has to very judicious. A right to vote, a right to assemble, a right to protest, a right to speak are critical rights that must be protected. No one has challenged the right of people in Linden to protest; to peaceful protest. I heard all sorts of and very disturbing things Mr. Speaker of innuendoes, of statements of what did and did not happen, and comparing the situation with other communities. This I find very painful because the problem that confronts this country is about a fragile democracy in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, where we are still struggling to overcome poverty. The issue of how the cake is divided up and how people are able to improve their lives is always going to be a contest. There is always going to be those who play with people’s insecurities, whether its ethnicity or gender or religion.

I again turn my attention to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, Brigadier (Ret’d) Granger. I think about what would be the best thing for this country, what would be the best thing for this House. We talked about a strategic partnership and this type of thing; we talked about how we are going to work together, and national unity. Tonight when we take this vote it would be a test about our

national unity. Are we prepared? Are we prepared? Are we prepared? Mr. Speaker are we prepared for the opposition to look carefully at the amended motion which retains the essence of Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger's motion and thus be allowed for a forward path, a way for us to agree and go forward?

Mr. Speaker: Time Hon. Member.

Mr. Hinds: Mr. Speaker I move that the Hon. Member be given another 15 minutes to continue her presentation. Thank you very much.

Motion put and carried.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, I believe firmly in the good faith efforts of those who have been meeting from 19th July to now. I believe firmly in the good faith efforts that we have had with the regional representatives, Mr. Solomon and Ms. Kissoon. I regret that as of tonight I understand on television that the announcement by the Chairman is that he has no written document of his engagement with the President of Guyana when, in fact, on Tuesday, 24th July, arising out of discussion with the Regional Chairman, Hon. Member Ms. Kissoon, Mr. Nigel Hughes, Dr. Rupert Roopnarine and, of course, Mr. Aubrey Norton we agreed that we will try to find the draft language to go forward with the technical team to look at the electricity increases and the economic issues that confront Linden. As of now, a week later, we have not got a response, and it is not because Mr. Solomon and I do not talk, and it is not because the President and Mr. Solomon are not talking. They have been talking whether in physical presence or on the phone. They have been talking.

Mr. Speaker, maybe Mr. Greenidge has just returned to Guyana, but I will say this for my Prime Minister, that the issue of electricity has been an ongoing issue. There have been many formulas, many options, and many consultations over and over and over and over again in Linden. I will just go back as far as 2006. I would not even go back to before that; I would not even go back to when Mr. Burnham was the President. I am dealing with the last five years. There were many options and each time they were turned down. The blocking of the bridge is not the first time. There was one in 2009. In 2009 Mr. Corbin and President Jagdeo went up about five days after it started; not as some people are saying, the day after it started and all that nonsense. **[Mrs. Backer: Inaudible]** I am talking about when they went up together Madam. Madam, listen carefully.

We have to try to find a solution to this issue. Therefore, we cannot be sitting in the back rooms talking and reaching agreement and then coming into the House with an alternative path. [Mrs. Backer: It is not an alternative path.] You do not want to call it an alternative path. How do you have a motion on this floor calling for the resignation of a Minister on a basis of which you have not proven culpability? It is all conjecture; it is all speculation. Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger in particular - no other person on that side except Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger - because I believe that Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger has an opportunity tonight as the Leader of the PNC/R now to show that he wants to find a way out.

The amendments have been put to this House. I am asking Mr. Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger that if he wishes to suspend the discussion to give him time we would more than willing to work with him. If he does not consider the amendment of the motion, allow for space, space for us to work together as APNU, AFC and the Government.... Is that not what we say we want? Is that not what we say we want?

You can talk about shields and water cannons and this and that, but I will tell you this, just to close on that technical issue. I remember being fascinated as the Minister of Home Affairs with water cannons because when at the big Seattle riots they were using water cannons and I saw these water cannons being used and pelting people up in the air. I remember talking to my Commissioner of Police, as my chief advisor, on this issue because the non-lethal methods people have talked about are actually not as non-lethal as you think they are. This House debated in 2009, Mr. Franklin's motion on the use of tasers. Tasers are considered more non-lethal than the heavy methods.

11.37 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Franklyn's motion was for the House to adopt the concept of non-lethal use of force, including the use of tasers.

Ms. Teixeira: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Because I seconded the motion with him and I have been recalling it all night, so it was not just limited to tasers.

Ms. Teixeira: I did not misrepresent, the discussion was looking on non-lethal weapons. The Speaker has added on the other part. I was not misrepresenting. Mr. Speaker, any weapon can be used for lethal and non-lethal purposes. The reason with the water cannon, the advice I got as the Minister of Home Affairs, in relations to the water cannon with which we had wanted to represent to the Government to buy for us, was that it was not a good idea, it could be very lethal because it could pelt people up and around the sky and break their limbs. Now I am hearing from the person who advised me that this was not a good idea, that, "Why was the water cannon not used?" This is why I am asking...

Mr. Felix: A Point of Order, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make a point. I would like the
[*Interruption*] [Mr. Seeraj: Why do you not radio it in.] I have to ask Mr. Rohee. I would like the Minister to clarify... [*Interruption*]...my position...

Mr. Speaker: If something has been said that you need to clarify for the record you can do so.

Mr. Felix: Yes, it is a clarification. The situation with the water cannon is one in which the Government of Guyana now sought to purchase. I did not advise them to buy something as
[Mr. B. Williams: Derelict.] a proper word, derelict as this one, because that cannot throw anyone anywhere.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I do not get your Point of Clarification up to now. You have used the current piece of equipment as a reference which was acquired long after you left office. You can clarify something that happened when you were Commissioner, you are not doing so. So I am not interested in what is present now and bought now. The question is, do you need to clarify anything about your tenure as Commissioner of Police, *vis-a-vis* a water cannon? If not, it is not a valid clarification. Mr. Felix do you need... very well proceed Hon. Member.

Ms. Teixeira: In conclusion, I believe that we have an opportunity in this House tonight to have ... [Mrs. Backer: You sound so convincing.] I am sorry if I sound convincing darling. The issue is that we have an opportunity that the good faith efforts - we can do an analysis to say who did what at the wrong time, who did not go and do what when they were supposed to have, we can do all the analysis because all of us will write our memoirs at one time. I am waiting to write

mine about my period as Minister of Home Affairs, but I am waiting for some persons to not be around, because what I have to say will be detrimental!

Let us in this House, - we have started on a path for a Commission of Inquiry, we have worked on the terms of reference - let us in this motion amend it to reflect that this House totally and unambiguously supports the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry and that we commit ourselves that whosoever is guilty; whosoever has been involved; who is responsible, that they will be dealt harshly and by the letter of the law.

We have a choice tonight, we can go on a path of law and order or we can go on a path of anarchy, you choose which one, I know which side I am on. Thank you. [Applause]

Mr. Bond: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I first rise to support the motion standing in the name of the Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Majority, Brigadier (Ret'd) David Granger, which calls for *inter alia*, a condemnation of the killings of Wednesday 18th of July and to extend sincerest condolences to the family of the decease and same to the injured.

In the following resolve clause it asks this National Assembly to censored and express no-confidence in the Minister of Home Affairs, the Hon. Clement Rohee, M.P.

[**Mr. Harmon:** James.] Well I would not use James I do not want to contaminate my name. It is not only regrettable that we are here today, this evening, when we have seen where aggression has led us. Aggression not by a criminal band of men roaming the country preying on the innocent, we see aggression by the police.

On December 6th there was a similar peaceful protest. Persons walking two by two, pleading with the police, saying this is all peaceful. The police opened fire and myself and others were shot. I was protesting right outside the windows of the Hon. Minister on Brickdam with placards. Yet, still, on Wednesday 18th of July, we not only had a repeat, but we had something much worst, something that we could not even believe that it had happened.

What is palpably clear is that you have three dead persons all shot through the regions of the heart, that is clear. What I find and what I think this side of the House finds repulsive and we cannot condone, is that there are attempts by Members from the other side to offer justifications; to offer excuses for the loss of life. What the Members of the other side are not realising is that

when you offer these excuses for incompetence and dereliction of duty, you take away from the condolences you offered previously and that is hurting. What you are actually doing is exacerbating the hurt caused initially, because the families and deceased, they feel that their intelligence is now being disrespected. You cannot come and say I am sorry and then you are going to say, “Buddy, but it is your fault you know”. It makes absolutely no sense.

I have noted three points that the Hon. Member, Gail Teixeira, mentioned. She mentioned first and foremost, a crime wave in which my cousin Dexter Barry, a 20 year old, National Hockey Player was shot through the back of his head by an A-K47 while he was shielding his girlfriend. That was done by a bandit, a criminal lot. There is no way that the Hon. Member, Gail Teixeira, can make a comparison to what happened at Linden, again, to do such is disrespecting the intelligence of the deceased and their family members. You cannot equate an act of aggression by a law enforcement officer with that of an individual – forget a bandit - a private individual. Because, we hold the Guyana Police Force in such esteem, we hold them in such regard that when we walk down the road we are supposed to feel some sense of security for not only our property, but our lives and our families. The woman said it is not easy seeing a police officer pointing guns at you; it is not an easy sight.

The people of Linden have come to a place where Guyanese should now be awakened and accept no excuse; accept no cover-up of what transpired on Wednesday 18th. When we asked for a vote of no-confidence against Minister Rohee, that is just what it is. I personally have no confidence in Minister Rohee as a Guyanese citizen and I know I am not the only Guyanese. The only people who would vote for Minister Rohee are those sitting on the other side. No Lindener would express any confidence in Minister Rohee. No person in Region No. 10 would express any confidence in Minister Rohee and for that simple reason that the people of Linden have no confidence in him he should do the honourable thing and resign.

Guyana is not a country where these things are to be viewed in isolation, where we can say, “Ah this affects Tom alone and does not affect Jane.” The protest have shown that, that when Region 10 put on the strangle hold, Region Nos. 7, 8 and 9 started to choke; started to suffocate. So what this says is that the people in Region Nos. 7, 8 and 9 have a problem with Minister Rohee too, because now their livelihoods are now being directly affected by his actions and his views and

how people view him. That is the rationale. I get calls, I know Minister Persaud is getting calls, but I am sure he can say this, that they are getting calls to say: “Why yall got that man still there?” They are concerned because they are saying and I will also say this; there are miners who see with Lindeners, they understand what they are going through and they are willing to sacrifice.

I want to say that the Government, the other side, will suffer no loss with Minister Rohee’s resignation. He is not the jewel in the crown of the PPP. If he were to gracefully exit with his head held low, he would not be missed from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Mr. Speaker, persons on this side has examined the track record of Minister Rohee and it has not been fair reading. I know the Speaker has cautioned Members to stay on track and to stay to the motion, but I believe his track record has a lot to do with this no-confidence motion. Was this an isolated case, you could say, “You know what, we need to pardon the good gentleman.” But this has been a serious of failures. We cannot allow such a man to be responsible for the security of the State. The next thing you will know is that under Minister Rohee’s watch, twelve protesters dead, 50 protesters dead, 100 protesters dead and it will keep going up. We are asking the question, how many more? One is just too many and for this reason I searched high and low to find -because I love being a fair person – reasons to say, “You know what maybe you do not need him to leave,” but he does have to go. **[Interruption]** **[Ms. Ally:** James was here.] He is no James, his name is Clement. **[Interruption]** **[Mr. Greenidge:** Maybe he is James the worst.] Maybe he is James-the-less.

You also have to examine how the police force is reacting to his leadership. There have been a lot of comments about leadership and fair leadership on this side, but the leadership in question and under trail, is the leadership of the Hon. Minister. His lack of leadership has resulted in such statements as, “ruffing-up”, that the Brickdam Police Station is now a five star hotel **[Mr. Ramjattan:** He said so.] Yes he did say so. “Kick-butt...there has not...

Mr. Speaker: I think there is a cartoon called *Kick-tusky*. Go ahead.

Mr. Bond: There is such a departure from the norm of a seriousness to protect the lives and livelihood of citizens, the ordinary Guyanese that Guyana is at risk, the ordinary Guyanese is at risk, the police force is at risk. Is this the same Minister that rejected the Security Sector Reform

Programme, the moneys allotted? Is this the Minister that rejected that under his tenure, that we did not reform or modernise our police force. Is this the said Minister? Well if you have a Minister that does not see it as important to have a modern police force, a police force that we could be proud of, a police force that would not put the cart before the horse, that would talk to the people and interact with the leaders and if the situation escalates to a violent one then take measures. If we do not have a Minister who is unable to see his own failings, he is not fit to be a Minister. If any other Minister so under performs, I have no qualms in saying, you have to go too.

We are not picking on Ministers here. No one is picking on any Minister, we understand the job you do is tough, it is hard, we understand that, but Ministers must also understand that this is a new age, there cannot be an age of incompetence. We know the PPP has a habit of rewarding incompetence; has a habit of rewarding Ministers who abrogate the law - hitting down people, gun-butting people, they are rewarded... [Mr. Greenidge: We are not talking about Ramkellawan ...]

No, I am not calling any names. The day has come when that has to be put to an end. This House cannot and the words used by the Leader of the Majority David Granger resonate with me, he says, "This House in this Tenth Parliament cannot allow such an act to be done by a Minister and not say anything about it, not do anything about it." How do we tell the majority of Guyanese who voted for us; the majority of Guyanese whose consciences have been affected by this, how do we tell them that we are comfortable with this Minister in this House. This is their House; this is not the PPP's House. This is the people's House and they have a problem with Mr. Rohee in their House.

The Leader of the Majority did not just wake up a morning and decided: "Oh Rohee must go." The people chanted, "Rohee must go", so we must honour the wishes of the people.

Now on the vote of no-confidence, I am hearing a lot being said that we cannot bring a motion of no-confidence against a single Minister; we have to do it against the whole House, the whole Government side. Well let me say this, it is inherent in my humble opinion, it is inherent, that if you can send the whole lot home you can send home one. You have the inherent power that if you can send everybody home, you can send home one. We are sending a message to the executive that if you do not act according to our wishes, the wish of the people, we are prepared to go the nine yards. There has to be an end game to this. [*Interruption*] I know that this

Administration is afraid of an election right now, so we are not afraid of an election. Mr. Ramkarran, the former Speaker, has left, they are weak, and so we are not afraid of an election.

Back to the issue at hand; holding on - and I hear the work Jonah being spoken – to Jonah, holding on to the apple that spoiled the whole barrel is not logical and one has to question the motives of an Administration that does not seek to sanction its own, when its own is in error. We have to see an avenue where a Minister recognises that there is some amount of pressure on him and in his own wisdom says, “You know what, let me ease off or ease back. Let me allow an investigation into this. If I am exonerated, I am welcomed back. Let me step back and step aside.” It is pride that is keeping Minister Rohee in his seat. But I am reminded that a pride goes before something and it is not a promotion, it is a fall.

We have to understand that our people are hurting. Not Linden is hurting, not Region 7, or 9 is hurting, that is beside the point. Our people are hurting and we must do something for our people to show them that we are willing to take all steps, do all that is necessary to make sure you are not hurting anymore. Minister Rohee is a source and cause of that hurt. And if your eye offends you, you need to pluck it out. I am no bishop; I am no pastor, my father is.

In conclusion, I wish to express the sentiments of my learned friend and colleague, Hon. Member, Mr. Winston Felix. It is that Minister Clement Rohee should do the honourable thing if he is a James, do the honourable thing if you are a James. Resign and let Guyana get back to healing. Let him resign and let the healing of Guyana begin because if he continues to be that sore in the eyes of the majority of Guyanese, few Guyanese are rationalising this the way Members of the other side are rationalising this, few, I have not met one in this House. We need to put this motion as is; as was submitted on Wednesday 25th, 2.00 p.m. We need to submit this motion as is, without any alterations. We cannot water it down to this. We need to carry a strong message that everyone will see that we are a House that respects lives, respect life, that there is sanctity of life in this country. That is all from me Mr. Speaker, thank you. [*Applause*]

Mr. Ramjattan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I just want to, in this very late hour of the night it is midnight quite frankly, indicate that we must be not get tangential on the issues at hand. There are two issues here; two resolve clauses. One is that we express our condolences to the bereaved relatives and friends. We have all agreed to that. What happened on that unfortunate day is

appalling. Quite frankly, it was disgusting and something that each and every one of us if we have any sense of conscious must clearly condemn and we have all done so.

There is the second issue of this motion. What also is of serious note, is that there is in Guyana, what is called certain conventions, which are practices and habits that we in this Parliament must adhere to. Otherwise, we then ought to be condemned.

[**Mr. G. Persaud:** Give us the precedents.] I will get the precedents. The precedent is revealed in the case of Mr. Ronald Gajraj. Mr. Gajraj as Minister of Home Affairs, had to leave and step aside for a Commission of Inquiry to be held. [**Mr. G. Persaud:** That is due process.] What due process? We do not see that happening here! We saw that with Mr. Robert Corbin. He had an incident with some young woman and he had to come off as a Minister and wait until there was an investigation. Remember Mr. Hoyte had asked him to take leave and go and he went.

Whatever it is, do not feel that this one might not be botched, unless we get an international core of experts to come here.

But the trouble is we have had precedents that required us as Ministers to do a couple of things that are going to ensure what is called, accountability. That is what we want. If Ministers are going to go about doing their business as if no one will ever find them accountable, we are going to have that which is going to be disastrous. We are going to have catastrophes. We are going to have what is called non-accountability and that is the point I want to bring home here.

We also had a third example, and it had to do with Mr. Asgar Alli. Mr. Asgar Ali, we all know and I know because I was over there, did certain things. He was asked to leave and he honourably left in relation to certain incidences. That is why Mr. Jagdeo then became senior Minister of Finance. I understand he had indicated some of the information to the Hon. President then and that is another precedent.

The lesson of these precedents is that when things go wrong under you watch you have an obligation to ensure that you behave honourably. And if you do not behave honourably, then censorship can come and in this case it is coming. And you have an obligation if the majority of the House says that indeed you resign, you must resign!

July 31

12.07 a.m.

Mrs. Jagan in 1964, I think it was... These are precedents and, apparently, our Attorney General did not want to educate those Members over there about those precedents. That is what is called individual ministerial responsibility. “I do not have the confidence of my department and I will go”. That is how Her Excellency, Mrs. Janet Jagan, went, and she walked. We must understand here that these are the precedents.

There are lots of textbooks that have been written on this subject. There is a famous professor who lectured to all of us, Albert Fiadjoe, who has written books. One of the texts he has written is *Commonwealth Caribbean Public Law*. In the latest edition he indicated that, notwithstanding that we have a written Constitution today, conventions from our British origins still apply.

“In the UK, with no written constitutional text, conventions have developed over time...”

This is on page 178 of the third edition.

“... and they play a critical role in the process of identifying the meaning of the constitutional rules. These understandings, these habits, these customs and practices which are not written down in any authoritative sense are nevertheless obeyed by the political directorate, although they are not enforceable in the courts or by even Parliament.”

Parliament, then, as a separate branch of the executive and the judiciary, must be understood. We must not muddle it as Hon. Member Ms. Gail Teixeira was trying to do when she gave the impression that we are denying due process. Mr. Rohee is not on a criminal trial in this House. That is not what we are here doing. That is why we are saying that the criminal law realm has not as yet been reached. The impression was being given that this Parliament has no authority in relation to asking for a no confidence motion. [Ms. Teixeira: It is a no competence.] I am saying that it has the competence, the authority, and it can do it.

What we are talking about is a concept and a doctrine in the ministerial realm, in the parliamentary realm, and it is very well set out in this very famous book, out of Oxford, by Diana

Woodhouse, talking about *Ministers and Parliament: Accountability in Theory and Practice*. When we went to England I got this from, I think, that famous fellow who wrote about our practices here, Sir Davies. The trouble is that we must go back to what we learnt and what we ought to learn about. And not to muddle it up by saying that we are convicting the man without due process. It has nothing to do with that.

What the book makes plain is that it is a political decision that has a constitutional basis of accountability and that is the realm we are dealing with here.

“The Constitution of every Westminster democracy prescribes in cases of serious error and even fault on the part of the Minister that he has been involved, he may be required to resign. It provides the rule, the precedent and the morality to which appeals can be made. The application of the rule depends on the narrow judgement of whether the fault is serious enough to warrant resignation, there being no constitutional definition of fault and the broader judgement depending on the Parliament.”

We here are members of the jury who will determine whether, indeed, the fault has been made.
[**Mr. Nandlall:** Where is the fault?] The fault has been made. [**Mr. Nandlall:** You could have got rid of the Speaker.] It is not as if we have to go into some criminal law statute...

Mr. Speaker: One second Mr. Ramjattan. Why do you not use yourself as an example, Mr. Nandlall? Do not use me as an example. Do not bring me into the debate. Say that you would go - not the Speaker.

Mr. Ramjattan: This is at page 163, which makes it quite clear. By the way, it identifies almost sixty-nine resignations, including the Dugdale and the Crichel Down affair and the Profumo affair, right down to the man who went into the Queen’s bedroom, all of that. Indeed, it has it all.

The adviser to the Government on good governance, who earns a lot of money, must advise properly and not muddle the criminal law with the ministerial realm, since it might be money that is not properly salaried to her.

“The extent to which a resignation is regarded as a ministerial obligation, thereby carrying the ring of honour, duty and dignity or as a punishment depends on the speed

with which it is executed, the mistake involved and the rhetoric surrounding the resignation from press and members of the public and all.”

[**Mr. Nandlall:** Punishment has to follow wrongdoing.] That is the reason we can do just that. The wrongdoing is already in what we are saying here, by virtue of all that has been said by the previous speakers and Mr. Nagamootoo. I will go to the next page, because I want this to be understood.

“Precedent provides a measure of what may be serious enough to require resignation but in the end the judgement is of a particular situation and is made by the political actors involved.”

Do you know who the political actors are? We the Members of this House are! [**Mr. Nandlall:** It is acting capriciously.] We are not acting capriciously. We have set out, as brilliantly done by Mr. James Bond, a series and string of events that indeed caused a lack of confidence in this Minister. This is but the last stop.

At page 165, when going on, after distilling all of the sixty-nine incidents, it states:

“It is the function to protect good government as a whole. Moreover, the price paid for this is that the individual Minister must abide by those decisions.”

At the very end of it, it makes quite clear this position, which is at page 173 of the book:

“Politicians call for constitutional requirements to be fulfilled, at least in part, for political reasons, but by so doing they reinforce the constitutional morality which in turn gives the system legitimacy.”

This is a kind of philosophical unpinning of the convention.

“The convention of individual ministerial responsibility is therefore a determining factor in ministerial resignations. There are times when circumstances militate against its operation, but this does not reduce its significance. It does, however, illustrate that for resignations to occur there needs to be a coincidence of breach of constitutional requirements and political desirability.”

[Mr. Nandlall: “A breach”, do you hear that?] Yes. That is what we are saying. The constitutional requirement for fault is that which is considered by the political actors to be so. We here make the decision as to whether there is fault and we are saying that when he talked all that he talked, as mentioned by Mr. Nagamootoo, the Hon. Member, and dealing with all of the ways which he was talking about – “we are going to kick butt” and do this and that – there has to be fault here. That nexus obviously means that the conditions have been satisfied. Who decides that? We will decide that. If these conditions are met, the resignation is required. The requirement, as I will want to emphasis, needs to coincide with the desirability of such a resignation in the wider political context.

The threshold has been made here. I do not think that when Ms. Teixeira was Minister any threshold was met. She was trying to confuse chalk with cheese, when citizens and, probably, narcotic dealers and terrorists, and whosoever, were killing each other. This is not the case here. This is a case in which a certain department of a Minister..., and the Minister, only hours before sending it to Linden, made a certain speech to it, whatever that was.

I also went to the National Park, where I generally would walk on some afternoons, and I saw him with certain policemen and the water cannon, a week before. He was there. He even saw me, I think. That is what he was doing. He was obviously taking charge of operational matters. That was an operation matter. What was he doing at the National Park telling the Commissioner of Police? Mr. Brummel was there too. Was it how to point the ‘water gun’? What is it called - the water cannon? Well, it turned out to be a ‘water gun’.

I want to make this point, which was so very well made – I have it down here – that in this convention, it arises out of being a subset of the larger constitutional provision that we have in our Constitution, which is that this Parliament here can have a no confidence motion against the entire Government. All twenty-three Ministers must go, yet they do not want to utilise this individual responsibility of Ministers to be the basis in which we can have one go. It is like the argument that was made in the case of the budget, where it was said that we can cut the budget from \$179 billion to \$0, but we cannot cut it by \$1. Thank God the Chief Justice understood the argument. It is important that we understand that if one can knock down twenty-three Ministers, why is it that we cannot, in relation to the conditions being met and the conditions being what we

here are going to address and deal with and come to a conclusion as to whether it is fault or serious or not... ?

This thing is going on in England all the time. A more recent Oxford text, *Constitutional Law and Administrative Law*, by Pollard and Parpworth, the 2005 edition, indicated, at page 171, that between 1945 and 1997 a total of sixty-five Ministers resigned on the doctrine of individual ministerial responsibility. Sixty-five Ministers had to go.

As I indicated, I just want to speak on this one aspect of the resolution. I want to add this point. Ms. Gail Teixeira stood there and gave the impression... [Ms. Teixeira: You love to talk about me, do you not?] I love talking about you. This is what I got only today from Dr. Luncheon. The Government Members are saying that they want to include an inquiry that is going to involve all and sundry. It is not really accurate. This is what Dr. Luncheon wants, as the terms of reference... [Ms. Teixeira: It is a draft.] It is a draft, my dear. I will show you a second draft and neither draft got that he wants a ministerial inquiry. What does he want? It is the actual sequence of the events at the bridge, the management of the police detachment...

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, if I may, the last draft that we ironed out – which Mr. Harmon can bear me out on – ministerial responsibility was a specific item on that draft agreed upon. Mr. Ramjattan was not there. He is going to misrepresent that the Commission of Inquiry is not going to deal with ministerial responsibility when we specifically added that as an item.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Harmon, could you clarify please, quickly?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Luncheon also has a second draft which I just got from Mr. Harmon and I could read it out. [Ms. Ally: He did not send you that one though.] He did not send me this.

“Specifically to ascertain whether the police were responsible for the shooting, if so determined;

To ascertain whether the police had justification to use force;

Specifically to ascertain details of the police deployment at the scene of the protest when the shooting took place;

To identify the nature of the perpetrators of the violence and the destruction caused;

To enquire also into the organisation of the protest and its form against the electricity tariff;

Specifically to identify the political parties and other agents and their role in organising and maintaining the protest.”

That is what he has here. You can have it.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Ramjattan, you are reading from what was sent to you by the Office of the President.

Mr. Ramjattan: No. I read that first and that had nothing to do with it and he said that Mr. Harmon had the second draft from Mr. Luncheon. I just read the second draft.

Mr. Speaker: Very well. Proceed.

Mr. Ramjattan: It had nothing to do with ministerial responsibility. [Mr. Nandlall: There is a draft that deals with...] Okay, you have other drafts. The trouble is that it does not appear, at this stage, that there is going to be an inquiry into the ministerial misconduct. Ministerial misconduct is largely a matter for the Parliament and if we then feel that the Minister is criminally liable or there is some evidence as to his criminality that will come under the Commission of Inquiry, but this is not a case where we are saying that the minister is criminally liable. That is why it is chalk to cheese. We are not saying that the Minister is criminally liable. We are saying that he is ministerial accountable and that is a totally different realm. That is why it would appear that there is a total incomprehension of what the motion is all about – a total incomprehension. They want to muddle the issue and talk to the people out there about “*Ramjattan an’ dem and Granger wan’ fuh go and lackup de man.*” No. We are not getting there. That is to carry on the propaganda.

This is what we are talking about and I want to leave it there, Mr. Speaker, because they are misleading this House into giving the impression that we are denying due process. In a scenario like this, it is not due process; it has nothing to do with it. It has now that we, being peers, are asking what the Minister has done over the past couple of incidences. What has happened here?

The role that he played, as far as we know, and from the evidence that we have at hand, we determine we have no confidence in this member being in our House as a Minister. That is what we are doing.

Moreover, there was decency about the presidency of Mr. Jagdeo when he asked Mr. Gajraj to leave. There was decency about Mr. Desmond Hoyte asking Minister Corbin, then, to leave. Both stepped down. That is the first thing that happened. But we do not have that happening there. Mr. Ramotar seems not to want to do it. I have named the conventions and I have named the precedents. They felt that we did not have the precedents. That same Dudus affair is another precedent. Mr. Bruce Golding, the Prime Minister, had to resign and that was with narcotic dealers going into Tivoli Gardens. Here there were policemen going to peaceful citizens and shooting them. What is the equivalence? It cannot be equated. It is important that that be understood.

Here is the important point that I wish to make: Accountability is the basis of this whole thing; it is the platform. When we can start having...

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ramjattan keeps talking about certain things concerning comparisons that were made. In the sixth AND WHEREAS clause of the original motion, it makes it very clear that the door was open to deal with other issues other than the killings in Linden. The sixth AND WHEREAS clause talks about banditry, piracy, torture, narcotics, and so on. The references, which were made, are in relation to that paragraph in which Mr. Ramjattan seems not to recognise as a part of the motion.

Mr. Ramjattan: It has to do with accountability. If we do not start this process of living certain examples where Ministers are going to be held accountable, we are not going to have good governance in this country. We must set the example. In Guyana, a lot of the Ministers love the Westminster model that is called the “power and privilege side” of it – “*Dem ah Minista an, deh gon live it up. Deh gon drive Prado an deh gon geh security guards.*” That is the kudos side. But when it comes to the accountability side they do not want it. We love the power and privilege side, but we must also appreciate what is called the “accountability and responsibility side”. That is what we have to bring home to our Ministers. This is a good opportunity because the threshold has been made, there have been constitutional improprieties, in my opinion, and it would appear

as though it is the opinion of the Opposition Members here. So we must ensure that indeed the “responsibility and accountability side” is upheld.

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

Mr. B. Williams: Good morning to all. I shall endeavour to support the motion under the hand of the Hon. Leader to the Opposition while, at the same time, I am locked in the struggle within the arms of Morpheus.

I, in the first instance, would like to adopt the factual matrix inherent in the contributions of the Hon. Members Mr. Morian, the Member of Parliament for and of Linden and Mdm. Vanessa Kissoon. I do not think that we could gainsay the personal accounts that they have given and the narrative of the factual matrix on that date and that time.

Speaking to the first resolve clause, I would like to also record my commiserations with the family and surviving relatives of Shemroy Bouyea, Ivan Lewis and Ron Somerset. May their souls rest in peace and rise in glory.

The second resolve clause is very incisive and I am not going to detain this honourable House with too much more because, as I said, all of the preceding contributions have been enlightening. This no confidence motion speaks to the competency of the Minister in discharging his responsibilities within the Cabinet and to the people of Guyana, and, as I said earlier, the arguments are *in pari materia* in relation to the ability of this House to cut items in a budget as against the whole budget and in this House, again, under the Constitution, to remove the entire Cabinet, yet one Member cannot be moved against. I am respectfully submitting that once we say that we are a Westminster model Constitution, it means that the conventions, which we inherited and the conventions which were enforced, from time immemorial, from the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, must apply here unless they are especially excepted – *mutatis mutandis*.

In the Standing Orders of this honourable House there is a provision which states “where these rules are silent then the practice and procedure of the House of Commons is applicable.” I do not know why the Members on the other side of this House tried to ignore the conventions that apply to this honourable House and rely only on anything that is in the Constitution and everything else

is excluded. That is not so. We are respectfully submitting that the arguments in Woodhouse's book, bearing on the responsibility of a Minister, are applicable and I endorse them.

Now it is a simple exercise. When Members look at the tenure of the Hon. Member Mr. Rohee they will see a string of matters that was so reprehensible; that was so appalling. The impact on the psyche of the Guyanese people is horrendous. Then the Minister compounds it by his own conduct and the arrogance that he displays with respect to the discharge of his remit. Only recently in this honourable House the Hon. Member, speaking to the issue of not giving leave to the police officers at that time... It all fits in. He was not giving any leave. Nobody asked him to come here to speak on anything about that, to the officers, because he had information that people are planning things. Then he labelled us by reading from what he contended was a report from the Special Branch and was saying that this person said this here and this person said that there. If Members cannot remember that in the House, it was very significant, and as far as I was concerned it was – I do not want to use too heavy a word – pointing us in a direction. After having regaled us with that, the next thing we knew, since it was only the Minister, in giving the kind of direction and control that he has under the Police Act to send a special unit to Linden, a special unit which promptly effected that devastation on those hapless people peacefully protesting on the bridge. That, I believe, speaks volumes.

We have argued over the years because this is not something new; we are not reinventing the wheel. Guyana has been made a killing field under the watch of this Government. Our sons, our brothers, our fathers were cut down. They slaughtered them; slaughtered under the watch of this Government.

12.37 a.m.

The Minister, when he took over in 2006, had at his disposal the Patterson Report, the Simmons Report and the Disciplined Forces Commission Report. He discarded the Security Sector Reform Report from the UK Government. In other words, the Minister of Home Affairs had the duty to consider those reports and to attempt to implement the recommendations therein to make the police force efficacious. He had that specific remit, because specific emphasis was placed on recruiting proper people, training them properly, equipping them and preparing them to deal with certain situations. All of those he had, and what has the Minister done? Nothing! He has done

nothing and so he has to accept the blame. He has to accept the responsibility for that, Mr. Speaker.

Representations were made when we met the last Commissioner of Police. I remember a team of us from the PNCR went there and I recall that I asked: Why is it that whenever the police is about to go and confront any form of protest they have to use live ammunition? I remember suggesting the use of rubber bullet and pepper sauce and the Commissioner laughed. The Commissioner laughed because it was not pepper sauce, it was pepper spray that I was supposed to say. We discussed that and he agreed... In fact, I was presently surprised to see that efforts had started being made to bring in these things. In fact, at one of the meetings of the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on the Security Sector the present Minister informed us that he had actually ordered a water cannon, but we have heard what actually happened with the water cannon, or water gun, or whatever it is.

The efforts of this Hon. Minister really have come to nought. When one looks at the report of the pathologist... The pathologist is an expert. He is definitely one of the best. I introduced him to Guyana. I introduced him to Guyana in a situation where a young woman was found on the road outside of a police station on the East Coast Demerara with her head crushed. I do not know what that has to do with boasting. I am telling you what happened. The woman was on the road slaughtered and her head was mashed in and the pathologist in this country said, "Oh, this looked like it was an accident," and the police laid charge for dangerous driving.

When I got information from the family that it was domestic abuse, we sought the services of Mr. Daisley. If you saw the report on his presentation which showed clearly that the woman was dead at the time when the truck wheel ran over her head. I am saying that when I saw the results, which was published in the newspapers, from Dr. Daisley, where at least two persons were shot cleanly to their hearts, and the other one, not far from the heart, it is clear that whatever transpired that day someone was earmarked, especially in that group, to effect exactly what they intended to do. The mission there was to ensure that they killed people that afternoon, to send a message to the people of Linden about it, they think that they could protest. I am telling you that. There could be no random killing and with pinpoint accuracy persons are hit in the heart with a single shot. This has the hallmark of deliberation and it is a dark time for us. It is a dark time

when people could plan to so callously and wantonly take life for political expediency. This is a serious time in this country. In fact, they must be warned. I am reminded of Psalm 37 (14):

“The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their own sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.”

Take heed. All who have ears to hear, let them hear.

On that ground alone, the Minister of Home Affairs has to accept responsibility. The Hon. Member Catherine Hughes made her contribution on the issue of ministerial responsibility and I endorse that. Woodhouse’s book, just used by the Hon. Member Mr. Ramjattan, I also endorse that. The Minister must be responsible. The buck stops there – at the Minister.

Further, our Constitution, article 197A (1), tells us clearly, and this is one of those provisions that came out of the constitutional reform process:

“The State’s defence and security policy...”

That is the highest level that is speaking to the remit of the security forces of Guyana,

“...shall be to defend national independence, preserve the country’s sovereignty and integrity, and guarantee the normal functioning of institutions and the security of citizens against any armed aggression”.

I am putting emphasis on that, “guarantee....the security of citizens against any armed aggression”.

Let us look at the Hon. Member Brigadier (Ret’d) Granger’s second resolve clause.

“That the National Assembly censures and expresses ‘no confidence’ in the Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Clement Rohee, M.P., over his inability to discharge his responsibility for public security and calls for the immediate revocation of his appointment as a Minister of the Government and for his dismissal from office.”

Mr. Rohee is clearly in breach of article 197A because his remit is to protect citizens from armed aggression. What has happened? The police perpetrated armed aggression on the 18th July, 2012,

against the people of Linden. So, it is a clear breach of the constitutional provision. What is his explanation for this? He has to take responsibility.

This fallacy of the Hon. Attorney General that we cannot do this and we cannot do that... I think my brothers painted clearly the dichotomy between the criminal trial, which we are not proceeding with here, and our business of censuring the Minister for incompetence and his breach of his remit.

Article 108 states that the removal of a Minister is dealt with in article 183. What is so important about this is that article 156 speaks about removal of a Member of Parliament. In other words, our Constitution clearly makes a distinction between removing a Member of Parliament and removing a Minister. Let us see what it states about removing a Minister, article 183 (2):

“The office of any Minister shall become vacant if the holder of the office –

(a) ceases to be a member of the Assembly for any cause other than a dissolution of Parliament;”

Do you see this sweep-all clause that it has here? It is for any cause, and any cause means and includes a no confidence motion.

(b) is not a member of the Assembly when the Assembly first meets after a dissolution of Parliament;

Well, we know that.

“(c) is, by virtue of article 156 (2) or (3), required to cease to perform his functions as a member of the Assembly.”

That is when he ceases to be a Member of Parliament. To contend that there is nothing, no provision, and no power within this Parliament to remove a Minister cannot be entertained because any clause must include a no confidence motion. The President has to act because the President is part of this Parliament. To make it clear, the only distinction between the Parliament and the National Assembly is when the President is sitting. Once the President sits, it is Parliament. When he is not sitting, it is the National Assembly. Therefore when the National

Assembly finds, by a majority, that it has no confidence in a Minister, the President, who appointed that Minister, is enjoined to act.

This has nothing to do with any criminal investigation and inquiry. This has to do with looking at what is there on a mere visual apprehension of the facts surrounding this contention. Everyone said that there were uniformed policemen who fired into the crowd. The question of individual responsibility or legal culpability, or criminal responsibility, is not what we are dealing with here. We know that the police went and shot into a peaceful crowd and, therefore, it is a question for the Minister. We are seeing all of the killings and the slaughter all over. We have seen and we have heard all that has happened.

This question about the Commission of Inquiry: The Commission of Inquiry, which is being worked on right now, is going to be independent, because sometimes there have been flawed Commissions of Inquiry. The one dealing with the predecessor of this Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Gajraj, was flawed because the remit and the terms of reference did not go far enough. My sister, the Hon. Member Mrs. Backer, would know, because we worked on that together and there was much resistance to going further with proper terms of reference in order for us to get to the bottom of the mischief.

The problem with those Commissions of Inquiry really is that they do not get material witnesses to come and testify for the simple reason, despite for the past decade we have been talking to this Government, it has not put in place any witness protection programme. It has never done so. As a result, people are not prepared to go and make any reports to any police station, because the moment they go and make a report at a police station, as soon as they go out there, the telephone is picked up and the people are informed. The Guyanese people have no confidence in going and give any information to anybody. **[An Hon. Member (Government):** You were hooked

up.] You can talk about how much hooking up as you like. I would hook up with any Commissioner of Police. I prefer to be hooked up with any Commissioner of Police than with Mr. Roger Khan.

From whatever angle we look at the issue before us in this motion, we cannot escape the fact that the Minister has shown and exhibited a gross dereliction of his duty. He has. We do not have an effective police fighting unit. There are not any of the recommendations implemented. Nothing

has been done. We are in the same boat as we were in 2000. The police, in fact...and we are not talking about every policeman; we are talking about certain rogue cops. We know that a lot of those special force units bypass the Commissioner of Police and report directly to the Minister. We know that. That came out in the case of his predecessor also. We hold him... [Ms. Teixeira: I was his predecessor. Are you talking about me?] I do not know why you want to be the last action hero.

We cannot countenance that there are people who have been starved as a matter of policy. They have been made economically depressed and deprived as a matter of policy. When they try to highlight it and protest against it, as they are entitled to do under article 147 of our Constitution, they are mowed down. It is totally reprehensible. We cannot continue to countenance the slaughter of our people by certain members of our police force.

Until and unless there is all of the systems put in place to have a viable police force, there will be a search for the Minister who has the ability to do that. Perhaps the energetic Attorney General should be moved into that portfolio. With his energy I cannot get to see cricket anymore in Guyana. Let us move him to the Ministry of Home Affairs, so that we can get cricket again.

Mr. Speaker, it is very late and a lot has been said on this matter, but I just wish to ask you and the Members of this honourable House to appreciate just what is the important thrust of this motion. The motion is talking about the competency of the Minister of Home Affairs in discharging his responsibility. His incompetency has led, yet again, to the shooting to death of the Guyanese people who were going about their constitutional business. I am supporting this motion, overwhelmingly, and I urge this House... [Mr. Neendkumar: As amended.] I have nothing to do with any proposed amendments to this motion. The motion is affective as it is and I am supporting this motion and I ask the other Members of the House to support this motion and to see that the Minister of Home Affairs, the Hon. Member Clement Rohee, is removed off the backs of the Guyanese people.

Thank you. [*Applause*]

Minister of Home Affairs [Mr. Rohee]: I rise to say that I am touched by all that has been said by my colleagues on the Government and I thank them for their words of comfort and support. In addition, I wish to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those Guyanese who are

standing by me and have been giving me words of encouragement and advising that God is in charge and that I must be strong.

Mr. Speaker, as far as I could recall it was one hundred and sixty-six thousand one hundred and twenty-seven people who voted for us on this side of the House and it is those one hundred and sixty-six thousand one hundred and twenty-seven voters who are standing behind us. I have listened to what has been said from the Opposition benches, but I do not wish to engage, in respect of policy, accountability, responsibility, in the debate at this time. I will leave all that I have to say in these matters for the independent Commission of Inquiry. I have much to say, but prefer to await the independent Commission of Inquiry.

The issue before us is a complex one. There can be no one side to this matter. In fact, there are many sides to what occurred on Wednesday, 18th July, at Linden. The many views expressed in the course of the debate are but a microcosm of the views existing in the wider society. In my view, a no confidence motion cannot and will not arrive at the truth as regards to the circumstances surrounding the death of those *Lindeners*. To place the blame for the shooting at the feet of the civilians at the Ministry of Home Affairs flies in the face of the lofty principle of presumption of innocence which is a fundamental right enshrined in our Constitution. To apportion guilt merely by political reasoning and argumentation is, in my humble opinion, a reckless and futile exercise.

I await the establishment of the independent Commission of Inquiry. I do so with a conscience that is clear and the vindication of all the charges made out against me in this motion. I close by stating that I have always executed my functions without fear or favour, affection and ill will.

I thank you. [*Applause*]

Mr. Hinds: This has been a long debate. It is a debate that fills me with a certain amount of sadness, not only for the deaths of the three persons in Linden, but because it reflects, as Hon. Minister Rohee pointed out just now, the width of sentiments and opinions that exists within our society.

Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members, it is, indeed, with a heavy heart that we in Government have been reflecting on the tragic development of twelve days ago in Linden which resulted in the deaths

of three of our fellow citizens, Ron Somerset, Shemroy Bouyea, and Ivan Lewis, and the wounding of about a score more. We are indeed sorry and regretful that things reached such a head. There is nothing of gain to us. No one of us, not the Minister, no one in this Government, could think that there would be something of gain to us, the People's Progressive Party/Civic, in the occurrence of that event. Indeed, there is no gain to anyone within or outside of this House. There is only grieving, suffering and loss.

To the families of those who lost their lives, I, on behalf of our Government, again extend my heartfelt sympathies. We are all too aware that nothing we may say or do here, in this House, in the streets in Linden or elsewhere in Guyana, could undo those tragic events of the evening of 18th July. Our thoughts are as well with those who are still hospitalised and all those who were traumatised by the events which unfolded during last Wednesday's protest action. We wish for every injured person a speedy, full recovery.

Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members, on learning of events in Linden, His Excellency brought many members of Cabinet together within a few hours to review what was known of those events. Without hesitation and without any prompting, and before any calls for such, our Government committed us to a full and independent investigation into the events that occurred, including, and most of all, the deaths of the three persons.

1.07 a.m.

We have been ready to and have been meeting with all national and regional stakeholders, the Opposition political parties in the National Assembly in particular, and we have been meeting, repeated times, with a number of stakeholders, including the Chairman of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) and other stakeholders in Linden. We believe that progress is being made; we believe that we must make progress and come back from this precipice which was reached on the night of July 18th.

On hearing the call for an international presence on the Commission of Inquiry our Government is so committed and we anticipate that the inquiry will be comprehensive in its coverage, including examining all aspects of this tragedy. Our Government expressed its willingness to meet with the bereaved families of the deceased to discuss matters relating to the post-mortems

and funerals. We know that has occurred and we know that there has been the presence of a pathologist from outside of Guyana.

Following on, on meetings with the Regional Chairman, Mr. Solomon, and others accompanying him, to meet with the President on a number of occasions, and other relevant parties, we have sent for their perusal and review, a draft statement addressing the question of the convergence of electricity tariffs in Linden, the tariffs prevailing across our country and special economic initiatives for Linden and the Government looks forward to a response from the Chairman.

The Government has committed to putting on hold, July 1st as a date from which there will be some increase in tariffs. The Government has proposed that a technical team, with members named by the two sides, be established quickly to review all available and practical options and attendant implications, financial and otherwise and to report back quickly, preferable within two weeks of being established.

With respect to the economic initiatives, the Government is reiterating its commitments made in the April Budget 2012 talks with APNU, with regards to restarting the Linden Enterprise Network (LEN) programme and encouraging and incentivising our banks to Women Of Worth (WOW) and other micro credit schemes to Linden, in particular, and all of Region 10. Additionally, the Government is encouraging the Regional Chairman and the RDC to submit their priorities for economic activities which should bring benefit to Linden and Region 10.

The Government will have the Ministry of Agriculture work with the West Watooka and other farmers to take agriculture, in Linden and across Region 10, to a still higher level.

The Government fully supports the first “BE IT RESOLVED” clause in this motion, except that it would want it to be left to a finding of the Commission of Inquiry that the police force killed the persons.

This Government, ever since it entered office, has always had the development of Linden and Region 10 and all their citizens therein as an important and major task. We have always been aware of the particular difficult challenges of our old industries, both bauxite and sugar, and their communities; industries which in earlier times brought us great pride and glory and which for many years brought us much income, but which face challenges in the current times. Indeed over

the last three or four decades they have been facing challenges. Aware of their history of great challenge during the previous decades, and aware too of the programmes which we found in place, we recognised that they would require careful attention and nurturing to manage the many anxiety-filled transitions which would be entailed in refashioning them to be profitable and, wherever possible, to give birth to a range of modern activities springing from their achievements of earlier times of which we are justly proud.

In the particular, the case of Linden, I can recall, very early in our time in Government, a young economist, one Bharrat Jagdeo, leading a team of a number of mostly young economic and sociology professionals on an in-depth study of Linden, a study which informed our approaches to the European Union (EU) for support for Linden Economic Advancement Programme (LEAP). We have spoken from time to time, and I have spoken from time to time, about that we have not ever overlooked Linden in our programmes; that Linden has shared equitably in all that we have been doing.

I would like to refer to the results of the 2002 Census which shows that, on many counts, Linden is ahead of many other regions in our country. Let us look. In net secondary school enrolment: Region 10 has a figure of 87.5 per cent compared with some 75.2 per cent as an average for all the regions and indeed 87.5 per cent is the highest figure. In the area of illiteracy rates, Linden, again, is one of the lowest. Indeed, on the census for 2002, Linden is the lowest. This shows that the provisioning for education in Linden is at a minimum comparable with the others. I want to speak to this and I need to speak to this issue because an important consideration in the events that took place, the sad and tragic events which took place in Linden, is the diet that the people in Linden are being fed steadily. Even just now as Hon. Member Williams spoke, he spoke about people being made economically suppressed and depressed and then they go to protest against it. This issue of the diet those leaders in this country keep feeding the people in Linden, and more generally, Afro-Guyanese, that this Government discriminates against them, suppresses them, is the biggest weight on them. This created, in the minds of the citizens of Linden, the feeling that led to their actions. This is something that I think must hang as a heavy stone around the Members of this House and others in this country who feed that sort of diet to the people. They do them no good. It is a self-fulfilling diet that they feed them; that they should not partake

because they cannot win and then they do not partake and they say, "You have seen what we told you."

Our hope lies in these results here that they seek to suppress. Our hope lies, and our motivation lies, and our justification lies, and our support for the Minister lies, in this sort of information that is in the 2002 Census. We have heard a lot about unemployment in Linden being seventy per cent and seventy-eight per cent and we have here the census on the unemployment figures. I would admit that it is higher than in the other regions, but it is nowhere, the unemployment as reported in this census, close to seventy per cent and seventy-eight per cent. It is 15.2 per cent. The only places in which that level of unemployment is exceeded are in Region 1 and Region 2 which have 16.6 per cent and 15.5 per cent. Also there is in Region 8 the number of 19.3 per cent. There is unemployment all across our country, but there is nothing as seventy per cent and seventy-eight per cent.

These numbers are important because they go to the crux of the problem as being put out by the Members on the other side. When we go to these real numbers there is no basis for all that is being said. These numbers are most important. [Mrs. Lawrence: They are outside. You should go and tell them.] Maybe, I should break my flow and speak this question about us not going to the people. We have heard of what just has been said, there, that the people are outside and we should go to them. We have heard, along the way, as we speak, of what the situation is, people on the other side, who claim to be leaders, making a retort, "You go and tell them that. You go and tell them that." Those are statements of totally abandoning their responsibilities as leaders and the abandoning of the people of Linden. That is what those statements reflect. Those statements reflect their total abandonment their responsibility as leaders. [Interruption from Opposition Members.] Say it again Hon. Members, say it again. "You go and tell them." We will go and tell them. We will build a Guyana for everybody in Guyana.

The Leader of the Opposition, in introducing this motion, said that the Linden killings were shocking but the fuse was burning for three months, and those were very true statements, and if followed on, we must focus on the fuse and the lighting of the fuse. I want to speak to the lighting of the fuse, three months before. The fuse was lit with this statement that I read in National Assembly. This true statement that I read in the National Assembly and I think, even

though the night is far gone, even though some people are fighting with Morpheus, that the lighting of the fuse is so important that I need to read it once again. Let me read it.

“Mr. Speaker. Hon. Members, I would like to report that this morning the Government continued the discussions requested by Hon. Member Mr. David Granger, Leader of the Opposition and of the APNU with His Excellency the President, Mr. Donald Ramotar, to avoid unnecessary collision in the exercise, we are engaged in, of approving the nation's budget.”

That was good.

“The discussions also followed on from the question asked by Hon. Member Volda Lawrence of the Minister of Finance in this Honourable House on Tuesday, 17th whether Government would be willing to meet with the Opposition in relation to the budget Estimates. The Hon. Minister of Finance confirmed Government's continued availability to receive views from stakeholders and to consider these, provided that the matters to be discussed were documented and that the schedule for consideration of the Estimates was adhered to in its entirety.”

The Government believes that these meetings have been useful in creating a wider and better understanding of the inevitable, specific trade-offs in the fashioning of our nation's budget and in avoiding unnecessary collision.

I want to acknowledge and express appreciation also for your own efforts, in keeping relationships from breaking down.

Today's discussion revolved around the ongoing considerable allocations to the electricity sector which are intended to cushion the impact of cost recovering electricity tariffs on our people and acknowledging the special, historical circumstances of Linden. Today's discussion focused on Linden and what could be done to ease and make good the transition of Linden into a regular Guyanese town, and the greater inclusion and participation of all of Region 10 into the programmes and fortunes of Guyana as a whole. More specifically, the matter of Linden electricity tariffs along with other issues relating to Linden were discussed.

In relation to electricity tariffs, it was agreed that alignment with the Guyana Power and Light Inc. (GPL) tariffs and elimination of the Linden electricity subsidy was necessary. It was also agreed that the tariff adjustment will proceed from 2012, guided by the principles of gradualism and selectivity with a transition to the aligned tariffs being introduced in a differentiated manner that cushioned the impact on the most vulnerable consumers. It was further agreed that the first stage of tariff adjustment, this year, would be implemented along the lines outlined and in a manner that would ensure adherence to the allocation provided in Budget 2012, bearing in mind applicable budgetary constraints.

In relation to the promotion of accelerated growth in economic activity in Linden, Government undertook to explore ways in which small business activity could be encouraged. In particular, Government undertook to reactivate the post-Linden Economic Advancement Programme/Linden Economic Advancement Fund (LEAP/LEAF) facility, now known as the Linden Enterprise Network (LEN), aimed at promoting affordable access to financing by small businesses in Linden and Region 10. Government also undertook to engage the financial services sector on the possibility of establishing small business financing facilities in Linden, along the lines of the Women Of Worth (WOW) programme, also aimed at promoting more affordable access to financing.

In relation to television stations, seen in Georgetown and the coast, being available in Linden and across our country, our Government will, shortly, be granting, on application, additional over the air television broadcast licences all over Guyana, including Linden.

In relation to the continuing dust problems, the Government will firmly hold BOSAI to its commitment to President Ramotar to complete the installation of the dust collecting system on the first kiln by the end of June this year and on the second kiln by the end of September this year.”

[An Hon. Member: Who was it signed by?] It was signed by me and it is a true representation. More than that, as I came in, the two friends over there, my two honourable colleagues, asked to see it before I read it read and I showed it to them and they suggested at least two changes which I made.

I am not saying this to put anyone on a spot because I am aware that as leaders, that often we must make a step forward with the hope that we can bring our people along, and as a leader too I want to give people room. In a matter like this when we have the kind of presentations that we have had on this motion, when our integrity has been put to question, I am afraid that I had to come back to this statement. One just has to look at what happened after I read the statement. There was no immediate objection. Mr. Greenidge was there too. Mr. Harmon was there. There was no immediate... In fact, if you go through the reports on that online news radio, Demerarawave.com, you would see how it developed. In fact, the best judgement around is that it was accepted by Messers Granger, Roopnarine, Hon. Members Greenidge and Harmon, but then all hell broke loose. It was either Hon. Member Ms. Kissoon who ran out to call or it was Mr.... [An Hon. Member (Government): Ramjattan.] ...Ramjattan, who ran out with a statement, with a call, to Linden. Once that happened the fuse was lit. That was when the fuse was lit. That is what honourable Leader of the Opposition had to be talking about when he said that the Linden killings were shocking, but the fuse was burning for three months.

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order. Hon. Member Ms. Kissoon has already spoken of this matter during this very debate. She pointed out that the protest was going on prior to this announcement; she pointed out that there were demonstrations prior to this announcement. She made that very statement this evening.

Mr. Hinds: Mr. Speaker and Hon. Members, I want to speak to that. We were aware that, ever since the Minister of Finance read..., people were reacting in Linden and, therefore, we had wanted to speak with somebody and we spoke with the leaders in this House who represent that area and it was expected that when we spoke with them they would have sought to carry the day. As I said before, Mr. Speaker and Hon. Members, I recognise, and all of us leaders should recognise, that each of us, at times, make some steps ahead of our people, to take them in what we think is a good direction. Therefore it is with some amount of regret that I am making this representation here, because I want to maintain the capability of all of us to be able to lead our people – leadership. The issue is one of leadership... [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, it is 1.30 in the morning. Are we finishing or are we not finishing? We need to allow the ...

Mr. Hinds: We had some presentations that were very emotive. We had the presentation of the Hon. Member Mr. Nagamootoo and we had a number of other presentations on the other side. I think the Government needs a good opportunity to respond, not in the same emotive way, but maybe a bit more calmly. This is where and how the fuse was lit. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I need to have the Prime Minister conclude his presentation.

Mr. Hinds: This event should be of some lesson to us and I am willing to say that, perhaps us, the Government, the PPP/C and the APNU, although the question was raised in this House by Hon. Member Mrs. Volda Lawrence for meetings, and the AFC was present and aware of it and could have similarly asked,... I think that the only lesson could be taken from this is that maybe we should have demanded that the AFC sit in at that meeting. I am concerned that, even today as we go forward to arrange for the Commission of Inquiry, the AFC is holding itself apart, again, and outside.

1.37 a.m.

Is it that it is reserving for itself the same position as when we spoke about the Linden rates that it ran out and said to people that they have been sold out by the APNU and by Mr. Granger? Is it that it is reserving for itself, a second time? I am concerned.

We need to speak also, we need to look also a bit more calmly, at what occurred on the 18th of July. We need again to look back at it. There is some bit of overlap in what various people have presented. I think when we reflect on the various presentations, and when we reflect on what the media reported, the *Kaieteur News* and the *Stabroek News*, in particular,... [**Ms. Kisson:** ...and the *Guyana Chronicle*.] I would leave the *Guyana Chronicle* out, because you may have your reasons to be suspicious of it, but let us reread the *Kaieteur News* and the *Stabroek News*...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, someone will have to request some extra time for you.

Ms. Teixeira: I would like to ask [*inaudible*] for the Prime Minister to continue.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Hinds: When we reflect on it, even what Hon. Member Mr. Morian said that people were not intended to stop on the bridge, but they did. They wanted to drink water, but they happened to have tents, and they happened to have many things with them.

When we read about the reports on the police being rebuffed and thrown out at the ten o'clock time..., and there has been also the report that Hon. Member Vanessa spoke about, which was picked up, I think, by some other speakers later, which states that a number of people were injured with rubber bullets, but those three people were killed with slugs to their heart.

I listened to the presentation of Hon. Member Mr. Morian, earlier, who maintained, and I believed him, that he was there. Did you hear what he said? He said that at the end when the shooting started, or before, it was preceded with tear gas, and persons could not have seen. There was no seeing and a young man next to him, in the midst of this tear smoke, fell down dead. He had to lift him up, but that poses a question. How could he have got shots to the heart and he was some distance away, I understood, in such exact shooting in an atmosphere of tear smoke? It raises questions. There are a lot of questions. I make this submission that there are a lot of questions that need to be considered in a different atmosphere from this one in this House, this evening, and therefore we need to have the Commission of Inquiry. We all need in this House to give that Commission our unreserved support. That is what we need to do.

There are some other things here which were not accurate: issues about the electricity provisions in Linden, and so on, that people said, from time to time, but I would prefer that they be left to that Committee that we are talking about, so that it could address them.

I would like to point out that we had a presentation that spoke about problems with the way our police behaved, from even long before my colleague became the Minister of Home Affairs. There were problems long before and we in the Government have been on a programme of reform. We in the Government have been in a programme to improve the performance of the police and the security forces. We must recognise that we have a society where there is a high tendency to violence. All of us tend to have great or to put great emphasis on issues of being a man, we all tend to put great issues on that, and respond in exaggerated ways. The challenge facing us across our nation, as a whole, is to gradually and steadily improve our people and the way we relate with each other. This is the challenge, not only for the police force. This is a

national challenge. The police force behaves as the people of Guyana behave and this is the challenge. The people in the police force come from our own society. We have been working at bringing about reform and improvement.

There is a list of the things which we have been doing. We have been working to make law enforcement more effective and we have a record of twenty-nine pieces of legislation passed in this National Assembly. We have been working at establishing a police change team to execute reforms within the Guyana Police Force, under the Citizens Security Programme, and to monitor, evaluate and to implement those reforms. We have been working to significantly improve the ICT architecture within the Guyana Police Force. We have been working on the remodelling of police stations to facilitate greater confidentiality with respect to reports. We have been working to enlist the communities to support the police to maintain law and order at the local level, and there is the programme that seeks to provide training in life skills for young persons, launching of rapid impact projects, and so on.

We have been working. This is a work in progress. The improvement of the police force in Guyana is a work in progress, and we would maintain, that in material things, we are much better off. This Government has been making significant provisions all along and we are working to change the nature of our people. We are working to bring a new attitude to all our people. We think we are making progress. With this background of the situation in Guyana, we see no reason to call upon the Minister to resign or to ask the President to request his resignation.

England is okay with its history. The United States of America is okay with its history, but we have to make judgement within the context of Guyana. We have to make judgement on the basis of improvements being made in Guyana, all around and in the police force. This is what we have. Those people who died, the three dead, in my view, the responsibility lies just as much on my honourable colleagues over there who lit the fuse or who did not set out to out the fuse. Let me rephrase that. It is who did not set out to out the fuse. If we are talking about responsibility, the responsibility is no less. Therefore, this Government, we on this side, feel quite satisfied...

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger: Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order, responsibility for what? We are speaking about the death of three persons. Are you accusing the APNU of being responsible for the shooting of the three persons?

Mr. Hinds: No, my honourable colleague. I am speaking to your words that the Linden killings were shocking, but the fuse was burning for three months and I am saying that I was greatly let-down that you did not join with us in outing the fuse. That is what I am saying. On that basis, if the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and if the other Members of this House, out there, are going to insist on this motion, calling for the Minister to resign, then they should do the honourable thing and lead with their resignations.

On that note, Sir, I conclude. [*Applause*]

Hon. Members (Opposition): Murder, murder. It is cold-blooded murder.

Mr. Speaker: It is what a way to bring this debate to an end, at ten minutes to 2 o' clock. I now invite the Leader of the Opposition to conclude the debate on this marathon motion.

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger (replying): As opposed to the one hundred and sixty-six thousand people who the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs said are standing behind him, I have the honour to speak for the one hundred and seventy-five thousand who voted for the Alliance For Change and A Partnership for National Unity on the 28th of November, 2011.

We have met here to discuss the killing of three persons. Is anyone responsible? Is anyone culpable? Is anyone blameworthy? We have heard the authentic testimony of eye witnesses - the Hon. Member Mr. Renis Morian, the Hon. Member Vanessa Kissoon and the Hon. Member Desmond Trotman, persons who were in Linden on the 18th of July. I, myself, was in Linden on the night of 18th of July and I saw some of the injured persons, women with gunshot wounds to their backs. I saw the three dead bodies in the Linden Hospital Complex.

This is not the occasion on the sad and the tragic death of those three *Linden*ers; this is not the occasion for frivolous anecdotes; this is not the occasion to trivialise the deaths of those three martyrs. This House is not the place to make jokes about those three deaths. This is not the place in which we should make fun of the agony of the citizens of the residents of Linden; this is not the place and this is not the time to use the debate for filibuster which is being taken place by the insistence that every person on the Government side should speak. This is not the occasion to dilute this motion by using dialogue as a sort of device to delay the inevitable decision on the fate of the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

This motion is not about electricity rates. This motion is about the competence of the Minister of Home Affairs. We support a Commission of Inquiry, and this honourable House supported the Commission of Inquiry into the disciplined forces nine years ago and where did it get to? Nine years have passed since the Disciplined Forces Commission Report has been published and we must ensure that we do not only put faith in Commission of Inquiry, but we must also put faith in the action on which we can take on the floor of this House.

The killings of 18th of July were not *force majeure*; they were not acts of god. They were deliberate acts of people who aimed shots at human beings. They were deliberate acts of people, of policemen who shot into the chests of young men. We have not come here to discuss anything other than the fundamental rights of our citizens, than ministerial responsibility and the responsibility of this House to determine how action is to be taken to protect our citizens. That is the role of this National Assembly and we will not abandon that role.

This motion is not a premature one. If anything it is delayed; if anything, this motion is pre-emptive to prevent further mischief. It is a pre-emptive to prevent further police lawlessness; it is pre-emptive because it pays attention to a fault that has been committed and we want to prevent that fault from recurring. We will not wait for the Commission of Inquiry; we will not wait nine years, as we had to wait for the Disciplined Forces Commission Report. We are going to ensure that there is justice tonight. We are going to ensure that the people who presided over the last shooting will not preside over another shooting.

There is no other institution in this country that can prevent this insanity; only this House can do it. There is no other institution in this country that can authoritatively call for and demand the revocation of the appointment of the Minister of Home Affairs. This is what we have come to do this evening and this is what we shall leave, having done. Yes, we support a Commission of Inquiry, but a Commission of Inquiry is not a substitute for the revocation of the appointment of this Minister. We shall support the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry. We shall contribute to the drafting of terms of reference of the Commission of Inquiry, we shall support, just as we supported the Disciplined Forces Commission, the Commission of Inquiry, but we will not wait another night to prevent this lawlessness or to stop this lawlessness in the Guyana Police Force. This is what we must do this morning.

We are not complaining about the Minister's inactivity. The Minister is very active. We know that. The Minister is no slouch. His colleagues have come here to remind us of how much he can do, how much he has done, how alert he is, how active he is. We are here about the Minister's performance, not his activity. For over six years there has been a gradual pattern which has built up, a slow fuse if you want to call it that Mr. Prime Minister. He has been unable to solve the most serious crises in public security and the 18th of July was the limit, and we will not take any more of it. We are the majority and we have no confidence in the ability of Minister Clement James Rohee to protect the public security of this country. We reject the amendments offered by the Government side and we call upon this honourable House to support the motion standing in my name and to support the revocation of appointment of Minister Clement James Rohee. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, it now falls on me to put the motion. We received today some amendments in the name of the Hon. Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has been good enough to actually incorporate them into an actual reworking of a motion, quite legitimate, I should add, method. What I propose Prime Minister, I do not know whether you will object, is to put your rewritten motion with all the amendments incorporated to the House for its approval and then we go on to the substantive motion for which we were debating since last Wednesday. Hon. Members, I first put the amendments, as proposed by the Hon. Prime Minister, and contained in full form, and I would like to ensure that every Member has received a copy of the Prime Minister's amendment.

Question put.

Mr. Hinds: Division.

Assembly divided: Noes 33, Ayes 29, as follows:

Noes

Mr. T. Williams

Ms. Marcello

Dr. Ramayya

Ayes

Mr. Jaffarally

Mr. Damon

Dr. Persaud

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Mrs. Hughes

Mr. Nagamootoo

Mr. Ramjattan

Ms. Ferguson

Mr. Morian

Mr. Allen

Mr. Jones

Mr. Adams

Ms. Baveghems

Mr. Sharma

Mr. Bulkan

Mr. Bond

Ms. Kissoon

Mr. Trotman

Ms. Selman

Mr. Allicock

Ms. Wade

Mr. Felix

Ms. Hastings

Mr. Scott

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Seeraj

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Chand

Mrs. Chandrapal

Mr. Nadir

Ms. Teixeira

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Baksh

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai

Ms. Webster

Mr. G. Persaud

Ms. Manickchand

Mr. Benn

Dr. Ramsaran

Dr. Westford

Mr. R. Persaud

Dr. Singh

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nandall

Mrs. Backer

Dr. Ramsammy

Dr. Norton

Mr. Rohee

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. Hinds

Mr. B. Williams

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopernarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

Amendments negatived.

Mr. Speaker: I will now put the motion which has not been amended in the name of the Hon. Member Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger.

Motion carried.

2.07 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, it has been a thorough, emotive debate and a very sensitive issue which still remains very sensitive. We all have a responsibility as national leaders to ensure that we manage this issue and ensure that it moves from being a crisis to a manageable problem. Those who are working on it, as I know they are, I encourage you to continue doing so. I would like to say that we have had, today alone, 24 Members of the House speaking which is quite a marathon.

Before we close, I would just like to recognise the efforts of the staff of the Assembly - thank you - the Members, of course; the media for reporting and reporting accurately; the police force

for providing protection even though there are some who bring dishonour; and all our auxiliary persons who have supported our efforts up until this hour.

Lastly, to just wish all Members, for what it is worth on this occasion in this year, Happy Emancipation, 178th Anniversary Celebration. It is going to be an ominous day of celebration. We will meet, I believe, after the 1st August, 2012 and so I take the opportunity to wish all Members, particularly those of African descent, Happy Emancipation and, of course, to all members of our society. Hopefully, on the 179th Anniversary, we will have much to celebrate and we would have turned a corner away from this crooked bend that we are in. [*Applause*]

Brig. (Ret'd) Granger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of my colleagues, particularly Mr. Basil Williams, Mrs. Volda Lawrence, Dr. George Norton and Mr. Ronald Bulkan, to whom you were so kind to extend congratulations at the beginning of this Sitting and to thank you for your kind words of encouragement on the appointment to our new positions in the People's National Congress Reform.

Secondly, I would like to join you in extending Emancipation greetings to everyone in this House and to the staff of the National Assembly on the happy occasion of Emancipation, one of the most important days in the national calendar. Thank you and happy Emancipation to all. [*Applause*]

Mr. T. Williams: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Alliance For Change (AFC), I too would like to wish all Guyana a Happy Emancipation and I say the same to all our colleagues in this honourable House. Like you, in your own words, I hope that next year this time we would have more to celebrate and be proud of as a nation. Thank you. [*Applause*]

Mr. Hinds: Mr. Speaker and Hon. Members, I too join on behalf of the Government and all of our Members in extending Happy Emancipation Day to all Guyanese and, in particular, those who have many ancestors who may have come from Africa. [*Applause*]

I now take the opportunity to propose that the House be adjourned until 2nd August, 2012.

Assembly adjourned accordingly at 2.12 a.m.