

Electoral College

Thursday, October 21, 2021

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Thursday, October 21, 2021

The College met at 12.15 p.m.

PRAYERS

[HON. BRIGID ANNISSETTE-GEORGE *in the Chair*]

National Anthem

PRAYERS

CONFIRMATION OF MEMBERS

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, in accordance with subsections 28(1) and (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, this meeting of the Electoral College has been convened by me as Speaker of the House. Before we commence, the Clerk must confirm the attendance of Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate by way of roll call. Clerk.

[Madam Clerk starts Roll Call]

PRESENT

Mrs. Robinson-Regis

Dr. Rowley

Ms. Cudjoe

Mrs. Webster-Roy

Ms. Beckles

Dr. Gadsby-Dolly

Mrs. Morris-Julian

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon

Ms. Allyson West

Ms. Cox

Mrs. Sagrarsingh-Sooklal

Mrs. Lezama-Lee Sing

Ms. Bethelmy

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Mr. Hinds

Mr. Deyalsingh

Mr. Al-Rawi

Mr. Imbert

Mr. Young

Mr. Gonzales

Mr. Mc Clashie

Mr. Cummings

Mr. de Nobriga

Mr. Leonce

Mr. Manning

Mr. K. Richards

Mr. Scotland

Mr. Munroe

Mr. Rambharat

Mr. Sinanan

Mr. K. Hosein

Dr. Browne

Mr. Mitchell

Mr. de Freitas

Mr. Bacchus

Dr. Ibrahim

Mr. N. Young

Mr. Lee

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Persad-Bissessar.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The Opposition party face these proceedings under protest. I am present, thank you.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Ameen.

Ms. Ameen: I am present.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Charles.

Mr. Charles: Under protest, but I am present.

Madam Clerk: Dr. Moonilal.

Dr. Moonilal: Present, under protest.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Indarsingh.

Mr. Indarsingh: Present, but under protest.

Madam Clerk: Dr. Bodoie.

Dr. Bodoie: Present.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Hosein.

Mr. S. Hosein: Present, but under protest.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Padarath.

Mr. Padarath: Present, but under protest.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Haynes.

Ms. Haynes: Present, under protest.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Tancoo.

Mr. Tancoo: Present, under protest.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Mohit.

Ms. Mohit: Present, under protest.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Benjamin.

Ms. Benjamin: Present.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Rambally.

Mr. Rambally: Present.

Madam Clerk: Dr. Ragbir.

Dr. Ragbir: Present, under protest.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Ram.

Mr. Ram: Present, under protest.

Madam Clerk: Dr. Seecheran.

Dr. Seecheran: Present, but under protest.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Ratiram.

Mr. Ratiram: Present, under protest.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Mark.

Mr. Mark: Present, but under protest.

Madam Clerk: Ms. John.

Ms. John: Present, under protest.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Lutchmedial.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Present, under protest.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Nakhid.

Mr. Nakhid: Present, under protest.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Lyder.

Mr. Nakhid: This is the most undemocratic proceedings we have ever seen in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Lyder.

Mr. Lyder: Present and under protest.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Roberts.

Mr. Roberts: Present and ready to debate, Madam.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

[*Roll Call continued*]

PRESENT

Mr. P. Richards

Mr. Vieira

Dr. Deyalsingh

Ms. Deonarine

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Ms. Seepersad

Hon. Member: First name? First name?

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting*]

Hon. Member: What is the first name? Which first name?

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting*]

Madam Chairman: Members.

Madam Chairman: Members—

Mr. Roberts: Madam please, respectfully—

Madam Chairman: Members, could we please proceed in this important matter.

Mr. Roberts: Madam, respectfully, I would like to know on this vote about independence, if Independent Sen. Seepersad, if this issue involves her sister, should she recuse herself from this vote?

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

[*Roll Call continued*]

PRESENT

Madam Clerk: Mr. Teemal

Mr. Teemal: Present.

Madam Clerk: Thank you.

Mrs. Thompson-Ahye

Dr. Dillon-Remy

Mr. Welch

Mrs. Kangaloo

Mrs. Annisette-George

ABSENT

Mr. Forde

Mr. Paray

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chair.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received request to be excused from this meeting of the Electoral College from the following Member: Mr. Esmond Forde, MP for Tunapuna.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chair, could I ask if the Leader of the Opposition will get an opportunity to propose and read her Motion?

Madam Chairman: Member for Oropouche East, I believe the guidelines have been circulated. They have been clear. You have been present in another place where announcement was provided. Now, we may disagree with the procedure, and that has been made very clear. But the procedure has been established by me as Speaker as provided by the Constitution, and the Electoral Regulations made under the Constitution. So, I think one thing we do agree on, that this is an important process, and may we proceed.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, before—

12.25 p.m.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chairman, may I seek some clarification, please, as we proceed before the vote. You have indicated to us that we are using section 28 of the Constitution and using Regulation 3 under the rules for Electoral College, Legal Notice 187 of 1976. Madam, that provides for a secret ballot. And therefore, I am asking if we are keeping in accordance with the law, whether we will be allowed to do this by secret ballot.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Secondly, therefore, Members can then exercise a conscience vote.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: That is why we have a secret ballot.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: Okay, so hon. Members, Member for Siparia, I think the guidelines are quite clear. We may also have a different interpretation with respect to Regulation 3 and its applicability. Please proceed, Clerk.

Mr. Ram: Madam Chairman, with the greatest of respect to yourself, in accordance with section 28(4):

“Subject to this Chapter, the Electoral College may regulate its own procedure...”—and not the procedure of the Speaker.

Please, can you clarify this for me, please? This is in accordance with section 28(4) of the Constitution.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: Hon. Member for Caroni Central, it appears that you have only read part of the Constitution. If you look, you would see that the Electoral College has already regulated itself by the Electoral Regulations made pursuant to the section 28(4) of the Constitution. In the announcement in the other place, the appropriate guidance to the two relevant regulations was given. Please proceed.

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Chairman, respectfully—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Madam Chairman, 187 of 1976, the rules that we are referring to speaks to a secret ballot and they relate with respect to Election of a Speaker. These proceedings are not for the Election of a President. So, something is wrong there, Madam, something is just not adding up. So I seek your clarification, again, with the greatest of respect.

Madam Chairman: Yes, so, hon. Member for Siparia, as you corrected yourself, the election rules speak not for the Election of a Speaker, but the Election of a President. My considered view is that the secret ballot—the provision it makes for a secret ballot refers to, as you correctly said, the Election of a President, but where there is a contested election. I am sure you would agree we are not engaged here in the Election of a President. Please proceed, Clerk.

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Chairman, respectfully—

Mr. Charles: Are you mindful of the fact, and I am speaking here on behalf of some of us present, that if we vote in a particular way, there may be consequences?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: Member for Naparima, I am sure mindful, I am mindful of many things. I expect you are also mindful too. I do not have to determine who votes how and what happens. That has been determined long time ago by the constitutional provisions. As I have said, you all have already announced that you are here under protest. In the other place, while it may not have been at all appropriate, all your interjections were tolerated for the purpose of giving you full

opportunity to protest in what I considered a very important exercise. The guidelines are there. They have been made clear and I repeat, we may disagree but the guidelines are what they are. Let us get on with this very important business that has been initiated by the Member for Siparia.

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Speaker, what is inappropriate is the fact that the Member for Siparia cannot present this Motion via debate [*Desk thumping*] in this Parliament.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Speaker—

Madam Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan, take your seat.

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Speaker, the election regulations—

Madam Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan—

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Speaker, may I? The election regulations which you—

Madam Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan—

Mr. S. Hosein: [*Inaudible*]—Caroni Central—[*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Member for Barataria/San Juan, take your seat!

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Speaker—

Madam Chairman: Take your seat.

Mr. S. Hosein: I am on my—

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Speaker, we have no voice.

Madam Clerk: Vote to adopt the Motion—

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Chairman, we have no voice in this Parliament. And I am asking that you justify your guidelines by the Constitution but there are indirect contraventions to the Electoral College Regulations.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein: [*Inaudible*]—to section 28 of the Constitution and they are indirect—[*Inaudible*]—of our Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein: And for us in this Parliament to proceed on this particular matter without debate. Madam Speaker, it is the most inappropriate thing that we can do because the President, the Prime Minister and the former Chairman of the PSC “is” hiding behind the robes of the Speaker of this House.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: Members of the Electoral College, on Monday, October 18, 2021, you received a letter from the Clerk of the House and Secretary to the Electoral College containing a Motion filed by the Leader of the Opposition and Member for Siparia to be proposed in the House of Representatives pursuant to subsection 36(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in respect of the procedure for the removal from Office of the President.

Earlier this morning, Thursday, October 21, 2021— [*Interruption*]

Mr. Nakhid: Madam Speaker—

Madam Chairman:—pursuant to subsection 36(1)(a) of the Constitution, the Motion was proposed— [*Interruption*]

Mr. Nakhid: [*Inaudible*] We have never heard the completed reading of that Motion from the Member for Siparia. We have never heard the completed reading of that Motion from the Member for Siparia.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. Nakhid: [*Inaudible shouting*]—fairness and justice for all in this country to hear the completed reading of that Motion.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: I would like all Members to comport themselves in a manner that is befitting the seriousness and the importance of the business that we are engaged in.

Mr. Nakhid: We would also like, for you, Madam Chair, to guide us in a way that is fair and not just for all, both sides. Both sides.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. Nakhid: [*Inaudible*] —and rule how you are ruling. We do not agree with your guidance.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: Earlier this morning, Thursday, October 21, 2021, pursuant to subsection 36(1)(a) of the Constitution, the Motion was proposed in the House of Representatives by the Leader of Opposition and the Member for Siparia. In accordance with subsection 36(1)(b), the Motion received the support of not less than one-third of the Members of the House of Representatives.

Now, therefore, as required under subsection 36(1)(c) of the Constitution, the Electoral College has been summoned to vote on the adoption of the Motion proposed by the Leader of Opposition and Member of Parliament for Siparia and circulated to all Members of this College on Monday, October 18, 2021.

Against that background, Members of the Electoral College, and pursuant to subsection 36(1)(c) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the question is that a tribunal be established to investigate the removal of Her Excellency Paula-Mae Weekes, ORTT, from the Office of the President. This question, Members, cannot be determined by a collection of voices. In accordance with section 36(1)(c) of the Constitution for the adoption, this Motion requires a vote of not less than two-thirds of the total membership of the House of Representatives and the Senate assembled together. The Clerk will count the votes by roll call. Clerk.

12.35 p.m.

Mr. Mark: Madam Chair.

Ms. Ameen: Madam President.

Mr. Mark: May I ask whether you can guide us as to whether these proceedings are being recorded by Hansard? Can you advise us?

Madam Chairman: Hon. Senator, I am sure you too are quite well familiar with how proceedings of the Electoral College work. And yes, these proceedings are being recorded by *Hansard*. Please proceed.

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker, with due respect—

Mr. Lyder: Madam Chairman.

Mr. Roberts: Madam Chairman, we were not as Senators here this morning—

[*Voting process begins*]

Madam Clerk: Mrs. C. Robinson-Regis.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: No.

Mr. Roberts:—so we do not know the question. We would like for the other Members of the Senate, all of the Senate, to hear the Motion. We do not know what we are about to vote on—

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. Roberts:—because we were not here.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker—

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker, please, I would like a response. Maybe I am talking too softly because I do not have a mike. I would like to know about what I am about to vote on. I was not privileged to be in other place. I have not heard the Motion. I would like the Motion read for the benefit of all hon. Senators present so that we can vote properly on what we are hearing.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: The count shall continue and I will ask—

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker.

Madam Chair:—all Members for the purpose of the count, if Members will remain in silence so that the count could be properly reflected.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, before the count is taken—

Madam Chairman: Member, the count has already begun.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker—

Madam Chairman: Take your seat please.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, there is—Madam Speaker—

Madam Chairman: Clerk, please proceed.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, my voice is loud enough. There is a particular issue in this House, Madam, that was raised in the House of Representatives and I would like the mike administrators to stop cutting off the mike and muting—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, the Member for Siparia in a letter that you responded to expansively—

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Madam Chairman: Member for St. Augustine.

Ms. Ameen:—in the House—

Madam Chairman: Member for St. Augustine.

Ms. Ameen:—made a very important—

Madam Chairman: Member for St. Augustine, you do not have the floor. Please sit.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, there is a critical issue that you have not replied in your expansive reply in the House of Representatives from the letter from the Member for Siparia concerning a conflict of interest where a Member of this gathering is—

Madam Chairman: Member, I am going to ask you again—

Ms. Ameen:—[*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman:—to take your seat.

Ms. Ameen:— is the sister of Ms. Bliss Seepersad.

Madam Chairman: Madam Clerk continue. Continue with the count.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, I am very respectfully requesting you to make a decision concerning this conflict of interest by a Member who ought to recuse herself based on a close relationship to Ms. Bliss Seepersad, being her sister. It is improper for the sister of a Member—

Hon. Member: The sister.

Ms. Ameen:—to be voting in this matter.

Hon. Member: Yes.

Ms. Ameen: And therefore, I—

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, I am asking you, first of all, to direct the Parliament to stop muting the voice of the Opposition today.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Ms. Ameen: And secondly, I am saying that no vote should be taken before a decision and your guidance is given on this matter of a very, very—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: The vote.

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Robinson-Regis.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, is it that you are ruling that in spite of this conflict of interest and this close relationship that the sister of Bliss Seepersad who respectfully is a Member and who is a very central figure in this matter will be allowed to vote? Is that your ruling?

Madam Chairman: It appears that we just do not want to get on with the business of the day. Madam Clerk, please continue with the vote.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, I am anxious to vote, but this matter must be dealt with

Dr. Moonilal: Give a ruling.

Ms. Ameen: Please give a ruling.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Give a ruling. We have to vote.

Dr. Moonilal: What do they want to hide?

Mr. Indarsingh: We want some level of decency in this gathering here.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: As the Chair of this gathering, are you going to allow Sen. Seepersad to participate in a vote?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Give a ruling.

Mr. Indarsingh: You must give a ruling on this particular matter. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Padarath: Madam Speaker—

Madam Chairman: I have not—please have your seat.

Mr. Padarath: [*Inaudible*]—stakeholders of this Government. She is a political appointee on a board of the State.

Mr. Indarsingh: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Lyder: Madam Chairman, these guidelines have been foisted upon us and the manner in which we are proceeding here today is unconstitutional. Madam Chair, it is a breach of our democracy. We as Senators—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Speaker, the Standing Orders are unclear. If a Member has a conflict in a matter before the Parliament, that Member must declare their interest before they take a vote on a particular matter.

Mr. S. Hosein: Are you going to ask Sen. Seepersad to declare her interest in this particular matter?

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, and particularly the Members present here who were in the other place, I gave a ruling based on the urgings of the hon. Member for Siparia concerning that matter. We shall proceed.

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker!

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Robinson-Regis.

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker—

Dr. Moonilal: This does not involve the Senators. She is not a Member of the House.

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Robinson-Regis.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: No.

Madam Clerk: Dr. Rowley?

Dr. Rowley: No.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Chairman, I am asking for you to make a ruling concerning this matter. Madam Speaker? Madam Speaker, I am asking for you to make a ruling concerning this very important matter, and this ruling must be taken before the vote is taken. There is a situation where we could have a conflict of interest based on a Member being the sister who is an essential player in this whole matter.

Madam Chairman: Unless Members hear what they want to hear they have not heard. I have already indicated, Member for St. Augustine, just prior to you standing, that I have already ruled that I am not accepting that invitation to exclude any Member of Parliament from any Chamber from the Electoral College. Please let us proceed.

Mr. Nakhid: Madam Chair, your ruling, your guidelines “has” indicated— [*Inaudible*—of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, that you need to show more

impartiality to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and to this honourable Parliament. But you are not doing that, Madam Chair, and we will not allow you as the Opposition of this country to so do.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

12.45 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Madam Clerk, continue. Continue with the vote.

Mr. Roberts: Madam Chair!

Madam Clerk: Dr. Rowley.

Dr. Rowley: No.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Cudjoe.

Ms. Cudjoe: No.

Mr. Roberts: Madam Chair, I still do not know what we are voting on.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Roberts: The Senators need to know what we are voting on.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. Roberts: We were not in the other place. We are only in this place. Can the Motion be read so that we can know what we are voting on?

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

[*Vote continued*]

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Webster-Roy.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: No.

Mr. Roberts: Madam Chair, are you hearing me? I am not hearing. [*Inaudible*]

Madam Clerk: Dr. Gadsby-Dolly.

Dr. Gadsby-Dolly: No.

Mr. Roberts: Madam Chair

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Roberts: I would like to know what to vote on please. Could you rule, please? This is a very serious issue. I cannot hear the Motion, I have not heard the Motion and you are not responding or ruling, Ma dam Chair.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: The Government [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Roberts: “Dey ain go—[*Inaudible*]—no vote on doubles.”

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Morris-Julian.

Mrs. Morris-Julian: No.

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Gopee-Scoon.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: No.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker—

Madam Clerk: Ms. West.

Ms. West: No.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, before this vote is taken, the Member involved should be given an opportunity to declare an interest. Madam Chairman, Madam Speaker, will you allow that to take place and at what point? You cannot take that after the vote is taken. It must be done before.

[*Vote continued*]

Madam Clerk: Ms. Cox.

Ms. Cox: No.

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Sagrarsingh-Sooklal.

Mrs. Sagrarsingh-Sooklal: No.

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Lezama-Lee Sing.

Mrs. Lezama-Lee Sing: No.

Hon. Member: “Whey allyuh voting for?”

Madam Clerk: Ms. Bethelmy.

Ms. Bethelmy: No.

Mr. S. Hosein: “Allyuh doh know wat allyuh voting for.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Hinds.

Mr. Hinds: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Deyalsingh.

Mr. Deyalsingh: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Al-Rawi.

Mr. Al-Rawi: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Imbert.

Mr. Imbert: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Young.

Mr. Young: No.

Hon. Members: Recuse, recuse.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Gonzales.

Mr. Gonzales: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Mc Clashie.

Mr. Mc Clashie: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Cummings.

Mr. Cummings: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. de Nobriga.

Mr. de Nobriga: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Leonce.

Mr. Leonce: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Manning.

Mr. Manning: No.

Dr. Moonilal: “Shame on yuh!”

Hon. Members: Shame! Shame!

Madam Chairman: Madam Clerk.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Richards.

Mr. Richards: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Scotland.

Mr. Scotland: No.

Mr. Roberts: “Ah man work obeah on yuh—” [*Inaudible*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Monroe.

Mr. Monroe: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: No.

Mr. S. Hosein: “Ramb whey yuh voting on?”

Madam Clerk: Mr. Sinanan.

Mr. Sinanan: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Hosein.

Hon. Member: “Rohan cyah read yuh know.”

Ms. Ameen: “Allyuh read de Motion fuh Rohan.”

Mr. K. Hosein: No.

Madam Clerk: Dr. Browne.

Dr. Browne: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Mitchell.

Mr. Mitchell: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. de Freitas.

Mr. de Freitas: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Bacchus.

Mr. Bacchus: No.

Madam Clerk: Dr. Ibrahim.

Dr. Ibrahim: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Young.

Mr. N. Young: No.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Lee.

Mr. Lee: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Persad-Bissessar.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Ameen.

Ms. Ameen: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Charles.

Mr. Charles: Yes, but I would have preferred it to be secret.

Madam Clerk: Dr. Moonilal.

Dr. Moonilal: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Paray. Mr. Indarsingh.

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Dr. Bodoë.

Dr. Bodoë: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Hosein.

Mr. S. Hosein: The mike is not working. The mike—

Madam Clerk: Mr. Hosein.

Mr. S. Hosein: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Padarath.

Mr. Padarath: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Haynes.

Ms. Haynes: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Tancoo.

Mr. Tancoo: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Mohit.

Ms. Mohit: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Benjamin.

Ms. Benjamin: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Rambally.

Mr. Ratiram: Madam Chair, why are the microphones being muted?

[Vote continued]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Rambally.

Mr. Rambally: Yes and I am still ready to debate.

Hon. Members: *[Sustained desk thumping]*

Mr. S. Hosein: The mike is being muted so nobody could hear what is taking place outside of this Chamber, “eh”.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Ram.

Mr. Ram: Yes!

Mr. S. Hosein: It is very unfortunate that the mike is being muted so nobody is not hearing what is taking place outside of this Parliament.

Ms. Ameen: No one can be heard in here.

[Vote continued]

Mr. S. Hosein: This Parliament does not have a focus on the public. *[Inaudible]*

Madam Clerk: Dr. Seecheran.

Dr. Seecheran: Yes.

[Continuous crosstalk]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Ratiram.

Mr. Ratiram: I support this—*[Member stands]* Can I get this microphone on?

Madam Clerk: Mr. Mark.

Madam Chairman: Go on, go on. “Maybe he not voting. Maybe he not voting. He not voting?”

[*Mr. Ratiram stands*]

Mr. Ratiram: Madam Chair.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Hon. Members: [*Loud banging of desks and shouting*]

Mr. Nakhid: “Put on de mike!!”

Mr. Roberts: Turn on “de” mike

Hon. Members: [*Chanting*]

Ms. Ameen: Put on “de” mike! Put on “de” mike!

Mr. Roberts: Why is the Speaker’s mike on?

Mr. Nakhid: Why are they being muted? We would like to know.

Madam Chairman: Have a seat, please. Have a seat.

[*Vote continued*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Mark.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous talking*]

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Chair, with great respect to the dignity of this Parliament, I ask if the microphones on this side of the House have been permanently shut off? **Hon. Members:** [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. Roberts: Why the Speaker’s mike is on?

Mr. Mark: All right.

Madam Chairman: My advice is that the banging on the desk sometimes affects the functioning of the mike.

Hon. Members: Awwwwwww.

Mr. Mark: Ohhh. Okay. Okay. Yeah.

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam I did—

Mr. Roberts: Turn off “de Speaker mike!”

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, could the technical people please take a look at this—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Members: [*Loud talking*]

Dr. Moonilal: We did not have a right to talk, we do not have a right to vote. What is happening here?

[*Vote continued*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Mark. Yes or no.

Hon. Members: [*Loud shouting*]

Madam Chairman: Mr. Mark, are you going to vote? Or do we put abstain? Please, determine.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Hon. Members: [*Desks banging and mikes blinking*]

Mr. Nakhid: [*Inaudible shouting*]

Mr. Mark: I would like to vote. But when I press the light the mike “blinking”.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: [*Inaudible*]—the technical people, but the votes are recorded for the broadcast and for the *Hansard*. This is very inappropriate. Is there some way for the technical people—just to bring back the dignity towards the proceedings.

Hon. Members: [*Loud desk banging*]

Madam Chairman: And I assure Members their votes are being recorded. I would ask if Members—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Mark: I am going to vote now, Madam Chair?

Hon. Members: Hold on.

Mr. Mark: This is a death to democracy. [*Inaudible*]

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. Hosein: “But de mike not even on.”

[*Vote continued*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Mark, yes or no, please?

Mr. Mark: Yes, a death to democracy!!

Madam Clerk: Ms. John.

Ms. John: Is the mike on?

Hon. Members: [*Loud shouting*]

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, clearly there is a technical problem here that we should rectify so we can vote in an ordinary dignified manner. And, Madam Chair, your mike is permanently on while nobody on this side seems to have their mike on.

[*Vote continues*]

Madam Clerk: Ms. John. Yes or no?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I am not hearing the Member.

Hon. Members: We cannot hear.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting*]

Ms. John: Maybe I can tell MP Saddam to tell you—[*Inaudible*]

Madam Clerk: Ms. John.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous talking*]

Mr. S. Hosein: Ms. John has indicated she cannot register her vote because her mike is not working. And, Madam Speaker, when the Government was voting, all of their mikes were working.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein: [*Inaudible*] Half of the Parliament [*Inaudible*] Every one of their mikes “was” on when the votes came to this side, our mikes are being muted. And, Madam Speaker, respectfully, I know you have some controls at your Chair, if you could adjust it so that our mikes can come on.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

12.55p.m.

Madam Chairman: Continue.

Mr. Indarsingh: We hope a high official did not go into the audio room.

Mr. Charles: A high official? Instructed.

Madam Clerk: Ms. Lutchmedial.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Speaker, if you remove your finger from the button, the Opposition mikes will come on.

Mr. Hosein: Yes. Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

[*Vote continued*]

Ms. John: Madam Chairman, was my vote denied?

Madam Clerk: Ms. John. Yes or no, please? Ms. John?

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting*]

Ms. Ameen: Why is the Government's voice on record as voting and the Opposition cannot get our voice on record?

Hon. Members: [*Loud shouts*]

Ms. Lutchmedial: Madam Chairman, I say that it is procedurally incorrect to ask me to vote on a Motion that I have not heard read but I support it.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Nakhid? Mr. Nakhid, yes or no, please?

Mr. Nakhid: Madam Chair—

Ms. Ameen: Can we get the mike to hear Mr. Nakhid's vote?

Mr. Nakhid: I am speaking. Madam Chair—[*Inaudible*]

Ms. Ameen: How come all of the Government Members' mikes were on and we cannot hear the Opposition's vote?

Mr. Nakhid: Madam Chair, you singularly “has” brought that Chair into a position of ridicule today.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. Nakhid: Every single—[*Inaudible*—]—has got that Chair in—[*Inaudible yelling and screaming*]

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, as someone with experience in this House, could I indicate that in years to come, when this historic day is played for purposes of research and political thought, they will not recall the voice of Members of the Opposition and that is an affront to our democracy.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

[*Vote continued*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Lyder.

Mr. Lyder: Madam Chair, we in the Opposition Senate have not had the luxury to have heard our Leader deliver the Motion. So you have reduced us to having to toe the line with those in the Lower House and we have not been able to hear them vote here today so we do not even know what we voting—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Lyder, yes or no, please?

Mr. Lyder: Can somebody—I could not hear, but somebody down here seem to say what the vote was because I have to toe the line. [*Inaudible*—to toe the line. We did not hear our leader speak today.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Lyder, yes or no, please?

Mr. Lyder: Okay. Yes.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Roberts.

Ms. Ameen: Put on your mike so he could hear you.

Mr. Roberts: I say yes, even though I have not heard the Motion, I have not debated, but I will say yes on this day that our democracy has been killed by the People’s National Movement and Keith Christopher Rowley, the Prime Minister.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: Clerk, proceed.

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Chairman: Clerk, proceed.

Ms. Ameen: “De mike start back working?”

Hon. Member: No.

Ms. Ameen: No?

- Madam Clerk:** Mr. Richards.
- Mr. Richards:** No.
- Hon. Members:** Shame! Shame! Shame!
- Madam Clerk:** Mr. Vieira.
- Mr. Vieira:** No.
- Hon. Members:** Shame! Shame!
- Hon. Members:** Shame! Shame! Shaaame! Aaaaaahh!
- Madam Chairman:** Dr. Deyalsingh.
- Dr. Deyalsingh:** No.
- Hon. Members:** Shame! Shame!
- Madam Clerk:** Ms. Deonarine.
- Ms. Deonarine:** No.
- Hon. Members:** Shame!
- Madam Clerk:** Ms. Seepersad.
- Ms. Seepersad:** No.
- Hon. Members:** “Ohh.”
- Hon. Members:** [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]
- Ms. Ameen:** Madam Chairman, if you kindly remove your finger from the button on your desk, we could get the Opposition mikes working.
- Mr. Roberts:** Great is democracy.
- Madam Chairman:** Please continue.
- Ms. Ameen:** I want to speak about a matter I raised before, concerning the allowance for Ms. Seepersad, who is a Senator, to vote in this procedure.
- Madam Chairman:** Member, you do not have—
- Hon. Members:** [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]
- Ms. Ameen:** [*Inaudible*]
- Madam Chairman:** Member, you do not have the floor. We are proceeding. Continue, Madam Clerk.

Ms. Ameen: Madam Chair, Madam Speaker, you have made a decision to allow Sen. Seepersad to vote without declaring her interest and it is only fair and good for transparency sake that if a Member has a conflict of interest, that they declare it—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein: Madam Chairman, your finger has the button—[*Inaudible*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Teemal.

Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Hosein:—the heart of democracy.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting and sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Clerk: Mr. Teemal.

Mr. Teemal: No.

Mr. Roberts: “Yuh jess like dem”—[*Inaudible*]*—PNM.*

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Thompson-Ahye.

Mrs. Thompson-Ahye: No.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting*]

Hon. Members: Shame! Shame!

Mr. Roberts: [*Laughter*] “She should go up fuh Port of Spain South.”

Madam Clerk: Dr. Dillon-Remy.

Dr. Dillon-Remy: No.

Ms. John: PNM.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Welch.

Mr. Welch: No.

Hon. Members: [*Continuous shouting*]

Mr. Roberts: “Singing fuh yuh supper. Dis country sweet too much [*Inaudible*]. Sing fuh yuh supper.”

Mr. Nakhid: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Kangaloo.

Mrs. Kangaloo: No.

Madam Clerk: Mrs. Annette-George.

Mrs. Annette-George: No.

Mr. Nakhid: Madam Chair, Madam Chair, can you please answer the Member for St. Augustine? She is an elected Member. Elected!

Hon. Members: [*Sustained desk thumping*]

Madam Clerk: Madam Chairman, 24 Members voted for, 47 Members against.

Ms. Ameen: Look, she take off—[*Inaudible*]

Madam Clerk: No Members declined to vote.

Ms. Ameen: “De mikes working now?” Are the mikes working now? [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Chairman: Hon. Members, the result of the vote is as follows: 24 Members voted for, 47 Members voted against, no Member declined to vote. The Motion is defeated.

Motion made and question proposed, that this Electoral College be now adjourned sine die.

Question put and agreed to.

Electoral College adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 1.04 p.m.