The letter columns of the daily newspapers carried a letter from Ms Abraham, living in Canada, who defended a charge against her father, a civil servant during the sixties. Her father and other members of the Abraham family died in a fire during the violence unleashed in the sixties by the PNC, behaviour well known in the nineties and even in this century whenever that Party loses elections. The false charge levied about her father was that he supported the opposition at that time when he was a top civil servant. His daughter described him as the type of civil servant at that time who served whichever government was in office, without taking sides overtly or secretly.

I knew her father, an intelligent, pleasant, upright civil servant who, in fact, did the job he was given to the best of his ability without prejudices one way or the other. That’s how it was then.

I remember when I served as Minister in two PPP governments (1957-61 and 1963-64). One had as permanent secretaries two men who carried out their functions without any political prejudices. In those days, as of now, there were plenty of people who hated the PPP. Nothing new about that! But in the majority part of the civil service, the officials did their work in an acceptable manner. Of course, there were a number who did not and tried to slow up or halt what we were doing.

I guess I was one of the luckier ones, because my two permanent secretaries gave me excellent support, particularly Mr Evan Drayton when I was Minister of Labour, Health and Housing. With his consistent help I was able to complete a number of projects that improved the welfare of the working people in the three areas of my ministry.

To some extent, the PPP was fortunate in the 1957-61 period, because the PNC was busy trying to build a party – which Mr Burnham had formed after the PPP won the 1957 elections. The PNC, at that time, was too busy trying to build a strong opposition and did not move to its terrorist designs until it faced defeat at the 1961 elections. So, it was during that period that the PPP’s achievements, even though still a colony, were easier to come by – no frequent interruptions as were later to be the norm, by violence in the streets and other means.

Of course, things have changed greatly since those years. There are those who in values, trust, responsibility and the blind eye to criminal consider wrong. I remember once addressing a youth conference. I began with a quotation from Plato in which he decried the way the next generation was behaving, so there is really nothing new in this complaint which goes back for centuries. However, the new factors of technology development change the pace of life and permit, even encourage, some of the factors considered detrimental to society and its welfare.