

*Leave of Absence**Friday, March 7, 1997***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, March 7, 1997*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I wish to advise that I have received communication from the Deputy Speaker (Dr. Fuad Khan) and from the Member for Port of Spain South (Mr. Eric Williams), who both asked to be excused from today's sitting. They are excused.

**CHEDDI JAGAN (DR.)/MICHAEL MANLEY (MR.)  
(CONDOLENCES)**

**Mr. Speaker:** I wish to advise this honourable House that our neighbours and friends in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and in Jamaica are now mourning the passing of two of the region's most distinguished sons, who laboured long and hard in the political vineyard. I ask the House to take note of the sad news of the death, yesterday, of President Cheddi Jagan, followed by that of former Prime Minister of Jamaica, Michael Manley. I invite a representative from both sides of the House who may care to say a few words for the record. I call on the Prime Minister.

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Basdeo Panday):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and on my own behalf, I wish to express heartfelt condolences on the passing of His Excellency, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, former President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Dr. Jagan was an ardent regionalist and one of the leading political figures in the region. He was an active trade unionist and a firm believer in the rights of workers. Throughout his life, he remained steadfast in his fight for the improvement in the condition of the disadvantaged members of society, both at home and within the region. His monumental role in the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War period was responsible not only for his rise in international stature, but also transformed the Caribbean into an important player in the international arena through the forging of links with the Non-Aligned Movement.

He was an ardent advocate of working class analysis and a Marxist in his early political life, and although this philosophy permeated some of his many writings, he

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demonstrated considerable flexibility with regard to his early political ideology on becoming President in 1992.

Among his many accomplishments were:

1947—1953 Elected Member of the Legislative Assembly.

1950 Founder of the People's Progressive Party.

1952—1953 President of the Guyana Rice Producers Association.

1961—1964 Head of the third elected PPP Government as Premier and Minister of Development and Planning.

1976—1992 Leader of the Political Opposition (People's Progressive Party).

Dr. Jagan was elected President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana in October, 1992. At the time of his death, he was also Honorary President of the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers' Union and General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party. He was also the President and Member of the Guyana Peace Council.

The region and, indeed, the international community, are now poorer with the passing of this illustrious Caribbean leader. The sterling contributions at regional fora, in particular at meetings of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean community, will leave a void difficult to fill. The former President of Guyana was also passionately dedicated to promoting the establishment of a New Global Human Order and a Regional Integration Fund, based on debt relief and with greater emphasis on human development and the reduction of the gap between the richest and the poorest countries.

Dr. Jagan will always be remembered as a man of enormous simplicity and humility, totally accessible to people from all walks of life. We shall miss him dearly.

**Mr. Patrick Manning** (*San Fernando East*): Mr. Speaker, it is a truism that we must honour people when they are alive and not wait to eulogize them after they have gone. I am honoured, though deeply saddened, to offer tribute to the late President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, His Excellency, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, and his comrade in arms, the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, Mr. Michael Manley. I am forced to ponder at this double loss and to wonder whether there are some hidden metaphors here for us as a Caribbean people.

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This afternoon, I rise to pay tribute to fallen Caribbean sons; not just a Guyanese President, and a Jamaican statesman, but a part of each of us who call ourselves Caribbean people. We are all made poorer by the passing of President Cheddi Jagan. For more than four decades, he cast a positive shadow over the development of what he referred to, in January, 1994, as a "true Caribbean Community".

Dr. Jagan's vision for Caribbean people was one in which he saw the richness of each of us: each country, each national group, each person, being harnessed through mutual sacrifice and mutual respect, resulting in people confident in individual and a common dignity; a people able to take their rightful place, with pride and independence, in the society of nations.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, that sentimental words are cheap and come all too easily for most of us. What distinguishes Cheddi Jagan most in my mind is that he was well-prepared, at great personal sacrifice, to bring his vision to pass, not only for his native Guyana, where, from his earliest involvement in politics and social development, he strove for the establishment of a non-racial society, but also for the rest of the Caribbean.

He can well be, and favourably compared to, that other stalwart for human dignity and true independence, President Nelson Mandela. Cheddi Jagan was detained and, in one sense, he suffered an even more insidious imprisonment when even though he was normally free, the nature of narrow politics confined him to a non-person status. Yet, in the face of this, he could maintain the gentle spirit which allowed his coming to office in 1992 to be a time of renewed hope.

One could never discern a sense of bitterness and regret in his words or his bearing. There was always evidence of a humble spirit, which understood the contradictions of our humanity, but felt nonetheless, that human society was worth the effort. Perhaps it was because he was convinced of the rectitude of his cause and the purity of his ultimate vision that he could bear the indignities that were perpetuated against him.

There are many lessons from the rich and rewarding life that was lived by Cheddi Jagan, for all of us Caribbean people, and most certainly for those of us who strive for public office. There are lessons that remind us of how important it is for us to "number our days aright", to "know our times, and to be instant in season and out of season". Dr. Jagan has served his people and the Caribbean well. He died with his boots on, a man "called to struggle".

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**1.40 p.m.**

In his last interview from his bed at the Walter Reed Army Hospital in the United States, while there was intense international speculation about his possible successor, Dr. Jagan demonstrated characteristic humility when he noted that people, including politicians, come and go and that he was prepared to go, having accomplished his task and aware of his contribution, life would go on after his passing.

It was the calm of a man who had not lost faith in the potential of succeeding generations to bring his vision to fruition. It is our responsibility to keep the legacy of Cheddi Jagan alive.

Michael Manley shared many of the ideals of Cheddi Jagan. He was the son of a giant of the nationalist struggle that marked the British West Indies in the middle of this century. This was the genesis of our independence movement. Michael Manley was schooled in that struggle and it came to mark his life and his approach to politics.

After a distinguished career as a trade unionist, when Michael Manley first came to office as Prime Minister of Jamaica, it was in the midst of turbulent times in world politics and international economic relations. True to his fighting spirit, Michael Manley decided that in the cause of justice, size was no impediment in battle. He took on any and everybody whom he felt stood in the way of Jamaica's progress to a more humane society.

The rest is history. Michael Manley was somewhat ahead of his time. His intellect was powerful enough to recognize that a rose by any other name is still a rose and sometimes packaging is more important than the substance. He was able to hold fast to the essentials of his message and mission for justice and fairness, while recasting the package to ensure that the people of Jamaica got a better deal in life.

Michael Manley, for all the press of his career as a politician and trade unionist, was an avid cricket fan. For him, the game of cricket was an important metaphor of Caribbean life, it embodied our creativity, our genius, our nationhood, our identity, and our ability to compete victoriously with the best in the world. In his several books on the subject of cricket, Manley wrote lyrically and with feeling. In one sense, he was able to touch the soul of the Caribbean people in their search for identity as displaced people establishing themselves.

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Mr. Speaker, we, the Caribbean nations, are poorer with the passing of the Dr. Jagan and Mr. Manley, but it is my expectation that their visions and their lives will serve to illumine us all.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the People's National Movement, on behalf of the Opposition, and on my own behalf, I extend condolences to the families of Dr. Jagan and Mr. Manley and to the people of Guyana and Jamaica.

Thank you.

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Basdeo Panday):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I express sincerest condolences on the passing of the Right Hon. Mr. Michael Norman Manley, former Prime Minister of Jamaica. Mr. Manley was a committed regionalist and a renowned international statesman. He was born on December 10, 1924, and was the son of Norman Washington Manley, one of Jamaica's national heroes and the architect of its political independence, and Edna Manley (nee Swithenbank), an internationally famous sculptress, patron of young artists, and one of the leaders of the nationalist movement.

He was also the cousin of Alexander Bustamante, one of the founders of the trade union movement; and Norman Manley's key political rival; as well as Sir Donald Sangster, a former Prime Minister; and Hugh Shearer, another former Prime Minister and Bustamante's successor.

Mr. Manley has left an indelible mark on Jamaica's politics having served as Leader of the Opposition (People's National Party) in the House of Representatives from 1969 to 1970 and then again in 1980; and Prime Minister from 1972 to 1980, and 1989 to 1992.

Mr. Manley was a leading figure in Socialist International and was elected as Vice-President in 1979. He was also an influential figure in the Non-Aligned Movement. During his first term in office, Mr. Manley pursued a wide range of social programmes, asserted his democratic socialist ideals and was also a champion of the poor. During the period 1989 to 1992, Manley became pragmatic and abandoned most of his socialist rhetoric, but still advocated increased social relief measures for the disadvantaged members of the society.

The former Jamaican Prime Minister was a champion of the regional integration movement. He was one of the signatories, the others being Errol M. Barrow, former Prime Minister of Barbados; the late L.F.S. Burnham of Guyana; and the late Dr. Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago, who signed the Treaty of

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Chaguaramas that established the Caribbean Community on July 4, 1973. Mr. Manley was one of the few persons to be invested with the Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC), its highest honour, in 1995 in recognition of his sterling contribution to Caribbean integration.

Mr. Speaker, the late Jamaican Prime Minister played a prominent role in the establishment of the Association of Caribbean States. He was also a lover of cricket and was the author of *A History of West Indies Cricket*. Mr. Manley also authored several other books including:

*The Politics of Change;*  
*A Voice at the Work Place;*  
*The Search for Solutions;*  
*Jamaica Struggle in the Periphery;*  
*Global Challenges from Crisis to Co-operation;*  
*Breaking from the North/South Stalemate; and*  
*Up the Down Escalator.*

Among the many awards conferred on Mr. Manley were:

Order of the Liberator (Venezuela)  
Order of the Mexican Eagle (Mexico)  
Order of Jose Marti (Cuba)  
United Nations Gold Medal for Work in Anti-Apartheid Struggle  
Juliet Curie Peace Prize

Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members of the House of Representatives, it is with a deep sense of grief that we mourn the loss of Mr. Manley so soon after Dr. Jagan. The Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago share with Mr. Manley's family and with the people of Jamaica profound sadness on the passing of this great Caribbean patriot who, throughout his life remained committed to the development of the Caribbean and the upliftment of its people. Indeed, his accomplishments will serve as an inspiration to those of us who are committed to the ideals of Caribbean integration.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to announce that I intend to extend an invitation to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to be part of my delegation when the Government attends the funeral of both President Jagan and the Hon. Michael Norman Manley.

*Joint Select Committees*  
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**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I wish to associate with the glowing tributes which have been paid to late President Jagan and former Prime Minister Manley by both sides of the House. There is hardly much that I could say to add to all that has been said. I personally will long remember the pleasant stimulating conversations, it was my privilege to have, with the late President of Guyana and, indeed, with the late Mr. Manley, both in and out of office, theirs and mine.

Two of the late President's books which he presented to me, *Forbidden Freedom* and *The West on Trial*, will forever be a testimony to the giant of a man who was made of stuff of which Mandelas are created. His inscription in one of the books to me which reads, "To Hector McClean, towards peace, freedom, democracy, and social progress, Cheddi Jagan, June 2, 1989", will long be treasured.

**1.50 p.m.**

Mr. Michael Manley came from extremely good stock, his father before him having been a Jamaican Prime Minister of tremendous distinction. I am sure that the entire Caribbean community is saddened and all the poorer, with the loss of these two tremendous men who have certainly made their contribution and their mark in this region. I shall certainly ask the Clerk of the House to forward, on behalf of this entire House, our condolences to the grieving families of the late President and former Prime Minister.

It is of note, that the family of the late President of Guyana, includes a brother who is a Speaker of the Guyana Parliament. I ask that we stand and observe one minute's silence to mark the passing of the late President Cheddi Jagan and former Prime Minister Michael Manley and the memory of these truly great men, whose privilege it was to contribute meaningfully to the world.

*The House stood.*

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES**  
**Green Paper—Integrity Legislation**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I wish to advise that I have received pieces of written communication which I want to read to the House. They are from the President of the Senate and they are dated February 25, 1997. The first is addressed to the hon. Hector McClean, Speaker of the House. It reads:

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"Hon. Speaker,

Resolution—Joint Select Committee.

I wish to refer to your letter dated February 13, 1997, and advise that at the sitting of the Senate held on Tuesday, 18 February, 1997, the Senate agreed to the following resolution which was moved by the Leader of Government Business:

'Whereas the Green Paper on Integrity Legislation was laid in the House of Representatives on February 2, 1996, and in the Senate on February 6, 1996;

And whereas both Houses of Parliament agreed that a joint select committee be established to consider the said Green Paper and submit recommendations to Parliament thereon and appointed such a committee by resolution passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on Tuesday, June 4, 1996 and Tuesday, June 11, 1996 respectively;

And whereas the Committee reported to this House on Monday November 18, 1996 that it was unable to complete its deliberations and recommended that continued consideration on the matter be undertaken in the next session of Parliament;

Be it resolved that a Joint Select Committee be appointed to consider the Green Paper on Integrity Legislation and to submit recommendations to Parliament thereon. That this Committee be authorized to adopt as part of its records, all the work done by the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider the said matter in the last session.'

The resolution is accordingly forwarded to the House of Representatives.

Yours faithfully,

Ganesh Ramdial,  
President of the Senate."

**Equal Opportunity Legislation**

**Mr. Speaker:** The second piece of correspondence from the hon. President of the Senate, is addressed and dated similarly, and it reads:

"Hon. Speaker,

Resolution—Joint Select Committee.

I wish to refer to your letter dated February 13, 1997 and advise that at the sitting of the Senate held on Tuesday, February 18, 1997, the Senate agreed to



the following resolution which was moved by the Leader of Government Business:

‘Whereas the Working Paper on Equal Opportunity Legislation was laid in the Senate on February 13, 1996 and in the House of Representatives on February 16, 1996;

And whereas both Houses of Parliament agreed that a joint select committee be established to consider the said Working Paper and to submit recommendations to Parliament thereon, and to appoint such a committee by resolution passed by the House of Representatives on Tuesday, October 1, 1996 and Friday, October 4, 1996, respectively;

And whereas that Joint Select Committee reported to this House on Monday, November 18, 1996, that it was unable to complete its deliberations and recommended that continued consideration of the matter be undertaken in the next session of Parliament.

Be it resolved that a joint select committee be established to consider the Working Paper on Equal Opportunity Legislation and to submit recommendations to Parliament thereon.’

The resolution is accordingly forwarded for the attention of the House of Representatives.

Ganesh Ramdial,  
President of the Senate."

### **Ombudsman's Report (Seventeenth)**

**Mr. Speaker:** The third and final piece of communication from the hon. President is similarly dated and addressed, and it reads:

"Hon. Speaker,

Resolution—Joint Select Committee.

I wish to refer to your letter dated February 13, 1997, and advise that at the sitting of the Senate on Tuesday 18 February, 1997, the Senate agreed to the following resolution which was moved by the Leader of Government business.

Whereas the 17th Annual Report of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was laid in the House of Representatives on December 1, 1995, and in the Senate on December 5, 1995;

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Whereas both Houses of Parliament agreed that a joint select committee be appointed to consider the 17th Annual Report of the Ombudsman and to make recommendations as to the most effective machinery for the office of the Ombudsman and appointed such a joint select committee by resolutions passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on Friday, March 8, 1996 and Tuesday, March 26, 1996, respectively.

And whereas the joint select committee reported to this House on Monday, November 18, 1996, that it was unable to complete its deliberations and recommended that continued consideration of the matter be undertaken at the next session of Parliament.

Be it resolved that a joint select committee be established to consider the 17th Annual Report of the Ombudsman, and to make recommendations for the most effective machinery for the office of the Ombudsman. And that this committee be authorized to adopt as part of its records, all the work done by the joint select committee appointed to consider the said matter from the last session.'

The resolution is accordingly forwarded for the attention of the House of Representatives.

Yours faithfully,

Ganace Ramdial,  
President of the Senate."

**2.00 p.m.**

**Hon. R. L. Maharaj:** Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate stage of the proceedings, I shall seek the leave of the House to move the motions, naming the Members from the House to serve on these three committees.

**VINCENT LASSE (DR.)  
(EXPULSION)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, on Friday, February 24, 1997, I received a letter from the Leader of the Opposition, signed by him as such, advising me of the expulsion of the Member for Point Fortin from his political party, effective the 12th day of February, 1997, and requesting me, under section 49A of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to declare to the House at this sitting that the said Member for Point Fortin has been expelled from the party

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of which he was a member when he won the Point Fortin seat in the 1995 general elections.

I now read the letter:

"Office of the Leader of the Opposition

24th February, 1997.

The Hon. Hector McClean,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
Parliament, Red House,  
St. Vincent Street,  
Port of Spain.

Dear Sir,

This is to inform you pursuant to, and in accordance with the provisions of section 49A of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, that Dr. Vincent Lasse, having been elected the representative for Point Fortin as a candidate of the People's National Movement, ceased to be a member of the PNM with effect from the 12th day of February, 1997 on which day he was duly expelled from the PNM. I enclose a copy of the letter dated February 1997 so informing Dr. Lasse.

I respectfully remind you of the provisions of the said section 49A which provide that I, having performed my responsibilities under the said section to inform you as above 'the Speaker shall, at the next sitting of the House of Representatives after he is so informed, make a declaration that the member has been expelled by the party.'

Yours faithfully,

Patrick Manning  
Leader of the Opposition."

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Hon. Members, it is provided by section 49(2)(e) of our Constitution as follows:

“A Member of the House of Representatives shall vacate his seat in the House, where—

(e) having been a candidate of a party and elected to the House, he resigns from or is expelled by that party.”

Section 49A(1) of our Constitution stipulates that:

“Where circumstances such as are referred to in section 49(2)(e) arise, the leader in the House of Representatives of the party as a candidate of which the member was elected, shall so inform the Speaker in writing of those circumstances and the Speaker shall, at the sitting of the House of Representatives next after he is so informed, make a declaration that the member has resigned from or has been expelled by the party, as the case may be.”

Hon. Members, section 49A(5) of our Constitution provides that:

“Standing Orders shall make provision for the identification and recognition of the leader in the House of Representatives of every party and for otherwise giving effect to this section.”

It is a matter of record, hon. Members, that the House of Representatives has not to date, complied with section 49A(5) of the Constitution. The House has not done what the Constitution demands of it, that is:

“make provision for the identification and recognition of the leader in the House of Representatives of every party.”

The question therefore, is, hon. Members, whether in the absence of the House of Representatives complying with the said section 49A(5) of our Constitution, the Speaker—any Speaker—can properly act upon information received from a source other than, and I quote, “the leader in the House of Representatives of a party” within the meaning of section 49A(5), and declare a Member of the House expelled from his party.

For whatever it is worth, hon. Members, a matter quite similar to the instant case concerning the competence of the Speaker to declare a Member of the House expelled from his political party under the very section 49A(5), despite the House's non-compliance with the provisions of section 49A(5), has already been dealt with by this honourable House.

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I refer hon. Members, to the proceedings of this House on Wednesday, September 13, 1995. On that day, Mr. Deputy Speaker Griffith, who was in the Chair, referred to a letter received by him dated September 11, 1995 from the leader of the political party who styled himself "Leader in the House of his party", in which the leader requested that the Member for Chaguanas be declared by the Speaker, to have been expelled from the party to which she belonged when she won the said seat at the 1991 general elections.

The record will show that on Wednesday, September 13, 1995, Mr. Deputy Speaker Griffith, denied that request:

"until such time as provisions by way of Standing Orders are made for the identification and recognition of the leader in the House of Representatives of every party."

To my mind, hon. Members, there is really no difference in substance between the request for the declaration of expulsion made to the Deputy Speaker in the House in September of 1995, and the present request made by the Leader of the Opposition to me on February 24, 1997. Accordingly, if I am to act consistently with the ruling of the Chair in September 1995, I should deny the request of the Leader of the Opposition, who incidentally, did not even purport to write to me as "leader in the House of Representatives of a party", but as Leader of the Opposition.

**2.10 p.m.**

Hon. Members, quite apart from my having sufficient reason to come to a decision based on recent precedent in our House which went unchallenged and seemed to have been accepted by all sides in September 1995, I have myself examined the issues. Nobody could therefore say that I followed slavishly what was done in 1995.

To make a declaration against the Member of this House under section 49A of the Constitution, could have very serious consequences for a Member, ultimately resulting, perhaps, in the Member's seat being declared vacant. That is serious business. It is noteworthy to think that our Constitution does not allow the Speaker to question whether the expulsion by a Member's political party is correct or proper or lawful—he cannot question that, he must just accept it.

Indeed, our Constitution seems to call for strict compliance with its provisions. Accordingly, strict compliance ought also to be demanded when considering whether the requirements of section 49A(1) have been met. All of these requirements are

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clearly not met when the person who supplied me with the written information required by section 49A(1) is the Leader of the Opposition and not the holder of the position which the Constitution decrees must give to the Speaker that written information about expulsion.

The Leader of the Opposition's letter to me said:

"I, having performed my responsibilities under the said section to inform you as above..."

Nowhere in section 49A of the Constitution to which the Leader of the Opposition referred would, or could be found the assignment of any responsibilities to the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition in purporting to have responsibilities under section 49A of the Constitution really has no such responsibilities and was therefore, in my view, not competent as Leader of the Opposition, to make a request of the Speaker under section 49A.

I, therefore, hon. Members, take the view that I have not been communicated with as provided for in section 49A of our Constitution and I am, therefore, not properly called upon to make a declaration of expulsion. It is my view that this honourable House must do what the Constitution enjoins it to do by section 49A(5) before any Member of a party could claim to be the correct or competent person to communicate with me, as Speaker, in writing under section 49A(1).

It is important that hon. Members appreciate that the following terms, all of which include the word "leader" do not necessarily have the same meaning: "Leader in the House of a party", "Leader of a party who happens to be a member of a House", "Leader of a party", "Leader of the House", "Leader of the Opposition", "Leader of the Opposition in the House" and "Leader of Government Business in the House".

Section 49A(5) of the Constitution does not permit a Member of this House to appoint himself "Leader in the House of his party" nor, indeed, can his political party appoint and style him as such for purposes of conforming with this section. The mechanism for identification and recognition must be settled by the House and the House alone. The House is yet to act in this regard.

There is further difficulty in my acting in the way requested by the Leader of the Opposition. It is this. I do have correspondence from a Member of the House who belongs to the very party of the Leader of the Opposition in which he has described himself "as Leader of the Opposition in the House".

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Even if my other reasons for not making a declaration were without merit, questions would obviously arise, whether it is the Leader of the Opposition, or the other member of his party who styled himself "Leader of the Opposition in the House" who should be the correct and competent person to write to me pursuant to and in accordance with section 49 of the Constitution.

In the circumstances, hon. Members, I find myself unable to accede to the request of the Leader of the Opposition to declare that the Member for Point Fortin has been expelled from the party to which he belonged when he contested the election for 1995.

Hon. Members, I have noticed the promise, and/or threat, of the Leader of the Opposition, as reported in the press, that should the Speaker not declare the seat for the Member for Point Fortin vacant, the Speaker would be taken to court. I feel sure that the Leader of the Opposition did not thereby intend to intimidate the Speaker into ruling in his favour without due regard to the Constitution and the precedent.

**RUPERT GRIFFITH (DR.)  
(EXPULSION)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, by letter dated March 6, 1997, the Leader of the Opposition wrote to me advising of the expulsion of the Member for Arima from his political party effective the 6th day of March, 1997. I received this letter at 4.20 p.m. yesterday. He requested me, under section 49A of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to declare at this sitting that the Member for Arima has been expelled from the party of which he was a member when he won the Arima seat in the 1995 general elections. I will read that letter:

"Office of the Leader of the Opposition

6 March, 1997

Honourable Hector McClean,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
Parliament,  
Red House,  
Port of Spain.

Dear Sir,

This is to inform you pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of section 49 of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago that Dr. Rupert Griffith

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having been elected a representative for Arima on the People's National Movement ceased to be a member of the PNM with effect from the 5th day of March, 1997 on which day he was duly expelled from the PNM. I enclose a copy of a letter to Dr. Griffith dated March 5, 1997 so informing Dr. Griffith.

I respectfully remind you of the provisions of the said section 49 which provides that "I, having performed my responsibilities under the said section to inform you as above "the Speaker shall, at the next sitting of the House of Representatives next after he is so informed, make a declaration that the member... has been expelled by the party..."

Yours faithfully

Patrick Manning  
Leader of the Opposition."

I may say that accompanying that letter was a copy of another headed:

"People's National Movement

March 5, 1997

Dr. Rupert Griffith  
Hollis Avenue,  
Arima.

Dear Dr. Griffith,

I wish to acknowledge your letter of February 27, 1997 to the Political Leader in which you indicated that you intended, with immediate effect, to become an independent Member of Parliament.

Further to this, the General Council of the People's National Movement has noted that you have accepted an appointment as a member of the UNC/NAR Coalition Government. This conduct on your part has resulted in you ceasing



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to be a member of the Movement. Accordingly, in keeping with the provision of the Party's Constitution, I wish to advise you that you are expelled from the People's National Movement.

I wish you well and thank you for your contribution to the People's National Movement.

Martin R. Joseph, M.P.  
General Secretary."

**2.20 p.m.**

I may say that there was also an accompanying letter to the letter from the Leader of the Opposition with respect to Dr. Lasse which I neglected to read but which I will now read for the completeness of the record:

"February 19, 1997

Dr. Vincent Lasse  
Bldg. 56,  
Cotton Hill,  
Point Fortin.

Dear Dr. Lasse,

I wish to acknowledge your letter of February 11, 1997 to the Political Leader, in which you indicated that you intended, with immediate effect, to become an Independent Member of Parliament.

Further to this, the General Council of the People's National Movement has noted that you have accepted an appointment as a member of the UNC/NAR Coalition Government. This conduct on your part has resulted in your ceasing to be a member of the Movement. Accordingly, in keeping with the provision of the Party's Constitution, I wish to advise you that you are expelled from the People's National Movement.

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I wish you well and thank you for your contribution as a member of the People's National Movement.

Martin R. Joseph, M. P.  
General Secretary.”

So, hon. Members the questions which, as Speaker, I should address on this matter are, indeed, no different from those which needed to be addressed in considering the position of the Member for Point Fortin, following a request from the Leader of the Opposition that I act under section 49A. The very same reasons which I earlier today advanced to this honourable House for refusing to accede to the request of the Leader of the Opposition to make a declaration under section 49A of the Constitution in respect of the Member for Point Fortin, I now also advance, in refusing to accede to the request of the Leader of the Opposition, to make a declaration under the said section 49A of the Constitution in respect of the Member for Arima.

I accordingly decline to make a declaration that the Member for Arima has been expelled by his party to which he belonged when he won the Arima seat in the 1995 general elections.

I will indeed read that again for the Member who did not quite hear. I accordingly decline to make a declaration that the Member for Arima has been expelled by his party to which he belonged when he won the Arima seat in the 1995 general elections.

#### **POLICE SERVICE (AMDT.) BILL**

Bill to amend the Police Service Act, Chap. 15:01, brought from the Senate [*The Minister of National Security*]; read the first time.

#### **COPYRIGHT BILL**

Bill to make provision in respect of copyright and neighbouring rights, in substitution for the Copyright Act, 1985, and for related purposes, brought from the Senate [*The Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

#### **PROTECTION OF NEW PLANT VARIETIES BILL**

Bill to provide for the protection of new varieties of plants and for matters incidental thereto, brought from the Senate [*The Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

*Petition*

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**PETITION**

**Sukyo Mahikari Association**

**Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds** (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Mr. Speaker, with your kind leave, I wish to present a petition on behalf of the Sukyo Mahikari Association of Trinidad and Tobago of No. 56 Erthig Road, Belmont.

It is quite refreshing, given all of the circumstances that exist in Trinidad and Tobago today, to have this humble petition presented.

I now ask that the Clerk be permitted to read the petition and that the promoters be allowed to proceed.

*Petition read.*

*Question put and agreed to.* That the promoters be allowed to proceed.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. The Immigration (Amdt.) Regulations, 1997. [*The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj)*]
2. A National Population Policy for Trinidad and Tobago—June, 1996. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]
3. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) Limited for the year ended November 01, 1990 to December 31, 1991. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]
4. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) Limited for the year ended December 31, 1992. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]

*Papers 3 and 4 to be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.*

5. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of the Management Development Centre for the year ended December 31, 1994. [*Hon. R. L. Maharaj*]

*To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.*

**CRIMINAL LAW (AMDT.) BILL**

Bill to amend the Criminal Law Act, Chap. 10:04 [*The Attorney General*]; read the first time.

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Bill for the purpose of establishing the National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago and for matters incidental thereto [*The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs*]; read the first time.

**2.30 p.m.**

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES  
(APPOINTMENTS)**

**The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj):** Mr. Speaker, I now beg to move that the following Members of this honourable House be nominated to serve on the following Joint Select Committees:

**Green Paper—Integrity Legislation**

Mr. Mervyn Assam  
Miss Pamela Nicholson  
Mr. Harry Partap  
Mr. Manohar Ramsaran  
Mr. Kenneth Valley  
Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis

**Ombudsman's Report (Seventeenth)**

Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar  
Mr. Harry Partap  
Mr. Chandresh Sharma  
Mr. Razack Ali  
Mr. Barendra Sinanan  
Mr. Martin Joseph

**Equal Opportunity Legislation**

Mr. John Humphrey  
Mr. Trevor Sudama  
Mr. Chandresh Sharma  
Dr. Fuad Khan  
Mr. Jarrette Narine  
Mr. Roger Boynes

*Question put and agreed to.*

**NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
(PRIVILEGED INFORMATION)**

**Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege and responsibility to raise in this House the Motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

*Whereas* it has been reported that the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago at a public political meeting referred to privileged information obtained in his capacity as Chairman of the National Security Council regarding alleged internal problems in the People's National Movement detected by the Security Services:

*Be it resolved* that this honourable House condemn the political use to which the Security Services are reportedly being put and the public use by the Prime Minister in a political capacity of privileged information so obtained.

Mr. Speaker, the People's National Movement is a political party which was founded in 1956. Having recently celebrated 41 years of service to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, we are particularly concerned about the initial reports as carried in the news media in Trinidad and Tobago. Subsequent to filing this Motion we were even more concerned about the reaction of the Prime Minister to the fact that anyone could question his conduct in this matter.

Our party, the People's National Movement, has a record in this country which is revered across the Caribbean and, in fact, throughout the developing world and respected by the developed world. The PNM is the party which took this country to independence, brought it to republican status and nurtured its democratic traditions. We have the distinguished record, as a political entity, of having contested every election and every seat in Trinidad and Tobago from 1956 to 1997. [*Desk thumping*]

During that 34-year period, Mr. Speaker, we have provided this country with management, guidance and governance, and for the rest of our 41 years as an Opposition, we contributed to the well-being and development of this country, and the democratic process under our version of the Westminster model.

Mr. Speaker, what is it that concerns us? I draw your attention to what was reported to the national community. I am quoting from an article headlined "Govt was spying on the PNM. Panday: Security services informed me of 'serious convulsions'" which was carried in the *Independent* dated February 19, 1997, written by Richard Lord. It states:

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“The Country’s national security services had infiltrated the People’s National Movement and alerted Prime Minister Basdeo Panday about the troubles within the opposition party.

And the information passed to him by that division of government enabled Panday to put things in place and even make offers to PNM members of parliament to join his government...

Panday made these disclosures himself at a public meeting in La Romain...”

The reporter went on to quote Mr. Panday, who is the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

“‘Because I am Chairman of the National Security Council, the Prime Minister is privy to information which very few people have,’ Panday told his audience.

He added that their security intelligence had been reporting to him that there were serious problems, all sorts of disputes and convulsions going on in the PNM, and that for several months he knew what was going to happen in that party, although he did not know when.”

He goes on to say:

“‘I was waiting...waiting like a cobra, ready to sting,’...‘I was ready and I put everything in place. But I was expecting somebody else to come.’”

Mr. Speaker, that is the story carried in the *Independent* and similar stories were carried in the *Trinidad Guardian* and the *Newsday*. These stories have not been refuted. In fact, the position as outlined here by the Prime Minister at that meeting in La Romain has been further cemented by his bombastic response. So now it is not a question of the Motion confining itself to the issue of what has been reported with any element of repudiation being possible at this stage. It is that this position, as reported in the *Independent*, the *Trinidad Guardian* the *Newsday* and elsewhere in our national media is the position that is concerning us.

**2.40 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, immediately upon reading the story and on hearing the repudiation of the Prime Minister’s confirmation and, if I might dare say, on hearing the comments from the other side at this moment, only one thing comes, immediately, to mind; that is, what is the role of the security services in Trinidad and Tobago? There have been most of these agencies for quite some time. There

have been old ones and there are new ones, but they all come under the umbrella of the National Security Council. The Prime Minister was speaking in La Romain as the Chairman of that National Security Council, implicating all the intelligence agencies in this country which report to that umbrella agency.

Mr. Speaker, I raise it again. In the context of this report that the security services had infiltrated the PNM, and triggering the concern as to what really is the rightful role of the security services, questions arise. As Members of Parliament, many of us having served in the Cabinet, we know that the security services have a function to play and that function is two-fold: to gather information and to make use of the information.

What information should be gathered? The role of the security services, as documented in our documents and documents elsewhere, is to ensure that the security of the state is preserved in the face of local threats of subversion and preservation of law and order on the local scene, and to protect the state from potential threats from outside.

In any properly functioning democratic society, that is the perimeter of the role of the security services. It is in that context only that I raise this Motion in this House, to alert the national community of the implications of the statements made by the Prime Minister, that, as Chairman of the National Security Council, he, as leader of a political party, had been able to take political advantage of information provided by the security services as they reported on activities taking place in the PNM.

I do not pretend to want to tell the Prime Minister what information to receive or even what to do with it, or how much money to spend on it. I ask: How did this information, under what rubric, under what item of the agenda of the conduct of the business of the National Security Council did the internal affairs of the PNM become a matter of concern for the Prime Minister?

Even before we get there; how was the information obtained? As one would expect, as our security forces go about doing their work, they can obtain information in an active or passive way. By passive, I mean they might be looking through a window expecting to see a blue car and while they are looking there, a white car passes. They cannot help that. That is information. If, in the conduct of their affairs, the security services become aware of normal legitimate business of the People's National Movement—a political party which has served this country democratically without question above board for 41 years—is that the focus of the security forces whose function it is to look after the state's interest with respect to protecting the state from breaches in national security?

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The question is: Is it that in the eyes of the security forces, the organization called the People's National Movement is an entity that needs to be looked at because it poses some kind of threat and some kind of problem for national security in Trinidad and Tobago? If the answer is yes, then someone on the Government side must get up and confirm that, and that will justify the security services obtaining information in a passive way and needing to pass that information on to the National Security Council. If the answer is yes, then somebody has to tell this country who makes that determination; who determines that the PNM is an organization that warrants close scrutiny by the security services?

On the other hand, if the information obtained by the security services was not obtained in a passive way but was obtained by way of identification and targeting of the organization to specifically obtain that information, then, we are in more trouble than we think. The question arises again even more forcefully: Who determines that the PNM should be targeted to find out what is going on in the party because somehow, somewhere, it is viewed at the level of the state that the PNM poses a threat to national security?

Mr. Speaker, it is in that context that the Prime Minister's statement must be taken. Here it is, operatives are out there in the national community gathering a basket of raw information; information on the PNM, like others, arrives in their domain, are we to expect that information is now to be used in a certain kind of way? Or, are we to expect, in Trinidad and Tobago, that the internal affairs of the PNM's normal political activity are acceptable and should form part of the national, political and other ethos which would not give the impression that the security services are concerned about the PNM's legitimate internal affairs?

It is my contention that until such time as the PNM is viewed as a potential threat to national security in any form or fashion, internal differences in the PNM of whatever nature ought not to be treated in the manner in which the indications are, that they had been treated as for the exposé of the Prime Minister. I want to confine that, not only to the PNM but to any political entity that is legitimate or any organization: religious, cultural or otherwise, which is carrying out its *bona fide* business whether there are agreements or disagreements within them. It is treading on very thin ice when the security services begin to believe or be encouraged to believe that what goes on legitimately is, in fact, their domain and information to be gathered and to be handled in the way the Prime Minister has handled it.



We have had good reason in this country to review our information gathering post-1990. As a result of that, we have improved our security services but all along, a country trusting its Government in office, security officers operating and gathering important information. Up to the moment when I saw this article which outlined what the Prime Minister said in La Romain, I was quite comfortable, like most of the national community, that we had been following the standards set by our predecessors. We are building our democracy on a foundation exposed to us by the British which we commonly call the Westminster system. In form and in substance, our security services have been modelling their conduct on the basis of acceptable behaviour outlined under the Intelligence Services Act, 1994, of the United Kingdom.

Trinidad and Tobago has not as yet put on its statute books this particular kind of legislation. Given our political antecedents that where we have not enacted our own specific legislation to govern our own jurisdictions in any area, we look to the British system for guidance. The security Intelligence Agency which is that civilian body of recent vintage which has been put in place to gather the kind of information which I presume would have reached the National Security Council in some form or fashion, has some kind of guideline as to how it should conduct itself.

Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence in drawing to your attention how that is done in a proper civilized society against which we have been taking some kind of guidance. I am seeing that in recent times we have been charting new courses into uncharted waters.

**2.50 p.m.**

As I said, the Intelligence Services Act, 1994, Chap. 13 of the United Kingdom should guide our conduct in this country. This is what it says about the function of the intelligence service. Section 1(2) states:

“The functions of the Intelligence Service shall be exercisable only—

- (a) in the interests of national security, with particular reference to the defence and foreign policies...; or
- (b) in the interests of the economic well-being...; or
- (c) in support of the prevention or detection of serious crime.”

That is the perimeter of the function of the security agency.

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It was not left there. Knowing the temptation which could fall to persons who have access to information and security services and, seeing what the world had been like in the 1950s and 1960s, this Act went on. Section 2(2) states:

“The Chief of the Intelligence Service shall be responsible for the efficiency of that Service and it shall be his duty to ensure—

- (a) that there are arrangements for securing that no information is obtained by the Intelligence Service except so far as necessary for the proper discharge of its functions and that no information is disclosed by it except so far as necessary—
  - (i) for that purpose;
  - (ii) in the interests of national security;
  - (iii) for the purpose of the prevention or detection of serious crime; or
  - (iv) for the purpose of any criminal proceedings; and
- (b) that the Intelligence Service does not take any action to further the interests of any United Kingdom political party.”

These are the guidelines against which our security services ought to be operated. In the absence of our statute we follow the British system.

The Government does not have to accept this legislation. The Government has demonstrated on a daily basis that it would do anything, can do anything and it does not accept our norms in the country. The wider population of Trinidad and Tobago expects that this is the yardstick against which our security service would operate. I ask the Government, specifically the Prime Minister: Where does the People’s National Movement fall as an organization in this country, *vis-à-vis* the conditions as spelt out here? Do the Prime Minister and the Government see the PNM as operating against the economic well-being, defence and foreign policy interests of the country? Do they think that somehow the PNM is implicated, or has the potential to be involved in the perpetration of serious crimes?

If the answer to all that is no, then, this Government has a serious charge to answer. Why is information to which the Prime Minister alluded, being collected and used in that way? The Prime Minister went on to say that being in the position that he is, as Chairman of the National Security Council, he was receiving that information and, based on the flow of it, he was able to position himself to make political capital to receive those who want to come across, because he is building

something called a government of national unity. We have observed very carefully this kind of conduct on the part of the Prime Minister and the Government on a consistent basis, to do things which would have the net effect of disgracing this country. We are calling on those on the other side to take stock and stop this destructive trend.

Many countries, whether it is in Africa, Asia, the Soviet Union, Latin America or the Caribbean, have come to grief on this plank of abuse and misuse of security services. The worst kind of human rights abuse in the world has taken place in countries where the security services have not been confined to their proper function, as outlined in the Intelligence Services Act from which I quoted under the British system. Abuse of a country's security service has led to serious pain and heartache across the world. We are now in a position to examine our behaviour in this country and take stock before it is too late. We have seen enough in the last year to know that there are those in the Government who have no qualms about abusing the safeguards which are in place to protect citizens' rights. To ensure that we are not viewed as another Latin American banana republic, run by well-suited demagogues, we have to be careful.

I raise this Motion to alert this House and the national community that we are at that crossroad. Mr. Speaker, picture a meeting of the National Security Council, chaired by our Prime Minister who is physically in the same broad path with Napoleon and Mussolini. I was thinking about the famous dictators in the world. They have something in common. They are all little men. *[Laughter]* When one looks at the likes of Charles De Gaulle, Nelson Mandela and Robert Bradshaw, one sees towering democrats! Then, one looks at Napoleon and Mussolini! *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Tobago West is calling names. I am proud of our Napoleon. I am talking about Napoleon Bonaparte. *[Laughter]* Little men with limited brains. In answering my colleague from St. Joseph about Dr. Williams, what separated Dr. Williams from the rest, was that while he might have been a small man in stature, he had brain! He had set himself apart from those little dictators.

If we picture a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister who receives information, what kind of agenda would the National Security follow? Would there be an item on the agenda that says internal affairs of the PNM, or the state of play in other political parties or the Opposition? I do not ask these questions facetiously. I am asking you to figure out at what time in the proceedings of the National Security Council that is chaired by the Prime Minister and staffed by the Minister

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of National Security, the Attorney General and some other persons—How is the information recorded as outlined in La Romain, by the Prime Minister?

**3.00 p.m.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, we know that everyone is entitled to make his contribution without unnecessary disturbance. The hon. Member has asked for my protection, to which he is entitled. I ask Members to refrain from disturbing him.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that as you raise these very serious issues here today, my colleague from St. Joseph takes that position. I do not expect him to appreciate what you say. Even when he takes a vow for life, he is prepared to change it every Monday morning. *[Laughter]* I am talking about matters which threaten the quality of life of every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, so I am not surprised that the Member is prepared to interrupt me in this manner. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** What has just transpired may be amusing to some of the Members and some of the strangers, but we have a responsibility to keep up the level. I am afraid that we are falling short of that. I indicated to Members very generally that we need to observe certain norms and that the Member for Diego Martin West needed protection, to which he is entitled. However, the Member for Diego Martin West resumed his contribution and said something which could, in normal language, be considered provocative. That has led to a situation which has brought about laughter and has also had the effect of lowering the Parliament even further in the eyes, certainly of the school children who are among us.

Please, let us keep up the standard!

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, I was making the point that the utterance of the Prime Minister caused concern to some of us, and we were now thinking that maybe he does not understand his function. If that is so, it is dangerous. There are security services reporting to a prime minister who chairs a national security council, but who does not understand what is expected of him.

**Mr. Panday:** Mr. Speaker, I merely wanted to assure the hon. Member that I meant no disrespect by being absent when this debate started. Having regard to the events which are taking place in the Caribbean, I had to be on the telephone for quite some time. Please accept my apologies.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** I appreciate the intervention by the hon. Prime Minister, but I took no umbrage at his absence.

The utterances of the Prime Minister—and I assume that actions followed from those utterances—cause us to think that he does not understand his function. When the matter was raised by way of this Motion being filed, the Prime Minister took the position that he had done nothing wrong. He said that he, in his capacity as Prime Minister, had to receive this information to secure the state. I am hoping that he will join the debate to provide us with concrete evidence on how he came to the conclusion that the People's National Movement posed a threat to national security.

That would have been a small matter, had it not been for the Prime Minister going on to say that since he came into office, all that he had done was to let things flow on autopilot. He had been out of the country 16 times; he had touched nothing, seen nothing, heard nothing, knew nothing, except to know that PNM members were coming across for a few dollars. That is not good enough. I can tell the Prime Minister that we are not being fooled by that. That position is not the correct one.

I said earlier that out of the traumatic events of 1990, this country's Cabinet, of which I had the honour to be a part during the 1991 to 1995 term, in reviewing the country's security system, took the decision to provide the state with an improved security system based on a better flow of information to those who are charged with the responsibility of protecting the state's integrity. Today, our Friend from Couva North is the Prime Minister. We created, after proper investigation, an organization called the Security Intelligence Agency. That civilian agency was meant to provide that body of information, all in the context of the guidelines laid down by this Intelligence Service Act, from which I quoted earlier. Heading that agency was one of our distinguished sons, a gentleman of whom we all could be proud, the only general who served in our army, General Ralph Brown, who had the distinction of standing between insurgents and our future in our moment of need. When all the dust had been cleared from that and we reviewed our security system, we put him in charge of the Security Intelligence Agency and the next thing we knew, before the Government had comfortably occupied its position in the Twin Towers, General Brown was humiliatingly dismissed from office.

The Government can claim that is its prerogative. We will say that it is, but we will also say that the Government has not acted in the best interest of Trinidad and Tobago. What is worse is that I have been a part of the Cabinet which created that agency to garner sensitive information in connection with activities that threaten the security of Trinidad and Tobago, whether terrorism, drug trafficking, counterfeit

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money, visa and passport racketeering. We had put that agency in place to collect information to fight these threats.

**3.10 p.m.**

The first thing the Government did was to dismiss the head of the agency. More alarmingly, however, the Government asked to make known, in a kind of way, all persons who were involved as operators in that agency. Mr. Speaker, I do not know that this Government, as yet, understands the implications of what it has done.

The persons who formed the agency understood the implications of such an agency and the sensitivity of such a body. The Cabinet of the day—of which my Friend from Point Fortin was a part—took the position to delegate decision-making authority to the National Security Council in respect of certain security matters.

That was done. As we all know, Mr. Speaker, there was a famous statement made by a famous Prime Minister that, “The ship of state leaks from the top.” Security was so important, and preservation of the integrity of security information was such that, by this Cabinet decision to create that agency, it was delegating authority to the National Security Council so that sensitive, and even dangerous, information would not come to the Cabinet table for discussion where it might end up where it was not supposed to. That is security consciousness, Mr. Speaker!

The then Cabinet approved the structure, budget and posts of the organization, but it did not want to know who were the required individuals to fill those posts. Do you know what this Government did, Mr. Speaker? This Government demanded to know, personally, at the level of the Cabinet, every single person who is a security officer in this agency—I hear my friend, the Minister of National Security saying, “Rubbish!”

The Prime Minister, in responding to the disquiet and consternation that followed from his Government seeking to have those names disclosed in that manner, decided that he would play pacifier and meet all the officers to calm their fears and let them know that the Government does not mean anything. Here is the Prime Minister of a country wanting to meet personally with all the security operatives to allay their fears. *[Interruption]* What is wrong with that? That is the problem, Mr. Speaker! He sees nothing wrong with that and therein lies the problem! *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. Speaker, it brings us to the question: Could it not be that having found out who the people are, they now know who to target and who to subvert? The information being collected has to do with many of them on that side. He still does not understand what he has done. It was the officers who told the country as a result of this action on the part of the Government their very lives may be at risk, and the Government still does not understand what it has done.

I am not surprised because, time and time again, this kind of irresponsible action—making statements which would have the effect of portraying us in a light which is less than favourable—has been the practice of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Our concern is that as the Government expresses itself now and before, there may very well be the thinking that it does not subscribe, as fully as the country expects, to the democratic tradition and behaviour to which a government of Trinidad and Tobago should subscribe.

In that context, Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to the recent tirades of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago who, all of a sudden, has a problem with the Westminster system. Here is the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, as Chairman of the National Security Council, who sees no problem with the population being told that he has been using privileged information for political advantage; information gathered in his capacity as Prime Minister and Chairman of the Security Council. He sees no problem with that because he has an inherent problem with the Westminster system.

I quote from the *Newsday* dated Thursday, March 6, 1997:

“Prime Minister Basdeo Panday has called the Westminster system of government divisive, polarising and adversarial, a system which has left the nation unable to go forward.

‘It is a system that once you win, the other side is excluded, and so they are bitter and envious and spiteful, and they try to do everything to prevent the winner from succeeding...’”

What the Prime Minister is doing here is not really providing an intellectual discourse on the Westminster system, he is providing a description of the Westminster system as he sees it! As he practises it!

It goes on:

“He said that the Opposition had a ‘duty under the system to criticise Government, knock them down, and do everything in their power to prevent them from succeeding, and so dividing the population.’”

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That is how he sees the Opposition. He spent 20 years seeing the Opposition like that. That is why he says here:

“...and do everything in their power to prevent them from succeeding,...”

We know his history with respect to that. [*Desk thumping*] Then he goes on to say:

“...and so dividing the population.”

We also know his history with respect to that.

Today he is walking all over the country talking about national unity. But it was he, as Leader of the Opposition, who went to Skinner Park and addressed thousands of our brothers and sisters of East Indian descent and told them that those who serve under political umbrellas have sold their birthright for a wig and a mess of pottage. And that is national unity. [*Desk thumping*] He insulted those persons of East Indian decent who had not sought to follow him in his political pathways. If ever there was a racial statement made by anybody in this country, that was it. [*Desk thumping*]

Today, he is Prime Minister and he is walking all over the country and has even managed to convince some of my colleagues that he is leading a campaign for national unity. He knows to whom he has told that foolishness.

He is using the security services to gather information, to use it in the way he is using it and to boast about it without any fear or shame. He now talks about building a government of national unity. I do not care what he builds, Mr. Speaker. I am concerned that the security services of this country must act within the confines of their functions as described by tasteful behaviour of the Westminster system.

For those of you who have forgotten our history, I can say to you and to the national community today, that the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago has no abiding commitment to the principles of democracy, especially the Westminster democracy. [*Desk thumping*]

He went back to his homeland—I congratulate him for going back to the homeland of his foreparents. I, too, hope that some day I might be as fortunate as he was to go to a place from where my forefathers came.

**Mr. Valley:** And you will pay your own way.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** However I get there, I will be grateful to get there.



When he got there in that emotive reunion, it must have been something, Mr. Speaker. I wish I was there. They asked him: “How come, a man like you—one of us—could have risen to what you have become, coming out of St Julien Village, a rural area in Princes Town and striding the world’s stage as you are today? How did you do it?”

**3.20 p.m.**

He, very quickly and accurately told them how he managed to do that. Mr. Speaker, do you know that he did not tell them that he grew up, he was nurtured, and he survived and prospered under a racist, oppressive regime of Dr. Eric Williams in Trinidad and Tobago. He did not tell them that.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am inclined to think that the hon. Member is veering away a little too much from the theme which has to do with security services.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with your comment, except that insofar as the comment about national security does not stand alone. It represents a pattern of behaviour and it is just another statement of many statements, by the Prime Minister which indicates that he does not fully appreciate what is required of him as Prime Minister.

I am questioning his behaviour with respect to the information he obtained and the implications of how he is using, or intends to use, our security services. I am questioning his commitment to the democratic process. I am drawing to your attention that when he answered the question in Lakshmanpur, he could have told them that he was able to come out of Princes Town and enter the political arena. He chose to enter the political arena, with democracy at sway in Trinidad and Tobago, as a communist under the Workers and Farmers Party. To this day, he has not repudiated those doctrines. [*Desk thumping*] They could groan as much as they like, but the philosophies of the Workers and Farmers Party were communist, insofar as ideologies were, and that was where he entered the political arena.

Needless to say, the people of Trinidad and Tobago rejected him. If he had to have political success he had to enter into another vehicle. So he entered into the vehicle on another side and rose to the level of Prime Minister. Could it be that it is a case of the Ethiopian not being able to change his skin or the leopard’s spots? How else can we explain a Prime Minister treating with us in such a cavalier manner, on matters which we believe more care is required and who should demonstrate a greater commitment to national security?

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Given what we have seen by this indication, I call on the Government to satisfy the national community that there are guidelines which govern the conduct of our security services. I am not here, in any way, being critical of our security services. My criticism is levelled and targeted at the conduct of the hon. Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, in his treatment of the work of our security services.

I want the Government to assure this honourable House that it has no intention of abusing our security services. I want the Government to comfort the national community that there are guidelines in place and insofar as those guidelines might be insufficient, they would be improved and brought up-to-date, to be worthy of a modern democratic state. I want the Government to go further and commit itself to bringing, and at the earliest opportunity, legislation of the type that I have mentioned earlier. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, it was not brought by previous governments, but we survived with an element of comfort, because up to that time, the people of this country had some trust in the Government's conduct. *[Desk thumping]*

Today, we have a runaway Government in office demonstrating every day, in all of its actions, that there is no level beneath which it would not sink. That is why that legislation is required at this time; legislation to govern the conduct of the security services and the Government treating with information gathered by our security services. That is now an urgent requirement. It is an imperative. To do otherwise, is to allow those on the other side, who will pay lip-service to democracy to do what they want, to entrench themselves in office. Mr. Speaker, this action of the Prime Minister is not a singular action. If it was singular, I might have dismissed it as an unfortunate aberration. Mr. Speaker, it is a long list of asterisks; it is a loud peal of bells saying, "Watch out! Look at what is happening."

Mr. Speaker, a simple matter like the Prime Minister going abroad to lobby for this country. I have a problem with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago being an accompaniment to the American Chamber of Commerce visit to America. I have a problem with that. If the Prime Minister understands his office he would not agree to accompany any American Chamber of Commerce to the United States. If he has to go there, he must go as the proud Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago at the expense of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. *[Interruption]* When he gets to Washington they do not take two minutes to identify him for what he is; a little tin God at home, trying to build a banana republic but representing nothing. Look at him here, saying that he is Prime Minister but he is being taken along as baggage accompaniment—

**Mr. Assam:** He went at the expense of the United States government.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. I know for a fact that other officials have gone on invitation but—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Quite obviously, my strategy is not working. In dealing with what should not happen, I ask the hon. Member, please, let us deal with the whole question of security and the like that we are talking about. I know that one has some latitude, but I do think you are going too far and I would say to the Member for St. Joseph, if even he is going too far that is not the way to deal with it. I continue to say, speak to the Speaker, and all will be well.

**Mr. Bereaux:** Mr. Speaker, before the Member continues, could you repeat what you said please? I was unable to hear because of the noise outside—the singing. *[Laughter]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Provided that the hon. Member was not making a joke, I am prepared to repeat it, but I thought that the amplification of my voice made a difference. Just now I said two things: one was I feel that the hon. Member for Diego West is veering a little too much, and I would like him to stick to that which is on my Order Paper with respect to this Motion. I am saying to the Member for St. Joseph—with whom he has been involved in a contretemps—that if even he feels that the Member for Diego Martin West is veering too far and he should make a comment on something that is not particularly germane to the matter before us, I would prefer if he does it through me; that he should speak to the Speaker as you just did.

### 3.30 p.m.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The point I was making is, the actions of the Prime Minister, in treating with national security information, ought not to be taken in isolation, because one could make a singular mistake. We are all human; we can make mistakes. If the action was singular, it probably would not have alarmed us so much, but the action of the Prime Minister in treating with security information as he himself has described, and using it for political gain as he has described—and other actions where he has related to the security services—when one puts all of this together, along with other actions, the concern that I am raising here, Mr. Speaker, is very real and the condemnation is required.

I am also, in this Motion, questioning the Prime Minister's commitment to the standards which normally exist in a decent modern democratic society. If he had a

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commitment to that, he would not treat our security services in the way that he has described. It raises the question, Mr. Speaker: Where else are we seeing a lack of commitment to the norms and the safeguards that the Westminster system dictates? What we are hearing is that the Prime Minister does not like the Westminster system; he has a problem with the Westminster system. He is describing it according to his own image in a way that is frightening, and I gave you an example. I am asking, if that is so, where else do we look to see whether our concerns are well-founded?

We have concerns about the Prime Minister's commitment to freedom of the press. [*Desk thumping*] We have to look at it in the context of how he wants to treat the security services; how he wants to use the information. We have to see that, *vis-à-vis*, what we know about his lack of commitment to freedom of the press when he behaved like a bull in a China shop, trying to treat with the *Guardian* when it said something about him that he thought he did not like. We have that on the table. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, in a country where freedom of the press is enshrined in our Constitution, gets up and says who he does not like as editor, who must go, and if they do not go, what he will do. Mr. Speaker, it is in that context that I question the Prime Minister's commitment to our fundamentals which guarantee our rights and freedoms. [*Desk thumping*] Where else do we look?

Mr. Speaker, as a former trade unionist in a country where freedom of association is cherished, we have the Prime Minister who goes down to La Romain and says he has been treating the National Security Council chairmanship in a certain way. He took a position that he would not meet with the teachers' union because a certain gentleman is its leader. These are things that should concern the people of Trinidad and Tobago. We are on the verge of dictatorship. [*Desk thumping*] What we are encouraging here, if we do not stop him now, is a little dictator. [*Desk thumping*] "If you do not print what I like, I will deal with you. You do not sing what I like, I will deal with you."

I am raising that in the context that whereas the matter about the security services is only his most recent outrage, it is but one of a series of outrages, each of which would have the effect of portraying Trinidad and Tobago in a certain light. If we are not already so, we are being portrayed as an ordinary Latin American banana republic, where the Government, according to Mr. Lord of *The Independent*, through its security services, has infiltrated the Opposition and is using that information for political advantage. That is a typical Latin American

banana republic. We are not that and we do not want this UNC/NAR coalition to bring us to that. That is the basis of this Motion.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to be viewed by others as a country where the Government can do anything; the Government can disregard all the norms of decent behaviour and appoint who it wants and disappoints who it wants. Once that becomes our image, we are going to suffer because nobody on the outside will want to come into a country like this, where the Government has set those as the norms and fancies of behaviour.

It is not by accident that those who went ahead of us chose the Westminster system as the course of action, the path of development, that the people of Trinidad and Tobago should follow. It is not by accident, and there are those on the other side who, in their development to where they are today, have resisted that at every step of the way. We have to be cognizant that today, they are in office, and they have the authority to wield that power; we have to be concerned about how that power is going to be used and what we see, Mr. Speaker, we do not like.

It is a frightening spectacle of a majority of people sitting there, saying nothing, doing nothing, and allowing the Prime Minister and a handful of people to run riot in Trinidad and Tobago's business. [*Desk thumping*] Some statements are even trite. The Prime Minister goes abroad to a foreign capital. While he stays at home and boasts about what he does with the security services, he goes abroad and tells the world that our policemen are running behind bandits on donkey carts.

I do not know any policeman, in this country, who operates on a donkey cart, but the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, in his normal irresponsible destructive self, goes abroad and tells the world that our policemen, on the doorstep of drug infested South America, are running around on donkey carts. That is his conduct.

Mr. Speaker, I do not confine my concern to the single action of the Prime Minister and the security services, as he made that statement in La Romain. Once again, I want to say that the Prime Minister is a destructive element; I can demonstrate that. We, in Trinidad and Tobago, have produced a brilliant son, who is the vice-captain of the West Indies cricket team, and when the Prime Minister comments on his future progress, it is to hurt his chances of becoming the captain of the West Indies cricket team. [*Desk thumping*]

He goes to India and on the international news media, raises questions about his suitability to become the captain of the West Indies cricket team. It is only

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when he was embarrassed by that, he is back-peddling now and saying, "I did not say so". I want to ask that animated toy, if it is not true. Why, when he had the opportunity in India, he is now saying that he will be very happy to have Brian Lara as the West Indies captain? When he was asked that in India, why did he not say so? Instead, he has spoken words as the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, and those words will now be used against one of our distinguished sons who is in line to become the captain of the West Indies cricket team. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago is a destructive element. [*Desk thumping*]

I guess my Friend from Nariva will tell me that he was not there in Skinner Park, San Fernando, when the current Prime Minister got up and said that "you have sold yourself for a mess of pottage." You were not there? Did he not say that? Just as he is saying to us now that he never touched the security services. He left them the way he met them. So, who fired Ralph Brown? Who asked to see the security officers? Who did that?

**3.40 p.m.**

I am not surprised that they are behaving like that Mr. Speaker, because very few of them on the other side—I will be charitable, I am sure my Friend from Siparia is not one of those—understand the seriousness of the misconduct of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that you, and the national community, will be making a mistake to expect that those others who should know better will intervene to curb the excesses of this Prime Minister and his Government. What I expect is that what is happening, will continue to happen.

We are registering our protest as a political party that has served this country well; that has nothing on its record to indicate even remotely, that we are not committed to democracy in its broadest term. We are supremely proud of the record of the PNM in Trinidad and Tobago. It is a record which few organizations in the world can match. Those on the other side who now have an opportunity to serve this country, one implores them to seek to contribute to national development and not to break down our institutions at the behest of staying in office a day longer than they really should.

Mr. Speaker, I am not the only person who is concerned. The PNM is not the only organization that is concerned. I want to put on record the concerns as expressed in the various editorials in the media. I am so happy that my Friend from Nariva has left the media because he might have been there writing "Hail chief, ride on ahead," and he would have seen nothing wrong with it.

Mr. Speaker with your kind indulgence, I want to put on record what the *Newsday* in its editorial, had to say to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, and by extension his Government, on the Prime Minister's public utterances insofar as they symbolize and represent the unacceptable conduct of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Reprehensible conduct. The *Newsday*, Thursday, February 27 1997, page 8 says:

"Secrets Made Public

Prime Minister Basdeo Panday's recent announcement that as head of the National Security Council he was aware of problems in the PNM and that some of the Party's Members of Parliament would cross the floor has exposed an abuse of the national security process.

Equally disturbing is that this information, compiled and passed on by the National Security Council was not only of a distinctly partisan political nature, but was exposed at a private meeting for purely partisan purposes.

Mr. Panday should never have made that statement. National Security is about national defence against possible external aggression and internal subversion and includes, correctly, the maintenance of internal order.

In addition it should clearly not be intended to advance the position of the party (or parties) in power against that of the Opposition party, particularly if the Opposition party is democratic and is not actively seeking the unconstitutional overthrow of the party in Government."

The *Newsday* goes on to allude to the Watergate development, where a president of America sought to abuse their security services in gathering information and using it in this way. In that case the president was using—as bad as it was—outside, low-level, low-life operatives. In this case, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago is boasting about accessing the National Security Council as chairman to do the same thing, and *Newsday* joins with the rest of the country to condemn the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

Insofar as the PNM has been the target for this kind of action, in keeping with *Newsday's* concern, this PNM Opposition cannot be deemed to be an organization that threatens our democratic process and, therefore, the Government has no basis for saying that.

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Mr. Speaker, the *Sunday Guardian*, February 23, 1997, page 8 says:

"Mr. Panday's error

Mr. Panday stated that as chairman of the National Security Council he was 'privy to information that a lot of people were not', and his intelligence sources had informed him that there was trouble in the PNM camp. The implications of his foolish boast ('I was ready to strike like a cobra!') are staggering.

Was the Prime Minister implying that the country's security forces were spying on the PNM, a political party which has every right to exist under our democratic constitution and which has never been considered to be a clandestine operation...

From our knowledge, the country's intelligence service is to keep track of matters that may threaten national security. How does the domestic disputes within the PNM constitute such a threat? Is it part of their duties for the security forces to be spying on political parties?"

The Government must answer that. The quote continues:

"And is it just a matter of time that we will hear that our domestic lives have been and are under the scrutiny of national security intelligence? Will the Prime Minister be making public, on an election platform, details of the lives of citizens based on intelligence gathered by the country's security forces?"

Mr. Speaker, these are questions raised by the *Sunday Guardian*. Very pertinent questions are being put to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and I hope when they get up to reply—if they reply—they will answer these questions. Mr. Speaker the *Sunday Guardian* goes on to say:

"...the Prime Minister's statements must be seen as nothing short of irresponsible and insensitive and a threat in themselves to the security of the nation."

**Mr. Speaker:** I just want to remind the hon. Member that he has about three more minutes to wind up. The 75 minutes will then be up.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, another one of our dailies, *The Independent*, of Thursday, February 20, 1997, page 8, says:



"Beyond the bounds

There are critics of the Prime Minister Basdeo Panday who argue that he has little respect for the norms of democracy and no feel for the limits of governmental action in a free society."

Mr. Speaker that is an amazing indictment against the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago by a newspaper in this democratic society. If they feel no shame, it is because they have no shame-bone in their body.

Mr. Speaker, the *Daily Express*—from which came my Friend from Nariva—of Friday, February 21 1997, page 8, under "Our Opinion", says in the heading:

"An eye on security spies"

This is why our citizens should be alarmed, both at Mr. Panday's disclosures and his manner of making them. On whom are the security forces spying? To whom is that information brought? Most importantly, to what end is it being put? The quote states:

"All over the world presidents and prime ministers are sorely tempted to use sensitive security information in their own partisan interests."

And they make mention of Nixon. I could go on, Mr. Speaker.

Raffique Shah writing in the *Sunday TnT Mirror*, February 23, 1997, page 4, says:

"What is frightening is that, as Prime Minister, he admits to using one of the most powerful and sensitive state institutions for personal political gain.

In any democratic society that is not just a travesty of the constitution, but an abominable abuse of his powers as head of the NSC."

I could go on and on.

Mr. Speaker, having used up my allocation, I want to close by calling on this honourable House to condemn the behaviour of the Prime Minister, and while doing so in this matter, to draw to his attention that as head of our Government and the major exemplar in this country, he must conduct himself in a way as not to be divisive, provocative, and irresponsible, and not to tarnish the country's image both at home and abroad. The Prime Minister is now at large, and he requires to be brought to heel. This Motion, Mr. Speaker, is the first link in the change that will bring the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago to respect the norms of decency in Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

**3.50 p.m.**

**Mr. Speaker:** After all that applause, do you think we might be able to get a seconder?

**Mr. Colm Imbert** (*Diego Martin East*): Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the Motion of the Member for Diego Martin West. I reserve my right to speak at this time.

*Question Proposed.*

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. Brig the Hon. Joseph Theodore):** After hearing the contribution from the Member for Diego Martin West, I am glad for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to correct the record as far as the security services, as they are referred to in Trinidad and Tobago, are concerned. The security services consist of the Police Service, Fire Service and the Prison Service; but I understand that reference is really being made to the intelligence agencies.

These agencies in Trinidad and Tobago consist of the Special Branch, the Security Intelligence Agency, referred to by the Member, and the Strategic Services Agency. It is not that these agencies are functioning in a willy-nilly fashion, they do have their areas of responsibility and they have a mandate to collect information which comes from various sources, external, internal, and is done in a covert manner and by overt means.

I should like to mention that the National Security Council first met in December 1964, as the successor to the Trinidad and Tobago Intelligence Committee, which operated in the pre-independence period.

**Mr. Manning:** What is all that about?

**Hon. J. Theodore:** To set the record straight, Mr. Speaker, I know the Member for Diego Martin West spoke from memory; he referred to certain things. I would like to build on that.

This National Security Council existed in various forms and degrees of activities. Its membership, as mentioned, comprises the Prime Minister, the Attorney General, the Minister of National Security and other ministers as decided. In 1994—and this came out of the 1990 failed coup—a study was done to look at the security agencies.

**Mr. Manning:** Who was the government then?

**Hon. J. Theodore:** This agency is now advised by a committee, comprising the Chief of Defence Staff, the Commissioner of Police, the head of the Security

Intelligence Agency, the Director of the Strategic Services Agency, and the Special Branch. The National Security Council receives reports from these various agencies.

I should like to go into some more detail concerning the Strategic Services Agency, which was formed by the Strategic Services Act of 1995, and came into being on July 1, 1996. The Member for Diego Martin West made reference to this agency when saying that it seems as though the agency requires some guidelines under which it is to operate. What I would refer to is, when this Act came into being in 1995, it would have been an ideal opportunity for such guidelines to have been inserted. The way the Act was structured, it seemed to suggest that the various functions were, in themselves, meant to be guidelines. As the Member for San Fernando East pointed out, the National Security Council came back in 1964 and it is being suggested that this was under the PNM administration and so, too, was this Strategic Services Agency Act, which was brought to Parliament in 1995, under the former administration.

As was stated, this came about as a result of a study which was done, and it could be that the study having been done, was not fully implemented. Mr. Speaker, although the Act came to Parliament in 1995, it was only in 1996 that we were able to give life to this agency. At no time was any effort made to find out who were the people who staffed this and other agencies.

The Member mentioned that the Prime Minister offered to speak with the members of the agency and in so doing suggested that was a way of finding the membership. As far as I am aware, I certainly was never asked, and I have never asked anybody to supply the names of the operatives of any intelligence agency. This confidentiality is maintained and, as is known, without that, the agencies would be hampered in their functions.

**Dr. Rowley:** I thank the Member for giving way, Mr. Speaker. I did not say that the Prime Minister sought to find out who was in the agency by seeking to meet with them. I said that when the request was made to meet with them, an alarm was raised by those persons. The Prime Minister offered to meet with them to allay their fears and assure them that everything was okay.

**Mr. Panday:** Where is your evidence of that?

**Dr. Rowley:** Well get up and say it is not true!

**Mr. Panday:** Where is your evidence?

**Hon. J. Theodore:** I repeat, Mr. Speaker, if I am to correct the record, the Prime Minister never did meet with these people. It did not come to pass.

The main functions of the Strategic Services Agency are:

To act as an office for centralizing information that could facilitate the detection and prevention of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals;

For co-ordinating operations for the suppression of illicit drug trafficking and drug related matters; and

For co-operating with the corresponding services.

In the main, Mr. Speaker, this agency was designed to deal with the increasing drug problem which started long before our time.

There are several other areas but I would like to deal in part, with some of the areas of responsibility for this agency. It is required also to prepare drug interdiction strategy and stimulate action towards, and monitor implementation of the agreed strategy.

It is required to assist also in identifying sophisticated drug-related criminal activity and those who engage in it. The agency is in effect, doing just that. It has to help the law enforcement efforts by identifying links between individuals and organizations involved in the drug trade. It also provides strategic intelligence to assist and promote the efficient and effective use of operational resources so as to enable the development of law enforcement strategies. It identifies new trends in patterns of drug-related criminal activity.

#### **4.00 p.m.**

It is very difficult, I believe, to get an agency that is so structured to be collecting information or sending it to collect information that is not included or is not covered by its mandate. It is also responsible for establishing channels of communication for domestic and overseas services and providing a national focal point for the promotion and exchange of information and intelligence of organized drug-related crime and major criminals in the drug trade.

Some of the things that I have heard, suggest that these security agencies, somehow or the other, report to the National Security Council on matters other than these and, in particular, they are providing information as mentioned by the Member for Diego Martin West, of the PNM. What is important, is that information

comes from all sources. People in the street give us information; people write letters; people call. In Trinidad and Tobago, knowing the society we have, if there are problems that have become public knowledge, even people from within organizations where such problems exist are quite keen to pass on the information. I do not know if it is a sort of attitude that they like to see things go wrong. Letters do come to us saying things about organizations and people. That is information. That information has to be analyzed and put on a database and when it becomes intelligence, that is when one starts to see how this information can affect the security of the country.

Any properly organized agency, as the Member for Diego Martin West will say, is designed and staffed to perform the functions that will ensure the security of the state, both from internal or external aggression. That being the case, I doubt very much that in Trinidad and Tobago one needs to direct any agency to find out what is *mauvais langue* and news about people in Trinidad and Tobago. That information comes. It goes both ways. I am sure other people have been given information—sometimes false, sometimes correct—about people who are on this side. I have heard stories about myself, totally wrong, without foundation, but people like to talk and that is just information.

That is why an intelligence agency is important because it does not just take “ole” talk and act on it. It is concerned with analyzing what is information at that time, or news. Maybe if I call it news, we will understand better what I am talking about—news and “ole” talk. These agencies are not designed to hear news. Maybe what concerns my Friend from Diego Martin West, it is that we will pick up anything we hear and maybe put some meaning to it. I would like to say on behalf of these agencies, that they are far more professional and better organized than that. Maybe to a certain extent the Members on the other side are entitled to take some credit for that, because the agencies were, in fact, established in their time. One cannot establish something and then come and tell me that what was established was somehow faulty and you are now trying to discredit it. This matter of going from left to right is not going to work. It is either the agency is not properly run or the agency is not running, but I take the point that it may be that the public needs to know about these agencies. I take the point that again, in Trinidad and Tobago, these agencies have been so secretive that people are concerned about what they are doing; what they are spying on; and things of that nature.

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In the United States of America, the agencies have become very public. The CIA is in the book. Our agencies can be found in the telephone directory. We encourage people to bring information—not information on domestic matters, but information that has a national security import. What we are looking at here, is that we are concerned about the defence and the well-being of our citizens, the prevention and detection of serious crime, and criminal proceedings. The important thing, too, at this stage that the public must know, is that the source of this information is protected and it is important because right now we need information about these drug dealers. We need information about plans for organized crime. These agencies are committed and they are far too busy.

Again, as the Member for Diego Martin West pointed out, one does not have to send an agency to get information. He mentioned passive information, and again the point is well taken. One may be looking at something dealing with something else. One may be looking at a place, but then one sees a certain person arrive at that place. One was not watching the person, but watching another person. This is the passive information that was mentioned. I concede that in surveillance, information of other parties who may not be targeted, does come into our purview. What becomes of the information? All information, Members of this honourable House, Mr. Speaker, is recorded. All information. It is not for the intelligence agent to try to say what is good and what is not good. He must bring everything and then the analyst puts it and sorts it out. This is how the agencies work. There is more I would like to say because I myself, am quite aware that the public has many misconceptions about the agencies.

If I may proceed, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak a little more about this very agency called the Strategic Services Agency which was formed by an Act of Parliament in 1995. In addition to the functions I listed earlier, this agency shall give assistance to the services to which particularly serious or complex and drug-related cases have been referred. For example, the Organized Crime and Narcotics Unit, known as the OCNU—it will give them some help in collecting their evidence. It also provides a central point for the receipt of all disclosures made under the drugs legislation and develop such disclosures through the intelligence process and disseminate to the appropriate services for further action. At this time, these are automatic actions that take place among these agencies. They are also required to facilitate and monitor the enforcement of requests for assistance relating to proceeds of drugs and other serious crimes made under bilateral and multilateral confiscation agreements.

**4.10 p.m.**

Right now the Minister of National Security does not suppose that the Ministry of National Security alone is capable of dealing with the drug problem or dealing with the crime problem in its entirety. We work in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Education. The reason being that we want to reduce crime, and, if these agencies could give us information which will prevent something from happening, that information is welcome. So we are not saying allow the crime to go ahead and when it gets to a proportion that only a raid or arrest can solve then the Ministry of National Security becomes involved.

The agencies are there to serve the nation. The agencies are managed by the Ministry of National Security. They are there to function within the guidelines that have been set down. I certainly do not attempt to tell any agency what to do and where to go, and I am quite convinced that so, too, does any member of National Security Council attempt to direct the agency to any particular place or political party. On the other hand, if information comes down and when it is analyzed, there is suspicion, or we are satisfied that a particular person or group of people could be planning something that could be detrimental or dangerous to the state, it is then our business to investigate.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member for Diego Martin West mentioned, the People's National Movement—as I stand here, I can say quite unequivocally—[*Interruption*]. I can speak for myself, this is not the mandate. As you would know that is not part of the job of an intelligence agency. However, when you look at the Special Branch you will see that for years it has been involved in attending union meetings in the Square, attending rallies and political meetings. This is something that goes with the territory. This is not something that happens because somebody feels some party is planning something. This is a matter of course. In fact, the Member for San Fernando West said this in the *Independent* newspaper on Tuesday, March 4, 1997.

**Dr. Rowley:** Thank you Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. Minister for giving way. I am in agreement with everything that he said to that point. The point I was making is, having gone to the Square or wherever, what information is gathered on the PNM that caused the agency to portray the PNM in such a light that it must now be looked under the microscope of national security? [*Interruption*] You said that the information is distilled and only when it becomes intelligence it comes forward. It obviously went forward to the chairman.

**Mr. Panday:** What is the information, that you have trouble in the PNM?

**Hon. J. Theodore:** I really cannot comment on that but I would like to go back to the statement I was making—part of a statement made by the hon. Member for San Fernando East and this is reported in the *Independent* newspaper on Tuesday March, 14, 1997. I quote:

“Opposition Leader Patrick Manning has admitted when his government was in power he too used the National Security Council to find out what was happening with other political parties.” [*Desk Thumping*].

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, the Security Services Agency is also responsible for contributing to the training of specialized staff in action against drug trafficking and to establish and maintain close contact with corresponding services in other countries in order to achieve broad co-operation in investigation concerning international drug trafficking, so as to establish the identity, description, place of residence, movement and activities of drug traffickers. And this is relevant to recent incidents, Mr. Speaker.

In the recent reports in the media, there was the report of a number of people arrested in England and the law enforcement agency in Britain notified the police here and they were able to carry out a raid and arrest the person who, it is alleged, was responsible for shipping the cocaine to Britain. So, this is where intelligence plays a vital role in protecting the security of our state.

This agency is also responsible for monitoring the movement of dangerous drugs as well as equipment, material, precursor chemicals and instrumentalities used in illicit drug manufacture. So this agency has quite wide-ranging powers and a staff that has been in training over the years.

While the agency is only eight months old this month, it has been so far able to utilize some of the staff from the previous agency, the OSS, and they, too, are in a state of development like the SIA, which was formed in 1994. They have been recruiting and training, and I wish to assure you, Mr. Speaker, and Members of this honourable House, that it has never been suggested that any effort should be made to compromise these agents. In fact, the people who are recruited by posts so that we can arrive at a salary scale based on terms and conditions and not on names. This is done by the agency with the co-operation, maybe, of other agencies from the United States of America and Britain in vetting them and assisting in the selection process. I believe this was what was intended and we have maintained the purpose for which these agencies were designed.



I should like to touch, before I complete dealing with the Strategic Service Agency, on a few other things for which they are responsible [*Interruption*]. They are to be prepared to give details regarding current or projected drug trafficking. This means communication, more readily today, with our Caribbean neighbours. Funny enough, when the agency was formed, they spoke to Britain and the United States of America. They did not talk with Barbados, Jamaica, Grenada and St. Vincent. Somehow or the other we tend to miss out the region. What we are trying to do is to get a better regional security system because the vessels pass through the Caribbean.

**Mr. P. Manning:** We all knew that.

**Hon. J. Theodore:** I knew a lot of what the hon. Member for Diego Martin West said, but that did not prevent him from saying it.

**4.20 p.m.**

The Special Branch is the third agency which is the oldest; it has been there for some time and it is a unit of the police service which we all know—I will say it nevertheless—is headed by an officer of the appropriate rank under the overall command of the Commissioner of Police, while reporting directly to the Prime Minister, as mentioned in this article. This report goes to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of National Security.

The responsibilities of the Special Branch are wide and far-reaching. They are responsible for collecting, processing and assessing information on subversive and potentially subversive organizations and connected persons from the available areas. They are responsible for planning, conducting and advising on counter-subversive, counter-espionage and counter-sabotage operations. These responsibilities were not given to the Special Branch yesterday. They were there for many years, dating as far back as when the deceased Dr. Eric Williams was Prime Minister.

They are responsible for advising the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Security on all matters relating to protective security and the use of security intelligence. They assist the Criminal Investigations Department in the investigation of any criminal offence which may occur.

They maintain close contact with Government departments and with public opinion on matters which are likely to cause general discontent among any section of the public. All in all, these agencies, in their own way, operating with their own teams, provide the input that forms the intelligence that reaches the National Security Council.

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As some Members on the other side would be aware, these meetings are secret. Minutes are not taken away; the agenda is not broadcast. So for what it is worth, the confidentiality of the information coming in is preserved—the source is preserved. As I pointed out earlier, the sources can include the Customs and Excise Division, the Immigration Department, the Defence Force Intelligence Unit, the Prisons Department, the Post Office and other sources.

Other sources could be a friend making a phone call from abroad, or a man in the street who says, “I have to see you; I have some information.” Most of this information arrives directly to the members of the National Security Council. I do not have to wait every time for a report from an agency. There are ways for me to get information. I have friends who know. Maybe the same people who told the agency would also tell me, just to make sure it reaches me.

It is not a case of receiving information only from the agencies. This is where I think we have a problem, because it is suggested that we have to accept everything that the agencies provide. There are cross-checks; there are ways of checking back on what we heard and this is all part of the process where the information is analyzed. The point I want to make here is that the agencies are functioning as the professional agencies they are and doing the job that they are there to do.

As a member of the Security Council, there are times when—and I am sure the Member for San Fernando East can testify to that—we, as individuals, can give information which had not even come from the agency, but it is something which, once it is heard, is added to the data base. It does not mean that one does anything with that. Again, this is different from someone carrying news on someone and then action would be taken. An agency does not function like that and this is where the difference lies; this is where we have to be careful, that the public is not alarmed and made to feel that anybody who is working in an agency makes it his business to spy on individuals, on parties and on bodies. We cannot tell them what to tell us. All the information comes.

Maybe what we need to do to comfort the public is something which the PNM administration never did, as pointed out by the Member for Diego Martin West, which is to put in guidelines under which the agencies are to act. If we need to do this for the ease of mind of the public, perhaps with their assistance, we can put something like that together. But it is important that the people of this country do not feel threatened. They must be able to rest assured that these agencies are functioning in their interest and not against them.

While this is already happening, if it means that putting something like this in place is a necessity, we will certainly give it serious thought. I am not suggesting that without this the agencies are not working, but if it means that this should be a manifest action we take to show, “well look, we have regulations; we have something”, we will consider it. What was mentioned was that they should be improved and brought up to date. I have no problem with that. The important thing is that these agencies are here to protect the citizens’ rights and for their sake, this Government will certainly make every effort to ensure that they are comfortable and confident with the agencies that are there to perform on their behalf. So all the agencies are functioning; they are collecting information. We have to be careful that their positions are not jeopardized and we certainly have no intention of making it known who these people are.

The point I would like to emphasize is that in addition to numerous open sources, that is, the public, sources of information and intelligence provide inputs into the analysis and assessment which form the basis of the reports and the recommendations that are made to the National Security Council. So there is a system in place; there are dedicated people who are doing the work and we respect the confidentiality and we have to respect the fact that their safety should not be put at risk while they are doing the work on behalf of the state. But again, the sources of information are preserved. We do not go around telling people who told us this or that.

We had a history, during the former administration, where the police were not trusted. This is something we have to correct. People must be prepared to go to the police and to the intelligence agencies because without their co-operation and support one does not know what is going on. We are trying to turn around this negative impression. The Member for Laventille East/Morvant, a former policeman himself, understands and appreciates the vital role and responsibilities carried by the police service. It is important that we give them that sense of confidence that we will not, in any way, jeopardize them or put them at risk in the job that they are doing.

I should like to close at this stage, seeing that I have used my allotted time until the tea break. I am quite prepared to say to this honourable House that the public can feel confident and assured that their intelligence and security agencies are performing a valuable function in their interest and in the interest of the safety of this country.

**Mr. Manning:** I thank the hon. Minister of National Security for giving way before he resumes his seat. I get the impression he is about to wind up his contribution and therefore I just want to make it absolutely clear, before that happens, that the quotation to which reference has been made in relation to myself in that newspaper, is not correct at all. Indeed, had I been aware that such a statement was published, I would have refuted it. I say it for the purposes of the record, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. J. Theodore:** As I said, I should like to assure the Members of this honourable House and the public at large, that their security and intelligence agencies are functioning and that we have trusted professional people there, making their contribution towards making Trinidad and Tobago a safer place and providing security for all our citizens.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the sitting of the House is suspended for half an hour.

**4.30 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.08 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Mr. Patrick Manning** (*San Fernando East*): Mr. Speaker, there was a time when I knew you as a naughty fellow, Sir, but, mercifully, those times are past. I am sure there is no element of naughtiness in your calling on me before I was able to take my seat. [*Laughter*] I thank you very much for your kind indulgence.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Motion so ably moved by the distinguished Member for Diego Martin West, my colleague and Friend. I would straightaway say, that one of the major planks on which the success of our system is promulgated is the traditions on which our system is based, as stated by my colleague. The Westminster system is by no means ideal and many countries that have experimented with it have had experiences that have not in the final analysis gone down to the credit of those countries.

In 1962—it was before that—when we began to look around for a system of government for an independent Trinidad and Tobago it was natural that we would have gone to the system of our colonial masters, the United Kingdom. We did, in fact, espouse the system as adumbrated at Westminster, but it is also a credit to Trinidad and Tobago that the system was modified in a number of important ways to ensure that it suited the requirements of Trinidad and Tobago at that time.

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Whatever the modification, and whatever the country, be it Trinidad and Tobago or any other country, what has been critical to the success of this system, and what remains critical to its success here and elsewhere—and has been critical to the success in the United Kingdom—are the traditions that are associated with Westminster democracy.

Mr. Speaker, our experience, and it has been the experience all around the world—we now know it; we did not know that in 1962—is that England is a country that has a long history—hundreds of years—and these traditions that are critical to the successful use of the Westminster system are traditions that were not arrived at overnight. They are not legislated, but they have emerged from the experience of the United Kingdom over time and are an essential part of the British character as anything else. The difference between the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago and other countries is that we do not have that tradition. Therefore, what is seen as an essential part of the British character and personality cannot be seen as an essential part of the character and personality of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

What we now know is that whereas in the United Kingdom these principles and traditions are honoured, that is not necessarily the case in the countries that have been former colonies of the United Kingdom and are now seeking to espouse the system as handed down from Westminster.

For example, Mr. Speaker, you will not see a motion of no confidence being passed on a speaker in the United Kingdom, but I am sure that you can see something like that being passed elsewhere in the former British Commonwealth. In the United Kingdom, long before it gets to such a position, a speaker will resign. When recently we passed a law to put new legislative and constitutional arrangements in place for the conduct of affairs in Tobago, we included a provision for the removal of the presiding officer. What, indeed, I am doing is expanding on a point raised by the mover of the Motion and its implications. I will come to the implications for Trinidad and Tobago.

**5.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, the intelligence services in the United Kingdom are services that operate on certain traditions. In Trinidad and Tobago, those traditions do not exist. That is essentially the point that I am trying to make.

When, in 1994, the then Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago addressed this question of proper intelligence arrangements in Trinidad and Tobago following the

breach of the country's security in 1990, a prerequisite and a precursor to establishing proper arrangements were, of necessity, an examination of the arrangements that existed in the United Kingdom, at the time, the evolution of that system, and some kind of assessment of the relevance of that system to Trinidad and Tobago. What you see in place today, therefore, was not something that was dreamed up by some people operating out of some ivory tower, or some academic assessment of what was required, but a practical assessment of the direction in which this issue has evolved in the country from which our system has come, and a further analysis of whether that new arrangement is acceptable in the context of Trinidad and Tobago.

If, in the United Kingdom, guidelines are not required for the operation of security services because of the country's traditions, guidelines are required in Trinidad and Tobago. As of now, not enough guidelines are in place in Trinidad and Tobago. Following the examination of 1994, we now have a new Civilian Intelligence Security Agency, which was considered necessary following the experiences of Trinidad and Tobago in 1990. Yes, some measure of legislation was brought to the Parliament in 1996 and, perhaps, that might have been the appropriate time to put other guidelines in place, but that was not done. Just for the record—and I am not blaming anyone, because I understand that the Government, too, is looking at that situation and that system—it is necessary for those guidelines to be put in place expeditiously in the context of what is taking place in Trinidad and Tobago.

I think that this Parliament benefited from an examination of how the current system operates. We have the assurances of the hon. Prime Minister that no adjustment was made to the system that he met when he took office in 1995. And if no adjustment was made, and we take the hon. Prime Minister at his word, we can say that on these matters he is an honourable man. And while I am saying that, I am a bit surprised at the Minister of National Security because, in speaking about the composition of the National Security Council, he left out two important persons for reasons that yet remain unclear. One is the Commissioner of Police, who sits on the National Security Council in his own right, and separate and distinct from the head of the Special Branch and the second is the Chief of the Defence Staff—because the army has an intelligence unit associated with it.

For those who do not know, the sting operation that was held a few years ago which led to the seizure of some \$975,000.00 was an operation of the Army Intelligence Unit and not the other intelligence agencies. I make the point just for

the record. It may well have been that the hon. Minister had intended to say this and did not, but I thought it was necessary to clarify that point.

It is also very dangerous when the National Security Council sits and takes a view that individual members of the Council can bring information to the Council and the Council acts on that basis. Not only is that dangerous, but it is fundamentally contrary to the system that we sought to put in place in 1994 after we had spoken with the British and others who operate it and after examining that system in great detail.

When the Members of the National Security Council sit with their advisors—the way it operated in my time—we started off by asking what were the major threats to the security of the state? Threat 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, whatever they were and you identify them.

Then having identified those threats and having given that priority listing to the National Security Council Secretariat that is headed by a Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, it is up to the Secretariat under the direction of the Permanent Secretary ,to now ask the relevant intelligence agencies to decide who will do what in the context of the state's requirements for intelligence. It is a very ordered system and it is not a system that admits of the hearsay evidence that will of necessity be associated with any individual on the Council saying that I have heard this and that. Indeed, the Secretariat was put in place precisely to get away from that. One of the things that we experienced and which we felt may very well have been responsible in part for the breach of security in 1990—*[Interruption]*

**Hon. J. Theodore:** The Member for San Fernando East did say a while ago that I left out the Commissioner of Police. There was an implication that this might have been done deliberately. I want to correct that. This is all part of this whole security issue. I should like to inform Members that this Council is advised by a committee comprising the Chief of Defence Staff, the Commissioner of Police, the head of Security Intelligence Agency, the Director of Strategies Agency and the Head of the Special Branch.

**Mr. P. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, the National Security Council has to protect itself against hearsay evidence and evidence which is unsubstantiated, and that is one of the major reasons why a different arrangement was put in place. Prior to that arrangement, essentially raw intelligence with a minimum amount of analysis had gone from the relevant intelligence agencies to the relevant Ministers including the Prime Minister. We saw the weakness in that system and we decided to do

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something to change it. In putting this Secretariat in place one of the major responsibilities of the National Security Council Secretariat is a clearing house of information, and a body of assessments of raw intelligence is made before it goes forward to the relevant persons in positions of authority.

I am sure that the hon. Member for Naparima and other ship jumpers on the other side will agree with me that the system is far superior to the system that it has now replaced.

I remember when I handed over to the current Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, I brought him up-to-date on my own views as to the current threats to the security of the state. Indeed, my advice to him was that he should call a meeting of the National Security Council as early as possible to satisfy himself what the threats to the security of the state are and to ensure that the security of the state is preserved. That was the advice he got from me and I am in no position to say what happened.

At no time in assessing the threats to the security of the state did we ever identify any political party in Trinidad and Tobago as coming under that general grouping. If one talks about irresponsible statements that could easily have been interpreted as threats to the country's security, those statements were coming from hon. Members opposite, especially the distinguished Member for St. Augustine whose record in this regard is unparalleled by any other. Wild statements which, if we were so mindful, and if we had a paranoid disposition, would easily have been interpreted as a political threat to the security of Trinidad and Tobago.

I am aware—and it is natural in all countries—that in Trinidad and Tobago, the security services would monitor public meetings of any political party. Indeed, now that I am in Opposition that is normal—[*Interruption*] They monitor public meetings. I do not know what the Member is talking about by activities. I am talking about how it operated when I was there. They monitor public meetings of any political party so much so that when we hold political meetings today, if it turns out that the security agencies do not know where our meetings are—sometimes they try to find out where. We are aware of that—when we find out we make a list of the meetings available. We have nothing to hide.

**5.25 p.m.**

While we were in government, at no time did the activities of any political party in Trinidad and Tobago engage the attention of the National Security Council. Do you understand the distinction? The moment the National Security



Council deliberates on anything, it comes under the general heading of a threat to the security of this country. That is the point. When the hon. Prime Minister talks about a position in the PNM and, more than that, that this position is one which has been discussed at the level of the National Security Council, the first thing I see as a former chairman of the National Security Council, is that this could only engage the attention of the council because the hon. Prime Minister sees the PNM as a threat to the security of the state.

Today, what are the implications of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, viewing the PNM as a threat to the security of the state? Now, hon. Members would begin to take a different perspective of the wild and irresponsible statement of the hon. Member for Couva North. Last year, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago accused the Leader of the Opposition of seeking to destabilize and overthrow the Government. Everybody was alarmed by it. Do you know why they were alarmed? It was because the PNM was 40 years old last year and led this country for 35 of those 40 years. The PNM put democracy in place in 1962 and set up democratic institutions which keep this country free.

On the other hand, all the talk about destabilization has always emanated from the Opposition. If today or at any other time, there was any political party that could be accused, and justifiably so, of being a threat to the security of the state, it is the United National Congress. Even so, the PNM never did that because for the Government to so view a political party, the implications are frightening. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Member for San Fernando East is entitled to make his contribution without being harassed.

**Mr. P. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, they are now realizing that I can easily defend myself against them, but for the purposes of this Parliament, I thank you very kindly for your protection.

From the moment one begins to see political parties as threatening the country's security, then one would be opening a whole new area of operation which has fundamental implications for the fundamental rights—such as freedom of speech and others—of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Last year, I made the statement that the Government was planning to lock me up. I think hon. Members are now in a better position to understand my concern at that time.

If the Government sees a political party as threatening the country's security, then it can easily justify tapping one's telephones. I will make a categorical statement. While I was Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and Chairman of

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the National Security Council, at no time did I authorize the tapping of anybody's telephone.

**Mr. Maraj:** Not true! Not true!

**Mr. P. Manning:** They could say what they wish. More than that, I was not aware that anybody's telephone had been tapped without appropriate authority. I will say one further thing.

**Mr. Speaker:** I assure all Members of the House, that not one of them would be denied an opportunity to speak.

**Mr. P. Manning:** Matters of a national security nature were not generally known to Members of the Cabinet, as now. When the Member for Naparima says, "not true", he has no idea of that of which he speaks. He does not know and is therefore in no position to speak authoritatively on that matter to this honourable House. *[Interruption]* Produce the evidence!

Mr. Speaker, you understand why this motion is before this honourable House today. It is not because we are concerned about the statement of the hon. Prime Minister that political parties are being monitored. From the moment that engages the attention of the National Security Council, it puts the political party in a certain category as one of the major threats to the security of the state. We are fearful that from the moment one so categorizes any group, whether a political party or not, what flows therefrom is quite easy to justify on the grounds of national security.

I ask the Government: Are the telephones of politicians in this country being tapped? Is the answer yes or no? We want a clear statement. I ask a second question of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago: Are politicians of this country being followed in the conduct of their normal affairs? The third question is: Are the offices of Members of Parliament and politicians of this country bugged by the security forces of Trinidad and Tobago? I ask those questions for direct answers from the relevant minister. I ask clear and direct questions to the hon. Members on the other side, so that they can satisfy the national community, and us, that the country's security arrangements are not being used in a manner which is prejudicial to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed every citizen under the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago.

**5.35 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I want to give them the assurance that when I held the position of Chairman of the National Security Council, I was not aware that any of those

things had been done. If they had been done, they would have been done without the authority of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, this Parliament is a place for truth. *[Interruption]* Why do they prefer not to allow me to speak? The ship jumpers on that side can say anything they wish, they are completely irrelevant to the politics of Trinidad and Tobago. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr. P. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear, arising out of the statement of the hon. Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, that this country now needs to be told what guidelines the Government will place on the conduct of intelligence operations in the country which, while allowing for the protection of the country's security, does not prejudice the fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Once more, I appeal to Members to allow the Member for San Fernando East to continue uninterrupted.

**Mr. P. Manning:** This question never arose in the 36 years of the independence of Trinidad and Tobago. At no stage in this country's history was there as great a concern for protection of the citizens from the state as there is today. It is so, Mr. Speaker, because of the wild and irresponsible utterances of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

I began by talking about the traditions of Westminster. The hon. Member for St. Joseph was once this country's ambassador to the United Kingdom and one of the things that people most remember him for was the day he presented his credentials to the Queen and a photograph appeared in the newspapers here of the hon. Member in a top hat and tails. I remember a school child saying: "Who is this 'dotish' fellow in the top hat and tails?" I do not agree with that: I am merely reporting. That is the way it was seen. *[Laughter]*

**Mr. Speaker:** When this Parliament gets to the stage where we are talking about someone wearing a top hat and tails—the Leader of the Opposition, I am sure hon. Members can do better than that. Can we allow the Member to continue, top hat notwithstanding?

**Mr. P. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, top hat, tails, sports and stirrups notwithstanding, I began by talking about the traditions of Westminster and how essential they are for the proper operation of the Westminster system of democracy. What the Prime Minister has done is a lesson for all legislators. It is a lesson for all people who

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watch the evolution of constitutions and political systems. By that one act he has now confirmed what we have been seeing elsewhere. Whereas Trinidad and Tobago has a Westminster system, it does not have the traditions of Westminster, and those traditions are not necessarily adhered to.

I make reference *en passant* to what is taking place in the Tobago House of Assembly. There is a presiding officer who is conducting the affairs of the Assembly in a manner which suggests that if he wants something discussed, it can be discussed, and if not, one does not talk in his House. In other words, it is no longer the people's parliament, it has become the hostage of the presiding officer. Those are the lessons that some of us will have to learn.

What is emerging from this is that the next time this country reviews its Constitution, it will have to write in, as far as possible, some of these very traditions that we consider essential to the operation of the system, which are not written in the United Kingdom, but which experience tells us must be written in Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Attorney General (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the adjournment of the House to Friday, March 14, at 1.30 p.m., when we shall continue Private Members' Day.

There was an arrangement that we would give the Opposition this Friday and the next because we were not able to have a Private Members' Day on the last occasion. *[Interruption]* Last month, Private Members' Day was not given. The Opposition Chief Whip had agreed on the condition that we had Private Members' Day today and the following Friday. What we are doing today is last month's Private Members' Day. Maybe the Member would like to change that to Government's Business next Friday and have the last Friday as Private Members' Day. *[Dissent indicated]*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5.45 p.m.*