

*Leave of Absence**Friday, July 28, 2000***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, July 28, 2000*

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 three Members of this House who have asked to be excused from today's sitting. The Member for San Fernando East has asked to be excused from today's sitting; the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro has asked to be excused from today's sitting; and the Member for Arima is out of the jurisdiction and has asked to be excused between July 26—28, 2000. The leave of absence which they seek has been granted.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, the Government would be able to answer Question No. 77 and Question No. 79. In light of the nature of the question which is asked in Question No. 78, the hon. Minister of Public Utilities would need a further two weeks to answer it because of the voluminous record, so I respectfully seek leave of the House for an extension of two weeks.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I take it that both sides of the House will agree that, in the circumstances, Question No. 78 will be deferred for two weeks.

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Colm Imbert (Diego Martin East):

**Water and Sewerage Authority
(Construction and/or Equipment Supply Contracts)**

- 78.** (a) Would the Minister of Public Utilities give details of all construction and/or equipment supply contracts in excess of \$1 million awarded by the Water and Sewerage Authority in the years 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 to date, including the names of the successful contractors, the type of work, the location of the work, the date of award, and the amount of each contract?
- (b) Would the Minister state whether the successful contractor was the lowest bidder in each case?

- (c) In cases where the successful contractor was not the lowest bidder, would the Minister give the reasons why the contracts were not awarded to the lowest bidder?

Question, by leave, deferred.

**Competitive Prices Quote
(Supply, Transport, Spreading and Rolling of Asphalt)**

77. Mr. Kenneth Valley (*Diego Martin Central*) on behalf of **Mr. Colm Imbert** (*Diego Martin East*) asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

- (a) Would the Minister state the most competitive prices quoted to the Ministry by contractors for the supply, transport, spreading and rolling of asphalt in the year 1999 and in the first quarter of the year 2000?
- (b) Would the Minister state whether the Ministry intends to pay higher prices for asphalt in the second half of the year 2000?
- (c) If the answer to part (b) is in the affirmative, would the Minister state the reasons why the Ministry intends to pay these higher prices for asphalt?

The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Works and Transport (Mr. Chandresh Sharma): Mr. Speaker, during the period June 1, 1998 to May 31, 1999, contracts were awarded by the Central Tenders Board for the supply, transport, spreading and rolling of asphalt at prices ranging between \$175—\$215 per tonne Vat exclusive.

During the period June 1, 1999 to May 31, 2000, the Central Tenders Board awarded contracts under Schedule 20 at prices ranging between \$178—\$210 per tonne Vat exclusive, but no paving contracts were executed because of a High Court action which was filed by a contractor.

During the second half of the year 2000, the Ministry will invite tenders through its ministerial tenders committee. The Ministry will then pay the most competitive price after evaluation of tenders.

The Ministry is also aware that the cost of input into the production of asphalt, such as bitumen and other materials, has increased over the last two years. It is very likely, therefore, that the price for asphalt will be greater than those quoted in 1998 and 1999.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ministry of Housing and Settlements
(Award of Contract for Relocation of Oropune Villagers)

79. Mr. Kenneth Valley (*Diego Martin Central*) on behalf of **Mr. Colm Imbert** (*Diego Martin East*) asked the hon. Minister of Housing and Settlements:

- (a) Would the Minister state whether any contract was awarded in the year 2000 by the NHA or the Land Settlement Agency or any other agency of the Ministry of Housing and Settlements for infrastructure works to facilitate the relocation of the Oropune Villagers from their present location at Piarco?
- (b) If the answer to part (a) is in the affirmative, would the Minister state whether any of these contracts were awarded without open competitive tender?
- (c) If the answer to part (b) is in the affirmative, would the Minister state the name of such successful contractors, the type of work, the location of the work, the value of the contracts, and the number of contractors invited to tender in each case, and the reasons why open competitive tendering was not used to award these contracts?

The Minister of Housing and Settlements (Hon. John Humphrey): Mr. Speaker, the Land Settlement Agency of the Ministry of Housing and Settlements has awarded a contract for the carrying out of infrastructure development works at the Oropune relocation site. The infrastructure works did not include site electrification, construction of a lift station and force main for the treatment of sewage.

The contract was awarded on a sole selective tendering basis.

The name of the successful contractor is Coosal's Construction Company Limited. The work is for the execution of the infrastructure facilities, inclusive of construction of an office for the project manager, site clearing, grubbing, grading, roads, site drainage, water reticulation and sewage piping system.

The site on which the work is being undertaken is situated at the south-eastern section of the intersection of the Churchill Roosevelt Highway and Golden Grove Road and immediately west of Ice Connection and Innocent Land Development.

The value of the contract is \$9,360,583.75. This figure is exclusive of VAT. A breakdown of the value of the contract is as follows:

- (a) Clearing and grubbing—\$250,000;

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- (b) Site grading—\$592,500; and
- (c) Infrastructure works which include building of roads, site drainage, water reticulation, laying of sewage piping system—\$8,518,083.75;

which totals \$9,360,583.75.

The reasons for the Land Settlement Agency's agreement to the process of sole selective tendering are as follows:

- (i) The severe time constraints for delivery in order to meet the deadline to relocate the villagers so as to facilitate the opening of the new airport terminal.
 - (a) The open tender procedure would have delayed construction start up.
- (ii) A significant section of the project's road system, particularly part of our proposed main boulevard which intersects with the Golden Grove Road is included in the scope of works for the Orange Grove Road upgrade. Coosal's Construction Company Limited, one of the tenderers for the Golden Grove Road upgrade project, was notified by Petrotrin, project managers, that they were the successful tenderer.

**CRIME
(HIGH INCIDENCE)**

[Second Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [July 7, 2000]:

Be it resolved that this honourable House condemn the Government for its failure to deal effectively with the high incidence of criminal activity and crime, especially violent crime, in Trinidad and Tobago.

Question again proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Member for St. Joseph had been speaking when last this Motion was being debated and he is, in fact, into an extension of time and has some 11 minutes left. The Member for St. Joseph.

Hon. Mervyn Assam (St. Joseph): Mr. Speaker, when I was on my legs on the last occasion, I was attempting to paint a picture of the holistic approach that this Government has taken since it assumed office in November 1995 with respect to addressing the crime situation in Trinidad and Tobago. I had indicated how the various Ministries of Government have acted in concert to assist the Ministry of

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National Security and all the expenditure that has been put into that Ministry with respect to hiring of policemen, equipment, vehicles, electronic transmission, updating of the courts and so forth.

But having said that already, I wanted to indicate to you some statistical facts to show the Member for Diego Martin East that he should not be moving such a frivolous and false Motion against this Government.

Mr. Maharaj: Vexatious.

Hon. M. Assam: Vexatious, also, Mr. Speaker.

I should like to point out that prior to this Government coming into office, the crime rate in Trinidad and Tobago was increasing and escalating and this is reflected in crime statistics for the period 1991—1994. Figures available for this period show that crime increased from 16,157 cases in 1991 to 18,620 in 1994, an increase of 13.2 per cent, Member for Diego Martin East. In comparison, over the period 1996—1999, offences on serious crime decreased with this administration from 18,093 in 1996 to 16,260 in 1999; a reduction, Member for Diego Martin East, of 10.1 per cent.

Looking at individual offences such as murders, rapes, robberies, woundings and shootings over the period 1991—1994, one notes that there were increases in all of these categories under a PNM administration, Member for the Diego Martin East. Murders rose from 97 in 1991 to 139 in 1994, an increase of 30.2 per cent, Member for Diego Martin East, under your watch. Rapes rose from 228 in 1991 to 254 in 1994, an increase of 10.2 per cent under the PNM's watch; robberies from 3,099 in 1991 to 4,490 in 1994, an increase of 30.9 per cent, under the PNM's watch; woundings and shootings from 453 in 1991 to 533 in 1994, an increase of 15 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at this administration's record in fighting and arresting crime, you would see a marked difference. The period 1996—1999, however, was marked by a general reduction in crimes just mentioned except rapes. Murders declined from 107 in 1996 to 92 in 1999, a decrease of 16.3 per cent. Robberies declined from 4,075 in 1996 to 3,629 in 1999, a decrease of 10.9 per cent. Woundings and shootings declined from 505 in 1996 to 340 in 1999, a decrease of 32.6 per cent.

Sadly, however, over this period, the incidence of rapes increased by 38 per cent and it has been suggested that one of the reasons for that is people coming forward as they did not go forward before, because of greater confidence in the

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police service and the development of the Community Police Service; also, because of the social services developed by the Ministry of Community and Social Development, the Ministry of Gender Affairs and the Ministry of Health.

This is a spectacular record of a government four years in office that has been able to deal with a crime situation that was escalating under the People's National Movement and the Member for Diego Martin East has the effrontery to come here to tell this House about crime increasing under this Government. He should apologize to the nation and to the House. No wonder he is in so much trouble—he cannot pay his debts; walls he built are falling down; he cannot consummate a contract to build a stadium in Grenada and, recently, I saw where people were suing him because he would not pay them—

Mr. Maharaj: Their just dues.

Hon. M. Assam: Their just dues.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: What about that million-dollar judgment against you?

Hon. M. Assam: You are a lawyer. Tell me that outside and you will see.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Do you want me to bring the evidence?

Hon. M. Assam: Yes. Yes. Bring it. In this article of June 24, 2000, in *The Economist*, headed “The Caribbean—A Tidal Wave of Drugs”, it tells of all the Caribbean islands where drugs are increasing at an exponential rate and the only country in the Caribbean that has been singled out for favourable mention is Trinidad and Tobago. Some steps are being taken; Trinidad has a respected police drug unit and since 1997, a multi-agency outfit linking this with the tax authorities and the customs and immigration service. A joint anti-drug force based in Barbados, known as the Regional Security System, attempts to support the smaller islands. Jamaica is working with the United States Coast Guard to control the sea-borne traffic.

So that, Mr. Speaker, you see what we have done in respect of drugs. We have entered into mutual assistance treaties with the United States, Canada, France, the United Kingdom—all of these countries—in order to arrest the drug trade and we have been extremely successful, not only in arresting and jailing for life, some of these drug dealers; we have had them extradited to other jurisdictions in order for them to face trials in those jurisdictions where they committed offences. For the Member for Diego Martin East to come to speak about crime escalating under this Government is a total falsehood.

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What he should have done when he was in office, he should have solved the problem of the Maximum Security Prison. One article states:

“CABINET RIFT HOLDS UP NEW PRISON”

That is the *Express* of March 9, 1995; he and his Cabinet colleague, the then Minister of National Security, fighting:

“PRISON DELAY AT \$60,000 A DAY”

The *Express* newspaper again, of March 17, 1995; under his watch, the Maximum Security Prison was accruing \$60,000 a day, to the taxpayers' of this country. They demitted office on November 6, 1995, so you could imagine what cost this country had to bear from March 1995 to November 1995, at \$60,000 a day, under the watch of the Minister of Works and Transport, and he comes to this House as if he is some kind of moral creature.

Another articles states:

“NEW PRISON STILL ON HOLD”

Again, an article in the *Express* of May 03, 1999; and not to talk about the Pride Project. The Pride Project is one of the most pernicious projects—*[Interruption]*—I am sorry, May 1995.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at the history of that Minister when he was the Minister of Works and Transport you would see a most lurid one:

“Pegasus Associates Inc a one-man company”

February 3, 1993, the *Express* newspaper.

“Pride a \$1 company”

Express January 29, 1993:

“Mystery firm gets \$m Piarco contract

One-man Texas company out in US \$80 million airport”

Camini Marajh of the *Express* November 1, 1992.

“Of Pride And Prejudice”

Financial and Business part of the *Express*, the airport project:

“...is steeped in secrecy about missed deadlines and, of late, there is outright refusal by government and airport officials to respond to almost any aspect of the now controversial negotiations.”

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“CORRUPTION AT WORKS MINISTRY”

With a big picture of the former Minister of Works and Transport. [*Desk thumping*] Bobol they say; the entire system of tendering in the Ministry of Works and Transport is bobol under Colm Imbert, July 7, 1995. And this man has the gall and the effrontery to come to this Parliament week after week accusing people of corruption on this side, when, Mr. Speaker, he seems to be steeped in those same kinds of accusations that he alleges on this side.

Sunday Express, May 20, 1995:

“Corruption in Works Ministry

Imbert’s report on RIP...”

which is the Road Improvement Programme, that he comes every month and lambastes the Minister of Works and Transport for not reporting:

“Imbert’s report on RIP implicates employees.”

You are implicating employees and you are the Minister? Who is the boss in the Ministry? How could you implicate them? By extension he must be implicating himself. [*Desk thumping*]

Friday June 2, 1995, the *Mirror*:

“5 MINISTRY BIG BOYS IN \$M ROAD RACKET”

You must understand that none of these articles, whether in the *Guardian*, *Express* or the *Mirror* have been refuted, to date, by the former Minister of Works and Transport, and he wants to come here and talk about all kinds of racket and incompetence and all kinds of bobol.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order 36(5).

Mr. Speaker: Standing Order 36(5) deals with the imputation of improper motives. I have been following very, very closely what the Member is saying and, indeed, he is saying things in a type of language which one uses in Parliament, without, indeed, contravening the standing order, which some people in this House are quite good at. I understand where you are coming from but I am afraid that in the circumstance—I have been following it very closely, because it is a very touchy issue and he is referring to articles and this stops short of the standing orders. I am afraid I will allow him to proceed.

Hon. M. Assam: Thank you. What I was trying to do very simply is that when someone comes to this Parliament and accuses this side of incompetence, of

corruption, of bobol, that person must come with his hands clean. It is like when you go to court you must go with your hands clean, but do not come here and pretend to be as white as a lily when in fact, “coal pot must not tell pot that its bottom is black.” [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: I do however want to say to the Member for St. Joseph, that he is almost at the end of his extended time.

Hon. M. Assam: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government, I totally and unequivocally reject this Motion. I want to put on the record that this Government has been singularly responsible for the reduction in crime, for providing all that is necessary in the most holistic fashion, taking all the ministries into account and all the laws that we have introduced into this country, in order to make Trinidad and Tobago a safer place for everybody; and we will continue on our crusade and our mission, “if you do the crime you will do the time”.

Mr. Edward Hart (Tunapuna): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join this very important debate, and it is unfortunate or fortunate that I have to speak after the Member for St. Joseph. I know for a fact that he has a good command of the English language, and whenever he stands on that side of the House, I expect him to lift the standard of the debate. I know for a fact that he was a member of the Arawaks Literary and Debating Club; I never attended a debating club; fellows like Jones P. Madeira, Guiseppi, Mr. Gordon Draper and the like; they produced some good boys.

They were told in that debating club that when you have a weak point, raise your voice. Right through his contribution his decibel level was just a lot of noise and shouting in a shouting match. Apparently, he is disturbed because Sunday last at the convention, after hearing Tchaicovsky’s 1812 Overture playing, he did not hear his name—[*Laughter*] [*Desk thumping*—so he is still wondering what is his position in St. Joseph.

Mr. Assam: Weep not for me, but for yourself and your children; do not weep for me!

Mr. E. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I sat quietly; I did not disturb the Member; now that I have my opportunity to speak—I do not know, he has a way of misbehaving in this House.

Mr. Speaker: On the question of misbehaving, allow me to be the judge of that. Anytime I think that anybody is misbehaving, you could depend on me to intervene. Not only that, anytime you think that anybody is misbehaving and I am not taking note of it, on a point of order you could draw it to my notice and I will deal with it.

Mr. E. Hart: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will be so guided. Mr. Speaker, right now we are in the midst of the emancipation celebrations and, obviously, we are in a sort of joyous mood, so I do not want to get into any shouting match with the Member for St. Joseph.

Concerning this debate that I have entered into here, I recall vividly staying in this honourable House all night, and I made a short contribution at 5.15 the next morning. What were we debating? Whether we should extend the life of the then police commissioner, because he was doing such a good job and so forth, and the Government wanted him to stay on.

Mr. Speaker, we all knew about the introduction of the Cherokee jeeps, we spoke about it over and over; we knew that was not the solution to crime. Just recently one caught afire at a policeman's house in Arouca, Bon Air; many of them are down for repairs, depleted. Then we heard the Prime Minister come and speak about "Operation LEAP", when we were told that we could return to the good old days when we slept with our windows and doors opened and walked the streets freely any hour of the day or night; but that is not happening now. If my memory serves me right, we had six murders in one weekend.

I just want to turn my attention to the beautiful constituency of Tunapuna, which you know so well. Apparently, the Member for St. Joseph got annoyed because my colleague from Diego Martin East referred to newspapers, and he did the same thing today. I just want to talk about Tunapuna in recent times.

This article is from Monday, July 3, 2000, the *Newsday*:

"Ex-con shot dead

Neighbours of Anslem 'Bolo' Baptiste remove his bullet riddled body from his St. Michael Road, St. Augustine home. Baptiste, 27, was shot dead early yesterday morning, in what police believe was a drug related killing."

This was a young man who also attended the Curepe Junior Secondary School, and I saw where Mr. Sat Maharaj alluded to the fact that Dole Chadee also went to Curepe Junior Secondary School and that is why the junior secondary schools have produced a lot of criminals and the educational system has failed.

Then we have in the daily *Express*—although Members on that side were told not to read that newspaper—Wednesday, July 19, 2000:

"Teacher abducted

Body dumped in bushes"

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I attended the funeral a couple days ago—it was very sad—at the St. Charles R.C. Church, especially when one of the twins, an eight-year-old, got up and said a poem about his dad, and how he loved his dad so much. He was abducted while plying his taxi on St. John’s Road. The criminals took him to Port of Spain, threw him in the trunk, bought chicken and chips, ate and then took him...

Mr. Speaker: Simply because you seem exasperated, but I get the impression that there is a criminal matter before the courts and I would ask you please not to go into the gory details, because you unwittingly might be interfering with the administration of justice; so please.

Mr. E. Hart: Once again I will be guided by you, Mr. Speaker. In the *Daily Express* again—I like to read the *Express* newspaper—Thursday, July 6, 2000,

“US Preacher shot in mouth”

Newsday, Tuesday, July 25:

“prisoner attacked by 3 inmates—
Attempted murder in jail”

I do not think this one is before the courts, but from what I understand, this fellow was jailed for babash and yet he was incarcerated in the cells with hardened criminals, which is so unfortunate; now he is in a critical condition there.

We have the Sunday, July 23, *Newsday*:

“KIDNAP SUSPECTS BROUGHT BACK”

This is very recent, and frightening, Thursday, July 27, a memorable day; we just have to look at the bullet holes and we will remember that day:

“Cops seize high-tech guns”

What was said about these guns and the ammunition that they got, Mr. Speaker—three pistols, two rifles, and three submachine guns:

“The Magnite is capable of firing 1,200 rounds of ammunition a minute at a distance of 1,000 yards. It is described as accurate and deadly.

The Sniper rifle has a range of three miles and is bigger than anything the police use here...”

This is very scary, I want to repeat it:

“...bigger than anything the police use here, and the ammunition has the capacity to penetrate body armour. The Remington rifle has a range of two miles. The other guns are used in close combat fighting.”

And so the story goes on and on.

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This one sounds comical but it is a fact: In the *Newsday* of Wednesday, July 26, 2000 it says “Two Cops Face Suspension As Stolen Car Stolen From Police”. What has this country come to, Mr. Speaker? Stolen car stolen from police!

We have heard about rat eating cocaine in the police station. It is like what Sparrow said in his calypso: No pick pocket should look to pick another pick pocket’s pocket. This is what is going on.

In the *Daily Express* today, Friday, July 28, 2000 the headline reads: “Racial slurs lead to brawl—Club Clash”. Race! And when there are people on public platforms who are held in high esteem saying that the people do not like having an “Indian Prime Minister”, this is race, plain race and it is trickling down. “Fellas” get their faces bashed in because of racial slurs. It is alarming. So when we hear on the other side that they are doing such a wonderful job and the Prime Minister stands on the steps of the Usine Ste. Madeleine Police Station with two charts showing in the PNM days crime was at this level, and now in the UNC days they have done so much—Crime is nothing to play with and to politicize, Mr. Speaker.

Most of the Members on the other side live in their ivory towers surrounded by security. They have guards and some of them move around with their bodyguards. We, on this side, and most of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago are exposed to the criminal elements. They have no form of protection, so to come here and politicize and try to score cheap political points in this House by saying that the UNC has done so much for crime and it is going down. I say it is not so, and I am not dealing with statistics, I am dealing with where I live. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, this is a road that you travel very often because as I said, we live in close proximity. Not so long ago a retired public servant, a lady who gave so much for this country, she was an organist in the church, my Sunday school teacher, retired, living a very peaceful life, she was on her way home from the market—and I am speaking of the deceased, Mrs. Vena Paul—someone stole her car, ran off the pavement, killed her and escaped through the savannah and we are not hearing anything about that. We have again, Mr. Peter Powerson, the gentleman who cuts the lawns in Trincity where you live. Michael Ramdhanny, clubbed to death two weeks ago with no evidence of anything. A stone's throw away from me on Tuesday afternoon on my way to a funeral, a robbery took place right in front of me at 3.30 p.m in the day. So what are they talking about crime gone down? It is frightening.

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In the savannah, murder on the Eddy Hart Grounds. So many unreported rapes, yet the Member for St. Joseph is saying that the Member for Diego Martin East did not talk about white collar crime. Mr. Speaker, all kinds of crimes are taking place in this country.

Do you know what I consider a crime? The Member for St. Joseph staging the Miss Universe. The same night of the pageant when everybody in the ballroom was having fun, watching the newly crowned Miss Universe and Evander Holyfield, people were stealing out everything in sight. That is a crime. *[Desk thumping]* We are talking about the poor vendors and the Attorney General is always talking about the small man. The small entrepreneurs come with their toolum, they make their sugar cake and tamarind balls expecting thousands of tourists to purchase these things and there was nothing. They had to fight to get back their money. That is a crime also. When they give a contractor \$100 million to speed up work on the Piarco Airport and nurses suffering and they cannot get medication. That is also a crime. That Government is guilty without a cause.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but I am saying we have reached a stage that is scary in this country. When a chairman of a regional corporation gets gunned down and there are all kinds of gimmicks with \$100,000 reward and all we are hearing is an arrest is imminent and it will continue to be imminent. Nothing is happening so we must not politicize crime at all. This Government has failed miserably.

We live in a culture of crime, and the Member for Nariva talks about the minimum wage being \$7.00 per hour and people are scrambling to live on the \$7.00 and a man kills a girl for a pen. Someone stepped on another's shoe in the carnival show in south. Death again. It is happening all the time. A man was killed for oranges in San Fernando. The Member for Siparia will know about that. And we are going on and on and the Member for St. Joseph has the gall to say this is a frivolous Motion and saying the Member for Diego Martin East is taking a delight in reading from the newspaper clippings. The Member for Arima, he is not here, said do not put crime on the front page. Where to put it? Man dead on the doorsteps, shooting at the Prime Minister's residence. What to do, hide that? Do not publish it? That is what they want? Do not publish crime and only attacking the journalists all the time, they must only publish things to make you all look good. You have failed miserably, gross incompetence. Nepotism, cronyism, corruption, racism are the order of the day. You name it. You all will go down in

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history as the worst Government to ever hold office in this country. [*Desk thumping*] Do you know why?

You all started off every time you got up with, Mr. Speaker, the Government of national unity, this UNC/NAR coalition Government. What has happened to the UNC/NAR coalition now? All we are hearing now is a UNC Government. You bite the hand that feed you. The NAR put you all there and the Member for Tobago West has to come over here, she could not take it. All the bribery, the robbery. All these things are crimes you know.

And when people on that side are offering inducements to people on this side to join them. That is a crime. [*Desk thumping*] I watch the programme *Politics* on a Monday night and they had the politics of Basdeo Panday, Lesson I, Lesson 2, Lesson 3. Lesson 3 aroused my interest and curiosity. This is what Lesson 3 says: The politics of Basdeo Panday. If you want to enslave someone, just find out their desires and either dangle it in front of them like carrots or give it to them. It is emancipation and when we feel we are free we are not, because the man is looking to enslave people. The politics have gone down to gutter level through this UNC Government. They are buying, selling and trading that is why so many Members over there are uneasy—they do not know what their fate is. On Sunday people were waiting and they did not know what was happening, but I will say more when the appropriate time comes.

I heard a football magnate this morning saying he has news for Mr. Manning. In one breath he was saying he hates Mr. Manning and after the candidates are named you want to see him? What kind of rubbish is this? What kind of deceit is this? There are too many hypocritical people and the same parasitic oligarchy which the Prime Minister spoke about, I see him with a list of people to bring— [*Interruption*] Everything is a college now, so next year everything might be a university.

Mr. Speaker: I recognize that it may well be a political year, but we must return to the topic, and although one must give some latitude in terms of that, I ask you please to come back to the question of crime.

Mr. E. Hart: Mr. Speaker, thank you, I am guided. It is how I interpret crime, even in this honourable House where we stand with that yellow tarpaulin on the roof. That is a crime. I see that as a crime, Mr. Speaker. The Attorney General is putting up a building, and here is where we come to do the public's business and when we walk down the corridor we see a sign "Wet slippery floor" and it is dry.

A man paved the savannah where I played football for ten years in the glory days of football and they empty a half load of gravel on Mr. Eden Shand, now he is elevated. He is going to see about roads now. I find that is a crime. Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat what I said earlier on, this Government is a very deceptive Government, it has taken people for a ride and the time is coming close when it has to take its exit. *[Interruption]*

Okay, Mr. Attorney General, I am a “fella” always open to advice but I cannot help. Before I finally take my seat, I must say something on the closure of the Youth Camps. It is one of the biggest crimes the Member for Chaguanas has committed and he will pay for it. *[Cross talk]*

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Mr. E. Hart: Do not try to trivialize what I am saying here. I say the closure of the youth camps, the Civilian Conservation Corps, all the programmes we had for youths in the country, this Government has gotten rid of all of them. The NAR brought in YTEPP, and I commend them for that, that was vision. What have you done to the YTEPP now? You have destroyed it. You cannot tell this House what new programme you have at the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. I was there for 10 years while you were in customs with its corruption, I was working there in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, so I know about that ministry.

Mr. Assam: They fired you as parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Speaker: Order please. May I appeal to hon. Members to hold their fire until such time as they are recognized to speak? And may I appeal to the Member for Tunapuna to speak to me, it would help in cutting much of the crosstalk.

Mr. E. Hart: Through you, Mr. Speaker, for a man who is supposedly an intelligent man to say they fired me as parliamentary secretary. I was transferred from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs to the Ministry of Education, not fired, unlike what happened to him when he was in England with his scissors tail coat and top hat. *[Desk thumping]* It will not be too long before you will know who will be fired and who will not be fired.

Mr. Speaker, there are other speakers to join this debate and on behalf of the residents of Tunapuna, the people who are living virtually under siege, youth groups have to hold their meetings early on afternoons to get home earlier than usual. There is an aura of fear, they are not feeling comfortable and no honest citizen could stand here today and tell me he or she is more comfortable and

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feeling safer now than five or ten years ago. I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very happy emancipation.

Thank you.

2.15 p.m.

The Minister of Tobago Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Development (Dr. The Hon. Morgan Job): Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand the statement of the mover of the Motion, the hon. Member for Diego Martin East, a chronicle of waffling; of mischief; of misinformation; of duplicity; of deviousness reminding me of a book I read—and I still have it in my library—titled *Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics*. Mr. Speaker, his polemic does not deal with statistics, so it must deal with the other two things.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind this honourable House and the nation in extension, that I have been pilloried by every Member over there—from the time I came in here and even before—for saying things that are manifestly of a didactic nature enjoining the population and the people to abandon denial; to abandon hypocrisy; so that we can better help the people from Laventille, Pinto Road and the people in the East/West Corridor. Mr. Speaker, I use language.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President, the Prime Minister and you were in the Trinity Cathedral, and then you did walk and came and laid wreaths over there to commemorate a most savage and criminal attack on the democracy that we hold so dear. As a consequence of hearing people from Laventille and elsewhere say that the only thing that Bakr did not do right was that he did not kill Robinson, I said those people who said that Bakr should have killed Robinson are swine, and for saying that, they nearly murdered me. All of them say it: I said that all black people are swine. I never did say so.

I come into this Parliament and this is from the Member's *Hansard* record, and he was going on. I better start mildly:

“While this was going on her sister was locked in the car trunk, she is now warded in a serious condition.”

And the Member goes on like that:

“A student was killed and shot in the head; eighteen-year-old became latest murder victim.”

Note the age. And I am sure that who shot him might have been 18 years old or something like that:

“Victim No. 36, shot in the head in a house in Dibe; people were raped and robbed; children burnt and buried alive in shallow graves; preachers being shot in the mouth; seventy-year-old woman raped by police officers; killings, shooting matches ending in murder, knifing; kidnapped; killed; mom and daughters on murder charge; battered body found—hands, feet, mouth, guns, strangled to death and kidnapped hours before.”

Mr. Speaker, these are things I have copied. I have taken my time and studied the Member’s contribution and I am reading from it:

“Businessman shot by bandits and died; sixteen-year-old was murdered for \$1.00 more—stabbed him in the chest; somewhere a woman, man or child is being beaten, chopped, raped and suddenly becoming a victim of domestic violence; one woman ended up in hospital or the morgue, broken families, broken bodies, broken spirits and death.”

All this in aid of trying to support a Motion that says that this Government is not doing anything about crime.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to burden people with the sound of this incessant creepish love affair with violence and sexuality, and the sensuous pleasure that some people get out of that kind of violence. So the Member goes on:

“Thirteen-year-old girl gang-raped for three days by three men; while at home a man she knew demanded sex and forced her into a bedroom and raped her; another man joined minutes later and raped her. The following day another man visited her at home and raped her again; a woman 70 raped by cop, a man known to her, drove to a quarry and ordered her to the back seat and had sex with her, after raping her he engaged in other acts of indecency then raped her a second time and raped her twice and drove home. A policeman was charged with rape, serious indecency and attempted buggery of a 70-year-old woman; rapist slits girl with cutlass; a 15-year-old girl was slit open between her legs with a cutlass by a man who then proceeded to repeatedly rape her, she was left bleeding profusely. While this was going on her sister was left locked in the car trunk and the woman is now warded in a serious condition bleeding profusely between her legs.”

Mr. Speaker, now, this is Parliament, the Member came here to move a Motion to say that the Government is not dealing with crime. Why do we need

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this morbid, cacophony of discordant nonsense? To what purpose! I cannot understand it. I do not know what it is I have to refute because all these criminal acts that have been committed here have been done by people, or most of them—that is except those who are babies—who are more than five years old. Was it in November 1995 that this Government came into power? What date was it?

Hon. Member: November 26, 1995.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: November 25, 1995 or whatever it is. So anybody who came into Trinidad and Tobago by birth after that date is less than five years old. Am I right? So I do not understand. All these monsters that are being described in such gruesome fashion by the Member from Diego Martin East must have been nurtured under the PNM government or the NAR government. PNM has been in this country since 1956 and there are grandmothers in the Beetham and elsewhere in this country whose average age is 25 years. They did not deal with it. When I wanted to talk about it so that they could have dealt with it, they closed down my radio programme.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know that Bill Clinton in America or Tony Blair would ever think a thought to call a radio station or television station and tell the manager, “I want you to close down that programme.” Do you believe that is possible in any civilized country in this world, the Head of State or the Prime Minister or whoever it is, would call a media house and talk to the Chief Executive Officer or the General Manager and say, “Look, you have to shut down this programme”? When I confronted the Member for San Fernando East about it in Parliament, when I came in here, the Member said he would do it again because he thought he was doing the right thing. These are the kinds of people who have been running this country. They do not want to deal with truth!

Mr. Speaker, I cannot remember the title of this book that I copied this thing from but it is from a reputable source and I want to read it. I can say this but I want to read because people would want to believe that I am the only one who thinks these thoughts. It is talking about juvenile gangs and it says:

“The social progress of modern societies is always attended by a trail of social problems. Growth in wealth, education and technological innovations have created problems in addition to the benefits they introduced. This is true for all types of societies. Capitalists and communists states, developed and underdeveloped countries and religious and materialistic societies alike are all confronted by the social upheavals which seem associated with any attempt to move forward and improve the quality of life.

Contemporary events in countries as diverse as the Soviet Union, China, Iran, and the Caribbean show the advent of juvenile gangs which create insurmountable problems for the authorities. From all accounts these juvenile gangs show similar characteristics to those which have been troubling American and other Western countries since the sixties. They are the symptoms of societies which seek social progress without attention to the existing social problems or those problems which progress itself creates.”

Mr. Speaker, and it goes on to talk about Jamaica and so on. The reason I am quoting this is I want to deal with this intellectually bankrupt chronology of falsehoods brought here by the Member from Diego Martin East, suggesting that this Government is responsible for all that is happening in this country.

The Minister of Education has on her desk there a document which I have oft times quoted in this country. *How Literate Are We?* That document is a report on the IEA Reading Literacy Study conducted in Trinidad and Tobago between 1989 and 1992. Now, was Mr. Basdeo Panday the Prime Minister between 1989 and 1992? Who was it!

Mr. Assam: And which they hid.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: This document was prepared by the National Research Committee and it is a most damning document because that is not the only one. I have also here in my hand, excerpts from a report of the Cabinet-appointed committee to examine juvenile delinquency and youth crime in Trinidad and Tobago and it is dated January 1994.

2.25 p.m.

Let me say again for the record, for the audience and for the national community, this is the report of a Cabinet-appointed committee. It means that the Prime Minister and his Cabinet would have sat down, maybe deliberating on some submission of a member of Cabinet or some member of the public, and said, “We should set up a committee to investigate this matter of juvenile delinquency and youth crime”. Am I right? Then, they would have appointed members to this committee. Is that not the way it is done? And then they would have sent them letters and said, “Start on your journey and you have six months to report”. They brought in a report in January 1994!

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am amazed that we are in the year 2000 with Internet and global communication and so much egregious nonsense is said in Parliament here by those Members of the Opposition as if they are contributing to the

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edification or to the knowledge base or the leadership of people in this country. Why are we allowing it? Why is the public allowing it?

I am not quoting from my own head here. This is a document that exists in this country. Let me quote from it, Mr. Speaker. It says:

“Many of these children...”

We are talking about these children who end up as criminals.

“are living and developing in neighborhoods...”

Of course! Like those neighborhoods where the most ignorant and illiterate people will tell you, “I am going to dead a PNM”. Those are the neighbourhoods we are talking about. They do not say so, but we all know that.

“...where there are limited positive role models for appropriate social behaviour. Frequently, the only adults they see who are making a decent living are ‘making it’ at illegal activities.”

This is their report! They did nothing about it! It goes on to say:

“The resultant problems due to student frustration, unrealized expectations and low self-esteem are visible within the nation's schools.”

This is where the crime starts.

“Similarly as indicated in other sections of the report the family environment, teenage mothers, poverty may lead to children being disturbed with consequential problem behaviour in school reflecting their frustration and low self-esteem.

The committee recognized that the quality of education that pre-schoolers, as well as primary and secondary school students now receive may also negatively impact on student behaviour and foster frustration, unrealized expectations and low self-esteem. Moreover, since most pre-schools are privately run and costly, the majority of children cannot attend at this crucial development stage, when compensatory verbal and other skills training has been shown to be more effective.”

And they go on to say in this report here that one can go to primary schools in some of these depressed areas in the PNM constituency and identify in the classrooms of primary schools, the boys who are going to be criminals, who will not live to be 15 years old and the girls who will end up a “child mother”. It is all in their report. They refuse to tell us here because they want everybody in this

country to live in denial. They do not deal with the problem and then they come in the Parliament here to talk a pile of egregious rubbish that the UNC is causing crime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have done nothing about this. I have here a report No. 2088TR; a document of the World Bank, and there is a table in this document. This document was in June 2000. That is last month, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and there is a table here: the Main Common Entrance Score and Enrollment in Secondary Schools by School Type and Family Income Level. It is important that we come into this Parliament and talk sense.

I want to remind everybody here that there is a tradition in this Parliament that when someone comes here for the first time, no one heckles him. He is left alone. Do you remember when I spoke the first time? They gave me hell! Do you know why? They never wanted me to settle down so I could educate people about all these things.

There is a whole table here, and it lists by column, school type and then the main common entrance score out of a possible hundred. It puts the income levels: upper income, middle income, lower income and unemployed parent. It gives an indication of how evil this PNM role of denial is to their own people. This is what I was trying to do, and this is what this Government is trying to do. To make sure that the idea and the principle are captured by the statement, “a rising tide lifts all boats”, “no chain is stronger than its weakest link”.

You cannot develop this country, even in the PNM constituencies, the people who live there and their children, the way the PNM has nourished and nurtured them and exploited the fractures of the reality that these people live in. They exploited it. They did nothing to educate them, nothing to edify them, nothing to emancipate them from myth and tribal anxiety. They did nothing to liberate them from illiteracy and innumeracy. Nothing! The better to use them, to lasso them like so many donkeys onto the flagpole of the PNM. [*Desk thumping*]

The people who are now at junior secondary, the morning shift; what percentage of those children come from upper income homes? It is 1.9 per cent. The evening shift; what percentage of them come from upper income homes? It is 1.9 per cent. What per cent of them come from lower income homes? It is 37 per cent in both morning and evening shifts.

The mean scores that these morning and evening shift people are getting is 54 or 53 out of 100. Those who are in the whole day schools get 60 and the

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percentage of those who come from middle income is 47 per cent, and from lower income families, 36 per cent.

Let us go to the seven-year traditional college. What is their mean Common Entrance score? It is 82 out of 100. How many of them come from upper income houses? It is 20 per cent. How many come from middle income houses? It is 61 per cent. Those who go to five-year traditional schools? Their mean score is 75 out of 100. Ten per cent of them are from upper income households and 62 per cent from middle income.

This is the reality that I was trying to tell these people about on the radio. They evilly, wickedly and deliberately went all over this country and used the media to say that "Job does not like black people". So, they keep the black people in ignorance! All of them voting for PNM! That is what has been happening. They come here talking their foolishness about the UNC is causing crime. The criminals, the fellows who beat up the teacher with the crank iron and threw him over the cliff, where did they come from? Did they not see the newspapers? Where did they come from?

Take the list of all the crimes he is talking about. What is the statistical probability that these people who are beating people with crank irons on their heads and throwing them over the Lady Young Road are living in Bayshore? Almost zero! This is not to say that Bayshore and those places do not have criminals living there, but that again is the problem with the PNM. Because people are innumerate, they cannot understand mathematics, so when we talk about probability and chances, they do not understand what we are talking about.

In the meantime, the things they need to do to help their own people, they never do it. The Member for Tunapuna is saying that the Government is responsible because he is reading something from the newspaper and the Government has not done any investigation. How on earth can one live in a democracy, in a society with the kind of constitution we have, where the last thing this Government should ever want to think about is going and calling Mr. Guy and saying, "Somebody fell over a bridge or somebody's daughter got raped. I want you to go and make sure the CID..." They cannot do that. I act as the Minister of National Security often since I have been here and I would not even think to do that. Investigation of crime is a matter for the police, protected by the Constitution.

The most stupid Cabinet member would be the one to say that the Member for Tunapuna said something about some family of his who got raped or bugged

and “I want you to send an investigator.” I cannot do that! If the police are under-performing—as is a logical implication from what they are saying—that cannot be the fault of the UNC. The UNC is here five years now and it is trying mindfully. This Government has been here doing all that is humanly possible with the constraints and the limitations of time to make sure the police are more efficient and more effective.

I have a document done by Selwyn Ryan who had a thing called the Institute for Ethnic Studies. They took a set of taxpayers’ money and gave it to Ryan to investigate racism in employment. I do not know why they did not come to me. I could have done the same thing. I would not have to do any research. I would have told them. If one reads that report, it is such a shame. I am sorry I did not remember to bring it because I would have liked to quote it.

It says quite clearly that the people who do best in the police examinations for the previous years—I did not write it, Selwyn Ryan wrote it and gave it to Mr. Manning—are the people of Indian descent, but they do not get selected because the people who select them are all of African descent. It is written there in black and white. I did not write it, and they are coming and talking foolishness. The quality of the police in this modern day and age, when a drug baron in Colombia controls more resources than every Caribbean territory, some criminal conspiracy, he controls billions of dollars. He has state-of-the-art equipment, he has all the lawyers he can hire and pay for all the accountants, more computers, more software at his command, and they want to put a set of "duncy" people that the PNM put there to fight him.

Crime fighting in the modern world has to be a very intelligent operation. So, that means that every part of the process has to be equal to the task one sets oneself. Do not come here and try to tell people the Government has to do police work to investigate crime. Do not talk about the quality of the policing and the failure of the police as if, in fact, it started five years ago. This is an endemic and systemic problem that takes time in terms of the culture and behaviour of institutions for you to modify. It is a problem for all of us. It has to be a non-partisan issue.

I remember well that the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition got together earlier on in the year on the same matter to look at the problem of recruitment. Earl Lovelace wrote a book called *The Dragon Can't Dance*. Somewhere around the first chapter, Lovelace discusses a scene where some of the people who grew up as his boyhood friends and who were criminals, rapists

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and pickpockets; one day he is going up Laventille and he sees a police jeep coming down, and these same bandits and rapists are coming down with guns in their hands in the jeep. It is telling us something about the PNM method of recruiting police. I did not write *The Dragon Can't Dance*. Let us deal with reality.

The Member says that Ramdhanie was clobbered to death. I do not know whether he said clubbed or clobbered because they are two different words. One can club somebody and clobber him. The person who did the clobbering is not less than five years old.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with your permission, somewhere in the contribution of the Member for Diego Martin East, he spends a lot of time talking about the role models of the UNC, the Prime Minister, the things he does and says. He talks about the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre. He says all these things as if to say the reason we have crime in this country is because of the set of people who sit on this side. Role models; the kind of culture and kind of psychology. I want to put on record, I am reading here from *Going to Ground* by Jeremy Taylor. I do not know who Jeremy Taylor is. I understand he is some journalist. Here is a compendium of his essays. This one was written in 1989. I will quote from it:

“Years after his death, I still find Williams a complex and baffling personality, and the question of how he could tolerate the activities of an O’Halloran, or ignore them, is just one of the many that a serious biography will have to answer. ‘Where was the Williams who stood up and spoke in Woodford Square?’ asked C.L.R. James after Williams’s death. ‘That Williams, nobody has seen him for years’.”

I am quoting from Jeremy Taylor, not Morgan Job.

He goes on to talk about education. Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the most potent, one of the most necessary explanations for the crime situation in this country has to be the education system. The PNM knew that because as I said, they have documentation, they have the document, “How Literate are We”. I am going to quote from that later where they say that it is no longer a doubt, no longer a question that crime in Trinidad and Tobago is a logical consequence of illiteracy and failure. It was written there in 1992. Mr. Manning had it on his desk. They did nothing about it and they come here frothing at the mouth talking about the UNC causing crime.

I am quoting from Jeremy Taylor who says:

“The expansion of educational opportunity was one of Williams's greatest achievements; but, having created the schools, he was less interested in their progress, in teaching quality and class size and exam results. He could recite all the ‘serious shortcomings’...”

And he put the serious shortcomings in quotes because he is quoting a statement that Williams gave.

2.40 p.m.

"He could recite all the ‘serious shortcomings’ of the system, as he did a couple of months before his death, but as if they were nothing to do with him. In the same way, this distinguished historian, who made his name debating at the Public Library, could never stir himself to rescue the Central Library after its collapse in 1974...

Williams gave Trinidad and Tobago the slogan ‘Discipline, Production, Tolerance’. Yet when he died much of the public sector was in a state of chronic disorder—inefficient, unproductive, undisciplined and unprofitable. Here, and in a wide array of services from hospitals to telephones, implementation was secondary: it seemed that it was enough to enunciate the problem and declare that something had to be done. Actually doing it was another matter.

But anyone who pointed this out was attacked with the weapons of nationalism; to say that things didn’t work was an insult to the country, it was sabotage, imperialist propaganda, the conspiring of vested interests. ‘What is really being said is that we, the people of Trinidad and Tobago, cannot make anything work, that we do not know our place.’”

You cannot deal with the problem by living in denial. That is the PNM way—live in denial. Do nothing about the education system when they tell you that you can go in the primary school and see who is going to be a rapist, bandit or gunman—all of them. You can see them there. You had it on your desks and you did nothing to go to Trou Macaque, to go to Laventille, to talk to the people to say, "This is what my task force, my education committee tells me." I continue:

“Now, I have to engage you because prestige schools are not about buildings on Pembroke Street; prestige schools are not about buildings on Frederick Street; prestige schools are about prestige parents and prestige teachers. That is what prestige schools are about, so I cannot carry you to the

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prestige schools. You have to get the children not to waste their time watching TV, not to be wining like a hog and 'jookin' like a dog for Carnival when they should be preparing for Common Entrance. Create an ambience and environment for excellence at school."

This is a problem that deserves and merits honesty. You cannot ignore it. You cannot live in denial. You cannot say, "I am not going to talk about it because it will make people ashamed." That is the way to keep them in bondage. Keep them enslaved to their own ignorance and weakness and like Manigat, a man from Haiti who wrote after Papa Doc's death—I quote what he said because some people feel I am really joking:

"Duvalier's political 'genius', writes Haitian social scientist Leslie Manigat in a paper following his death, was mainly the art of using to his profit the structural ills of the Haitian system. He also exploited—being careful not to remedy them—the psychological and objective consequences of the injustices of which the popular and mainly rural masses were victims..."

That is the exact programme that I am talking about here. Exploiting illiteracy, exploiting poverty, exploiting innumeracy, exploiting ethnic anxiety, the better to enslave people to a backward set of ideas. That is why we have the problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I repeat, no responsible government in this country can ever forget what the ancients had known: that rising tides lift all boats and no chain is stronger than its weakest link. How on earth can you carry Trinidad and Tobago anywhere when you carry on this PNM programme of keeping black people in Laventille, Trou Macaque, Waterhole and Pinto Road living in denial, refusing to deal with their problems and only dreaming for patronage?

When I went on the radio and said that, they called up Ken Gordon and told him to close down the programme. Do not deny it.

Mr. Maharaj: Who called Ken Gordon?

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Manning, the Member for San Fernando East and he boasted about it. When I asked him why, he said he was going to do it again.

Mr. Maharaj: He is interfering with the press.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: The press, you saw Julian Rogers talking about the press—a band of "mediocrats"—people who cannot read; those who did not get five passes go and become journalists and act as editors. That is why they always misconstrue what I say. I used to say they used to do it because of mischief and

wickedness. I understand now they do it because they are just intellectually decrepit. They cannot help themselves. They do not understand English, so whenever I speak, the kind of language I use is beyond their ken so they interpret it in all kinds of weird and devious ways and they go and say Job say what Job could never even think to say. That is what Rogers was talking about. The press in this country is one of the baneful influences that we must suffer that is oppressing and burdening the country.

Mr. Maharaj: It is not all that.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Well, most of it. They raised a crusade against me lying on me for decades, misrepresenting what I said. We have to deal with that.

I was on the point of saying when I used to be on the radio that the PNM, the Unit Trust and all of them closed me down, I used to be pleading with people saying if you want to help poor people's children, do those things for them which the middle class and the upper class will do for their children. We need to focus on how we can help those in greatest need. Why do we not get a music programme to teach children music, instead of using the steel pan as a fascist emblem to always be telling people pan is the national instrument—pan; pan; pan—and we leave these people abjectly ignorant about every line or note of music or of every other instrument?

I got into the Cabinet and I put forward a proposal to the Cabinet that children in Tobago and in Trinidad should be introduced, as a matter of course of their core curriculum, to music from age five, from First Year. That programme is going on in Tobago. This Cabinet allowed some funds to be allocated to start a pilot project in Tobago in order to learn from that exercise so that we can extend it to Trou Macaque, to Morvant RC, to all these schools where they have people trapped in illiteracy and ignorance, and would not do anything about them for the last 40 years, the better to be screaming like wild feral curs that, "Ah going to dead PNM." The programme is going to come here. This Government will be allowed to stay in power so it can educate and bring music in schools to all the children all over the East-West Corridor, to Point Fortin, to San Fernando East and wherever they are being denied it. It is going to come here.

As I am speaking to you, the children in Maha Sabha schools have a programme like that. What do they call it?

Mr. G. Singh: Baal Vikaas.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Baal Vikaas. They have it. The Indian children have it. When I was telling the PNM to do it for the black people, they would not do it.

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They closed down my programme but come here talking about crime and that the UNC is causing crime. Wicked people; evil people; that is what they are; exploiting the disadvantages; exploiting the natural weaknesses in the culture which is not the children's fault.

It is not the fault that a child is born where he or she is born but it is the fault of every leader and every government that thereafter, they did not do as much as they needed to do to help that child cope with the disadvantages that they met there. You see it when you read what this gentleman has to say. You read Carl Campbell—*Endless Education*—they do not need anything more. Carl Campbell said here—I do not know who this man Carl Campbell is but I have some other papers by him. The press is the University of the West Indies. Apparently, he is a lecturer or a professor at the University of the West Indies somewhere.

Carl Campbell says quite clearly in simple, unambiguous language that the education system after 1956 was the greatest political boon to the PNM, which gives the explanation that this man can say what he said. We all knew, on the basis of the evidence, that the poorer classes of people were the ones who were ending up in crime and that is not something unique to Trinidad and Tobago; it is there; it is documented all over the world.

But you have to go now and say, "What do I do because I care? I have to go inside and I never did it." They come here talking a set of foolishness about the UNC causing crime in Trinidad and Tobago. The mind of a criminal is already formed by the time he passed 7 years old. It is already formed by the time he has reached 11-plus, so when he is 17, 18, 19 or 20, how dare they come here to say they are blaming the UNC.

There is a word in the English language—hooligan. Hooligan was used first in the English language—I took a note and have it somewhere—I think in 1898. Hooligan was a family of Irish immigrants in southeast London that behaved rowdy, were always getting in fights and always misbehaving. I am saying that because I want you to understand what I mean when I say criminal behaviour among underprivileged and poor people is not a unique thing to Trinidad and Tobago; it is not a unique thing to black people; it is not a unique thing to anywhere.

If you go to the ghettos in Bombay, you will find the same thing. All over the world, whatever ethnic group or country you are in, the culture, the ennui, the sociological entropy, like in physics, the principle of increasing disorder is a function of poverty, of lack of structure and it is the responsibility of Government

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to go and help them out of that. The PNM never did anything because if they helped them out of that, they would get bright like Job and then they would not want to vote PNM, so they left them where they are.

I have a book here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, titled *THE CULTIVATION OF HATRED—The Bourgeois Experience Victoria to Freud*. I think the copyright is 1890. It is dealing with the same question I am talking about.

Mr. Hart: People killing people and you reading all them "chupidness". People murdering people. You reading book after book after book.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: You do not want to read any books, so you could leave.

I am saying that even back then in the 19th century, people knew that to deal with crime, you had to deal with how you educated poor people. They are talking about England here where there are mostly white people. Let me read this paragraph:

"Unlike James, who called for the taming of his own class, most bourgeois cultural critics were satisfied that only the lower orders needed moral equivalents for their aggressiveness. It seemed obvious that the men and women with the smallest stake in their polity also have the smallest reserves of self-control. What was most urgent, then, was to devise pacifying activities analogous to James's moral equivalent—constructive outlets for the bellicosity the masses exhibited in drunken riots, unbuttoned festivities, wife-beating, sexual violence, and perhaps worst of all, irregular work habits. Mastery over a world growing more interdependent by the decade appeared out of reach without the defensive strategies that would reduce savages in town and country to orderliness and sobriety."

Again, the first time the phrase "safety valve" was used was around 1842, by an English travel writer and journalist, W. Cooke Taylor, who urged that:

"... 'there must be safety-valves for the mind; that is there must be means for its pleasurable, profitable and healthful exertion.'"

He went on to say if you give little boys footballs to kick, they would not be likely to be kicking policemen in alleys.

I am telling you this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make it clear to the public that the line that the PNM is taking is bogus; it is spurious; it is intellectually shallow; it is without merit; it is nonsensical. What they should have done was to bravely,

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when they had the opportunity, when they had an oil boom, when they had 36 years then another four years running this country, have a massive programme to make sure that all children go to primary school and get a good education; that all children go to secondary school and get a good education; that vocational schools and opportunities were developed equal to the need. Many of these young people who are in crime, cannot read.

In the United States of America, 90 per cent of the people in prisons are illiterate. It is not different in Trinidad and Tobago. If you go into the prisons, you will find, to the shock and surprise of many, there are people in there with IQs that are in the 190s and 200s so they are not there because something is wrong with their brain; they are there because they are in a system that neglected them. You know when Omar Khayyam said, "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness on the desert air." That is what we are talking about. That is Omar Khayyam.

Mr. Sudama: That is not Omar Khayyam; that is Gray.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Gray would have taken it from Omar Khayyam. I am telling you. I have read it in Omar Khayyam so do not quarrel with me. The next time I am coming to Parliament, I will bring it. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Valley: You could show him in the Cabinet, you know.

2.55 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the whole Motion missed the point, because they came in here with a vengeful attack on the Government, claiming that in the last five years all the crimes, murders, rapes, massacres, wife beaters and people who dig out women's eyes and cut off their tongues, all these people are doing that because of the UNC, as if they were not doing it when the PNM was there. Mano Benjamin was digging out people's eyes when the PNM was in power. Do you not know that? All these people, Sewel Gordon, Boysie Singh, Samuel Jacob, the fellow in Wallerfield, Samuel Jacob—[*Interruption*]—Abdul Malik, this country has a chronology of these kinds of serial killers and other kinds, all kinds of barbaric people.

All these young people who are "tiefing" cars and doing all kinds of devious things are not created by the People's National Movement. There was a case where the Carrington and the Sa Gomes ladies were butchered in that gruesome manner down at Westmoorings. One of the guys, who is in jail now for life, was 15 years old at the time when he committed that act, and you saw his nonchalant

and calm manner, and you looked at him and you knew that he would have killed other people before, and that he had no feelings. The man is a psychopath!

It has nothing to do with who the politician is; I would not say that Mr. Manning caused that, or that Chambers before him caused it; except I would say that they did not do enough to save little boys like that, to help their mothers and the communities that they come from deal with those kinds of problems. This is the line that you should take. Do not come in here and make this issue a partisan thing.

Hear this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in his opening speech, he said, "In fact, their latest buzz word is Common Entrance, every child will get a place; whether it is in a rum shop or a cow shed"—and the rest of them laughed—"or a primary school, as the case may be. That is the latest buzz on the national agenda. It is no longer crime." What greater irony can you get!

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are PNM documents telling us that the problem of crime in Trinidad and Tobago is about primary school education, and the Member for Diego Martin East comes in here and says that we stopped talking about crime, we are talking about primary school and education, and that, in his view, is sacrilege. You see, he does not understand that crime and control of crime is not about buying police jeeps; it is not about getting 7,000 more policemen; it is about getting that connection with parent and child and community so that you nourish a moral universe, a pattern of behaviour, a set of attitudes early that school can build upon so that the child does not end up in crime. The most revolutionary thing that is going on is the debate that this country is engaging in about education. [*Desk thumping*]

If you understand what is going on, if we do not take this chance we are doomed and lost forever. This is the greatest opportunity in the last 100 years that this country has had to deal with the question of the poorer class, the no class, the black and the underprivileged, to bring them to the modern world. This is the chance to talk about quality education, to make sure that those disadvantages that some people suffer are compensated for by particular and targeted interventions that are appropriate to the purpose; that is what we should be talking about. Instead of that, we have this most unseemly, the most futile, the most empty, the most vacuous, and irrelevant debate about whether or not we should be talking about crime. Talk, talk, that is what they are about.

Then the Member goes on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to talk about statistics. The man is an engineer, a fortunate man at that. He is part of the upper class; his

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mother is an astronomer and his father is an engineer—a good friend of mine too—so he is fortunate, much more fortunate than I was, none of my parents went to high school. He is in the upper class so he understands these things. He is talking about statistics and how statistics are dangerous things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, listen to me carefully. Have you not sat right here in this House and heard the Member for San Fernando East time after time, Friday after Friday, boast about how the People's National Movement made this country 98 per cent literate? He comes in here bravely, talking about statistics. What part of this country are you finding 98 per cent of the people literate? Certainly not Trou Macaque; certainly not Laventille. What other constituency is a PNM stronghold? Call it for me. *[Interruption]* Where are you going to find 98 per cent of the people literate? Nowhere! If you find any community where 98 per cent of the people are literate, they are not voting for the PNM; that I am sure about. *[Interruption]*

The people in Tobago are not stupid, that is why they are supporting me with all I am doing in education for them. *[Desk thumping]* They know that I care about them; I am not about to fool them. I am not a traditional politician to talk a set of stupidity to people and leave them wallowing in their misery. I told them before I went up for election what I was about, and I am doing every single thing that I promised to do. *[Desk thumping]*

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: And they believe you.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: This nonsense about being 98 per cent literate, how could the Leader of the Opposition be spreading this bogus lie? Remember I talked about lies, damned lies and statistics? Well it is not a statistic so it has to be one of the other two. He goes on in the PNM convention talking this rubbish about 98 per cent literacy, when, in fact, the people who are trapped in illiteracy—it is about time I quote this section about how literate we are, because it says quite clearly that crime and illiteracy—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the Member for Tobago East has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. *[Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar]*

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleading—I have always done so—for the poor and the oppressed, because I have come from among them.

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I am not as fortunate as the Member for Diego Martin East to have both parents who are university graduates and professors. My parents never went to high school, so I understand the problem. Most of my peers and cousins are still living in Laventille, that is why I know so much about it. I still have first cousins living there; Trou Macaque, all over the place. I used to live on Belgrade Street with all my cousins when I was going to Queen's Royal College; I know the place, so when I am pleading, I am pleading from a matter of knowledge, and this is what the information that was available to the Government says.

It says:

"There is now convincing evidence of the urgent need for diagnostic focus on the potential instructional, independent and performance reading levels of our younger children in order to forestall the danger that now threatens the very fabric of our society, the education system and the nation at large. Furthermore, the intimate relationship between reading failure and crime can no longer be disputed."

Black and white it is there! What did they do? He comes here with a bogus, nonsensical, stupid motion, he did nothing about this, but he is coming here to say "is the UNC caused this". He was in the Cabinet; all of them were there.

The next paragraph continues:

"Correcting the blatant imbalance and injustice in reading, curriculum and supervision which has been ignored and kept in subjection for far too long a period, the problem of illiteracy in our schools continues at a rapid pace to take its cancerous course incapacitating the potency of the delivery in all other subject matter areas."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you know what that means? If you cannot read you cannot do mathematics. There is no physics text book in this country, that any child would use, that is not written in English, so if you cannot read, how are you going to do physics? If you cannot read, how are you going to know about Boyle's law and Charles' law? You cannot know that! The Syrian children would know; the French Creole children would know; the upper class blacks and Indian children will know. Poor those children from Laventille, they cannot read and those guys are keeping them living in denial; so they are 98 per cent literate and they cannot read "A" for apple, "B" for bat, so they end up in crime.
[*Interruption*]

You do not even understand your own country. Let me tell you something, if there are 50,000 people in Tobago, there are 200,000 people in Trinidad who were

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either born in Tobago and living down here or are the children of people who were born in Tobago, I have no doubt about that. If there are 50,000 people in Tobago you have, at least, 300,000 people living in Trinidad who were either born in Tobago or are the children of people who were born in Tobago. Do you understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker? So her asking this foolish, stupid question about how I could have lived in Laventille and talk about Tobago, she does not understand.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: You just lumped all of Laventille together.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Mr. Deputy Speaker, these wicked people are the ones who have kept those black people entrammelled, enslaved, barricaded, battened down in the wombs and tombs of ignorance, the better to use and abuse them. Once somebody like me went public with it, they nearly killed me in this country. I came into the Parliament and they did not want me to start talking, so that I might have gotten fed up and left, so that I would not be here today to reveal to all in this country the evil that is the People's National Movement.

Last year, since I am in the Cabinet, I got the list of children who passed the Common Entrance Examination, the one who came first, the highest mark, right down. If you read the list of the first 100 names—I do know that there are people looking like me in this country, because of the way we go; there are people looking like me, physically, phenotype, pheno-typically, but they are named Singh, and it is going to be more and more like that, despite what Sat Maharaj and the rest of them feel—but, nevertheless, the probability is still true, the first 80 names were like Singh, Gopie, Latchman, Lal, Bhagan, Sirju. The reason for that, is that those people over there kept their own people in tralldom; they gave them bad schools. That document that—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: My daughter was in the first 100, but she is not a Singh.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do not understand mathematics, they do not understand statistics; that ignorance is what you are talking about; stupid, silly, intellectually backward, a cretin, devious; that is what they are. [*Interruption*] They do not understand. In this document there is a list of the 181 schools that took part in this reading/literacy study. I want to make the point, because they want to distract me; they do not want the country to understand what I am saying. [*Interruption*]

Let me call out the first 15 schools on the list. Mr. Deputy Speaker, could you quiet that Member please.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member for La Brea, you will have your time right after him. [*Interruption*]

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: I will call out the first 15 on the basis of the highest score that they got. The first school on the list is Sacred Heart Girls', then St. Xavier's Private School, Amoco/Galeota Private School, Curepe Presbyterian, Rosary Boys', Rio Claro Hindu School, Clifton Hill Private School, Guaico Presbyterian, St. Peter's Private School, New Town Girls, Bishop Anstey Preparatory, Holy Name Preparatory, St. Christopher E. C., St. Joseph Private and New Town Boys'; that is the first 15.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

If you go to the bottom of the list, those that scored the least, the last school on the list is Upper Laventille R.C. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Do you find that funny?

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: The next school is San Juan Girls' Government School, and so it goes on. Going from the bottom up you are meeting Manzanilla Government, Morvant Central Government, St. Barb's Government; those are the schools you are meeting there. It tells you something. I want to say again, the reason I am letting the nation know all this is because, the old people from ancient times said that a rising tide lifts all boats, a chain is no stronger than the weakest link. Mr. Speaker, when I am dealing with this question of crime, the way the Member for Diego Martin East raised it, I am giving you all the evidence to suggest that he tried, in a devious kind of way, to tendentiously deflect the mind of discerning people from the real chains of causality.

Somebody sent this to me, *Common Entrance Neuroses in Trinidad and Tobago*, by Dr. Hari D. Maharaj, B.Sc., Hons., MBBS, and so on and so on and different things, St. Ann's Hospital. I am going to read the abstract into the record.

3.10 p.m.

Abstract

“A number of psychological and physical problems are associated with teachers, students and their families in the preparation and outcome of the Common Entrance Examination (CE). These disturbances referred to here as Common Entrance Neuroses, reflect the stressful experiences individuals undergo each year. In this study, four cases are presented demonstrating the effect of the CE on students and their families. The roles and practices of teachers in primary and secondary schools are briefly explored and popular

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social attitudes are discussed. The CE appears to be a culture of mental torture giving rise to stress-induced illnesses. The education system for children is too demanding, there is a need for radical change.”

He lists in Table 1 some of the psychological, psychiatric and physical symptoms in children which are seen during the Common Entrance period, which I will read into the record. They are:

| PSYCHOLOGICAL | PSYCHIATRIC | PHYSICAL |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Memory loss | Eating disorders | Headaches |
| Irritability | Emotional disorders | Fever |
| Disturbed behaviour | Conduct disorders | Vomiting |
| Truancy | Anxiety | Cough |
| Nightmares | Depression | Somatic complaints |
| Hyper-religiosity | Hysteria | Abdominal pains |
| Exhaustion | Suicidal behaviour | Fainting spells |
| Temper tantrum | School phobia | Dizziness |
| Sadness | Sleep disorders | Asthmatic attacks |
| Misery | Obsessions | Skin rashes |
| | Psychosis | Intestinal disturbances |

Mr. Speaker, may I remind the others that this decision by the Government has given this country the greatest opportunity it has had in my lifetime to deal with the question of quality education for poor people, and how you make Trinidad into a first-world country. If you look at the statistics in 1977, Trinidad and Tobago had about the same per capita gross national product as Singapore, something like a little more than US \$3,000 per capita. By 1995, Singapore’s gross national product per capita had gone past US \$30,000 while Trinidad and Tobago’s was barely above \$4,000. What explains that? It is not that the Chinese children in Singapore have better brains, it is not that the Indian children in Singapore have better brains, or the Malay children in Singapore—because Singapore is a multi-ethnic society dominated by Chinese, of course, but there are Malays, Indians and other people. So what I am saying is that instead of coming here and dealing with a framework that will explain to people what we need to do,

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the things that should have been done and we did not do, they came with a long chronology of diatribe of vituperation, vulgarity, and barbaric language forcing people to cringe in their seats, talking of some little girl slit between the leg with a cutlass and while she was bleeding, she was raped, and raped, and raped. What is the point? Why are you emphasizing this gory, morbid detail of rape and blood dripping? What does that have to do with a Motion to deal with crime and wanting to censure the Government for not dealing with crime in this country? Then he talks about the fact that the reason there is all this crime in Trinidad and Tobago is because the Government is making the people poor and the economy is not working. All that is not true.

I have in my hand, an address that was given at the Central Bank Auditorium by Señor Claudio Mosa, Director of the Western Hemisphere Department of the International Monetary Fund. The title of the lecture was *Global Financial Crises and their implications to the Caribbean towards a Second Generation of Structural reform*. The date was October 12, 1998.

He said he recalled that the 1985 mission came at the start of a difficult period in Trinidad and Tobago's economic history and it was a difficult period for most of the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean. He stated that it was a period of high inflation, weak commodity prices, large fiscal deficits, misaligned exchange rates and debt service difficulties, and in Latin America it was called the lost decade.

Looking back, it was far from lost since it turned out to be a wake-up call for this region. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, following the collapse of oil prices, real GDP had declined by one-third over the period 1983—1989 which meant that by the end of the decade of the 1980s, the standard of living was roughly equivalent to that of the late 1960s. To reverse this decline, the Government of the day, the NAR government initiated a programme of macro economic stabilization and reform with financial support from the fund. This programme was implemented with a discipline and commitment that had been continued by the present administration and we are seeing the good results today.

Mr. Speaker, what Señor Mosa was saying is that there had been continuity in policy even up to this Government, so what they are saying is mere propaganda and scare tactics to run people out of this country, but the figures and statistics show otherwise and people are coming to Trinidad and Tobago. When he is blaming the Government of Trinidad and Tobago I want to remind him that in the context of when he is talking about culture and how you have the symbolism of people in the Cabinet, the symbolism of the Prime Minister, the symbolism of Mr.

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Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj all these people are symbolic of corruption in this country, I have the word of Dr. Eric Williams himself that if, in fact, he had done some of the things he wanted to do, Trinidad would have become depopulated, so many people would have to leave because of corruption. I have it here in a list of essays, *Forged from the Love of Liberty* and I will quote. Dr. Williams is saying on the occasion of dealing with the setting up of an integrity commission which did not go anywhere, that he was getting resistance even in his Cabinet among politicians. I am quoting from page 160 where he says:

“I do not know, I cannot impose my will on a lot of my Cabinet colleagues that we should have not less than the limited form of the Integrity Commission originally proposed by the Cabinet, which a lot of us would like to see expanded. I have been told if we did that we could soon depopulate the country; you will increase the number of emigrants.”

This is Dr. Williams saying that, not Morgan Job. He is saying that if you have an integrity commission it will cause Cabinet Members, Parliamentarians and other people like them to be lying rather than to be honest. Dr. Williams is saying that. He says:

“I have been told if we did that we could soon depopulate the country; you will increase the number of emigrants.”

Morgan Job did not write this it is from the book *Forged from the Love of Liberty* and they come here talking their foolishness about the UNC Government and symbolism.

There is a certain calypsonian whose name I will not call and I am reading from Gordon Rohlehr, *The Shape of That Hurt and other Essays*. Rohlehr is dealing with the same thing, culture and symbolism, so I am glad that the Member for Diego Martin East raised it. He is saying that this calypsonian was like the poet laureate of the PNM. I am quoting from Rohlehr, so I can call the name.

“Kitchener also celebrated George Chambers’ 1981 victory, with a mocking attack on his arch-rival Sparrow, who had supported the badly defeated ONR.

Not a damn seat for dem

Sparrow, that’s ingratitude

Not a damn seat for dem

You bite the finger that give you food

Not a damn seat for dem

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Look how you hug up Doctor Willie

Not a damn seat for dem

People fraid you in this country

(Not a Damn Seat (1982))

Supporting the six-times-victorious PNM went hand in hand with turning away from the burgeoning corruption and atrocity. When the Sam P. Wallace scandal broke in 1982, and the extent of O'Halloran's fraud in that business alone—a matter of some 250 millions—registered on the nation's consciousness, Kitchener composed *Soca Corruption* (1983) in which he simultaneously dealt with and evaded the dreadful implications of corruption."

These are some of the lines of *Soca Corruption*.

“Soca Corruption

If I have a few million

And they want to link it with corruption

Is mih damn business

If is true how they describe

Ah get mih money by taking bribe

Is mih damn business

If they say ah gone abroad

To get away from the charge of fraud

Is mih damn business

If they say it is a fact

Ah have no intention of coming back

Is mih damn business

All o' we does thief but is the one that they does hold become the guilty man.”

That is part of the calypso. And the chorus goes like this.

“Chorus

Soca—Corruption

Soca—Confusion

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Soca—Destruction

Soca—Invasion

Soca—Inflation

Soca—Recession

Soca—in winin

Soca—in grin'in

Soca—in thieving

Soca—in wukking

Soca—in rocking

Soca—in ducking

This calypso alludes covertly to four parallel scandals including the Sam P. Wallace, D. C. 9 and CDC scandals. The voice of the protagonist changes from stanza to stanza, but all of them are flippant and brass-faced as many people have been then and are now with respect to the issue of corruption, the extent of their involvement in it and the question of taking responsibility for their tainted stewardship. The voice here proclaims the ethic of the white-collar crook: corruption exists only when one has been caught and legally convicted. All else is 'business' in every sense of the word."

So you have the calypsonian poet laureate justifying, flippantly disregarding the cries of the masses of the people with respect to corruption in those times. This matter of corruption that comes up in a Motion moved by the Member for Diego Martin East is in order because indeed, as he articulated his case in his presentation the mass of the people are looking at leaders and if they see corruption, they might feel this is the ambience that is created.

I have introduced evidence to suggest that they have much to deal with and in fact, their attitudes and culture as exemplified by the poet laureate of the PNM, demonstrated in an unambiguous manner that there is a long-standing culture of political endorsement of corruption in the days of the PNM.

Mr. Speaker, be that as it may, I have said on previous occasions in this House that the matter of corruption is not a partisan thing and should not be looked at in a partisan way. You can only deal with corruption when you deal with institutional mechanisms in terms of changing the culture and putting in place those arrangements to facilitate due process that would mitigate, send signals that

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would make it more costly to profit from corruption. They did not do that, they did not pass a single law. There were no institutions built up as they are in Singapore, New Zealand and elsewhere to deal with corruption. What they did was to let go Kitchener to railroad the minds of the youths in the East-West corridor to believe that soca was about corruption and corruption was about soca and soca in wining, in grinding and ducking. I do not want to use the “f” word but this is what they would say.

I have this article, *The Other Face of Business in Latin America* and it says that corruption is caused by a combination of factors including low average salaries, weak law enforcement culture and wide acceptance among the general populace.

Mr. Speaker, in Argentina I have an article from a book of essays on the matter which is written in Spanish, but later on I will translate it and make it available to the Members opposite, where it is saying that they did a survey in Argentina and only 17 per cent of the population there respected the judges because they are so corrupt. We know the story of Venezuela next door, also in Latin America. We have not gone that way in Trinidad and Tobago as yet, but the surveys that came out from Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj and the Cabinet’s investigation into the Judiciary would say that people in Trinidad and Tobago are also disturbed in terms of how they look at the Judiciary here, so we had better be warned by the information coming out of Latin America.

What I am saying is, the way the Member for Diego Martin East is making the thing a UNC problem is very invidious and devious because he is avoiding to deal with the systemic issue of institution as is dealt with in this article. He goes on to say that corruption can have significant negative effects on economies and goes into some details, and also proposes some things that we need to do. Some of those things have, in fact, been done in Trinidad and Tobago since this Government is here.

We know that Brazil’s President, Collor de Mello, was locked up for corruption charges and Carlos Andres Perez from Venezuela was also locked up on corruption charges, but I do not know that under the 40 years of the PNMs rule they put any rules or laws in place that would have allowed anybody here to lock up any head of state for corruption. All these things are what we need to deal with; not just to come here and play partisan politics. We need to deal with the matters of facts. What do you do?

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3.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, one of the most grievous things that I have always complained about since I am in this Parliament is the way we have a culture that is given to talk and talk and not so much to doing things. So that it is all right to get up and let go Kitchener's calypso on people; it is all right to attack the Government for corruption; it is all right to say all these things; but what has the Opposition done and plan to do? We should have a culture that focusses the mind on what is to be done; how do we do these things; how do we look at corruption as a worldwide problem as this article is saying, as everybody knows. In this same book that I quoted here it dealt with all of that—the *IMF study on Youth and Social Development and Integrated Approach to Social Development and Inclusion*.

Mr. Speaker, in order to accuse the Government of being symbols of corruption, one needs to look at that statement in the context of the kind of society that we live in; in the context of all the antecedent circumstances; in the context of what Dr. Williams himself has said about his own Cabinet. He said that, he wrote that, in the same sense that he said that many of them were nothing more than millstones around his neck. Sir, a millstone is a thing you used to put around the neck of some people and throw them in the pond and drown them. *[Laughter]* That is Dr. Eric Williams! I did not tell Dr. Williams to say that about his own people in his own Cabinet; I did not tell Dr. Eric Williams to write an article and say that if he really put the kind of integrity legislation that he wanted, many of the people in the Cabinet would have to leave and some of them would have to migrate. He wrote that. *[Laughter]* They do not like to deal with facts. Do you understand!

Mr. Speaker, I did not come into this Parliament to “mauvais langue” and talk a set of racial “dotishness” and stupidity. I come here to enlighten people, to use the opportunity to do the best I can for all the poor people in Tobago and those in Trinidad, which is what I am doing. I have to use the opportunity to denounce the brazen attempt at falsehood; the brazen attempt at lies; the brazen attempt at manipulation of ignorance; the brazen attempt to, again, use like Manigat says, the fractures and the weaknesses and the structural defects of the society in which we live to trap people, to enslave them. We need emancipation, Mr. Speaker.

I see the Member from Tunapuna and the Member for La Brea in African regalia. I think we need to always tell people that emancipation is about love; emancipation is about truth; emancipation is not about any kind of fascist

dogmatism; emancipation is not about the misuse of history for particular partisan purposes. Mr. Speaker, emancipation is—we never hear the name of Thomas Fowell Buxton; we never hear the name of William Wilberforce; and we never hear the name of the British Parliament. Long after 1807 and long after 1833 when the emancipation proclamation went through Parliament, the British Government was fighting slave traders like Chief Jah Jah and Tipu Tib. We heard about Makandal Daaga—his name goes on to a leader. Makandal Daaga was a slave trader, a slave catcher, and he was trapped by people whom he was selling Africans to and that is how he got down here. All that is a matter of fact, Daaga catching and selling Africans.

Mr. Speaker, I used to live in East Africa and in Tabora some of the areas which were the centres of the ravages of Tipu Tib, the British closed down the Zanzibar Slave Market in the 1870s, long after 1834. We need to look at history, not in a fascist sense; not in a Nazi sense; but history in an objective sense that we are all God's children; that evil, wickedness, crime and slavery was part of the human experience. You see it in the *Bible* when in Exodus they said that Pharaoh wanted the Hebrew people to make bricks without straw. That is the story of Exodus. That is it there. I went to Egypt and I saw the Pharaoh. Mr. Speaker, the Pharaoh looked just like you and me. A lot of these people were just like us in physical features, they were black African people. I saw them, but they were slave masters. It is written in Exodus. I saw it there. We need to get children to understand that.

There is a great African historian, FA Ade Ajayi, who I think is still alive. He and Adu Boahen, a Ghanaian, have a compendium of history for school children. Ajayi, the co-author of a United Nations Seven-Volume History of Africa said that since before Jesus was a baby, the Africans were selling each other into slavery all over the world. We need children to understand this in order that they may better come to terms, each one, with a great human possibility.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, when you get the chance, I just want to indicate that your time is almost expired and if you would wind up.

Dr. The Hon. M. Job: Mr. Speaker, Yes. So, I am saying we need to celebrate emancipation; we need to understand that there is no criminal propensity endemic or necessarily inherent in any particular ethnic group but, in fact, in this society what we need to do is to understand as we did when we looked at Dwight Yorke and Russel Latapy scoring that magnificent one, two pass goal, and we saw a sea of red, we could not tell who was Indian, Chinese, "Coco Panyol" or Syrian.

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We saw a sea of 30,000 red voices screaming. All of us were there and that is the kind of national unity; that is the kind of national purpose we must apply to education, so that all those poor children who because of PNM neglect have been abandoned to crime as a way of life, will now be helped out of that situation. So we do not have to come in here to have devious politicians claiming that the reason we have crime is because of five years— *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, I have made my case and I thank you for the opportunity to give that oration of edification to those intellectual cretins sitting on the other side. *[Desk thumping]*

Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a few observations on the Motion as moved by my colleague from Diego Martin East. It was not my intention to respond to what has been said by the previous speaker but, I think, I would be failing in my duty, if I do not respond to a few of the comments made by the last speaker. I want to begin by saying, nobody on this side has attempted to, or is making a case that anybody on the other side is responsible personally, or as a Government for individual acts of crime committed by other citizens. Nobody over here is saying that. *[Desk thumping]*

So the premise of all that has gone on a while ago is wrong. The Member for Tobago East is of the view that the PNM is saying that. In fact, it is people on the other side, the Prime Minister himself. I saw the Prime Minister on television with a chart showing “PNM murders” and “UNC murders.” *[Words Expunged]* The Prime Minister was naming PNM murders. I do not know where in this country a criminal of any level who is about to commit a crime says, I am not going to commit that crime—

Mr. Speaker: Now, it was just something that you slipped in there that went very quickly that I feel we should clarify. I think that for the completeness of the record, we would like to see that statement expunged. Thank you.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I was making the point that we are not saying that when a criminal decides to take criminal action, he or she does not say I am not going to do this because “X” is in power or “Y” is in the Opposition. Criminal activity as conceived and executed by the criminal element is not as a result of looking to see who is in office, and we all know that. So I do not know what my friend, the Member for Tobago East is carrying on about.

In fact, what the Member has been very good at doing is, as a Member of the Cabinet that is responsible for looking after the response to the criminal element, the Member has been very circumspect in skirting the issue. The Member has given no assurance about Government action to deal with the runaway crime

wave in Trinidad and Tobago. None whatsoever! *[Desk thumping]* In fact, what the Member has done is to begin a debate in this country of associating and identifying criminal activity by racial content and location, a very dangerous development. *[Desk thumping]* I will not sit here and have the Member of Parliament for Tobago East give the impression that it is those persons who vote for the PNM in constituencies which are known to the country is where the criminal element is.

3.35 p.m.

When one begins to argue like that, he made a very clear case here that it is those people in PNM constituencies, black people, who are in fact the criminal problem. This leads me to ask him, which constituency did the police come from? Which constituency did Dole Chadee come from? That is the kind of argument he is putting in this country. When we begin to count criminals by race, then we are on a very slippery slope. *[Desk thumping]* If he thinks he is doing a favour to those people on the other side and singing for his supper, he better understand something. My friend, the Member for St. Augustine has more credentials than he has, and he does not even know if he is going back for elections. That kind of behaviour is no guarantee. The Member for St. Joseph spent four and a half years here abusing the PNM and he has no assurance that he is going anywhere.

To come here today and try to treat the country's crime problem in the context of racial content and origin is a dangerous development from which this country must turn away. *[Desk thumping]* The one thing we are sure is happening in this country, like every other country, is that there is an element of criminal activity. Every country has crime from every race. Every economic failure is crime. What this Motion is about is the response to the criminal activity in the country, and insofar as a national response is required to be managed and to be put forward, therein comes the responsibility of the Government.

I heard the Member for Tobago East say that jeeps cannot solve crime. Obviously, he was not around when the batch of people on the other side were indicating that the solution to the criminal problem was to remove the PNM from office and to buy 100 Cherokee jeeps. That was their solution to crime. The jeeps are now four and a half years old. The criminal activity, as known to every person in this country, has not abated.

He is right. A few jeeps cannot be the solution to crime. Then he made a very interesting observation. That one cannot hold the Government responsible for crime. What one has to do is put mechanisms in place to deal with crime. What if

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the Government itself is facilitating criminal activity? [*Desk thumping*] Suppose that is the case? What am I supposed to do? Turn away? He made a big song and dance about my colleague reproducing in this House reported instances of criminal behaviour in the community. That seemed to have offended them no end, because they seem to think that the press should not be there and should not report on what is going on.

The fact that my friend from Diego Martin East, in presenting his Motion, pointed out a number of instances of runaway criminal activity all over the country, he is deemed a sexual deviant and, somehow, they manage to see sensuous eroticism in that. I do not know how they see that. Examples of criminal activity of the worst kind, and they cannot see in that the need to account to the country for their lack of performance in responding to the criminal element, but they see something wrong with the mover of the Motion.

He spent the whole time, he and the one from St. Joseph, talking about-

Mr. Speaker: The Member for St. Joseph.

Dr. K. Rowley: The Member for St. Joseph, I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. They spent a lot of time trying to destroy the messenger who has come to this House to draw to the country's attention that criminal activity is not abating and that those who are responsible for putting in place proper responses to criminal activity are failing in their duty.

In the meantime, the criminals are running riot in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] But he comes here with all kinds of irrelevant hogwash to show off his own intellect, that he knows about this Roman and that Greek and that Celt and this one, and we go all around the world and back into history. Totally irrelevant to the point, what is the Government's response to the criminal activity in Trinidad and Tobago which continues to threaten the safety and security of every man, woman and child alive today? Not the Pharaohs who died 3000 years ago that you find you are friendly with. Not those! Those who are alive today who are being threatened by criminals. [*Laughter*]

Understand, we have a problem in this country. Two months ago I was in England and I passed through a village. On the pavement was a box of tomato seedlings and there was nobody in sight. There was a tray and the box of seedlings. There was a little note saying "Five p each. Leave money on tray". I asked myself if there is anywhere in Trinidad and Tobago that one could put down a box of anything, say what the price is and get the tray back, the seedlings or the money. [*Laughter*]

I make this point that you have to respond to criminal activity in the way in which it exists in the community. There are certain things happening here and contrary to what he might want to say is Eric Williams's fault—he died 20 years ago, God rest his soul, and it is still his fault—the PNM has been in Government for three and a half of the last 14 years. The bottom line is that the women of this country cannot walk in the road virtually anywhere again. That is as a result of the level of criminal activity!

Young persons are being abused in the streets, whether it is San Fernando—in fact, not too long ago I was shocked when a case came up where Tobago schoolboys held up a tourist somewhere in Black Rock. I grew up in Tobago, Mr. Speaker. Our house did not have a key! Today, contrary to what my friend from Tobago East would have us believe, that it is the little black swine in the little black ghettos, crime is a problem across Trinidad and Tobago, at every level! [*Desk thumping*] The bottom line is, how do we respond to it?

I want to make a comment, Mr. Speaker. The Police service is our second line of defence with respect to criminal activity and our personal security. The first line is, of course, our own self. Every individual has to take responsibility for not putting himself or herself in harm's way. The second line of defence is the police service. Whether it was the PNM in office, the NAR or the UNC, our line of defence against the criminals, the police service, would always come into focus. Since we have to ask those in office now what is happening with that response, it falls to them to answer, but they will not.

He talks about denial; the PNM being in denial. Who is in greater denial in this country than the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago himself, who gets up on national television and says that he does not care about what anybody says, press or otherwise, he knows that crime in this country is falling? If that is not denial, you tell me what is? That is the Prime Minister.

When one does not acknowledge that there is a problem, clearly, there is no solution. When I heard the Prime Minister saying that as part of his election campaign, I understood why the police service was left without recruits for a significant period of time during this Government's tenure. I want one of them to get up and explain to me why.

There is a crime wave in this country. We require police manpower, but he somehow saw it fit for a significant period of time not to have inductions into the police barracks for new recruits. Explain that to me. Explain it to the country, because there might be a good reason. We do not know what is the reason. What

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we do know is that he did not see it fit to maintain the manpower even at the level he met it. With no recruits being trained and people retiring, there is a reduction in manpower. Tell us what was the benefit of that and how that treated with the crime wave.

I will go further. We had the whole disjointed thesis from my friend, the Member for Tobago East, about youth and criminal activity, and he made the point, reading from some of his favorite authors, that in the black people community, as he puts it, all they see are criminal mothers and fathers. They see nobody who can give them a proper grounding and make them look up in a way that they should.

No exemplars, so you know what? The last Government put a programme in place to provide young people with exemplars, the Civilian Conservation Corps, that would go on block. Using the soldiers to take those young people, encourage them to develop a life of discipline and production, and what did this Government do? This Government saw it fit to close down the Civilian Conservation Corps programme which was designed specifically to provide young people with that kind of guidance. Tell me how that is helping in reducing criminal activity?

We asked questions in this House about the youth camp. When I drew it to the House's attention that this Government had shut down the youth camp in Chaguaramas, the Member for Chaguanas said it was only temporarily closed and will be reopened. No such thing has happened. You have denied a body of young people access to a system which could have assisted them in developing themselves. Tell me how that is assisting in the reduction of crime? Tell me! We need to understand their *modus operandi* because we know their *modus vivendi*. We know what they are about.

When my friend, the Member for Tobago East, says that we should not blame the Government for crime and that we should only talk about putting mechanisms in place, well we have put mechanisms in place, and insofar as we have some mechanisms in place, this Government has spent its time dismantling those mechanisms and creating the opportunities for activity that may be regarded as a crime.

Let us take an example, Mr. Speaker. This Toco ferry project, and I see you are looking at me with great interest, Mr. Speaker, and I guarantee you—

Mr. Speaker: I do not know whether the hon. Member is trying to draw me into it, but I make it a point of duty—I may be wrong—to face the person who is speaking, because the person is supposed to be speaking to me, as you are so

correctly doing. But I would prefer, particularly in an election year, if you do not in any way say anything that might have the effect of drawing me into it.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I will do nothing to draw you into the election fray. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Speaker: I see.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I was talking about crime because crime comes in all forms and fashions. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the Government is facilitating what can be deemed to be crime, because if I go into HiLo and pick up an apple that might be \$2, arrest me for theft. If a public servant signs a document improperly, that would be forgery and that could be jail, but let us take the Toco ferry project and look at the Government's action in that and tell me if one does not see some semblance of criminal activity in there?

Mr. Speaker, there is a law in this country which says that Government can acquire land for a public purpose. Government is not provided with the authority to acquire people's land for private purposes but you know, this Government has provided a guarantee to a handful of people who see great profits to be made by having a port located and built in Toco. While we are not against development, we are against this kind of development, and we are moreso against what, in fact, could be deemed to be naked wrongdoing.

3.50 p.m.

The basis for this port is some Tobago to Toco ferry. Nobody in Tobago wants it; nobody in Toco wants it; nobody in Tobago or Toco appreciates it; but that is the grease to have the product created. Do you know who is doing this? The Cabinet. By saying that it is a Tobago to Toco ferry, the Government is giving the impression that it is a public purpose and, under that category, the Government is now going to proceed to take away people's homes to create this port.

So, here we have a situation where those who are living on the land enjoying it now, protected by the law, the Government is seeking to find a mechanism to acquire their land, then give that land to other private citizens to make money. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, this Toco ferry port has nothing to do with the people of Tobago and Toco.

Miss Nicholson: At all.

Dr. K. Rowley: It has to do with creating a landing and jumping off point for the oil industry off the East Coast and the Government knows that. There are six

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oil companies now off the East Coast that can use that facility and if you look in the document, you will see it there. From BHP Petroleum, to Enron, to British Gas, to Exxon, to Elf Petroleum—all these are new names in our industry in the last 10 years—friends of the Government. The chairman of Caroni and the Chairman of the Maintenance, Training and Security Company Limited (MTS), with the Cabinet's support, are prepared to break the law to acquire people's private land for private purpose under the guise of it being for a public purpose, with a government guarantee.

That is supposed to make us all happy, then he tells me I must not talk about corruption and accuse the Government of corruption; we must only talk about mechanisms. We have mechanisms; we have laws and you all are breaking the laws to carry out your corrupt act. [*Desk thumping*]

If the people of Tobago are not interested, the people of Toco do not want it, then whose public purpose is it going to serve? We come to talk about criminal activity here today and you give me a long esoteric argument about Cicero and his Roman friend. I am talking here about problems facing us directly. I am talking about police manpower. What are we doing with the police manpower we have? I think the time has come for us to examine the police manpower we have to determine whether, in fact, we have sufficient police manpower. That is the first thing. Is there need, given the escalation of criminal activity in this country and the general feeling of unease and lack of personal security, to significantly expand the police service?

I have just been late for Parliament this afternoon because I spent one hour coming from the Licensing Office to the Parliament building. I did not see one policeman on the road. Is it because we do not have enough police manpower? There was virtually gridlock in downtown Port of Spain. I did not see a police presence. Is it because we do not have sufficient police manpower? Or, is it that the deployment of police manpower needs to be revised and reviewed? Because, when you look at it, I think the level of staffing in the police service is about 5,000. The vast majority of those policemen are working daylight hours—8.00a.m.—4.00 p.m. We have to ask ourselves: Does that kind of deployment of police manpower treat with the criminal element, which is not restricted to 8.00 a.m.—4.00 p.m.? Should we consider re-organizing the response? And I would go further: are our systems too centralized? Have we accepted the colonial arrangement so much that we are now not even thinking of changing it if the change will more adequately deal with our current situation?

In the colonial days, Port of Spain, San Fernando and Arima had populations and assets which were far smaller than many other communities that have grown subsequently, but in the colonial days, Arima, San Fernando and Port of Spain each had a municipal police service and, historically, that was largely to protect the assets which were located in those areas—population concentration and the business houses. This country has grown considerably beyond that, but today we still only have municipal police in Arima, San Fernando, Port of Spain and Point Fortin. The whole idea of making a municipal police service may need to be re-examined.

In 1988, under the NAR government, this whole question of decentralising and closer community management had come before the national community resulting in a law being passed in this House for regional corporations. We have a tremendous bureaucracy of regional corporations in this country, but has it really impacted on the delivery of services? I think we need to seriously examine whether we should not have some more decentralization.

A place like Diego Martin which, today, is far more economically developed, has far more people than San Fernando had when San Fernando had its borough police service, why should Diego Martin, or a similar area like Chaguanas, not have a municipal police service where you localize the response? The municipal police can have more direct contact; foot patrols; know who live in the area; know who to pay attention to; know who to go to when there is a break-in. Or, is it that we have accepted as we have done in the recent past and we are still doing, that if somebody breaks through your window, most people do not even bother to report it to the police, because virtually nothing is going to happen. We have come to that stage. Many people now are not reporting crimes of that nature—burglaries, even rapes and assault. They do not bother to report it, so do not come and talk about statistics because those numbers are minimal. There are far larger numbers of criminal activity and that is why virtually every person you meet in this country, if you ask him or her what is the main problem he or she is facing in this country today, he or she will tell you security of the person. They are afraid of crime, whether a businessman, a school child or an adult working on the port, the problem of personal security is paramount in Trinidad and Tobago and the old systems are not working.

That is why as we bring this Motion, we want to draw to the Government's attention that it came into office on a platform of dealing with this crime problem. Nobody is saying they created it or caused it, but it was there during the last campaign. We agreed it was there; they agreed it was there; but they said, "We

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have the answer. Put us in office and we will respond in a way to bring the crime rate down", and they have failed and failed miserably.

Now, your spokesman, the Member for Tobago East is not even prepared to treat with the issue. The Prime Minister has taken a position that if he says it is down, it is down. A Motion on crime is before the House; he talks for an hour and 15 minutes and he is not treating with the crime wave in Trinidad and Tobago because, I believe, he, too, like the Prime Minister, believes that if they say it is not there, it will go away. Go and tell the numbers of people who are facing the criminals in the street every day that crime has gone down.

I passed through Wisconsin not too long ago and drove through a neighbourhood which looked very strange to me. Something was different about the place and it took me a little while to figure out why. Not a fence. The lawn of every house opened straight down to the road. Not a fence in sight; not a burglar bar on a window. But in Trinidad and Tobago, on every structure, whether it is a business place, a home, a church or a graveyard, there must be lock and key on it because the level of criminal activity in this country is just unacceptably high. [*Desk thumping*] While that cannot be denied by any person on the other side—not even the one from Pointe-a-Pierre could deny that because he spent a lot of time talking to the police about criminal activity—when we said that the Government has a responsibility and has failed, when you have a Minister of the Cabinet assisting the police in a murder case, then there is a serious problem of—

[*Mr. Partap rises to leave Chamber*]

Oh, I thought you wanted to get in the debate. You are going early. When there is a situation where, in the scenario that we all know, he talks about somebody writing that black children in the ghetto have nobody to look up to because their parents are criminals. What about the children across the country who know that the Minister of Local Government is a prime suspect in the murder of Sumairsingh? What effect is that having on the children of the country?

Hon. Member: Do not study that.

Dr. K. Rowley: But when the PNM talks about it, they start dredging up Eric Williams' name and other names. That is not the point. The point is how are you responding?

I read in the newspapers yesterday that while the criminals are there in the courthouse, the Minister of Local Government is in court talking about fight with policeman; the courthouse is tied up with that. That is the example we are setting

and, therefore, we are failing to influence the general psyche of the country that something is wrong. When the country sees and hears that the people of Toco do not want a ferry port in the way that it is being put across to them because, in fact, it is an industrial complex they are talking about; the people of Tobago do not want it but that the Government is going to guarantee US \$60 million for it whether they want it or not so as to make two of their friends rich, what effect do you think that has on the criminal element? Do you think they have any pangs of conscience when they put their gun to your head on the street? Because they know that you in your suit and tie in your air-conditioned building are worse than they are because you have a different option to do differently. You have a responsibility to lead and you are leading us down the wrong way. Raiding the Treasury to give to your friends. I failed to have any of you convince me that that kind of behaviour is not contributing to criminal behaviour in Trinidad and Tobago.

He talked about people by age seven already having a criminal mind formed in their heads. But, you could imagine all these 7-year-olds with criminal minds looking at you all every day and your conduct, look at the ease with which millions are being raked in. How do you think they react to that? By saying, "I will be a good boy." He just told me that we have a criminal mind formed by age seven and he looks at what is going on and he sees a Member for one constituency in a particular party—election results come in and Arima voted PNM and a PNM member of long-standing suddenly end up in the UNC Cabinet, telling me the PNM is the worst thing in the world. What effect do you think that has on the criminal element in the country? It tells them that anything goes, any means justifies the end. [*Desk thumping*]

When they see the Prime Minister spend his 20 years in government trying to name everybody with a balisier tie a thief and then coming and hugging up poor Muriel in her dying days to use her as a political tool, then they say anything goes. I ask him: When did she stop being a thief? When?

I was passing through a public meeting one time in San Juan and he was on the platform and I do not know how the police did not lock him up because he was naming a certain Cabinet minister as a thief. Now, all of a sudden, out of my bosom buddy brother. What kind of effect is that having on young people in this country when you are telling them it is an anything-goes-life as long as you get what you want and the Prime Minister could say that any person could find out what another person wants and just hang it in front that person's face?

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I could tell you one thing here, Mr. Speaker, I am particularly happy and proud that that Prime Minister, his Government and his spokesperson, not one of them has had the temerity to put God out of their thoughts to put anything in front of my face. Not one of them.

Because I am hearing his puppy dog talking about: he grew up in Laventille therefore, he knows Laventille people are swine and child molesters. Mr. Speaker, I grew up in poverty in the back of this country at Mason Hall in Tobago in a large family and I know what it is for public policy to impact on a generation of people. I was the first person in my family to go to high school. My brothers who are older than I am, I am sure they were brighter than I was, but Eric Williams came too late for them. So, today, when these people, in trying to construct their election campaign, seek to treat with education in this context, I just say, "Carry on. We will meet you on the hustings." In the meantime, while this Motion on crime is before the House, I would like the Government to get up and give some assurance to the people of this country that it has plans and programmes and that we are making progress in dealing with the criminal element. We are not seeing that.

4.05 p.m.

What we are seeing are frightening developments in the country. In fact, when you look at the bulk of the criminal element with the violence in the country, it comes from many young people, it has to do with drugs and it involves firearms. Those are three things that cannot be disputed. There is a very high frequency of illegal firearm activity in Trinidad and Tobago; maybe the time has come for us to develop a separate agency in this country to treat with firearms in Trinidad and Tobago. The standard police service is a reactive service, it is only when something happens that policemen react to it; by that time it might be too late.

We may have to develop a completely different agency which is resourced in such a way that the people who are working in that agency spend their time preventing something from happening, finding out what is happening, finding out who is interested in bringing guns into this country, and finding out who is on their way to bring guns to this country. If you do that, you can stop it. You cannot just be reacting to it, because we are always going to be playing "ah go" catch-up with the criminals.

The time has come, given what we are facing, given the ease with which anybody can have a gun in this country—there are places in this country where people are walking on the streets with firearms exposed and could not care less.

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What is our response to it? Wait until somebody gets killed then a bus load of policemen comes down and by that time, it is too late. We need to look at it and see whether we should not, as part of our enforcement and protection system, as part of our police system, have a separate agency to treat specifically with firearm situations and, of course, drug enforcement.

What really has been happening in recent times, with respect to drug enforcement in this country? We do not know; all we hear from time to time is that the Americans say that we are doing well. Well, Americans could say what they want, we live here. Are we seeing any abatement with respect to the drug trade in Trinidad and Tobago and all its deleterious effects? Are we seeing that? [*Interruption*] You are seeing it; that is why they “throw” you out of Nariva. In fact, you are down there growing marijuana. [*Laughter*] The population in Biche—

Mr. Speaker: I do not think I heard you correctly. I do not think that what the Member said was that, in fact, someone was down there growing marijuana.

Hon. Members: Yes, he did say that.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the English Language is one of the most imprecise of languages, and something that one says might be capable of different interpretations. Just for the avoidance of doubt—[*Interruption*]—I would clarify it for you. I think the record must reflect that, in fact, when you said “you are down there growing marijuana,” it did not relate to the Minister or the Member for that constituency, but that that was a marijuana growing area. For the avoidance of doubt, let us have it that way. [*Laughter*]

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I know that you are very versed in the language and I am always wanting to learn from you.

Mr. Speaker, I am not by any means accusing my friend, the Member for Nariva, of actually growing marijuana, but I thought it was common knowledge in this country that in the constituency representing the Biche area a certain amount of marijuana is grown. The point I was coming to was that maybe the Government's inactivity could, probably, end up with us having a situation like St. Vincent, where, when the government did decide to act, we had a march in Kingston by the Marijuana Growers' Association. [*Laughter*] I do not know that my friend would want to lead his constituents in that kind of march, but it did happen in St. Vincent. There was a demonstration calling on the Government not to act because it had become an integral part of the economy, the Marijuana

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Growers' Association of St. Vincent. In fact, I think that the government did not act. [*Laughter*]

The point I am making is that while the criminal activity continues unabated, the Government's response to it is very curious, because we see no new initiative and, insofar as they have taken action, the action cannot reasonably be deemed to be something that will impact positively on the developments that we do not want.

We want the Government to first accept that there is an unacceptable level of crime in Trinidad and Tobago. Let us forget the People's National Movement and the UNC and the National Alliance for Reconstruction for a moment, because when the criminal approaches you he is not going to ask you for your party card, that much we know. [*Crosstalk*]

What we have to talk about is whether, in fact, we are responding appropriately to the upsurge in criminal activity, and I dare say, Mr. Speaker, the answer is a resounding "no". The simple matter of transportation for the police, a lot was made about the 100 Cherokee jeeps; all that has happened with that is that we had a new fleet of vehicles, it replaced some that were there before and for about a year and a half we had an improvement in transportation; we are now back to square one. As a people with a police service to protect us, we cannot supply them with transport seasonally; it has to be a 24-hour, seven days a week response; the criminal does not rest. So do not play politics with Cherokee jeeps, buy them in 1996 and come in 2000 to say "yuh buying" 50 more cars; that does not treat with the criminal element; that is no response.

Maybe the country has a psychological problem with the whole thing. I was looking at golf on Sunday, and they showed some policemen and policewomen in Scotland on the golf course. I said to myself that this reminds me: why is it that in Scotland these people's uniforms could look so appropriate for a tropical environment, but we in Trinidad and Tobago somehow think that whatever the colonial masters left us with cannot be touched? Trinidad and Tobago policemen are still in the same colonial uniforms that they left us with in 1962. Maybe it is something that we think, "because it name police" and it came from the colonial people we cannot touch it. I am saying that that is only a symbolic expression.

Look at induction into the police service. We are now into the computer age, while we talk a lot about the violent crime that has blood and gore, a lot of the criminal activity is now white collar crime. Computer-aided crime is going to be on the increase in Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, already as a Member of Parliament people are telling me that they have a lot of disquiet about dealing

with some of the activities in some of our banks, because it is so easy to be fleeced; it is so easy to be accessed. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, who are probably least trained in dealing with that kind of crime? The police service.

Are we still going to be selecting people based on the size of their feet, height, the barrel of their chest and so forth, to come into the police service, or are we now prepared to have people inducted into the police service based on their brain power and their ability to deal with computer-aided crimes? Until you begin to address those things—I mean, if you live on a street in Diego Martin or Tunapuna and you call the police, the first thing they tell you is, "We have no motor vehicle." Is it that the Government has to put up vehicles for every single policeman? Is that the policy? Is that how we are going to go?

Of course we need many vehicles; we need to get around fast. What is the role of foot patrol in the streets of our neighbourhoods? Are policemen prepared to do that? Is that part of their requirement? Or is it if there is no car in the yard, even if you are two streets away, you get no response? I have had instances of people telling me that they called the police station at night and are told, "I cannot leave here because there are only two of us here and we cannot leave the station." How do we deploy the manpower?

I am pretty sure if a proper professional examination is made of the number of man-hours available from our police service and you see how that man-hour tally is deployed, with respect to the known criminal activity in the country, you will find it is a very inefficient employment. We need to review the whole situation, and if we have to make different pay arrangements to pay policemen who work in a different kind of regime, then we have to do that; 8.00 to 4.00 is not providing security to the country.

If you look at what is happening here at nights—only this week I was talking to a youth group, they now have to move their evening meeting up to close to daylight hours because they dare not have their meeting at night again, because the night is now too dangerous. That is how life is in this country, and we have to come up with solutions to treat with that.

One of the recommendations that I would make and—in fact, it is too late for you now, you have gone beyond your call; you are on your last days, and I understand that my friend, the Member for St. Joseph, has started giving his good-byes. The next government of this country, which is going to be a PNM government—[*Desk thumping*—will have to seriously take on board putting into the community more responsibility for the community. We have a tremendous bureaucracy.

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What you have shown is that you have no interest in making that bureaucracy work for us. Could you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? You have a tremendous bureaucracy called local government, you go through the trouble to hold election, have people vote, elect corporations, staff the corporations, pay money to do that, and a simple thing like paving or patching a few pieces of road, you have the minister and a ministerial tenders committee handling that, bypassing the bureaucracy that the state has created. Rather than give the responsibility to the community, patching and road paving is being done and controlled in a centralized way by the ministerial tenders committee. That is how they want to control everything, so they could put in this and that pocket. By the end of the day, the very thing that we have discussed 12 years ago, the whole question of more responsibility in local government, the use of regional corporations to bring service to people on their doorsteps, they have bypassed that completely.

We have a minister getting up here and saying—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: The speaking time of the Member for Diego Martin West has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mr. C. Imbert*]

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. K. Rowley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues for the extension.

When you have laws that say how things should go, we go through the trouble in the Parliament to present a case, argue in debate, the state pays for our time, you create the law, the law is there to guide everybody. I heard my friend, the Member for Tobago East, making the inane comment a while ago, that the People's National Movement did not put anything in place to allow the country to exclude the Prime Minister from being locked up.

The law applies to every citizen in this country. If a Prime Minister is known to have broken the law, there is no exclusion clause, so please do not get up here and talk those kinds of things in the Parliament, children might hear you. There is no law that excludes the Prime Minister. If the previous Prime Minister or his colleagues broke the law, what does that have to do with corruption or otherwise? The law could have been made to apply? The fact is you had plenty “ole” talk and you could not provide any substance to your “ole” talk. [*Words expunged*]

Mr. Speaker: The Standing Orders do not permit a Member to make allegations of corruption against any other Member of this House except it is being done on a substantive motion. I regard what you just said as being contrary to the Standing Orders. That would be expunged.

Dr. K. Rowley: I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just responding—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Are we on the same thing? Just regard me as having ruled on that. Could we pass on to something else please? I have ruled on it and I ask that that be expunged.

4.20 p.m.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, what I was saying is that there was no law—my friend, the Member for Tobago East, said this afternoon that the PNM did nothing to deal with corruption—

Mr. Speaker: Rightly or wrongly, I have just made a ruling.

Dr. K. Rowley: I am not dealing with your ruling. I am making my representation on the Motion. I have passed on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I see. Thank you, please proceed.

Dr. K. Rowley: I am at the point of my presentation where I am saying that we are in a position to point to this administration instances of contracts, persons, times and sums where, unlike in his case we have heard about other people being involved in crime. I do not know that there is any law here, according to him which would have excluded any Prime Minister from being prosecuted. It does not exist.

What we are talking about is Government taking responsibility for responding and I am saying not only is the Government not taking responsibility, the Government itself is breaking the law. That might be hard to swallow, but it is a fact. We had the Minister of Local Government in answer to a question when he was asked under what authority was work done at Smirch Hill in my constituency unbeknownst to the regional corporation and he said he authorized it, so you had public expenditure taking place on a back road in Carenage.

The Government had a structure to deal with Carenage roads, it is called the Diego Martin Regional Corporation. There is a chairman and council there with legal power and authority, but the Minister of Local Government bypasses them and goes with a handful of his friends and institutes construction projects on the

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road unbeknownst to the public servants and the executive and we are then told that hundreds of thousands of dollars have been expended and we are asking where the money gone because no work has been done. Is that not criminal activity, Mr. Speaker? If one goes to the jail and does a tally to find out how many persons are in jail for stealing as much as \$200,000 there are very few. Many of them who are in jail are there for small sums of money, but go to Abbe Poujade Street, Mr. Speaker. I invite you and the media to go to Abbe Poujade Street in Carenage and you will see the entire road which was recently paved last year. The Minister of Local Government goes on a tour of the area and without the involvement of the authorized body, instructs that the road be dug up saying they are laying pipes and taking water to Scorpion, and when they lost the Local Government election last year July, they left it in the same state. The road is virtually impassable and I invite any one of you to go down there now and drive from Abbe Poujade Street to Upper Haig Street and you will see the condition of the road.

The Minister of Local Government goes down there, totally ignoring the Diego Martin Regional Corporation, instructing the people's right of way to be dug up and then just leaves it like that and goes. So the people of Upper Haig Street and Abbe Poujade Street, their vehicles can hardly pass on the roads now. Where they have dug is now the watercourse, so what was in fact a proper roadway is now virtually destroyed because the Minister of Local Government, in breaking the law, has destroyed their road. So when the Government is behaving like that, do you see why they are not interested in treating with the other breaches in the law? Because the Government itself is quite prepared to break the law in a matter of that nature. I told you earlier that if this Government attempts to acquire people's land in Toco to give it to the chairman of Caroni and the chairman of MTS, that will be illegal and I am waiting in this Parliament to see if any of you—in fact, you would not be here.

I want to send a notice out to all who are involved out there. The next Government is going to be a PNM government, and do not expect that any PNM government will take any action against people of Toco to take away their land and give it to any private mercenaries. You better be warned on that because that action is contrary to the Land Acquisition Act. I was the Minister who piloted the Land Acquisition Act in Parliament and it has no provision for the government to acquire people's private lands to give to the benefit of others.

It is spelt out here in a letter talking about the Toco Port and Ferry Service to Scarborough. Do not call Scarborough name in your mouth. This is from K.

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Ramkissoon, the Chairman of Caroni (1975) Ltd. who is writing to his friends in the Government. Paragraph 2 says:

“We have assessed the terms of reference for the project and note that the Client has indicated his willingness...”

Which client, Tobago, Toco? Which client?

“...to negotiate on the incentives that will assist in bringing the project to an economic success with a desired return on investment.”

So it is all about return on investment for the likes of these investors under the guise of Toco Port. Can you imagine a Tobagonian with a load of bricks going to Toco? And to add insult to injury when you go on with that project, it will destroy the life force and the reefs in Toco. They are saying the reef is half dead already so there is no problem in burying the reef. Can you imagine that?

The people of Tobago know about reefs more than anybody in this country and they do not want Toco's reef to spoil. The people of Toco will find support from the people of Tobago to have their reef protected because Tobagonians know about the value of reefs. So when the spokesman for this ridiculous idea says that the reef is already dying, I want to ask the Government who is funding this, what is killing the reef in Toco? The cleanest water around this country is off the East Coast of Tobago, what is killing the reef up there?

Mr. Narine: UNC.

Dr. K. Rowley: The Government is prepared to lie to create support for its friends to give the impression that the reef is dying so therefore there is no problem to bury it and continue with the Toco project. The Government is supporting that. It has all kinds of resources available to it: the Environmental Management Authority, the University of the West Indies, independent consultants and contractors. The Government does not hire them, it lets the contractors, the beneficiaries and mercenaries speak for themselves and tell the country the reef in Toco is already dying so it does not matter if we bury it; and every one of you sit there and support that theory of doom, shame and damnation.

Where in the world do you hear that the people of a rural community have a facility that they want to defend in the way they are defending this facility? I admire their fervour and interest because they must defend their birthright. Toco is their birthright. Where is your conscience? Have you not seen those people? Where is your conscience? You all are prepared to bury their wishes and ambitions to allow two or three persons to become rich and one of them is well known to us.

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When I was in Cabinet we approved \$5 million for the renovation of Whitehall, not to buy it, not to build it, but \$5 million to renovate it. And I remember arguing with my colleague saying \$5 million is too much, but we eventually agreed on the \$5 million to renovate Whitehall. Under the current chairman of MTS, the same one who wants to bury Toco and its reefs, we ended up spending \$36 million on Whitehall and that is not enough, they want to bury Toco in the process.

Mr. Speaker, it is all well and good to point to the criminals in the street, the jail and the ones who come through your window. It would be very sad if we do not identify this kind of development we are facing in Toco as another kind of criminal activity. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, the Government has a responsibility to lead and show the way and a responsibility to provide us with protection from the criminal element. I am raising two children in this country, I have a family and friends in this country and it bothers me when this Government's official position is that crime in Trinidad and Tobago is going down and every day I take up the newspapers—I did not bring any newspaper here to quote because everyone in this country knows. They hear the news on the radio, they see the television and they read the newspapers. Every morning, rest assured that some blood is shed in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*].

Mr. Speaker: I do not want to stop you, but are you winding up?

Dr. K. Rowley: I can stop here.

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

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.07 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Mr. Speaker: The Member for Diego Martin West.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could give me a little guidance as to how much time I have left.

Mr. Speaker: Fifteen minutes.

Dr. K. Rowley: Fifteen minutes. Thank you very much, Sir. I just want to continue in the way in which we were going when we took the tea break to make the point that the Government has a responsibility. It does not matter how the Government feels about the need for speed; or the need to adjust certain

imbalances as they may perceive them; or the need to be nice to friends and relatives and chosen ones. If the Government is to be worthy of the title honourable it has a responsibility to set the tune. As I mention that, I notice something has been happening in these documents all the time. I look at a copy of the *Hansard* and I see all the Cabinet and Government Members are listed as honourable and the title of honourable has been removed from Members of the Opposition. I wonder if there is some explanation for that.

Mr. Speaker: If I could just clarify that. It always has been that Ministers are referred to as “honourable” and Members of the House are referred to as “mister”. That is high protocol and I do not think that there is anything sinister about that. If, indeed, in any place in that *Hansard* you see anything appearing as “honourable so and so for a Back Bencher” it is wrong. That is on authority. You will never find a Back Bencher referred to as “honourable”. In fact, Back Benchers were always “mister so and so” and Ministers are referred to as “honourable”. Former Prime Ministers who remained in the House are permitted to keep that title.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I did not know that. I thought it had to do with some status with respect to our respect for honour and integrity, because the point I was going to make is that those of us on this side—even though I am not about titles—but the thing is, if the Government is to be worthy of that title—because you made the point very clear that the Cabinet is given that title so, therefore, it must mean something. I would like to think that Members on the other side should respect the title that has been bestowed upon them. I do not see that because too many times we see situations, where for one reason or the other, Members of the Cabinet—either directly or in a facilitatory way—allow the laws to be violated.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you one example. The road-paving that is going on now with this great rush and hurry; do you know what is one of the reasons for that? The Minister of Works and Transport, a Member of the Cabinet, sought to get the Ministry of Works and Transport to amend the tendering documents that you have known since your time, because you happen to have been a Minister of Works, so you would know what I am talking about. The invitation to tender was such that a Minister of this Government interfered with the tendering requirements in such a way as to permit only a particular tenderer to qualify.

Mr. Speaker, that happened and a contractor who felt, quite rightly, that his rights were being violated because of this development took the Government to

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court, and the contractor got an injunction preventing the Government from awarding any contracts. A few months ago that contractor who went to court to seek redress won the case. I have a copy of the judgment and the judge said that the Central Tenders Board and the Ministry of Works and Transport were in breach and that the Government should not act in a way to facilitate corruption.

The result of that was, the purported contracts that were awarded for paving were annulled and the Government had to go right back out. Instead of complying with the law and going back out and inviting tenders so that everybody could bid according to what the law requires, do you know what the Government did? The Government decides, well, it is going to have a different approach. The Government called the contractors into a Government department and let the contractors decide how much they would charge and then the Government would apportion out the work. There was no open tendering process, so the country does not get the benefit of competition. As a result of that, do you know what is happening?

Mr. Speaker, the last time we had competitive tendering for hot mix to pave the roads in this country the Government paid \$190.00 per tonne. As a result of going the way I have just suggested, by the Government not following the tendering rules, the Government is now allowing price fixing to the tune of \$400.00 a tonne because the contractors have been allowed to fix their own price. There is no competition among them. That is what the Government is doing.

Miss Nicholson: Repeat it.

Hon. Member: What?

Dr. K. Rowley: That is what this Government is doing. The Government having gone to court and been told that it has no right to interfere with the tendering process, to facilitate rather than observe the law, created a new offence—not just giving it to a particular friend now—by allowing the contracting fraternity to fix the price and they fix the price at double the original amount. In June last year, the Government was paying \$190.00 for hot mix from the tenderer and it is now going to pay \$400.00 a tonne—price fixing. Mr. Speaker, if that is not corruption you tell me what it is.

The Government is doing it, knowing exactly what it is doing, and there is a court order in its hand. The Government knew in the last nine months it could not pave any roads because it was under legal requirement to stop the award of contracts and now it is “running like a chicken with the head cut off” to pave for election and in so doing, it is making the country pay twice the price. What are

Members of the Cabinet doing about this honourable title? That is a dishonourable act! [*Desk thumping*].

Mr. Speaker, I want to end on a note—I see my friend, the Member for Tobago East, is here—because I am still very disturbed about what the Member did this afternoon. In 1988 a number of our citizens left this country—and it is dear to all of us—seeking to get into the “Canadian people country”. They labelled themselves refugees and created a lot of slander about how they lived in Trinidad and Tobago. One ex-Member of Parliament of this House had it to say that African men were raping Indian women in Central Trinidad. That statement was made in this country. These are not statements that can be substantiated and they ought not to be encouraged and for them to be brought into this House as evidence and substance in a debate, I ask my colleagues on the other side—he says, a rising tide raised all boats? Well, a falling tide of racism will sink all boats.

5.15 p.m.

I warn the Members on the other side to not seek to score points in this way by denigrating other people, because we are all exposed to the criminal element. I do not know of any scientific study done that shows that the criminal element of the country is confined to any particular racial or geographic group. What I do know is that all over Trinidad and Tobago, from Charlotteville to Cedros, from Carenage to Toco, from Carapichaima to Couva, people in this country are unhappy about the state of their personal safety and their property. The criminals have the upper hand.

We have made a little progress in the courts with respect to speeding up trials. That has not abated crime. We talk about psychopaths; people who are killing and do not care that they have murdered someone. We have seen them on the news. We have seen how they behave. The fact is that it is there. For the time being, the Government has the responsibility to fashion and execute the response, whatever it might be. I am sure they can get up and tell us a lot of things they are doing, but the bottom line is that the response is not turning back the tide.

My intervention in this debate, I conclude by saying, it may very well be time that we review how we are treating with the criminal element, review our systems, expand in some areas with respect to numbers, if we have to, to get more police-man-hours. Create different working schedules if we have to, and pay for those schedules. Put a different kind of person in the police system along with the traditional types, because the kinds of crimes are changing.

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We need to look at bringing management of our security closer to home, and I think there is a role for the regional corporation and I think all regional corporations should now have their own police service. That kind of service should have greater foot patrol within the community, in the streets around our homes; not just around the business sector in Port of Spain. The streets where our young girls and mothers cannot walk at nights; where the criminals sit on the corner and one little brainy one works up the scheme as where to get the gun to terrorize the rest of us.

Local policemen in a municipality with a good system and a purpose would be able to nip these things in the bud, and the Government must certainly explain to our satisfaction what it has replaced the youth programmes with, and very quickly, reinstitute equivalent programmes. The same way they do not want—if they could take Muriel and make her a candidate in San Fernando, what do they have against programmes from the PNM?

They do not want the Civilian Conservation Corps because it is a PNM programme. They do not want the youth camps because it is a PNM programme. They shut down all, but come election, they cannot find enough ex-PNM people to push in their campaign. What is this? Are they about politics, or are they doing the job they are paid to do? Are they about service? How could they be so anti-PNM that they do not even want a good programme like the Civilian Conservation Corps? They abandoned it, replaced it with nothing and left those youths who would otherwise not benefit, and then they cannot find enough PNM people to parade in front of the country.

Mr. Speaker, if we do not take crime seriously and stop treating it like it is some political label to be attached to some person or to be removed from some person, the criminals will continue to have the upper hand on all of us in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] I speak for every one of us here that this would be a much nicer and much more pleasant place if we could reduce the role and effectiveness of the criminal element in Trinidad and Tobago.

There was a time when I used to go hiking in certain areas on a Sunday morning with field naturalists and never thought that crime was a consideration. Now I know that many people would not go near there because to do that is to expose oneself to criminal activity; even in Tobago.

We read about tourists going to the waterfalls in Argyle and being assaulted by criminals in quiet, serene Tobago. We have to find ways and means of reducing the criminal content, and that responsibility lies with the Government to

take the lead. They are responsible for managing the response to the criminal activity. It is not sufficient and it is not acceptable to come in a debate like this and “throw ole talk” about PNM and Eric Williams. They have to account, they have to report, and they have to perform, and the Government has failed on all three counts.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to join this debate this afternoon, but in light of the misleading statements made by the hon. Member for Diego Martin West and his use of this Motion to introduce allegations of racism and of corruption against the Government, I think it is my duty to put on record—I do not intend to complete my contribution this afternoon—some matters which I think I have a duty to put and also, I will extend an invitation to him in my contribution.

When this Motion was moved by the Opposition, the Motion was moved by the hon. Member for Diego Martin East and it was seconded by the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, and he reserved his right to speak. The Motion blamed the Government, condemned the Government, for the high incidence of criminal activity and crime. He was in the Parliament when the hon. Member for Diego Martin East made his presentation. I have the presentation of the hon. Member for Diego Martin East, and throughout his presentation, he quoted the facts of crime, of actual cases, gave all the details of some of the matters; how people were killed, how people were raped, and in effect, he linked it that the Government was responsible for those matters.

He made other allegations of the increase in crime, and so forth, and it is very significant that the hon. Member for Diego Martin West did not respond to what the hon. Member for St. Joseph said, but decided to respond to what the hon. Member for Tobago East said. Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Diego Martin West may have come late. He probably did not hear what the hon. Member for St. Joseph said today, but if he was seriously interested in this debate, he would have got the *Hansard* and he would have recognized that the premise or one of the bases of his contribution has been wrong.

The hon. Member for St. Joseph showed from the statistics that there has been a decrease in crime during this administration. He quoted the statistics. He showed that from 1991 to 1994, during the PNM administration, when the hon. Member for Diego Martin West was in government, in the Cabinet, he showed

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that it increased from 16,157 cases to 18,620 in 1994, and from 1996 to 1997 there was a reduction of 10.1 per cent.

He went through the other statistics, but yet, the hon. Member for Diego Martin West said that crime is on the increase. I am not saying it is satisfactory to even have this decrease, but he is saying that crime is on the increase, and one of the reasons for crime being on the increase is because of corruption of public officials and corruption of the Government. That is a reason. Well if that is the logic of his argument, Mr. Speaker, then it means that it is because of the corruption of the Opposition in government, crime was on the increase. Therefore, he, as part of the government, was also painted with that brush. [*Desk thumping*]

If that is the logic of his argument, Mr. Speaker, then it means that for all the years the PNM occupied office, they were corrupt, because crime increased gradually over the years! It did not increase overnight! On his open admission, by his own argument, Mr. Speaker, he is saying he is corrupt. He is saying he is corrupt and his government was corrupt!

Dr. Rowley: Oh logic, boy!

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Logic? That is what he said. That is his argument. He quoted all the instances. Mr. Speaker, he made an allegation here which I am taking very seriously. He said that he has evidence that Members on this side have broken the law and they are corrupt. I want to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, that I am asking him to supply me with the particulars and that I would submit it to the Director of Public Prosecutions for investigation and that I will report to this House after I get a report from the DPP, or if there is a prosecution it will be seen for itself. If he does not do that, I want to serve him notice that I am going to take steps in order to see whether the Parliament would not take steps for misuse and abuse of the privileges of this House. [*Desk thumping*]

He knows. He is an experienced parliamentarian, and he knows he does not have any evidence. He does not have any facts, because if he had facts, he could have filed a substantive motion against any Member of Parliament here and they would have to answer it. [*Desk thumping*] He does not do that. He comes and uses inferences at an important debate like this about crime to “make a gallery” about allegations of corruption.

Mr. Speaker, he also knows that he can go to the police and make a report. Is he saying that the police also are corrupt? That they will not take his report? That they will not investigate it? He knows that, but he does not do that because he knows he does not have any basis! He also knows that the DPP, independent

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officer under the Constitution—he can go to the DPP and produce the evidence, and he knows that. *[Interruption]*

Go what? If you go there, the DPP might have to take action against you! *[Desk thumping] [Laughter]* Is it that he is afraid of the office of the DPP? Why is he afraid? He is afraid of the office of the Commissioner of Police, the head of crime, Superintendent Grant. Is he afraid? Mr. Speaker, I am saying it again. He must supply the information to the holder of the office of the Attorney General, produce it to the DPP, and if he does not supply the information, he may be guilty of breach of privileges of this House. *[Desk thumping] [Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I ask that we allow the debate to proceed in a manner in which a Member could make his contribution without disturbance. Please proceed.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, he also knows, because he is a person who has legal connections, he also knows connections with the law. He knows that if, for example, he makes a report to the police and the police do not act, he makes a report to the DPP and provides them with evidence and they do not act, he can go for judicial review to get a mandamus. He knows that he can use the court to get a mandamus.

He also knows that under the Act, under the law, he could produce his statements to the Magistrate and he can apply for private indictable information. He knows that, but he does not do that. He comes “gallerying” here. “I have evidence! I have evidence! I have information!” He knows, Mr. Speaker, that you will rule him out of order, because he knows the rule of the House!

5.30 p.m.

He wants to create an impression to the media because he knows that some of them would write some of that nonsense he says. He knows that. So that, in effect, what he does is, he comes here to use an important debate like this. He sat there and listened to his colleague make a presentation which, as an Opposition attempting to get into government, made no recommendation as to how to deal with the crime problem—his presentation is there for people to read—as an alternative government, he made no recommendation but this Member comes here now and the recommendation he made is to change the uniform of the police.

I can now understand why the PNM could not have dealt with crime in this country, why crime went up and up all the time; because as far as he is concerned, he wants to change the colour of the uniform of the police because in Scotland,

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when they were playing golf, he saw police dressed up in a particular way. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, what nonsense. What he wants to change, too, he looks in the *Hansard* and he does not see "Honourable" before his name and he is vexed, so he walked with the *Hansard* today, this big book. Mr. Speaker, he never walked with a briefcase here with contributions. He never walked with material or research matter, but he walked with this big book to say that his name does not have "Honourable" before it. How can this really be a serious thing for the Opposition to deal with crime?

Dr. Rowley: Could the Member give way?

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: I will give you a chance. Mr. Speaker, he wants answers. But, before I go to some answers, I am sure you would recall—not that you take an interest in all these matters—that there was a big situation in Trinidad and Tobago when the PNM said it had to deal with crime, how it was going to deal with crime and the problem of dealing with crime was the service commissions, that if we got rid of the Police Service Commission and if you could fire the Commissioner of Police, you would be able to deal with crime. The last Prime Minister was saying, "Abolish the service commissions. They have become totally useless." That was the answer. Put a management board and, in effect, make the police service subservient to the politician. That was their way of dealing with crime.

But while they were dealing with all that, the special reserve policemen were there "donkey's years", year after year suffering, not enjoying the facilities of police officers but doing the same work. He came here today to say that the police service is not increased. He does not have his facts right. Even with the special reserve police fully integrated, the police service has been increased and I will show him statistics. He comes here unprepared, with his hands shaking with only this *Hansard* in his hand in order to say he should be called honourable. That is how to deal with crime.

Mr. Assam: Member for Diego Martin West, you should be in jail.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, he talked about sleeping with your door open. I am sure he would remember—because he tried it and he closed his door after—during the last administration that the Minister of Social Development was sitting in one of these seats here; he was sitting here when she got up and said, "From now on, people can sleep with their doors open. People are safe." She is now the chairman of the party. Is she the chairman? I cannot remember now. One week after, she had to close her door because they went in her house. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, I do not know. As a matter of fact, I understand that the Member for Diego Martin West did not take on the now chairman, he kept on closing his door. He never slept with his door open. Well, from now, he is not listening to anything she says. [*Laughter*]

They are trying not to give him a seat, but I want to say, if it is one person the Member for San Fernando East has to give a seat, it is the Member for Diego Martin West, the real debater in this House.

Mr. Assam: The only debater.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: He is the only—no, no. I withdraw that, Mr. Speaker. The Member for San Fernando East cannot be leader unless he gives him a seat. That is why he could walk in here with that book alone in his hand. He must be called honourable. No other Member of Parliament. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving way but you were here when I walked in. I met this book here. [*Laughter*] I did not walk in with this book. Let us get the *Hansard* correct. I know he likes to argue and twist but let us keep it correct. I met it here.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, that even makes it worse. He arranged for the book to be there. [*Desk thumping*] [*Laughter*] This thing was planned. As a matter of fact, the planning there is in this book. He arranged for the book to be on his desk so that he would be able to quote from this book. I give him the assurance, Mr. Speaker, that I will support any motion to have "Honourable" before his name. I will support a motion to that effect. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, in November 1995, when this Government assumed responsibility for the administration of Trinidad and Tobago, we focussed on the state of the police service with respect to vehicular fleet. I will start with that.

The police vehicular fleet had very few serviceable vehicles and there was no policy regarding replacement of the fleet. It was also noted at the time, that of a fleet of 697 vehicles, 307 vehicles were serviceable and 390 were unserviceable. In this regard, it is to be noted that of the 100 motorcycles purchased in late 1993 for community policing, 38 were unserviceable. I am giving an idea of what we met and what we did.

Radio communication—one of the earliest initiatives of this Government had been the introduction of E-999 Rapid Response System because you would recall from 1991—1994 or 1995, people were calling the police station and you could not get answers nor responses because there were no vehicles. When this

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Government took office in 1995, the police service, the entire defence force and the protective services operated on a very obsolete and outmoded radio communication system. Further, the E-999 system was localized and, more often, out of order. In addition, not only was there a lack of equipment for use by these services, but parts could not have been sourced for the equipment.

Further, the wireless system then employed was open and insecure and the public had access to these channels. In addition, for long periods, the police radio communication was susceptible to interference from channels in Venezuela and Barbados.

Community policing—prior to this Government's administration, very little was done in the area of preventative policing except for the juvenile bureau, counselling services and youth clubs. The police's main preoccupation had been law enforcement.

Accommodation—up to 1995, it is to be noted that little or no preventive maintenance had been employed in the upkeep of police facilities over the years. Apart from the seven facilities which had been constructed two to three years previously, all other buildings had been in need of major repairs. The most common defect observed and highlighted was that of the plumbing system which, in most instances, was connected to fixtures and fittings either broken or faulty.

Additionally, the lack of proper janitorial services impacted negatively on these buildings. Forty-four stations had been identified at that time for major repairs refurbishment and 14 for rebuilding. These matters, obviously, adversely affected the police in dealing with the crime situation. What was the action taken by the Government since 1996?

Vehicle fleet—as a consequence of what occurred, one of the very first initiatives undertaken by this Government in its fight against crime was providing an adequate number of vehicles for the police service. In this regard, the Government established a policy for the acquisition of vehicles for the police service through leasing arrangements with selective financial agencies over a three-year period. In 1996, therefore, 100 vehicles were acquired on a lease/purchase basis for use by the police service. In the same year, a further 132 vehicles were purchased including 100 jeeps for the E-999 Rapid Response System. Ten other vehicles, including two buses, were also purchased in the following year. This policy of acquisition of vehicles through a lease and maintenance arrangement with selective finance companies has played an important role in the reduction of crime and it would continue as an important policy of this Government in the fight against crime.

It is to be noted that at present, of a total fleet of 692 vehicles, 415 vehicles are serviceable and 277 are unserviceable. Further, during 1996—2000, it is to be noted that 39 of the 100 motorcycles purchased in late 1993 have been repaired. Seventy of these motorcycles are currently serviceable and the remaining bikes are, at present, being repaired.

The E-999 telecommunication system—in October 1996, the Government approved the implementation of the E-999 Rapid Response System for the police service in Trinidad and Tobago. That system was designed to provide police and the Ministry of National Security with tools to effectively combat crime and drug trafficking; to provide rapid response to emergencies; to provide reliable wide area mobile to field and fixed site police personnel; to provide for the Ministry of National Security a controlled, independent and secure communication network with group privacy and with the capability to support other government communication requirements; to provide increased security for citizens and to provide a communication platform and foundation for future needs of the Ministry of National Security.

The system was launched in April 1997 and has been very successful to date. The E-999 system was further expanded to a second phase which commenced in December 1998. This phase will provide most of the police service with secure radio communication. On completion of phase two, members of the Trinidad and Tobago police service and fire service will be able to communicate 95 per cent of the radio communication needs nationwide on a single radio network. More importantly, these services will be using a common platform with independent control and privacy.

Phase two, which will be completed in July 2000, will mark the completion for Trinidad and Tobago of a high capacity microwave backbone, designed to carry all the audio and data communications channels of the trunking system and to provide the foundation for high layers of communication in the final phase of the project.

One sees that it is not correct, it is unfair and unjust to get up in this Parliament to say that this Government has not been doing anything to deal with the crime situation.

Community policing—in 1996, the modern concept of community policing was introduced in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. The Ministry of National Security has been very supportive of the efforts of the police service in this regard. It should be noted that this philosophy was initiated primarily as a proactive strategy—

Dr. Rowley: What year was that?

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: 1996—to help in crime prevention. It was an innovative method adopted by the police to control crime, violence and delinquency in our society. Since its introduction in 1996, the police service has placed greater emphasis on the expansion of the community policing unit. As a consequence, a number of officers, whilst this administration has been in office, underwent training both at home and abroad. This training enabled officers to successfully lecture to schoolchildren, counsel students and provide advice against social ills in the various communities.

In keeping with this thrust of the community policing programme, officers continue to network with both governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to assist communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Rowley: I thank you for giving way. I am just seeking a little clarification. Is it that of the 100 motorcycles to which you referred of which 39 were in disrepair when you came in the government, that those motorcycles were actually part of the community policing system? If that is so, how did the community police system begin in 1996?

5.45 p.m.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: It was effectively begun. You must have started something to have it done, but effectively it began in 1996. I did not want to say begin and just acquire motorcycles and only three bikes on the road. Mr. Speaker, if he wants some credit for some motorcycles on the road and some community policing, take it. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Rowley: I want some truth.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: I am waiting on your letter with the particulars. Accommodation—subsequent to this Government's coming into power, relief has been provided to communities in the high risk areas by the construction of police posts in the following areas—[*Interruption*]

This is the honourable gentleman who said that nothing has been done and the Government—where is the hon. Member for Diego Martin West living, in Trinidad and Tobago? He probably spent a lot of time abroad, but he must know that all these things are happening. The hon. Member for Diego Martin East knew he could not talk about these matters, that is why he did not deal with achievements of the Government and alternatives. He knew that he had to go with bacchanal; he had to read facts of crime and then link Government with crime.

That is why the hon. Member for St. Joseph got up and said, “Well, if that is correct, then the PNM was responsible for the Dole Chadee murders.” Mr. Speaker, let us see where the construction of police posts occurred: Cap-de-Ville, Longdenville, Pinto Road, St. Barb’s, Malabar, St. Mary’s, Piccadilly, Mango Rose, Debe. New police stations have been built and commissioned in the following areas: Maraval, Four Roads, Diego Martin, Erin, Ste. Madeleine, Princes Town, San Fernando, Sangre Grande, Mon Repos, Barataria, El Socorro, Gran Couva, Cunupia, Freeport, San Juan Police Station annexed, and nothing. You want police to deal with crime, but you are not giving them police stations and accommodation, and you are making them work under very inhumane conditions. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, I will ask him to quarrel with the Minister of National Security.

Manpower—he talked a lot about manpower today. When I say manpower I mean womanpower too, because in law you do not include woman; manpower and womanpower. In 1996, the strength of the police service stood at 4,856. During the period 1996—1999 it is to be noted that 1,246 persons were recruited into the police service, while during the same period, 547 officers left the service through retirement, resignation and so forth. Further, during the same period, the strength of the police service increased from 4,856 to 5,747.

Mr. Speaker, where is the basis for him saying that he wants an explanation why the police service was not increased? His facts are wrong; he should check it and come back the next day and apologize. His facts are wrong.

Regarding training, Mr. Speaker, since 1996 the training of officers in the police service has accelerated. Recognizing the importance of training for human development as well as a conduit for organizational change and effectiveness, the Ministry of National Security embarked on an intensive training programme of personnel in its respective divisions. During the last four years, members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service proceeded on overseas as well as on local training. During that period an estimated 200 officers were trained overseas.

With respect to local training, there were 2,952 in various courses in 1997; 1,316 in 1998, 2,253 in 1999. Emphasis was placed not only on the traditional areas of police work, but also in the areas aimed at helping police officers to acquire and master skills in the use of modern techniques essential to the control and detection of crime. Eighty-nine police officers received training in crime scene management over the last four years, very vital to the detection and prosecution of crime. Over the last four years officers also benefited from

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computer-related training to deal with computer fraud and cyber crimes, as we have coming up in the future.

Mr. Speaker, steps were taken to make the police service more customer-oriented. I should mention that in the community policing area, 36 officers were additionally trained and there were other kinds of training—which I would not relate—even in the court procedures and so forth, which I would deal with some more at another time.

Concerning anti-crime measures taken, there is a police youth club programme, which I will deal with on the next occasion, the crime stoppers programme, which has worked very well and there were other anti-crime measures taken by this Government. There is also a prison welfare and rehabilitation programme. I will deal specifically with the question of what has been done for Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, for the hon. Member for Diego Martin West to indicate to this honourable House and to give the impression to the national community, through the media—if you look, you would see some of them printing these falsehoods—that crime is on the increase, is wrong. To also say that the Government has not done and is not doing anything to deal with the problem, is also wrong. In every area this Government has attempted to deal with the problem and taken measures to deal with the problem.

We brought a measure to deal with crime and the Opposition did not support it. The Government did not have the support of the Opposition. They are complaining about the hangings, but they blocked a law of order to allow this Government to consider over 20 persons who were convicted by the courts, due process of law, and the human rights bodies are preventing it; delays. We brought a bill here to give those persons a certain period of time and if they do not deal with it, give the law its course, and they voted against it. But they come here to deal with crime, how could you deal with crime if punishment cannot be implemented?

We come here to deal with matters in respect to corruption. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, he does not know and he spreads this rumour. The nine persons that he talked about was because the human rights bodies finished the applications within a certain period of time; but they have these matters for three four years and he is agreeing for them to do it. He must go and tell his constituents, and I want to tell him that I am coming to Diego Martin West and I will tell them how he voted in order to prevent them—[*Interruption*]

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He voted against the Domestic Violence Bill which is to provide relief for women and to prevent domestic violence and, in effect, violence against women. Yet he comes here today to talk about the Government not doing anything about crime. He comes here to talk about corruption. We brought a Bill which would give the Parliament, including his party, the power to deal with corruption, but he voted against it because he thought, and he still thinks, that the People's National Movement will get into office and the Bill would be used against them.

He voted against the Bill which would give parliamentary committees consisting of Opposition, Independent and Government members the power to call for any file. As a matter of fact, the same allegation that he is talking about—if he is genuine—that committee would have been able to call for the file, examine it and report to the House. Yet he comes here to make allegations about corruption. The reason he does not want to do it is because he really believes that the People's National Movement is getting back into office, but I want to tell him that he is having a false dream. [*Desk thumping*] It is time for him to face facts.

As a matter of fact, I know that he knows that the People's National Movement cannot get into office again, especially under the leadership of the Member for San Fernando East. So how could he come here and say what the next Government will do? He knows also that although he is sure to be a candidate, he is not sure to be a minister if the PNM wins office. [*Desk thumping*] How could he talk on behalf of the future Cabinet—if there is a PNM government?

As a matter of fact, I think if the hon. Member for San Fernando East hears that, he will think that you are anticipating him, that if he wins you are demanding to be a Member of Cabinet and he might try to veto your—[*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Assam: Do not study for me, study for yourself. “Ah young and ah strong and I ain’t fraid no man in town.” Study for yourself, not for me. [*Crosstalk*] [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker: I do not know whether hon. Members would care to reserve this type of thing for when the election date is actually announced. I think that if we still have some months to go and we are starting with this type of speed now, I very much fear for whoever is sitting in this chair in the next month or two. So please, try to make the rest of the term easy for me.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, do you have information, you have a few months to go? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker: No, I simply go by what the Constitution of the country says. As you know, the Constitution of the country is very clear, and if anybody tries to go beyond that, one is acting outside the law. Let it not be said that the Speaker tried to indicate anything.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, before I deal with some of the unfair comments made against the hon. Member for Tobago East, I want to say that I agree with the hon. Member for Diego Martin West that the Land Acquisition Act cannot authorize the acquisition of land for private purposes. Therefore, again, if he has any evidence in which he thinks that some unlawful thing is happening, he knows how to deal with it, but I do not think it is right to come here and make a statement which can be—[*Interruption*] I am not saying that what he said may not have any basis, I do not know, but if it is I am not aware of any land which has been acquired for private purposes.

Dr. Rowley: Is the hon. Attorney General saying that he is unaware that a state sponsored project in Toco is now underway and that attempts are being made to acquire people's residential sites for a port development project?

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that I know that the Cabinet did not authorize any acquisition of any land for private purposes, and if there was any acquisition it would have been for public purposes; that is what I am saying. No Attorney General knows everything that is happening outside there, we do not have investigative purposes, but as a Member of Parliament if he has facts which can establish any irregularity, I invite him to send them to me with particulars, or if he wants he can file a substantive motion in this Parliament. He could go to the Director of Public Prosecutions. That is the point I am making.

I cannot sit here and give the impression that what he said is correct, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago has not decided that any land to be acquired under the Land Acquisition Act would be for private purposes; it has to be for public purposes.

Hon. Member: "Boynes must be tell him so."

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: I am just saying that if anybody wants to take it for private purposes they would be acting outside the law. [*Desk thumping*]. Mr. Speaker, then what did the hon. Member for Diego Martin West try to do with the brilliant contribution of the hon. Member for Tobago East?

What the hon. Member was saying was that you have a crime situation, but crime is committed by individuals. He was saying that circumstances and

conditions, can influence the commission of crime. People can be exposed to crime and they can then become involved in crime, and he talked about all sorts of things, including the education system. That is a fact of life, why should out of that be taken this race allegation to give the impression that the hon. Member for Tobago East was saying that Indo-Trinidadians are not involved in crime, white Trinidadians—if I can use that expression—are not involved in crime, Syrians are not involved in crime in Trinidad and Tobago, and only Afro-Trinidadians are involved in crime? The Member for Tobago East did not say that.

As a matter of fact, the Member for Tobago East in this House has been saying that in order to get the people of Trinidad and Tobago together all must live in unity. He has been one of the preachers of national unity, and he lives it. [*Desk thumping*] Here it is the hon. Member for Diego Martin West with his cheap politics has decided to use such an important Motion in order to introduce race.

6.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is even more unfortunate that nearing to a great day, the Emancipation Day celebration, they have put on garbs but they do not have it in their hearts that emancipation means freedom from inequalities based on race and colour. Here it is on this great event in Trinidad and Tobago when they should be preaching love, reconciliation—

Mr. Bereaux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, clause 36(5), imputing improper motives.

Mr. Speaker: There are no improper motives there.

Mr. Bereaux: Yes, there are.

Mr. Speaker: With the greatest deference, would you excuse me if I interpret the things while I am here? There is no improper motive, please continue.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, especially at this time, in their hearts should be love, peace, reconciliation, selfless service, humility. They should come here today recognizing that on the eve of this great event, where all Trinidad and Tobago, regardless of colour, creed or race share the trauma of the Afro-Trinidadian community in the inhumane conditions in which they live in Trinidad and Tobago and throughout the world, and which would be emancipation for all people. An injustice to one would be an injustice to all and we come here and instead of trying to keep the society together, make statements which could cause and promote division.

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Mr. Speaker, all I can say to them is that it is never too late. President Nelson Mandela said that the greatest blight in the world was slavery, because the worst evil that one can tell a man, or make a man or a woman feel is that he is not equal because of race or colour. Let us all rededicate ourselves, whatever our past may be, let us rededicate ourselves so that Trinidad and Tobago could be a better place with emancipation in the air. *[Desk thumping]*

I want to let them know that I am of the firm view that on the performance of this Government that they will also agree that Government is not the same without a United National Congress Government. Mr. Speaker, I have not completed my contribution, but at this stage I will move the motion on the adjournment of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn to Monday, August 14 at 10.30 a.m. May I indicate that I mentioned to the Opposition Leader that in the month of August it is not unusual for the House to accommodate a little holiday for Members of Parliament so that those who have children could spend some time with them.

On the 14th and thereafter, we would sit regularly for the next two or three weeks to see how far we can reach with the agenda of the House.

Dr. Rowley: When is election?

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: I am not saying anything about election. Mr. Speaker, on the matter of the issue which is before the House, by agreement it will be put for the next occasion.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, by agreement of the Leader of the House and the Opposition Chief Whip, it is agreed that the matter which was to be raised will be deferred to the next sitting of the House.

Mr. Valley: Will the Leader of the House inform us on the matter we would be discussing on August 14, 2000?

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: I can tell you now, but it is subject to change. It is in the same order. As you know, there is the committee stage of the Socially Displaced Persons Bill, the Act to amend the Representation of the People Act, Chap. 2:01, and then there is the Confiscation of the Proceeds of Crime Bill, No. 3 on the Order Paper.

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I am hoping on the next day that we would be able to do the committee stage of that Bill together with Bills Second Reading Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 and possibly complete Bill No. 5 since we will be sitting from 10.30 a.m.

Motion made and question proposed, That the House do now adjourn to Monday, August 14, 2000 at 10.30 a.m.

[Dr. Rowley stands up]

Mr. Speaker: I am in the middle of putting the question.

[Dr. Rowley goes to the Speaker, discussion in process]

Mr. Speaker: My friend, the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, just drew to my notice that there seems to be a contradiction in terms that the Speaker himself refers to all Members of the House as honourable. I wish to state that that is because it is considered an honourable House but for protocol purposes. So there are certain things as the Member knows which one could take the liberty of saying in here which cannot be said outside.

Hon. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, again, I am fully indebted for the further representation of the hon. Member for Diego Martin West to be called honourable in printed form. I would have no objection if you can entertain it so that it could be printed hon. Keith Rowley in the *Hansard*.

Dr. Rowley: All I was seeking was clarification as to whether in fact, on the invitation to vote, if it was only confined to those Members addressed as “honourable”, or is it that we are only honourable when the Speaker addresses us? It is just clarification.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member is quite right in seeking to ensure that I am consistent in what I say and I simply indicate to you that it is the practice. You could take it from me. It is the practice in Parliaments of the Commonwealth. Although one talks about “my learned friend”, “my hon. friend” and things like that. In fact, one just has to look at the *Hansard* that comes out of the United Kingdom, the mother of Parliament to understand it.

It is the practice that in this House one refers to Members in the House as honourable whether they be Cabinet Ministers or not, but in terms of strict protocol, you will never go to the United Kingdom and hear them refer to you as a “Back-Bencher”, as the hon. Member from somewhere else unless you are a Minister or the Leader of the Opposition and the like. It is one of those issues that we can address at another time.

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Dr. Rowley: *[Inaudible]*

Mr. Speaker: All I am really saying is that there are several practices that develop; for instance it is recorded every day in the newspapers that Mr. Justice So and So of the Industrial Court has done so and so. That is quite wrong. They are not Justices, but they are Judges of the Industrial Court, they are not Mr. Justice anything.

There are some practices that develop and the correct thing is to refer to all Ministers—for instance, the Member for Fyzabad, notwithstanding that he is a Parliamentary Secretary, he is Mr. Chandresh Sharma and not hon. Chandresh Sharma. *[Interruption]* I am telling you, as I said to your friend, if even that book has that, it is wrong.

Mr. Assam: May I ask a question?

Mr. Speaker: Indeed.

Mr. Assam: Is it the hon. Speaker and the hon. President of the Senate? Is that correct?

Mr. Speaker: Indeed it is.

Mr. Assam: Okay. It is not only Ministers then, it is also the Presiding Officers?

Mr. Speaker: You are perfectly right, but when I was saying that, I was referring to people at that level. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Assam: Okay.

Mr. Speaker: Had that been raised by the hon. Member for Tunapuna, I would have given him a different response.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.12 p.m.