

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 6]

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA
UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

8th Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Friday, 1st December, 1972

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.

Members of the Government

**People's National Congress
Elected Ministers**

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent – on leave)

Dr. The Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National
Development and Agriculture

(Absent – on leave)

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State of Agriculture

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Works and Communications

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour and Social Security

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information, Culture and Youth

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop, **(Absent – on leave)**
Minister without Portfolio and Leader of the House

The Hon. D.A. Singh,
Minister of Health

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of State for the Public Service

The Hon. W. Haynes, **(Absent)**
Minister of Co-operatives and Community Development

The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of Local Government

Appointed Ministers

The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C., **(Absent)**
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Attorney-General

The Hon. H. Green, **(Absent)**
Minister of Public Affairs

The Hon. H.O. Jack, **(Absent)**
Minister of Mines and Forests

The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird, **(Absent – on leave)**
Minister of Education

The Hon. F.E. Hope, **(Absent)**
Minister of Finance and Trade

Dr. the Hon. K.F.S. King, **(Absent)**
Minister of Economic Development

The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. J.G. Joaquin, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Finance
and Trade

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Information,
Culture and Youth

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Information
Culture and Youth

Mr. C.F. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and
Communications

Other Members

Mr. J.N. Aaron
Miss M.M. Ackman, Government Whip
Mr. K. Bancroft
Mr. N.J. Bissember
Mr. J. Budhoo, J.P.
Mr. L.I. Chan-A-Sue
Mr. E.F. Correia
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Mr. R.J. Jordan
Mr. S.M. Saffee
Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman
Mr. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.
Mrs. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

Dr. C.B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition
Mr. RamKarran
Mr. R. Chandisingh

Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C.	(Absent – on leave)
Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker	(Absent)
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson	(Absent – on leave)
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip	
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.	
Mr. M.Y. Ally	
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.	
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.	(Absent)
Mr. R. Ally	
Mr. Balchand Persaud	
Mr. Bholu Persaud	(Absent)
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.	
Mr. L.A. Durant	
Mr. V. Teekah	

United Force

Mr. M.F. Singh	
Mrs. E. DaSilva	(Absent – on leave)
Mr. J.A. Sutton	

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks
Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Mrs. L.M. Branco

Officers

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F.A. Narain

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M.B. Henry

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

Prayers

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**Leave to Members**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Minister, Miss Baird, and to the hon. Member, Mr. Sutton, for today's sitting.

PUBLIC BUSINESS**BILL – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS****LOCAL AUTHORITIES (POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS) BILL**

The Assembly resumed the debate on the Bill intituled:

“An Act to provide for the postponement of Elections of Councillors of Local Authorities and for purposes connected therewith.”

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member, Mr. Harry Lall. When we adjourned last evening you had already spoken for about 17 minutes.

Mr. Lall: Your Honour, when we adjourned last evening I quoting from the **Guyana Graphic** of November 29, 1972, what the Mayor of Linden stated in a report to the citizens of Linden. I mentioned that he said “they” seek to throw a spanner in the programme set out by the Central Government. The word “they” is a general word and I do not know if His Worship the Mayor was referring to the nation as a whole.

As far as the functions of the municipality of Linden are concerned, I cannot see who will throw a spanner in the work of the municipality. At Linden the members nominated in the council are 100 per cent P.N.C. One hundred per cent are nominated councillors and they had

every opportunity to seek the assistance of persons with technical know-how to run the affairs of the municipality.

The mayor said that hard-earned money was wasted. May I ask your Honour: Who wasted the money at Linden?

Mr. Speaker: I could not answer that.

Mr. Lall: May I ask, through you, sir? Surely it was not the P.P.P. nor the United Force but the councillors who were nominated by the P.N.C. These are the inefficiencies we are talking about. This is the mal-administration. That is why we are saying that this measure in the House today is highly undemocratic. It should be withdrawn and we should have fair and free elections in the municipalities and local authorities of the country. If they are given another year in office, the situation will be the same.

Let me mention some grave irregularities which went on in the Vreed-en-Hoop/Pouderoyen District Council. We all know that various Committees are appointed by each council. This council appointed a Finance Committee which went through the financial position of the council. Without bringing the proceedings of the Committee for ratification by the council, the Chairman of that Finance Committee forwarded the proceedings to the Minister of Local Government. What a standard of inefficiency! Why did the P.N.C. not hold a seminar to educate the persons who were put in local authorities and municipalities?

It is beyond one's comprehension that the proceedings of the Finance Committee were transmitted direct to the Minister concerned without the approval of the district council or the local authority. This shows the type of maladministration that is going on in the various local authorities.

I would mention, if I may, the proceedings and the affairs of the town of New Amsterdam where I am residing. That is an inglorious town, Your Honour, since the P.N.C. took office there. I am sure that if the hon. Minister of Information had travelled to New Amsterdam when she was pregnant she would not have today the lovely baby girl that she has. The streets of New Amsterdam cause automatic abortion. You do not have to send people to doctors for abortion. You can just put a pregnant woman in a car and drive her through the streets of New Amsterdam. Automatically she will give birth.

2.20 p.m.

This is the state of the Town of New Amsterdam. Lack of sanitation, the Town is a town of mosquitoes. We can go on and on. We do not want a bill to postpone elections, but a bill to change the system of local government elections in this country, and instead of having elections based on proxy we must have fair and free elections. The Minister of Local Government indicated that the P.P.P. is advising people not to pay taxes and at the same time he said that the P.P.P. cannot go to the people. I cannot understand this, Your Honour.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Lall, you have two minutes more.

Mr. Lall: Thank you, Your Honour. This statement by the Minister is illogical and baseless and it is without foundation. We want proper elected local authorities, not nominated. We want local authorities elected by the people, not by proxy and then and only then you have the people paying taxes. People take part in the affairs of local government but so long as you are having rigged elections, so long as people's democratic right is curtailed, that long the people would not co-operate with these proxy local authorities.

In conclusion, we are here to put the truth to the Government and its, I should say, lackeys if I am permitted. They might not like to hear the truth but the truth is lie the football kicked all over the field, and finally it shall reach its goal. They won the first battle of proxy,

they won the second battle of overseas voting but that does not say they have won the war. Hitler won several battles but where is he today?

Mr. Speaker: Time!

Mr. Lall: Your Honour, the same way as Hitler's name was diminished the same way the name of the P.N.C. will be diminished.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Bhola Persaud.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: Mr. Speaker, we have met to discuss an Amendment and as the Minister puts it, to give the local authorities an extension of a further two years to carry through their development programmes. I tend to agree with some of the hon. Members who said that the Government should have seen from the inception that it would be impossible for councils to carry out their programmes in a matter of two years.

While this is going on it is very unfortunate to recall some of the things that have taken place in the local authority districts. The Minister unfortunately, perhaps, is very young and is now in his job. I am in sympathy with the hon. Minister but he will have to learn more of the districts because what I am going to mention here would be strange to him, these are things happening in his own area.

The propaganda of the Government more or less is cheap in a sense that it has not created any merit in order to attract the attention of this nation to be proved genuine in order to have an extension of time for these robots who have been placed in these councils. While it is a well-known fact that we had two elections, one June 5th and the other the latter part of that year, and the results have shown the position, the P.P.P. has boycotted the elections because of the large scale rigging and fraud which is well known throughout the country. This is something no one can hide. As a matter of fact, my friend the hon. Member knows the results at Leguan. The hon.

Member Mr. Balchand Persaud who is responsible for the Sheet Anchor district may mention something about that district when he makes his contribution; it is a pity the hon. Member Mr. David Singh is not here. A Motion was submitted to discipline this Minister but unfortunately it was never put on the Order Paper of this House. In the Bartica district alone, in 1971, out of the number of votes cast, voting by proxy was 37 per cent. If the hon. Members would like to deny this let them tell us how much? Georgetown District 29 and 19 per cent.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Bhola Persaud, I do not wish to interrupt you, but I will not permit a repetition of those figures which were given by other hon. Members yesterday.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: This is not a question of repetition; these are figures I am quoting of what took place --

Mr. Speaker: I do not think you understood what I said just now. All those figures were given yesterday by other speakers.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: I am talking about area-wise.

Mr. Speaker: Percentage-wise and area-wise were given.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: Out of 65,165 votes cast in five districts, 10,849 were proxies. This is the point I want to bring to your attention, sir, not to mention, and they know of this, hundreds of people who turned out on the day of polling, who were turned away. Unless one wants to hide the truth they were turned away because people had already voted for them, despite the fact that they did not sign. The hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud showed some of the proxy forms which people have already started to collect, signed proxies, not to mention the tampering of ballot boxes.

At Leguan, for which I was responsible at that election, at first, the representative was not allowed to enter the counting office - in fact, all the representatives. The ballot boxes were conveyed to the Guest House. The United Force members had applied since the 16th for permission to stay at the Guest House but subsequently they were removed so as to make available the place to carry out their manoeuvring. Our representatives were not allowed to go into the place or to follow the boxes, to carry the boxes from the polling places to the counting place.

It is normal to have security or to have drivers from the Police or some other place, but we observed there that thugs of the P.N.C., mainly one named Clarke, had to drive one of the vehicles to carry the boxes to the counting place. Let them deny this. We were not allowed to go into the compound. I am showing instances of what happened. Hours after, they told us, "Okay boys, you can come in", and then we saw and it was proven that the boxes were tampered with. The incidence of proxies was so rampant that even the P.N.C. was ashamed to celebrate its so-called victory in the Leguan district.

They made promises before the election campaign. This is a pamphlet printed by the P.N.C. Government prior to the election in 1971, and the promises they have made, let the Ministers tell us how many of these promises they have fulfilled, and whether because of this they are calling for a new period of two years for the robots who are unable to perform some of these. They said, roads, bridges, pavements, markets, water services, recreational public conveniences, drainage, street lighting, varying schemes, mosquito, fly and rodent control, sewage disposal, free fire brigade and ambulance services, constabulary, food and drugs, water supply, refuse collection and disposal, maternal and child welfare, health centres, small pox vaccination, oral polio campaign, blood test, urine test. The only test they do not have here is filth test. Let them tell us how much of this they have fulfilled.

One would have expected that the Minister would have come with the same promises they have made and to tell us how much they have fulfilled in the various districts. As I said

earlier, it is very unfortunate that the only thing he could have said was that G.A.L.A. has more popularity than the P.P.P. why is it the Minister was dishonest to tell us the reason why Sydney Sukhu was kicked out as chairman, because Sydney Sukhu was alleged to be a murderer? Was it because Sydney Sukhu was involved in the case against Balchand Persaud and company, or is it because Sydney Sukhu has failed to carry out the duty of the P.N.C., or because his hands were tied he could not have done better?

Not only Sydney Sukhu in that district, let them tell us. As a matter of fact, the judge has said that the evidence given by Sydney Sukhu cannot even kill a fly. Not only Sydney Sukhu, another one named Hazel. Let them tell us why is it that Hazel, because of disgust, has resigned from the district. As a result, he has left the country. One would expect that Bill would have told us these things. Because of these failures, their friends have been resigning en bloc. They have placed another one named Barclay, and very soon Barclay will resign because he has indicated his intention to resign.

During the Prime Minister's tour and the electioneering campaign in 1971, in that very district, he said; "we will make this district a model area." No wonder they are ashamed to go to the district. Let them tell us what they have done, what model area they have created in the Sheet Anchor-Cumberland district.

2.40 p.m.

They are not only disgusted; they are afraid to hold meetings because there is no planned programme. There is nothing to be done. The Minister goes only to discuss with them things that they should do beyond their will. They have asked for loans to carry out their development programme. Ask the members of the Government how many loans were given to the Sheet Anchor/Cumberland District although they said it would be a model area.

In 1971 this district council voted \$164,000 as over-all expenditure. Let the Minister tell us why this money could not be obtained and why only \$34,000 was spend during 1971.

I must mention, too, expenditure and squandermania. In that district councillors normally use \$14 a day as travelling allowance. Let the Minister tell us why this is so. Are they coming to ask us for postponement in the No. 19 Warren district, because of these failures? Let them tell us how many councillors are operating there now. I am sorry the Minister had to speak so early or he could have answered this question. Let him tell us why the council is not functioning and why the Chairman is functioning as a one-man council. His name is Roy DaSilva. There is a one-man council functioning in the Whim-Bloomfield No. 19 district.

These are some of the reasons why the members of the Government are coming to ask us for extensions. Do they want more robots to be placed in position there? The new robots have to be directed by Government and Government is unable to direct them on the question of giving loans and advice. Hon. Members are speaking about seminars. Seminars were held but let them tell us how much help they got form the seminars in these districts.

The Government is running into trouble in area after area. Let the members of the Government tell us how the Whim-Bloomfield District Council is operating. There is a Chairman and only a few members. As a result, the Chairman called in P.P.P. supporters to assist him and to advise him how to run the Council. Our supporters have more knowledge than these people. They told him that they must be free to run the local authority and not be directed by the puppets.

Let the members of the Government tell us about pure water supply in all districts on the Corentyne. They are ashamed to tell us that these are the reasons why they are asking for an extension – lack of water supply, lack of road facilities, high taxation, people protesting and picketing them.

They are asking for an extension to give their friends and these robots more power to operate. Let them tell us why the community centre which was built by the labour and sweat of the community in this very district is being used as a P.N.C. office. We are not objecting to the centre being used as a health centre, but why are the residents who built it not privileged to use it and only P.N.C. hacks and their friends are allowed to make use of it.

This has been happening in all the districts. I was asking the Minister a question earlier but apparently he did not understand. The Chairman in the Crabwood Creek District has resigned in disgust because of the failure of this Government. The promises made to them about activities that were to be carried on in the various districts were not kept. The Minister should investigate this if he does not know about it.

The Minister should make a note of this or find out the facts from his predecessors. A dragline which was owned by the local authorities was sold by this Chairman and up to now the money cannot be accounted for. [Mr. Carrington: "Say that outside."] He has resigned but what have you done? Many of these chaps, as he has said, have been disciplined. You call it "open criticism" but what is the use of expelling a man when you cannot carry him to the proper place for him to answer charges. If you cannot do that, then you are part of it.

To come back to the question of the Leguan District Council: two year ago one of the main kokers in the Louisiana District was blown away and was totally out of order. As a result, thousands of acres of rice lands belonging to farmers were destroyed. Attempts were made to sue this Government through the councillors and through the Ministry of Local Government to see what assistance could be received for these poor farmers. They would not tell us the reason why they did not investigate the affair.

I understand that they are making some adjustments now, but because of landlordism they cannot carry out the project properly. They are afraid to tell us because Bagh Khan is the owner of the estates, Louisiana and Success, and Bagh Khan happens to be one of the P.N.C.

councillors in Georgetown. This is one of the main reasons why they could not tackle the main issue in Leguan. Let them tell us how much the farmers have lost, and how they are going to remedy it. Farmers have called for legislation on the question of compensation; they have asked for assistance through self-help methods, but nothing has been given to them.

There was not only the question of replacements within the two years. The hon. Member, Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, was making the point that this is an indication that a request will be made to have the general elections deferred. He has proved that proxies are being collected. It could be that we have exposed the Government from the inception and they know this. We have exposed all the proxy collectors. Because they have failed is, I presume, one of the reasons why they have decided to introduce this amendment.

2.50 p.m.

The hon. Member Mr. Zaheeruddin knows this. Let him get up and tell us if he has confidence in the people his party has placed there. Why is it that the Adventure Local Authority had to move a no confidence motion against the Chairman Mr. Shaw? These are some of the facts which give us the indication that the Government is moving this Amendment, first of all, because of its failure to get the robots to perform their duties plus the question of rigging of the new elections. With this in mind, I feel that the government should withdraw this Amendment and it should think wisely and let us have free and fair elections so that we would have the right placed, so that we could have proper representation and genuine freedom and socialism for Guyanese as a whole.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally

Mr. R. Ally: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Local Government told us the request came from the Guyana Association of Local Authorities for the postponement of the Local Government Elections. But as far as I can see it G.A.L.A. is really P.N.C. and P.N.C. G.A.L.A.

Today, all these nominated local authorities throughout the country are really not working in the best interest of the ratepayers. Ratepayers are dissatisfied with the type of administration they are getting from these inexperienced councillors. They do not know where and how to start because in most cases today councillors and chairmen of local authorities are going around and it appears as if they are at a loss. But what bothered me today, I should say from since yesterday, is hearing Members on the Government side especially Ministers making a lot of noise. I wonder if these hon. Members know what took place at Skeldon in Corriverton. One Scheloo, Maragin and one man call Crabman were going around telling people that, "The Mayor of the Town is no good, he is a young man and is inexperienced, so we would like you to sign these papers and we will remove Jackman and replace him by Goor Persaud." The people in the Corentyne area know that he does not know anything about local authority. The streets are in a terrible condition, they are under bush, there are flies all over the place. There is no doubt that the P.N.C. Government is fully aware of this. They used their thugs up there to collect proxies. People are going around with proxy forms, they knew in other words they could have got the people because they are fed up with the type of administration knowing that the Mayor, Mr. Jackman does not know anything.

The P.N.C. Government knows that it has been trapped and now it has declared that there will be no election. It wants to postpone the elections because the councillors it has put in are unable to do the type of work that they are supposed to do in the short period of time. All of us know what took place in the Nos. 48 to 51 Good Hope areas where one Subnauth who contested that district thought that the P.P.P. and the U.F. were all telling lies about rigging and he doubted everything. He went there with some of the P.N.C. supporters behind him trying to prove what the P.P.P. were saying was all false and ratepayer in that area were advised by this man to use red ink ball point pen instead of lead pencil to mark the ballot papers. They did this but to their surprise at the time of counting there was no red ink mark on the ballot papers. Subnauth and a few others boasted that they could have got eight seats. When the ballots were finished being counted they only had 30 votes.

Let us take the Crabwood Creek area. The hon. Member Mr. Bholu Persaud just told us that the Chairman sold a dragline which really belongs to the ratepayers of that area. They were so fed up that they came out in large numbers and they closed the office door and put placards right along the road side daring anyone to go inside. The District Commissioner and the Assistant District Commissioner sent for me and I went up there. When we got up there and looked into the matter they were satisfied that the Chairman sold the dragline without even consulting the Council itself.

3 p.m.

It happened so that they advised him to tender his resignation, which he did, and he left the local authority. But what happened? The Crabwood Creek Local Authority district today, ratepayers in that district are crying out because of bad streets. Even in the rice cultivation area, when they need water, too little water, when they do not need water too much water.

This is happening all over the place. Some of them cannot hunt iguanas. They went around with proxy forms for people to sign. They told the people: a man like Jackman cannot run his home properly, how can he run a town? This is the type of thing. The No. 52 – 74 Local Authority, in this district they needed two trainee overseers. They put out their tender, they received applications. When they sat on the day in question to make their selection, from nineteen people who applied, when they went through the applications they saw that thirteen had two, three and four G.C.E. subjects, and the rest had one or none. Two without any subjects got the jobs because they are sons of the councillors and relatives. This is the way these people are administering, in the interest of themselves, they do not care a hang.

Not only with these overseer trainees, a typist was needed in that area, so the local authority again put out a tender and posted up notices all over the place. A girl from No. 69, one Heera, she had then in her possession, a certificate for typing, certificate for 120 words a minute in shorthand, and Advanced English, another one had typing and Advanced English, no

shorthand, but a girl who was very friendly with councillors and there was some sort of relationship, she has got it. She has got into the local authority office. It is not something I am trying to exaggerate, but when ratepayers see her going through the streets, they are saying that somebody of this type should be in the asylum. She appears to be mad. When she got into the office, the Executive Officer said they are all fed up with her. She cannot write a letter, she cannot spell, and even if they write it, to type it she has to make mistakes.

Ratepayers will have to pay this money. Not the numbskulls the Government put there, they are not going to pay, and the Government is going to keep them there because it has to give them work. Some working with the Guyana Rice Corporation, rice Marketing Board, the Government had to find jobs for them in order to keep them on the council. The No. 52-74 Local Authority has put on the 1971 Local Authorities estimates, \$12,000 for salaries. The Minister sent back the whole estimate to the council for them to remove the \$12,000. After they could not get salaries they asked for a jeep to go around the place, and the ratepayers said: this is nonsense, we had free services from our ratepayers and tenants in the area, people with the necessary experience, and those people usually walk along the road to the backdam.

Not too long ago, in the same area, there was no irrigation water in the rice field. They depend on rice. The ratepayers went out in large numbers and blocked the main entrance to the local authority office. The Assistant District Commissioner Mr. Rampat got there, he asked what was going on, and when the people put their grievances to him, he sent for the chairman. The chairman sent a message to the A.D.C. that he hasn't got time. He is a teacher, he does not know why they forced him to be there. This very P.N.C. Government in 1969 appointed this man to fill a vacancy on the No. 57-66 Local Authority. This man did not attend three consecutive meetings and his seat was declared vacant. The Government had to fill that vacancy and that man has been selected as chairman. The hon. Minister cannot tell us how many times people had to leave the area to go to No. 64 Village and picket the chairman's residence.

Many of them, even the hon. Minister, said many times he is very much ashamed to know what is going on. I took Mr. Mingo when he was Minister of Local Government to No. 62 and he has seen living conditions for himself. He said he cannot imagine people living under those conditions. When he got to the local authority office, he asked them to do something about it, but the thing remains the same on to this day. Even if the Minister approached them, they could not do it. The whole thing is in a miserable state today.

Let me deal with this man McGowan. Who is McGowan? They needed a junior overseer at No. 51 – Good Hope Local Authority. They put out their tenders, they received twenty-five applications. When the day in question came to make the selection authority office, he asked them to do something about it, but the thing remains the same on to this day. Even if the Minister approached them, they could not do it. The whole thing is in a miserable state today.

Let me deal with this man McGowan. Who is McGowan? They needed a junior overseer at No. 51 – Good Hope Local Authority. They put out their tenders; they received twenty-five applications. When the day in question came to make the selection, the chairman and councillors all sat in the local authority office and read out the applications. While reading, one Thompson drew the chairman's attention to the fact that fifteen of the applications did not comply with the tender and those fifteen applications could not be accepted. The Chairman agreed with Mr. Thompson and he put it to the council and the council agreed. They scrapped them. From the remaining ten, they were searching to see who was a strong P.N.C. man, working in the interest of the P.N.C. they selected an Indian man from No. 45, a man who since 1965 started supporting the P.N.C., selling the **New Nation** and so forth.

3.10 p.m.

The names were selected and the list sent up to the Local Government Board. After it reached the Board a letter was sent by Mr. McGowan asking them to summon a special meeting

because he wanted to meet the local authority. He also requested the local authority to summon the Assistant District Commissioner to that meeting.

Mr. McGowan went to that meeting and the councillors thought that he went there for a very important reason. Mr. McGowan asked them: “Do you know how you got into this office? How can you send a name like this to me? Was it a man like this who put you here? Put the man we want.” He pinpointed a man from No. 51 Village.

After Mr. McGowan mentioned the name of this man from No. 51, the Chairman of the local authority draw his attention to the fact that this was one of the fifteen man whose applications have been thrown into the wastepaper basket.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Ally, what has this to do with this Bill?

Mr. Ally: This has something to do with it because it was Mr. McGowan who asked the Government to postpone the Local Government elections. He is the head of G.A.L.A.

Although the councillors told him that they could not select this man, Mr. McGowan still stood there and the meeting broke up.

Mr. McGowan summoned another meeting. Mr. Thompson went to this meeting with a tape recorder and said, “Today I will tape what every man says.” Mr. McGowan said, “You cannot tape anything in this office.” The meeting broke up.

Mr. McGowan said that they would have to put the man chosen by the P.N.C. He is a top-ranking P.N.C. man and he is the head of G.A.L.A. The P.N.C. would only have to tell him, “It is very bad for us to say that we want the Local Government elections postponed. You make a request that you want a postponement of the elections.”

The postponement of Local Government elections is being requested not because the councillors do not have enough time. If they are given more time the ratepayers will catch up with them. There will be a ding-dong affair in the villages because this is bread and butter on the spot for ratepayers and tenants; this is not the Central Government. I do not know whether the hon. Minister and hon. Members of Parliament on that side of the House do not understand this. When the people object to what is happening they will go to the office, as they have done on several occasions. They will chase out the overseers and try to beat up the councillors.

If the members of the Government want a clash it will come because of the inexperienced chairmen and councillors now in the local authorities. They know nothing. Their only remedy is to hold free and fair Local Government elections now. The members of the P.N.C. know that these people are inexperienced but they want to use their own people to collect proxies. We want you to remove John and put in Harry. You know that Harry is the better man.

The members of the P.N.C. are collecting proxies; people are signing proxies for the general elections. You do not want to spoil things now, because if you rig Local Government elections, how are you going to rig general elections also?

The hon. Minister of Local Government, Mr. Salim, told us yesterday about two tunnels which were constructed at the Black Bush Polder road, known as Java Road. These tunnels provide drainage for the No. 46, Good Hope, area. I doubt whether the hon. Minister knows very much about this. For many years the people could not cultivate their lands and, because of that, they had to do several things. They wrote to the Local Government Board; they wrote to the Minister of Local Government; they took up the matter with the Assistant District Commissioner. I took the District Commissioner and the Assistant District Commissioner there on two occasions to see the whole cultivation.

These two tunnels were purchased from Emkay Contractors. The company had no use for them after they finished the road project and offered them for sale. When the tunnels were

purchased, the Minister of Local Government did not hand them over to the local authority as it knew that the Chairman and councillors of the local authority do not have the necessary experience. The Ministry handed them over the Administrator of Black Bush Polder.

The Administrator worked out a plan with an engineer – I do not know who was the engineer. The people promise to do everything by self-help if directed how to work. They put in 50 days' labour and then, what happened? One engineer went and condemned the work of the other engineer, and 50 days' labour had gone west.

That is why, as the hon. Minister rightly said, only one tunnel has been put down over a period of two years. It took two years to have this one tunnel put in place and there is another one to be put there. Perhaps that is why the Government is saying that the local authorities did not have enough time to do their work. If they had told the proprietors to take charge and to do the work, the whole project could have been finished within three months.

The hon. Minister, Mr. Salim, has had no experience in local government. He was living on a sugar estate. He does not even know how to cut cane. This Government should now get down to the base, where local government is concerned. Instead of postponing the elections the members of this Government should go into the fields and find out what is really wrong, why the people are dissatisfied and what type of people have been put in charge. They should do some research and find out what should be done. If there is need for something to be done, then let it be done but hold Local Government elections now.

I have asked the Minister of Local Government on several occasions to let me know when he is coming to the area so that I could take him around and let him see conditions for himself. I have asked many Ministers but they will never inform me. When the hon. Minister, Miss Field-Ridley, was Minister of Health I asked her to send me a letter when she was coming up. In many cases you find that Ministers and Members of the Government are claiming that what we say in this House is false.

Mr. Speaker: You have two minutes

Mr. R. Ally: They claim that we are trying to put over things that are not true. Let them inform me when they are coming to the district. Why do you doubt us? [**Miss Field-Ridley:** “Who is to be informed?”] An elected member of Parliament, who represents the people of the area, not a nominated member.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, not too long ago during this same autumn rice crop the people at Crabwood Creek complained that corn birds were attacking their crops. I brought three bundles of rice from that area, and when I showed the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Kasim, he said, “No, no. This is not for me, this is for Mr. Kasim.” Two Ministers in one Ministry and they do not know what they are responsible for. When I asked Mr. Kasim what do I tell the people in Crabwood Creek, he said, “What do you want?” I said to him the people want something to prevent the birds from attacking their crops. He said, “What is that?” I told him guns. I said give the people five guns. Crabwood Creek is made up of ten sections, it is not an ordinary place; one gun can be allocated to two sections. This is the answer given to me by Mr. Kasim: “You mean you all want to overthrow this Government?” With five shot guns? Then this Government is as weak as trash.

Mr. Speaker: One minute more.

Mr. Ally: I went further, I said, “Mr. Kasim if you know that five shot guns will overthrow your Government, well, then do not give them the guns, all you will have to do is to send five P.N.C. people with shot guns.”

Mr. Speaker: Time, hon. Member Mr. Ally.

Mr. Ally: Mr. Speaker, the birds --

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member I called time.

Mr. R. Ally: Yes, sir, I am winding up.

Dr. Jagan: I beg to move that the hon. Member be given five minutes more to complete his speech.

Question put, and negative.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the House seeks to extend the life of the local authorities and municipal district councils for a period of two years. The reason put forward, to give longer life to the councils, is that the councils were unable to fulfil their programmes and as such they must be given additional time so that their programmes can be fulfilled. Local authorities and municipal district councils do not function by themselves as such; they function in such a way as to administer the districts of the area they represent and also to help the Government carry out its development programme. One would ask the question: What programmes do the Government have in mind for them to fulfill?

The position is that the Government does not have a programme that can be able to give proper guidance to the different councils so that they can administer the affairs of the councils and implement such programmes. For instance, such programmes as drainage and irrigation. No district council alone can carry out such a programme; it has to be involved in the Government's programme. But what programme does the Government have in so far as drainage and irrigation is concerned? So you see the Government having selected its candidates, having installed them in office, is faced with the dilemma of not being able to get the councils to function efficiently. The reason is that the councillors chosen and appointed by the Government do not reflect the wishes of the electorate. Many of the councillors are inexperienced. Many of them have never

sat in a council meeting before, and as a result, they do not have the necessary know-how to administer the councils.

Because of this factor many of the councils are not functioning, many of them have not been able to carry out the tasks given to them by the ratepayers of their respective areas. Members of the councils are not people who have had experience, because as you know, Sir, in the past, many of the village fathers were persons who had an interest in the local authority areas, because many of them were farmers, many of them were workers and many of them have to earn a livelihood in the areas. Over 50 per cent of the councillors selected by the P.N.C. Government are Government officers, either they are working in the Ministry of Education as teachers, in the Ministry of Works and Communications or doing some governmental function, full-time and paid by the Government, so they have very little time to administer the affairs of the council.

This is the basic problem. The Councillors themselves do not have a feel of the area, they do not know what the people want. Everybody knows the way our villages are located, residents are living just by the roadside, but most of the developmental work takes place in the backlands where the farmers have their rice fields and cultivation. This is where the farmers earn their livelihood and many of the councillors do not have the time, nor do they want to dirty their clothes to go to the farms to look into the problems of the people. That is why ratepayers and tenants are facing grave difficulties in their respective local authority areas. They are not getting the service they got before although they were paying less taxation.

In the pass, better representations were given to them by people who were not paid; today, there are persons under this new reformed system and people thought that there would be considerable improvements but these improvements have not materialized. This is because of the fact that the councillors do not have materialized. This is because of the fact that the councillors do not have the interest of the village at heart. This is the basic mistake of the P.N.C. Government in its choice of candidates; and not only that, it is because of the way in which

elections were run. The second reason for the failure of the local authorities is that the Government has not offered proper leadership and guidance to the local authorities.

3.30 p.m.

For instance, in relation to the Leguan Local Authority in 1971, in an article in one of the daily newspapers, it was stated:

“Leguan Estimates declared null and void. Minister of Local Government Vibert Mingo is reported to have declared null and void, the estimates which the District Council of Leguan had prepared for this year, because of an alleged illegality in connection with the appraisalment of properties.”

The P.N.C. council is in the majority in Leguan. The members do not know procedures. There is in the area of Vreed-en-Hoop District Council the chairman, Mr. Cyril Chan. The council was asked to prepare estimates and send them to the Minister of Local Government for approval. Mr. Cyril Chan as chairman, prepared his own estimates and sent them. The finance committee that was charged with the responsibility of preparing the budget for the village, that committee sent its own estimates also. How can you function this way?

This is the problem which faces the councils. The councillors do not understand procedures. They are people who were just brought in because the P.N.C. had difficulty in finding people to be on their list. We never had difficulty. That is why the P.N.C. went to Sheet Anchor and intimidated many persons to leave the P.P.P. list. This is basically the problem where the Ministry of Local Government has failed give leadership to the local authority areas.

Loans and grants which were promised to the various councils were not given by the Government. Over 95 per cent of the councils were promised grants during the election campaign for the election of councillors in the different local authority areas. The local authorities have not, over the years, got any grants: loans, in 1968, \$29,866, in 1969, \$500, in

1970, \$2,400, in 1971, \$47,600, in 1972, this year, \$50,000. And they have not even spent the money yet in providing loans to the various councils. The fact is that the Government did not have the money to service the local authority areas and that is an additional factor which caused the councils not to function. Having meetings does not necessarily mean that a council functions, but to do the work for the benefit and in the interest of the people in the area, that is what matters, and the Government and the councillors have not been able to do this.

Because of unfair valuation of properties for rating purposes, actively due to racial and political considerations, the residents of Edinburgh Village wrote the Minister of Local Government protesting against the appraisements of their properties. They pointed out in this letter dated 18th October, 1972, the unfair appraisements, and they listed the various discriminatory acts on the part of the appraisers against the residents of the area.

The points which they made were: (1) all the lands in Edinburgh Village are not transported lands but owned by Bill of Sale, and were appraised above the value of transported lands at Sister; (2) all the lands in the extra nuclear housing area are owned by Bookers Sugar Estates Ltd., for which a rental of \$2.88 per annum is paid to Bookers Sugar Estates Ltd., and which are all appraised for taxation; (3) no forms for opposing unfair appraisements were left by the appraiser in order that unfair appraised value of properties could have been challenged at the proper time; (4) the appraiser that appraised the Rotterdam-Enfield area resides in the very district and did not do a justified appraisal especially in that area, as is widely said by the people there; (5) no consideration was given to cases of extreme poverty; (6) no meetings were held or notices posted up by any of your officers or even the councillors to explain the methods of taxation, although repeated requests were made for the same. The Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee still has quite a lot of amenities yet to be provided to the Edinburgh Extra Nuclear Housing Area; (8) most of the houses in the abovementioned area were unjustly appraised and it is so glaring that it caused quite a lot of dissatisfaction and uneasiness upon hearing of the same by the public. We have on the list certain comparative proprietors' appraisal valuations to prove our claim.

Low appraisalment: The proprietors listed the unfair appraisements of their properties: A. Nelson, 484 square feet house area. They appraised it at \$800. I. Clements, 770 square feet house area, they appraised it at \$2,000. H. Ally, 1,176 square feet, they appraised it at \$4,000. Shivmangal, 1,080 square feet, \$3,800. Isaac park, 648 square feet, \$600. E. Ramotar, 320 square feet \$650.

The list goes on to show the discriminatory policy of the Government in appraisalment of properties and this is the bone of contention why ratepayers are reluctant to pay their rates and taxes, because of the fact that there has been unfair consideration in the appraisalment of property. The councils have failed because of the inability of the councils to tacklers the drainage and irrigation problems in the village areas. As I said earlier, this has to be involved in the overall policy of the government but the Government does not have a tangible programme for drainage and irrigation to help the village areas. If the village areas are to be developed the areas have to be involved in the Government's overall programme and the Government does not have a tangible programme to let the ratepayers understand. That is why they have not been able to function.

Because of the increased rates and taxes collected by the councils, the ratepayers are dissatisfied with the services they are having. Some of the services they had before, they no longer have them today. Because of the fact that they cannot find the money, they are pressing the people more as far as taxation is concerned, whatever money they are getting, that money is being used to keep up the bureaucracy in the local authorities. In the past, a council had an overseer, an assistant overseer, and a ranger. Today it has a chief executive officer, assistant executive officer, finance officer and also the ranger and a typist, and all sorts of posts in the bureaucracy.

The Government is saying the councils need this staff because the areas are enlarged. Is that really so? The areas are enlarged but what about the services? Do they have more work to do? Surely not, because they are not even giving the services to the small areas that were there

before, much less the larger areas. The Government, after the local government election, introduced a policy of self help. The Government made promises that it is going to supply materials and the people must give self help. As far as I understand, farmers would not mind doing self-help work if it has to do with dams and so on to bring out their produce, but the Government has changed its tune. First, it said it is going to provide materials and the people must give labour.

3.40 p.m.

After a while no materials were provided. They went back to the people and told them, “You have to get the materials yourselves.”

On the one hand, they are collecting taxes from the people and yet they are going back and asking for donations to carry out certain types of work. Councils do not function in that way. Councillors have to be part and parcel of that area. They must have some interest in the area and the interest is not there with the councillors installed by the P.N.C.

That is why there is a problem; that is why the Minister had to say he is going to sack many of them. He said that he is going to dismiss them, or remove them, if they do not function. He had to make such a statement because he realizes that the P.N.C. has failed in its programme to provide leadership for local authorities.

One cannot expect, therefore, that the Government will be able to satisfy the people of that area. The main reason why members of the Government are afraid to hold elections is that they will have problems in doing so. For one thing, they will be unable to find suitable candidates and, secondly they realize that there will have to be massive rigging before they can control local authorities in this country. In some areas where the P.N.C. has some degree of support, they may be able to find persons to participate in elections but the time is too late for the Government to be talking of getting the councillors to put through the programme.

The Government has been unable to get the councillors to do its work because, first of all, many of the councillors were there for personal gain. Because they could not get a personal gain they shirked their responsibilities and they have not been able to satisfy the people.

The most important thing is that we have to be able to organize militant people who can carry out the functions of local government. Unfortunately, the P.N.C. is incapable of doing this. Therefore, regardless of what the P.N.C. says, the extension of two years that the Government is seeking for the councillors will not benefit the people. Increased poverty will ensue in the various areas. Only when the P.N.C. has free and fair elections will we be able to have proper local government in Guyana.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, we in the United Force are wondering whether the measure before this House today is not perhaps a question of coming events casting their shadows. The postponement of local government elections could perhaps be a very short step from the postponement of parliamentary elections. Perhaps the P.N.C. members will next come to this House with a request to postpone the national general elections as they have not had enough time in office to put through the improvements they wanted.

Lest they say that the law will not permit them to do this let me say here and now that they have raped the Constitution with impunity. [Interruption] The hon. Member speaks about the Constitution, but the Constitution says quite a few things which the P.N.C. has refused to observe. The Constitution states –

“The Elections Commission shall have such functions connected with or relating to the registration of electors or the conduct of elections as are conferred upon it by or under this Constitution or, subject thereto, any Act of Parliament; and, subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Commission –

- (a) shall exercise general direction and supervision over the registration of electors and the administrative conduct of elections;”

I anticipated what my hon. Friends on the other side would say. The Constitution provides for it.

What happened at the last general election? The Elections Commission was thrown aside; it was kicked aside. What kind of registration did we have? What kind of voters' registration did we have? There was a list of voters taken out from the national registration. The P.N.C. Government said, “Oh, no. The Elections Commission has nothing at all to do with national registration. That is a matter purely for the Government. Therefore the Government, with all its stooges and with all its machinery perverted as it was, went ahead and had national registration.

The members of the Government did not even go to the trouble of having a proper baptism. They merely called it “The national registration list” and therefore it was the Voters' List.

What did the Elections Commission have to do with the Voters List? Absolutely nothing. And yet the Constitution states that the Commission “shall exercise general direction and supervision” over the registration of electors and the administrative conduct of elections.”

Article 69 of the Constitution also states that the Elections Commission –

“shall issue such instructions and take such action as appear to it necessary or expedient to ensure impartiality, fairness and compliance with the provisions of this Constitution ...”

When was the Elections Commission when all the fraud was taking place, when there was all the proxy voting? The Grenada television showed horses grazing on the race track where people were registered. Where was the Elections Commission? The Chairman had been caustically

criticizing the Government shortly before. The Elections Commission was no where around and yet these provisions in the Constitution.

For the Government to say that it will be bound by its laws or by the Constitution is farcical. It is fraud, because the members of the Government have shown themselves incapable of adhering to the laws and quite capable of breaking them with impunity.

What else did they do? The regulations for the 1968 General Election the Elections Regulations 1964, provided in section 33 (3) -

“The returning officer of each district shall keep a list of proxies which shall be in the form prescribed and shall set out the names, addresses and the serial numbers of the identity papers of the electors for whom proxies have been appointed and of the electors who have been appointed to vote as proxies on their behalf; and the returning officer shall on the request of an election agent allow him, on the 4th day before election day, to inspect and copy the list.”

To this day those lists are not available.

This is the law passed by the P.N.C. majority with Rupert Tello crossing over in the latter stages of 1968. It was passed with a majority of one. It is their law which provides for a list of proxies to be made available. Up to now it has not been made available. They are breaking their own law with impunity and they have the brazenness to sit over there and to talk to us as though they are as white as lilies and without blame. They have no right to be there. If this were not an honourable House I would be tempted to say that the majority of them should be behind bars for the way in which they have broken the law in the past.

What are they coming to do now? They are coming to claim that their stooges should be left in office for another period of two years because they have not done the job which they were supposed to do. How hypocritical can we be when you come to Parliament with that kind of argument?

We cannot support this kind of legislation before the House. This Bill before the House exposes dishonesty; it exposes the farce, the rascality of the present Government.

The explanatory memorandum says that this Bill is “in the interests of the administration of the affairs of the respective local authorities.” Let us look at this very carefully. The members of the Government are saying further that they were requested by G.A.L.A. to do this and that G.A.L.A. has given reasons. What rubbish! Let us examine it in detail.

The first intimation the public had of G.A.L.A. having made a request to the Government was on page 8 of what was called the Government’s “mouthpiece” yesterday. I say this with all due respect to Mr. Mohamed Hamaludin. On page 8 of the *Daily Chronicle* of November 23, 1972, it is stated --

“G.A.L.A. SEEKS POSTPONEMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS”

This was the first public pronouncement by G.A.L.A.

3.50 p.m.

“The Guyana Association of Local Authorities (GALA) is seeking postponement of Local Government elections for at least a year in order that the vast majority of councillors could have time in which to get their development programmes off the ground.”

A resolution to that effect was adopted at a meeting of the GALA Executive last Saturday ...”

This is what appeared in the **Chronicle** of Thursday, 23rd November. Last Saturday was 18th November, and it said at the end of the article:

“Be it resolved that G.A.L.A. strongly recommends that Local Government elections be postponed for at least one year, in order to enable the majority of councillors to get their development programmes off the ground.”

This is the resolution passed on Saturday, 18th November, yet this is published on Thursday, November 23rd. On Friday, November 24th, the *Graphic* reports that the day before in this parliament, the very next day after this article was published, the hon. Minister introduced a Bill for the postponement of the Local Government elections. What fraud! Obviously this legislation would have had to go to the legal draughtsmen. The Minister would have had to take it to Cabinet. I was a member of Cabinet, I resigned because of the rascality of the P.N.C. Cabinet would have had to consider this matter. Cabinet instructions would have had to go to the legal draughtsmen. The legal draughtsman brilliant as Mr. Bryn Pollard is, he would have to take his time to consider all the implications and set his mind to drafting the documents, yet the day after the G.A.L.A.’s announcement was made the Minister – Mr. Speaker you said yesterday that when the Minister made his announcement the Bill had been published in the extraordinary issue of the Gazette. What extraordinary progress. G.A.L.A. passes a resolution on Saturday, 18th November and on Thursday, 23rd November the legislation is already published in the Gazette and the Minister moves the First reading of the Bill in Parliament. Whom are they trying to fool? The Government had made its decision a long time before and it was merely making G.A.L.A. as its stooge, its mouthpiece to put to this Parliament --

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Singh, if you were here when the Minister was introducing the Bill you would have heard him saying that the resolution was passed since the month of August.

Mr. M.F. Singh: The Government’s mouthpiece, the **Chronicle**, presumably has reported wrongly when they say that this resolution was passed on Saturday, 18th November. This is what I am quoting. I am not concerned with what the hon. Minister may have said here or there. If this is untrue let them say so.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, the Minister said the resolution was passed in August. If a report is made in the Chronicle, I do not know why you are basing your argument that the report is correct. The Minister said G.A.L.A. made this resolution in the month of August.

Mr. M.F. Singh: The Minister said that. I am quoting what the newspaper said. I submit I am entitled to quote what the newspaper says. That is what G.A.L.A. said. What is G.A.L.A. saying now? G.A.L.A. is saying that G.A.L.A. has acted in the national interest regardless of the views of the detractors whose sole reason for showing it as a retrograde step is an attempt to use local government vehicles to achieve their political ambitions. But what did G.A.L.A. say on October 26, 1972. Big headlines in the *Guyana Graphic*. This can be relied on. I quote:

“The Minister of Local Government Mr. Abdul Salim has warned that many village councillors may be sacked towards the end of this year for their display of lack of interest in village affairs. The Minister hinted this on at the meeting of the East Demerara Union of Local Authorities at the Helena Government School. The meeting was so poorly attended ...”

And I quote from the reliable *Graphic*:

“If it is evident that meetings of village councils are ‘always poorly attended’ emphasizing that such meetings be 100 per cent represented by local authorities the Minister said if councillors are not interested in these meetings then it is necessary to dispense with their services.”

“We cannot tolerate these recalcitrant councillors and I must here inform you that I have already discussed this matter with the Prime Minister explaining how very little these councillors and officers are interested in their work and the affairs of their local authorities. He warned that by December next new members will replace them for it was very shameful and deplorable.

Mr. Hubert McGowan, President of the Guyana Association of Local Authorities what did he say. He said that it was a shame that they had to meet a handful of people at such an important meeting.

He warned: If councillors cannot carry out their onerous duties and find time to serve, they should quit by tendering their resignations.

This is not the time to carry dead wood. These are not the days when a few chairmen and a few councillors used to run a local authority.”

This is what GALA is saying about these people, meetings poorly attended, and these are the people they want to continue in office for another two years. What hypocrisy! That is what they are tell us, that these puppets must be kept on, must be kept there in office for another two years and that is what they say about them. Let us call their bluff, let us say have elections now. You say some of them are bad. You say you are dissatisfied with some of them. Take out those you want to continue. You say the others are good, put them back on a list and hold elections now and see whether you will win. If you win you will give those people whom you say are good, you will give them another life, you will give them another chance to continue their work. Those people are there. But you know why they cannot hold elections. They cannot hold elections because they do not want to cope with two sets of rigging at the same time. In order to win national elections they have got to rig.

4 p.m.

In order to win local elections, they have to rig, they cannot handle the rigging for the two together, therefore, they are shelving one. Local government elections do not have overseas votes so they have to do a little more work in local government elections, so they postpone local government elections and concentrate all their energies on the rigging of the national elections. Let us not fool ourselves. They have no right to be sitting there. There are sitting there as a result of fraud, proxy voting, and rigging to such an extent. What kind of rigging --

Mr. Speaker: Before we go on, it is 4 o'clock. Perhaps we can suspend now.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

On resumption –

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh

Mr. M.F. Singh: As I was saying, the fact is that the P.N.C. would never have won any election, national or local, were it not for the fact that it indulged in fraud and rigging. We all know the famous story of the overseas votes in the 1968 elections. It has been said and repeated in this House and I will not dwell on it, suffice it to say that Granada television did an excellent job, *The Making of a Prime Minister* and *The Trail of the Vanishing Voters*. Here in Guyana, we all know of the widespread abuse of the system of proxy voting. Indeed, we know it so well that some of us right-thinking Guyanese are totally ashamed of what took place. In respect of proxy voting, things like these, where the P.N.C. presuming that a man – who is a friend of mine – because of the colour of his skin, was P.N.C. sends him a letter such as this.

“Dear Comrade,

You are appointed to stand as proxy for the following voters ...”,

And it lists one name and the rest are blank. They found only one proxy for him.

“You have to vote for three persons at the same time that you go to the polls to vote for yourself. Please vote as early as possible. Be at the polling station at 5 o’ clock in the morning. Avoid the rush. Vote P.N.C. for victory. Success Lutheran School lower. Thank you.”

Mr. Speaker, this gentleman, I will not call his name because he is a businessman and he will be penalized, and he will suffer if his name were known, does not know the name of this person that he was supposed to vote for by proxy. I have a copy of the appointment as proxy. He never agreed to vote for anybody as proxy. This was delivered to his house, pushed under the door. Presuming he was P.N.C. He is to go and vote for somebody he does not know. He knows not a thing about this. Fortunately this was a right-thinking man with some degree of

probity, a person of repute, he brings this to me and I make a photostatic copy of it. People who never knew the people they were voting for by proxy. Never agreed to vote for them, but his was the kind of practice that was being indulged in.

It is only part of the massive campaign of rigging which got them into power at the national level and at the local government level. Let us talk about local government, first phase of local government. This is why they cannot hold local government elections, because they know if they do not rig to a massive extent they will never get a majority. They had to do it the last time and this time they will have to do it more so, because the people are even more dissatisfied.

In Leguan, sixty residents of Leguan, fearlessly and openly signed the list of candidates supporting the U.F. list of candidates against the P.N.C., without any offer of reward. The P.N.C. could have offered them this, that, and the other. They went and they voted for us. Candidates on that list, when they turned up to vote, were told that they had already been voted for by proxy and they never gave any proxies. At the final count, thirty-two, and sixty names supported that list openly.

What happened in between? Our guests were not allowed to follow the ballot boxes. They were stopped, the cars sped off to the counting station, police barricaded the counting station, only the P.N.C. agents could have gone in. A known P.N.C. activist is in charge of elections. He is supposed to be an impartial elections officer and they are there, nobody allowed in until about three hours after when they say they are ready to count the votes. Obviously having got 32 votes tells us how the boxes were manipulated.

In Essequibo, someone of the P.N.C. people forgot, that is why bundles with rubber bands around them could have rolled out. Mr. K. D. Doobay formerly of the A.G.'s Office, Barrister-at-Law, he saw when these bundles of ballot papers with rubber bands rolled out of the ballot box. How did they get there? That is the kind of thing when you have P.N.C. agents

locked in the counting house with no representative of the Opposition parties to see what mischief they are up to.

Local government elections at Mabaruma, what happened there? Our agent, they followed him all around. Police Government using the police. Police tells our man Norman Swamy: you cannot go into Bumbury Hill. It is an Amerindian settlement, it is not a reservation. Now they are taxing the people's trash houses, and yet our man is not allowed to go in before that local government election. The hon. Minister Mr. David Singh, he so terrorized Ronald Teekasing, whose father works at the Mental Hospital, that the poor fellow withdrew from the list. Two of our members on the list, the P.N.C. agents terrorized them and they signed letters of withdrawal. When they were told of their rights, they swore to affidavits setting out the circumstances and those affidavits were sent to the Police, but what happened? Nothing happened.

In Georgetown, scores of people voted for by proxy. They turned up ready to cast their votes and they have been voted for by proxy. List of complaints we have at Unity House to this effect. What about the counting at Queen's College? Sir, let me give you one incident only. The Returning officer, Mr. Scott, there was a ballot box; the votes were over a hundred more than there should have been in the ballot box. An impartial set of people from the Audit Department were there. They came and tried to reconcile it. They counted all the counterfoils. That agreed with the ballot paper account but the votes were over a hundred more than should have been in the ballot box. Mr. Scott put the box aside. You cannot reconcile. What happens?

Mr. Minister of Home Affairs Desmond Hoyte struts in a P.N.C. agent goes up to him and whispers to him: "Look, that box has been put aside." He goes up and he says, "What about this box?" The man in charge of the table for the counting says: "Mr. Scott says put that aside." "Who the hell is Mr. Scott? Count it. That must be counted." So says the Minister of Home Affairs. Power! Count it and the poor chaps, okay, the Minister says so, and they count the box.

Up to this day that box has never been reconciled. The Officer who is supposed to be in charge there is overruled.

That is what is responsible for them and their lackeys being in office now and it is because they are lackeys that is why you have so much complaint against the people who are now occupying the seats in the village councils in those areas that the P.P.P. and the United Force did not contest.

4.40 p.m.

What is the point of contesting when this rigging takes place so openly and blatantly?

At Bartica the same thing happened.

Let us look at this Bill. Clause 6(3) states:

“Anything in paragraph (c) of section 3 to the contrary notwithstanding, for the purposes of the holding of the first elections of councillors after part II ceases to have effect, the provisions of the Principal Acts shall apply thereto subject, however, to such modifications and adaptations thereof as may be specified by the Minister by order made under this section if he considers it necessary or expedient for the purpose.”

What are the Principle Acts? The Principal Acts are defined as The Local Authorities (Elections) Act, 1969; the Municipal and District Councils Act 1969 and the Local Government Ordinance. How many of the hon. Members on that side realize the significance of this section? This means that the Minister, by a stroke of the pen, by an order, can modify any of the provisions of these three Acts which were passed in the Parliament. The Minister can say, “This should not apply. I amend this; I delete that.”

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh, you have two minutes more.

Mr. M.F. Singh: By a stroke of the pen this amendment can be made and this is what will happen. This provision has no right to be here; it must be taken out. It states:

“...subject, however, to such modifications and adaptations thereof as may be specified by the Minister by order made under this section ...”

It does not even state that the order must come to Parliament. The Minister can give any order to amend these Acts which were passed by the Parliament. He can manipulate them in any manner, just by an order. He can tear them up and we can do nothing about it. This Bill will give him the power to do so. That is the cunning bit of rascality in this piece of legislation.

The people of Guyana deserve a better deal than this. They want a change; they are dissatisfied. That is why men like Archie Codrington resigned from the Georgetown City Council. That is why other persons are resigning from other institutions. The people are dissatisfied but they are scared. The P.N.C. has them terrorized. It is governing so much by fear that people are afraid to talk. They say that if they open their mouths in disapproval they will be shot down as so many others have been shot down.

I warn the Government that the will of the people will always prevail. There are those who are hanging their mouths where the soup is dropping, like Rupert Tello who caused the legislation for national elections to be passed in 1968 with a majority of one. What happened to him? He was Chairman of the Guyana Electricity Corporation for a short time. I understand he is walking around the streets now.

Those who are hanging their mouths where the soup is dropping, those who think that they can sell the people of this country or hold them up for ransom, let me warn them that the will of the people will prevail. Let me warn the members of this Government. If ever you have free and fair elections you will no longer sit on that side. And even if you do not have free and fair elections, one of these days you will realize that rascality can never triumph. Hitler realized

this, Mussolini realized this. Nowhere in the world has evil ever triumphed. Your end is nigh and I warn you that when that day comes the people of Guyana will rejoice.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member, Mr. Cheeks

Mr. Cheeks: Mr. Speaker, the measure which is now before this House is one of the most important questions ever to be brought before this body. I should say it is one of the most important to be brought here over a long time.

No democratic Government can ignore the attitude of the people in the districts. No democratic Government can regard local democracy lightly because what happens in local government elections is always regarded as the barometer of the Government's popularity.

It is for this reason that in countries like England and America politicians keep their eyes on local government elections and regard the results of these elections as a kind of Gallup poll for national elections.

In Guyana the circumstances are such that the influence of the national government policy on the affairs of local authorities is considerable. People tend to praise or blame the Government according to what happens everywhere, not only in matters which are clearly the functions of the central Government, but also in local government affairs.

This is so, not only because of the influence that Government exercises but because of the system which operates, that is, because there is party government in local politics and because of the system of proportional representation.

If local government is successful, then the Government is successful: if local government fails, then the Government fails. People everywhere tend to praise or blame the central government for what happens. There is no one here in Parliament who is too young to remember

the frustration, the inertia and, I should say, even the decay that took place during the years 1959 to 1970 when local government elections were held in abeyance. So far as I can recall, the Opposition – which was then in the Government – was responsible for five of those blank years.

I took over some time in December, 1964, and for four years we did not have local government elections but, sir, there was full and sufficient reason for not holding those elections. There was no election law for the holding of elections and as elections could not be held because of the absence of a law, that was full and sufficient reason for the suspension of elections.

The question therefore arises now: Is there full and sufficient reason for the postponement of local government elections? I think that is the question to be asked, without indulging in any kind of sentimental excursion. I think that is the point to be decided.

4.50 p.m.

Now, it is the prerogative of a Government to fix the time for national elections when it believes that the climate is suitable for itself; that is recognized in all democracies where elections are held. Is Government committing a breach of the Constitution by deciding to postpone these elections? Is Government breaking the law by doing so? Is Government going beyond the bounds of moral scruples by doing so? The term of office of a local council is fixed by Parliament and we must understand that Parliament has the power; it does not have the power to break constitutional guarantees – the Constitution except under certain conditions and even then it would not be breaking the Constitution. But if the Government wishes to introduce a law into Parliament, and Parliament accepts the law whatever it is, if it is necessary and expedient in accordance with what the Government in power feels is necessary, then the question that really arises is whether Government is acting outside the law or outside the Constitution.

What is politically advisable for Government of Non-Aligned nations. It has also had a very successful operation of Carifesta. These are facts that no one deny. It is obvious that the

Government feels that it has worked so hard in placing Guyana in international firmament that it feels it needs some more time to place itself in another firmament, the firmament of the people's hearts. The holding of Local Government Elections is not a minor operation. It is a major administrative and political exercise. Politics is expediency. *[Applause]*

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan): Sir, "We believe in democracy. We believe in free and regular elections. We believe in the dignity of the individual and his right to express himself freely." This is the Prime Minister speaking in Washington in 1966 as now highly published and no doubt highly paid for by the taxpayers in a series of articles in the *Financial Times*, August 25, 1972, and subsequently printed no doubt en mass for distribution as leaflets. This is how the money goes.

Let us come back to the quote: "We believe in democracy. We believe in free and regular elections. We believe in the dignity of the individual." Sir, this is the main question which is before this House today. What is the argument adduced by the Government's spokesmen? That G.A.L.A. representative, as the Minister of Local Government puts it, of sixty local authorities which is more people than the Opposition combined, is demanding that elections be postponed.

Let us see the equation. The Government is taking advice from G.A.L.A. G.A.L.A. is representative of sixty local authorities. The Local Authorities were elected by the P.N.C. but everyone knows they were elected by fraud first, in six districts, and because of those frauds the Opposition Parties boycotted the remaining Local Government Elections. So where does the equation bring us? In a circle starting out with the P.N.C., starting out with fraud and ending up with a fraudulent request from an organization which is a creature of the Government, a creature of the Local Authorities which were fraudulently elected. That is the kind of logic we have in this House from the Ministers of the Government who propose to convince people in Guyana.

The Guyana Association of Local Authorities – first of all, let us see how it came into being. A previous Minister of the P.N.C. Government, Mr. Llewellyn John was at one time the President of the Union of Local Authorities, and was also President in the first year after these bodies came into being. But in the last election, fearing that Llewellyn John might win again, what did they do? They asked for a vote by show of hands; secret ballot is not to be entertained. They do not even trust their own supporters; their own people who have been hand-picked!

5 p.m.

Let us see how these people got there to G.A.L.A. The then Mayor of Georgetown, John Ford, nominated eight Georgetown councillors to attend, with himself and the Deputy Mayor, as delegates to the Conference. Was the P.P.P. there? Was the United Force there? How are the delegates selected? On what basis? In other words, the whole thing is a rump. A P.N.C. outfit which is composed of councillors who were elected by fraud. Therefore, this argument does not hold any water, that we are heeding the advice of a representative institution which speaks for so many people.

If this body was so strong, as is alleged, if the P.N.C. is so powerful throughout the country, will they tell us why they were not able to get their supporters to fill the cinemas which are boycotted because the cinema owners are carrying out proxy exercises? How is it you are so strong, you speak for all the local authorities, a cinema is closed because of boycott called by P.P.P.? *[Interruption]* Cannot win election, because you are fraud boss number one.

This Minister when he was not paid, and promoted as a member of the Elections Commission, we have what he said. He said clearly, that the registration list by no means could become the electoral roll. It could not. It would not. This is what he then said when the P.P.P. was expressing fears that this was a hand-picked outfit, and it referred to those who were making the registration lists. His line was, the Commission had nothing to do with that, and as regards the charge that the voters list will come from that, he said, not at all.

We have his exact words. I quote what he said on June 30, 1967: “The national register could not be the electoral roll. Compilation of the electoral roll was a matter for the Commission who shall exercise general directions and supervision over the registration of electors. The Commission has nothing to do with the preparation of the national register. Whatever might be the purpose of the register, it certainly could not be the electoral roll.” But it was his party government which validated the extracted names, 21 years and above, from the registration list to be christened and baptized the electoral roll. This is how they win elections.

As regards the electoral roll, they get up here and beat their chest, how powerful they are, but they have been made a disgrace internationally. The night before the second T.V. film was shown, *The Making of a Prime Minister*, it was advertised on T.V. They showed the Prime Minister walking like this, and then they stopped him. Still. Commentator: “This man should not be attending the Prime Minister’s Conference tomorrow. He won by fraud.” This is what people have seen all over the world, and then they have the gall to come here and talk about representative institutions such as G.A.L.A. The T.V. commentator pointed to a house in Western Berbice: “A dead man voted from that house. He was hanged fifteen years ago.”

Local government elections. An average of 29 per cent of the people voted by proxy. How can they come and tell sensible people that G.A.L.A. speaks for more than the Opposition put together? Examine the facts. R.P.A. elections, which are conducted in the countryside, they can win no seat. Let us take another area adjoining rice cultivation areas, sugar estates, cane scale checkers’ elections conducted by the Ministry of Labour. G.A.W.U. contests, M.P.C.A. contests, also their own union, whose secretary is a man who stole money from the N.I.S. This is the kind of morality they practice in Guyana. Stole money when he was an employee of the G.A.W.U. from N.I.S. why is it M.P.’s here cannot win a seat, their union cannot win a set in the sugar belt? How then can they represent all the local authorities in the country? Whom are they trying to fool, with what logic?

The hon. Prime Minister promised in 1971 in this House that machinery will be established to determine who should represent the sugar workers. When we were in the Government, when we tried to bring a poll, they said we will manipulate a poll. They are the bosses, they will supervise the elections; why then are they afraid? It is crystal clear. Examine the boycott of all their stooges and puppets and bootlickers, successful boycotts. They are using police to intimidate them. That is why policemen cannot go about helping to solve the crime problem.

On Wednesday, six P.P.P. supporters picketing as a protest about the postponement of elections at Bush Lot and another four at Fort Wellington, were picked up. The Sergeant tells the police: “Pick them up, there is no industrial dispute in this area. What are they picketing about?”

5.10 p.m.

“Pick them up; lock them up.” They are taken to the police station, put on bail and told to report in a week. This is how the members of the Government work then they come and tell us, “Put up constructive suggestions.” They tell the people to co-operative. How are they going to co-operate when they are being robbed and cheated, when there are crooks all over the place, from the top of the Government right to the bottom? You cannot expect any different system at the bottom when they are stealing at the top.

Look at the record; you heard it yesterday. Ask the Ombudsman. Where is the Ombudsman’s report about Hamilton Green and David Singh? This is the position. Yesterday we heard the record. It was so stunning that even they were shocked. Of course, they do not know what is happening. That is why the President of G.A.L.A. had to chastise in the public Press. This is not self-criticism; we know how parties are run.

This is just an indication. Those criticisms, those attacks, were an expression of disgust even on the part of the Government and G.A.L.A., because they realized that the system is breaking down. You cannot expect people to co-operate under these conditions.

One would hope that we would take the words of Mr. Cheeks very seriously in respect of the functioning of local authorities. We had a series of articles the other day in the “Mirror” about China. It was said that there was no unemployment, no stealing, no corruption. [**Mr. Hoyte:** “And no elections.”] You do not want to have elections but you have the stealing and the corruption. In China they may not have elections because all the people are there backing them. That is obvious and clear. But these are not having elections, sir, because they cannot win elections. That is the difference; there is a big difference between the two.

They are having problems. Their godfathers are not so generous as they used to be. They cannot bring forth their plan which has been in the making for so long. Perhaps they cannot see where all the money is to come from. It is axiomatic and I think that even the ideologists in the P.N.C. will say that. The building ideologist is groping, but nevertheless he is budding. They will admit that without the people’s co-operation, no matter how many plans you have, no matter how much money you get, you will not succeed. The writer of those three articles compared side by side China and India. I did that on many occasions in this House.

India was a recipient of much more foreign aid and help. At a conference recently it was announced that India was today burdened with debt payment to an extent of 30 per cent of its budget. This amount was swallowed up in debt. We are near that with 20 per cent already and with a moratorium.

Let us come to the basic reason why China succeeded. The basic reason why China succeeded, why the Soviet Union succeeded before that and why Cuba will succeed in the western hemisphere is that the people are backing the Government and the people are involved.

I was having a discussion with the Minister of Economic Planning in Surinam, Mr. Essex, and when we were discussing this question he said, "But we do not have the same kind of population as you have in China or in India to carry out this massive infrastructure work by the people's involvement." I reminded him that maybe that was so but we have 25 per cent unemployed, that half of the youths cannot find work and are liming all over the place, that it is necessary to mobilize these people even though we do not have the millions that those two countries have.

But how are you going to mobilize them? Do you expect to mobilize them when there is so much patent fraud and hypocrisy all over the place? The Government must have a moral position. A Mao Tse-Tung, a Lenin, a Castro, got the backing because of their life style, because of their moral position, because they were prepared to die for the people, if necessary. Can we say that here?

We are not speaking now just because we want to be in local authorities or we want elections just for the sake of elections. We are speaking out of deep concern about where this country is going. All right, postpone elections! But do you expect that you will remove the cause of the things which you are complaining about now, that is, the non-cooperation, which G.A.L.A. or somebody else, calls "sabotage"? I do not know what the sabotage is. There is fighting in court, but what do you expect the people to do if there is unrepresentative local government, if there is discrimination, as we heard yesterday? The facts are glaring. Are the people to defend their rights in the courts if there are dictatorial regimes at the central government as we experience here all the time in spite of being told that it is a parliamentary democracy and the same attitude is exercised at the bottom? What do you want the people to do? They must have recourse elsewhere even though they may get cowboy trials. They have to exhaust the process.

It seems to me that the Government has been gearing for the elections. It was gearing for them. Look at the proxies; they are all here without names. There is just the name they signed

without authorizing anybody. These are proxies which your agent signed. Here they are, duplicate copies! That is why a lot of them have boycotted this. Soon you will have to feed them out of the treasury.

5.20 p.m.

But apparently the campaign has not been so successful. Some of their bootlickers are afraid; they are getting worried because their cinemas, their shops, their stores, even priests and pundits are not getting any work. They are now beginning to realize that it is not profitable to become a proxy collector. Of course, some of them are promised to become Ministers in the next Government, some are even threatening your position, sir.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure I will get your support this time. *[Laughter]*

Dr. Jagan: We hope not by fraud. It would seem that the proxy collection did not come up to scratch as they had expected. But be that as it may, probably they felt that if they had an election and it was contested the fraud in proxy collections, in tampering with ballot boxes, will become so patent, so well-known, so well documented, this time it will not be the Making of a prime Minister only, they will probably have to make several films of the Making of Lord Mayors, sixty of them. They cannot stand this sir, it does not go well with their image that they are trying to create. The Prime Minister is trying to create: “Oh we have good boys, we are decent fellows” so they do not want any dress rehearsals before the elections which will expose the whole thing. I think these are the two basic factors. Therefore, they resort to this highhanded autocratic method.

When you talk about the Constitution as the hon. Member Mr. Cheeks was just talking about a little while ago they always refer you to the point: “Go to the Courts.” Sir, you know respected lawyers now in their Associations are questioning the Judicial process in Guyana. It is not only politicians but lawyers. When there are people who begin to lose confidence in the rule

of law, in institutions whether it is legally, administratively or otherwise – [*Interruption by an hon. Member*] My friend says liberty is a living reality in Guyana, freedom of speech. Yet we know what happened to one newspaper administratively. They are so ashamed that when pressure appears to become visible they sneak and they resort to underhand things like back dating permits. How can you set an example to the community at large in a society which is completely breaking down, more crime, disorder, loss of respect? You cannot expect that you are going to get anything else if you sow winds such as these, you are bound to reap the whirlwind.

The hon. Member Mr. Cheeks made a very good start, but I do not know where he was at the end. His betwixt shows his balancing act; this is indicative of his coming out of the United Force and going under the wings of the P.N.C. I was waiting anxiously to hear the conclusion when he sat down. This is the kind of thing that happens even in this Chamber. Poor Mr. Cheeks, look what has happened to him. He started out logically, but out of steam, because pressure one way or another, they exert pressure on people. Sir, fear cannot build a country. People are not going to do anything; they are going to do things for a while and you have to understand that merely making excuses is not a way out. You heard shouts yesterday: “Why didn’t you have elections? You postponed elections?” I am glad Mr. Cheeks has put the records straight; of course, he was justifying his own position. This is how he put it: “There was full and sufficient reason why no elections could be held in his period of four years at the Ministry of Local Government.” [*Interruption by an hon. Member*]

He went on to say which you must emphasis also that the longer period was in your P.N.C. regime. This is four years up to 1968 but elections were not held until 1970. If there was full and sufficient reason in 1968 not to have elections, can one not see that there was more than full and sufficient reason not to have elections in the period when the P.P.P. was in office? One recalls the burning and the looting; one recalls civil servants on strikes; one recalls that there were no valuation officers and so on. I only quote from what your previous Minister said which

amply bears out the point that there were sound reasons why it was not held at the time. Whether this is so or not. This is no time to go into all that.

5.30 p.m.

This is no time to go into all these things. This Government knew when it passed the local government legislation that elections would be held this year. If the member of the Government are so confident that they have all the support, if they represent more people than the P.P.P. and United Force combines, why is it they are not holding the elections, because from their argument they will win the elections. It is patent that they cannot win the elections, that they have no support in the countryside, and therefore they have to resort to this dictatorial measure, violating what the Prime Minister says, so that the same people who were attacked bitterly will be able to continue to run the show. They are in a dilemma --

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, are you going to be very much longer?

Dr. Jagan: No, sir. They are in a dilemma in that in the areas which were not contested, they won all the seats and therefore they do not have anybody else on the list whom they can put. They have to resort to the age-old colonial practice, which they condemned, of nominating people, but they will go on like this.

By pass the R.P.A., put rice action committees. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Rice production has fallen and similarly agricultural production is stagnating, and so on, as reflected in the city in the high prices of staple foods which the people have to eat. Had it not been for the controlled price of rice, they would have a riot on their hands right here in the city, by their own supporters, but they are doing it at the expense of the farmers. They do not mind because the farmers do not support them, and so they are caught up in all these dilemmas. Ultimately, they have to resort to these totalitarian methods in order to continue in power in office.

I repeat. We are not criticizing just for the sake of criticizing. The Government gives the impression that we have nothing to say, we are never giving any suggestions, we do not have any programme to recommend. This has been said over and over, but the Government is afraid to do what it should be doing both in foreign and domestic policies, because it is serving two masters at the same time, imperialism on the one hand and trying to serve the working class who voted for it. Eliteism whether it is at the central government level, or Guystac level, or the corporations level, or the local government level, is not going to solve the problems. Elitism has to give way to participatory democracy, to the involvement of the people.

G.A.L.A. has called for decentralisation. Why has all this not been done? G.A.L.A. is caught up in the contradictions also. It sees that certain things need to be done. Some of the members are no fools but they also see that it is not possible to do it with incompetents, with crooks, and with an incompetent central administration. Look at local government. In the P.P.P.'s time, they blamed us. They was no Minister in the P.P.P.'s time who was solely in charge of local government. But how many had they? Mr. Cheeks, Mr. Joaquin, Mr. John, Mr. Mingo and now Mr. Salim! Five Ministers. I think this record is broken only by the Minister of Health where there were eight in the last eight years. They do not know. They speak but they do not come down to formulating things which are basic and which have been enunciated as principles. The thing cannot work. We have a chairman in this House who does not know, things are referred by people lower down to the Ministry and he does not even have an estimate. I want to make two points.

As Mr. Cheeks pointed out, at the local government level, it is even more vital to have the people involved because they see, they are near to the problems, they see day by day, unlike the central government where things are hidden in reports and all kinds of things to which they have no access. The ordinary man is no fool. He may not be versed in what some of my colleagues in the Front Bench always like to applaud, that is good English, nice dress, nice appearance, nice image, etc. I do not only believe in being nice in surface when fraud and corruption are behind. Niceness cannot cover dirt, otherwise it will not last very long, and this is the problem. The

people, maybe, they do not have all these graces, but they know basically what they want. These are the ordinary people, like those who fought in China and got political power who are today building. This is the way they did it in Cuba, too.

5.40 p.m.

What are you doing? You are suppressing the majority of the people all the time. You are discriminating against them; you are defrauding them at elections. You are setting examples of dishonesty. What are you going to do? Do you expect them to co-operative? Eventually what are they going to do?

This is seen even in a big country like Argentina where they thought that dictatorial rule would help. But they had to come around to elections again even though they are going to try to defraud it here and there. They had to come back because, as I said, basic and axiomatic to development is the participation and the support of the people. Western capitalist countries are beginning to realize this. You suppress it here and it has to come out somewhere else. It must come out in non-cooperation and ultimately in revolt. As the night follows the day, there is nothing secret about this. This is just logical. This is why some societies prefer to have things evolve by democratic procedures.

We are only warning. Government has a majority and it tries to steam-roller with this majority. Parliamentary democracy does not function simply by steam-rolling everything. The end result of all action must be where it is going to get you.

The Minister (Mr. Hoyte) is now lecturing trade unionists how they must not strike. [**Mr. Hoyte:** "They invited me."] You must send me a copy. Let me read the whole thing and then give me an opportunity to come and answer you for about two hours.

They are realizing it. They cannot make it without the people's co-operation. That is why there are pleas to the workers, but they cannot fundamentally get the support unless they come down, whether at the local Government level or the trade union level, to basic democracy as at GUYBAU to solve the question of trade union democracy. Even in their own ranks, among their own supporters, they cannot solve it. Thus there are all these pleas, the twisting of things and criticizing of foreigners. The foreigners helped to put them where they are, these trade unionists.

The Government, at one stage, heeded the trade union movement when it wanted to make an anti-strike law. Because the trade union movement back-tracked on its own position, the Government had to retreat. We are calling on the members of the Government today: if they have the interest of the people of this country at heart they should scrap this, otherwise I predict that a slogan, the slogan which fired the flood of the revolutionaries in America in 1775, "No taxation without representation", will go up and down this country. That is bound to come as the night follows day, no matter how much rigging they do and no matter how much steam-rolling they do in this House.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 9(2)

The Minister of Information, Culture and Youth (Miss Field-Ridley): Mr. Speaker, I move the suspension of Standing Order 9(1) and (2) to enable this House to continue until the conclusion of the business in hand, namely, the Local Authorities (Postponement of Elections) Bill.

In moving the suspension I should just like to say briefly that I consider this necessary at the moment in order to enable me to assist in the smooth operation of the business of the people of Guyana at this point.

I had yesterday been directed by the hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition to contact the hon. Member, Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, to arrange with him and settle informally, as we

usually do, a list of speakers. This list was settled and, having seen the list, I agreed to his request contrary to what the Government desired, to move the Adjournment at 6.30 last evening. In other words, there was no business done last evening.

I was rather surprised, therefore, to notice, when I arrived at the House, that the list had been altered without any consultation and the agreement breached. I regard this as a breach of faith.

In the circumstances, the debate has gone longer than we had anticipated in terms of our agreement. Therefore, I think it is necessary at this stage to move the suspension, as I now do, to enable us to complete the business on this Bill this evening.

Mr. Ram Karran: I have no objection to the Motion by the hon. Minister for the extension of time, but I do wish to take objection to the suggestion that there was a breach of agreement in so far as the speakers are concerned.

As Your Honour knows, before the meeting each day, the list of speakers is submitted to Your Honour. I told the hon. Minister yesterday, when she consulted me to consult with my colleague, the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud. A list of names was given to the hon. Minister. That list was nearly exhausted when the debate was ended yesterday. We had taken a decision to meet yesterday and today to 6.30. It is not yet 6.30. Yesterday's list having been nearly exhausted, then another list had to be prepared today, as is customary.

Mr. Speaker: We will finish at 6.30?

Mr. Ram Karran: Naturally, sir.

Miss Field-Ridley: I should like it on the record that I do not accept that explanation. It was clear to myself and to the hon. Member on the other side that we were settling a list for the debate.

Mr. Ram Karran: Your Honour knows that on many occasions when decisions are made between the hon. Leader of the House and this side that those decisions are breached by the Government rather than by the Opposition. We do not breach agreements.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Order 9 (1) and (2) suspended.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of Works and Communications.

The Minister of Works and Communications (Mr. Hoyte): From the welter of confusion and contradictions coming from the Opposition Benches I have tried desperately to identify the bases from which the attack was launched on this Bill that is before this honourable House.

We have been treated to a host of irrelevancies, but nevertheless there seem to have emerged two schools in the Opposition ranks on this matter. One school took its position on the ground that the Bill was undemocratic and, as I remember, my good friend, the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall, was the chief proponent of that school.

The other position was taken on the ground of some ill-formulated concept of political immorality. I should like to deal briefly with those two bases of attack before proceeding in this matter.

I am grateful to the hon. Member Mr. Cheeks who put this matter in clear perspective and showed quite clearly that any attack grounded on an allegation of an undemocratic action is wholly untenable. It seems to me that it is a misuse of the term “undemocratic” to apply it to the action which Government has taken in respect of this Bill because we are here in this honourable House, which is the authority under the Constitution, charged with responsibility for approving Bills, amending statutes and revoking statutes.

I would just point to the fact that that argument comes a bit odd from hon. Members who represent the P.P.P. when we recall that in 1958 and in 1961 that party brought legislation to this House to postpone Local Government Elections. I think that the hon. Member Mr. Cheeks put the matter quite correctly when he said that the only issue, and the only possible issue, is whether there was full and sufficient reason.

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The other school had some vague idea that something was morally wrong with the legislation. My answer to that is simple. It does not lie in the mouth of the P.P.P. to talk about morality in respect of the holding of elections. We recall that on 27th November, 1961 the High Court of this country declared the elections in Electoral District No. 23, Houston, null and void on the ground of corrupt practice alleged and proved by the People’s Progressive Party. Notwithstanding that determination, the Premier of the country at that time who happened to be Dr. Cheddi Bharat Jagan, now the hon. Leader of the Opposition, consistently refused to advise the Governor as the Constitution demanded to issue a writ for the holding of elections. So we had the misfortune of enduring the whole term of office by that party without the party having the moral courage to go to the country and have a representative returned for Electoral District No. 23.

The issue, therefore, is whether there is full and sufficient reason. In 1958 to 1961 the Opposition at the time looked at the matter in this perspective and agreed that having regard to

the practicality there was justification in postponing election because at that time it was said that the Government hoped to change the electoral system for local government to introduce Adult Suffrage and generally to reform the system.

Even though in 1961 it was said that this would be done in six months time, it was never done. I wish to draw attention to the fact that the Minister of Home Affairs at the time in the People's Progressive Party Government, Mr. Balramsingh Rai, was at pains to point out, as appears in the *Hansard* of 20th November, 1961, page 630, that the Government's action in postponing the elections was taken after consideration and with the concurrence of the British Guiana Union of Local Authorities. He was at pains to point out to the hon. House that the British Guiana Union of Local Authorities was in agreement. At that time, we all know that Local Authorities were constituted on a limited franchise and, therefore, the British Guiana Union of Local Authorities represented a small vested interest. How much more is the Government today justified in paying heed to the request of the Guyana Association of Local Authorities which represents all the local authorities in this country under a reformed system in which the councillors have been elected under a system of Adult Suffrage?

The question is whether there is full and sufficient reason. Let me refer to the relevant legislation. When the Municipal and District Councils Act, 1969, was being drafted it was agreed that the term of office of councillors would be three years and that idea found expression in section 24 of the Act which reads as follows:

“Subject to the provision of this Act, the term of office of the City Councillors shall be three years, commencing on the 1st day of January after the declaration, under section 101 of the Local Authorities (Elections) Act, 1969 of the election results for the City.”

The idea was that the councillors were to have three years to be counted from the January which followed the elections. This Bill which eventually became an Act had its vicissitudes and was some time in gestation. When it came to this hon. House and was passed into law in

November, 1969 many of the projections, as far as the time-table was concerned for holding the elections, proved to be out of joint. Therefore, when in subsection (b) of section 323 it was recorded that councillors elected to City Councils and Town Councils were to hold their office until 31st December, 1972, that provision did not take into account the fact that the time-table had gone awry. This provision was passed into law without anybody noticing that the effect of that substitution would have been that the first councils would not have had a three-year term but that every successive council was going to have the term envisaged by the people who drafted the Act.

When the District Councils and the Village Councils were elected, an Order prescribing their date was made to coincide with the provisions of subsection (b) of section 323. Therefore, we have this position, that the six councils which were elected on 29th June, 1970 would now have barely completed two years in office, because they were elected in June and took office in August. But the majority of the councils, that is 52 councils, which had elections in December, 1970, took office in January, 1971 and at the present time they have not yet completed two years. It is in these circumstances I suggest, that ample justification is to be found to ensure that the spirit of the Municipal and District Councils Act is pursued rather than the letter of the law.

What was expected of these Councils? First of all, that they would lay a proper foundation for the local authorities under the new system.

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We were introducing a new set of provisions to govern local authorities, complex provisions, as events to which I shall refer in a moment have shown. Councils were expected to set up a proper system of administration, properly organized local government procedures, proper financial systems, and above all, what is the very fundament of proper local government administration, a proper system of rating; so that successive councils would inherit from them, authorities which were smooth working, where the procedures had been established and had been tested, and

where the local authority employees had been exposed to the operation of the new law and the new system, and were therefore in a position to carry on.

It is a bit incongruous to expect that the normal life of councils, under ordinary conditions when the system is working smoothly, should be three years, but the life of the councils which are charged with responsibility for setting up the new system and making it work should be less than two years. I have already explained how it came about that we have arrived at this position and, in the circumstances, Mr. Speaker, Government is satisfied that this legislation is both just and necessary and founded upon considerations which, as the hon. Member Mr. Cheeks has said, are full and sufficient.

Apart from what I may call the general time factor, there has been a particular reason why the authorities could not, with the best will in the world – and my contention is that even if we did not have this problem, they would not have been able to establish the kind of smooth-working system within the time allocated by the Act in the first instance. There has been a great dispute about the meaning of the provisions relating to rating. Various people and, in particular, the sugar estates – and they have been the prime movers in this – have approached the Court for interpretation claiming that the interpretation put on certain rating provisions by the local authorities was a wrong one and that their interpretation was right. They exercised their constitutional right to approach the Court.

My own view is that these are merely delaying tactics, but that is a personal view. The unalterable fact remains that we have had something like 140 cases in the courts spanning the whole breadth of the country where the local government system operates, in which many of the litigants have obtained interim and interlocutory injunctions against local authorities restraining them from proceeding with the collection of rates in accordance with what they consider to be the guiding principle. These cases are still pending, so that, until the local authorities are in a position to lay that base upon which they can operate, that is, the base of a proper system of rating, they are going to find the going very difficult.

There has been another problem, and that is, that in every case of the sixty new local authorities – because there is one which still operates under the old system – in every case except one, there have been enlarged boundaries bringing under the aegis of the local authority many areas which had never been subjected to local authority administration before and consequently had not been appraised and valued and rated. The business of appraising and rating those new areas, in accordance with a principle which is countrywide, has proved to be a very tedious and painstaking job. That is why I contend that no person who had contemplated the work which had to be done by the local authorities would have come to the conclusion that that work could be done within a period of less than three years.

We have had many points made by hon. Members of the Opposition who took this opportunity, not to look at the Bill and attack it on objective grounds, but to rehash the old story we have heard both inside and outside of this House, about fraud and rigging, and things like that. May I suggest that the members of the People's Progressive Party are adopting a well-known attitude of seeing in others what is in themselves, of seeing other people in their own image, because they are the past masters of fraud and electoral gimmicking.

May I refer to what was said by Mr. Balram Singh Rai, member of the P.P.P., member of the P.P.P. Cabinet. I refer to the *Guyana Graphic* of Tuesday, April 24, 1962, on the front page, "RAI ACCUSES PARTY OF FRAUD, CALLS FOR NEW ELECTIONS." Let me explain to hon. Members, who might not be aware of what happened on that occasion. At the elections within the party for the party hierarchy, there was such an extensive amount of fraud and coercion that Mr. Balram Singh Rai was forced to protest and to issue a public statement. I am going to read that statement because it shows that the P.P.P.'s performance is in character.

When they lose, they allege fraud. Shall I read, sir? It is said that the truth hurts. I agree with that.

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“Mr. Rai, in a statement said: ‘The P.P.P. elections just concluded were the foulest ever held in British Guiana. Fraud and coercion were its dominant features.

Dozens of genuine delegates from party groups were discredited while many others supporting the present clique were accredited while not entitled to delegate status. Several persons were given more than one ballot paper.”

[Interruption] The past masters of the art of rigging, fraud.

“...Dr. Jagan viciously attacked those delegates who were supporting me ...”

Mr. Rai added:

“At the same time Dr. Jagan took time off to insult, humiliate and slander the Hindus and Muslims of the colony and their ... Hindu Maha Sabha, the Latchmee Sabha, ... and the pundits Council and the Sadr Islamic Anjuman.”

Jacob, remember! *[Interruption]* I am just waiting for you to settle down.

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Delegates had –

“to mark their ballots in the presence of their secretary Mr. Annibourne as directed by him, while the 40-odd voters of the women’s section market their ballots under the open and shameless direction and assistance of Mrs. Benn. Truly, Dr. Jagan and the other ‘Leaders’ of the P.P.P. should hang their heads in shame. No longer should they speak of Democracy, no longer should they complain of unfair elections or gerrymandered constituencies.”

And these are the prophetic words:

“I challenge Dr. Jagan and Mr. Benn to hold fresh and fair elections.”

It seems to me that these words have a peculiar relevance to the People's Progressive Party and the way they operate.

It will be recalled, sir, that when Mr. Rai complained to the hon. Member, Dr. Fenton Ramsahoye, Dr. Fenton Ramsahoye replied in words which have become famous in the political life of this country: "Comrade, the party works in devious ways" just as the good Lord works in a mysterious way to perform his glories.

It is obvious that this Bill has ample justification. In August, 1972, G.A.L.A., having looked at the situation, took a decision by way of resolution at its Annual Delegates Conference to recommend to Government that the three-year period which was intended for councils should be implemented by amending the law. Government, having looked at the practicalities of the matter- because politics is still the art of the possible and the practicable – decided that this circumstances that this Bill has come before this honourable House.

I have no doubt that when we consider the whole matter objectively we will find that there is not a scintilla of truth in what has been peddled in this honourable House, in spite of the clear words of the Bill, that elections are being postponed indefinitely and that Government does not want local government elections or any other elections in the future.

Let us forget the other elections. We are dealing with local government elections. The Bill makes it abundantly clear that under no circumstances can these councils continue to exist beyond 31st October, 1974, and gives the Minister the power to call the elections before that date.

A point which I should like to stress finally, in showing the bona fides of the Government, in showing the way in which constitutional forms have been observed, is that this provision of the Bill will lapse automatically. One has not got to come to repeal or to amend the law. After 31st October, 1974, the provision of the amending Bill will lapse automatically restoring the former position.

I think that when we look at this matter objectively the only reasonable and common sense position one can take is that in all the circumstances there has been full and sufficient reason for bringing it before this honourable House. *[Applause]*

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

[At this stage the Members of the P.P.P. Opposition bowed to the Speaker and left the Chamber.]

Assembly in Committee.

Clause 1 to 5 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 6

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, it seems obvious that the Government is bent on passing this Bill. There are two Amendments in my name. The first Amendment is in sub-section (3), that a full stop be inserted after the word “thereto” and the words

“subject, however, to such modifications and adaptations thereof as many be specified by the Minister by order made under this section if he considers it necessary or expedient for the purpose.”

be deleted.

This part, if passed, would give the Minister the power, without reference to Parliament, to change any provision of three very important Acts. The Principal Acts are defined as the

“Local Authorities (Elections) Act 1969, the Municipal and District Councils Act 1969 and the Local Government Ordinance.”

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Mr. Chairman, the first two Acts came before this hon. House. They were exhaustively discussed over a long period of time and they were eventually passed by Parliament. We object to a mere stroke of the pen of the Minister by an order being able to change or to modify this Act however the Minister may feel, in the words here, it is necessary to do so. The provision itself may look innocent enough, but we know of the record of the P.N.C. Government. It is full of immoral conduct, of breaches of the law and the Constitution as I said when speaking on the Second reading of this Bill. I read provisions of the Constitution in respect of the Elections Commission which were breached, I read provisions from the Elections regulations which were breached. Undertakings given in this hon. House have been either conveniently forgotten or not observed at all. Even though it may look convincing enough, even though it may appear to the draughtsmen that it is necessary to correct a little here and a little there what I say is, the record of the P.N.C. Government does not entitle it to be given these wide powers. We object to a Minister merely by a pen to change such legislation as the Local Authorities Elections Act and the Municipal and District Councils Act. He could change anything in here without any reference to this House.

Let us look at the record of this Government. I have a copy of a speech made by the Prime Minister on 1st March, 1971. I was looking through it just now. Undertakings the Prime Minister made have not been fulfilled. The Prime Minister said:

“I give an undertaking that in future we will see to it that we meet more frequently on Wednesdays ...”

Has that happened? No. He went on further to say:

“Says the Leader of the Opposition, he has difficulty in getting into Amerindian areas. This matter has been under very close scrutiny by the Government recently and it has been decided that all Members of Parliament should automatically enjoy the right of going into these areas for which passes are normally necessary.”

and the House applauded. Has this been done? No. He made an undertaking also with respect to appointments on Boards and Commissions:

“... the Government is prepared, not merely to consult, but to guarantee that the Opposition can practically name representatives as long as it is understood the Government must have the majority.”

Has he done that? No. How can we give a Minister of this Government so much power when we have a record of the broken promises? Another one:

“... Government proposes very shortly to work out ways and means of discovering and ascertaining the absolute accuracy where the wishes of the majority of the workers in the sugar estates lie.”

Has this Government done this? No. There is another one:

“The Government is prepared to have the R.P.A. representatives on the Rice Marketing Board.”

Has this been done? No. Not even passes for the Amerindian areas.

This is a very significant one:

“We have heard about the need to extend the powers of the Elections Commission. I agree that the powers should be widened.”

Has this Government done anything about it? The Elections Commission is still the impotent fraud that it is. How can we give a Minister of the Government this kind of power? I say if there is anything to be changed let the Government bring it to Parliament. That is why if this

Amendment is vetoed I will move the other Amendment which is that it must be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament.

Amendment proposed.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, my hon. Friend has taken a lot of time to move this Amendment and I am sorry to have to tell him that Government does not accept his Amendment. Lest he takes a further period of time introducing his second Amendment and speaking for five minutes as he did on the first, I should like to inform him that like the Governor in the 1958 legislation the Minister can now exercise the same authority.

Amendment put, and negative.

The Chairman: Do you wish to proceed with the other Amendment?

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I move the other Amendment and I can see no reason why this should not be accepted. This hon. House as I said spent a long time dealing with these very substantial bits of legislation with respect to local government elections. All I am asking here is that you add to section 6 subsection 4 to the effect that any Order made under subsection 3 should be subject to affirmative resolution. Affirmative resolution is defined in the interpretation of the Act. That is, that the Order must come before Parliament for approval. We cannot give the Minister such wide powers in respect of such important bits of legislation which have been passed after such careful and detailed debate in Parliament. You are not dealing with a single matter you are dealing with the whole local authorities elections machinery and the Municipal and Districts Councils Act which deals with the whole local government administration. Again, I depreciate this attempt by the Government to give the Minister the kind

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of power that can change anything in these Acts. I sincerely hope that wiser council will prevail on the part of the Government.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, I have already replied in respect to the Amendment.

Amendment put, and negatived.

Clause 6, as printed, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed as printed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved,” That this House stands adjourned to Thursday, 7th December, 1972, at 2 p.m.
[Miss Field-Ridley]

Adjourned accordingly at 6.30 p.m.
