**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Saturday, September 03, 2011*

The House met at 10.00 a.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**STATE OF EMERGENCY**
**(EXTENSION OF)**

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Brig. John Sandy):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and a very pleasant morning to all.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

*Whereas* it is enacted by section 8(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago that the President may from time to time make a Proclamation declaring that a state of public emergency exists:

*And whereas* the President has by Proclamation made on the 21st day of August, 2011, declared that a state of emergency exists in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago:

*And whereas* it is enacted by section 9(2) of the Constitution that a Proclamation made by the President for the purposes of and in accordance with section 8 shall, unless previously revoked, remain in force for fifteen days:

*And whereas* it is enacted by section 10(1) of the Constitution that before its expiration the Proclamation may be extended from time to time by resolution supported by a simple majority vote of the House of Representatives, so however that no extension exceeds three months and the extensions do not in the aggregate exceed six months:

*And whereas* it is necessary and expedient that the Proclamation made by the President on the 21st day of August, 2011 declaring that a state of emergency exists in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, should be extended for a further period, not exceeding three months:

Now, therefore, *be it resolved* that the Proclamation made by the President on the 21st day of August 2011 declaring that a state of emergency exists in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago be extended for a further period of three months.

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank you most sincerely for the opportunity to speak further on the state of emergency that exists at this time in our beloved land. His Excellency has justifiably declared that a state of emergency exists in Trinidad and Tobago. The appropriate Proclamation was signed on August 21, 2011 and remains in force for a period of 15 days. His Excellency, in accordance with his legal obligations, issued the relevant statement and we concluded the debate on that statement last night.

I am sure the law-abiding citizens of Trinidad and Tobago were just as repulsed and amazed, as I was, at the lack of support given by those on the other side. Although they are my colleagues, it was abundantly clear that there are those who talk the talk, but refuse to walk the walk. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Imbert:** That is "ol' talk". You need to walk.

**Sen. The Hon. Brig. J. Sandy:** We are all guaranteed the right to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property, but instead criminals deny us this legacy of our forefathers. The law-abiding now live in fear and feel oppressed, because of the ever present threat of rape, robbery, execution-style murders, drug smuggling, kidnapping, arms smuggling and assault. Clearly, this signifies that criminals, and not our laws, dictate whose rights should not be held sacrosanct. Sadly, although this is recognized and lamented by all and sundry, only the People's Partnership Government was prepared to be our brothers' keepers, not just in word but by action. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, the decision to recommend that a state of emergency be declared, was not based on trivialities. It was an informed but inevitable response to criminal intelligence and other security developments. I have no problem with the word "intelligence", despite criticisms by my friends on the other side. They were of the view that who, what, why, when and how the intelligence was gathered should be provided. How ironic, though, that when they were using intelligence to unjustifiably spy on the hon. Prime Minister and other persons of interest to them, including me, they somehow had no qualms about the word and about maintaining its secrecy. Yet, when the People's Partnership Government uses intelligence in a legitimate manner to bring criminals to justice, it is greeted with brazen dissonance.

We are not an irresponsible Government, and when we, or any country for that matter, declare a public state of emergency, we do so in the best interest of our country; on the basis that it is a significant tool to restore stability and ensure public safety.

I wish to reiterate that those who have turned to crime and lawlessness are still our sons, our daughters and our brothers, and we want to protect them as well. We want them to live meaningful lives and survive to take care of their parents and, indeed, their children.

As history has revealed, crime, riots, violence, civil unrest, war and natural disasters are the typical circumstances that warrant this drastic measure. We, as a democratic nation, fully appreciate that inalienable rights cannot be abused, even though suspended for this period. There are several guiding principles which must be observed, and are being observed; for instance, non-discrimination, legality, proclamation, notification and time limitation. All our actions are transparent and are in keeping with the sanctity of the law.

As we have noted before, this is not the first time in Trinidad and Tobago that there was a need to invoke emergency powers which allow for search and arrest without a warrant. Prohibited conduct is also identified in the various regulations and orders. Unfortunately, concomitant with this initiative is the suspension of some rights. As patriots and law-abiding citizens we are asked to make this sacrifice for a better nation in the end.

We in this Parliament are not expected to make statements to incite discord or subtly induce discontent in our society. Our focus must also be the greater good and the Government's actions, though to some may seem extreme, are in proportion to the threat and are sanctioned by the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, please permit me to digress for a moment. No one is here to debate whether the President has the authority to declare that a public emergency exists. We are not here to contest that the Constitution recognizes and seeks to protect fundamental human rights and freedoms. We are here to firstly appreciate that the same Constitution which identifies our rights and freedoms, allows for the suspension of some of those rights during a period of public emergency. This measure enables a government to implement salient mechanisms to quell the emergency. Our second requirement today is to make a decision that allows the continuation of this measure to complete the existing operations.

Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General will no doubt speak to the constitutional issues, but I need to preface his contribution by saying that we can no longer endure these conditions under which we live. Criminals have forced us to intensify our initiatives by declaring a state of emergency. The danger is real. Self-curfews are imposed, yet that does not always avert tragedy. We have had situations where people in their own homes with a simple, cordial, social

gathering, have their homes invaded. So there was the time when we could have said that we are not going out, for fear of crime outside. The criminals are now invading our homes.

Rights of the innocent are trampled upon. Property is stolen without regard to legitimate owners. Lives are snuffed out. Dangerous criminal conspiracies are rampant. Gangs treat our roads and business places like the OK Corral of the western gunslinging era. Despite the actions of gangsters and other criminals, we shall observe their rights as we strive to protect this country and our citizens.

The Government has been receiving accolades on its recent initiative. Parents attest that they have better control of their children. A greater opportunity for the restoration of family life now prevails, and persons who live in crime-riddled areas can attest that their days and nights are no longer punctuated by the sound of gunfire. People feel safe and our regional counterparts like St. Lucia as well as St. Kitts and Nevis understand our position. Even in St. Lucia, where it is being considered, the only reason so far that has curtailed it is the fact that they are of the opinion it would interfere with their tourism industry. Yet the Opposition sees no value to the measure or purport not to.

What this state of emergency has accomplished is significant. Apart from averting a national crisis, we are sending a resounding message to criminals and the international community that we are committed to resolving the crime situation in Trinidad and Tobago. Many are indeed called to serve this nation, but in May 2010 the best patriots were chosen [*Desk thumping*] and the citizenry continues to endorse that the People's Partnership is a Government of action. [*Desk thumping*]

It is indisputable that the declaration of the state of emergency, which has allowed for substantial arrests and charges, reflects that we are well on the way to demolishing criminal enterprise and activity.

**10.15 p.m.**

We have been given a greater impetus to detect serious crimes and, as a result, we are taking back control of our country. Rest assured, Mr. Speaker, other initiatives will follow, existing anti-crime laws will be enforced and programmes will be implemented to complement these efforts. We shall sustain the accomplishments attained during the state of emergency but we first needed a mechanism, which, though afforded to the Opposition, was not utilized, to propel us to where we are today and to guide where we aim to go.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we cannot claim complete success as yet, as the Judiciary has to make its rulings on several charges. Nevertheless, what we can claim victory over is the ability to ferret out criminals and identify and cripple their insidious plans including those of their foreign counterparts. This could not have been done under normal circumstances in such a short space of time and without the powers temporarily afforded to law enforcement officers.

Mr. Speaker, substantial criminal acts of devastative proportions as well as consequences were averted because of intelligence and policing efforts. This country could have been mired in significantly more bloodshed, fear and turmoil had the action not been taken. We cannot say much more at this time as we have to allow the wheels of justice to turn. I simply wish to tell Members of the Opposition that my recommendation to consider the declaration was not in the interest of John Sandy but, indeed, in the interest of Trinidad and Tobago to which I have given dedicated service in excess of four decades. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, section 10 of the Constitution provides for extension of the proclamation by way of resolution supported by a simple majority vote of the House of Representatives. The extension may be from time to time, but no single extension must exceed three months. Extensions cannot, however, in the aggregate exceed six months.

Mr. Speaker, as the 15th day is drawing nigh, we recognize that 15 days is a diminutive time for our operational plans, but an inordinate time for criminals to remain underground. Fifteen days is a short time to undo what was left unattended for over eight years but, at the same, we recognize that 15 days equates to a loss of revenue for those who conduct legitimate business at night. Fifteen days of peaceful nightly rest is not sufficient, but 15 days takes its toll on the unpatriotic. We therefore respectfully declare that 15 is significant, but not sufficient.

Mr. Speaker, recent intelligence and unearthed evidence are disturbing. The nature of items being found on premises remains alarming. The plans that were being devised by criminals for this country and its citizens are frightening. As such, as law enforcement has made great strides in these past two weeks, we require some more time to thwart the megaplots, and we cannot do this optimally if prior judicial scrutiny is required.

Mr. Speaker, to achieve our objectives, we need the combined effort of the existing legislative framework, as well as the powers that are afforded by a state of emergency. Mr. Speaker, we must be given the opportunity to apply greater pressure to smoke out those who are waiting for the end of what some with ulterior and criminal intent are calling 15 days of rest and reflection.

As we sit here, Mr. Speaker, some are eagerly awaiting to resume their nefarious and criminal activities next week. We are on to them, but we need some more time to win this first battle in the war against crime, especially having inherited an abysmal battlefield from our predecessors.

My friends on the other side may wish to protest an extension of the state of emergency, as they wrongfully fear that it will only foster abuse on the part of those who have the ability to search and arrest without warrant. Like the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, I abhor brutality or excessive force or any discriminatory behaviour especially by officers who have pledged to protect and serve with pride or whose motto is to guard and defend.

We will not tolerate abuse and both the Commissioner of Police and the Chief of Defence Staff have publicly given the undertaking to investigate all reports of alleged abuse. However, I wish to remind Members of this honourable House, and by extension the national community, that there is always judicial oversight through laws and judicial hearings despite the sweeping powers. Our citizens and the international community are, therefore, assured that due process will be observed and stringently so.

Mr. Speaker, claims of abuse from relatives of those arrested by law enforcement officials are not new and, therefore, should not be ascribed to the state of emergency or any extension of it. Where such occurrences are proven accurate, there is redress and officers found guilty will face the brunt of the law. There is no way that this Government will condone any behaviour of that nature. [*Desk thumping*]

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, concerned relatives are advised that several programmes will be made available to their loved ones as part of the prison rehabilitation efforts. I urge our young men in particular to recognize that there are positive and worthwhile alternatives to crime and violence. I also urge parents to encourage their sons involved in criminal activity to understand that there is no future in crime.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday it was said that we have taken a backward step by declaring a state of emergency. I beg to differ. Despite their pledges of developed nation status by 2020, the Opposition's position on crime serves to keep us aligned with Third World status. What we have sought to do is to adopt severe measures the result of which will restore confidence in our security and stability as a nation. This Government knows how to get the job done and get it done well [*Desk thumping*] as demonstrated by unprecedented reforms.

Our rationale for these measures is sound and we commit to taking action to the extent necessary to avert the perils posed by criminals. Other countries have taken similar action on account of criminal activities, Mr. Speaker, and notable amongst these are Chester, Pennsylvania in the United States of America and our neighbours here in Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, the Mayor of Chester, Mr. Wendell Butler, was quoted as saying: "We need law enforcement to step up to vigorously go after any violator. Our number one priority is to get guns off the street, then drugs and try to make our neighbourhoods as safe as we possibly can. My intention is not to restrict citizens, but to protect them." I would like to reiterate the last sentence in that quote: "Our intention is not restrict citizens but to protect them."

Mr. Speaker, in Chester, Pennsylvania there were four killings in eight days. A state of emergency was employed and there was a 9.00 to 6.00 curfew. At least we allow our people to come out at 5.00. Like Mayor Butler, Mr. Speaker, he had enough and it was time to take action. We in Trinidad and Tobago, our citizens had enough and we took action.

Mr. Speaker, we have to spare the nation from further repression and, to this end, my friends on the other side are asked to support this initiative for a further period of three months. We understand that we cannot curtail legitimate commercial enterprise for an inordinate time. We also take cognizance of the fact that some of our workers are affected by the curfew, so we on this side are prepared to consider adjusting the curfew hours.

Mr. Speaker, we have achieved much over the fortnight and we do not wish to lose momentum at this critical juncture of our strategic posture. The Constitution allows for extensions and we would like the opportunity to maximize this right while observing the rule of law.

We urge the Members on the other side to show the world that we are unified on this important issue as far as returning safety and security to our beloved Trinidad and Tobago. With these words, I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Colm Imbert** (*Diego Martin North/East*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night, the Government had indicated that we would have two days of debate on the previous Motion, and arrangements were made, agreements were made and then the Government decided that it would attempt to out-manoeuvre the Opposition by changing those arrangements and telling us that we will be stuck in here until midnight or whatever and we would all be issued with curfew passes.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I thought that was a pathetic attempt to muzzle the Opposition and I can assure you that all of us will be speaking today, Mr. Speaker, all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Minister of National Security very carefully, he has provided no new information, and the comments made by the Government's spokesman—because we have to assume that the Minister of National Security speaks on behalf of the Government. The comments made by the Government's spokesman illustrate the inherent dangers in placing someone with a military background in charge of a government ministry. You see, Mr. Speaker, military men are trained to kill and that is the difficulty when you put the defence force on the streets and you give them powers of arrest.

Nowhere in the training of someone who is a member of the armed forces in Trinidad and Tobago is there any training with respect to the whole concept of service. You see, when you look at the motto of the police service, the motto is to protect and serve, and when policemen are trained, they are given basic training on how to interact with our citizens and how to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens, but army men are not trained in any such way.

**10.30 a.m**.

They are trained to shoot and they are trained to kill, and unless a military man has the sophistication to understand and treat with the tremendous human, economic and sociological issues associated with the use of political power, more often than not the result is more negative than positive and this is what we are seeing today in the persona of the hon. Minister of National Security in my opinion. In my opinion, he simply does not understand the medium-term, short-term and long-term effects of what he is doing and what the Government is doing at his behest.

Look at what he said: 15 days is not enough for the unpatriotic. What does that mean? The 1.3 million population that you now have under house arrest, 15 days is long enough for them, that is the logical corollary of what you are saying. We need more time. More time to do what? Up to now this population has not been given the courtesy by this Government of a proper explanation of why they need all of this time. Why, in the first instance, did the Government require 15 days? Why did they not call a halt to the state of emergency after the first seven days?

**Mr. Warner:** After five days.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Yes, after five days. If you were so proficient, if you were so competent, so incisive, so brilliant; you have such intelligence in terms of criminal activity in Trinidad and Tobago. You are the best Government this country has ever had. If you were so great then one would expect—[*Desk thumping*]. Mr. Speaker, they can make a fool of themselves if they wish.

But, Mr. Speaker, if this Government was as great as it says it is, then they could have done what they had to do in a matter of five days and that is the consensus of most right-thinking people in this country. What the Minister of National Security does not understand or pretends not to understand is that a number of countries have issued travel advisories on Trinidad and Tobago, and allow me now to educate hon. Members opposite.

**Mr. Sharma:** Foolishness.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Yes, I hear the Member for Fyzabad, the distinguished Minister of Local Government, bawl "foolishness". Well I would educate him.

Mr. Speaker, I read into the record the travel alert from the Republic of Taiwan, it goes as follows:

"Taiwan issues travel alert for Trinidad and Tobago

> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) issued a warning"—Wednesday, [*Interruption*] "it's all right, go ahead"—"advising people to avoid traveling to the southern Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago.
>
> The MOFA"—of Taiwan—"issued an 'orange' warning, the second-highest on Taiwan's four-color tourism advisory system. It advises Taiwanese nationals to avoid going to"—Trinidad and Tobago—"and to be on high alert if they have to go."

Now, they can laugh, they can get on if they want, but this is what is circulating in the international community. [*Show document*]

Mr. Speaker, the Italian Government and Tobago depend heavily on European tourists, and I dare any Tobago representative in this Chamber to contradict that fact. The Italian Government has issued an advisory, warning Italian tourists not to go to Tobago and a number of chartered flights have been cancelled, and this state of emergency is already having a deleterious and negative effect on the tourism industry in Tobago. [*Interruption*] You could say what you want. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, there is a basic problem with comprehension: those chartered flights were arranged, so the people were coming, but when your

Government declared this state of emergency for reasons which are entirely unclear to the population, the Italian Government issued a travel advisory and has warned Italians tourists not to travel to Trinidad and Tobago.

The Canadian Government, Mr. Speaker, has declared Trinidad and Tobago to be a high-risk country and if—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I would advise all Members, and especially those who are scheduled to speak, to take copious notes so that at the appropriate time you would be given the opportunity to respond. I appeal for wise restraint and calm reasonableness so that we can conduct our affairs in a dignified and civilized fashion. So all those interjectors, I would want to stem that stream by asking you to take copious notes and at the appropriate time you will be able to respond. Continue hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** You know I heard a comment across the floor that I am arguing for the state of emergency. You see, this is the point that I am making, there is a basic lack of comprehension. Now, it is not that the Members opposite are not intelligent and educated; it is that they are blind.

The fact is that it is after the declaration of the state of emergency that the Canadian Government, the American Government, the Italian Government and numerous governments around the world have upgraded their travel advisories for Trinidad and Tobago. Not before, after! So, it is a consequence of the actions of this Government in declaring this state of emergency for no good reason or for reasons which are unclear that these countries have warned their citizens not to travel to Trinidad and Tobago because the Government has declared a state of emergency.

You see, you have to understand the consequences of what you are doing. When other countries declare states of emergency, they do so because they are at war with some other country or the United States—recently when you had hurricane Irene coming along the East Coast, a number of the governors of those states declared partial or limited states of emergency because of an imminent natural disaster. So that when persons learnt of the state of emergency in the United States, instinctively they would avoid travelling to the eastern seaboard of that country.

In Egypt—who would want to go to Egypt now, unless you are involved in the energy sector and you have high returns coming from your investments? Who would want to travel to Libya now? Who? I am using these countries as examples, Mr. Speaker, because these are countries where it is known to the international

community that constitutional rights, human rights, have been suspended and that the population—of this country—is under lockdown and that visitors are not allowed to travel and move about as they please. What do you think a tourist would think when he is told by his travel agent that if you arrive in Trinidad and Tobago after 9.00 p.m. you have to go and line up in a queue? Mr. Speaker, I can state without any fear of contradiction that the delay—[*Interruption*]. Mr. Speaker, would you quell the noise on that side for me please? I know they do not like what I am saying.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, hon. Members, I would like to appeal again to allow the Member to speak in silence!

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is a blindness on that side. You think a tourist, a visitor coming to Trinidad and Tobago, who is told that if you arrive after nine o'clock, you have to line up in the airport for two hours to get a pass to travel to your hotel or your other destination, and when you arrive there you cannot go out because it is under curfew would still make the decision to travel to Trinidad and Tobago? Clearly, your average visitor is going to choose another destination, and that is the picture that is being portrayed in the international community.

Trinidad and Tobago is viewed by persons who do not live here as a place where people are rioting in the streets, where gangs are rampant just shooting people "black is white" every day on public streets. That is how Trinidad and Tobago is being viewed, that drug lords are in control, that drug lords are running this country. I do not mean to cast any aspersions on the Government. It is simply a perception created when you declare a state of emergency. The persons opposite, the Members opposite, you can fool yourselves.

There is an article in *The Economist* which I would like to share with hon. Members opposite, because I get the impression—[*Interruption*]—"yeah", well you read it? You read the article in *The Economist*? Well, I would read it for you:

> "Crime in Trinidad
>
> STREET life in St. James, a suburb in Port of Spain, Trinidad's capital, that likes to call itself the 'city that never sleeps', normally blasts on until the early hours. But now all that is deathly quiet."

This is an article in *The Economist* on August 27, just three/four days ago, it is not—this is very current and very recent, and the number of persons—[*Interruption*]. Mr. Speaker, would you quell the Member for D'Adabie/O'Meara, specifically?

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, again I appeal! Listen, if it continues after making all these appeals and Members continue to flout and disregard the ruling of the Chair, I am going to invoke the relevant Standing Order and I am going to exercise discretion in doing so. I would retire Members who persist in interjecting during other Members' contributions, and I would ask you to relax yourself in the lounge for a minimum of two hours and then you can come back. Rather than letting you leave for the entire day, you would take two hours off. So I appeal to Members, again, I heard it is heated, emotions are running high, but let us exercise calmness in whatever we are doing.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You see, I do get the impression that the Members opposite do not read or if they read they blind themselves to reality and I would read this into the record again:

> "But now all is deathly quiet. Customers and staff scuttle home early to beat a 9pm curfew that started on August 21st in Port of Spain and three other towns as part of a nationwide state of emergency imposed by Trinidad and Tobago's prime minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar. Jamaica, with a worse gang problem, imposed a similar emergency for two months from May 2010. Gunmen in the capital, Kingston, had attacked police stations in support of their leader, Christopher 'Dudus' Coke, who was wanted in the United States on drug charges." [*Interruption*]

"Hmm", I see he is not taking you seriously, Mr. Speaker.

> "Police and troops stormed his Tivoli Gardens stronghold, leading to 73 civilian deaths."

Let us go back, Mr. Speaker. This is Jamaica! This is why the Jamaican Government imposed a state of emergency—police and troops—we all saw that on the television, we all read about that situation in Kingston, Jamaica where there were street battles between members of the public and Jamaican police.

"Police and troops stormed his Tivoli Gardens stronghold, leading to 73 civilian deaths."

So, there were street battles between the armed forces and civilians in Jamaica leading to 73 persons being killed.

> "Mr. Coke was arrested a month later and now awaits trial in New York. A bevy of suspected criminals was detained. The murder rate fell by more than 40 % and has stayed down".

Now, this is the comment coming from *The Economist*, an outside observer, because what I am treating with now is how people from outside view us. They do not live here, so they have to go by what they read, what they hear and what they pick up from their own intelligence sources.

> "Nobody expects such drama in Trinidad. Two young thugs were shot dead during an armed robbery on August 22nd."—and here is the key—"But there is no kingpin on the 'most wanted' posters."

**10.45 a.m.**

So the point I am making is that we do not have a Dudus Coke in Trinidad and Tobago. We have no garrison where police and army are shooting at citizens and there is a street battle going on for weeks and months, Mr. Speaker. There is no kingpin on the most wanted posters in Trinidad.

> "The curfew will doubtless cut the murder rate, but it was slowly coming down anyway."

So that—this is not—[*Desk thumbing*]—you see, Mr. Speaker, either they do not understand or they pretend they do not understand, but it was slowly coming down anyway. "If arsenals of illegal guns are seized and hard-core gangsters are charged and convicted, there will be a longer-term dividend." So even they are wondering what on earth is the Minister of National Security up to. But that requires intelligence. And they recognize that there is an absence of intelligence in Trinidad.

> "…and unusual determination from a police force that is in a sullen mood over a pay claim and the appointment of a Canadian as police commissioner last year."

This is not me speaking. This is *The Economist*, a British—a highly respected British publication:

> "The previous prime minister resisted calls for a state of emergency because he worried this might scare investors when the economy was booming…Mrs. Persad-Bissessar reckons that leaving the gangs unchecked would be costlier."

This is what they are saying. So there is tremendous skepticism in the outside world with respect to why has the Government called this state of emergency. Yesterday—what a fool. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I was reading out some information on what has happened in other countries. This is an article from

Wikipedia, Mr. Speaker, but let me read the reference to Trinidad and Tobago, I did not get to that. Listen to what they have to say. And again this is what persons from outside of Trinidad and Tobago think about this state of emergency that has been declared in Trinidad and Tobago.

> "The Prime Minister, Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar on August 21st at 8:00 pm announced a State of Emergency in an attempt to crackdown on the trafficking of illegal drugs and firearms, in addition to gangs."

The state of emergency is also—like they know the reason. The state of emergency gave the police and army the ability to make arrests and searches without warrants and to use excessive force where necessary.

So when yesterday the Member for Chaguanas West in complete insincerity, Mr. Speaker; complete insincerity. I saw—I digress. I saw an article this morning, "a work of fiction" that the Member for Chaguanas West broke down in tears yesterday. That must have been when I was outside. Because that is a complete fabrication, but in complete insincerity yesterday, the Member for Chaguanas West asked: "What is so different with respect to this state of emergency?"

Look at what Wikipedia is saying. They do not know. He does not know, but they know. The state of emergency give the police and army the ability to make an arrest and search without warrant and to use excessive force when necessary. And in fact the hon. former judge knows as well. Because he said, if you are outside you will be shot on sight. So he knows too. You think without a state of emergency the police could shoot people on sight? You know, as I said yesterday evening, Mr. Speaker, they must think this country is a pack of fools. You must think this country is a pack of fools.

Last night somebody that I am associated with went out to buy some food at 6.30, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I am hearing the Member for Chaguanas West—I wonder if the people in Moka and the people in Living Waters know the kind of people you associate with. I wonder if they know. Chaguanas East, I am sorry. I wonder if the people in Moka know the kind of people you are associating with.

**Mr. Speaker:** Listen. Let us not impute. And Member for Diego Martin North/East, you know better. I do not think that we should be attributing or imputing in any way any kind of negatives to Members in this honourable House, unless you have evidence. I keep saying, bring a substantive motion. But please, you know better. Kindly continue but refrain from going that way.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I was simply responding to a *sotto voce* comment from the Member of Chaguanas East when he called the name of a suspected criminal. He is the one who initiated the process and that is why I responded by telling him I wonder if they know who he is associating with. But, Mr. Speaker, I did not call any names here, you know. I called no names. "Him that called the name." Who the cap fit, let them wear it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me move on with what is said here in Wikipedia:

> "The decision came under heavy criticism from the public and Opposition with many claiming that the police should be going after the country's wealthy, who many suspect to be the main perpetrators behind the shipment of narcotics and guns."

And you see, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the—you know I am hearing the Member for Toco/Sangre Grande muttering. The most severe adverse effect of this state of emergency is on the hospitality sector, a sector for which he has portfolio responsibility. And what has the Minister of Tourism done to appease the fears and the concerns of the persons in the hospitality sector? Absolutely nothing! [*Desk thumping*]

You see when you do not meet and treat with your publics, with your constituencies that is why—that is how resentment starts to build and that is why the Government is being viewed with tremendous skepticism. I would urge the Minister of National Security to contemplate these words.

> "The decision came under heavy criticism with many claiming that the police should be going after the country's wealthy, who many suspect to be the main perpetrators behind the shipment of narcotics and guns."

Yesterday the Minister of National Security gave us a very emotional statement about people of African descent killing people of African descent. I could not understand the relevance. I could not understand the relevance. Nobody had brought up that in the debate, Mr. Speaker. "Why he had to bring that up?" God knows! And you know we had the same kind of emotional rhetoric coming from the Member for Chaguanas West. Why bring that into the debate? Nobody was talking about that. In my presentation, Mr. Speaker, I spoke —[*Interruption*]

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Yes. The Member for—correct. The Minister of National Security spoke long before the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, and the Member for Laventille East/Morvant was simply responding to the commentary from the Minister of National Security.

The whole point is, Mr. Speaker, if you go deeper, if you do some introspection, if you apply some sophistication, the point is that people from outside have come to the inescapable conclusion that the transshipment of cocaine from South America to Europe and North America, in other words, from the producer countries to the consumer countries through Trinidad and Tobago, cannot be done by those little "fellas" in the three-quarter pants, those whom you are rounding up, corralling and putting, as the Leader of the Opposition put it, "Puh them in an area with a barb wire fence and throw some grass inside there for them to eat". Those little fellas, those little fellas in the three quarter-pants, they are not the kingpins. They are not the persons with the resources to acquire and ship drugs through Trinidad and Tobago into Europe and North America.

Therefore, when the Government gives us as a reason for the state of emergency a spike in drug related activities, but, "you only locking up them little fellas" and there is no indication, there is no evidence, there is no sign whatsoever, that you have been able to grapple with the problem, that you will be able to deal with the problem at source, that you will be able to deal with the masterminds, the persons who are in control of this nefarious activity, that is where skepticism comes in, Mr. Speaker, and that is why this Wikipedia article reeks of skepticism.

Listen to this. "Tensions arose further." It does not matter, Mr. Speaker, even though the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air is attempting to interrupt me. He said, Wikipedia is not a credible source. That is irrelevant. It is out there in the public domain and millions of people go on to Wikipedia and read the articles and they attach whatever credibility to those articles that they deem to be appropriate. It is not for you, it is not for you to tell people overseas what they must think and what they must interpret in terms of your declaration of a state of emergency. It is not for you. It is by your actions that people will establish your motives, not by what you say. So let us move on.

> "Tensions arose further when a teenage girl's attempt to humor got her into trouble with the law after she criticized and threatened the Prime Minister. Following the video, the Attorney General announced that a government agency would be monitoring activity on social media sites including Face Book and Twitter.

Now, you could laugh if you want. This is very reminiscent of the Egyptian turmoil.

The Egyptian President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak in his futile attempt to retain power, he shut down the Internet, he shut down BlackBerry Messenger and

he attempted to shut down cellphone communication in Egypt because the persons who were protesting were using those as means of communication. I even heard a rumor that the Government was contemplating shutting down BlackBerry Messenger in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Speaker. [*Laughter*]—No, no, no; no, no, no—because they have a belief that the gangs used BlackBerry Messenger to communicate. So they were going to shut down BlackBerry Messenger for all 1.3 million citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, the effectiveness of the state of emergency—Mr. Speaker, I know they do not like what I am saying, you know.

**Mr. Speaker:** Could you—I want to make it clear as well, this is not a church and I am not a pastor. This is a Parliament and we would expect some streams. I would want to exercise judgment, because remember I have been accused of being a schoolmaster. I do not want to be a schoolmaster. At the same time we have a Parliament and there is a tendency on both sides for crosstalk and exchanges. If I feel it is going out of control, the Speaker will intervene but I think liberty must prevail at the same time. Continue. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, the article concludes:

> "The effectiveness of the state of emergency was questioned when after five days, despite the increased number of raids and searches conducted by the police and army only six illegal guns were found."

Now yesterday we heard—[*Interruption*]. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, really, I am asking for your protection—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Peters:** Boy stand up and talk and hush your mouth.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, Member for Mayaro please—again may I appeal, allow the Member for Diego Martin North/East to speak in silence as far as is possible. Continue, hon. Member.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting, as soon as you sit down the cacophony starts again.

**Mr. Speaker:** Continue, hon. Member.

**11.00 a.m.**

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me also educate hon. Members opposite with regard to one of the consequences of a state of emergency. I will read into the record a report made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations on November 06, 1990 when the Permanent Mission of the

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations was required, in accordance with the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to report to the United Nations committee that it had suspended constitutional rights in Trinidad and Tobago. Now, the Minister of Foreign Affairs will be aware that he is obligated to report to the United Nations and to report to the Secretary General in the context of Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Now, in 1990, when the Government of the day, faced with the invasion of the Parliament by the Muslimeen, declared a state of emergency and continued it for a period of a couple of months, they subsequently reported on November 06, 1990 to the United Nations. The salient component of this report is as follows:

> "The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations as required by Article 4, paragraph 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights hereby notifies the Secretary General to the United Nations of the consequent necessity for the suspension of certain rights protected by the Covenant by the enactment of the Emergency Powers Regulations 1990..."

And our Minister of Foreign Affairs, through our Permanent Mission will have to do precisely this within the next month or so and report to the United Nations as to the suspension of human rights in Trinidad and Tobago, and these were the rights that were suspended in 1990 that our Permanent Mission reported:

> "Derogation from"—that means taking away from—"the rights protected by Article 9 of the Covenant, namely the right: (a) to liberty and security of person; (b) not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention; (c) to be brought promptly before a judge or officer authorized to exercise judicial power; (d) the right to bail; is authorized by the above-mentioned Emergency Powers Regulations..."

Now, the regulations that are in force now are a carbon copy of the 1990 Emergency Powers Regulations, which are, in themselves, a carbon copy of the 1970 Emergency Powers Regulations.

So for those on that side who do not know, such as the Member for Chaguanas West and others, who say that there is still due process of law in Trinidad and Tobago, I beg to differ, because the same Emergency Powers Regulations that are in force now were in force in 1990, and our Permanent Mission reported to the United Nations that they had suspended the right to liberty, security of person and, most importantly, the right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention.

So currently, our Emergency Powers Regulations give the Government the right to initiate arbitrary arrest and detention of persons, and our Minister of Foreign Affairs will be required to report to the United Nations that they have done this. The Regulations are as follows: Regulation 16 (1), (3), Regulation 17 and Regulation 19. [*Interruption*] Yes, quite correctly, the Member for Chaguanas West told the Parliament and told the country that no constitutional rights, no human rights, no civil and political liberties have been suspended in Trinidad and Tobago. But, you see, you could run but you cannot hide. Sooner or later you are going to have to report to the United Nations that you have suspended constitutional, civil and political liberties in Trinidad and Tobago.

Secondly:

> "The right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose one's residence protected by Article 12 of the Covenant has been derogated from by curfew restrictions on movement and travel imposed by virtue of Regulation 4 (1), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) of the Emergency Powers Regulations:"

Again, our curfew order which flows from the Emergency Powers Regulations, 2011 is more or less a carbon copy of the curfew orders, with some minor adjustments of 1990 and 1970, except they are being very selective in terms of the areas that have been singled out for lockdown and house arrest. That is the only difference.

You see, in 1970, initially, a curfew was imposed in Port of Spain and San Fernando, and then a couple of days later it was extended to the entire country, and similarly in 1990, there were stages and so on. But this Government has been very selective in its curfew restrictions. But for those unfortunate people who live in the region of Diego Martin and who live in the city of Port of Spain and in the region of San Juan/Laventille, and who live in the borough of Arima, and who live in the city of San Fernando and the borough of Chaguanas—for those unfortunate people—their right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose their residence has been taken away by the Emergency Powers Regulations.

Listen to this right. You see, a lot of noise, you know, but you see, you do things and you do not know what you are doing. Look at this next statement:

> "The right of the accused to be present at the hearing of a case against him (Article 14, paragraph 3 of the Covenant) is derogated from by Regulation 17 of the Emergency Powers Regulations…"

And our Regulation 17 in 2011 is a carbon copy of Regulation 17 of the 1990 Emergency Powers Regulations. So we are essentially talking about one and the same thing:

> "The right of the accused to be present at the hearing of a case against him is derogated from by Regulation 17 of the Emergency Powers Regulations which refers to persons detained according to the Second Schedule. Section 7(4) states as follows:
>
> '(a) The Tribunal may exclude the detainee or any other person from the said proceedings in the event of his misconducting himself…
>
> (b) Any such proceedings may be held in the detainee's absence if, in the opinion of the Tribunal, it is unreasonable to require his presence thereat on account of his illness or any other cause.'"

So, the right of the accused to be present at his trial has been taken away by this Government by virtue of the Emergency Powers Regulations. Listen to this next right:

> "The right of peaceful assembly protected in Article 21 of the Covenant has been derogated from by the Emergency Powers Regulation 7(1): 'Except with the prior permission in writing of the Commissioner of Police, the grant of which shall be in his discretion, no person shall hold or take part in any public march or in any public meeting.'"

This was the report made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to the Secretary General of the United Nations with respect to suspension of civil and political rights in Trinidad and Tobago in 1990, and we have done exactly the same thing in between 2011.

You know, if you put this thing into perspective, the Government is coming to us and asking us to agree. I heard an impassioned speech from the Minister of National Security who asked us to agree, but I am afraid that all I heard was rhetoric, because there is no explanation. The Government has come to us and has simply said, "Trust us. We know what we are doing and because we know what we are doing and because you are a little child and we cannot tell you, just trust that we, your parents, are doing what is best for you. Keep your mouth quiet; shut up and just go in a corner and we know what is best for you." That is how the Government is treating this population.

What is the real genesis of this state of emergency? It is essentially the unpopularity of the Government; that is what it is. You see, prior to the calling of

the state of emergency, what was happening in Trinidad and Tobago? Let us go back in time. The trade union movement had declared it was going to call a national strike. That made the airwaves; that made the international media for a month. The trade union movement was holding meetings at various parts of Trinidad and Tobago and sending a warning and a clear message to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that they were going to have a national strike, and they were mobilizing.

I remember—I am not sure precisely what I was doing, but I was on my way around the savannah one day and I was stopped because there was a huge crowd crossing from the savannah across by the roundabout there by the Hilton hotel and going up into the St. Ann's area. As I got closer—there were a lot of police and so on—I realized it was a group of trade union members who were on their way to protest outside the Prime Minister's residence. That is the infamous situation where they went and demanded to meet with the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister sent, I think it was Bhoe Tewarie and some other person to speak to them, and, of course, these two persons were dismissed.

So in Trinidad and Tobago we had a scenario where the trade union movement was mobilizing for a national strike. We also had a situation where, in various communities in the constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla, there were a number of protests where people were blocking roads and demanding better infrastructure in Tamana in the constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla. You had situations in various parts of the country where there were spontaneous protests taking place with respect to the betrayal by the Government of its manifesto promises. You had a situation where the police service has decided that they were going to take industrial action. You see, the outside world looks at these things very, very carefully and they do not go with the semantics and the propaganda and the spin-doctoring messaging coming from the Government.

I have in my possession an advisory issued by the Embassy of the United States of America: "Message for US citizens, August 12 - potential labour action by police." The US Embassy in Port of Spain is issuing this emergency message to warn US citizens of the possibility of labour action by members--

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East has expired.

*Motion made*: That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Miss M. McDonald*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The U.S. Embassy in Port of Spain is issuing this emergency message to warn American citizens of the possibility of labour action by members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, beginning on August 15, due to unresolved negotiations over wages and workplace conditions. According to news sources, the labour action termed "a day of rest and reflection" would likely take the form of an unusually high number of police officers failing to report to work. Media reports indicate the labour action could be staged over a period of days. While the Government of Trinidad and Tobago reports it has contingency plans in place to provide for the security and safety of citizens, the Embassy encourages American citizens to be particularly vigilant about their personal security should such an event occur.

So you have a situation where the trade union movement is mobilizing for a national strike; you have a situation where the police have decided that they are going to take industrial action, and the question is, this Government, this coalition Government, this UNC Government that has elements of the trade union movement in it, when the unions decide to march and the police decide to stop work, with this kind of Government in place you have to ask yourself why, because this Government is supposed to be a coalition of various interest groups in the country, including the trade union movement.

Why do you have a situation where you have a government that allegedly contains elements of the labour movement in it and yet you have the trade union movement, after just one year, mobilizing for a national strike and the police service saying they are going to stop working and down tools? Do some introspection and ask yourself why this is happening. The reason is, they feel betrayed, because your government—you—made promises to the teachers, to the police, to the people in the oilfields and all of the other unionized workers in this country—you made promises to them that they believed.

**11.15 a.m.**

You promised them the sun, the moon and the stars. You told them honey would flow, that manna would fall from heaven if they appointed you as the Government. But as soon as you came into office you told them there was a cap on wages, you told them five per cent, take it or leave it; and that is what has bred the turmoil and the resentment, and has led us to a situation where there is no industrial peace in Trinidad and Tobago.

So that you had a situation where there was industrial unrest in Trinidad and Tobago. You had a situation where you had spontaneous protest throughout many

areas of the country because of the unfulfilled promises of this administration. And then you have an unusual number of murders in a short period of time.

The inevitable conclusion is that the Government panicked because it cannot control the trade union movement, it cannot deal with the protective services, it cannot deal with the citizenry who feel betrayed, and then you cannot handle crime. Because for a whole year the Government was boasting about how its crime fighting measures were working, but all of a sudden things began to fall apart, and as I said, you had a situation where the Government was becoming unpopular and, therefore, any observer would have to conclude—because you have not told us.

You see, if they would tell us, if they would stop treating the people of this country like children, tell us why you have declared this state of emergency. Tell us why you need to extend it for three months. Tell us why you had to have censorship, suppression of freedom of expression, suppression of freedom of association for three months. What does suppressing people's right to express their points of view, to criticize, to object, to meet, to associate, to participate in political and labour organizations that may or may not support the Government, what does that have to do with this alleged spike in drug activity, and this alleged increase in gang activity? It has nothing to do with it.

That is why there is no way that—because you have not told us what the problem is, you have not told us why you have to take away our right to speak, why you have taken away our right to meet, why you have taken away our right to associate with people who we wish to associate with. You have not told us why you want to take away that right for three months, and therefore, how could any reasonable person agree to that? We cannot agree to that.

You know the economic effects of this thing are going to be very, very severe—very, very severe. I have some information with respect to the impact of this state of emergency on the economy. The impact of this state of emergency on business in this country, and from all of the information available to us, business on average is down by almost by 30 per cent since the declaration of the state of emergency, and this is across the board, the manufacturing sector, the services sector and so on.

I am sure in his quiet moments in his private conversations with people from the manufacturing sector that the Member for Chaguanas East is very well aware of this. He is very well aware from the persons he comes into contact with privately that business is down on average by almost 30 per cent. You have

particular areas of economic activity—the restaurant trade, the hospitality sector—where certain establishments, their business has gone down by 75 per cent. A number of businesses in the Port of Spain area in particular, their income, their revenue, is down by between 50 and 75 per cent.

From the research that we have done the consensus from the business people who have been speaking to us privately—because they are afraid to talk. Remember you have imposed an emergency regulation that says if you publish anything that is critical of this Government, that if you say anything that would lead to disaffection, they would lock you up. That is in the Emergency Powers Regulations. But what the business people tell us is that small businesses cannot sustain a three-month state of emergency, medium-sized businesses would be very hard hit and only very large businesses and conglomerates are going to be able to sustain the negative effects of this three-month extension to this state of emergency.

So what is going to be the economy impact of the state of emergency? You are going to have a number of small business people who are going to have to close down their businesses and retrench their employees. And if the Government were to do a profile of the employment of persons in this country like any other country, you would find that a significant number of persons are involved and employed in the small business sector. In fact, in some countries the majority of employees are in the small business sector, and those are the ones who are being damaged by this state of emergency.

You know it is having a tremendous negative effect on banks, people are out of jobs in certain establishments, people's working hours have been reduced, in hotels and restaurants because people cannot work at night anymore, people have to now share the number of available hours during the day. So where a person was working an eight-hour shift, they are now working a six-hour shift and a five-hour shift, and there is a concomitant effect on their income, and they cannot make their payments to the bank for loans for vehicles and for consumer items, for appliances and so on. There is already a significant effect on the banking sector, and I know that they know that. They could say what they want but I know that they know that.

You see, based on the feedback that I have received, ordinary people are completely in agreement with the concept that crime is a major problem in Trinidad and Tobago, but they had enough of this state of emergency and I am reading from comments that I have received from people who are neutral. Free movement has been compromised, people have been forced to make adjustments

in order to conform. They question why the criminals could not be dealt with under current legislation, and if the legislation is inadequate why did the Government not come back to the Parliament to amend existing law, rather than declaring a state of emergency. If the big fish are not arrested they would conclude that the state of emergency is a failure and a trick by the Government upon the population.

Most people are quite horrified about a concept of a three-month extension of the state of emergency—they are horrified, they would not say so publicly, but they will say so privately. They are horrified. Why are their constitutional rights in limbo, and why are we now living in what is essentially a police state, and for the longer term, because we still have to tolerate another four or three years of this Government? We still have to tolerate another three years of this Government.

They are worried about what will happen when the state of emergency is lifted. They foresee difficulty with the security forces being able to revert to the pre-SOE norms of power with criminals striking back, a crippled economy, a traumatized and deeply resentful and angry black community. Because do not fool yourself, that is what is happening in this country. They want to know why people in high places have not been arrested. They view the state of emergency as providing only a stopgap or temporary solution. They believe that the state of emergency has criminalized certain sectors of our society and exacerbated the racial divide. I am expressing here the views of what I have been told, and the Government would be well advised to listen. [*Interruption*]

Yes, you go ahead and say "nonsense." "Drugs coming in Toco every week according to the police report I have, but the Member for Toco/Sangre Grande saying 'nonsense.' No curfew in Toco, where millions of dollars of marijuana are coming in through our north east sector—and I challenge the Minister to say it is not true. "Say is not true". Millions of dollars of marijuana are coming in every week through the north east coast of Trinidad because this Government— you see, you have to understand what has happened why we have reached where we have reached.

This Government came in and they dismantled every single component of the crime fighting apparatus in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, how many more minutes do I have?

**Mr. Speaker:** Over 10.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Ooh, thank you. More than enough! Why has Trinidad and Tobago reached this situation where, if we have to believe the Minister, if we have to take what the Minster is telling us at face value, there was a clear and present danger to the citizens of this country, there would have been bloodshed, there would have been mayhem, there would have been chaos, blood would have been flowing on the streets? If we are to believe what he is saying, why has Trinidad and Tobago arrived at the juncture? And let us look at the evidence. What did the Government of Trinidad and Tobago do on assuming office in May 2010? The first thing they did was dismantle the Security Intelligence Agency. They destroyed the Government's capability to intercept communication between criminals.

Now what has happened to that capability, that resource? What has happened to it? What is going on in that Security Intelligence Agency? You have a pack of misfits who have been promoted throughout the system to run that organization. All of the experienced people have been sent home, all of the listening devices have been turned off, the entire apparatus has been destroyed. You cannot destroy something like that and rebuild it in one day, and that is what they did not understand. So they destroy the interception of communications capability in this country.

Next thing they do, they dismantle the Special Anti-crime Unit. What have they put in place? Nothing—nothing! So there are two weapons that the government had in its arsenal. The ability to intercept communications between criminals they mash up that. The ability to deal with crime in a particular way through the Special Anti-crime Unit, they mash up that! I hear them making a joke about the blimp, the airship, but what did the airship do? The airship had sophisticated listening devices on it.

One of the reasons why kidnapping dropped from 155 in 2002/2003, or whatever year it was, down to four in 2010, was because of the eavesdropping capabilities of the airship. They could say what they want but those are facts. You see the equipment that was on that airship which they have permanently grounded was not visual, it was audio, so what that airship was doing when it was travelling overhead all of these hot spots was listening in on the conversations of criminals. And it was because of the use of the airship that kidnapping was reduced from 155 to four. "What dey do?" And they have replaced that airborne listening capability with nothing. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, could you—

**Mr. Speaker:** Please continue.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Please, he is not taking you on. It is hard to ignore that loud noise, that drone in the back there.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, you could use better language to describe a Member of Parliament.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, I was referring to his voice not to him. His voice droned in the back .

Now the fact is they have replaced the airborne capability to listen in on criminals with nothing! They have replaced the interception of communication with nothing! They have replaced the anti-crime initiative with nothing! They have dismantled the entire national security apparatus. And when you do something like that and you have no plan, because I saw the Member for Diego Martin West, I heard him reading an advertisement for offshore patrol vessels, and, I mean, it is just semantics. Everybody who has any knowledge of our marine territory will know that once you go past 12 miles you are into offshore—that is known.

**11.30 a.m.**

So once you are advertising for vessels that have to go beyond the 12-mile limit, then those are offshore patrol vessels. You could quibble about the range, you could quibble about how far they will go and how many people they will carry, that is irrelevant. The fact of the matter is that almost 18 months after this Government came into office and scrapped the existing plan to have an offshore patrol capability to intercept the drugs coming from the producer countries—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Rowley:** The guns.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** And the guns because the guns come with the drugs. The Government came in and saw an existing solution to deal with interception and interdiction of guns and drugs being shipped from producer countries in Latin America, being transshipped through our waters and through our country. You saw that. You scrapped it. You said that the boats were not good. All right, you did that. The logic and the propriety of that decision will be tested in the arbitration. The arbitration will establish whether you had a sound contractual basis for doing that and, from all accounts, you are going to have to pay about a billion dollars, but that is not important, at least in the context of this discussion. What is important is that after you scrapped the programme that was in place to have a drug interdiction capability, 18 months later you have now advertised for

offshore patrol vessels. Do you think you can go and buy an offshore patrol vessel in a supermarket? Do you think that when your tenders come in—because all you are doing now—what is it now, expressions for information or something?

**Dr. Rowley:** Interest.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Interest! It is a procurement process. You want expressions of interest; then you shortlist; then request for proposals; then evaluation; then award of contract; then you have to settle the terms and conditions of the contract—I see the Member for St. Augustine listening—and that is about a year. It is about a year. Because you cannot buy an offshore patrol vessel in a supermarket, you have to build them, or otherwise you are going to buy some junk, some foreign used junk.

Mr. Speaker, you are talking about a period of two to three years where the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will not have offshore patrol capability to deal with transshipment of drugs from the producer countries in Latin America through our territory, up to Europe and North America. So what is the effect of all of that? You demoralized the police force. You can say what you want, but you have demoralized the police force. [*Desk thumping*] You have brought a foreign Commissioner of Police. That was your decision. You took it.

What has the Commissioner of Police brought to crime fighting in Trinidad and Tobago? What new techniques? What innovation? What skills? There is no evidence whatsoever that the foreign Commissioner of Police has improved the crime fighting capability of the protective services in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] There is no evidence of that. So you demoralize the police force; you tell them that there is a wage cap of five per cent; they decided that they were going on sick out, whatever it is.

So you have a demoralized police force, you destroyed the communication capability, you destroyed the anti-crime capability, you made sure that we do not have an offshore patrol capability and then you are concerned and worried as to why you have an upsurge in crime and upsurge in drug activity in Trinidad and Tobago? It is your fault. We on this side will be willing to treat with this matter if you would only come clean with us and tell us what is going on.

I am certain that the entire population would be willing to put up with some inconvenience if they were told what is going on; why our constitutional rights have to be suspended; why businesses have to suffer; why people have to lose their jobs; and why the economy has to take a hit. If people could feel satisfied that all of these things were being done for a good reason, then all reasonable

people would be willing to sit and discuss these matters with you. But you have not had the courtesy to take the Parliament into your confidence, you have not had the courtesy to take the Opposition and the country into your confidence, and you have not had the courtesy to explain why you had been so selective in the areas that you have selected for a curfew.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known that there are a number of criminal gangs in the region of Tunapuna/Piarco. It is well known. There are gangs in St. Joseph, there are gangs in D'Abadie, there are gangs in Maloney and there are gangs in Wallerfield. That is known. Violence erupts there all the time, yet this Government has selectively chosen to exclude the region of Tunapuna/Piarco which goes as far south as Munroe Road, as far east as the Arima Race Track and starts in Mount Hope. They have deliberately decided to exclude that area from the curfew. As I said, I read out a police report in this Parliament about millions of dollars of marijuana coming in from St. Vincent and other islands through Toco, and you have excluded the region of Sangre Grande from your dragnet, from your curfew.

Mr. Speaker, anybody who lives in the south-west peninsula knows about people coming across from Venezuela with guns and drugs through Cedros, Icacos and along the unprotected coastline in our south-west peninsula. You have excluded the Penal/Debe Corporation from your curfew. Everybody knows that in La Horquetta and these depressed areas that there is criminal activity, but you have excluded the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Corporation from your curfew.

The Member for Mayaro could say what he wants. He is well aware that there is criminal activity in Rio Claro, in Mayaro, and in all the areas associated with the Mayaro/Rio Claro Corporation. He knows that. He knows that there is criminal activity associated in Princes Town. Where did Deochand Ramdhanie escape from? From a police cell in Princes Town. Where was Dole Chadee from? Piparo. So you see—[*Interruption*]—yes, and I will say it again. People need to understand.

There is no rhyme, there is no reason, there is no logic and there is no rationality in the areas that you have selected for curfew. If there is this threat, these criminals who are going to engage in a massacre, who are going to shoot on sight or kill everybody, there will be a bloodbath. "Dat is wah yuh say." You cannot tell us who they are, you cannot tell us why, you cannot tell us when, you cannot tell us how, because that is a secret and we are children. We are not entitled to know that, but there is going to be a bloodbath. So when these criminals hit the Uriah Butler Highway—I need to emphasize this. These

criminals who are coming along the Eastern Main Road or whatever route they are using, as they cross the Uriah Butler Highway have they stopped killing people, have they stopped dealing in drugs, have they stopped dealing in guns? It defies logic, and the Government cannot explain why it has been so selective in this curfew.

When you look at the geography, when you look at the politics, which constituencies are contained in the region of Tunapuna/Piarco? The constituency of St. Augustine, the constituency of Tunapuna, the constituency of Caroni East, the constituency of La Horquetta/Talparo? That is also in Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo. Look at the areas that have been excluded from the curfew order. Oropouche East! I heard the Leader of Government Business making a set of noise, but his area is not under lockdown. The Prime Minister's area is not under lockdown, Tunapuna is not under lockdown, Fyzabad is not under lockdown, Caroni East, Mayaro, Tabaquite, Moruga/Tableland, St. Augustine, Caroni Central, Toco/Sangre Grande, Naparima. Let us do a head count here. How many areas represented in this Parliament are under lockdown and which areas are not under lockdown? [*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** Do a head count on our side.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Look in the back here. Lopinot/Bon Air. You know that there are gangs in Lopinot/Bon Air and it is not under lockdown. Oropouche West and Couva North! The point is, if there is a threat to national security, if there is going to be a massacre and a bloodbath caused by drugs—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Rowley:** Unnamed gangs.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Unnamed gangs—why in God's name would these gangs only frequent, operate and kill people in particular areas; and why would they not carry out their criminal and nefarious activity in Mayaro, in Tabaquite and in St. Augustine?

Mr. Speaker, because there is no rational explanation, the obvious conclusion is political that this Government, which is driven by politics, recognized that there would be a negative backlash from the people within their constituencies and that is why the curfew has been selective. They do not care about the people in particular areas of the country, but they are afraid about the negative backlash that will come from—Mr. Speaker, as you walk the street that is what you will hear people say. You hear people say that.

You walk in Port of Spain and in Diego Martin where the people are under curfew, and they want to know why the people in Penal are not under curfew.

They want to know why the people in Mayaro are not under curfew and I cannot answer them. I cannot give them a rational explanation as to why this Government has singled out particular political regions in Trinidad and Tobago for suspension of constitutional rights.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, because this Government has refused to take the population into its confidence, because this Government has refused to explain why it has an Emergency Powers Regulation that takes away the right to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, it has refused to explain why we on this side under no circumstances can support this Motion.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communications (Hon. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan)**: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin my contribution on this Motion for the extension of the state of emergency by saying that this is not just about a government introducing a state of emergency. This is about restoring the rights of citizens in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] This is about securing the well-being and welfare of all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, irrespective of colour, irrespective of class, irrespective of ethnicity, irrespective of race.

Mr. Speaker, this is not just about bringing in people, keeping them and arresting them. There is something much bigger in this state of emergency that perhaps we all need to recognize. This is why it pains me to see that when the country needs the support of a political party that suggest itself as an alternative government, that party has turned its back against the people of Trinidad and Tobago by denying the state of emergency. This is about a nation fighting back, not just a Government. This is about a nation fighting back to restore decency, to restore security, to restore peace and safety for all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Therefore, my colleagues on the other side should really hold their heads in shame that they have turned against the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Seemingly, on the one hand they argue that they are against criminal activity, but on the other hand, having done nothing for eight or nine years—as I will show—about this activity, they sit there and deny the impact of the state of emergency and, the results that the state of emergency has begun to bear and bring in Trinidad and Tobago, and they are arguing against themselves. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, what is even worse is that the very intelligent, the very well researched, the well-spoken Member of Parliament for Diego Martin North/East

could have come into this Parliament and make the unfortunate and unnecessary statement that insinuates that defense personnel, army personnel are simply trained to kill. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Imbert:** That is a fact!

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Perhaps, Member of Parliament for Diego Martin North/East, you have not entered into the new realm of the military where soldiers are not just trained to kill, but soldiers are really educated about peacekeeping. Soldiers are educated about mediation in communities and soldiers on the whole are trained, yes, to defend their country at the cost of their own lives. But I want to remind the Member for Diego Martin North/East that in 1970 and 1990, as far as my memory serves me right, I cannot remember any soldier killing anybody in the country except after the main incident in 1970, when the military went in search of insurgents, Guy Harewood, Beverly Jones, Brian Jeffers and they were known as guerillas and were killed in the forest.

**11.45 a.m.**

Also, there was the case of Rudy John who was killed in Fyzabad. In 1990, if my memory again serves me right, I am advised that no individual, no citizen, was killed by the army but that a soldier was killed in 1990 in this country in the defence of Trinidad and Tobago, and against what was happening in this country in 1990.

So, I think it is very unfortunate. I think if the Member for Diego Martin North/East were to have been present at the Independence Day parade which took place in Port of Spain this year, he would have witnessed, as was already reported in the newspaper of yesterday, the thousands of persons who applauded the defence force and applauded them over and over as they marched past the Grand Stand for the way in which they were defending the interest of Trinidad and Tobago. The citizens are standing on the side of the defence force and the army in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East quoted from his emails. I want to quote from a public document—a newspaper, Thursday, September 01, 2011. Similarly the Member of Parliament for Arouca/Maloney quoted also from newspapers and the question was asked:

"Do you agree with the three-month extension of the State of Emergency?"

David Boodram, 38, bus driver, San Juan:

> "Yes. It would definitely help with the crime situation. But the curfew could be modified to later because there are people who have shift jobs and the Government should make adjustments for them."

Let me say that the Prime Minister has already said that the curfew will be reviewed in accordance with the information provided by the law enforcement agencies of this country. Let me make it also clear that this Government is not unaware of the economic hardships that some people are facing as a result of the emergency. But, at the same time, it is these very small people who, facing hardships, are also willing to sacrifice and make the sacrifice for long-term gain in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, Gail Archer, 48, crossing guard, Laventille, says in answer to the question if she agrees with the three-month extension [*Interruption*]

> "Yes. The State of Emergency is not a problem; the curfew is though. It's really inconvenient for people with children. They have to work, and for some of them, on a shift; it really hard to do everything."

So, we are not denying that and we are also acknowledging that, and we are saying that something will be done with the curfew based upon the information that comes from the law enforcement agencies that have to provide that information, security information that because they have to carry out the job of policing and defence.

Judy-Ann Phillip, homemaker, Barataria:

> "Yes. I have no problem with State of Emergency, but the curfew is the problem for the people who working."

Lystra Selman-Drakes, housewife, Princes Town:

> "Yes. I have no problem with the State of Emergency at all. They should keep the State of Emergency…I think it's been working so far. They should push back the curfew."

Roderick Hutchinson, machine operator, Morvant:

> "Yes."—I agreed with the three-month extension—"With the State of Emergency is like everybody gone quiet. The crime down and that's a good thing, but they should push back the curfew…."

So, the problem is not the state of emergency, the problem, as we understand it, is the curfew and this Government has not said that it is not going to revise the hours

of the curfew, and again I repeat, as we get the information and advice from the people who have to give such advice.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East talked about travel advisories being issued by Taiwan and by other countries. I want to remind the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East how many travel advisories used to be issued when they were in office. [*Desk thumping*] How many travel advisories—UK, Australia, Canada, all the major countries issued advisories to this country. So do not come now and try to pin it and say that because of the state of emergency, the travel advisories are being issued.

I want to say that on the Monday following the declaration of the state of emergency, I met with the diplomatic community in Trinidad and Tobago and we had a briefing and a discussion on the matter and they were in full support of what the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was doing; there was full support. [*Desk thumping*] I have not heard, except for the one cancellation by American Airlines, of a flight for one day which they claim was done due to uncertainty. I have not heard of any other flights being cancelled in Trinidad and Tobago, and if the lines are long at the airport, it is because the planes that are coming into Trinidad are full of passengers, and nobody is ducking from coming to Trinidad. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, he talked about the tourism industry. I want to go back to the year 2010—February 01, 2010. That is when my colleagues were in office, and this is an article via jamaica-gleaner.com by Robert Kelly, and it says here:

"Caribbean youth identified as primary perpetrators of crime in the region"

The tourism problem is not now; it did not start with this Government. I want to read this article—a bit of it.

> "A study on the situation of Caribbean youth has revealed that youth's risky behaviors are wreaking serious havoc on the economies of the Caribbean.
>
> This is according to a study conducted by CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (CCYD) in keeping with its mandate from Caricom heads of government to analyze the situation of Caribbean youth and recommend policy intervention to improve their well being.
>
> The study conducted by former World Bank Economist, Jad Channban, found that murder rates in the Caribbean—at 30 per 100,000 annually—were higher than any other region in the world and that youth were the primary perpetrators, as well as the victims, of crime and violence.

> The report revealed that the economic costs of youth crime had two components: the first being direct financial costs related to public expenditure on security, policing, arrest, judicial processing, and incarceration.
>
> The second component was the indirect costs linked to the foreign earnings of the criminal while s/he was in prison and to the losses in tourism revenues linked to youth crimes. Lost tourism revenues as a result of crime had reached in excess of US$200 million per year for the CARICOM region and overall youth crime was costing at least 7 percent of the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)."

Mr. Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago is part of the market that depends on tourism, especially Tobago. If anything gives you an argument as to why there should be an intervention, why we should have the dramatic action that we have had in order to arrest the crime situation, it is the loss to the economy which translates into loss of jobs and which translates into further crime where people will not have jobs in this country and in the Caribbean.

So, I would not sit here and have the Member for Diego Martin North\ East make it look like tourism has been affected only in the last week because of the state of emergency. In fact, this has been a situation that had existed for nine years because of the ineffective and inefficient mode of the management of the criminal situation in this country by the people opposite. [*Desk thumping*] And not because they did not know; maybe they did not want to know.

Mr. Speaker, if you go back to Wednesday, April 18, 2007, Mr. Martin Joseph, the then Minister of National Security delivered an address at one of the public consultations on crime that was held in Arima, and I want to quote what he said.

> "My responsibility tonight is to explain the nature of the criminal challenge we face, share with you where we are in the fight against crime and assure you of the sustained effort that will be required to win the war against crime."

And I read this because the Member for Diego Martin North/East asked a question. He said we must understand, ask and answer the question why we are where we are today. Mr. Martin Joseph continued. He said:

> "We are in a complex and challenging era of law enforcement. An era where criminal activity including murder, organised crime, drug production and

trafficking is more prevalent than ever before, and the violence and lawlessness it fuels, poses a very real danger to our peace and stability."

Martin Joseph:

"In Trinidad and Tobago"—narrowing it down now—"we find ourselves in a prime transhipment location, a strategic geographical point for the shipment of drugs to points in Europe and North America. We are also finding that in addition to being a transhipment point, some of the drugs along with guns are remaining here.

These guns and drugs have been central to the gang violence and turf wars we have experienced in this country and have also fuelled the scourge of kidnappings, robbery and assault on law abiding citizens of the country."

Had they taken their own advice, had they made the interventions that were necessary, that were commanded by their own language and own experiences, we would not be here today debating a state of emergency nor extension on the whole; and that was four years ago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I can continue to quote Mr. Martin Joseph from a speech on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking—I can go on—but I want to go into some research that was done from the library of the *Trinidad Express*. Ria Taitt, Political Editor, January 26, 2008, Martin Joseph: "86 GANGS in T&T". That was the headline. What was said here by Ria Taitt, the Political Editor:

"Criminal gangs in Trinidad and Tobago are multiplying and fast, both in terms of the numbers of gangs and the numbers of persons joining gangs. The activity is leaving one with the inescapable conclusion that the society is now under greater threat."

And then she said:

"Speaking in House of Representatives yesterday, National Security Minister Martin Joseph said that there were now 86 gangs, comprising up to 1720 members across the country. He said the average size of each gang varied between 15 to 20 members which meant that was between 1300 to 1720 persons"—in gangs.

"The situation has deteriorated considerably"—says this article—"over the past 18 months. The last time Mr. Joseph give a head count, he told the House of Representatives on June 06, 2005, that there were some '500 hardcore members' in the '66 known gangs'."

So between June 06, 2005 and January 26, 2008, you had an increase of almost between 800 and 1, 220 members of gangs.

Mr. Speaker, if that does not deserve attention and action and intervention, then I ask you, what deserves it? Because it takes a small group of people in a society to disrupt the people especially when they have the kinds of guns that we see being recovered—one with which you can shoot a man from three miles off. That is the kind of sophisticated guns that have come into the country, and thank God for the police and thank God for the defence force that they are beginning to recover those arms and ammunitions.

Mr. Speaker, I heard them, seemingly, wanting to make a mockery of the fact that the police were able to collect 231 guns before the state of emergency and about 25 guns after that, and I do not know why they made a mockery of that. But, Mr. Speaker, that is one gun a day and when you consider almost 5, 000 rounds of ammunition before and almost a 1, 000 rounds, that is 6, 000 rounds of ammunition, and when you compare that in this same article by Ria Taitt, it says:

> "In response to another question, Joseph revealed that the Firearms Interdiction Unit had seized a total of 111 firearms and 2813 rounds of ammunition between 2003 and 2005…"

We have seized 250-plus and almost 6, 000 rounds of ammunition in the space of seven and a half months, and then in a space of two years—111 guns and 2, 813 rounds of ammunition.

Mr. Speaker, that is the rate at which this Government was going in terms of its determination to deal with crime, and it does not matter what they may say about Brig. John Sandy, and I choose to address him as Brigadier, as the Minister of National Security, he is doing a tremendous service on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**12.00 noon**

When he spoke in this House yesterday, it must have been a very difficult time for him to speak, as it is a difficult time for anyone on this side. To see young men having to be locked up, young men having to be arrested, it is a difficult time for any Member on this side to do that. But there is something called "commitment to duty". We have sworn to work and do our duty without fear and favour and without affection. And, therefore, we must rise to the challenge and do what is necessary because the national interest is the interest that has to be protected. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, in that regard we ought to compliment the police, we ought to hold the police in the highest esteem for the fact that during this period of the state of emergency, they, together with the defence force, have redefined the meaning of the words "nationalism", "national duty" and "commitment", because they have stood firm. Despite what salary grievances they may have had, they have risen above that and duty to nation has become the first and foremost thing for them. [*Desk thumping*] And we must applaud that.

This country needs to know what nationalism is. This country needs to know what commitment to duty is, and this state of emergency has helped us to learn from the defence force and the police service that when duty to your country comes, you must make duty first to your country a way of life.

Mr. Speaker, while they argued about the number of crime—criminal gangs that are in the country, on January 30, 2008, Independent Senator, the then Prof. Ramesh Deosaran (who, of course, is a noted criminologist) called on the government to clarify whether in fact there were 95 criminal gangs and not 86 operating in Trinidad and Tobago as had been stated by the Minister of National Security. But here is what Prof. Deosaran warned them in 2008 and we are now in 2011.

> "Deosaran further says that criminals will increase even more in number and influence by 2010…"

And may I just quote this from a Juhel Browne story from the *Trinidad Express*:

> "and is now calling on the Government to allow for private security officers to be involved in the gathering of intelligence on criminal activity, to stem what he called the gang epidemic. 'Gangs are going to penetrate—he said—'almost all parts of the country in the next year or two, they having settled down and creating a culture of violence and intimidation in certain fixed spots'..."

Mr. Speaker, this is what they presided over, in 2008 also. Also being warned about all these matters taking place in the country and they did nothing about it; they did nothing about it.

Mr. Speaker, yes, they claimed they had certain interventions. Just like in Jamaica, the Jamaicans had similar things like this, they had special anti-crime, they had operation Anaconda, operation Baghdad, they had all those kinds of things. But the Jamaicans will tell you, as reported in their newspaper, that it was only when they had a state of emergency it made a difference in bringing down the crime rate and controlling the mayhem that was taking place there.

Mr. Speaker, the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin North/East spoke about the unpopularity of the Government. The *Guardian* runs a poll on the newspaper every night and for the last couple of days they were running a poll, and last night I looked at it as to persons who would support the state of emergency and the extension; 78 per cent said they will support it; 78 per cent. Twenty-two per cent did not support it. That is overwhelming support on the net, the poll they run on the net.

Mr. Speaker, he talked about *The Economist* article of August 27, I want to take him back to Kim Boodram, January 04, 2010. In an article that Kim Boodram wrote in our local newspaper in which she said:

> "Eastern Port of Spain has been labeled as 'among the most dangerous places on the planet' by an international body that tracks the growth of small arms and crime".

You see he is trying to paint a picture that this Government is somehow failing in its effort to deal with the criminal situation. He is trying to paint a picture, but what the Member of Parliament failed to say is they did nothing.

So that when:

> "In its report dated December 31, 2009, the Small Arms Survey of Switzerland explored the rise of criminal gangs and gangster-styled killings in Trinidad and Tobago and concluded the country's gun problems were not going to go away."

It was a 53-page report—it is available—entitled: "No Other Life—Gangs, Guns and Governance in Trinidad and Tobago". The article:

> "…opens with the tale of known gangster and sometimes political golden boy Sean Bill Francis who was gunned down last year, his body riddled with 50 bullets. Townsend"—painted in that report—"a grim picture of a wealthy but corrupt, segregated and generally 'out-of-its-league' island nation that appears to be falling before even reaching grace."

This was January 04, 2010, and this report was submitted on December 31, 2009. They were in office for all those years. Mr. Speaker, I wish I had the time to read into the record this whole article. This is the Small Arms Survey of Switzerland dated December 31, 2009. We are here today because if my colleagues on the other side had dealt with getting the guns at that point in time, and had taken note of all of this, we would not have been here today to debate this.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, talked about censorship. Yes, he quoted all the regulations and so on. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you listen to talk shows—maybe you do, maybe you do not. Maybe you look at television "First Up" on CNMG. I have not seen any talk show host removed from their stations. I have not heard anybody tell any person calling in do not call in and say what you are saying. There has been no censorship of the media, no radio station, or [*Desk thumping*] televisions in Trinidad and Tobago, because we hold sacred and we hold dear press freedom in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Prime Minister herself goes out of her way to ensure that the press is given adequate opportunity to cover matters relating to Government in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the talk shows continue, persons are writing their reports, persons are being critical of the Government on this state of emergency. That is part of the territory, that is part of the transparency, that is part of the openness, but, above all, part of the respect [*Desk thumping*] that this Government has for freedom of speech in the country.

Mr. Speaker, no member of this Government left a barber shop and went into a radio station to [*Desk thumping*] remove any two persons from there. Nobody did that. So press freedom is sacred, press freedom is dear and is being protected in this country, and it will be protected by the People's Partnership Government. As long as we are in office we are going to continue to do that as a Government. We are not going to stop persons from being critical of the Government. All we ask is that persons be fair, in terms of being critical.

Mr. Speaker, you know in the life of individuals, in the life of nations, in the life of families, in the life of organizations, in the life of communities, Member for Point Fortin, there are defining moments. As I hear the whisper on the other side from the Member for Point Fortin about protest. I want to remind the Member for Point Fortin that when the fires were lit in Point Fortin, I read in the newspapers where she said she supported the protests. It is dangerous for Members of Parliament to support protests like that, because you may think that the fire will burn somebody else, but one day it will come back and probably burn you also. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, we arrived at many moments of truth in this country, many moments of truth. Nineteen sixty-two was such a defining moment when we decided to be independent, when we decided to take responsibility for our own affairs; so too when we became a Republic in later years. There are times when a defining moment has to do with the protection of the nation, with the protection of

the national interest, with stability, with security and with safety. It must have been a defining moment also for a man of the stature of Mr. Errol Mc Leod to take the position in a Government as the Minister of Labour, when he had stood perhaps on the other side of governments with respect to labour, but he took it. Do you know why? He took it because he believed in his heart that he was coming on the side of a Government which had labour as its main concern, and he has continued to serve in the interest of labour. That is also a moment of truth.

When he spoke yesterday in this Parliament, it was one of the moments when I sat here and not only did I feel inspired, but I want to tell you that he stood tall in the eyes of Trinidad and Tobago as a Member of Parliament, Mr. Mc Leod, yesterday. [*Desk thumping*] You did, Mr. Mc Leod. Mr. Speaker, the declaration, therefore, of the current state of emergency is a defining moment, one that required a different kind of courage, one that required a different kind of determination, one that required political will which has always been absent on that side, the will to do that which is right.

Mr. Speaker, as a Government you make choices, you make hard decisions, you make soft decisions. That was a hard decision. But as a Government we took the hard decision, because our Prime Minister had the political will to take a decision that is in the right interest of the country at this point in time. It is that kind of decision-making, it is that kind of determination, it is that kind of the exercise of political will to make the edgy decision that Trinidad and Tobago required that defines the leadership of Kamla Persad-Bissessar and distinguishes it [*Desk thumping*] from the former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago when he was, in fact, advised by the Ken Gordon committee on crime that a state of emergency should have been instituted in order to deal with the crime situation and they never did it. Today Mr. Gordon has come out and he has actually said that he applauds the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for taking this decision which should have been taken a long time ago.

Mr. Speaker, the People's Partnership Government was voted into office because it pledged to improve citizens' security as a whole. That was a pledge. And the promise of citizen security was part of what I like to describe as the psychological contract between the People's Partnership as a Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago, the citizens. A psychological contract is a contract of expectations.

The people voted us in, 439,000 of them voted us in—the biggest mandate a government has ever gotten in this country beyond the 320,000 the former government got; the biggest mandate 119,000 more votes. They gave us a

mandate because we made a contract with them that we will deal with crime and we will deal with corruption in this country. Therefore, we have to fulfil that mandate, because we made that contract with them.

This is why, Mr. Speaker, they have stood gallantly, they have stood as a family with the Government in this matter of the state of emergency and are willing to undergo further sacrifices to ensure that this country is returned to the beautiful country that this country has always been known for.

Mr. Speaker, there is an article in yesterday's *Guardian* newspaper in which a person said something that is so telling:

"Midway up to Waterhole, Sybil and her friends, have a different view.

> Perched outside her home alongside Sam and Snappy, Sybil says: 'We are glad the place sweet now baby, is like the old days when we could come out and relax and things was good. People inside early, no trouble',
>
> You used to be able to go down-town, hold your boyfriend hand and walk around and window shop. We want that again. But in the night sometimes you hearing Bodow!—gun shots. So this thing could last for three months, I doh mind,' Sybil added.
>
> …But they bring back the times like we had before with this curfew, right now T&T sweet…I happy' says Snappy." [*Desk thumping*]

**12.15 p.m**.

That, Mr. Speaker, reflects how people feel in general about this state of emergency and its extension. They talk about big business and business on the whole and I have dealt with that because so much of the argument of the Member for Diego Martin North/East was based upon the economy and upon the loss to business.

We admit that. There is going to be some hardship with respect to business. There is going to be sacrifice, but we are a very adaptive nation and we must compliment our citizenry for their adaptation. They have settled down to what is happening because they understand that it is in the best interest of Trinidad and Tobago.

A headline here: "Emergency is for T&T's best interest says Sabga"

"Bhagwansingh calls on business community to support Govt move"

If that is not enough:

"London calls for maturity during emergency"

That is the Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly.

> "He said nationals had recognised the realities of the situation and needed to act and react with maturity, sensitivity and duty."

That is the Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly, Mr. Orville London.

**Mr. Speaker:** Could you quote the date of that newspaper and the page?

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Sure. Friday, September 02, 2011, *Trinidad Guardian*. On the very newspaper, Friday, September 02, 2011, another headline:

> "Lawmen back PM's move for extension
>
> The Police Service Social and Welfare Association is throwing its full support behind the Government as it is expected to announce an extension of the state of emergency today.
>
> The association's president, Sgt Anand Ramesar, said the initiative was working efficiently in its bid to stamp out criminal elements that have been terrorizing T&T.
>
> He added: 'We are fully supporting an extension of the state of emergency. We believe it is working well in its objective.
>
> 'It is a clear indication more can be accomplished, given the extra powers granted to the political police.'"

Mr. Speaker, there is the issue. You had in this country all the Anacondas, all the Baghdad's, all the zero tolerance; everything under the sun that you had, but it did not bring the results. What was necessary is that now having the legislation in place, whether it is the Firearms Act, the Anti-Bail Act, Anti-Kidnapping Act, Anti-Gang Act, you needed to make a swift move. You needed to augment the amount of human resources that you had in order to do the job.

Let me explain. On the day on which the sick-out was supposed to take place among the police, the information provided about the police showed that 1, 411 officers were rostered that day throughout Trinidad and Tobago, of which 271 did not come to work. So you just had over 1, 200 police officers available. You have a problem where all of these gangs, all of these guns, all of these murders are taking place; where, in the words of an article by Darrel Heeralal, Investigative Desk of the *Express*, March 01, 2009, he said:

> "Sophisticated weaponry is in the hands of several of the 81 criminal gangs that have been identified by the police across the country. Based on weapons

> seized over the past five years, police sources tell the…*Express* that the weapons in the hands of gangsters include the likes of the Uzi and Tec 9, assault rifles ranging from the AK 47, Galil and M 16, shotguns, pistols, grenades, sub-machine guns and revolvers.
>
> Police believe that gangs possess close to 1, 000 guns, more than can be found in some of the nine divisions of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service."

That is what we are fighting and that is why you needed a state of emergency so that you could also bring the army, the 5, 000 available soldiers, augment the human resource in this fight, give them the power to arrest and search under a state of emergency, which could not have been done otherwise. That is why we are having the successes we are having and that has why we will win this war against crime.

Mr. Speaker, there is a false argument being made that the state of emergency was not necessary for arresting the criminals in a particular gang—false argument; that the anti-gang legislation was sufficient. The Member for Diego Martin West has pegged his entire argument on the fact that the anti-gang legislation was sufficient.

Mr. Speaker, before the state of emergency was imposed, gang leaders, criminals and gangsters were the jailers. They were jailing us. They were keeping law-abiding citizens behind bars in their homes. What changed that was the state of emergency. It is regrettable, therefore, that the PNM, for political expediency, just as they did with the hanging Bill that came before this Parliament, did not support, and today has said that they will not support the extension of the state of emergency.

They say they are against criminals, but it is hypocritical to speak in two tongues. You cannot say that you are against crime and criminals, but you do not want to put your foot in the water to take the kind of protracted action that is necessary to get the job done.

Let me remind again. Prior to the state of emergency, police used joint army patrols. We knew that the army could not arrest anybody. It was called confidence patrols. They used searches, warrants, roadblocks and so on and the only thing that made a difference in the crime fighting landscape over the last two weeks is the state of emergency. It has made the difference. It has been successful and this is why it is necessary for the next three months.

It has been successful because it allowed for special, greater and swifter powers of operations. The defence force could now conduct independent

operations and this is why when the Member for Diego Martin North/East argued where the curfew should be, the defence force, if you listen to the daily updates, are operating all over Trinidad and Tobago with the police, but they are now able also to operate independently. So there is a wider policing of the country. That is why people are sleeping so much more comfortably at nights. They know that the defence force is there also with the police to support them.

In the state of emergency, therefore, the police now have the back-up of the defence force, not only in terms of personnel, but resources. The defence force has the capability, because of their training, to go into areas to do the kind of work that perhaps the police may not have been trained to do, so that wherever the criminals run and hide, the defence force will ferret them out. That is what is necessary. For too long this country has been begging for decisive action and, for the first time, they see a Prime Minister and a Government who are willing to engage in decisive action and not passive resistance to the criminals.

This period also of the state of emergency and the three months' extension will allow the police to do the additional intelligence gathering, investigations and case building that are necessary to ensure that those who have been arrested and who are known members of gangs are put away in the jails where they really belong and leave the people free in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the removal of the criminal elements using the state of emergency has created a breathing space for communities to cooperate with the police without fear. One of the things is that if you have the criminals in the community and you have good people in the community and they want to cooperate, they are fearful of cooperating because they feel they will be "licked down". This has given them a breathing space to cooperate with the police and for institutions of the state to function as they need to.

This also means that, having taken out the criminals, the next three months will provide an opportunity to put the right community leaders in place, the ones who have the peace; the ones who have the opportunities for the people at hand. When you take out errant leadership, the criminal leadership if you wish, this Government will work to put the right leadership in place.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made:* That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. E. McLeod*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Before you continue, hon. Minister, may I again advise hon. Members that because of the serious nature of the debate we are engaged in, which is of national interest, I invite Members, when you so desire to have your lunch, you can stream out, have your lunch and return. Similarly, when tea time arrives, you can do the same. The debate will not stop. It will continue.

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Thank you most kindly, Mr. Speaker. I would not be long again. There is another impact that the state of emergency has and one that has to be sustained. I like to call it the psychological effect.

In my view, the greatest effect of the state of emergency is that it provided and presented a threat, not to the citizens, but a credible threat to the operations of the criminals and their enterprise. That is what the state of emergency did. In other words, Mr. Speaker, for the first time in a very long time, including the eight or nine years when they presided over the mayhem, there is a real fear in the minds of the criminals that the police could reach them, even if they are not physically present.

That is why they are on the run. If the criminals were so brave, they should have come out and stayed in the open. Now they are on the run. They are so much on the run that, with their ill-gained moneys, some live in the Hyatt, some live at Number One Woodbrook Place; some live in hotels at Lowlands, Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the country has put them on the run and this is why I said earlier that this is about the nation fighting back. This is not just about the Government, the defence and the police. The nation is fighting back, and when a nation comes together to fight back, that nation will together grasp the community, will take back the soul of the very nation they wanted to steal and will re-energize this country and will make it the paradise it can and will be in the future.

For the first time, there is a national sentiment that criminals are retreating and people are helping to make them retreat. This is why people are taking advantage of the two numbers that have been put out by the police—800-0699 and 800-0700. They have been calling in 24/7 and providing the information because there is a new confidence in the police. The confidence that the population had probably lost has returned. Now, they are trusting the police once more and will now give the information through these numbers that will help us to go further into the bowels of the criminals.

Citizens are now emboldened to take a stance against crime because the state of emergency has created an environment with the tools for regular law enforcement to do its work. That is why we need this three-month extension so

that this psychological victory in the minds of the people could be sustained and turned into information and intelligence gathering and new and revived relationships between the police and the people because the police depend on communities for information.

**12.30 p.m.**

And that is why we are engaging the community in this very, very direct way. Mr. Speaker, you must never lose sight of what is happening in the country, you know. You must never lose sight, even as this state of emergency is in effect you can have a headline of Friday, September 02 which says, "Cash and phone found in Robo cop's cell". I am not going to go further than that. But when you can hold someone and when in a state of emergency cash and a cellphone is found in that cell, it tells you how deep the criminal elements are penetrating. It tells you the task and the depth of the job that has to be done.

I was very heartened, therefore, to hear that several policemen who have been advised of that with respect to this incident have been placed on disciplinary charges. I am very happy to hear that because it means that respect for law, whether you are a police or whether you are a citizen, it is beginning to return to this country.

Mr. Speaker, the rate of accidents have fallen in this country. Dr. Gopeesingh, the Member of Parliament for Caroni East, spoke about the smaller numbers in the accident and emergency divisions of the hospitals, that is also true. I spoke with people from the South West Regional Health Authority last night. They said the number of stabbings is down, the number of people coming with gunshot wounds is down, the number of motor car accidents is down because this has returned a sense of discipline also into the ordinary citizen in this country. That is also very, very important.

Mr. Speaker, we must not underestimate what disrespect the gangsters and the drug pushers and drug traffickers have for our country. Even while the state of emergency was going on you read in the newspaper that a $3.2 million cocaine bust took place offshore in which two Trinidadians, a Columbian and a Venezuelan were in fact held so that the criminals have not stopped their activity because they have always seen Trinidad and Tobago as a soft target. But let us send a clear word and warning to them today that we are no soft target, Mr. Speaker. We are no soft target.

Under the distinguished leadership of Brig. John Sandy as Minister of National Security, and the determination of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and

Tobago and every member of this Cabinet who stand firm behind them, we will root out the criminal elements in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Therefore it is disappointing again that that side has resorted to innuendos. They have resorted to all kinds of baseless arguments, but they have refused to acknowledge that crime does not have a face, that everyone is subject to crime.

Whether you are black, brown, white, yellow or pink, if you are a criminal you deserve to be put behind bars, you will be put behind bars, whether you are big, whether you are small. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity and say again that I support fully, along with the hundreds of thousands of people in this country, the vast majority of people in this country who support, not only the existing state of emergency, but the extension of the state of emergency for three months. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. Amery Browne** (*Diego Martin Central*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to today's debate. I listened very carefully to Members opposite trying to understand some thread of logic in their presentations thus far. It has become clear to me that members of this Government have certainly misunderstood and underestimated the pernicious impact of the drug trade in the beautiful country of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Crosstalk*] You were not talking about that at all.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Members opposite, including the Member for Tabaquite, are of the opinion that herding young men into trucks like cattle in East Port of Spain is somehow going to cripple the drug trade in Trinidad and Tobago. I have to tell them nothing could be further from the truth. [*Desk thumping*] All intelligent citizens of this country and of this region recognize that the drug trade is like a many-headed hydra. If you cut off one of the tentacles it simply grows back.

If you do not cut the head of the hydra or address the head of the hydra all you are doing is treating these young men as cattle, and, guess what, they will be replaced, the resources continue to be there. The borders continue to be porous, the finances continue to flow—and we will talk a little more about those finances in a bit. The pawns in the game will be replaced, the trade continues, the violence continues and the Government, in trying to continue, treat with the leaves—are not dealing with the roots and the trunk of the tree at all.

Mr. Speaker, they seem to feel that the drug trade in this country is based on the block, that the drug trade in this country is based and rooted in the small parlours and the hang-outs in Morvant and Cocorite and so on, not recognizing

that it is the casinos, the real estate agencies, the fancy restaurants and the big businesses very often that conceal the roots of this industry. Driving trucks out of East Port of Spain and driving trucks out of Bagatelle and Cocorite is not going to solve this problem for a country. You are fooling yourselves, you are fooling some citizens, but you are not fooling the Opposition, the People's National Movement and you are not fooling the thinking citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Until we see those trucks driving out of some other areas of this country with some other types of characters on board, whether they are in the back or at the front or shackled together, then we would recognize that the Government is making use of this last card that they have played, and have been making a difference where it matters the most; otherwise, you are wasting away, you are frittering away our civic rights and our constitutional freedoms. I am afraid that is what is happening as we speak.

The Government has not justified the imposition of this state of emergency. They did not justify it before, they have not justified it by the results that they have been able to demonstrate and certainly they have not justified any extension; whether it is by one day, one week, two months or three months, they have not justified it, Mr. Speaker.

I listened very closely to my good colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Member for Tabaquite, as he gave us one of his usual shrill presentations in the House. Sometimes, just sometimes, Mr. Speaker, you would need to remind Members that the quality of a presentation is not determined by the volume of the contribution or how loud you can shout at those opposite [*Desk thumping*] but by the quality of the content and what is being conveyed and you would be looking for threads of logic as well.

Mr. Speaker, I thought the Minister of Foreign Affairs would have offered us an explanation for the following comment, and I would quote as best as I can. "We did not pull this measure from a hat. We were carefully planning this for a long time". Do you remember those words, Member for Tabaquite—"We did not pull this from a hat. We were carefully planning this for a long time"—directly contradicted by the Minister of National Security? [*Desk thumping*]

He has acknowledged the words, Mr. Speaker, directly contradicted by the Member for Oropouche East, the Leader of Government Business. Just mere days before these measures were imposed on the nation of Trinidad and Tobago, and he is acknowledging it here today. The Member for Tabaquite owes the nation an

explanation for those comments. Mr. Speaker, he also owes us a different type of explanation and the Government owes the nation this explanation.

The observation was made by the Member for Diego Martin North/East that the curfew areas and the so-called hot spots that are being targeted are in the urban areas along the East West corridor, urban areas in Chaguanas and in San Fernando. The rural ports through which a lot of the cocaine and the weapons enter Trinidad and Tobago have not been receiving the type of attention that they should.

Do you realize what that means? It means that the police and the army as well are being directed towards what the Government has determined to be hot spots and away from these ports of entry. What that says, Mr. Speaker, the irony of the situation, is during a state of emergency it is now easier to bring drugs and weapons into Trinidad and Tobago than outside of a state of emergency. [*Desk thumping*] How can that be justified? Think about it, Member for Caroni East. You tend to come off as a thoughtful person. [*Crosstalk*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** "Do not mamaguy me".

**Dr. A. Browne:** You are directing resources—[*Interruption*]—away from the ports of entry. We have already acknowledged that your record is clear, the Government's record is clear in terms of making our borders more porous. We are not going to argue about that anymore today. The citizens are clear on that. But even with imposing a state of emergency, resources are directed away from those ports of entry towards your so-called hot spots, herding the young men, et cetera, and the irony is that even as you are claiming to be fighting the drug trade—as the Member for Chaguanas West claimed it is easier to bring drugs and weapons into this country than ever before, while the citizen constitutional rights have been removed.

I do not understand how the Government can come here under these circumstances, and with this reality, and request an extension of three months, until the month of December. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, they do not seem to know where to find the big fish. It started off in a very interesting fashion. The first night they hardly caught anyone at all—this was the Sunday night—the Monday night, I think there were about four persons captured, then Martin Daly came to the media and said we need to see larger numbers of people if this thing is really working, and then the numbers accelerated. People were being harvested wholesale from the streets. People "liming" on the block at Nelson Street, if you were looking a little odd, if you had your shirt a little loose, if your gold chain

was a little too big, you were going down the road, Mr. Speaker. And that is the kind of atmosphere that they have brought into this country, and talking about comfort.

Well some people may be more comfortable but we are here to tell you that there are many citizens who have been made very, very uncomfortable. Law-abiding, innocent citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, particularly in PNM constituencies have been made very, very uncomfortable. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, they do not seem to know where to find these big fish and eventually, of course, the story keeps changing day by day.

We have these press conferences where there is jostling and so on. Sometimes we wonder which one is the Minister of National Security, which one is the Attorney General. Sometimes, you feel the DPP is at the table as well because you hear pronouncements being made almost as if the DPP is speaking as well. But Mr. Speaker, they do not seem to know where the big fish are and maybe we could assist the Government in this regard. You need to follow the finances. When you are trying to track the tentacles of the drug trade, follow the finances, follow the money and you are going to find the figures that you need to find.

Speaking about finances, I want to take us back to the words of Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj—a very familiar figure to some opposite—when he remarked about the record contributions that were made in the last election campaign to the United National Congress. He himself indicated—this was his figure—that $400 million, his estimate, was contributed to that campaign. [*Crosstalk*] Yes! You compare that to the contributions to the People's National Movement which were in the order of about 23 million.

If the Government—and they keep asking where are the big fish? Tell us where the fish are. I would suggest that—and I am not casting aspersions on members of the Government, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest they start by looking at the individuals who made those types of large contributions during the last election campaign. [*Desk thumping*]

**12.45 p.m**.

Just start by taking a look. You have the resources, just take a look, and you might be filling your trucks with a different type of individual. I am wondering if—

**Mr. Roberts:** Ken Julien!

**Dr. A. Browne:** They start calling names, but, can they name those contributors, Mr. Speaker? I throw out that challenge to the Government today. Can they name those contributors? I do not think they can at all. They can call some names.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communications went on at some length, and I wonder if he would bear in mind that this country reports to international bodies through his ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Communications and, therefore, he holds some responsibility, not just for internal communication with the expansion of his ministry to include the portfolio of communications, but he has responsibility for communication regionally and internationally. So it behooves him to be very clear on the status of these measures in Trinidad and Tobago. I would want to ask him—I see he has put in a disappearance at this time—a very simple question: how many of the young detainees in custody, thus far, have seen a lawyer since they were taken off the streets?

**Miss Hospedales:** Good question!

**Dr. A. Browne:** A very direct question, because the Government comes at us with these press conferences, but they never give the human rights perspective. How many of these individuals who have been detained—they use the word "arrested", I would use the word "detained"—how many of them have seen a lawyer thus far? A very simple question and I hope the speaker who is going to follow up would be able to provide us with that very simple indicator. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Imbert:** It is arbitrary.

**Dr. A. Browne:** Arbitrary! How many of them have seen a lawyer? There is another indicator that the Government is not coming clean on this issue. They have presented an increasing figure day by day of the number of persons detained, but do you know what they have not been telling us? It came to my attention when a young lady called me in Diego Martin and said, the police and army came down by them, harvested a number of persons, took them away, and by the next day many of them were back on the block again.

I said, "Wait a minute, what is going on here?" The Government has not been telling us that figure at all. They have been adding up the total number of detainees day by day. I think they have reached 1, 200 now, but they have not been indicating that, just because of the random nature of the exercise, many of those persons are being released, taken back and released, so we are getting statistics coming from those press conferences that have no meaning whatsoever.

I want the citizens to look very carefully at what the Government is trying to feed us, to create an impression that our constitutional rights were taken away for a good cause when, in fact, it is the emptiest of PR gimmicks that this Government has played; a very audacious move that they have made to take us through this August—September period.

Again, I listened to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communications. He does not realize that some of those actions that he was lauding are having a very dangerous effect at the community level, because it is reinforcing certain stigma. They are further stigmatizing some of the young people in Trinidad and Tobago. It is radicalizing some of our young people—the brutality of treatment, et cetera—and creating new criminals, because some of these persons may have left gang life, and they were swept up the same way and treated in the same manner and taken off to these secret locations.

Some of them may not be members or never have been members of gangs at all, but simply by nature of their association by where they were at the time or by how they were dressed, they were profiled and their liberty was removed. That has an effect on the human psyche. So while they are boasting about a pause and a lull, I am suggesting to them that they have placed a cover on the pot, but the pot is still boiling, and some day when that pot lid comes up, it is going to be hot steam rising through our communities. So, let not the Government be comforted by what they see as a pause or a lull.

The Member went on to refer to the Jamaican state of emergency, and almost suggested that a similar approach was being taken here, but that was obviously, a ridiculous premise, because, on one hand, you are targeting "the big fish in the country" Dudus Coke himself. You could take 5, 000 of the minnows—that they are brutalizing here, you would not add up to the financial worth of one Dudus Coke, so it is a fallacious argument and we are not even going to focus anymore on what he indicated.

Mr. Speaker, I think the most interesting part of the contribution of the Member for Tabaquite was when—this is what he basically told us—"Don't worry about the draconian regulations, don't worry with that, listen to the talk shows. No talk show host has been arrested thus far." That is the comfort that a Government in a western parliamentary democracy is offering to the citizens.

**Hon. Members:** Shame!

**Dr. A. Browne:** "Do not mind what regulations we put in the country, we have not arrested any talk show host yet, so you can feel comforted." Mr.

Speaker, is this the same Minister of Government who appeared on CNMG, had a difficult interview with a reporter—and a few of them have had those types of difficult interviews—with Fazeer Mohammed, lo and behold he was dismissed forthwith after that interview and he is telling us we should feel comfortable and trust his Government under these circumstances? He will have to explain that and he is talking about freedom of the press, et cetera.

Is this the same Government that had a highly paid advisor, Janice Thomas, I believe, the name may have been, who was writing threatening emails to the editors of large newspapers in this country? This was outside of a state of emergency. That is the type of behaviour that is manifested coming out of the Government. Now, we have a state of emergency; we have draconian regulations as admitted by the Members Opposite, but they are telling us, what? "Trust us, just relax, we have not arrested any talk show host as yet." Mr. Speaker, no right thinking citizen can accept that foolish logic and that foolish contribution. [*Desk thumping*] Draconian regulations!

Mr. Speaker, and the message to the citizens is, you cannot put draconian powers in the hands of a government like the United National Congress. [*Desk thumping*] It is a dangerous move to make. You should not do it for one week far less for three months to take us into the month of December. Mr. Speaker, very unacceptable, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communications. I do not want to spend too much more time on him.

He was also intriguing in that he spoke about a contract of comfort and safety for the citizens that was signed on May 24, 2010. [*Interruption*] These are the words of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communications—a contract of contract of comfort and safety that they signed with the citizens of this country. Mr. Speaker, I have a newsflash for this Minister when he is talking about this contract of comfort and safety. That contract of comfort and safety was broken by this Government the day their National Security Council and their Cabinet approved a 31-year-old computer operator to head the national intelligence service of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Not too much about that. The contract of safety was broken that day.

We cannot trust any decision this Government makes with regard to national security and the safety of our families. Impossible! And they dare come and talk about this contract of safety? Mr. Speaker, that contract of safety and comfort for the intelligent citizens of this country was broken—[*Interruption*]—the day they broke the OPV contracts. That contract of safety and comfort that the Member referred to was broken for any right-thinking citizen the day they sold the airships,

which would have been very useful in the current exercises at this time. That contract of safety and comfort that he referred to was shattered the day they broke their word. They said they will bring legislation to regularize SAUTT, and what have they done? One of their early decisions was to disband SAUTT altogether. Mr. Speaker, that contract was broken by the Government.

The final comment was a statistic that he presented which was very interesting and these were his words: "The gangs possess over 1, 000 guns in Trinidad and Tobago." This is the Minister presenting during a state of emergency extension debate, announcing that the gangs possess over 1, 000 guns in Trinidad and Tobago, and they have taken away our constitutional rights, to find 24 of those 1, 000 guns.

Mr. Speaker, this Government should be ashamed of themselves. They should be ashamed to come here and ask for more time, given what they have not been able to achieve thus far. I wonder if they have even listened to what they have been saying, because the Minister has presented excellent evidence why this state of emergency should not be extended and excellent evidence why the constitutional rights of the citizens should be restored immediately.

He said the curfew has instilled a sense of discipline on the roads. We heard a number of speakers refer to this foolishness. Mr. Speaker, if you have no cars on the roads how could you be boasting and calling that discipline on the roads? What is disciplined, the ants that are walking on the side of the road? There is no discipline on the road; there are no cars on the roads, but maybe the members of the Government have not been looking in the hour before the curfew period—maybe because of where they live—to see the types of crazy driving that we have been seeing on the roads.

Persons are very anxious to get home; very nervous. Do you know why? Because a very senior and experienced member of the Government has told us that we would be shot on sight by the police—we are liable to be shot on sight should the police and soldiers see us out during curfew hours. Nowhere in the western hemisphere does that apply, but somehow our Minister of Justice has told us that applies in Trinidad and Tobago. Just to reassure the citizens, I want to declare that nothing could be further from the truth. They do not have to fear from those very unfortunate and reckless pronouncements.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make one comment on the Minister of National Security's presentation. He took me back to his presentation yesterday on the statement of the President, and the Member for Diego Martin North/East referred

to the need for sensitivity training for soldiers. I do not know if he is still a soldier, but the Minister has a very distinguished record, and I do not think anything we could say here can tarnish the distinguished record of the Minister, but I would agree on the need for sensitivity training. This is why I say that.

I heard a most odious statement being made, and I would try to quote it as best as I could, based on my notes, when he said that if he had not called a state of emergency, or if he had not recommended a state of emergency, the coup of 1990 would have looked like a Christmas party. Mr. Speaker, this is someone who served this country at the ground level, standing in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, a Chamber that was invaded at that time, recognizing that 24 citizens of this country lost their lives during that period including a Member of Parliament for the constituency of Diego Martin Central, and makes an insensitive and reprehensible comment that "it would have looked like a Christmas party."

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell every Minister opposite that there is no action or activity that can take place in the future of this country that can ever make July 1990 look like a Christmas party. It is ridiculous, and that is why I am agreeing with the Member for Diego Martin North/East that the Minister of National Security should avail himself of some sensitivity training. Those types of comments should never be made, especially in the parliamentary Chamber, given what has happened in the past, and lives that were lost, including staff members of this very Chamber and the Parliament of this country.

The Government has had a tough time in this current debate, because they have been unable to put any cards on the table; they have been unable to justify the imposition of the state of emergency, and if they are unable to justify the imposition of the state of emergency, how on earth could they be expected to justify a three-month extension? Mr. Speaker, so said so done.

**1.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, they have simply been unable to put any credible information forward that would support a responsible Member of Parliament granting such an extension or voting for such an extension. It would really be audacious of them to suggest that a MP should do otherwise under these circumstances. We took an oath to conduct our duties without fear or favour, affection or ill will—without fear our favour, affection or ill will, and we all know that under God everyone here is equal.

If we are responsible, we would also appraise matters based on the evidence presented. That is how good decisions are made, based on evidence presented.

The Government cannot come here under these circumstances and suggest, "You just need to trust us. Sign away your constitutional rights; sign away your civil liberties", when they have not been able to present any justification whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked a little about the declaration, and just to share an interesting observation: if they found 24 guns in 13 days under a state of emergency, at this rate of gun retrieval, do you know how long it is going to take to find the rest of guns? Two years of state of emergency in Trinidad and Tobago; two years at this rate, and they have come here to request a vote on this matter? Absolutely not! That is not going to work.

**Mr. Imbert:** It would take three years actually.

**Dr. A. Browne:** Mr. Speaker, soon I am going to ask for protection from the Members who might be disturbing me; [*Laughter*] a very good colleague, an erstwhile colleague.

The best decisions are made based on evidence, and the Government has simply been unable to present anything. We see the Minister of National Security struggling under the burden of trying to make a cogent argument, without being able to present any content whatsoever. They want us to trust them; "Just trust us." The Minister said, "I was trained at Sandhurst and I have all this experience and I am a good guy."

**Brig. Sandy:** I never said that.

**Dr. A. Browne:** Were you trained at Sandhurst?

**Brig. Sandy:** Never.

**Dr. A. Browne:** Never? But you were? I was enhancing his qualifications. Mr. Speaker, just trust him—he made the decision—and sign away your constitutional rights and civil liberties.

**Mr. Imbert:** He was trained to shoot on sight.

**Dr. A. Browne:** That logic, that construct, that approach would have been successful in the 1980s in Yugoslavia, that could be successful in Egypt, that could be successful in North Korea, that could be successful in Libya of a few weeks ago, it cannot be successful in a western parliamentary democracy like Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] It cannot be.

These same rights and freedoms that the Government treats so frivolously and so very lightly, there are good citizens who lived, fought, worked and died so that we could have these liberties. People like Sir Ellis Clarke, lived, fought, worked

and died for Trinidad and Tobago, so that we could have the type of democracy we have today. People like the late great Dr. Eric Williams, one of the greatest gifts that the People's National Movement (PNM) has given to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, fought and died so that we could have those constitutional rights and freedoms.

And the Government wakes up one Sunday afternoon, has a meeting down in Philippine, appears on television, [*Crosstalk*] before the President receives any document, and announces a state of emergency. When we see the emergency orders—and I would not worry to go through them again, because they have been well ventilated in this Chamber—we realize that some of most draconian measures are present, that cannot be explained if we take the Government at face value in saying that this is a crime fighting measure.

Up to this point in this debate at 1.00 p.m., the Government has not offered any explanation whatsoever for those draconian regulations that affect freedom of association, freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of the press is also affected, freedom to express your political persuasion. They have not even offered us any attempt at explanation. I would want the Government, the next speaker and the Minister when he is winding up, to at least make an effort at that. If do you not do it, you are taking the citizens for great fools and assuming that the sense of fear that might be present in the mind of any citizen is sufficient to blanket their sense of reason.

No government should assume that its citizens are foolish. No government should assume that citizens are sheep or pliant and just accepting, "We think this is good for you and therefore this is what you are going to get." That cannot work in the year 2011. The bad news is that governments and regimes that have tried that kind of approach, that have tried to quell civil expression, community demonstration and labour unrest in that manner, have not lasted long at all. They have not lasted long at all. The Government would need to consider and reconsider their approach. We cannot trust them in this regard.

The Government seems to take the entire exercise very lightly. They have the majority, they feel they are going to come here, not really say anything at all, vote on the Bill and walk out comfortably, with a country, the jewel of the Caribbean, where the citizens have their constitutional rights and civil liberties removed. That is not good enough.

I want to tell the Government, besides the shenanigans with FIFA and Concacaf, when you add what is happening now, UNC Government of Trinidad

and Tobago, you are dragging the flag of this country. You are dragging the flag of Trinidad and Tobago, and others are noticing. The international community is noticing. That approach cannot work in this country.

The Minister of National Security claimed that it was his brainwave. But if he had taken a simple trip to the library—and there is a library in this Chamber; I hope there would be one when eventually we move—and had taken advantage of the eighth edition of the *Textbook on Civil Liberties & Human Rights*—I just want to share a very brief portion for the edification of the Minister, and anyone who might be listening at this time. From page 227, I quote:

> "The temptation for governments, wishing to reassure their population that steps are being taken to minimize the threat from an enemy that uses unpredictable means to strike at civilian targets, is to take measures which significantly restrict civil liberties and human rights. This is often expressed in terms of 'balance'. We must balance our freedoms against the need for security. The analogy is unhelpful. It suggests that governments are entitled simply to reduce human rights if it will lead to a more secure society. Freedom and security are regarded as being of equal value, with one being traded off against the other. This is not acceptable in a society which aspires to democracy, and the human rights principles that underpin that concept."

I repeat:

> "This is not acceptable in a society that aspires to democracy, …"

I hope that describes our society.

I go on, Mr. Speaker:

> "Rather than 'balance', the concept that should be used is one of necessity. The question that should be asked is, "—Minister of National Security—"given the nature of the threats, what are the minimum steps which are necessary to respond to them. Individual freedom should only be restricted when there is a real and pressing need to do so, not simply when it might be regarded as helpful to the police and security services."

I understand even more fully, having read this extract, why the Member for Diego Martin North/East was a little nervous. Besides the wealth of experience a soldier would bring to this position, the type of recommendations he might make, given this reality, given the need to make decisions responsibly at that level of power, I understand why he might have been a little nervous. The citizenry need to take note of what is taking place at this time, particularly with this three-month extension.

Just a thought with regard to our new Canadian millionaire in Trinidad and Tobago, Commissioner of Police, Dwayne Gibbs: the Commissioner of Police was recruited and hired by the taxpayers of this country to perform a task, to perform responsibilities in a western parliamentary democracy. He was not recruited to be commissioner of police of Egypt or any autocracy. He was not hired to be commissioner of police any country in which the citizens have no constitutional rights or civil liberties. He has failed. He and the Minister of National Security are telling us that they have failed; that they are unable to provide safety, [*Desk thumping*] in circumstances in which the citizens of this country have their civil liberties and constitutional rights, and that is the only way they can move forward at this time. That is what they are telling us, "Do not fire us; continue to pay us, but the only way we can move forward with our responsibilities, at this time, is if you sacrifice; you give us your civil liberties and your constitutional rights."

They were not hired under those terms by the taxpayers. [*Desk thumping*] My humble suggestion is that they should demit office. Organize a one-way flight back to Edmonton in Canada, and hand over the job to someone who can operate in a western parliamentary democracy. Those were not the circumstances under which these individuals were hired and recruited to serve the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. They are saying that they cannot catch these criminals who they are catching now, while the citizens have their constitutional rights. That is an absurd argument, and it is an absurd argument.

It is not just my words. You would not imagine who shares the same sentiment. I want to quote from the *Newsday* of September 23, 2010. Someone else shares these same sentiments. This is an article by Andre Bagoo:

"If I fail fire me

> Dwayne Gibbs, the country's 17th Commissioner of Police…yesterday indicated that if he fails to perform,"—in this western parliamentary democracy—"he should be held accountable to the people and fired."

These are the words of the Commissioner of Police himself.

> '"I would hate to think that if I don't perform, that you would keep me here…Gibbs said.'"

Mr. Speaker:

> "'I would hate to think that if I don't perform, that you would keep me here,' Gibbs said during a question and answer session at the Hilton in Port-of-Spain.

> '"Why would you?"—these are his words—'"Certainly there are expectations for me to be out here working. And I am fully prepared for that. Similarly, I believe in accountability and if I am not accountable to the people of Trinidad and Tobago for my work then, again, why would you want me here?"'

I am going on the strength of the words of the 17th Commissioner of Police of Trinidad and Tobago, and offering a recommendation to the Government at this time, that they forthwith dismiss Commissioner of Police, Dwayne Gibbs, [*Desk thumping*] and take his own recommendation.

Unfortunately, the Government has sought to take advantage of the justifiable and legitimate fears of citizens, with regard to crime and violence, to reduce our civil rights, and they have done so under a very false pretext. They have not been able to explain the measures they have put in place, and the measures that every citizen of this country faces at this time, whether living in Trinidad or Tobago. The world has seen these measures before, and they can be described as dictatorship, they can be described as tyranny, they can be described as an authoritarian approach to governance.

If these sound familiar, the former President of the United States, George W. Bush, took the same cynical approach to governance in his country. There were legitimate fears among the citizens of the threat of terrorism. I remember he made that speech on September 20 in the year 2001, at 9.00 p.m. in front of the Congress. He acknowledged the fears of citizens. He proceeded to roll out a strategy that included restricting the civil liberties of his own citizens, and we had the birth of things like the Patriot Act, et cetera.

We recognize afterwards that history has been a very harsh judge of that President. Many now see him as one of the worst Presidents in the history of that country. History judges those actions very harshly. Fast-track to this year, on August 21 at 9.00 p.m., the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago sits in front of the nation in the same way, plays on the legitimate fears and concerns of citizens with regard to crime, and then slips in measures that restrict our civil liberties as well.

**1.15 p.m.**

I am suggesting to this Government, while they may feel that they have comfort zone now, the citizens and history are going to judge them very, very harshly, [*Desk thumping*] and they will be regarded as one of the worst governments in the history of this region, simply based on an action like this far

less for the other reckless decisions and mistakes that they have made in the past. They already are. [*Interruption*] Thank you, Member for Arouca/Maloney. We will judge them by their actions.

They love to talk about the PNM. They love to pretend that an election was not fought last year, because they have comfort in just focusing on that as opposed to recognizing that this Opposition has a duty under the Westminster system to hold the government to account, and we are doing our duty. Every speaker on this side, beginning with the Leader of the Opposition, has stood here and done our duty on behalf of the citizens. That is all we are doing. It is not something to take personally.

There is no personal battle between us and any Member on the other side, we are doing our duty, and there is a very dangerous narrative that has set in, and it is probably coming from some of their communication experts, Mr. Speaker. You know what that narrative is? That it is somehow unpatriotic to ask questions of your Government, that somehow it is unpatriotic to analyze the decisions that the Government is making—yes big brother—somehow it is unpatriotic to seek to hold the Government to account, Mr. Speaker, and we are here to say that that is the very essence of patriotism and that is why we will do our duty.

The flip side of that, Mr. Speaker—back to their communications team—is that is it unpatriotic to refuse to answer legitimate questions on the floor of the lower House of Parliament when the Opposition has consistently been asking questions about this state of emergency?

Mr. Speaker, the Minister National Security—I am hearing the Member for Oropouche East—stood here and gave a record winding up to a debate a few hours ago when he may have taken about three and a half minutes, full of anger because he could not answer a single question, not one! [*Desk thumping*] And the Member for Oropouche East has the audacity to say that they answered all of them. Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to give him the list, you know, but I think he is trying to distract me from the rest of my contribution. He tends to be very wily in that regard, Mr. Speaker.

It is not unpatriotic of any citizen to ask questions of their Government and to seek to hold the Government to account. That is a false premise that they have been trying to sow in the minds of citizens. We are doing our duty. Whether it is the Patriot Act or whether it is Emergency Order 163, the citizens and their representatives have the right and the responsibility to examine every measure that the Government seeks to put in place, and if they can come here and not offer

any justification and explanation, they cannot expect the vote of any responsible Member of Parliament, they cannot expect the vote of any right-thinking Member of Parliament on these measures and this extension. That is the reality that I wish to put on the table at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I view that this state of emergency has been totally unjustified by the Government, it has been very poorly implemented as well, it will not bring sufficient benefits and will bring incredible hardships over the three-month period. It will harm Trinidad and Tobago and they are further dragging the flag.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made:* That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Miss M. McDonald*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Dr. A. Browne:** Thank you most kindly, Mr. Speaker, and Members on both sides for the extension.

Mr. Speaker, I was saying this state of emergency imposition has been totally unjustified thus far by the Government, and their arguments have been incompletely specious. They have not justified the imposition or extension of a state of emergency in this country.

We heard talk—let us look at what they have been saying—about a $20 million drug bust or seizure or accidental finding we are not sure. Let us call it a seizure. Twenty million dollars, Mr. Speaker, it sounds like a big figure but the Government needs to recognize that there have been larger seizures in the past and hopefully they might stumble on larger seizures in the future. So a $20-million seizure has triggered the Minister of National Security into this state of panic and—a knee-jerk reaction at this time. A $20-million cocaine seizure is an absolutely ridiculous premise for the imposition of a state of emergency in any nation on planet earth, an absolutely ridiculous premise.

If, as they seem to be implying, based on that seizure, one gang will attack another gang and there will be bloodshed, well, Mr. Speaker, just a suggestion, why not use the same laws that we have on the books today to apprehend and detain the members of the gang who will be under threat, and apprehend and detain, in another location, the members of the gang—yes they have all this intelligence—who are presenting the threat, and leave the citizens with their constitutional rights?

Leave the children who need to do night classes and so on to go and do their night classes and studies, leave the vendors in the market to ply their trade, leave the small man to be able to sell the hamburgers, the doubles and whatever else is taking place, constituting the life of Trinidad and Tobago. It sounds as if our distinguished Brigadier has made a very, very bad call and has not been able to back it up. Sounds like that to me, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Twenty million dollars has resulted in this whole holocaust of activity. And they need three months to find—and they have all the intelligence, Mr. Speaker, and they have over a thousand in custody so far. Something is just not adding up and you cannot expect the parliamentarians or citizens to just keep swallowing the foolishness that is coming from the other side. It is unjustified.

If a major crisis was averted as they seem to be boasting, "We spared you"—that is where the comment about 1990 came from. If it was averted—first of all, why do we need another three months? Secondly, if it was adverted, well then you can level with the Parliament and tell us what you have averted. The fact that they are not able to share that would suggest that they have not averted anything. Maybe there was nothing to avert in the first place. That is my suggestion at this stage. They averted a major crisis.

Then I heard the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I believe, suggest that some people may be taking a vacation, some of the crooks as they call them might be taking a vacation, that is why they need three more months. They were able to last out the 15 days. Suppose they come on November 30 and tell us that the crooks were lying low for the last three months they need another three months because, just trust them, they will get them in that time? Where is that going take us, Mr. Speaker? The logic—we are seeking logic and content from the Government that will enable us to make a rational decision on this Motion, and the only information that we received would leave us to vote absolutely not to any request for an extension of this state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, they talked about this crisis that was averted and one might expect that if that was an emergency measure, from that very first night to avert the crisis there would have been major detentions of the really dangerous guys. [*Desk thumping*] If that is what the Minister of National Security said as an attempt to justify—that very first night—that is when—they say the first stab is the best, I cannot remember the details, but from the very first night we would look at that as significant as demonstrating an emergency response, not just to be a television announcement but on the ground, using the forces that have been mobilized, our hard-working officers.

Mr. Speaker, what happened on that very first night? We have a report from the erstwhile Deputy Commissioner of Police that is contained in the *Express* of Wednesday, August 24, summarizing the Monday night. Now, the Prime Minister made a very confusing announcement that suggested to all that the curfew was beginning from the Sunday night, but I think that citizens have gotten so accustomed to this Government that they recognized that they were just talking through their hat at that stage, and Monday night was probably was the first official night of curfew and state of emergency. Oropouche East I am giving you a night to get your act together. Monday night the Deputy Commissioner Williams is reporting on Monday night. Let us listen to what he had to say. Remember, major crisis being adverted, bloodbath being threatened. Deputy Commissioner Williams stated:

> "…police have seized six guns and hundreds of rounds of ammunition as they went into action after a state of emergency was declared throughout the country.
>
> Four suspects were…nabbed in connection with a stolen vehicle and two suspects were arrested in Paramin in connection with an ongoing murder investigation."

The headline is "Williams: Cops detain 4, seize guns, ammo in hot spots."

**Mr. Speaker:** Did you quote the name of the newspapers?

**Dr. A. Browne:** Yes, I did. The daily *Express* August 24, 2011. I did that, Mr. Speaker.

This is what the Government is holding up to us as an emergency response to the $20 million drug bust. On the first night, the first action is the most significant, tells us what their *modus operandi* is, cops detain four, seize six guns. This Government cannot be taken at its word, and when you look behind the rhetoric there is absolutely nothing of significance to offer to any citizen of Trinidad and Tobago. This makes no sense given the argument they have tried to present—no sense whatsoever. That is not an emergency response to anything. That is not an emergency response to a bank robbery, or rum shop heist far less for some sort of potential disaster that has resulted in sacrificing our civil liberties on the altar of the Minister of National Security's premonition or hunch. Makes no sense! This flies in the face of their justification of working to avert mass killings.

We all agree that a state of emergency must be a last resort and everyone—all speakers have indicated that in some way or another. So a reasonable and sensible

government would probably come to us—a reasonable and sensible government would say, "Yes, Opposition PNM, you have supported and worked with us on some key bills, anti-gang and anti-crime laws, et cetera, and we have tried them, we have tried them for a period of time, maybe three months, and they are insufficient for us in the current crisis." A responsible Minister of National Security would do that. "You have worked with us, we have tried these new measures and they have not worked. We have given then a period of time to operate and they have not worked for the right target we are seeking to achieve."

But Mr. Speaker, you cannot take anything for granted with this Government, so I decided to check for myself what they have done with these laws. Mr. Speaker, these laws were finalized in the Parliament with unanimous votes on May 16, 2011, and the Government was very happy, they were shaking hands with the AG, and we all worked late nights to achieve that. The Government kept emphasizing the urgency of those measures, the urgency of the Anti-Gang Bill, "We have to work hard. We have to work together." It is pressing because they have work to do. They need to empower the police.—And this is the winding up contribution of the Attorney General.

> "I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the discussion on these two Bills and look forward to the speedy implementation of this legislation, in the hope that it would lead to a reduction in gang-related warfare and criminal activity in this country."

The AG's words, Anand Ramlogan, the Attorney General of this country.

> I "look forward to the speedy implementation of this legislation, in the hope that it will lead to a reduction in gang-related warfare and criminal activity in this country."

Speedy implementation, Anand Ramlogan.

**1.30 p.m**.

Mr. Speaker, then I look at the proclamation by the President. As you know, Acts must be proclaimed before they can be operationalized. This is May 16, "eh":

> "Now, therefore, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, do hereby appoint this 15th day of August, 2011, as the date on which the Anti-Gang Act, 2011 shall come into operation."

You see, Mr. Speaker, mere days before—

Mr. Speaker, you know what this is saying? This is saying that we worked very hard here; the Government took three months to get these Acts proclaimed—the Anti-Gang Act and the Bail (Amdt.) Act—they could have done it in three days; they took three months and they apprehended not a single gang member under the Anti-Gang Act and then sprung a state of emergency on Trinidad and Tobago and took away our constitutional rights and freedoms. This Government should be ashamed to be sitting in the Parliament here.

**Hon. Member:** Shame! [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. A. Browne:** This is an absolute disgrace and further reason why there should be some persons who really should not be sitting there trying to even justify what is happening. It cannot be justified; it is impossible for them to justify this.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing is that everything that they are doing now: the road blocks, the seizures, the entry without warrant, the detentions, et cetera, as the Leader of the Opposition demonstrated, could have been done, could be done tomorrow without the state of emergency. That can be lifted tomorrow and the Government can conduct the same activities. So it suggests the fact that they are insisting on this extension, they are insisting on the state of emergency in the first place suggests that they have another agenda besides the crime fighting that they claim they are focusing on. They can do these things without the state of emergency. We have demonstrated that.

I have a report in my hand here from an area called La Blanca at the top of Cascade, where, on June 14 the police conducted some—oh, well I would describe them as very brutal raids, detaining 47 young men and took them off in vehicles, no warrant or anything else; property was damaged; some of the young men lost their jobs as a result, many of them were released afterwards, the same types of activities we are seeing now—June 14, 2011. There was no state of emergency in place. We have seen no consequence coming out of this, so there are two lessons coming out there, the brutality that sometimes, with due respect, the hard-working officers and the good officers, that can occur, even outside of the emergency powers, now these extraordinary powers are put in place we are very concerned about the citizens and their treatment, but at the same time the Government did not need a state of emergency to conduct these detentions and operations. [*Interruption*] Road blocks: entering without warrant, detention without bail, searches; none of these are necessary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, have we forgotten that the Commissioner—he is still the Commissioner to this day at least—told this nation that we have enough police

officers? The only thing someone feebly tried to say was that we needed the state of emergency to get soldiers to operate as police.

**Dr. Rowley:** The army.

**Dr. A. Browne:** Yes, the army to operate as police. February 03, 2011; that is this year, Mr. Speaker, *Express* article by Abby Brathwaite:

"POLICE COMMISSIONER"—the headline is "We have enough". Mr. Speaker, we have had enough of this Government and their foolish rhetoric. [*Desk thumping*] The headline, "We have enough". [*Interruption*]

"POLICE COMMISSIONER…Gibbs said yesterday that there was no need to increase the number of police officers in the country.

But his view seemed at odds"—as usual—"with a statement made by Minister of National Security"—who said there—"is…dire need of more manpower.

Gibbs claimed the number of police officers employed locally, compared to other countries, was high.

He was addressing members of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce at their Westmoorings office yesterday."

We have the Commissioner of Police saying there is no need to increase the number of police officers in the country and he is still employed by the taxpayers for some strange reason and you have the Government employing soldiers as police officers under the emergency powers and using that as some sort of strenuous justification. They found 24 guns in 13 days under the state of emergency. The former Commissioner of Police, who they fired, found 22 guns in one raid at the home of a big fish in Valsayn. One raid! [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, we need to bring that man back and get rid of the one that we have here.

Mr. Speaker, they are talking about a last-ditch measure, and you know they have not presented the statistics well, and I had to pull up the Member for Caroni East in this regard when they are talking about the homicides data. They have now started from 2009. You know why they are doing that? Before they used to call 10 years, because they realize if they present that forthrightly it would demonstrate to the public, despite all the fear mongering, the homicide rate in this country actually began declining from 2008 and continued. [*Desk thumping*]

That is the truth, no murder is acceptable, but they are justifying this state of emergency based on some spike and mushrooming of homicide when they know the homicide rate has been in decline since the PNM was in power since 2008,

since the implementation of the Homicide Investigation Task Force, under, guess what agency? The Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Continuous desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, with these little guns they have found they are going to have real trouble in sticking cases with any significant number of these detainees. But you know what SAUTT had that provided an advantage with? Their detection rate, 40 per cent in homicide cases as opposed to about 11 per cent for the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. What are they doing with SAUTT at this time? They disband it.

I heard representations being made, but I had a meeting just this week with someone—a crime scene investigator from SAUTT—who is saying, they are not being absorbed into any agency right now. They have the skills, they have the training. The Government is literally, as far as they are concerned, discarding them at this time and they are worried, not just about their own welfare but also about the future of criminology in Trinidad and Tobago and the future of—besides all the hullabaloo about a state of emergency, the hard work that has to be done to detect crime, to bring criminals to justice and to make cases in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is dismantling everything that has worked or shown potential in dealing with crime in this country. What I have not heard any explanation of, these same areas that are hot spots and receiving curfews and other types of attention, are the same areas from which police posts were removed. I want to know or I want to hear an explanation from the Minister of National Security, how on one hand you can say that homicides are going down, remove police posts from some of these communities, you see a backlash in terms of some of the gang activity and then you do not return to community policing, you impose a state of emergency and start trucking away the young men like cattle.

There is something just missing with regard to logic and honesty in the approach of this Government, but they are claiming it is a last-ditch measure to save Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Let us bear in mind that there was polygraph testing for SAUTT employees; there is none for the police service and, therefore, with regard to concerns about corruption and other issues, there was some degree of redundancy and the ability of law enforcement to treat with some of these national cases very directly.

So, it was not justified at all, poorly implemented, and I just want to focus very quickly on the communication aspect that was mangled and continues to be

mangled by this Government. Mr. Speaker, to this day on Government's official website—to this day, after all the denials and so on with Dominic Kallipersad and the back and forth—the Government has up a bulletin describing the Prime Minister announcing a limited state of emergency. This is still on their official website that nationals all over the world and other people are accessing. "Prime Minister announces limited state of emergency;" "the Government will impose a limited state of emergency in hot spots." "The regulation sets out more details of the limited state of emergency". It goes on and on, nine times. This is on the official Government website. This is the kind of misinformation that continues while we are paying high money to pay people for communications work in this country. Worse yet, they have the President—dangling the President, well, offering the President on the same website proclamation and emergency powers giving effect to the limited state of emergency—

**Hon. Member:** What! What!

**Dr. A. Browne:**—"signed by the President, George Maxwell Richards, on August 21. The Proclamation and Emergency Powers Regulations 2011, giving effect to a limited state of emergency signed by President George Maxwell Richards on August"—

**Hon. Member:** Shame!

**Dr. A. Browne:** Shame on the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Shame! Nonsense! Inserting the President in that foolishness.

This is still there to this day, two weeks after the imposition of a state of emergency. Mr. Speaker, it is ridiculous. Ridiculous!

Mr. Speaker, I could go into the issue I saw—how much more time, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** Nine more minutes.

**Dr. A. Browne:** Oh, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [*Interruption*] [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, I want to just touch on some of the community and personal issues that people are treating with. There are a number of people across the East-West Corridor who have been severely impacted by what this Government has done so far, that they have not justified. There are persons who were fired from URP. I know of a particular pair of young ladies, who, on being dismissed—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Pair of ladies?

**Dr. A. Browne:** Yes, two; two is a pair—they established—[*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, this is serious business—a small hamburger business in Petit Valley. They ply their trade at night. That is when the customers are approaching this hamburger stand and they are unable to make a proper living. They were dismissed by this Government after their false promises—"We would give you maternity benefits, we would increase your salary, you will have nothing to fear from the UNC". All of that garbage went on before the election.

They were dismissed. They have now established a small business, legitimate business, to feed their families and put school uniforms on their children. The Government has come with this arbitrary measure, taken away their constitutional rights and now taking away their livelihood as well. They are struggling, Mr. Speaker, to survive from day to day. That is the type of callousness where the Government is going to sit back, they are smiling and they are cracking jokes and so on while the citizens suffer.

Mr. Speaker, people are suffering in other ways, even in terms of expressing themselves. We see a number of local celebrities have been putting video blogs on the Internet, et cetera. These, sometimes, have negative influences and it is very unfortunate that a 14-year old girl was caught up in the sweep of that type of, well, unfortunate activity. The comments that were made on that video, no right-thinking person could justify, but we have to separate—and the Attorney General I hope he is listening wherever he is—the act from the individual, especially when you are dealing with a child. Some of his pronouncements pretending to be the Director of Public Prosecutions cannot be supported in any parliamentary system.

You were wondering whether the Commissioner of Police or the Minister of National Security, and threatening—Mr. Speaker, I got a call last week Sunday. I did not look to see any video. I did not know what was taking place with this individual. I got a call from someone in Cocorite telling me that there was a little girl who was having a suicide debacle. What is this about? They told me that the Attorney General had said if she does not turn herself in to the police, surrender to the police, there would be dire consequences. She was having suicidal thoughts.

Mr. Speaker, I flew down, first of all, to the St. James Police Station, then to the nearest police station, I said, are you all looking for a 14-year old girl by such and such a name? They said, "What! We are not looking for any girl. What are you talking about?" I explained what I knew. They said, "Not at all." They said, "If any child walks into this station, we are going to send him/her straight back home." They had no information whatsoever about anyone being sought for any such activity.

This is the police in the district, but you have an Attorney General representing his own fantasy on the television in a press conference—"You must surrender to the police" and so on. Nothing could be further from the truth. Well, we accompanied the young lady to see her lawyer, et cetera. She is very, very repentant and I want to do something a little different and acknowledge the Member for Siparia, who had a much more responsible approach to that situation than the Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago. She was able to separate the act from the individual [*Interruption*] and was able to accept the offering of an apology.

Now, just to bear in mind, the young lady removed the video the same day when her friends told her, "You're going to get in trouble for this". But someone recognized potential in that video, because there were all sorts of racists slurs. Someone recognized that a sinister potential—took the video and pasted it all over the Internet, creating the sensation that we had at that time and creating the environment for the Attorney General to jump on the national stage and make a big issue, make her public enemy number one. Someone saw malicious intent in that and the Attorney General took the bait, hook, line and sinker. So, I just want to salute the Member for Siparia. It might be the first time I have done so, at least in this case, in recognizing that there was some separation between the child and the act and she—[*Interruption*] I know, I know. Allow me to be a little charitable.

**1.45 p.m.**

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, so there are real human consequences to what is happening. This is not a system in which the Government can just come in here and throw a few empty comments on the table and expect the Parliament and the country to just go along for a three-month ride with them. This is not an exploration of how far we can go with draconian measures before people feel uncomfortable. This is not an adventure of the Minister of National Security, as a soldier in charge of the security of a country like ours, to see how much power can be put into the hands of soldiers and police.

This is a country that people have lived and died for. This Constitution is something that is precious and must be precious to every citizen and we should not give up an iota of our freedoms. We should not give up an iota of our liberties unless the Government is able to properly justify it. They have not been able to do so at this time. It is not just small businesses and small people; it is all citizens who are affected in different way. Yes the Government has a little comfort. "They

quoting" people who said, "Yes, we are happy the night is quiet." But they have to think a little longer term than that. They have to be more responsible than that and recognize that while you have the lid on the pot it is still boiling.

Many of the young men who are being wrongfully detained, when you compare 1, 200 people to 24 guns you realize there is very little evidence going on. You have to recognize that many of them would be back on the streets. They already feel stigmatized and persecuted sometimes by law enforcement and other persons. How would they operate now and what environment would they be working in now? And I am sure the Minister of National Security has been giving that some thought as well.

Mr. Speaker, so there have been some suggestions as to what the real reasons are for this state of emergency because they have not been able to justify in terms of the security situation. The labour unrests, definitely a factor at this time and you see the trade unions scaling back on their activities. Friday they were supposed to have a big protest in Point Fortin, it never existed. So mission accomplished in that sense, temporarily, by this Government. Community protest was coming to a boil across the country, especially in the constituencies controlled by the Government. They simmered that down temporarily at this time and I am not seeing the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla. He will know what I am talking about.

Mr. Speaker, internal political pressures and dissatisfactions within the Government itself that seems to, well I do not know if that has quieted down because I see an article in the *Express* of Tuesday, August 30, 2011

"MSJ: Citizens need to see results"

And Mr. Speaker, this is a letter from the deputy political leader of the MSJ which is really reading the riot act to the Government. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, you have one more minute.

**Dr. A. Browne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "Citizens feel they have lost their civil liberties" and are basically saying the same thing the Opposition has been saying at this time, but "they pretending" not to know anything about that.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has not justified the state of emergency. They have not justified the extension. If they cannot justify it, they cannot justify extending it, and no right thinking parliamentarian, based on the arguments they have presented thus far, would give a three-month extension for these measures. They fail to level with the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. They fail to level with

the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. They fail to justify their actions to this point and the removal of the constitutional rights of our citizens. They fail to justify those draconian measures in the regulation that they have offered. They have not even consulted their coalition partners. They have given no good reason for a three-month extension of this state of emergency. They just play on the fears of the citizens and have had an approach that is not very forthright. It is unreasonable. It is unsupportable. We will not support it. We cannot support it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Minister of Finance (Hon. Winston Dookeran):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Warner:** Common sense for the first time.

**Hon. W. Dookeran:** As I listened to our colleagues make their contribution on this rather significant debate, my memory went back to 21 years ago when I was perhaps the only person in this Parliament had to contribute to the debate of similar nature.

**Hon. Member:** San Fernando East as well.

**Hon. W. Dookeran:** San Fernando East, I am so sorry. Two of us had to contribute to this debate, a similar debate. I remember very well the debate that took place then in which the national objective was second to the political requirements of the day. And it would always be something that I would have felt rather disturbed about, for in a situation when the national imperative is clearly based on what is the value that must dominate our thinking in terms of the conduct of public life, there is no doubt in my mind that physical safety is the first and primary responsibility of the State, the physical safety of the citizens. Anyone who attempts to compromise that physical safety of the citizens of the State is indeed not upholding what is the first and primary responsibility of the State and a government in that State. And to me that is the essential point around which the debate ought to have taken place and perhaps will continue to be eluded in our discussion here today. When the Prime Minister suggested to the Cabinet on April 21 that having heard the comments—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** August 21.

**Hon. W. Dookeran:**—sorry, of August 21—of the National Security Council and conveyed to us the recommendation of the National Security Council and we addressed this issue by the comments of the Minister of National Security, there is no doubt that the key message that was coming out then and ought to come out

today is that the Prime Minister indeed was establishing a clear message that we must not surrender to the criminal element of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

It was a message that was further reinforced by the information at the disposal of the Minister of National Security who has his hands fully involved in that aspect of public life. We shall not surrender to the criminal elements in our society. And this perhaps is what we are here to discuss again. We are calling on the Parliament not to surrender to the criminal elements in the society. We are calling on the society not to surrender to the criminal elements in our society, for our first and primary responsibility is to ensure that there is physical safety for the citizens of our country. There is no doubt that this has not been so for many years and there is no doubt that we cannot simply sit back and allow the criminal elements in society to control whether or not life is safe or not in Trinidad and Tobago. It is in that context, Mr. Speaker, that I believe that this debate should be framed.

We have had submissions from the Minister of National Security and other Members of the Government outlining clearly what some of the circumstances were that led to this proposal proclaimed by the President to avert what could have been a rather distasteful and bloody situation. We must respect the competence of our institutions and the institutions like the National Security Council as well as the information available to the Minister of National Security which he conveyed to the Prime Minister and indeed to the Cabinet, that this is the basis on which we have operated on this particular issue of ensuring that the first and primary function of the State is being upheld.

But what we have heard during the course of this debate is a call for justification and speculation on the part of the hon. Members as to what that justification could have been. I want us to spend a few moments, Mr. Speaker, looking at some of the arguments that were put forth as their perspective on the justification for this very important measure at this time in Trinidad and Tobago; secondly, to see how this fits into a wider plan in order to have a sustainable sense of civic peace in this country.

The argument that was made by the Member for Diego Martin Central at the very end of his contribution, and echoed earlier on by the Member for Diego Martin North/East, suggested and speculated that the noises of this public discontent reflected by what they referred to as the labour unrest or labour noises and other evidence of such noises in the country may have suggested this course of action.

I think all Members will recognize that public discontent is a normal part of democratic living and therefore one does not respond to public discontent in a functioning democracy by attempting to be afraid of dealing with the issues of public discontent. And if anything that this Government has done in its 15 months of existence it has always been to confront the issues head-on, come up with solutions and make them work [*Desk thumping*] and elements of public discontent we have been dealing with. It is part of the functioning of a democracy.

As of now, there is no basis to suggest that the elements of discontent could have created this sense of emergency in the minds of those of us who are responsible for charting the course of public management. We in this Government have been brave to negotiate that discontent and to arrive at a consensus that manifests itself in the total well-being of the society.

[DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

We have never been afraid to tackle the issues of discontent frontally. We have always been brave to deal with and deal with them in a manner that satisfies the entire national community. So, I think those who argue that it was the noises of public discontent and the attempt to suppress some kind of discontent are in fact looking at this problem with very, very myopic eyes. And that particular speculation has absolutely no foundation whatsoever.

The other argument that was raised in terms of our justification for not proceeding in the way we have done has been raised lastly by the Member for Diego Martin North/East in which he argued that there was an erosion of public confidence in the world of commerce claiming that somewhere between 30 and 75 per cent of economic life was being curtailed and therefore this was an argument in order not to perform our primary and first function, which is to ensure the public safety of our citizens.

**2.00 p.m.**

To the contrary, what you find is that when you can deal with the issue of the underground economy, when you can clean up the underground economy or start that process, rather than have an erosion of public confidence you will, in fact, have sustained public confidence in Trinidad and Tobago, [*Desk thumping*] and the momentum for building that public confidence will, in fact, increase.

Is it that the Members opposite are prepared to sit back, as they seem very happy to do, and in the name of civil liberty—which I will deal with in a little while—say, let the disorder in criminal activity continue; let the chaos increase;

let us, therefore, because we believe that this is going to create some temporary dislocation in our economic life, sit back and do nothing? The job of a government is to fix the problem when the problem is before us and we intend to fix that problem. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the third argument that was raised in this debate, and was raised by the Member for Diego Martin North/East, in particular, has to do with the issue of the international image. He went on to argue that since the emergency there have been many advisories about travel to Trinidad and Tobago.

Of course, the advisories that took place when his government was in office, he ignored. It was a permanent emergency when the PNM was in office, [*Desk thumping*] and the advisories were coming all the time, over many years, but they did not see that as affecting our international image. Now the advisory is a matter of routine by governments looking at a situation and watching very carefully as to the future.

I had a discussion with the Minister of Foreign Affairs as to the extent to which international bodies and foreign governments were apprised and he gave us the assurance that they were providing them with regular updates as to the state of affairs, as well as the results that are to be expected in this matter, and we have kept those governments fully informed, as well as the international bodies. Therefore, we have taken all the steps that are necessary in order to ensure that the wider community outside of Trinidad and Tobago does not see this as a situation in which they should be sensing some kind of chaos.

This is not a deterrent to the international image to this country—has been able to create. In fact, it is a reassurance, and many individuals who have spoken to me in the financial world and, indeed, in the investment world, have had a sense of reassurance that finally a government has the resolve and the tenacity of purpose to take on this problem and to take it on in the way we have done. [*Desk thumping*] Unless and until we discharge our first and primary function as a government, there is no other function to perform in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] That is why the priorities must be established as to the purpose we are here today.

There are some who wish to surrender to terrorism inside or outside the country, and by the action that this Government has taken, it is very clear that this Government will never surrender to terrorism inside or outside of this country, inspired from outside. Therefore, the arguments of the international image are

really flawed. They are flawed because, as I said, sometimes the debate degenerates into the narrow political context and loses sight of what really is the major public purpose for which we are engaged here today.

The other argument that has been raised against the Opposition's claim that they will not support an extension for three months is that it will not work. They are predetermining that this beginning—and I do not think anyone here claims that this is the total answer. This is the beginning of the answer to dealing with the problem of safety in Trinidad and Tobago; [*Desk thumping*] a bold measure, a measure that is based on the evidence that was before us at the time and a measure that will begin that process in earnest. There is a lot to be done and no one will underestimate the work to be done. In fact, I believe we now will be faced with far more responsibility to be able to secure the benefits of these temporary emergency measures with respect to Trinidad and Tobago.

"It will not work." The Member for Diego Martin Central went on to say that the drug trade is pernicious and that the financial underpinnings of the drug trade are so strong and so resilient, and by implication saying that there is nothing we can do about it. How can you, as a government elected by the people with a mandate to put this country right, to fix the problems in this nation, say that this problem is beyond our ability to solve? I say here today that this Government will solve any problem that is in the interest of Trinidad and Tobago, regardless of how complex it may look. [*Desk thumping*] That has been the hallmark of the governance of this Government over its 15 months and will continue to be so.

But to say that the drug trade has a financial underpinning that is so strong that it cannot be tackled and put at risk the safety of our citizens on a regular basis as an excuse as to why they cannot support this measure, I could not understand that argument; that it will not work because the forces around us are too large.

**Dr. Rowley:** Who said that?

**Hon. W. Dookeran:** The Member for Diego Martin Central was arguing—

**Dr. Rowley:** Nobody said that.

**Hon. W. Dookeran:** I think you were absent at that point. [*Laughter*]—that it is pernicious. It is the beginning to deconstruct the financial underpinnings of the drug trade in Trinidad and Tobago, and a separate programme has already been put into place in order to be able to start to deconstruct that: some measures with respect to financial integrity in the banking system; some measures with respect to the establishment of the Financial Intelligence Unit which we debated at length

here on previous occasions. When that government could not fix that situation, we were able to get it under control within a year, providing the necessary financial integrity for ensuring that our financial system does not become prisoner to the drug money laundering affairs.

It is an aspect that has not been dealt with in this debate, but it is an aspect that this Parliament has debated when we debated the Financial Institutions Act; the amendments to it; the enforcement of the structures that have to be put into place, and today we have been moved from being almost blacklisted, as the Member for Diego Martin North/East apparently wanted us to be, to a situation where we are now moving to a higher level of acceptance in that body, and there are other bodies.

There is before us the Securities and Exchange Commission Regulations that will come before this Parliament very shortly in order to reinforce the integrity of the Securities Exchange Commission and its mandate. There is also legislation that the Cabinet has already agreed upon with respect to insurance companies in Trinidad and Tobago and how we shall restructure the regulatory system for the insurance companies so that we can have financial integrity.

Whenever those from international institutions come to me and we discuss Trinidad and Tobago, I always reinforce to them that one of the primary objectives of a reform in the financial sector is to ensure that there is financial integrity in the operations of the financial system in Trinidad and Tobago. The steps to bring that about, we are putting into place, and, therefore, the fact that it will not work—Member for Diego Martin Central—is really to abdicate your responsibility to governing the interests of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

There are other arguments that he has raised with respect to "it will not work". It will not work because there are some issues of the day, and the issues of the day are obviously some inconveniences, and they are playing on these inconveniences in the short term to prevent us from doing in the long term what will prevent these inconveniences at all in the end. So where is the argument? I have listened very carefully to hear the argument.

Then they came with this final argument of civil liberties; that we cannot in any way compromise civil liberties, even if such compromising of a temporary nature is meant to ensure that we have discharged the primary function of the safety of our citizens. How could one accept this argument in absolute terms, that there must be no temporary curtailment of civil liberties? Even that, as someone from the Government, I believe the Minister of Foreign Affairs said, that while

the law is there, this Government has no appetite to deny any civil liberty within the constraints of the job that we have before us. [*Desk thumping*] We have full confidence that the people in the country know what we are doing; agree with what we are doing; support what we are doing and will join us in doing the right thing to get this country on the right path. [*Desk thumping*]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want, and no one on this side wants, to give the impression that the state of emergency is a substitute for criminal activity in Trinidad and Tobago; that the mere existence of a state of emergency and a curfew will stop criminal activity. No one has argued that. No one in his right mind will argue. What it does, it gives us a start to deal with that problem at this point in Trinidad and Tobago, and that start has to be structured in many other measures.

I have made some quick reference to the financial integrity issues which we are putting into place in order to reinforce that aspect, so that money laundering and matters of that nature will not be seen as permissive in our environment. But there are other measures. The state of emergency, in my view, is simply the beginning of the development of a very sustainable programme for the future. It has been ongoing. It is not that things have not been happening.

Many have mentioned the fact that there has been some lull with respect to the level and intensity of criminal life in Trinidad and Tobago because some of the measures that are being put into place are beginning to bear fruits. But we know that there will be a backlash at some time, and before that backlash takes us, we ensure that they are demobilized for any backlash to take place in the future. It is that kind of pre-emptive strategic thinking that has led us to take this time and to try to put that in order.

**2.15 p.m.**

The state of emergency measures, therefore, would allow the protective services comfort to be able to discharge their duties which are, to preserve law and order in this country without some of the legal obstacles that prevent them from discharging that duty for a short period of time. In that sense we will be able to have a headstart. Even in so doing, there would be adherence to all the fundamental rights of the citizens. Those whose rights are going to be affected are those who wish to operate outside the law, in order to bring about a sense of confusion for those who are upholding the law.

The second element in this programme—and was referred to rather briefly by some Members opposite—was the speed at which justice should take place. That

has been a problem. We have discussed in this Parliament how the justice system has not worked at the pace which it ought to work. The Minister of Justice has started his entire programme by trying to accelerate that. It is not something that can be resolved overnight but clearly, that is part of the programme to increase the speed of movement in the wheels of justice. We know it is a challenge, we recognize it is a challenge.

I have no doubt that the judiciary recognizes a challenge, but it is a challenge we have to confront as a society in order to be able to start the process of cleaning up the society for building a different tomorrow. If you are preoccupied with fighting the problems you will never be able to provide the temples, and the mosques and the values that this society must be built on in the future.

So a second part of this programme has to deal with the way in which justice is dispensed, maintaining all the very fundamental principles that we uphold as a society in the discharge of that justice.

A third area that has been raised here, and has been raised here in a very flippant way, has to do with the reform of the police service and we all recognize. I believe it is the Member for Diego Martin West who had made the point that in the final analysis, a well-functioning police force and police service is our best safeguard. Indeed that is so, but we must create the conditions for that to take place. And, I am aware of the fact that, many steps have been taken—and I am sure the Minister of National Security at the appropriate time might even go into greater detail, in terms of the work that his Ministry has been doing in order to reconstruct the police service. So that is the third element in the framework of action that will now continue.

A lot of capacity needs to be built, and we recognize the difficulty in changing institutions. The previous government kept bringing consultants to look at what to do. What we are doing is not bringing consultants but we are doing what has to be done. [*Desk thumping*] It is a different approach—a hands-on approach to change as we face the problem. We deal with it once we know the framework within which we must operate, and the objectives that we want to achieve.

They had spent—I believe the Member for Caroni East had called it the amount of consultancy work—but rather than doing that we are streamlining the operation. And the fact that we are building a new set of institutions makes it necessary to debunk the old set of institutions. If you want to keep the old institutions, you keep the old institutions, the old problems, and the old government. The country has voted against that. [*Desk thumping*] I am saying

they were changing the institutions and changing the results. So you cannot argue here that we must keep SAUTT and must keep this and must keep that. Then you are telling us, keep the old problems, keep the old government, keep everything as how it used to be in the past. [*Desk thumping*] [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Warner:** "Gi dem, Winston; gi dem Winston."

**Hon. W. Dookeran:** So we are creating the conditions for this change to take place in the institutions. Changing institutions is not an easy thing. In fact, for those who have been looking at the issues of failed states recognize that there are three things that have to be corrected: communal strife, violence that cannot be controlled and institutions that cannot perform.

We have inherited the beginnings of a failed state and we shall turn that into a success state over the years to come but we are dealing with the issue of communal divisions in an open transparent way. That is why we can sit here as a Government in which there are different competing interests, which the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre spoke about; all the efforts that he has taken with respect to the working population in this country, for we find a new consensus of all these competing groups. That is why I found the discussion on racial profiling somewhat irrelevant at this point. It is something that can be exploited—you know you can find a situation where one exploits that—but let us not use this opportunity to divide this society. [*Desk thumping*] Let us use this opportunity to unite the society; to bring it together to fight the most fundamental issue we are facing, which is public safety of our citizens.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fourth element has to do with the issue of an element of the special emergency measures which has to do with the curfew. Obviously, you need to have to a catchment area; you need to be able to put into operation what is required or else you need not have the state of emergency. And as was pointed out based on the advice of the technical people in the Ministry of National Security and their advisors, they would let us know when it is appropriate as to how to make this less onerous on the people.

True, there is some reduction of commercial activity, but this has always been accepted on the grounds that this is a price that we have to pay for something better tomorrow. I think I heard the Mayor of Chaguanas, when asked about what are the people saying about closing at six o'clock, he said "They always do that anyhow." So, therefore it was not a new burden, but clearly, we cannot continue. This is why there are special measures aimed for a special time, and that would be

dealt with at the appropriate time. It is to provide a window of calm so that the work can be undertaken on the different fronts of which I have spoken. And during that period we will be able to establish the beginnings of that solution.

As we move forward in any journey there are always risks ahead. There are always possibilities that you may not achieve all your targets, there are always chances that you might get reprisals. That is the dynamic world in which we live. But what is clear is that the intention of this Government has been articulated by its action, in order to deal with this issue, and to deal with it for the first time in recent times as a Government should deal with this matter. [*Desk thumping*].

As I speak, I know that the relevant Ministers are working feverishly to develop what we call a "Post-Emergency Social Plan" in order to deal with the emergency social plan throughout the country. That too will take time. It is an enhancement of what exists today, and very shortly, I have no doubt, as we overcome these trying times, we will get into the more proactive side, so that urban dispossession will be a problem that will be tackled by innovative social plans.

Rural dislocation will be dealt with so the entire programme for the next fiscal year is being geared to deal with the two issues of urban dispossession and rural decay. And that becomes an important part because we are not here to punish the criminals, we are here to free the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. To do that, we have to get rid of the criminal element in Trinidad and Tobago, and that is the philosophical undertaking that we have embarked upon. In developing this post-emergency social plan to sustain the opportunities—and we can and I am sure we will—because these matters will come to Parliament in due course.

So these are the arguments that have been put forward as to why the Opposition will not support an extension. None of the arguments that they have put forward is talking about the future. They are talking about regaining the past, they are trying to hold on to what was there before, when what was there before has put us where we are today, and we want to move from where we are today to a different tomorrow. [*Desk thumping*] These are the arguments that I sense they have made. And I have no doubt, in the final analysis, the most fundamental issue is the restoration of the value of life in our citizens. [*Desk thumping*]

Life has become too meaningless and that has created a whole atmosphere where many of our young people succumbed to that. The value of life is at the heart of the civil liberty argument. You can have all the laws of civil liberty but

you cannot in fact live those laws if you are not alive to live them. And therefore, this is a time to make some choices, and the choices clearly are let us put back on the national front burner this whole concept of the value of life.

That is why it is not only a government's responsibility; it is a responsibility of civic society, it is a responsibility of the national NGOs of the mosques and the churches and the Temples to restore this sense of the value of life, so that our young people will not walk out of their homes believing that life is valueless. Because in the final analysis that is the bedrock that will build a safe society. But all that will happen if there is movement in the other areas which we have identified to you here today.

The state of emergency is not a solution, it is the beginning of the solution to make the country safe again. We hope that we shall get the support of the Opposition here in Parliament and the support of the wider society in order to execute the different dimensions to this programme, so that we can start this road and make a tremendous dent. I do not wish to underestimate the size of the problem, the extent to which we recognize the complexity of the issues before us. I do not wish to underestimate the resources that will be working against us. I do not wish to underestimate—and we on this side do not wish to underestimate that this is a huge undertaking.

What we have done is that we said, as difficult as it is, as complex as it is, as multifaceted as it is, we intend to make a start, and the state of emergency is our start to tackle this problem in Trinidad and Tobago today. [*Desk thumping*] I think we will all be very happy when it comes to an end. But, before it gets there, we must show tangible evidence that the new directions that we have outlined are beginning to bear fruits.

**2.30 p.m.**

We call on the Opposition, not only here in Parliament but in their own constituencies, to join in this national effort. As I have said and as I have reflected on 1990, I was dissillusioned in that debate when the national interest was so clear in my mind, when the issues of the defence of democracy were so present, when our institutions were brutally attacked and the debate at that time descended into small politics. I remember that day very well. That meeting did not take place here. It could not have taken place here.

**Hon. Member:** Central Bank.

**Hon. W. Dookeran:** It took place in the Central Bank Towers. At that time in my view our leaders did not rise to the occasion. I hope that this time around all our leaders would rise to the occasion in our land. [*Desk thumping*]

Thank you.

**Mr. Nileung Hypolite** (*Laventille West*): Thank you kindly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The People's National Movement does not support crime. [*Desk thumping*] The People's National Movement does not support criminality. The People's National Movement does not support breaking the law or the law that governs this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, every time we come to this Parliament, what we get from the Government is that the People's National Movement did not do this, the People's National Movement did not do that, the People's National Movement did nothing at all for this country. [*Desk thumping*] But let me say to you that the People's National Movement did a lot for this country. [*Desk thumping*]

One of the first things that the People's National Movement did was to provide this country with visionary leadership [*Desk thumping*] and we started with Dr. Eric Williams. We had George Chambers, we had Patrick Manning [*Desk thumping*] who presented this country with a vision to develop this country to the year 2020 and beyond, and we now have a visionary leader—[*Interruption*]

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 40 (b) and (c). We are very respectful. Allow him to speak, please.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, let us uphold Standing Order 40 on both sides of the House, please. On both sides of the House, allow the Member for Laventille West to speak.

**Mr. N. Hypolite:** Thank you kindly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We now have another visionary leader who would take the people of Trinidad and Tobago out of the 20-year period that this Government would have sent us, with this state of emergency.

**Mr. McLeod:** Take you time, son.

**Mr. Peters:** Who is your leader?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members!

**Mr. N. Hypolite:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Members on the other side wish for me to acknowledge them so that the PR again will be brought into the

Parliament as what the Member for Chaguanas West would have done, by bringing a map into Parliament to show the areas on which a state of emergency would have been imposed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, here they are coming to this House to ask for an extension of a state of emergency and, up until today, they cannot give a proper explanation why the state of emergency was called. [*Desk thumping*] They have indicated that .003 per cent of the population is responsible for getting involved in criminal activities. So the Government would have taken away the rights of the people of this country for a mere 003 per cent. If you look at the areas in which they would have hosted curfews, which accounted for approximately 467, 000—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** What per cent?

**Mr. N. Hypolite:**—that .003 per cent accounts for some 14 persons. So the Government is saying that some 14 persons are outside there terrorizing the people of Trinidad and Tobago and, more so, the areas of Arima, Chaguanas, Diego Martin, Port of Spain, San Fernando and San Juan/Laventille; .003 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, .003 per cent of 467, 000 persons, a mere 14 persons. So I do not know if—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Roberts:** Our population is 1.3 million.

**Mr. N. Hypolite:**—of the whole population which makes it even worse because this is just a portion. I am just speaking about a portion of our population. That map that the Member for Chaguanas West brought and showed Arima, Chaguanas, Diego Martin, Port of Spain, San Fernando and San Juan/Laventille, those areas where the curfew right now is imposed account for some 467, 000.

I know you are speaking about the entire population, but I am here speaking about those six areas alone and within those six areas we are looking at some 14 persons, that .003 per cent. There are some 46, 000 persons living in Laventille West. Point zero zero three per cent of that 46, 000 persons is somewhere around 1.38. Of course, you do not have .38 of a person. [*Interruption*]

**Miss Cox:** Two persons.

**Mr. N. Hypolite:** Two persons. So they would have locked down the whole of Laventille West just to find two persons? That is what is happening—just to find two persons. That is what this Government is indicating to the people of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the areas that do not have curfew at this point in time is somewhere around 742, 000, much larger than the areas that have curfew. But it is also significant to note that some of those areas are places like Cedros, Icacos, Toco, areas known for the drug trade to be taking place, or the drugs that are coming from the South American countries to be passing through our land and including guns and ammunition. That Government would have removed all of the necessary measures that the People's National Movement would have put in place to take care of drugs and ammunition coming into Trinidad and Tobago. Why? Because they want to believe that they are doing something and, rightfully so, they are doing absolutely nothing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government is beginning to be known for conveniently contradicting themselves so as to bring forth a view as if they are telling the truth. They are conveniently contradicting themselves. The Minister of National Security indicated to this honourable House, and to the people of Trinidad and Tobago by extension, that in addition to the police service they would have brought some 20, 000 plus security officers to fight crime in this country. We heard my colleague, the Member for Diego Martin Central, made mention that the Commissioner of Police indicated that the police service has sufficient police officers. So while the Commissioner of Police indicated that they have sufficient police officers, the Minister also indicated that the Government will enlist security firms to fight crime and he made mention of some 20, 000 plus security officers. So why the need to take the army, the people who are trained to fight war, the 5, 000 as he made mention of, bearing in mind that you already had some 6, 000 police officers plus another 20, 000, that is 26, 000 individuals outside there fighting the war against gangs as they put it? That is not all.

You had December 01, 2010. The hon. Prime Minister ordered the Commissioner of Police to get a new crime plan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of this country have been asking the Government what are their plans. Tell us where is the plan to get things going?

**Hon. Member:** Where is this plan?

**Mr. N. Hypolite:** Where is the plan to fight crime? [*Desk thumping*] That is what the people of this country have been asking for. Is the state of emergency their plan? If that is so, a state of emergency ought to be the last resort, the last measure, for any government to take in fighting crime. I am certain that if they had a plan, something to work with—because right now they have absolutely nothing—you would have probably seen a steady decrease in the criminal activities as per what the People's National Movement started with.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they continued to boast that in 15 months crime started to go downwards. All of a sudden, in 12 days, a miracle occurred and crime is almost down to zero as said by the hon. Prime Minister. Crime started to go downwards since 2008. In fact, in January 2010 in the Laventille area, you would have heard from a number of people from that community, a number of people from that constituency, a number of people more so from the St. Barb's area indicating that it was the first time in a very long period of time they could have walked the streets and have parties. One o'clock or two o'clock in the morning they are now going to a party or coming back from a party.

**Miss Cox:** When was that?

**Mr. N. Hypolite:** We are talking about January 2010. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what one of the constituents in the St. Barb's area indicated. There was a meeting and one of the constituents who addressed the meeting said that St Barb's had experienced a crime reduction and that would have been on February 10, 2010.

**2.45 pm**

St. Barb's had experienced a crime reduction. That individual also lived in the St. Barb's area so it is not an individual who came from Siparia or Penal or D'Abadie/O'Meara, but an individual living in Laventille, and more so, living in St. Barb's who would have explained to the people that in 2010, February more so, they had a lot of peace, quiet, tranquility, the opportunity of walking through the area, one o'clock, two o'clock in the morning, party started and all of those things in that particular community. The gang warfare in the Laventille community went downwards.

So when they on the other side come to this House boasting about criminal activities and crime went down under their watch, Mr. Deputy Speaker, come on. It started under the People's National Movement; some 506 murders in 2008; [*Interruption*]—then 550 in 2008, if you say so. Correction, 547 in 2008; 506 in 2009; 473 in 2010—the whole of 2010: 473; in 2011, it is somewhere around 270, and one has to wonder if it is, because, again, the PR that this Government comes with on a daily basis. If this state of emergency is not a measure to try and keep the crime down—by all means, we will be pleased for that—keep the crime rate down just to come outside there on the 1st of January and wave a flag and say yes, in 2011, the UNC brought the crime rate down and kept it below 300. I wonder if that is their goal. Mr. Deputy Speaker, a person who boasts about the reduction of

crime under a state of emergency is like an individual on a hunger strike under famine because what happens after that state of emergency is what one needs to look at very, very, very carefully.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while all of that is taking place, here it is you have the police service, and this is an article coming out of the *Mirror* on January 14, 2011. [*Interruption*] Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are people in the Parliament who love to be seen and heard because it probably seems as if that is the only place they could be seen and heard, okay. [*Interruption and laughter*] So maybe he needs to.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the police service admitted that the police strategies, a big failure in curbing the murder rate, and this is after the Prime Minister called the Commissioner of Police and asked him to present to this country with a crime plan. Police officers are now stating it was a failure. They have nothing in place. So the question again: where is the plan? What is the plan? Or is the plan a state of emergency? If that is the case, we are in for some big, big problems.

While all of that is taking place, you have the Minister of National Security parading throughout Laventille, meeting with the boys on the block, liming and talking with them, and I appreciate that, I really appreciate that, okay. We will bounce up a number of times at a number of such activities, all right, but then he said—and again, this is an article by Akile Simon.

> "Sandy, during a recent interview with the Sunday Express, said that, to fully achieve and sustain a significant reduction in crime and criminal activities, it was important for the police to partner with the community and build meaningful relationships."

The point I am getting at is, why a state of emergency; a question posed to the Government that has not been answered properly to date. [*Desk thumping*] The Minister of National Security indicating—let me repeat it.

> "Sandy, during a recent telephone interview with the Sunday Express said that, to fully achieve and sustain a significant reduction in crime and criminal activities, it was important for the police to partner with the community and build meaningful relationships."

And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a couple of months after, a state of emergency—boys outside there being picked up and gone with; parents, mothers, wives do not

even know where they are; do not know where they are. But then the Minister of National Security continued:

> "He said, based on his personal interaction with the youngsters, many who have been identified as being involved in a life of crime, they expressed a desire to have a better life for themselves.
>
> I want to get an office work,"— one of them indicated to him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of these were measures that the People's National Movement would have put in place for many of the communities outside there, not only that of Laventille but also in Maloney, D'Abadie, Arima, Penal; we put a number of those programmes in place for the reduction in crime. So, when they come and they beat their chest that crime is going down and went down under their watch, no, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, it started under the People's National Movement, and it continued because of the measures that we would have put in place. One of the measures that they (the present Government) put in place is to pay ex-prisoners $5, 000—something that the Prime Minister indicated. "Go to jail and when you come out, we give you a cheque for $5, 000." That was one of their measures.

What we did is that we put social programmes in place. We put rehabilitation programmes in place; we put sporting programmes in place; we put a lot of youth programmes in place; educational programmes in place; we put programmes in place for the senior citizens also. We put a number of programmes in place; we put On-the-Job-Training in place; we put the MuST programme in place; YAPA programme in place and we could go on and on with those different programmes. [*Desk thumping*]. We put MILAT/MYPART in place; we maintained the CCC programme; we extended the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force. All of those are things that we did, and they come into this Parliament to try to fool the people of Trinidad and Tobago and say that we did absolutely nothing. Convenience of contradiction; they conveniently contradict themselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I speak about conveniently contradicting themselves, I heard yesterday that a particular individual does not work at the Ministry of the People and Social Development. But, I ask the Minister, "Skippy" Barrington Thomas, when he calls a Member of Parliament and he says, "I am calling on behalf of the Minister of Social Development [*Desk thumping*] so as to arrange for the Minister to tour your constituency with you", I wonder whether or not it is another means of convenient contradiction by the Minister when he sat across there and shook his head, and he said, "He is working URP", or I wonder

whether he is being paid by URP and working at the Ministry of Social Development. [*Desk thumping*]. Maybe the Minister, when he speaks, can clear that.

**Dr. Ramadarsingh:** The Ministry of the People and Social Development does not exist by itself. It exists in partnership with NGOs, CBOs, FBOs—faith-based organizations—community-based organizations, MGOs—we partner strongly and collaborate heavily with stakeholders in the society who volunteer and assist the ministry to do its work. Thank you. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. N. Hypolite:** Thank you kindly and I appreciate the Member for Caroni Central clearing the air on that because when he calls, he tends to say he is his personal assistant. So, again we need to clear that because the Leader of the Opposition made mention of the kind of language that individuals like Mr. Thomas use on Facebook, and it is something again that the Prime Minister and probably the Minister needs to look at, because we are willing to send you that Facebook document to see.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one would like to look at this state of emergency. In 2009, we had a summit. The crime rate in 2009, the murder rate in 2009 was much more than what it is now—some 506. It was the then Opposition Leader, Kamla Persad-Bissessar who, when it was suggested by the Prime Minister then, the hon. Patrick Manning said, "Rule out any kind of state of emergency." In fact, according to the *Guardian* article written by Mr. Richard Lord on March 20:

> "Opposition MP Kamla Persad-Bissessar says Prime Minister Patrick Manning must immediately and unequivocally "rule out the declaration of a state of emergency, limited or otherwise, for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, scheduled to take place in Port-of-Spain from April 17 to 19."

We have a very high crime rate—506—much more than what it is now.

**3.00 p.m.**

You have heads of various governments, various countries, coming to this country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and while the Member for San Fernando East as Prime Minister then would have put forward a proposal to look at a state of emergency, the Leader of the Opposition then said no to that. In 2011, when you have the Minister of National Security, you have the Commissioner of Police; you have the Prime Minister all boasting that crime going! Crime going down! Crime going down! All of a sudden one Sunday morning we get a state of emergency coming at you. One Sunday morning. [*Interruption*] Evening? Morning, morning,

Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because it was the morning that the Minister of National Security would have met and asked for it. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*] It was the morning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of National Security was boasting about the reduction in crime. On January 19, 2011, "Sandy: 14 per cent drop in serious crimes from June to November."

**Dr. Rowley:** Who?

**Mr. N. Hypolite:** Sandy, the Minister of National Security boasting 14 per cent drop in serious crime from June to November. You see, the thing about it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the question: what is the real reason behind that state of emergency? What is the real, real reason? And we are asking the Government to tell the population why they chose to go the way of a state of emergency rather than putting a proper plan in place to look after the security and safety of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while all of this is taking place, and they are asking for an extension of the state of emergency, in Laventille a number of persons right now are being taken advantage of. I was on the Beetham on Tuesday speaking to a number of my constituents there, Phases 1 and 2, and the kind of pain that those persons are going through especially over the last 13 days, we need to revisit this whole idea of a state of emergency.

Before a state of emergency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the law enforcement agencies, law enforcers, would go onto the Beetham and exactly what they are doing right now is what they used to do. But what they are doing at this point in time to the people of the Beetham, the persons in other areas of Laventille—I stress the Beetham because there is where I passed on Tuesday.

My colleague from Laventille East/Morvant made mention of Keon Quow. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Keon used to play for the under-20—he used to play for police. Keon Quow does not smoke, he does not drink, does not lime. [*Interruption*] Thank you. He does nothing. He does not smoke, he does not lime, he is not involved in any kind of criminal activity, but he lives next door to someone who the police believes—alleged as a good man would say, alleged, all right—is involved in criminal activity. He was in his house sleeping and they passed, broke open the house, "dey gone with him".

Keon had just signed a contract to start with W Connection, earning an income of some $4, 000 plus. And maybe the Minister of Sport will open his ears

and listen to that and try and put forward a proper case for the young boy to get him outside there, and [*Desk thumping*] have him work with W Connection. [*Interruption*] "Yeah", Minister of Sport, probably he needs to get him out of that prison at this point in time, under which the authorities would have picked him up, for what apparent reason we do not know. And they charged him under the anti-gang law. The guy is not involved in any of those things at all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is another incident where this lady's house was broken into with a sledgehammer. No one was home. Police broke into her residence with a sledgehammer, the door was flat on the ground, no one at home. In another incident, the police passed and saw this guy liming right in front of his home, and say "Hear what, nah, we carrying yuh down." He said, "For what, officer?" They said, "We gonna carry yuh down because yuh breaking de law. If not, gih mih $500." So here it is this individual, not wanting to be locked up—this is not alleged, this one is facts, okay—$500 was given to the police officer for this youngster not to go to jail.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is unfair. It is unfair. The Minister of National Security went into details about the murders and how many Afro-Trinidadians were involved in murders, got murdered and were arrested and all those different things. He said in 2006, 390 murders, 220 were Afro-Trinidadians, and he went right down the list. In 2010, 473 murders, 320 Afro-Trinidadians; all told an average of 72.3 per cent of the murders which took place between 2006/2010 the victims were Afro-Trinidadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we started this debate, it was about crime throughout Trinidad and Tobago and not who are Africans, who are non-Africans or any of that nature. It was not along those lines at all. The Minister of National Security started this whole African talk about murders [*Desk thumping*] and arrests. As is the norm, they conveniently contradicted themselves and they want to throw the whole issue on the People's National Movement, that the PNM started this whole racial talk about crime. We never did; we never did. It started with the Minister of National Security, followed by the Member for Chaguanas West and my colleague for Laventille East/Morvant only corrected the situation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us understand exactly what transpired here. On August 16, it was alleged "some $22-million drug bust" took place. On August 18, you heard about "some massacre in Arima, four persons getting killed in Arima, crime rate going up. On August 19, you heard that the Commissioner of Police left the country; on August 20, you heard that the Trinidad and Tobago

Defence Force celebrated their anniversary and as such all the officers were together celebrating. And then you heard on August 21 that a state of emergency was to be imposed on the people of this country.

In the normal way of conveniently contradicting themselves, this is what you also heard. You heard that the reason was the drug bust; then you heard it was not that; it was the spike in crime; then you heard it was not that; it was some container of guns which went missing; then you heard it is not that.

But what exactly happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the Minister of National Security went to the Prime Minister, put forward a case, whatever that case may be, which is what the people of Trinidad and Tobago continue to ask for, and whatever was said or discussed at that meeting; the National Security Council was then ordered to meet and after that meeting you heard the Cabinet coming together so as to discuss the details of the meeting with the National Security Council, and a couple of minutes after that a letter was heading towards the President to sign off on a state of emergency.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member's, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Laventille West has expired.

*Motion made*: That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. A. Roberts*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

[*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. N. Hypolite:** Thank you kindly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And thank you kindly, Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara and Members on both sides.

**Mr. Warner:** Punishment! Punishment! Punishment!

**Mr. N. Hypolite:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Chaguanas West indicated punishment, punishment, but there are thousands of persons right now going through a lot of punishment outside there, [*Desk thumping*] a lot of punishment, because of what they did, impose a state of emergency on this country. That should have not been at all! At all! At all! And they cannot explain why a state of emergency.

I indicated about the decrease in criminal activities. I indicated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the Minister of National Security boasting about the reduction in crime, 14 per cent and all of those different things. When you look at all of those

things you ask yourself the question: is it really and truly crime, or criminal activities, or gangs that really and truly was the core of the reason for this state of emergency? Or was it another issue that was brewing?

**3.15 p.m.**

On that same morning of the 21st, the unions, and more so the OWTU, had an article that went somewhat like this.

> "President General of the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union…Ancel Roget, says while many have been focussing on the trade unions' plans to 'shut down the country', little or no time has been spent to analyse why there was a call for the shutdown in the first place. He said detractors had conveniently disregarded all of the issues and conditions that were responsible for all their actions."

It carried me back to the last time the United Kingdom had a state of emergency, in 1974. The reason for that state of emergency being called in the United Kingdom was in response to increasing industrial action.

One wonders whether or not this is another convenient way of contradicting, or maybe a diversionary tactic to shift the focus from the real issues of this country at this time, the unions marching and protesting, even the police. It was said, since February 17, 2011 in the *Trinidad Guardian*:

> "In wake of police protest expert warns:
>
> Watch for state of emergency"

The article went on to say:

> "Continued sickout action by police officers across T&T for a 40 per cent wage increase can push the Government into imposing a limited state of emergency, a political scientist has warned."

**Dr. Rowley:** What was that?

**Mr. N. Hypolite:** This was since February 17. So you had, a couple days before this state of emergency was imposed on the people of Trinidad and Tobago, police sickouts. Then you had the unions acting up. Then you had members of the public joining the unions showing their discontent. You had a series of protests in various communities. You had burning of tyres and in the manifesto of the People's Partnership/UNC-led Government, they said those were the days of burning of tyres. There will be no more burning of tyres.

One has to ask oneself what is the real reason behind the state of emergency being imposed on the people of Trinidad and Tobago; whether or not it is really and truly the gangs, the guns and the drugs outside there, or, if it is that the industrial action of the various unions, as well as the protests throughout this country—people showing their discontent in the way in which this Government is managing the affairs of Trinidad and Tobago at this time—is why they choose to take a different approach and try to divert attention with this state of emergency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, no longer are you hearing about the dengue situation. No longer are you hearing of contracts being tendered out and how they are being tendered out. No longer are you hearing about the affairs of Tobago. No longer are you hearing about the plans for recreation grounds. All we are hearing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is about the state of emergency and I want to believe that is a diversionary tactic.

The people in Penal have been asking for an extension of the curfew in the southern area. The Prime Minister indicated no. The *Trinidad Express* dated August 28, 2011 states:

"Kamla: No extension of curfew in South."

And it went on to state:

> "There will be no extension of curfew to southern areas of Trinidad, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar said yesterday."

Why are we concentrating on those six areas when crime in Trinidad and Tobago is nationwide? Why are we only concentrating on Arima, San Juan/Laventille, Diego Martin, Chaguanas, San Fernando and Port of Spain? What has happened to places like Siparia and Penal where there are gangs, where there are murders taking place, where the people themselves have been calling for this state of emergency and curfew?

After all of this is said, one must also ask the question: at the end of these three months—at the end of the day, the Government has the majority to pass this Motion with or without our support, but it is also my right to stand here and speak for and on behalf of my constituents. To close the debate, as suggested by the Member for Chaguanas West, is another means of showing the people of Trinidad and Tobago that they do not care about the voices of the people in Laventille. [*Interruption*] He just said that. "Then close the debate." That means they do not want to hear the voice of Laventille, the voice of Diego Martin, the voice of Point Fortin and the voice of La Brea. The same person who said that there would be nothing for the areas that did not vote for the UNC; am I correct?

After the state of emergency, the three-month period, what happens next? Will they extend for another three months and maybe another three years simply because the aim is to keep crime down and probably run this country along the lines of being under a state of emergency? Is that the aim? If the crisis that would have pushed the Minister of National Security to imposing such a state of emergency on the people of Trinidad and Tobago has been averted, then why should we extend for another three months?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is an economic impact and again I speak on behalf of the people of Laventille. A number of these individuals have night jobs. They work in restaurants, bars, casinos, have their little burger carts, punch carts and work taxis. They have their children to send to school come Monday morning. This state of emergency, and more so the curfew, will affect each and every one of them.

My colleague, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, made mention of the economic impact and the 30 per cent downward trend. The 30 per cent is an average, but in one particular area it has been affected by as much as 75 per cent. Business places that open, say from six o'clock to 12.00 midnight—restaurants and nightclubs—will all have been affected by this state of emergency by some 75 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say again: the People's National Movement will not support criminals or criminal activity. We stand for any measure to assist in the reduction in crime, but we do not believe that at this time a state of emergency should have been imposed on the people before the Government brought a proper plan or a plan at all to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, have it tested and tried before imposing a state of emergency. [*Interruption*] Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you test out the plan that you do not have. They should have brought a plan, try it out; test it, before imposing a state of emergency.

We are expected to accept the state of emergency, which has been called for reasons we cannot comprehend, for a purpose we have not yet been told about. There are many questions still unanswered about this whole state of emergency and all we are asking for are answers.

I end with a quote by a poet, William Butler Yeats. It goes somewhat like this:

"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, "— upon the world—

"The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity."

I thank you.

**3.30 p.m.**

**The Minister of Trade and Industry (Hon. Stephen Cadiz):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, this the is second day I have been hearing the Members on the other side, talk, talk, talk and more talk, and as typical with the other side plenty talk and absolutely no action.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the rights enshrined in our Constitution, the first thing we talk about is the right of the individual to life, liberty, security of the person as item No. 1. And here it is for I do not know how long but I know that the other, I believe, held office for 37 years—[*Crosstalk*]—and in 37 years what has this country come to? There was a time in Trinidad and Tobago where we did not have to worry about crime. There was a time in Trinidad and Tobago where it was absolutely no problem to leave your house, you could go all over, all hours of the night. I hear them talk about curfew preventing people from going out at night, and here it is that Trinidad and Tobago, over the last 10 years, has had a self-imposed curfew, a self-imposed state of emergency on this country. They forget that for 37 years—and they like to boast, you know, about how long they have been in office—and for 37 years they have done that to this country.

**Hon. Member:** Done what?

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Done what is right—done nothing. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Member:** You should not say that, Member for Chaguanas East. You do not believe that.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** We have looked at this society just deteriorate year after year after year. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes Robo.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** "Ah coming with yuh Robo talk just now".

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** I would like protection from the Member for Diego Martin North/East. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Especially, Member for Diego Martin North/East, you were well protected by the Chair. [*Crosstalk*] Please conduct yourselves and abide by the Standing Order 40.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the late 1960s is when it has been said by the people in authority that the cocaine trade actually started in Trinidad. The reason I want to go back to that is from 1960 we go to 1975 when the then President of the United States, Gerald Ford, made this statement that cocaine is not physically addictive and does not result in serious social consequences such as crime, hospital admissions or death. That was in 1975, four years, a short period of four years.

In 1979, the drug trade in Florida became the biggest source of income to the tune of US$10 billion. So in 1975 it was not an issue, in 1979 it is an issue. In 1979 the city of Miami recorded a drug-related murder every single day which "kinda" reflects what has been going on in Trinidad. So let us put it in the right context. Let us go back to 1979 where this problem was.

In 2008, the then Minister of National Security in the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago, Sen. Martin Joseph, made a statement that Trinidad—and referring to the drug business—was a trans-shipment point and as a result we did not pay too much attention to it at all because it was not staying here. So here it is in other countries coming down to the end of the 70s, they recognized the problem of how dangerous this cocaine trade was, and here it is, it was not until 2008 that you get the Minister of National Security of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago making that statement that they did not think it was going to be a problem and therefore they allowed it to flourish.

The western world after that obviously was not the same and had become addicted to cocaine. You can go through all kinds of documents to tell you how far and vast this cocaine trade is, how dangerous it is, where it has reached and who it has reached over the years.

I want to go back to Mr. Martin Joseph because Mr. Martin Joseph spent, I think, five years somewhere, I am not too sure—the other side would know how long he stayed in office—I know he tried to resign a number of times but for whatever reason the then political leader, the Member for San Fernando East, refused to accept his resignation and that is something else, I guess, in time we will try to figure out what happened there.

On June 06, 2005—and I quote the hon. Sen. Martin Joseph—this is talking about criminal activity:

> "This concern takes on even more significancefor us in the Caribbean when we consider the growing number of criminals being deported to the Caribbean each year, most of whom have a history of drug-related offences and violent crimes.
>
> This is the main priority of the regional security ministers at this time, Mr. Speaker"

This first time he goes into detail.

> "…Members, our best intelligence indicates that there are some 66 known gangs…"

Again, this is June 2005:

> "…66 known gangs in Trinidad and Tobago. We further estimate that there are some 500 hardcore members. We also have a sense of the areas in which they operate."

This is Martin Joseph, the Minister of National Security in the Government of the section over on that side there. He goes on to say—this is the homicide group:

> "When the group was established the crime data at that time clearly showed that the majority of the homicides were being perpetuated by a number of gangs operating—where—in eastern Port of Spain, Laventille and Morvant. As such, the operations of the Inter-Agency Task Force…which incorporates elements from the Police Service and the Defence Force was strengthened and expanded to focus on the prevention of gang and drug related homicides. To date, this focused operation has established centres of operations in Quarry Street, Charford Court, Harpe Place and Beverly Hills."

So when I hear them talking about the map that the hon. Member for Chaguanas West is showing to the population and when the hon. Minister of National Security tries, in all seriousness, to indicate where the problem lies in this country, and here it is that they stand up and want to abuse this side for casting aspersions on people of their constituency and here it is in 2005, their own, Mr. Martin Joseph, identified where the problems are.

The other thing of note is where the IATF incorporates both, the police service and the defence force. I know the Member for Diego Martin North/ East he makes

a speech and then he runs. For some unknown reason, he cannot stay here because much of what he says is untrue which is strange to say in a Parliament. [*Crosstalk*] He knows that.

He talked this morning, about the defence force being trained to shoot and kill, and how we could have the defence force as being part of the operation. Here it is, Mr. Martin Joseph with the IATF is talking about incorporating elements from the police service and the defence force. So here it is with all of that that has been going on all the time. That is not a People's Partnership Government. That has happened. [*Crosstalk*]

**Miss. Hospedales:** What year is that?

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Monday, June 06. I could give you the time too. So we go on again:

> "The IATF is now expanding its current operations to address the escalating gang-related violence, where, in Carenage, Diego Martin, Beetham Gardens and Cocorite."

Again, quoting Mr. Martin Joseph:

> "This Government will not allow a small group of criminals to threaten the safety, security and well-being of our nation."

Mr. Martin Joseph again. Listen to this one:

> "These criminals are miscreants, social misfits and tyrants, who refuse to behave and live in a civilized manner. We will not allow these criminal elements to ruin or compromise this country's drive towards developed status"—of course—"by 2020." [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Member:** What is wrong with that?

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** So when you hear that the People's Partnership is taking the stand, making this thing happen, dealing with the situation that you all failed to deal with year after year after year—and I heard the Member for Laventille West and maybe one of the other Members talking about the crime statistics, the last time Trinidad and Tobago did not register a murder, there were zero murders for that year, you have to go way back to 1851, all right, 1851. [*Laughter*] But let us deal with today.

| | |
|---|---|
| 2001 | 151 |
| 2002 | 171 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2003 | 229 |
| 2004 | 260 |
| 2005 | 386 |
| 2006 | 375 |
| 2007 | 395 |

In 2008, 550 which was the winner year, Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of both sides. Of course, 2009 was the great year of the Summit. [*Crosstalk*] Okay, therefore, it dropped slightly to 508.

Then 2010 when the People's Partnership came in May 2010, it went down to 480, and right now as of July it is 235. All right, so if it is one thing is that the People's—no, it is working. But we cannot wait—I think the Member of Parliament for Laventille East/Morvant was talking about in England it took 40 years and some other country it took 30 years for them to deal with crime. We are really going to sit around here—you all were there for 37 years. Thirty-seven years you all governed this country and look at how we ended up; look at where we ended up, after 37 years. And here it is, you want this Government now—because we will be here for a next 40 years, but we are not going to take 40 years to fix the problem.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Forty months!

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** This problem has to be fixed immediately. This problem has to be fixed immediately and we are not going to wait. [*Crosstalk*] When this Government makes a decision, "we going with it". We are not going to wait on you all, so do not worry about it. [*Crosstalk*]

You know, 2005 was a significant year, and again that year was—themurder count was 386. Because I met the Member for Diego Martin Central the other day, and he and a Senator friend of his were asking me about the Keith Noel Committee. He said: "Whappen to you and the Keith Noel Committee? All of a sudden now, jacket and tie and you no longer marching in the streets and signing petition and what have you." [*Crosstalk*]

When I heard him make that statement—and is not the same, and the Mayor of Port of Spain made the statement on radio, his radio station, of course. It is his radio station. He could say what he wants, which is another thing I want to tell you all. And the Member for Tabaquite made the statement, okay. There has not

been one issue of censorship, not one single issue of censorship by this Government. People could say what they want, anything whether it is on television, on the radio, letters in the papers, whatever it is, they can say so. [*Crosstalk*]

When you all start bringing that talk of censorship that is totally incorrect. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Imbert:** Even Dale and Tony could talk all kinds of "stupidness"—

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** But coming back to the issue of the Keith Noel Committee, the Member for Diego Martin North/East talked about this Government governing like an Orwellian State, in an animal farm, some are equal and some are more equal than others, and what have you. I want to tell the other side, who was in charge in 2005, when you want to talk about animal farm on an Orwellian State, Minister of Labour/Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, I do not know how long it is supposed to take to get a permit to, march, but I was told when I had applied that it would take 10 days. That is the requirement. That is the policy. I took six weeks begging for a permit to go and march—six weeks, because every single time I went they wanted to find out something else. So when you talk about an Orwellian State and who is allowed to march and who is allowed to speak, the PNM created that state. [*Crosstalk*] So when they come here and they talk about us ramming things down people's throats, and what have you, that is totally incorrect. It is the PNM who does that. [*Crosstalk*]

**Miss Cox:** This debate is about the PNM?

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** No, it is about the issue of good governance, responsible governance and totally irresponsible governance. That is what this debate is about. [*Desk thumping*]

Let us go back now. Again, a senior member of the Government, when the Keith Noel Committee was started with our petition and somebody asked them in the tea room: "What you think about these people going with this petition, man, and this Keith Noel Committee?" [*Crosstalk*] His answer was very simple, "Them like everything else; them is nine-day wonder, they will just disappear". Okay, they will just disappear. Here it is that we go and we continue—and I would not go into all the other details about patch audits on me, and what have you, after I started—because "that is how the PNM does operate, you know". From the time "yuh raise yuh hand" and "yuh" start to show the PNM how wrong they are, all of a sudden, you are No. 1 enemy now. They are coming after you.

**3.45 p.m.**

When we did the now famous "death march" and the PNM had a meeting on the Wednesday to decide if they were going—[*Interruption*]

**Miss Cox:** What that has to do with the state of emergency!

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** No, I want to let you know. I want to tell you something, because you have to listen. When you do not want to listen like the Member for Diego Martin North/East who had a private elevator in his office so he would not have to meet people and listen to what people were saying; hiding from the people—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, let us abide by Standing Order 40, please.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the Monday after the march, who was profiling? They talk about people profiling—the PNM is always talking about profiling—and they wanted to profile the march to see who was in the march, what kind of people was in the march. [*Interruption*] What is that? You see, the PNM feel they have a divine right to rule this country, and when it is not PNM it is wrong, and when the PNM is not in office all of a sudden they become vexed PNM, okay, and that is how they operate. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people in this country are tired; they are fed up; and they are frustrated. Fear has become the norm in this country, and how did we get there? That is from nine years of mismanagement—

**Miss Mc Donald:** By the PNM!

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Of course, it is by the PNM, not dealing with the situation, because this thing is about the state of emergency, and this state of emergency had to be called, because of where the PNM allowed this country to reach. It is very simple, okay. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Members:** PNM! PNM!

**Miss Mc Donald:** It is nonsense, man!

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issues of crime in other countries, right around the corner here, the issue of crime in Guyana—

**Hon. Members:** PNM caused it!

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** "Probably, the way all yuh does work; the way all yuh does work that is probably true." Guyana has a major problem; St Lucia has a major

problem; and what are they doing? They are looking at the effect of the state of the emergency in Trinidad to see if the same thing could happen there. [*Interruption*] The PNM would not be correcting anything for a very long time. Do not worry about that. That is one thing you do not have to worry about. That is one thing you do not have to worry about.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Take a PNM break!

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** When we go now—[*Interruption*]—it is PNM sitting over there. What do you want me to do? My Member of Parliament from Diego Martin North/East—

**Hon. Members:** He is a PNM!

**Hon. S. Cadiz:**—this morning, he comes out and talks about the issue of the economy, and that in Tobago so many flights from Italy were cancelled, Tobago is in a mess and Tobago is about to shut down, because of what the People's Partnership has done to Tobago. This is today's *Express*. The Member for Diego Martin North/East said he had these conversations and people came to him, but he does not read the newspapers. I want to quote from today's *Express*. This is not yesterday. It says:

"Curfew-free Tobago wooing visitors

> The association"—this is the Tobago Hotel and Tourism Association in Tobago—"wants to reconfirm that there is no curfew in Tobago, unlike certain areas of its twin sister island of Trinidad. Businesses here are continuing to operate as normal, welcoming in visitors from around the world, and it is expected to stay that way,".

…Hear the Italian flight business! The Member wants to come in this Parliament to jumbie people.

> "All international flights"—how many is that? How many is "all"?—"to and from Tobago have maintained their schedules. The inter-island flights between Trinidad and Tobago are also continuing as normal." [*Desk thumping*]

Again, this is not the People's Partnership Government saying this, this is the association President, Mr. Nick Hardwicke. Hold on!

> "'We support the government and law enforcement agencies who are doing all they can to reduce crime. We continue to monitor the situation daily and are in regular contact with all stakeholders"—this is a nice part here—"Moves by the Government to tackle crime are welcomed and will ultimately enhance the visitor experience." [*Desk thumping*]

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Again, we have another headline "St. Kitts and Nevis PM vows to get tough", and he is talking the same language that this Government is talking, and not only talking but doing; the same, identical language. So ladies and gentlemen, it is not a case of the economy falling apart or anything like that. That is the furthest thing from the truth.

This morning again—I do not know why he picked on me this morning—but the Member for Diego Martin North/East talked about business people are afraid—they are afraid of the People's Partnership; they are afraid to come and talk because of victimization. I think the reason he would say that is because he knows exactly that is how his side operates, because within days of the state of emergency being declared, I had every single business organization that we could find in the office of the Ministry of Trade and Industry to sit and determine how this thing was going to work, and he is talking about people are afraid to come and talk to us! What nonsense is that?

**Hon. Members:** Arrant!

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Arrant nonsense, according to my good friend. Another thing that he talked about—when I say the different organizations coming in, the head of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber, the largest chamber in Trinidad and Tobago—they have over 600 members—Catherine Kumar made the statement that security costs over a nine-year period have risen by 20 per cent; because of crime in this country; an indirect cost. [*Interruption*] Of course it is PNM. Let us not forget that! The indirect cost to businesses rose by 57 per cent. So when you are talking about this curfew and this state of emergency costing business people money, the cost was already there, the high cost for security, the high indirect. "So, let we doh try that. Doh try that shot at all".

The other thing my learned friend spoke about was the article in the famous *Economist* newspaper. He would not read the *Express*, but he is reading *The Economist*. What he failed to tell us in *The Economist* is what the headline was. What did the headline say in *The Economist*? The headline was very simple. "Crime in Trinidad Taking on the gangs". That was the headline in *The Economist*—"Taking on the gangs. Emergency treatment!"

The same *Economist* dated August 27, 2011 that he so dutifully quoted, there are a couple of things that he forgot in the article and one was that the murder rate last year in Trinidad and Tobago was 36 per 100, 000, and that is an international benchmark.

They do not want to know how many murders you had, but how many murders per 100, 000, and Trinidad and Tobago was 36 per 100, 000, and what does that equate to? Seven times the average in the United States of America. That is what we have to deal with in Trinidad and Tobago, and that is why this Government, this People's Partnership, has made the decision to have a state of emergency to be able to deal with it, so when we look at that statistic next year, it is not going to be 36, we are going to possibly end up like Jamaica which has it down now to about 16. Imagine that! Imagine where Jamaica was and where Trinidad was, and the tables have turned on us now, and we now have this wonderful statistic of 36 per 100, 000; seven times higher than the United States of America.

We continue with the same *Economist* article: The article says:

> "The previous prime minister"—which, of course, was the Member for San Fernando East—"resisted calls for a state of emergency because he worried this might scare investors when the economy was booming."

So, the then Prime Minister puts money in front of everything else. He refused to call a state of emergency because it might affect foreign investors, and here it is we are scrambling every day to stay alive. What sense does it make to have this booming economy and you cannot enjoy the fruits, you cannot enjoy the quality of life you are supposed to be getting from a booming economy, because of the fear of crime?

Another thing I think he forgot was that Jamaica with a worse gang problem, imposed a similar emergency for two months in May of 2010. So Jamaica did the exact thing that we are doing to be able to deal with it. So if Jamaica could move it from where it was down to 16, that is where we are heading. That is the direction in which we are going to be going.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of other things inside here that really and truly that are just very distasteful, and when we talk about herding people like cattle into the backs of vans and so forth, where is that coming from? Why are we talking about that? Why is the Opposition making that an issue when it is not an issue? [*Interruption*] Why is that? [*Interruption*] I am not going to give way. Of course it is.

They deal with this thing, and for years and decades the Opposition has dealt with it in the same way, by trying to hide it and by trying to create all kinds of other issues outside of what the real issue is. We are living and have lived under a state of emergency for the last nine years, and it has taken this Government to be

very decisive in dealing with that, and taking it out and the time has come now for all of us to come together, including the Opposition which is probably a very difficult thing to do, to come together with it.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday something was said inside this Parliament, and I know it was to be struck from the record, but strangely enough, the statement that was made ends up in the *T&T Mirror* this morning, and I find that very strange, that the statement made by the Member for Diego Martin North/East, yesterday was retracted, but yet it ends up in the *T&T Mirror* this morning. The author is a lady by the name of Irene Medina. Mr. Speaker, what I find also very distasteful is that the same Member for Diego Martin North/East comes here this morning and makes a very similar statement. I find it very strange.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 36(5), that is imputing improper motives against the Member for Diego Martin North/East. He is not here to defend himself, so what is the statement that the Member for Diego Martin North/East made? Mr. Speaker, please, Standing Order 36(5); improper motives are being imputed against my colleague.

**Miss Cox:** But those newspapers are printed before.

**Mr. Speaker:** All right. I know what you are referring to, but I do not think it is appropriate to possibly attribute a link between what might have been said by the Member for Diego Martin North/East and what may have appeared in today's *T&T Mirror*. It could have been coincidental. It does not necessarily need to have a link and, therefore, to attribute any motives as it relates to the Member for Diego Martin North/East, I think it is inappropriate. So I would ask you to refrain from going in that direction and I have already ruled on that matter as you recalled when that matter was raised. So, please be guided. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Mr. Speaker, we talk about the issues of the economy, and yes the Government is very aware of the curfew being imposed and the effect it is going to have on business. It is not that the Government did not take that into consideration when the decision was made, and we know that the hospitality industry, in particular, will suffer because a lot of work in the hospitality industry is done in the evening and night-times.

Of course, there is the issue of shift workers which is also a major issue for us. How do we deal with shift workers, and not only shift workers in factories, but we have the whole energy sector that operates 24/7 and, therefore, these are issues that we are looking at, and we would want to take them into consideration. I know that the Minister of National Security has already made the statement that as soon as it is possible, the issue of the curfew would be looked at again.

**4.00 p.m.**

In the meantime, we know that people have made changes in the way in which they are doing business, and people have reacted to it. They have changed their hours of work. The people working shifts have changed those hours also to make sure that persons are not caught in the curfew. Again, the word coming from the business organizations is that they are very, very glad that finally this thing has happened and finally there is a Government installed that is willing to take that sort of decisive action in dealing with crime in this country.

The issue of the ports, they are now operating on a Saturday, therefore the disruption or any congestion on the ports is going to be minimized.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of the scrap iron I know came up. One of the issues with the scrap iron is also the issue of money laundering with the scrap iron business. Do you want to hear more about the scrap iron? One of the issues is that of money laundering, and the Bankers Association has indicated that it is a major issue with them; hence the reason that even after the state of emergency the scrap iron business is going to be regularized. Not everybody and their brother are going to become a scrap iron dealer overnight. That is not going to be the case. You are going to be licensed. It is going to be dealt with in a very professional way [*Crosstalk*]

I am going to be very, very short. The recent history of this country is not a pleasant one. Crime has to be dealt with, and this is one way in which we are going to be able to eradicate this issue of crime, of the horrible murders. Therefore we ask that the Opposition—[*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** You see this crosstalk, Member for Port of Spain South, and I am not too sure where it is coming from, Member for Fyzabad, this talk, cut it, please.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** If there is one time in the life of the Opposition that they could really and truly show they are for this country, is to be able to support this state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

**Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon** (*Point Fortin*): Member for Chaguanas East, I do not know if you realized what you said, but you seemed to have intimated and expressed some lack of concern that Trinidad and Tobago should have a robust economy, at the expense of other things. I just want to register that concern is noted, that you have other interests and you are weighing those. You seem to have

forgotten what hat you are wearing now, as Minister of Trade and Industry; therefore, based on that comment, if I were you, I would really hand in my resignation. [*Desk thumping*]

I will have you know that the businesses may have been a bit at ease about the initial public emergency, but I do not think anybody is happy about this extension business. People are simply not happy about the three-month extension, especially when the Minister of National Security has come here and given no plausible reasons and no great justifications that are comfortable enough for people to understand why they have to withstand this imposition on their lives, on their businesses and on their livelihood for another three-month period, and who knows whether another three months to follow after that. But if we have our way at that point, you certainly will not have our support once again.

Minister, you said that when this Government—and you were talking about the UNC Government—makes a decision, you go with it, and that is very, very evident, your callous, callous way of implementing things, regardless of what the population thinks. Today, you have used your simple majority again to impose the three-month extension, without any concern for the population, [*Desk thumping*] without doing the needful and giving a full explanation to the public as to why there is the need to go on for another three months. I am very, very disappointed in the Minister of National Security. In his presentation, one would have thought that he would have spoken or contemplated some sort of review of the emergency regulations or maybe the hours that your Government has been speaking about, that the Prime Minister has speaking about, that the hours would be reduced.

One would have expected that you would have said something about that, and a review maybe of the areas of lockdown. I would have expected some kind of analysis in your presentation, and that did not come through. You are using your simple majority, the requirement of this Motion, to impose on the public the extension of the state of emergency. You are depriving the people of Trinidad and Tobago, once again, of their civil liberties, this time for an even longer period.

We on this side are not in agreement with it. Despite the debate yesterday, we feel the objectives which you sought to explain were not at all acceptable in terms of the level of explanation which you gave. We looked through the Proclamation thoroughly again, and there were just repeated words about gang violence and gang activities, so again, no kind of satisfaction given to us about the reasons. You were not convincing at all, at all, at all.

I say once again, we do not at all favour—that is not the word, let me use a stronger one—we abhor criminal activity, but at the same time we cannot support this because we feel there is a way to deal with criminal activity. We have said that. You use crime fighting measures to deal with that, and therefore you have gone about this all together the wrong way.

Again, there was no sensible analysis of empirical data, and this is what we expected. Instead we had an analysis of convenience. What they wanted to impose on us, they imposed on us. The whole process, to my mind, was completely botched, completely flawed, and this Government is now seemingly wanting to make things right, now seeming to do so at the expense of citizens.

Contrary to what the Member for Tabaquite said earlier today, the public is not supporting this extension at all. He looked conveniently at the poll in the *Guardian*, but if he had listened to the poll on CNC3 last might, he would realize that 83 per cent of the public are still demanding some clarity on the objectives of this state of emergency. They are demanding an explanation before you could even consider moving on.

Again, we seem to be certainly made abreast every day. Every day we are made aware of the number of detainees taken in, but not once have we heard about the number of convictions and releases, and these are the kinds of figures that we want to get from the Government, not just the detainees, but the convictions and the releases. We are hoping and waiting that this is what we would hear from you. Again, you are acting in your usual high-handed manner, using your simple majority and moving on, according to the Member for Chaguanas East.

As representative for Point Fortin, the people of Point Fortin vehemently oppose this state of emergency. [*Desk thumping*] It is a complete denial of their freedom and of their rights entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. That denial is for no good reason. Everything you did in the last two weeks, and I predict that everything you propose to do in the next three months, and maybe post that three months, could be done without suppressing the rights and freedom of the people, and the rights and freedom of the people of Point Fortin as well, I might add. I really demand that the Government give us its logic behind the extension. We could find no logical reason.

We need to know what goals you intend to meet, what are your targets. You probably would not want to expose who you are going after, for reasons of

intelligence, but you could give us some sort of indication. Instead of just saying, "Big fish, little fish; big fish, little fish," you could give us some idea, some clarity on where you are going.

Already we are stretched by virtue of the Constitution, under Article 8(3)—we have gone to 8(c), sorry, because 8(2) (a) and (b) are clearly dealing with matters of war and acts of God, and so on. We have stretched it, and 8(c) speaks to any person or persons who are likely to endanger public safety. Judging from that, the spirit of 8(3) seems to suggest that there are specific individuals for whom we expected by now there would be detention orders.

This state of emergency was called on the heels of some 11 murders. To this date, we would think that by now we would have heard of the capture of one of these murderers or one of the perpetrators of these crimes. We have heard nothing thus far, and this was supposed to be one of the major reasons for the calling of the state of emergency. We have heard nothing about the capture of any such individuals. I am trying just to match up 8(2)(c) in the Constitution with the real purpose for this state of emergency, and I still cannot find justification.

Therefore, again, the state of emergency is definitely not well founded. By now we should have known of the detention orders, if not for the criminals who would have committed those 11 murders, but certainly there should have been detention orders out for the financiers, importers, the specific and particular customs officers and police officers, coast guard and maybe some politicians as well, who would have been involved and who, based on the intelligence before you, you would be seeking to capture, but thus far, nothing at all. All I know is that you are preparing, I saw it in the headlines, your warehouse space for capturing more detainees, therefore the expectation is that you would just be continuing in the same vein, to haul persons, throw them into the tray of a vehicle and cart them down to these warehouses now.

I do not know if you have enough warehousing space, because based on the more than 1, 000 persons detained thus far, and I think you said one warehouse would hold about 300 and something. I do not know how many warehouses you would need. I would suggest that the business people not order any more stock, because their businesses have come to a grinding halt, and they could now get into the business of renting their warehouses to the Government to house the detainees. I would think this is what they would be thinking about.

Again we would have expected the plan. We still do not have the plan. Different Ministers are mouthing different plans. I know that Minister Volney has said that the plan would probably be, and I am quoting from the *Daily Express*:

The plan would probably be house by house.

I do not know if that is the same plan that the Minister of National security has in mind, but this is a trigger-happy Minister who has said that we should be shooting on sight, and his plan is house by house.

**4.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about the implications of the statement by the hon. Prime Minister that crime has gotten down to zero and that crime is at a lull, and we know it is only so because of the severe restrictions that have been placed on individuals, and of course on the criminals, and we do not mind that restriction on them, but it is only because of the restrictions that have been placed and also because of the availability of increased resources to the police as well—with the addition of the personnel of the defence forces to assist with the state of emergency—we know that is the only reason why we are experiencing this lull, and that the fact that crime is down to zero now. Based on that I am concerned about the implications, because I suspect that there will be a storm after the calm, and therefore, the Government is going to probably seek to implement another extension at the end of the three months.

So already, based on the analysis and the implications of that analysis, I am really concerned as to where we are going after: is there likely to be another extension and what exactly would it take to stop the Government in its track of this method which obviously is not working and will not work [*Desk thumping*] and is not the right way to deal with the so-called spike in crime. So I take that as a very sort of silly, silly statement.

Another concern I have—and I am skirting through the domestic issues so that I can focus a bit on the international issues. Another concern I have is the extent of the firearms that have been removed thus far, and based on the figures we have had to date, of 20-odd firearms being hauled in after a two-week period, this is a definite failure and I want you to keep in mind the statistics of 2008 when the police took off the streets some 460 firearms, and this was under the PNM—460, Mr. Speaker. You compare with the current Government who has taken—under a state of emergency—only just 20 odd pieces of firearms.

I understand because of the drought of firearms that they are even hauling in cutlasses, and I would not be surprised if the next thing we know "they hauling

in" knives as well, and using the general rubric of weapons instead of firearms to spike their figures up, or next thing they are taking in baseball bats as well, but that is the kind of expectation that you could expect from them just to bump up the figures and ensure that the PR works for them, because that is what it is about.

Again, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communications has said that there has been tremendous planning, and I want to say that we completely, completely disagree and obviously thus far the only detention orders have really been placed on gang members, and they are using the occasion as well to deal with all sorts of people, and I understand that even child maintenance defaulters are being taken in at this time.

**Miss Hospedales:** Just imagine that.

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** That is where they have gone just in order to spike the figures up again.

Mr. Speaker, it is surprising that the Government should really jump to this state of emergency when just in early March of this year this country held its Carnival celebrations. Mr. Speaker, thousands of persons came to Trinidad and Tobago, and all of the citizens were celebrating and attending parties, fetes at nights, they were out at jouvert and they were having a good time and at the end of day it was decided that Carnival was safe, and the Prime Minister said that, the Minister of National Security echoed that, the Commissioner of Police echoed that as well. Then post-Carnival the Government continued to say that crime is down and crime is down and really, Mr. Speaker, I am at pains to understand how we have come to this place where all of a sudden we need to have a state of emergency. In addition, Mr. Speaker, you would recall—[*Interruption*]—Mr. Speaker, I seek your protection

**Hon. Member:** From who?

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** You! You!

**Mr. Speaker:** You have my protection.

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, as well I just want to refer to the policing in the 21st century exercise which we know was implemented recently; in fact it was piloted by the Minister of National Security and the Commissioner of Police in Diego Martin. Again, they felt that it was a huge success and a press conference was called to express to the public how great this was and then they decided that they were going to roll this out nationally. Like

Carnival, this was just recently as well—middle of this year—and two months later here we are with a snap—I have to call it a snap—state of emergency. How preposterous, absolutely preposterous! [*Desk thumping*]

And there were very few words or very little has been said as to the concern about business. Whether you like it or not, and whether a few persons may have expressed their support for the initial state of emergency, this has had a very, very serious effect on businesses—small, medium and large businesses. If even for a moment at some time you may decide to cut down on the number of hours of the curfew, and you bring it down, let us say 12.00 a.m. to 5.00 a.m., businesses are still going to be affected because definitely it is still not business as usual in Trinidad and Tobago.

The point about it is, when you have a state of emergency it affects the mood of the people, there is a state of uneasiness, there is a state of flux and people are just not spending like before. Even if there is a curfew at nine o'clock, at four o'clock and five o'clock people are rushing home, very few people are thinking about going out and being entertained. That is the effect of a state of emergency. Therefore, any suggestion that you would appease the business persons by reducing the hours will produce no great results because people are still going to be in a mood and there is still going to be that atmosphere of uneasiness and that, whichever way you look at it, will affect business.

So, I can see no increased spending activity. I think it is going to be quite a bit of a dull Christmas for business, and I have said I would advise any business person now, do not order any great stock for Christmas because you are going to be stuck with it. You might as well rent the Government your warehouse space.

The economy in the last 15 months since this Government was in office has been stagnant. They have done nothing, they have spent 15 months [*Desk thumping*] and what have they been doing, a so-called right-sizing of the government, which was absolutely not necessary. The economy has been stagnant and now with the state of emergency, it has come to a grinding halt, and this falls directly at the feet of this Government. That is where it is.

Tourism, Mr. Speaker, although it is a small contributor to the GDP of this country, the fact about it is tourism is affected and tourism will be affected. No-one is going to come here based on the travel advisories that are out there. The Member for Diego Martin North/East read into the record this morning the travel advisories from Canada, from Taiwan and Italy and, Mr. Speaker, they should take the time to examime those from the UK as well and those from the US.

Someone on that side wanted to make the point that the travel advisories have been there since the PNM was in office, and I want to say to them, to those on the other side that if this Government had a crime plan and if they were able to live up to the expectations of the mandate which they gave to the people of Trinidad and Tobago that they would solve crime in a matter of three months or so, then certainly those negative travel advisories would have been lifted by now, and that is not so. Again, Mr. Speaker, this Government has no crime plan, the Government has acted impulsively in instituting the state of emergency and they are doing the same thing in extending the state of emergency.

Another thing I would have expected in speaking to the economy, I would have expected from the Member for Chaguanas East and the Member for Tunapuna some sort of analysis of the cost of the last two weeks on this country, and we still have not got that. They should at least have attempted to quantify the loss and bring to this nation what the loss is of having this charade called a state of emergency, and the loss as well to the business people should be quantified. Those are the kinds of things that I would want to hear the Minister of Finance in particular address and come to the country with.

Minister of Trade and Industry, just in case you are not too concerned about the manufacturers and the hotels, you just read the cover story by Curtis Rampersad in the newspaper of August 31, 2011 and it is there for you to see—manufacturers, hotels losing money, losing millions. They have been losing millions.

Again, I have said, looking now at Point Fortin just a bit, I am concerned—not that I want the curfew implemented, I do not want Point Fortin to be noted as a hot spot, but I have to say that I am extremely surprised, even on the extension of the state of emergency, that the Minister of National Security has not considered the question of Icacos and Cedros, Mr. Speaker. [*Interruption*] No, I do not want it but I am expecting the Government and the Minister of National Security to act responsibly. It is well known that—no, I am not contradicting myself.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known and well established that significant arms and ammunition and drugs, including marijuana and cocaine, come through the jagged coastlines of the south-western peninsula. And if this Government is serious they would certainly not be turning a blind eye to that. Equally, it is well known that marijuana is grown in areas like Biche and Moruga and yet still even on review the Government has not seen it fit to address these areas and I have to ask, Mr.

Speaker, I have to put the question then: why is the Government turning a blind eye to specific areas and does Government really want to leave these secret underground economies going in these areas?

**4.30 p.m**.

Maybe they do not want to do anything else to the people there at all, they are friends and family, I do not know, but they certainly do not want to look for alternative forms of improving the economy in those areas and, therefore, they have decided to turn a blind eye.

No doubt, Mr. Speaker, the actions of the Member for Point Fortin would have been partially responsible for this extension as well, and even the imposition, because quite honestly I feel that the state of emergency was put there to keep people like—keep the protestors of Tamana and Point Fortin at bay. [*Desk thumping*] Also, of course, the protest action by the unions, and, of course, there was the threat of the national strike. So, no doubt there was a real motive. There was an attempt by the Government to muzzle all of these groups. I just want to remind them that this is precisely how 1970 and 1990 started.

This is really how the 1970 uprising started, because it is as a result of disaffected persons rebelling and the rest is history. And 1990 as well, that is how the coup started again, it was because of social inequalities, and again, the rest is history. We certainly do not want history to be made a third time, and this Government, instead of continuing the extension, imposing that on the people again, should really seek to do some introspection as to why the people of Trinidad and Tobago are reacting the way in which they are doing it, why there are these significant rumblings as well on the ground, and clearly, this Government is insensitive and they have not been treating with the level of domestic turmoil.

**Mr. Warner:** I thank you.

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** No. As I said I was skirting through the domestic issues and I want to stop to look at the effect internationally.

**Miss Hospedales:** Yes, talk to—[*Inaudible*] [*Desk thumping*]

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** Mr. Speaker, this morning the Member for Diego Martin North/East—

**Mr. Sharma:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** Listen and learn something, Member for Fyzabad, you never have anything to contribute. [*Desk thumping*] [*Laughter*] This morning the Member for Diego Martin North/East spent a little time—and as a former Minister of Foreign Affairs I feel obligated to look at it, especially because of the seriousness of the implications of international law as it relates to this state of emergency. I need to look again at the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which Trinidad and Tobago is a state party to. It is a Covenant which Trinidad and Tobago has signed. It is a Covenant which has serious implications for human rights.

It is that we are signatory to and therefore we are bound by that Covenant, and it is a little surprising that the Member for Tabaquite came after the Member for Diego Martin North/East and chose, for some reason, not to address or defend the accusations that were made considering this aspect of the debate on international law. He chose to ignore it and I wonder why. Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, this country has an obligation to scrupulously observe these standards, and that is an obligation that is totally independent of whatever, the provisions are there in our domestic law. So regardless of what our domestic law says, we have an obligation as a signatory to obey what is in the International Convention, and therefore, very early I want to put on the table whether or not Trinidad and Tobago is in breach of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, we are a small state and small states quite naturally depend on these international laws to protect themselves and to prevent any sort of external attacks on the country's sovereignty and the rights of its nationals. But more than that external dimension of depending on these international laws, there is also an internal dimension as well in that there is a definite benefit to the individuals of this country as it relates to human rights. What I am saying is, that is yet another avenue that we can look to to defend and have protected our civil and political rights. So we have domestic laws which will protect our human rights, but there are also international laws that will protect our rights as well.

These international laws specifically lay down the norms that states are not allowed to deviate, are not allowed to depart from the laws—in particular, making reference to that Convention on Civil and Political Rights. The law is very specific that we are bound by it and it states, as well, the instances when we are permitted to depart from it, but those are very exceptional circumstances and for

very limited periods, and it states quite clearly that these limited circumstances must be proportionate to the problems at hand; the actual problems that the state is confronting.

In Trinidad we have always boasted that our domestic laws are more than adequate and, in fact, perhaps, exceed international law in dealing with these human rights issues, but I do not know if that boast can be repeated because I am really concerned as to whether or not we are in breach of this particular law.

Mr. Speaker, similar to the requirement of section 8 in our Constitution, in the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, there is a requirement to give notice and to inform the Parliament of the reasons of the declaration of the state of emergency and this is why we are here, even on a Saturday. So it is that Article 4 subsection (3) in that convention requires all state parties declaring a state of emergency to give notice, to inform all other state parties—and I could assure you that there are more than 100 state parties to that convention. There is a notice requirement that we are to inform, through the Secretary General of the United Nations, that—several things:

(a) That we have declared a state of emergency; that—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Ban Ki Moon is. I am going to call him now.

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** Yes, Ban Ki Moon is who you should have written to and I am quite certain that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has not done that.

**Miss Hospedales:** He does not know his job, you see.

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** Your envoy to the UN knows nothing about this, especially the last permanent representative whom you have appointed in Geneva.

Getting back to it, Mr. Speaker, the obligation is on the state to state that they have imposed a state of emergency, number one, to state the provisions from which it has derogated and the reasons for such derogation. The question is: has this Government fulfilled this obligation? And the answer is, no, inescapably, no, they have not done it. They have not done it! Here it is Trinidad and Tobago has run afoul already of the international community by not observing their obligations on their international law.

I know they would like to treat with this very lightly and say, "Well, why do we have to do it" and so, and they feel they could—I know them, do what they want and do what they wish, but the fact is that they are committed and that

international law exists for the protection of our rights, for the protection of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and we are demanding that the Government does what it has to do. I am disappointed that the Government has failed thus far.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go to Article 4—I know some of these people on the other side would have a difficulty in sitting through this. It is not the kind of conversation that they would usually have, and it is very important that we also highlight these perspectives for the general public and, therefore, I have a duty to do what I am doing, so they can sleep or retreat to the lounge, but the public is expecting this from us. This is another side to the state of emergency. Article 4, 1, paragraph one says, and permit me:

> "In time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation…"—which we cannot prove as yet, that is not part of it—"the States parties to the present Covenant may take measures derogating from their obligations"—and we spoke about that under the present covenant—"to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation"—and we were trying to weigh that and stretch 8(3), but we still cannot do it, anyway—"provided that such measures are not inconsistent with their other obligations under international law and do not involve"—this is the important part—"discrimination solely on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion and/or social origin."

That is my concern that there should be no discrimination whatsoever on all of those grounds, in particular, social origin. I really want to examine—I want to ask the Government to do some self-examination as to whether or not they have breached this very important obligation vis-á-vis the people of particular origin, social origin and so on.

Again, I want to look at the whole question of the scrap dealers which was spoken of by the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, of that situation where—I cannot say that the Government needed to go there, under the state of emergency, and attack—I have to use the word "attack" to deal with these scrap dealers. I would have expected the Government to be focusing on, as I said, the so-called criminals and the murderers and so on, but they are using the situation of the state of emergency to go after the scrap dealers and I am questioning the legitimacy of that. Because there are several instances of where they are offenders, and I look at all those persons who have been vending in particular areas for, let us say, 20, 30 years; some of those vendors are well known and we know that they have no legitimate right to be where they are, yet still they could be selling on the shoulders of the highways with impunity.

But I would like to find out whether—as well, Mr. Speaker, there are many persons who have constructed buildings without the necessary Government approvals and I can tell you that some of them are even renting those buildings to this very Government and I am saying that I do not know that there is a campaign on to use the state of emergency to suspend all of our rights to deal with all these offenders. I do not think that the Government would be going after every street vendor and every person who has erected a building without governmental authority, so, therefore, why are you using the occasion to deal with—

**Mr. Sharma:** What is your point?

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** The point exactly is that. Why are you using the occasion to deal with these scrap iron dealers? I want to say that it appears to me that your actions with regard to the scrap iron dealers have been discriminatory. [*Desk thumping*]

**4.45 p.m.**

They have been targeted by the Government when in fact they should be going after the money launderers as I said, the financiers, the big importers of guns and ammunition and so on, the importers of drugs. That is who they should have been going after. So I take issue again with these scrap dealers and I am saying that it runs afoul of international law, in particular this Covenant on Civil and Political Rights according to section 4 of that piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, I want now to—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you.

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** No, no, you have some more listening to do with regard to the international law. I just want you to know that Trinidad and Tobago, Member for Chaguanas West, is just not looking good in the international community and I am going to come to the point where I would say that you have contributed to it. You are driving me to that. I want to say that Trinidad and Tobago is just not looking good on the international community and I am concerned about that.

I want to go to Article 7 now, of that particular law. Article 7 precisely said:

> "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

The law—international law—designed to protect our citizens is very, very, very clear.

And I am not sure—again I feel comfortable and I am assured that the Government is running afoul of this legislation because reports are that persons—of up to maybe 21 or so; that is the figure I have seen—are being detained in one cell. And that, I mean, is meeting the test of cruelty. And inhuman or degrading treatment, I say, is very, very easy to meet when you consider 21 persons being put into one jail cell. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, when one considers as well that many of them are thrown into the back of a trailer—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made*: That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Miss M. McDonald*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will continue to educate the public and those who are interested. As I said, we were talking about the 21 persons who were hauled into a cell. And speaking of the figure 21, I know that Hon. Anil Roberts, the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara, is currently wearing a jersey No. 21 at the Oval and playing football, when in fact he should be sitting and experiencing and learning from and participating in this very historic debate. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Members:** Shame on them! Shame on them!

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** Here you are, all of you in hot pursuit, hot pursuit dealing with the lawbreakers and your Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara is playing football at the Oval.

Mr. Speaker, again I just want to continue and go to Article 28. I am soon going to be finished with this particular Covenant and I am going to be moving on to another.

Article 28 speaks to a human rights committee which is established by virtue of this covenant to deal with complaints or matters raised by other state parties on state parties relative to those who are breaking the law under this Covenant and it says that there shall be a human rights committee. So, therefore, these state parties will bring their reports on other state parties on these matters of human rights, and they would probably declare whether or not the state parties have been performing as expected. And what is required is a universal periodic review by each participating state, so that Trinidad and Tobago annually—or maybe every two years—would have to do a periodic review of its human rights issues.

Indeed I would inform the Member for Tabaquite that his office has done the periodic review very recently and they would have reported on all our human rights norms and so on in this country and it is that the members of this human rights committee will in fact be in Trinidad sometime in October to look at our human rights norms. Now, mind you, questions will surely be asked, because when this review was done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it would have been done before the imposition of the state of emergency, but now it is a horse of a different colour, so certainly questions will be asked.

I think the whole question of the validity of the state of emergency will be weighed and of course there will be some sort of discussion as to whether or not it is justified. My humble opinion is that this spike in crime, it will certainly not be acceptable and I think it is becoming more and more evident that this state of emergency was put in place so that the Government could really have a climate which it is in control of. And even to your international visitors who would be here, they would realize it was simply that the police were acting up, the unions were acting up, the constituencies and the citizens were acting up as well and this is just their way of retaining control.

I really do not know how the Government is going to be able to manipulate its statistics and justify that there was the need for a state of emergency or a public emergency that threatened the life of the nation. I just do not see how they will be able to do it. But you know generally the negative international publicity has just not done this country well and I think, really and truly, I want to endorse this statement that we have gone back many years.

Already Business Monitoring International, which is a leading international provider of country risk analysis, has published a negative report on Trinidad and Tobago and I want to look at an article in the newspaper by Curtis Rampersad on that. They have said—this is the view of Business Monitoring International—that they believe that there is a risk of a sustained period of violence similar to that seen in Mexico following President Felipe Calderón's crackdown on cartel activities. I think this is the real reason why they have probably but this state of emergency extension in.

The Business Monitor has said that the state of emergency could also hurt how investors look at Trinidad and Tobago.

> "In our view the decision to impose a state of emergency is likely to harm investor perceptions of the nation. The economy's non-energy sector continues to suffer."

And they go on and on about it. But the whole question is that one of the big casualties of—the whole point about it is, one of the big casualties of this state of emergency is confidence. Foreign investors are just not likely to come to Trinidad and Tobago.

In fact, since the Government has been in office some 15 months now, not one new investor has come to Trinidad and Tobago and I can safely predict that in fiscal 2012, we will have no new investors coming in to Trinidad and Tobago, particularly on account of the state of emergency and this extension, which will only make matters worse. I know that the Minister of Energy—current Minister of Energy—had announced a bid round for September for deep-water exploration and I just want to advise that he should really hold on this one because it is very, very doubtful that anybody will ever put in even a bid to get involved with Trinidad and Tobago at this time. I want to say that even if investors are considering at all, and the Government manages to attract any investors, it means that you would have had to excessively sweeten the pot per se to attract these investors and that too would be at a serious cost to the State.

So generally the big casualty out of all of this is that Trinidad and Tobago would see no foreign investors in Trinidad and Tobago. I hope none of the existing investors in fact leave. We know for a fact that in Trinidad and Tobago the petroleum sector is responsible for 42 per cent of the contribution to this country's GDP—42 per cent—and the success of the energy sector is predicated on foreign direct investment. We have BHP Billiton, we have BPTT, Repsol, we have—I mean, Trinidad and Tobago can boast of all of these ammonia, methanol and Urea plants and so on, and all of those are on account of foreign direct investment. Under the PNM, they found that Trinidad and Tobago was an attractive place to do business and they have been here for a number of years and they have stayed. The point about it is that this Government simply will not be able to sustain it. We cannot see any new investors coming in here.

I do not know, but the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communications is going to have a rather difficult task of really upholding the foreign policy of Trinidad and Tobago in terms of how Trinidad and Tobago has been seen by the international community and how Trinidad and Tobago wants to be seen based on the action of this Government. The fact that you know, Mr. Speaker, and the public knows how committed the PNM has been to good governance, transparent management and so on, and that we have been a principal member of the global community pursuing very friendly relations with all countries and peoples and we are an effective regional leader who has respect for the law—I cannot say the same from the other side.

And we also have respect for the non-use of force—very important. The dignity and the fundamental human rights of all of our people, that is important to us. We are aware of our humanitarian responsibilities and that principled humanitarian leadership has just not been seen. That impacts on Trinidad and Tobago and I know that the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communications would have a hard time making sure that this perspective is kept in place. Why he has that difficulty is because certainly the Prime Minister seems not too worried about the country's international image. And in fact there is a newspaper article, and I heard her on television as well, saying that she is not worried at this time about the country's international image and what is concerning her more is the images of mothers crying—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Rambachan:** Can you give way?

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** And I want to say that mothers are crying because all of their sons are in jail, and she is concerned about orphaned children and yes in a sense we have a lot of orphaned children out there because their fathers are in jail. Once more we have the Prime Minister portraying that very compassionate side of her.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Can you give way for a question? Can you give way for a question, please?

**5.00 p.m.**

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** No, let me finish what I am doing. Once more we have seen that compassionate side of the Prime Minister, but I am convinced that it is more likely to be a sort of political compassion, really, and I doubt the sincerity of it. It is a statement that I would not have expected, having regard to Trinidad and Tobago's reliance on the international community and foreign direct investment. I found that statement to be nightmarish and I want the hon. Member for Siparia to be fully aware that the success or failure of this country lies on her back and at her feet and, therefore, she has to be careful about these kinds of statements about our international image.

**Dr. Rambachan:** On a point of information.

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** Go ahead. One minute.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Thank you, Member for Point Fortin. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Member is aware that Trinidad and Tobago has been ranked by the *Financial Times* of Britain among the 10 top Caribbean and Central American countries of the future, and that was done on August 31 after the state of

emergency, and the rankings, in fact, have been created by the foreign direct investment intelligence division of the *Financial Times* of Britain. That is a benchmark of the investment attractiveness of countries and cities in more than 55 sectors for 350 locations around the world.

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** He has had his time, and this is not the occasion for the Member for Tabaquite to make a statement. If he had sought clarification, I could understand that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Once you give way you must allow the Member to complete his statement. Okay? Continue.

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:** I stand corrected, Mr. Speaker. But, generally, the message that has been sent is one of instability by imposing this state of emergency. In the case of Jamaica, you would realize that the state of emergency was truly a limited one on a particular area to deal with a particular issue. In the case of St. Lucia, yes, they have been occasioned, as well, by rising crime and murders, and what did they do? They considered the state of emergency, and for the information of the Minister of Trade and Industry and Member for Chaguanas East, St. Lucia took a decision that they would deal with crime with crime-fighting measures and they did not institute a state of emergency and, in fact, their murder rate has gone down.

As I said, I am at pains to see where this Government is going with this and they have some serious questions to answer. Whilst I am on my feet, I want to say that in addition to the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara being at the Oval, I now understand that the Member for Naparima and the Member for Arima can be seen on TV6 at this time on CTV at the Best Village Competition as well, when they should be here for this debate.

As I said, our international image is affected and, therefore, the possibility of any foreign direct investors coming in. I am still concerned at this time for the replacement project for the Alutrint Smelter Plant. I do not ever expect to get this replacement project. I am still concerned about Trinmar finding a joint venture partner. I do not ever expect that the Government would be able to provide one for us as well.

So there we are, in terms of our international image, being tarnished by this Government. I want to look just for a moment at the "then" and the "now" and to just examine where we were in 2009 when we were exposed on the BBC and the CNN. I mean to say, our country was exposed in a very favourable light, in a most positive way, a place to visit; a place to do business, and this was the occasion of

the 5th Summit of the Americas and the Commonwealth Heads of Government. For the 5th Summit of the Americas I will have you know that all 34 Heads visited this country and there was no question or no security concern by any of them. As a matter of fact, the Queen also visited and another 30-odd Heads also visited, along with other international officials, and so on, for the Commonwealth Heads of Government and, of course, there was no occasion to question security by them or by us as well.

So these are the two occasions where we were highlighted in the international press, and here we are, two years later. Yes, I can tell you that there has been a reflection of this Government in the international press on three occasions: one, when the Prime Minister was portrayed in the *Glamour* magazine as one of the 12 fashionable women leaders; two, when the Member for Chaguanas West was highlighted, and we know why, because of the well-known FIFA allegations. So that is the second occasion when this Government was highlighted. Of course, we saw recently on CNN:

"Crime-infested Trinidad and Tobago—state of emergency introduced."

Those are the kinds of negative circumstances when this country was exposed under this Government, compared with the PNM regime when Trinidad and Tobago was shown as a place to visit and a place to do business.

I really wonder what the Prime Minister of this country is going to say to those heads of state at the Commonwealth meeting in October/November this year to take place in Australia. Here it is, we took over the chair of the Commonwealth in 2009 when Trinidad and Tobago, as I said, was well showcased and we had so many visitors to this country, and so on, and here it is, now we are handing over the chair of the Commonwealth but it is against an entirely different background, against a state of emergency, against a country with poor governance, against a government which has dismally performed.

There is a dismal performance of the leadership of this country. This is a nation in crisis. Just compare the circumstances when we took over the chair and the circumstances when we, in fact, were handing over the chair of the Commonwealth. This is a Government that promised to deliver a crime-free Trinidad and Tobago within three months, and I have to say that this is trickery of the highest order for the population.

As a matter of fact, as I begin to close, this is a Government which really has acted impulsively from the time it entered office and this is the reason we are where we are today. They have terminated SAUTT; dismantled the SIA; they have

terminated the appointments of several military heads; they have terminated the use of the airship; the contract for the OPVs; they have terminated the employment—against what we had said—of several persons under the URP and under CEPEP; the Alutrint contract was terminated as well.

This Government has, and it continues to miss-carry this economy. It was stagnant. Now they have pulled the plug on the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, on businesses and on manufacturers. I would say this Government is a government of abortionists. It has just aborted everything that it found working well. This Government is in a calamity.

How much time do I have, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** You have nine minutes.

**Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was saying that it is my considered opinion that this Government is a calamity and I am sure there are many others who share that view as well.

There is something that troubles me a bit. I am sure that if we are altering the curfew that the Commissioner of Police would be required to sign a new order, and that is fine. But in the meantime, I remain unconvinced—and I raise it because I am sure that there are members of the public who are unconvinced as well—that the order is, in fact, a valid one. You know, there was the bungling at the beginning and what happened eventually was that the Police Service Commission actually caused the retroactive appointment of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Stephen Williams. I have no problem with that. They have done that and I recognize and they have made his appointment retroactive.

I still have a difficulty with the fact of the order done by him. The retroactive nature of his employment is legal, I accept, but I still have some concerns and I hope that the legal luminaries would have something to say and to clear up whether or not the actual order, despite the correction made, is, in fact, legal and valid, because what I want to do is to avoid several attorneys actually bringing such defence issues as to whether or not the order is good on behalf of the criminals, as a matter of fact.

So I am concerned about that. Even if all that it takes is some sort of validation—I am not an attorney, but I believe that you can, in fact, validate the unlawful act and I really think that the Attorney General should look seriously at whether that can be done, because in the absence of such validation we can have some serious actions in public law against the Government. So I just add that word of caution.

Again, let me end on the note, perhaps, by expressing my disappointment that the Government seems to think that the big security issue in Trinidad and Tobago, the big issue of criminality, seems to have emanated with the PNM. They keep talking about security over the last eight years. Again, they are completely ignorant; they are showing their ignorance once again, that this whole question of drug trafficking has been around since the 1980s and even before; the question of money laundering, drug trafficking and so on.

We have had particular problems with returning felons from the US initially and subsequently from the UK as well, and from other jurisdictions. All of that, too, has exacerbated the whole problem of criminality in Trinidad and Tobago. But they certainly do not take the time to explain that this thing has been going on since the 1980s and that it affects not only Trinidad and Tobago, but certainly the Bahamas, Jamaica, Belize and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The point about it is, we are a trans-shipment point for drugs emanating from South America, and so on, to Europe and the US.

I would rather that they speak with some amount of intelligence instead of, again, assigning political blame to the PNM for the scourge of drug trafficking which has been around for a long period of time and which, again, is largely because of our geographic position and, of course, the fact that, apart from being a major trans-shipment route, we know that there is a problem of marijuana growth in some countries neighbouring us as well.

So, again, we had been doing much about it. There has been tremendous cooperation with Latin America; tremendous cooperation with the US; there have been a number of cooperative agreements that have been signed in the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. I do not want to talk about the shiprider agreement as well, but also the extradition treaty and so on. So much has been done. We have been working well. The business of security was added as a fourth pillar in Caricom and there are a number of agencies, especially post-cricket World Cup 2007; a number of security agencies that have been implemented within Caricom and the matter was being addressed wholesomely by Caricom, but with Trinidad and Tobago taking a lead.

We have acted very responsibly. We have tried many things. Admittedly, some things have failed, but we have tried and tried. What has happened with this Government is that they came in, again fooling the public on an element of trickery, telling the public that in three months crime would be down; there would be no crime in Trinidad and Tobago.

**5.15p.m.**

What has happened is that there was no plan, they have not been able to deal with crime and the end result is I suppose—and being concerned about where the statistics will probably take them by the end of the year and that they would come close to being where the figure was for last year. They have willy-nilly and quite insensitively and quite impulsively imposed a state of emergency upon the people of Trinidad and Tobago and they have foisted this on us. What has happened today they have now used their simply majority and they have foisted on the public, on the citizenry of this great nation, another three months and knowing as well they will have no successes. I expect another three months then.

So with that I want to end my contribution, and I hope I have been able to educate on the implications internationally, in particular, of the actions taken by this Government on this statement of emergency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Tobago Development (Hon. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to join the debate in this august House. I listened to the Member for Point Fortin and every time I listen to her I am amazed. As you know I am a teacher of voice and she has such a beautiful voice and she is so articulate in her diction and the expressions on her mouth. She does all the right things for singing well but it is the content of her debate that I do not quite understand. It baffles me where she is coming from and where she is going. I find her attention to the debate and the matter at hand is so alarmist. She has such an alarmist attitude for a former foreign affairs minister. And then the identical recording of 14 months ago seems to appear every time not to cast any aspersions on the character of the person but just to talk about the content of the debate.

What was the human rights record of Trinidad and Tobago when Glenn Ashby was hanged while the Privy Council was deliberating? The words are designed, I think, to drive fear into the nationals of Trinidad and Tobago that is why I call them alarmist.

However, on the contrary, the lack of attention to the upsurge of criminal activity by the former regime is what has driven fear into the hearts of locals of Trinidad and Tobago. We see our people, especially in Trinidad, locked down behind wrought iron, and living a life of fear. Everybody is looking over their shoulder. You are driving up to your gate and you looking over your shoulder, because everyone is afraid of the next person.

But there is a time for everything under the sun, and Ecclesiastes will tell you there is a time to love and a time to hate, a time to build up and a time to tear down, a time for everything under the sun. I want to advise or I want to suggest that in Trinidad and Tobago this is a time for pause, this is a time for us to stop and take stock of what is happening here, consider where we have reached and ponder on our movement forward.

In Trinidad and Tobago, let us consider to what do we aspire and what have we achieved. And as calypsonian, Funny sang years ago, 25 years have gone, how you feel? But now 49 years have gone, how we feel? And the words of the calypso give you all. Do you feel you have reneged? How do you feel? I want to ask you on the other side 49 years have gone, 37 of which you were in power, how do you feel? Do you feel that you have nurtured in our people the kind of emotional intelligence and social responsibility that a country such as this should be answering to?

It really puzzles me when I come here and I hear learned men and women stand in this honorable Chamber—and I think that we are all learned men and women—and argue that what is bad is good, and what is good is bad, and what is wrong is right, and what is right is wrong, as if we are in some high school debate and as if we are not actually discussing lives of human beings and the permanent state of death, as if we are not reading the dailies and seeing that newspapers were only sold because the front pages had criminal activity on them, and today the newspapers are selling. Although we are in a state of emergency and there is no crime on the front page, the newspapers are selling.

That is to tell us that we can have good news, but we are hearing the people on the other side expounding that the good news that we are having on the newspapers these days since the August 21 is bad news. They are saying that it is bad news, and I imagine that the young, impressionable mind must grapple with these inconsistencies. The young, impressionable mind must wonder: which side do I support? Which side do I understand? Which side do I live? How do I organize my life to suit the different ideas that are coming at me, the different paradigms that I must live by?

How does the man on the street respond when the information is so skewed? Will the persons of criminal intent applaud the arguments of the Opposition? Do they think they should be allowed to continue to cavort and to kill? How many more must die? How many people must die before we decide that we have to come to pause and we have to stop and we have to prevent what I have said in this House before is an overwhelming display of black on black violence?

How many more people must die before we decide there is need for a state of emergency? And if anybody wants to enter into the issue of race, the conversation of race, remember that Tobago which I represent here is more than 95 per cent African origin. And if you look at the picture on the paper that the Member for Chaguanas West held up, you would see that Tobago is not in the picture at all.

Therefore, if somebody was trying to target African people to lock up, I would inform them that there are so many people in Tobago who are of African origin that if you are just looking for Africans—we are in the People's Partnership looking to rid our society of deviants of any colour, race, creed or class, and I would urge you on the other side. I would urge you—[*Interruption*]—yes I was. I was there, I was present, I was consulted, yes. [*Interruption*]

Who are you talking about? I was there and I was consulted, I am part of the Cabinet, and I was at the meeting and did advise that Tobago did not have the hot spots that you have here that require that level of lockdown. [*Interruption*] Laventille West knows I am telling the truth. Laventille West, I was there. Mr. Speaker, may I tell Laventille West, through you, that I was there at the meeting, and that Tobago is always consulted.

The arguments on the other side give testimony to the soft governance of the People's National Movement. They must have argued long and hard, they must have debated among themselves and decided. "Let us leave the criminals alone, lest we inconvenience anyone in this lovely twin State." Therefore, they see the state of emergency as an inconvenience. They see that people's human rights have been suspended. Well, we on this side say that people's human rights are being protected. [*Desk thumping*] We are protecting human rights, and we go back to section 8 of the Constitution. We are talking about section 8(c):

> "that action has been taken" where…"on so extensive a scale"…something is happening "…as to be likely to endanger the public safety...

But even as we ponder on section 8(c), let us go back to section 4(a):

> "the right of the individual to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property and the right not to be deprived thereof except by the process of law;"

The People's Partnership is a Government of action, a Government that brings dramatic social change to this beautiful twin-island Republic, a Government that will establish excellent traditional values and bring people back to a place where they can live comfortably and safely in their homes, where they have the right to security and the right to enjoy property. I want to challenge the Member for Diego

Martin North/East to tell me which flight from Italy was cancelled, which chartered flight from Italy was cancelled. What was the flight number? There is absolutely no truth in that statement and I could say that without fear. I want it to be put into *Hansard* of course, that there is absolutely no chartered flight from Italy that has been cancelled. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Peters:** Must be Italy in Laventille.

**Mr. Karim:** Arrant nonsense.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Maybe Egypt down in Chaguanas.

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** The quotation from the hon. Minister, the Member for Chaguanas East, from the paper he read just a part of it, and I am telling you because I intended to read the whole of it, but I will read the parts that he left out.

"Curfew free Tobago wooing visitors.

> The Tobago Hotel and Tourism Association stressed yesterday that Tobago is open for business as usual despite the State of Emergency which is currently in effect for Trinidad and Tobago. 'The Association wants to reconfirm that there is no curfew in Tobago, unlike certain areas in its twin sister island of Trinidad. Businesses here are continuing to operate as normal, welcoming in visitors from around the world, and it is expected to stay that way.'
>
> All international flights to and from Tobago have maintained their schedules. The inter-island flights between Trinidad and Tobago are also continuing as normal."

As a matter of fact, we have increased flights between Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] We have increased sailings between Trinidad and Tobago.

**Dr. Rambachan:** You all are strangers to the truth.

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** We have increased international flights between Trinidad and Tobago and foreign destinations. Nick Hardwicke, the Association's President, said:

> "'We support the Government and law enforcement agencies who are doing all they can to reduce crime. We continue to monitor the situation daily and are in regular contact with all stakeholders.'"

Tobago is open for business as usual. And I urge our Members on the other side to spend a vacation in Tobago. There is no curfew; now is a good time to go. You can spend the entire night on the beach, look at the warm sunset and have a good holiday.

**5.30 p.m.**

The impact on tourism in Tobago, since the state of emergency—say even before or just before—domestic tourism has seen a remarkable increase. The sailings on the T&T Express were adjusted—because of the curfew—to leave Trinidad at 8.30 instead of 6.30 in the morning, and to leave Tobago at 4.00 p.m. instead of 5.00 p.m. so that people could find their way home. Every day, every sailing is chock-full. Over my lunch break some people on the other side were telling me that the ferries are running empty. This is so far from the truth.

Mr. Speaker, I travelled in the ferry on Friday morning to get here, "ram-cram", chock-full. [*Interruption*]

**Dr. Browne:** They travel to see you.

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** I travel on the ferry all the time, so there is no need asking me whether somebody had to tell me. We are really enjoying quite a beautiful time. You see, the impact of crime in Trinidad and Tobago has sullied tourism in Tobago. So now that a state of emergency is in effect and Trinidad is running an almost crime free society for the last week and a half, the international advisories are saying that we are doing something about crime—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Browne:** Madness!

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:**—that we are finally doing something positive, strong and direct. Therefore, people are coming. We have an advisory out of Italy and we have an advisory out of the United Kingdom—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Browne:** Read it.

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:**—very recently. But the advisory out of Italy has come to people from Italy who live in Tobago, who are advising their people at home in Italy that there is no problem. Tobago is clean, green, safe and serene. [*Desk thumping*] So just to debunk that myth about Tobago having a hard time, Tobago is having a better time. Mr. Orville London, the Chief Secretary, himself, has said that tourism is up 10 per cent. [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** Good!

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** [*Inaudible*]

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** Oh yes, always. Tourism is up 10 per cent and this is something that I want to go through in detail for you. Let me just give some statistics from the Tourism Development Company and from the Central Statistical Office. It is interesting that it is the Member for Diego Martin

North/East who talked about Tobago and not the Member for Diego Martin West. The Member for Diego Martin West did not mention Tobago at all. The Member for Diego Martin North/East has no idea of what is happening in Tobago.

In 2004 tourist arrivals were 78, 729;

In 2005, 86, 467;

In 2006, 83, 460.

Mr. Speaker, from 2005 to 2006 I myself worked at the Division of Tourism in Tobago as a communication specialist, and I am very happy to report these figures. However, I left in 2006. Listen to this:

In 2007, 63, 000—that is more than 20, 000 less visitors;

In 2008, 37, 781;

In 2009, 31, 452;

In 2010, 30, 000.

So because of the global downturn and because of the poor management of the tourism production in Tobago, tourism went down. But as Mr. London says, tourism is coming up again now that the People's Partnership Government is in charge. We have a Tourism Standing Committee that is making sure that that happens, along with the national security body and all of the stakeholders.

So, again, I applaud the People's Partnership Government for bringing tourism back out of its doldrums in Tobago; for addressing crime in the positive way that it has done; and for the initiatives that are being put in Tobago through the Ministry of Trade and Industry, bringing hoteliers, giving a guarantee to bring hoteliers, tourism plans and products up to international standards once more.

Let me go on to crime in Tobago. There was a time when we were having some problems with criminal activity, especially crimes against tourists, but we could thank now ACP Allan Crooks—just recently retired—and at present ACP Edwards and the team of police officers who have held out and have effected a huge reduction in crime in Tobago; an extremely dramatic turnaround. I have the statistics for you. Murders in Tobago:

In 2008, six murders—none solved;

In 2009, 15 murders—10 solved;

In 2010, 10 murders—7 solved;

January to August 2011—2 murders. However, none have been solved to date.

I am trying to inform this House, especially the Member for Arouca/Maloney, that just one murder in Tobago is cause for alarm. Therefore, six murders in Tobago in 2008 were distressing for us. None of these murders committed in 2008 have been solved so far. Can you imagine the islandwide anxiety that this murder rate in 2008 has caused? But if 2008 and 2009 were disastrous, the number of murders moved from six to 15. This was a 150 per cent increase, but it is sobering to state that 10 of the murders were solved. In 2010 there was a significant drop in the number of the murders from 15 to 10, a drop of 33 per cent and significantly there was a change in government. Although the number of murders fell, the 10 murders in 2010 in Tobago were too many. Seven were solved. In 2010, the Government changed, the policing initiative changed—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Rowley:** We were classmates.

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** "Ah!" I was your classmate? [*Interruption*] Yes, Mr. Speaker, that was my classmate. He is just sitting on the wrong side of the House. From January 2011 to August 2011 there have been only two murders in Tobago. He is out of touch with Tobago. He does not remember. He comes for jazz. ACP Edwards said that the homicide bureau is working assiduously to have their murders solved. Member for Diego Martin West, let us not talk about school.

Robberies and other serious crimes. 2008, 99—36 solved; 2009, 106—33 solved; 2010, 104—31 solved; January to August 2011, 38 murders—10 solved; from 104 in 2010 to 38 so far in 2011. To date, robberies have fallen significantly from a high of 106 in 2009 to 38 at the end of August 2011.

Crimes against tourists—breakins and larceny:

In 2008, 95 crimes—8 solved;

In 2009, 54 crimes—26 solved;

In 2010, 54 crimes—21 solved;

January to August 2011, 15 crimes—6 solved.

Member for Diego Martin West, there is a trend.

Narcotics, cocaine-related offences:

In 2008, 45 crimes—all solved;

In 2009, 51 crimes—all solved;

In 2010, 34 crimes—all solved;

January to August 2011, 16 crimes—all solved.

Narcotics, marijuana-related offences:

In 2008, 24—all solved;

In 2009, 148—all solved;

In 2010, 173—all solved;

January to August 2011, 80—all solved.

That is just Tobago; just an island, not a country.

Narcotics, marijuana for trafficking:

In 2009, 170, 733 grams seized;

In 2010, 82, 381 grams seized.

This information is current information gathered from ACP Edwards and WPC Pollard, whom I thank very sincerely for their work in Tobago and for the statistics that they are returning.

Narcotics, cocaine for trafficking:

January to August 2011, 3, 011 grams seized from the total of l70, 733 grams seized in 2009, to 3, 011 grams seized in 2011 in the short time that has gone by.

Let me add here that, acting on intelligence, a vessel was seized with four men from whom a quantity of cocaine with a street value of $3.2 million was confiscated, but I want to come back to our Minister of National Security.

Our Minister of National Security, I think, is the best Minister of National Security that this Government has seen in the past 10 years. [*Desk thumping*] It is because of his actions that we are seeing a reduction in crime in this country. It is because of this dramatic move to a state of emergency that Trinidad and Tobago has become on the international market, a place that is considered to be serious about crime. Join me also as I applaud the actions of the hon. Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, [*Desk thumping*] who had the fortitude—I do not want to say the kind of fortitude that people talk about; maybe ovarian fortitude. [*Interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Intestinal fortitude. The guts—

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:**—the intestinal fortitude, the wisdom to endorse the call for a state of emergency. Join me as I thank God for entrusting the governance of Trinidad and Tobago to the People's Partnership Government. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I do not know where we would have gone had we not changed governments. Had Mister Former Prime Minister not in his wisdom called for a snap election, understanding full well that he could no longer continue with the team that he was trying to govern this country with, that God asked him to disband that team so that he could put in a fresh team, a team with ideas, a team with resilience, the People's Partnership Government, so that the people of this country could be delivered from the traps of hades.

Mr. Speaker, women are happy in their homes. The men are at home, children are happy in their homes, the parents are at home.

**Hon. Member:** Wives are happy.

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** Well I said women, but let me say wives. Wives are happy in their homes, the men are at home. Ah, there is my leader. My leader is happy.

Mr. Speaker, people have begun to understand again how to entertain themselves at home. People have begun to read again. There is a calm over Trinidad and Tobago that was not there very recently. Everybody is free now to have eight hours' sleep in the night.

**Dr. Rowley:** What am I hearing?

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** The social, emotional fabric is improving.

**5.45 p.m.**

T and T is rated number one among Caribbean countries of the future. The *Financial Times* of Britain has ranked Trinidad and Tobago among the top 10 Caribbean and Central American countries of the future, with Costa Rica rated at number one; Dominican Republic at number two and Trinidad and Tobago at number three. Rankings have been created by the Foreign Direct Investment Intelligence Division of the *Financial Times* of Britain as a benchmark of the investment attractiveness of countries and cities in more than 55 sectors for 350 locations in the world.

I dare say that it is because we have put a serious handle on crime that foreign investors are again showing interest in returning to Tobago and Trinidad to ply their trade here; a country that is stable; a country that is effecting positive change; a country that has the guts to remove the scourge of crime and to move forward as a modern society rivalling other modern societies that understand that it is discipline that moves a country forward.

Mr. Speaker, while our state of emergency is in effect, the People's Partnership Government has introduced many initiatives that will bring positive effects on our country. The Minister of Justice will, after some time, unfold some initiatives that will definitely help us in our efforts to bring our young people back to where they should be.

He will talk about electronic monitoring of repeat offenders. He will talk about individualized electronic monitoring of deviants in our society because this subculture that has grown under our noses must be watched. I encourage our young people, if you must be deviant—and I say it everywhere—exercise positive deviance. Let your deviance be for the benefit of society; benefit of yourself. Deviate from the behavior of your peers who want to go astray and engage in positive upbuilding initiatives.

The Minister of Sport will unravel his sporting initiatives. There are social cultural interventions coming. We have job creation, housing, education projects, rehabilitation projects; projects that will build the emotional intelligence and the social responsibility; build our fabric.

We, at this time, listen to the music of our youth, we look at the dress of our youth and sometimes as adults we tend to criticize them. When you listen to the music of the young people, you feel in the music the need for attention—positive attention. You would see the lament of the dirge of the monotony of the cycles in which many of them have found themselves. You understand, you hear that driving rhythm and the monotone on the scale, one note that tells you that there is some strangulation here and that there is need for release.

And even as I support the state of emergency fully, I must share how the People's Partnership Government is full of compassion for the state in which we have found ourselves, and how we are doing everything that we can to ensure that the youth are positively nurtured and put on the right track. So even in the event that you are deviant and you are facing incarceration, inside of that, we have built in all of the education and psychology and all of the things that will bring you out of that state of living, bring you out of that state of despair and into a state of positive, social responsibility where you can be an asset to your country and not a liability.

So, as I hear my colleague from Point Fortin talking about our Prime Minister and talking about the fact that the Prime Minister has no compassion, I think it is the only person I have heard in the whole of Trinidad and Tobago make a statement such as that. From the very first day of the swearing in of our Prime

Minister, we have seen the compassion that she has in her heart for the people of Trinidad and Tobago, for the children of Trinidad and Tobago, for the adults of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] There could be nobody anywhere in the whole wide world who is looking at our Prime Minister who could see a person with no compassion for the human being.

As head of the Commonwealth, you can see her ideas, her grasp, her reach, spreading across the Commonwealth. You can see where other nations are picking up her initiatives of milk for children, of food for the needy, of education for all. If our Prime Minister endorses a state of emergency and calls for a state of emergency in Trinidad and Tobago, I think that it is a compassionate move. It could never be seen as a move to harm or to hurt, or to disenfranchise or to suspend human rights. It must be seen as a move to rid this country of the intolerable level of criminal activity and to bring us to a place where we can stand proud and tall.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you sincerely for the opportunity to add a few words to the debate, and to state that as a member of the People's Partnership Government and as a representative of the people of Tobago, I do endorse the three-month extension wholeheartedly. I think it is a time during which we can reflect, a time during which we can take hold of our criminal element, a time in which we can organize the security measures that will prevent the revolving door—we have people held for 58 offences. This is the time when we must stop and take stock and bring our nation back to a place where God may bless us all.

A nation that is built on crime will not stand. A nation that is built on crime will degenerate into an abyss where we would not want to find ourselves. Mr. Speaker, thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey** (*La Brea*)**:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Forty-nine years have gone: how do you feel? Well, I want to ask another question. Fifteen months have gone: how do you feel? [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, it is a sense of great betrayal of those catchy promises that were made on the campaign trail by the UNC-led People's Partnership—they promised new politics, the utopia. What we saw, Mr. Speaker, was mischief, misinformation, misstep, miscalculation, misbehavior and mistrust.

Mr. Speaker, from the Member for Tobago East, she mentions that they were informed about the state of emergency. Well, I have an article here written by Elizabeth Williams of the Tobago Bureau, August 30, and it says:

> "The Tobago Organization of the People, one of the five pillars of the People's Partnership, was also not aware that a State of Emergency was called by UNC leader and Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

> Jack said, despite his party not having prior knowledge of the announcement made by the Prime Minister…"

and the Minister of National Security.

> "The MSJ, another arm of the People's Partnership, said they were not consulted on the…"

emergency that was called. I rest my case with that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are told about the question of discipline. Discipline moves a country forward. And I say yes, that is true, but why MILAT/MYPART was removed from the Ministry of National Security and sent to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, when in fact, under the Ministry of National Security, the army, their instructors are the ones who train the trainees, and I am wondering what was the intention in moving that discipline out from MILAT/MYPART and carrying it to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen the watering down of Praesto Praesto, Chatham, Chaguaramas Youth Camp, and again inside there, a whole set of discipline used to be taking place and we are watering down those things. I have a little bit of worry about this whole thing particularly when we heard the Member for Caroni East mention that there were some 4, 000 students unaccounted for in the Secondary School system that normally, some of them would have been absorbed into the MILAT/MYPART and the Youth Camp programme.

Mr. Speaker, compassion by the Prime Minister is another one that, you know, has a little question mark sometimes. Because, Mr. Speaker, that 5 per cent ad with the little child who was disobedient to her mother, I am wondering if the Prime Minister saw that. Because, Mr. Speaker, "it have a road that going down"—I do not want to go on that road at all—but that was a very dangerous advertisement, and whoever was behind it should be sanctioned.

Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the debate, I was obliged to refer to three quotations from the Bail (Amdt.) Bill in 2008 in the other place, because I find that it is indeed instructive for what is being debated. It is Tuesday, September 16, 2008, and if you want to go to the *Hansard* record, it is page 537. We are told it is clear to us the hidden secret agenda, the evil intention of this Government; but we go on.

> "Not because, as I keep saying, people are unhappy, you have to introduce draconian measures. Even if you introduce draconian measures such as a

> state of emergency, it cannot last forever. It would last three months, six months or maybe a year. After that, you would lift the state of emergency. They want a permanent state of emergency here to have the permanent power—"

Mr. Speaker, that is frightening. Mr. Speaker, we know what happens, the draconian measures—

**Dr. Browne:** Which Senator said that?

**Mr. F. Jeffery:** Yes, it was Sen. Mark in another incarnation.

**Hon. Members:** What!

**Mr. F. Jeffery:** And some of the draconian measures we have—we have the Bail Bill, we have the Firearms Bill—[*Interruption*]. Yesterday was yesterday and today is today.

**6.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, exhibit No. 2, page 529. Hear what it says:

> "You do not tamper and tinker with the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people just so. No government must be allowed to do so. Justify the basis for this draconian measure. Tell us the actual, clear, present and/or imminent danger and why you want to impose this on the society."

**Dr. Browne:** Which one is this?

**Mr. F. Jeffrey:** That is the hon. Wade Mark in another place.

> "I live here like you and you cannot bring criminal, dangerous and draconian legislation and tell us that because something is happening here we must give up our rights."

But that is exactly what is happening now, and I am wondering: are we serious in this place? The question, is who said that? And the relevance now—[*Interruption*]. That is the point

**Dr. Browne:** He is quoting a Senator. He is not attacking anyone. He must pretend he was not in the Senate?

**Mr. F. Jeffrey:** Mr. Speaker, "…the measure before us today is draconian, dangerous and repressive. It is undemocratic, uncivilized and barbaric in both form..."

When we look at that quotation we see it falls snugly and quite appropriately into today's discussion. In the words of the famous talk show host, very respected in a very popular station: "It is 2011 and not 1962." With the advent of the People's National Movement this country has been exposed to an education that is the envy of the Third World. We are more knowledgeable, more aware. We have more scholarships, more schools, more social programmes, et cetera. Therefore, we cannot sit back and believe you can pull wool over people's eyes. Mr. Speaker, we have to be very careful as we look at the whole scenario.

As my colleague from Laventille West mentioned, and we must never forget that, so for emphasis I would like to repeat it, we on this side condemn all forms of criminal behaviour. We reject outright, crime. We are appalled by the wanton loss of human life through criminal action. The loss of one human life by criminal action is a loss of one life too many, and we are committed to the permanent reduction in crime, particularly homicides in the shortest possible time. But, we are talking here in terms of why we had the state of emergency because now we want an extension.

I want to go back to Tuesday, August 30, page 6 of the *Guardian* to an article written by Gail Alexander. I quote from the hon. Minister of National Security:

> "The fact that the decision that we took has averted a major crisis in Trinidad and Tobago."

So, in other words, if the reason for the state of emergency was a crisis and you had the state of emergency and you averted the crisis then what is the reason for having an extension if you averted the crisis?

Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General again Thursday, August 26, 2001—and I see the same thing is on the *Express*, I again quote from the Attorney General:

> "'Ramlogan said the police were able to 'stop in its tracks an entire drug operation' that used T&T as a route and transshipment point."

So, we stopped it because of the state of emergency. What do you want the extension for if you have stopped it? More than that, Mr. Speaker, do you know something? If it was in America, they would have organized a sting operation to catch the culprit, but you stopped it, so the person got away.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister, and again I want to quote from the *Newsday* of Wednesday, August 24, 2011, page 15.

> "Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has hinted at increased gang warfare with further reprisal killings between criminal gangs as one of the reasons behind Government's imposition of a limited state of emergency."

We all know the sweeping powers that we have under the Anti-gang Act. The question I am asking is, in that situation where those 11 persons got killed, who were the murderers? How do we know that it was gang-related? Moreover, if you know that they were gang members, why did you not invoke the Anti-gang Act? Why did you not invoke it? This is 2011, not 1962. "Yuh eh fooling nobody wid dat."

The Attorney General said that the state of emergency was declared in order to avert a plot that would have resulted in mass killings. Do you know something? I quoted something in the *Hansard* in the Bail Bill. You need to be clear and concise. What is the plot? If you averted the plot it is gone already. You averted the situation. Let the nation know what the plot was.

It is a dangerous thing when we are saying we want an extension. Normally, you would tell the population: "Hey, listen, the reason we had the state of emergency is X, Y and Z." Therefore, at the end of the time, the population will be able to say, "Listen, all right you got through with X, you did not get through with Y, you got through with Z so you need a little more time." So we give them some more time. At this time, we do not know what they wanted to accomplish in the first 15 days that they did not accomplish, so that they need an extra 3 months to accomplish it. Because, we do not know, at the end of the next three months, you will hear: "Listen we need a next three months or we need a next year", and before you know it, it becomes permanently enshrined and people's freedoms are lost, as you yourself had mentioned in another place.

Over the last weekend, in my La Brea constituency, we had two ecumenical services. One was held in La Brea Unity Centre of Prayer. Do you know what it was about? It was about prayer to cease crime 24/7. That was during the state of emergency. I spoke with people. They are not happy with the state of emergency. They did not see it as a solution to the crime situation. They said: "Look, listen, you see this thing, prayers is what we need to deal with the situation, not an increase in no state of emergency and that kind of thing."

The second one was in Palo Seco, at Palo Seco Open Bible Church on August 20, 2011. Do you know what was the theme? The theme was "Morals and Integrity, the Keys to Nation Building." Again, nowhere are they talking about the increase in the state of emergency. It was morals and integrity. Two things came

out. We see here that one is the importance of prayer that we are supposed to be advocating. Secondly, if we continue to feather immorality and lack of integrity, we are only "spinning top in mud" with this state of emergency, whether you expand it or extend it.

This Government has not been very honest with the country. The population is getting weary of the PR and the stranger to the truth syndrome. I am not going to go into details but just to mention that we had the problem with the $3, 000 pension, the $20 minimum wage and the $2 million for carnival competition winners. We had the story with the Reshmi Ramnarine situation. We had the promises made to CEPEP workers and empty promises of industrialization at the Union Estate in La Brea. "So much ah ting was coming. So much ah thing was coming in La Brea to replace the smelter." Not one thing has happened in La Brea. Mr. Speaker, five years will pass and nothing will happen again in La Brea, I repeat.

We had the Sasha Mohammed fiasco. As the Member for Diego Martin Central said, we did not condone what the 14-year-old child did. It was wrong to use any threat, far more to our Prime Minister. She was wrong. Mr. Speaker, do you know something? If this Government had done the right thing when the Sasha Mohammed situation had broken out, that would not have happened. "Ah put meh head on ah block." But, they saw Sasha Mohammed get away and, therefore, everybody "figure" they could do the same thing and get away. We have to be careful.

I want to go a step further, because this is very serious. We are talking about getting back the country on foot and putting it the right way. "Yuh see this thing dey call integrity? Is something ah doh play with." With regard to the CEPEP contracts, in La Brea we have a CEPEP contractor from Debe "running CEPEP contract" in La Brea.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Who is that?

**Mr. F. Jeffrey:** Garib Dass is running a CEPEP contract in La Brea and no contractor from La Brea could get a CEPEP contract outside. "Wha going on?" This country, we have to get up and recognize "hey", La Brea people are people too. Why one part of the country must get and the other part must not get? It is wrong! It is wrong in all forms and fashion and I could never sit here and say all right. It is wrong! [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Peters:** Relevance.

**Mr. F. Jeffrey:** It is relevant because we are talking in terms of, for example we have a state of emergency and you want to extend it. There are certain things that you must do so that it would work. But, if you continue to show favoritism, you will run yourself into problems.

Mr. Speaker, the honourable Prime Minister erred, in my view, when she had an 8.00 p.m. simulcast and told the nation about a state of emergency from midnight. Mr. Speaker, it gave the criminals four hours to get out of the way. So, in other words, those "fellas" who had their yacht with their stuff had four hours to get out. Those "fellas" who had their drugs and guns—bam!—enough time to go and bury them and hide them.

**6.15 p.m**.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you get 21 guns and they get some ammunition, you defeat the whole purpose. When you have a state of emergency you are supposed to have a surgical strike. "So partner, if you know is twelve o'clock you are going to start this thing", around midnight is when they going to do it. Because you already have your persons set up, you know the hot spots, you know your gang members and so on, and you swoop down on them. But you cannot give those four hours and then say, for example, you are going to solve the situation.

And that is why, for example, in the whole 1,100 I think, persons, they detained it is just about 300 and something, I understand, supposedly gang members. That is far cry, Mr. Speaker, from the figure; and then you know in that, you have friends and family.

Mr. Speaker, I watched Crime Watch with Ian Alleyne, and I saw how a lot of persons were pushed into the vans. It is all well and good when you are not in the situation, to take your armchair rest and say, "Yeah, so and so and so", but "if is your child", or if it is your cousin, it is a different song you would have been singing. [*Desk thumping*] And I am saying, it is flesh and blood we are dealing with. A person is innocent until proven guilty, and it is wrong, it is wrong to treat persons like that, because some of the persons who were taken, I am certain all of them are not criminals. You are going to have yes, persons who are gang members, but I am certain, as time will show, that some of those persons will have to be released. After what, putting them, like my friend or colleague says, like cattle in a van. That cannot be right. It is not right and we must condemn it.

Mr. Speaker, at Christmas time, we have joint army and police patrols in San Fernando, Port of Spain, Arima, Point Fortin and so on. We have no state of emergency at that time and we have joint army and police patrols. So how come

you need to have a state of emergency to have the joint army and police to go into the hot spot areas? That does not make sense. This is 2011, [*Desk thumping*] not 1962. You cannot fool anybody with that.

Mr. Speaker, you have the Prevention of Crime Act, you have the Dangerous Drugs Act, Anti-Gang Act, Firearms Act, and so on, Bail (Amdt.) Act, use them! Use them! There is no need for a state of emergency far less to have an extension.

We come to the question of the missing persons. We all know, Mr. Speaker, that before the state of emergency there were a number of persons missing. I find it reprehensible of this Government that they will arrest a whole set of persons. You do not know where they are, you do not know who they take in and they carry them away, and they say listen, they cannot disclose the names, and so on.

But, Mr. Speaker, tell me something; all those policemen and all those soldiers are they men of impeccable integrity, or we have some crooks inside there? While most of them you could say, listen they are decent, hard-working and committed persons for the defense of our country, there are some crooked ones and what is it, for example, for them to apprehend somebody who they do not like and then liquidate them? That could never be right, and I am saying here, have a preamble if you want, but publish the names of who you have, and where they are, [*Desk thumpin*g] so people can know where their loved ones are. What is wrong with that?

Mr. Speaker, I find it very strange, it is estimated that some 300 tonnes of high-grade cocaine comes into this country every year, 300 tonnes. We also have guns that come into this country and the little fella on the street corner, or the Mr. Big we are talking about, they cannot buy that quantity of cocaine to come into Trinidad. It is Mr. Large. It is Mr. Large who brings in that quantity. Mr. Big is just a middle man, so whether or not he is in the Hyatt, that does not make him Mr. Large, he is a middleman, he might be a middleman. The question [*Crosstalk*] is the Mr. Large.

Mr. Speaker, you know something? Hear the problem. How come you go to Dibe—[*Mr. Jeffrey asks colleague*]—"Is Dibe it is called?"—those poor areas, and so on, but up to now, we are serious about the crime situation, "we did not hear about no homes in Westmoorings, Glencoe, Valsayn, Gulf View, Palmiste, or Maraval? Not one of them get break down". I am not saying that up there do not have plenty good persons, there are some very nice, decent, upright persons living in those areas, but there are some crooks. So why go down into some of those areas, because a man is bareback and his hair "teelay", would you arrest

him? Go in those areas too, show that "aye is a level playing field man", right? [*Desk thumpin*g] Because we know the intelligence knows "who does bring in the thing, they know who does bring in the thing. Not the man with the pirogue and dem, yuh know, dem fellas with the big yacht, and who have dem big containers coming in." That is how the thing is coming into this country. And we need to understand, show that you are serious and get involved in that scenario.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to this—my colleagues on the opposite side, and they are trying to blame the People's National Movement for the situation. Like my friend from Chaguanas West, I am a man of history and hear what happened December 04, 1997. You could check it. It is in the *Hansard* record of July 07, 2000, page 410:

"Kamla: TT entered the dark cave of horror",

That is in 1997. PNM was not in power at that time, 1997.

> "The skeletal remains of two children dug out from a cesspit and a shallow grave, have reminded Legal Affairs Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar of Mano the Beast of Biche Benjamin. If the reports are to be believed…it is the saddest and most bizarre example of domestic violence I have ever heard of in our beloved Trinidad and Tobago".

That was in 1997 she said that.

Mr. Speaker, November 1997 again: Prime Minister Panday summoned a special meeting of the National Security Council, to discuss what? To deal with the escalation of crime under the UNC. "If it turns out that we have taken harsh measures to deal with the scourge of crime, I trust that you would give support". Panday said that the security in the nation's schools was a very urgent concern for him and his government. That was 1997. [*Crosstalk*] "Wait, wait, wait, hello. Wait. Doh frighten, I eh finish yet. Wait nah?"

Mr. Speaker, *Newsday*, Thursday, November 20, 1997, the Minister of National Security, Joseph Theodore: "Jailing criminals was not the answer, you put them in jail and more coming. I have said that building jails is not the answer. That is 1997. In March 25, 2000 *Express Newspaper* headline: "Violent Crime Worries US Embassy". That is the year 2000.

Let us go again. Friday, December 07, 2000: Judge advises, lock your doors at all times. State of emergency you think? Lock your doors at all times. Justice Melville Beard has advised all householders to lock their doors while at home. That was when? Two thousand. PNM was not in power. Mr. Speaker, in the

budget debate of Monday, September 04, 2000, this is what Prime Minister Panday said:

> "The battle against crime is a long and bitter battle…The Government cannot do the work of the…Police Service Commission as far as recruitment, discipline and training are concerned... But, Mr. Speaker, the struggle against crime involves more than just the police vehicles. Crime threatens every single person in the society and we are particularly vulnerable given the designs and the connections of international drug trafficking cartels and their money laundering networks".

You see, Mr. Speaker, that is why I find it funny that our Leader of the Opposition called the Prime Minister to have to discuss the state of emergency and she did not take it up. "Because what, all you could do it by all yuh self?" Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead, at your own peril. Also, the Prime Minister, Panday, at the time talked about the international drug trafficking and you say you do not want the OPVs?

Mr. Speaker, tell me something. If you have the coastal patrol vessels, but we have thousands of pirogues in Trinidad, how could those few coastal vessels monitor those thousands of pirogues? To me it makes sense to have the OPVs outside there, you know, where the drugs and guns are coming from, and you could see, for example, all right, if a boat is coming from the Colombian region or it is coming from the Venezuelan region, listen, let us have them under surveillance. But no, they do not want any OPVs and I warn them if they have any connection with the four hours given when they made the announcement and when they invoked the state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, I hear they are boasting about their success in crime, but you know, in the President's statement, hear what he says—and I think the Member for Chaguanas West was a school teacher, I think the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre was a schoolteacher, the Member for Tobago East was a schoolteacher, I think we could all join in this thing. The present, unprecedented escalation in murders and other serious acts of violence and lawlessness, and so on, what does that mean? Present, unprecedented, it means never before, [*Desk thumping*] never before, was it so bad, and "that jerk them" to get into action. So your crime plan "eh wuking", it is not working. So what are you doing now? Panic; and that send them into the state of emergency mode, not realizing that we have other options. "Yuh tink it easy, Mr. Speaker? Yuh tink it easy"? Unprecedented, escalation, so your crime plan is not working. "Yuh plan wuking? It eh wuking. And we, I think the Minister of National Security, Mr. Martin Joseph had mentioned, "Aye, listen",

we have been trying things and yes, it "eh" work as well as it should. But do not condemn him, because the same thing that happened to him will happen to "all you" as well. You wait and see, you wait and see. Time is a great teacher.

**6.30 p.m.**

This crime thing is a serious situation. Hear the jackpot. It is taken from Yvette Holder, a consultant with the United Nations and she wrote an article, Guns and crime: A case study of Trinidad and Tobago.

Listen to this:

> "For many countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, the majority of assaults and homicides were committed in past years with blunt or sharp weapons. The trend toward increased use of firearms in the commission of crime began in the 1970s in Jamaica, so that a court was established in 1974 solely dedicated to gun-related matters. In Trinidad and Tobago this change began in 2000."

[*Interruption*] She was in government. She was a Cabinet Minister. She was a member of the National Security Council.

I continue with the same article.

> "There are several sources for these firearms. They may be diverted from legal owners in the country, or they may be purchased overseas (legally or illegally) and smuggled into the country. Diverted weapons come from both private owners and the protective services. In Trinidad and Tobago, authorized users of legal arms are robbed and sometimes killed for their weapons. Army and police guns go missing at intervals, and weapons that are stored at police stations for safe-keeping, especially those whose owners may be deceased, are also targets for diversion to criminal use. It is believed, however, that diverted firearms are not the main source of weapons involved in crime. That role is filled by weapons smuggled into the country…
>
> Smuggled firearms are sourced from South and Central American manufacturers of light arms…from Brazil (…Beretta, Colt, and Taurus makes); Venezuela (Smith & Wesson); Mexico;…Dominican Republic (Klare and Anderson, 1996). These countries all make firearms for domestic sale and for export, ostensibly to governments and licensed private owners.
>
> Weapons manufactured or otherwise available in South America are smuggled through Venezuela, Suriname and Guyana to Trinidad and Tobago via… private pleasure boats."

"Dem fellas from Nelson Street, dem ain't have no pleasure boat." This crime thing is something that wants the total population involved. You want to win the confidence of the public so that they could furnish your security with information. You have to win back the confidence of the public.

I wonder, the way we approach this thing in Nelson Street and "dem" areas where they will be privy to information that we are supposed to get, you have to win their confidence and, therefore, measures have to be put in place to win back the confidence of people.

Long time, what used to happen, when something happens in the village, you tell the police. Nowadays, people are afraid to tell the police because somebody will call you and say: "You called so and so and report me. I will do for you." So people are not taking that chance. We have to win that confidence.

Secondly, we have to clean up the police service. There are plenty good ones, but there are crooked ones, so we have to clean it up. There are plenty good ones in the army, but we have some crooked ones. We have to clean that up as well.

Mr. Speaker, it is a whole big job that we have to do to really put a halt on the crime situation. If you figure you can do this by yourself, you have something else coming. You will have the extension for three and when that is finished, you will want another three months and another three months and another three months, if we do not address those situations that I am talking about.

I heard in another place where another member from the People's Partnership was boasting about the July figures in homicide.

**Hon. Member:** Who is that?

**Mr. F. Jeffrey:** That is Sen. Kevin Ramnarine. He had mentioned that in 2009 the figure was 42 homicides, but in July 2010, it was 31. So the People's Partnership's crime plan, it "wukin", not realizing that in November 2010 the figure was 43, whereas in 2009 it was 23. Like he forgot. He wanted to blame that on the People's National Movement. So in July it was working, so it is People's Partnership; in November, it was not working good, "is PNM".

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made:* That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Miss M. Mc Donald*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Before you continue, I want to advise Members generally that we have developed a practice—and it is not a good one—where we quote, in the

current session, contributions made by Members in the other place. I do not think it is a good practice because they are not here to defend themselves and we have no control over the other place and they have no control over here.

I caution Members that we should not be quoting. After a session is over, we are now into a new session, it is not proper to quote from contributions from Members of the Senate because they are not in this House to defend themselves. You may continue, hon. Member

**Mr. F. Jeffrey:** Mr. Speaker, in January and February of 2010, under the astute leadership of Brigadier Peter Joseph of the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (SAUTT), retired Commissioner of Police James Philbert, retired Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police Gilbert Reyes and company, we saw that homicides, in 2009, was 49 and in 2010, it was 47. In February of 2009, it was 55 and it dropped to 32 without any foreign police commissioner. Acting Commissioner James Philbert, locally bred, was able to reduce the crime.

Not only that, as we indicated earlier, we saw a reduction in crime in 2009 and in 2010. This upsurge, this escalation in crime that we see taking place now, had to do with the dismantling of SAUTT, the cancelling of the OPVs, getting rid of the blimp and so on. I do not know that you could dismantle and put nothing back in place. You are bound to get that backlash. That upsurge in crime has to do with the dismantling of "dem ting". I hope that, for the sake of this country of ours, action is taken to put things in place.

Mr. Speaker, I have an article here:

> "CIVICUS urges parliamentarians of Trinidad and Tobago to reject extension of State of Emergency
>
> World Alliance for Citizen Participation has joined local civil society groups to call upon the parliament of Trinidad and Tobago to reject the proposed three-month extension of a State of Emergency, due to be voted on on Friday, 2 September 2011.
>
> The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has been under a draconian state of emergency since 22 August 2011...
>
> 'The State of Emergency, inappropriate legislation and broad implementation of a curfew represent a disproportionate interference with the fundamental rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly enshrined both in the constitution of Trinidad and Tobago and throughout international human rights law…'

'Persistent crime and personal insecurity are very real threats to many Caribbean nations and need to be taken seriously…'"

Using the controversial Anti-Gang Act, 2011, supported by the Bail (Amd't) Act, the State has effectively been able, under the guise of prevention, to detain persons falling within the vaguely defined category of members of a gang and hold them, without laying formal charges, up to 120 days. According to reports, the absence of a mechanism to notify family members of the detention of their loved ones has been a source of great distress to many parents.

Mr. Speaker, we need, Chaguanas West, to really and truly face this thing square on. There is no need for an extension of the state of emergency. I believe it was an oversight on the part of your Government; that you did not realize you have the Anti-Gang Act, Firearms Act and the Bail (Amdt.) Act to hold on to. I think you really forgot that and that you acted in haste and panic. I am saying that there is really no need. You can get the police and army to go into the hot spots and "pull out the people". You have the Anti-Gang Act and the Bail (Amdt.) Act, use them and save the people of Trinidad and Tobago this trauma of having another state of emergency for three months.

**6.45 p.m.**

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure (Hon. Stacy Roopnarine):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pride that I stand here today proud to be part of a Government not afraid to take the reins of crime—[*Desk thumping*]—led by a Prime Minister fearless enough to do what no Prime Minister has done before.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of this country has taken a decision to put our people first. We have come here today to hear every Member of the Opposition not support this important and historic day in our country. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, I do not need to go into the details of the success of this state of emergency thus far for my colleague, the Minister of National Security, has dealt with that efficiently. He has told us of the over 1, 100 persons arrested, we have seen the success with gang leaders off the street, guns seized, et cetera.

It is the right of every citizen of our country to feel safe. As a Government, as a responsible Government, it is our right to uphold that. We are the upkeepers of our Constitution and it is under the said Constitution that we are exercising that right to enforce a state of emergency. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, we have heard Members on the opposing side—to me it is Members down below, speaker after speaker—[*Crosstalk*]—repeating the impact of what visitors and what persons—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to hear the contribution of the Member for Oropouche West. Also, the Hansard reporter would want to accurately note and record what the Member is saying, but the voices, the disharmony is causing some challenges both for myself and I am sure for the Hansard reporter. So could we allow the hon. Member for Oropouche West to make her contribution in silence? You may continue, hon. Member.

**Hon. S. Roopnarine:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have heard colleagues on the opposing side, speaker after speaker, make the same point of our image on the international scale, and what visitors would think about us and who will not want to come to this country. I want to say that it is our responsibility to fix home first; fix our country first, put our citizens first.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, he quoted some quotes from *Wikipedia*—and my colleague from Lopinot/Bon Air West went on to question the accuracy of *Wikipedia*. That said *Wikipedia* that he speaks of also quoted several other states of emergency currently existing in 15 other countries. In addition to that, he quoted countries that have had states of emergency in the past for various reasons, including New Zealand, Thailand, Greece—United States, many times in the 21st century, had a state of emergency in various States—India, Portugal and the list goes on. So what we are doing in this country is nothing new to the global community. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote an article that was in *eTurboNews*. For those who are not familiar with that; it is the global travel industry news. In an article on June 18, 2009 it declared Trinidad and Tobago the murder capital of the Caribbean, 2009. That was the legacy that the PNM left us—[*Crosstalk*]—declaring Trinidad and Tobago a murder capital of the Caribbean overtaking then Jamaica due to the increase in the murder rate. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Member:** Yeah, right.

**Hon. S. Roopnarine:** The article referred to:

> "In October 2008, a Swedish couple was chopped to death in their hotel room in Tobago.
>
> Just 10 days later…two British females…robbed and sexually assaulted by a bandit…"

Both the US and the UK issued travel advisories warning of the high levels of crime. The article went on to say, Mr. Speaker:

> "With 550 homicides in 2008, Trinidad and Tobago has a rate of about 55 murders per 100, 000 making it the most dangerous country in the Caribbean and one of the most dangerous in the world. According to a report issued by the US State Department, gang-related homicides and other crimes will continue to increase in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009 and 2010."

[*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar said, "No more." She put an end to this and called a state of emergency to allow us to clean up the country. Members opposite want to know who would want to come here. I asked them in 2009, given those kinds of reports, who would have wanted to come here under those circumstances?

Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of concern about people not wanting the state of emergency in various areas. I had the opportunity, just last week, to visit a mosque in La Romain. As you know, La Romain is a hot spot and therefore there were a lot of people from around the area that would come to this mosque that would have been affected by the state of emergency. Yes, some people had to leave a little earlier to facilitate getting home before curfew hours, but at the end of the day around the table the feedback was the same. [*Crosstalk*]

**Dr. Browne:** They were just being nice.

**Hon. S. Roopnarine:** People are indicating that for the first time people can sleep safely and soundly in their homes. One woman even said that it is the first time in years she could sleep at night. That was a single mother. [*Crosstalk*] People are happy for the curfew. In an article on September 02, in the *Guardian* the headline reads:

> "Lawmen back PM's move for extension"

That article says:

> "The Police Service Social and Welfare Association is throwing its full support behind the Government as it is expected to announce an extension of the state of emergency today."
>
> The Association's President, Sgt. Anand Ramesar, said "the initiative was working efficiently in its bid to stamp out criminal elements that have been terrorising T&T."

Mr. Speaker, the point is that citizens and organizations in this country are, in fact, in support of the state of emergency. The only people who are not in support are the criminals of this country and today the PNM.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for La Brea in his contribution asked why a state of emergency. While I believe that my colleagues have, thus far, efficiently explained, let me reiterate. For the first time the citizens of this country have the upper hand on the criminals. [*Desk thumping*] For years the criminals have imprisoned innocent people and we were, in fact, curfewed in our own way by these criminal elements. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, we now have a supplement to the police of a 5,000 strong defence force, thus improving the policing in the country. This could not have been done without the state of emergency. The army could now operate independently and not just as confident patrols. There are now more eyes, ears and hands in the war against crime.

Mr. Speaker, people are now more confident about their safety and about their security. They are now more trusting of the police service. The police and communities are now growing closer. This nation is uniting once again like they did on May 24 when they voted out the PNM. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the youth of this country are the future of our nation, and we know that their development is directly proportional to the development of our country. It is any government's responsibility to ensure our right persons are kept on the right track. It is no secret that under the PNM the youth of this nation were failed. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Member:** No!

**Hon. S. Roopnarine:** Not only did the PNM acknowledge that crime was a challenge to the youth, they also did nothing about it. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, 2009, in an article in the *Newsday* dated November 27, 2009, the headline read:

"PM: Youth crime, a threat."

The article reads:

> "Youth and youth violence remain a major threat to young people in this country and other Commonwealth countries Prime Minister Patrick Manning told a large international gathering of young people. Addressing the closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Youth Forum..."

Since 2003 reports were done calling on the Government of the day to call a state of emergency in this country. In 2009, Prime Minister Manning admitted to a youth congregation that youth and youth violence remain a major threat to the young people of this country thereafter doing simply nothing about it. That is not acceptable to the 400, 000 youth population of this country.

The young people have a right to be protected. They have a right to security and it is our job to protect them. Mr. Speaker, with these curfew hours in place, you now have young people having more time at home with their families. This generation of young people is fast becoming a lost generation—as we saw with the recent episode of the 14-year-old girl who made a video of expletives against the Prime Minister. What is happening to this generation?

Mr. Speaker, we saw that just last year the hon. Minister of National Security had taken steps to mentor and to mitigate this lost generation. It was to this end that he launched the Youth Mentorship Programme so that we can groom our young people from a young age. We are seeing too many of our young people on the streets getting involved in crime, drugs, marijuana, gangs, you name it. Today, the PNM asked why a state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, the protection of our young people and the security of our young people are in our hands today. Today we take a decision that will create history. We will be leaving a legacy for them ensuring their protection. As I stand here today, I stand here as a young person in full support of the stand that the Prime Minister has taken in the fight against crime. I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**7.00 p.m.**

**Miss Alicia Hospedales** (*Arouca/Maloney*): Mr. Speaker, I stand in amazement here this evening, because when I thought the Member for Oropouche West was continuing in the debate, the Member for Oropouche West sat down. I am so amazed.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank you for the opportunity to stand and contribute to this debate on the extension of the state of the emergency for three more months, which is the Government's proposal. Mr. Speaker, I thought that the Member for Oropouche West would have used the reports of police intelligence that have been provided to us—it is well documented—to talk about crime statistics, and the fact that under the People's National Movement there has been a drastic decrease in crime in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is documented by the Government in their book on the Social Sector Investment Programme 2011.

Page 24 of that document states—I mean, I must talk about this—[*Interruption*] and as the Member for Diego Martin Central is reminding me, this document would have gone to Cabinet for approval to the "UNC A Cabinet" before it was actually published. What this document highlights for all of us and for the information of the general public is that during the period 2009 to May 2010, gang-related murders drastically decreased by 63.6 per cent. I am not saying this off my head, I am quoting the statistics that is written in the UNC A's Social Sector Investment programme 2011 document.

Mr. Speaker, let me repeat it again for their information. If you did not know, Member for Oropouche West, I am giving you a good lesson on crime and crime statistics. Once again, during the period October 2009 to May 2010, gang-related murders decreased to 63.6 per cent; kidnappings decreased to 28.7 per cent; serious indecency decreased by 28.2 per cent; narcotic offences decreased by 18.2 per cent. Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Oropouche West stands in this House to speak, she must have her facts right. She also said that the People's National Movement failed the youth of this country. [*Interruption*] As the Member for Point Fortin said, that was a speech she had when she was in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. She could never have her statistics right. Mr. Speaker, under—

**Mr. Speaker:** May I just remind Members that we should not refer to Members in the third person. There is a tendency to refer to "he" and to "she". I think that we should observe the Standing Orders, and I think it is 36(7), you ought not to refer to Members in that way. You refer to them, as I keep saying, by the constituency that they represent or by the office or title that they hold. So, it is just a reminder to all hon. Members. You may continue, hon. Member.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for your guidance. In the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, under the People's National Movement, there were significant programmes that were implemented to empower young people in this country. So when the Member comes and talks about that the PNM failed the youth of this country, I would appreciate if, when the Member stands on her feet, she comes and tells us the truth.

You know, the Member for Oropouche West was in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs when they promoted a million-dollar concert and the entertainer—the person who came to entertain—was caught singing expletives in front of children who were all in a kids' zone. Mr. Speaker, and they want to talk about the PNM failed the youth? It is the UNC Government who failed the youth and the children of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, for the information of this House, I just want to tell the Members on the opposite side, if they feel they have programmes, it is under the PNM we had programmes and we empowered the young people of this nation. I would tell you some of the things that were done.

In the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, under the stewardship of the then hon. Gary Hunt, there was the development of a complete youth mainstreaming toolkit to ensure youth participation at every stage of the decision-making process. They conducted a national youth survey, which determined the principal interests, motivations and needs of youths. That survey would have informed the implementation of more innovative projects. They designed a new youth delivery system, which was selected for the delivery of systems for youth services. The Youth Company of Trinidad and Tobago was established to manage the delivery of youth services. The Youth Development Leadership Institution was established to provide training for practitioners involved in youth work. There was the re-engineering of the Youth Division to more effectively and efficiently deliver youth services. Mr. Speaker, all of this was done to empower young persons.

Mr. Speaker, the National Youth Council of Trinidad and Tobago was established to develop a network of collaboration among youth organizations and youth serving organizations as a major mechanism for project development and implementation. There was the creation of a space for the voice of youth namely through radio, drama programmes and the annual youth exposition. There was the reintroduction of the Youth Arise Project. The Youth Arise Project was a project which was established to provide mentorship, counselling and financial support to young people who were desirous of starting their own business. There was also the implementation of the Save the Youth in Marginalized Communities Project. Mr. Speaker, the Implementation of the Social Education and Skills Enhancement Project, all of this happened under the People's National Movement.

Additionally, in the area of sport, in May 2010 the Ministry launched the Way Pathways for Sporting Experience Project which had the philosophy of being athletic centered, coach-driven and administratively supported. Mr. Speaker, apart from that, they would have established the Optimal Athletic Development Programme and developed a number of sporting facilities in St. James and many other areas. So when the Member comes to speak, she must be able to present her facts to us.

**Miss Roopnarine:** Would the Member give way?

**Miss A. Hospedales:** No, I am not giving way, Member for Oropouche West or Member for Couva North, no. You will have your time to speak. The Member

for Tabaquite came here this evening and presented a twisted view of what the people are saying about the state of emergency. He came and he gave a few examples of what people are saying about the state of emergency. I want to present a balance to this debate, and talk about what some people have said about the state of emergency. Mr. Speaker, I just want to tell you what would have been published in the newspaper.

On August 23, 2011 in the daily *Express* there were some persons who, when asked their opinion on the state of emergency, said, "No. Criminals can't kill in the night, they will come in the day and do the same killing." This was stated by a 52 year-old janitor of Petit Bourg.

Another person said, a 65-year-old retiree, who lives in Laventille said, "No. I don't believe it would help crime. Most of the crime is committed in the day. I believe Government have to take a different approach."

Mr. Speaker, a young man, 21 years of age from Paramin he said:

> "It cannot stop crime in the country itself. Government might think there are a lot of crime in certain hot spots but other areas are undercover. It also have a big man in charge of criminal activities."

That is the big fish that the AG was talking about.

Mr. Speaker, the state of emergency would not prevent guns from coming into the country, because our borders are unmanned.

Mr. Speaker, another person, a 36-year-old person from Barataria, said:

> "A state of emergency would not affect them"—meaning the criminals. The—"Government is…trying to throw people in a panic…"—and she is concerned about her job.

Additionally, one person said:

> "It is unfortunate that people voted for this Government because they said they had the answers to crime. They said they had an elaborate crime plan which they would roll out in 120 days."

We know the 120 days have passed and they have not rolled out any crime plan. [*Desk thumping*] They have no plan, Mr. Speaker. The only plan that they ever had was to cause destruction to Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, this person is saying:

> "Yet still, 15 months later, we have a state of emergency, because they have lost control of the situation. We are also paying two men from Canada over

> $1m a year to implement 21st century crime fighting initiatives, and yet still no results." [*Desk thumping*]

We have no results. That is what the people are actually saying, no results.

Mr. Speaker, apart from that, another person says:

> "I am watching this thing and steupsing, because while my business will be closed early for two weeks, the landlord is not giving me a decrease in my rent and my workers have to be paid."

This is a business person saying that. The person says:

> "They have not convinced me as yet that it is for the good of this country."

This is what people have been saying about the state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, apart from that, there has been concerns about the extension of the state of emergency and this was highlighted in the *Guardian* on Wednesday, August 31, 2011. Residents in Bangladesh in St. Joseph—that is where the Member for St. Joseph—he provides oversight for that particular constituency—and this is what your constituents are saying, Member for St. Joseph.

> "'Police run in here and put seven of us in the police maxi and take us to the Tunapuna Police Station last Friday. We come out Sunday and one still inside,' said a stoutly-built youth of 22. They didn't tell us anything, no phone call to family…"

Just imagine that is happening. They were missing for a few days, and no phone call to their family members. They said that they were not even able to call a lawyer. They said:

> "They let us go without any charge…" and they want to know why did the police hold them, why did the police arrest them. They had nothing on them.
>
> "It was 21 people'—this is what they were describing, their own personal experience—"to a cell, no water. Some people in there, parents don't know they inside because they cannot call them."

That is what these residents are saying.

**7.15 p.m.**

The reporter described that a thin person:

> "…rolls up his shirt to display his stomach where he claimed the police hit him with a gunbutt."

He said that when the police hit him with a gun butt, they ended up calling an ambulance for him, but the ambulance did not come so they had to carry him to Mount Hope to get treatment.

> "They hit another fella…"—and the person called his name—"with a gunbutt in the face and split his cheekbone."

These are the kinds of things that are happening, and you are saying that you want to extend the state of emergency, so people will experience this level of brutality, Member for St. Joseph. These are your constituents. These are your constituents. This is the type of brutality people are experiencing out there.

Another person, a woman, said that she had a two-month-old baby and during the course of the raid in her home, $1, 800 went missing. She reported it to the police and there has been no response from them with respect to this particular issue. I want to ask the Member for Oropouche West a question. She said that was how the UNC-A Government respected the constitutional rights of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Is this how you respect the rights of citizens, by suspending their freedom and brutalizing them? [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, I am really, really, really disappointed.

Other people went on to talk about the extension of the 15 days. They stated their disgust, their displeasure and they are not in support of it, because of the type of experience they have had. One person, a 20-year-old from Gonzales, said that he was not in agreement with the extension of the state of emergency and the curfew, because a lot of people cannot do what they want to do. Persons are unable to work longer hours. In some places they are unable to get tips, because some people live off tips.

Mr. Speaker, you have a lot of persons at home not doing anything. That could probably raise the crime levels in the future. Another person, a 76-year-old retired person from Barataria, said that the state of emergency should have never happened in the first place, much less to have it continue after 15 days. He said that 15 days would destroy the country. A 76-year-old retired person said that 15 days would destroy the country more than anything else.

Additionally, they are talking about the rights and, "It is good for the country," and whatever it may be, but there was another article in the *TnT Mirror* on Sunday, August 28, [*Crosstalk*] that highlighted the kinds of things that happened to law-abiding citizens. The report stated that people were detained in police stations. They are saying that people are detained in crowded cells in the Northern Division and in Port of Spain.

Concerns are being expressed about the inhumane conditions under which people are detained. A source said that there were 16 prisoners in a cell in the Morvant Police Station, 12 in Barataria and seven in San Juan.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin North/East said that he heard it was 27 persons in one cell being detained at police stations. [*Crosstalk*] The Attorney General said that the police can detain a person without charge for seven days. So for seven days, and longer, these law-abiding citizens, as in the example of the young men from Bangladesh, are kept in a cell. They are unable to call their relatives, unable to call a lawyer. They are kept in a cell for no reason and then released after a while.

What do you think that these detained persons would think about the extension of a state of emergency? We know, we can conclude that they would not want such a measure to be enforced in this country. The Member for St. Augustine is not in his seat, but he should have been here because he expressed some concerns. One of the things he said was that he hoped coming out of this measure the police would use more humane methods of arresting and treating with detainees, and stuff like that. Do you know why? He was fearful that at the end of the state of emergency, there would be an escalation in crime, because people, one, would no longer trust the police because of how they had been treated.

How do you think these young men in Bangladesh would feel about interacting with police, after having an experience like that? How do you feel? [*Interruption*] Member for Chaguanas West, you are talking. How would you feel? How do you think these young men would feel?

**Mr. Warner:** They would feel that they are better than under the PNM.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** The Members on the other side take everything for a laughing matter. We see the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo, the Member for Chaguanas West and the Member for Chaguanas East laughing as though it is a joking matter. This is not a joking matter. You are brutalizing citizens, and laughing at that? [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*] You are brutalizing citizens and laughing?

This Government claims to be a caring government, but earlier on we had the Member for Arima and the Member for Naparima missing. Do you know why? They went to give out prizes. The Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara went to play football wearing tee shirt No. 21, playing on the Trinidad and Tobago side against WIPA. Mr. Speaker, this is scandalous. They are taking the people of this country for granted. This is appalling.

**Hon. Members:** Where is Patrick Manning?

**Miss A. Hospedales:** Right now in this country people are angry, they are resentful and fearful, and they are saying no to a state of emergency. We on this side say no to an extended state of emergency, and for a state of emergency on the whole.

**Mr. Warner:** Where is Patrick Manning?

**Miss A. Hospedales:** The Government appears to be disillusioned, or I should say detached from reality, with regard to the negative impact of the state of emergency. Let me just tell you for a minute what they have said. I am sorry that the Member for Tunapuna is not here, but he said that:

> "Despite the disruptions to several businesses which operate at nights, as in the case of the fast food and the entertainment industries, Minister of Finance Winston Dookeran envisages no real fallout from the State of Emergency."

That was what the Member for Tunapuna said, that there was no real fallout from the state of emergency. I do not know why he is the Minister of Finance, because if he could tell the country that there was no real fallout from this state of emergency, after being aware that there were significant impacts, he should resign today. He should resign immediately. [*Desk thumping*]

The Member for Tunapuna said that:

> "…as soon as the logistics are worked out in terms of people getting to and from work, things will be better and there would be less fallout."

This statement is so confusing. One minute he said there was no fallout, there would not be any fallout, the next minute he said there would be less fallout. I really do not understand it.

The Member for Diego Martin Central is reminding me that on my way home last night, I was going out of Port of Spain, and if you see persons lining up to get transportation. That is an example of a major crisis. A few minutes after 8.00, people were still lined up, hundreds of people lined up waiting for transportation to go home. [*Crosstalk*]

Let me go on to the Member for Chaguanas East, who is the Trade and Industry Minister, who said that the state of emergency would have little impact. So one minute we are hearing it would have no fallout, it would have little fallout, and the next minute we hear it would have little impact. He said that it would have little impact on the local economy and will not deter foreign investment.

Let us hear what the Minister of Planning, Economic and Social Restructuring had to say. The Minister said that individuals and businesses losing money due to the state of emergency needed to look at "the big picture". This is so confusing. It is almost like these Members do not have any form of agreement, there is no one voice, no one message, no cohesion. Let me go further on what Minister Tewarie said and move on. He said that the Government was aware there were individuals who were having a loss of income, and small businesses and other businesses that operate mostly in the evening and night were experiencing problems. This is the only Member who seems to be a little realistic. Minister Bhoe Tewarie seems to be a little realistic.

The Member for Tunapuna was wavering in his thoughts; "one minute is no impact, next minute is a little impact." Then we hear the Member for Chaguanas East saying that there would be limited impact on the economy. They really do not know. These Members seem to be so, so confused.

**Mr. Warner:** Like you.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** This is another example of the level of confusion that exists among the UNC-A Government. What we see here is evidence of the fact that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. We have the UNC taking the lead. "The COP doh know what happening. The MSJ doh know what happening. You have the TOP, doh know." They were not even informed that there was going to be a state of emergency, and then we have "de NJAC, doh know"; all of them following blindly.

It is like the Pied Piper. When the Pied Piper played the tune for the mice, the mice followed blindly along a path of destruction. That is exactly what is happening. That is exactly what we are seeing before our eyes here this evening. [*Laughter*] [*Crosstalk*]

Let us talk about what the experts have said. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, I seek your protection, please; Lopinot/Bon Air.

**Mr. Speaker:** Member for Arouca/Maloney, you have my protection, continue, and I would like both sides to be silent. You are getting support, I noticed, from your side. So if your side could maintain silence, I would appreciate that as well. I appeal to the Government side to also maintain silence. You may continue.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** Thank you for your protection, Mr. Speaker.

Let us take one moment to look at what the experts have said. We saw that the Members of the UNC-A Government are all confused about the impact that this

state of emergency would have on the country and people. But let us look at what the experts have said about this state of emergency.

The Governor of the Central Bank said that the state of emergency would certainly have an impact. To the extent that businesses have been closed five o'clock or six o'clock local time, it is certainly going to have an impact. That is what the Governor of the Central Bank said. He said that the hotel industry had also complained of losing millions of dollars. We had the Member for Tobago East saying that the hotel industry and the bed and breakfast places in Tobago have not been impacted, but that is far from the truth. They have also been impacted significantly.

Mr. Speaker, the Governor of the Central Bank said that these industries have been impacted because reservations have been cancelled since the state of emergency went into effect. It was not before, but it has been since the state of emergency went into effect. That is what the Governor of the Central Bank stated.

**7.30 p.m.**

Additionally, the president of the Point Fortin Chamber of Commerce stated that,

> "…the economic growth of Trinidad and Tobago can be severely compromised if this state of emergency extends beyond 15 days."

So they are not in support of an extension. He said if it extends beyond 15 days the economy can be severely compromised. Mr. Speaker, he also said:

> "…we are hoping that the curfew lasts no longer than the 15 days because we see the entire exercise as something that must be done forcefully and swiftly enough for the required results…"

He also said that—okay, Mr. Speaker, I move on.

The National Workers Union also stated that they are not in support of the Government extending the state of emergency. They stated that they thought that in declaring a state of emergency, the Government would have issued detention orders for:

> "…financiers, importers, specific officers in Customs, Immigration, police service, coast guard, members of the legal profession…money launderers…et cetera."

Mr. Speaker, additional to that the Member for Point Fortin spoke about the London Business Monitor International and what they said is that the state of

emergency could hurt how investors look at Trinidad and Tobago, and I remembered seeing a headline in the newspapers stating that the Prime Minister says she is not really concerned about the international image or what people say about how our international image would be affected but, Mr. Speaker, this is a well-known business monitoring company, and they have said that the state of emergency could also hurt how investors look at Trinidad and Tobago.

Additionally, they said a state of emergency is likely to harm investor perception of the nation, and the Member for Chaguanas East said "No, it is not going to harm investor confidence, investors would come running to Trinidad and Tobago to invest in our economy, to invest in manufacturing, they will come running." Mr. Speaker, that is far from the truth. Again, this a prominent business monitoring company, and they said the economy's non-energy sector continues to suffer following the global economic crisis, and we believe that this development could further dissuade foreign investors in the medium to long term, if it extends for longer than originally planned. So they are stating, if the state of emergency extends for longer than originally planned it can severely affect the foreign investors.

Mr. Speaker, they said the state of emergency can also affect state fiscal accounts and deeper fiscal consolidation in the future. So, they concluded that they were concerned that a failure to achieve the necessary degree of gang activity containment in the short term, could have long term political and economic cost. So, Mr. Speaker, even this professional international company they had major concerns about the Government's decision, not just to declare a state of emergency but also to state that they wanted to extend the state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little about persons who will be most affected—you know the Members on the Government side do not like to hear the truth, you hear how they are groaning and moaning because it is the truth. [*Desk thumping*] It is the truth that we on this side stand to speak to them, so they do not like to hear the truth.

Mr. Speaker, one question I would like to ask the Members on the opposite side, who will be most affected by the state of emergency? The Member for St. Joseph said—I am really sorry he is not in his seat:

> "The people who would be most affected are the people who use the cover of dark in the night to carry out their nefarious activities and escape the long arm of the law under the protection of night. These are the people the State of Emergency will help the enforcement agencies to arrest."

Mr. Speaker, this Member really, really is detached from reality. The reality is that there are significant negative impacts on many, many, many citizens in this country—m-a-n-y—Member for Chaguanas West, many workers in this country.

In the Trinidad *Guardian* on Tuesday August 30, they highlighted an article "Emergency taking toll on workers' pockets"—state of emergency taking a toll on workers' pockets. It cuts into the working hours and the loss of income are some of the negative effects people who work in hot spots face because of the state emergency. Mr. Speaker, that is what they are saying. This is the type of effect the state of emergency is having, and you know what? The Government does not care. They say they want to extend this for another three months so that people would be unemployed. People would not be able to carry home a proper pay packet.

Another thing that we are saying, a young woman, 28 years old, with two children said—and this person lives in Chaguanas:

> "…the day after the state of emergency was announced her hours of work had been reduced. I work in a restaurant and everybody now has to work a daytime shift and even though some of us work for eight hours, we have been scheduled to take up to four days off in the week…"

So that their pay packets have been significantly reduced.

> "'I have a family to feed and I don't know how I am going to do it if this lasts a lot longer. It's worse for the people who have to go to school and can only work nights because now they can't work at all.'"

Mr. Speaker, in some places some businesses had to lay off their workers because they are unable to pay them, they are not making sufficient money to pay them. That is the kind of effect that this is having, and you know the Member for Chaguanas West and the Member for Chaguanas East should be standing up for their constituents.

This is somebody from Chaguanas who is crying out because she is not making enough money to support her family. She said it is worse for people who have go to school and can only work nights because now they cannot work at all. Just imagine that, there are some students who cannot make money to pay their tuition, to buy their books. They went to school during the day and they worked at night to ensure that they supported themselves through college or university or whatever it may be. Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of trauma that this Government is causing and they are insisting that they want to continue to cause the citizens of this country.

"A manager of a popular central-based restaurant said loss of income for employees was something that could not be avoided" because they had no other choice but to cut-back on their hours because their businesses are located in significant hot spot areas. The person went on to say that their "…opening hours have shortened and so"—"they are trying to divide the hours fairly for"—"their employees."

Mr. Speaker, this is what is happening and you know the Government, when we talk about these kind of things they laugh, they grin because they do not care about the impact that the state of emergency is having on people and they talk about their leader caring. Mr. Speaker, that is not care, this is not care. If somebody genuinely cares they will stop and they will think about the impact that this is having on people and rethink that decision to proceed with an extended state of emergency for 30 days.

Another area that has been affected is the fine-dining restaurants. This was published in the *Guardian*, and what they said is that the shorter shifts would have reduced profits. That is the cry of the dining restaurants in lockdown hot spots in Port of Spain. So, the restaurants in Port of Spain are crying out because they have not been able get significant profits. And what they are saying is that most times their profits are gained from dinner time. A lot of people would come and have dinner, and that is when they would gain their profits and that time period is between 6.00 p.m. and 10.30 p.m. But they had to alter that in order to ensure that they were within the confines of the curfew.

Mr. Speaker, one particular business said that they suffered 60 per cent in revenue during this crime fighting state of emergency period, and there was a tremendous loss in clientele. People were not going and eating even during the day as well. They have lost significant clientele.

Mr. Speaker, the owner of a chain of restaurants also stated that he was very concerned not only for the loss of profits but for his employees who depend on their nightly income for survival. These are the things which they are talking about, and you know the Member for Oropouche East is saying that they are home and they are dining at home, but when people lose income, lose employment, do you think they could be happy at home? Because they are worried. "The landlord is coming because they want their rent." The landlord is not reducing rent. Do you think that a landlord would be empathetic to the person who has reduced income and tell them, "Listen, do not pay your rent this month?" They are coming for the rent. They want the rent even though the person's income has been reduced.

Mr. Speaker, another manager said that 80 per cent of the staff members numbering between 31 and 61 employees depend on nightly dinners and they said the curfew is also affecting delivery people, bartenders and chefs resulting in unemployment for many of those persons. Mr. Speaker, I wish the Government could come and tell us what the unemployment rate in Trinidad and Tobago is now because of the state of emergency, and I am sure that they do not even know because they are not critically thinking about these kinds of things.

Mr. Speaker, another person said that normally they get orders during the night. The orders have been slashed in half. No seafood was ordered during the first week of the state of emergency. Mr. Speaker, Angostura also stated that they are a major supplier to the retailers, and also to the night trade. They said that the delivery to these people has been significantly decreased.

The Chief Executive Officer of UNIPET—the United Independent Petroleum Marketing Company Limited—said that they experienced significant losses due to the state of emergency. Instead of having employees work three shifts a day, they had to downsize it to two shifts. Because of the reduced system, it comes like employees are working three days a week. These workers are losing significant amounts of money because they are not allowed to work their normal shifts.

We also have a significant impact in the pharmaceutical chain. One particular pharmacy stands to lose $1.5 million in the 15 days, just imagine that, $1.5 million in 15 days alone, one business alone. A chain of pharmacies stands to lose that amount of money. Mr. Speaker, they are laughing, they are giggling and you know their Members do not have the courtesy to remain in the House and listen to the debate and be attentive to what we are saying, so that when the time comes to make a critical decision that they can make a decision based on facts and based on information recognizing that the state of emergency, far less the extended state of emergency, is having a significant negative impact on the people of this country. Mr. Speaker—

**Hon. Warner:** I thank you.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** The main impact on the pharmaceutical business has been the loss of sales revenue due to the curtailed opening hours. Where they would normally close at 11.00 p.m., they now have to close at 7.00 p.m. and their employees have also had their times curtailed and they have to let them go.

**7.45 p.m**.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made*: That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Dr. A. Browne*]

*Question put and agreed to*.

**PROCEDURAL MOTION**

**The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal)**: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 10(11), I beg to move that this House continue to sit until the conclusion of the debate on Motion No. 1 on the Order Paper.

*Question put and agreed to*.

**STATE OF EMERGENCY**
**(EXTENSION OF)**

**Miss A. Hospedales:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The managing director of the plumbing service said that their sister company has been affected to the tune of 5 per cent to 10 per cent since the state of emergency started. They said that they have 25 persons who are employed and they have had drastic decreases in the demand for their services. What the manager said is that the state of emergency has affected places like hotels, because they would normally deliver to hotels and businesses in MovieTowne, which they supply to and they have seen their business affected because those businesses have to be closed as well and they have experienced a significant impact and their business has been affected.

What the manager said, she saw that those businesses to which they deliver in MovieTowne have been buying less. Additionally, the impact of the state of emergency had also affected the energy sector. What we have seen is that the state of emergency has affected the production or the volume of their business. Forty-six 46 per cent of persons responding to a survey about whether or not their businesses were affected, they said that there had been very little change in the volume of business over the period. They said it led to delays in the implementation of maintenance of construction projects and drilling programmes leading to constrained production in the future. It also caused delay in the immediate impacts on service companies and contractors. It caused companies to be affected with respect to site maintenance, delays, cancellation of ships, transportation delays and problems associated with travel for employees.

What they are saying is that the employees in the energy sector were not provided with curfew permits. They are unable to leave home to get to work, which most times they are required to be at work at about five o'clock. They are unable to leave home and as a result they have to wait until it is five o'clock to leave home then to get to work, so that causes significant delays for the energy sector. There have also been delays at the two major ports which have caused major concerns for a number of projects since the equipment and supplies needed by the sector may not be available as planned.

Mr. Speaker, so not only are people affected in various industries—for instance we saw the hotel industry, we saw the restaurants, persons working in factories, taxi drivers, persons in the entertainment industry. I read an article about a DJ who said he is not making any money to support his family, no money at all. [*Interruption*] That is how he supports his family by going and playing music for different pubs, restaurants and other places, and he is not making any money. You see, his job is a night-time job. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, I am talking and the Members for Chaguanas West and D'Adabie/O'Meara, again, are taking this for a joke. This is a serious matter. [*Interruption*] This is a serious matter and they are taking everything for a joke. Additionally, people who work in cinemas—in the Arouca/Maloney constituency we have one of the biggest cinemas, Cinema 8. People who work in those cinemas actually have to go home early as well, so their hours have been reduced, and most of these people are minimum wage earners. So when their wage is cut back they are going home with next to nothing; working for three days a week; working for four days a week. That is not sufficient and it is not adequate.

**Mr. Warner:** But they are alive.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** Mr. Speaker, the fishermen—I read an article in the *Mirror* about the fishermen in Toco and Matelot. They are complaining that they are unable to leave home very early in the morning to come to Port of Spain, because Port of Spain is a hot spot and they are unable to leave home to come to the central market to sell their fish, so right now they are not making the money that they need to make. They are losing significant amounts of money.

Mr. Speaker, the vendors—all of these people have to buy books for their children and they have to purchase uniforms, they have to pay their transportation for these children to go to school and we are saying that you all say that you support the measure to take this state of emergency to another 30 days. Are you going to provide some comfort to these people? Are you going to pay their rent? Are you going to purchase the school books for their children? Are you going to feed their families? Are you going to do that?

**Mr. Warner:** They will be alive.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** You know the Member for Chaguanas West, again, is making a joke, "They will be alive". [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Member, you know if you would address the Chair and forget the Member for Chaguanas West as well as the Member for D'Adabie/O'Meara, you would focus on your contribution. Address the Chair. You are not addressing the Member for Chaguanas West, neither are you addressing the Member for D'Adabie/O'Meara, so ignore both and just address the Chair, please.

As I am on my legs, may I remind all hon. Members, dinner is here, so those of you who would like to have some dinner you are free to stream out and come back in. Hon. Member, you may continue.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** Mr. Speaker, I am very, very focused. Mr. Speaker, small business, as we saw, has been significantly affected. In the Arouca/Maloney constituency there are three malls: the Trincity Mall, you have the Bon Air Village Plaza and we have the Maloney Mall. All the tenants in those malls are significantly affected because of the state of emergency. Not only that, we have the village shops, we have Lester's Mini Mart, we also have Elsa who comes out in the night time to sell chicken and chips and other eats for her clients. We also have Le Hugh Bakery and the pharmacies. These members—all of these residents would have lost money, significant sums of money, because they have had to close at an earlier time.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Tobago East said that women are happy because women are home and families are happy. A lot of the people who have been affected are single-parent mothers. A number of them have been affected; their salaries, their wages have been cut down significantly and a lot of them are crying because they are unable to purchase the books for their children. They cannot. They cannot send their children to school come the first week of school; they cannot buy them uniforms, so I really do not understand how the Members on the opposite side could even consider such a measure as extending the state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, some of them, as I said, cannot even pay their rent or their mortgage, and the men are taking home less money to their families. How do you think these families would feel? Are they going to be happy? I wish the Member for Tobago East was in her seat. Are these family members going to be—

**Hon. Member:** She is in the back.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** Oh, she is in the back there. She is sitting—

**Hon. Member:** She moved to Arima.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** Yes, she moved to Arima. Mr. Speaker, I do not know how these families could be happy? How could they be happy, Member for Tobago East? How can they, when they have been significantly impacted by this state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to go back to the point about some people being unemployed. There was a maxi-taxi driver who had to give up his job because he was told by his boss that he had to bring in the same $900 he was required to bring in before the state of emergency. Then, before the state of emergency he was able to make $900 plus $300 or $400 for himself. You know what happens now? Because of the state of emergency, he could only make that $900 and submit that, so he makes no money for himself for that 15 days so he gave up his job. He is now unemployed. He has no job. These are the types of impacts implementing the state of emergency has had. The Member for Tobago East is smiling. This is a joke. [*Interruption*] This man's family has been significantly impacted.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the Member for Tabaquite, if this is the defining moment that he talked about. He said that in the life of a family, a community, there is always a defining moment. Is this the type of defining moment that you are talking about? I would like to think that it is about—in the life of a family there are moments to celebrate: a marriage, a graduation, a birth of a child; those are defining moments, but when you tell me that people are being unemployed, people do not have money to pay their rent, people are taking home lower wages, that is a defining moment. [*Interruption*] I mean, I would say, shame on the Member for Tabaquite. Shame on the Member for Tabaquite!

Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk a bit about the police and the intelligence that the police have. The police officers have the intelligence that appears to be lacking by the Government, and I want to repeat that. The police officers have the intelligence that appears to be lacking by the Government. They can identify where the gangs are, they know where the drugs blocks are and they know who the criminals are in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, the police can tell the Government who are the persons in the communities that engaged in serious crimes, who are the ones engaged in robberies and other serious offences. As I said, the police officers have the intelligence that the Government is lacking, both crime intelligence and otherwise. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Tabaquite stated that there were 86 gangs, but then we hear the Member for Chaguanas East stating that there were 66 gangs. This is the kind of confusion that manifests in the UNC-A Government, one Member coming and saying there are 86 gangs and another Member coming and saying that there are 66 gangs. The Member for Tabaquite said there are 1, 720 gang members and the Member for Chaguanas East came and told us that there are 500-plus gang members. Mr. Speaker, they cannot even agree on the number of gangs.

This information, they told us, was provided by the previous Minister of National Security, but yet still there is still no agreement. As I said, the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing.

**Hon. Member:** The left hand does not know what the right hand is doing.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** You know, the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, these are the same people who lack the intelligence that the police have, stating that they are waging a war on the criminal gangs and elements in this country. They are not aware where they are even going and, Mr. Speaker, you know, there has been information passed on to us that they closed down the Repeat Offenders Programme—when the Repeat Offenders Programme, Anti-Gang Unit, they closed down that unit. The Member for Laventille East/Morvant made mention of that. Why did the Government not come and tell us, why did you not come and tell us why you closed down that unit? You know, the thing is, that particular unit, long before they were disbanded captured 200 gang members in the Beetham Estate alone.

**8.00 p.m.**

So the Government came here yesterday and today to make us believe that there is no—the police are unable to manage the situation and as a result they had to have the state of emergency and all of that. Mr. Speaker, that is far from the truth. If this one unit was able to capture 200 gang members in the Beetham alone—I mean that tells you that the intelligence, the strategies—and that is without the Anti-Gang Bill. Yes, that is right. That is without the Anti-Gang Bill. This unit was able to capture 200 gang members in one community, far less if they had enforced or began to use the Anti-Gang Bill.

Mr. Speaker, why did they not tell us this before, that they had disbanded this unit? You know why? Because they want us to believe that you know that there are no other measures in place to deal with this particular issue. Every single thing that the People's National Movement put in place, they dismantled it, they destroyed it, they pulled it apart. Every single measure that was put in place to deal with the issues, to address the issues of crime and the criminal elements, they just destroyed it. They left our borders open. I read in a newspaper article: not only are our borders exposed to the elements of drug trafficking, gun trafficking, even human trafficking, but also trafficking in fuel. You would imagine that people are coming to this nation, stealing diesel and going to sell it to other countries. Mr. Speaker, that is what is happening at some of our ports. That is what is happening. Now they have exposed our border, this thing is happening in a big way in this country. We are losing diesel every single minute.

**Hon. Sharma:** How long ago?

**Miss. A. Hospedales:** Every single night, every single minute, we are losing diesel. We are losing diesel, Member for Fyzabad, since May 24. The police always had the capability to deal with crime in Trinidad and Tobago. What they have done by implementing or enforcing the state of emergency is that they have caused our police officers to be even more frustrated, even more disappointed and even more discouraged, Mr. Speaker. That is what has happened.

In Jamaica, yesterday I read the accounts of the Jamaican experience and I highlighted the remarks of an editor and—actually a journalist—in Barbados who said that, in Jamaica it was a limited state of emergency that was enforced to deal with criminal elements who prevented the police and the army from entering into a particular community.

Mr. Speaker, when the decision came to end the state of emergency, do you know what was presented to the country? A menu of measures to clamp down on crime was presented to the country. This Government should have been coming here today to present their crime plan that will be implemented after the 15 days, but guess what? They have no plan, no vision, no foresight. It is the blind leading the blind. It is so sad to know that our nation has come to this point where there is no leadership, no leadership whatsoever; the blind leading the blind, no vision, no ideas. They are just, you know, void, void of thoughts, Mr. Speaker. They are so incapable of manning this country.

Mr. Speaker, they do not have a plan. So the Jamaican government recognized that they needed to have a measure, to present a menu of measures to clamp down

on crime, and they did that. They did exactly that. They presented that to their people and they have begun to implement it. Again Peter Wickam, from the *Daily Nation* in Barbados. He said:

> "The authorities in Trinidad and Tobago would do well to appreciate that the most effective deterrent to crime is the quick capture and conviction of criminals, which requires criminal intelligence…."

The police have the intelligence that you all are lacking

> "…and capacity NOT a state of emergency."

Police intelligence and capacity! He also stated the quick capture and conviction of criminals, not a state of emergency. That is what Peter Wickam from the *Daily Nation* said.

In St. Lucia, they had the decision of either enforcing a state of emergency or declaring a state of emergency or not declaring a state of emergency, and you know what they decided to do? They recognized the risk, they did an assessment, they did not just pull it out of a hat in a day and decide to implement it. Mr. Speaker, they sat down and did a comprehensive analysis of their own situation and they decided that they would not declare a state of emergency, they would not do that. But rather they launched operation, "Restore Confidence" during which heavily armed officers went into hot spots and directly confronted gang leaders and other offenders. They never did. They did not suspend the rights of their citizens; they did not. All they simply did was decided that would have had severe consequences for their nation and for their citizens and they decided to launch operation "Restore Confidence".

Mr. Speaker, they said that the implementation of a state of emergency or a curfew would have had serious implications for the local economy. And just imagine, St. Lucia, the government of St. Lucia could see that and the members on the opposite side cannot see! The Members of the UNC government cannot see—could not see the negative impact! Because they want to continue to extend the curfew for another 30 days.

Mr. Speaker, the National Security Minister of St. Lucia said with operation "Restore Confidence" in full effect, the island has witnessed a marked decline. That was their crime plan. They implemented a strategy and they said they saw a marked decline in the crime and murder rate, and with an improved rehabilitation system at one of their correction facilities, inmates and past offenders have a

chance of bettering their lives after prison. They do not care. This government does not care about past offenders, repeat offenders, they do not care about that because they have suspended that programme.

Mr. Speaker, another person said that the state of emergency and curfew cannot replace crime fighting measures. It could never! It can never replace crime fighting measures! I just want to echo the sentiments of Catherine Kumar. She is the head of Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce. What did she say? She said that the Chamber of Commerce is calling on the Government for a comprehensive crime plan. The Members on this side have been asking—the Members of the People's National Movement—not the Members at the back, not those backbenchers.

The Members of the People's National Movement, all the Members on this side have been asking for the Government's crime plans from day one. We have never seen it and we have never heard, about it and the manifestation of the fact that they have failed our country is the declaration of a state of emergency, because they have no plan.

The Chamber said without a comprehensive plan, the Government cannot make a real dent in crime. I hope the Government is listening to this. Without a comprehensive plan you cannot make a dent in crime. She went on to say that a sustainable crime plan must include the efficient use of technology. We talked about the intelligence that has been used by the police service to capture members of gangs and other persons who committed offences. We talked about that. She also talked about the installation of closed-circuit TVs. She said that in England they used the closed-circuit TVs and they used the footage from it to identify criminals and to capture them as well.

Additionally, she said an understanding of the crime plan, the reason for the state of emergency and an indication of the measures achieved are needed. The Government has not come and told us how these measures, the implementation of a state of emergency, has benefited this country. They have not come to tell us that. What have you achieved? What measures are you using to highlight your achievements? What indicators of success? They have none. Mr. Speaker, they cannot tell us that.

Crime has also impacted on direct foreign investment. That is what she is saying, because investors look for attractive destinations to operate their business. So now, Trinidad has now become an unattractive destination because of the declaration of the state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, another person in the *Daily Express*, J. Smith, I would say J. Smith from Gran Couva stated that many of the people who—the gangs that the member for Tabaquite stated, the Member for Chaguanas East highlighted.

> "…many of these persons are already in the police database as being wanted and are well-known for committing certain types of crime, why does it take a declaration of a state of emergency to apprehend these criminals?"

And that is the question we have to ask. Why does it take a declaration of a state of emergency to apprehend these criminals when the information is already there? The information is already there.

> "Why suspend the rights of the citizens to apprend a handful of criminals whose whereabouts are known by the police and the people they are associated with, who so often willingly give up said information?"

Mr. Speaker:

> "Since it is only because of police data or information passed to the police by their associates that cause criminals to be caught, couldn't this exercise have been done in a different manner…?"

That is what this person is asking—J. Smith from Gran Couva:

> "Couldn't this exercise be done in a different manner, one which did not involve suspending the rights of citizens…?"

Why did they have to suspend the rights of citizens to do something that the police can do themselves? The information is already there. The police has the information. We saw the Minister of National Security declaring that he was not happy with the number of guns found.

Mr. Speaker, what do they expect? What do they really expect, that this measure would have brought in containers of guns? The people of this country trust the host of Crime Watch more than they trust the police. That is a major issue, a major, major issue in this country. They call him and tell him where to find the guns, where to find the ammunitions—they trust him more than they trust the police.

**8.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, that is a major, major indictment on the Government of this country. The state of emergency is the Government's admission of failure, failing the people of this country, failing to implement a crime plan.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, you have just 60 seconds.

**Miss A. Hospedales:** They have no crime plan; they have no intelligence; they have no justification for declaring a state of emergency in this country, far less to extend the state of emergency for another three months. They have no right to suspend our human rights. They cannot be trusted. I am telling the people of this country, they cannot be trusted and they must not be encouraged to extend this state of emergency for another 30 days.

I am advising the people of this country to wake up and do not be like the mice who were driven away into a path of destruction by the Pied Piper. I appeal to the conscience of the Government on behalf of my constituents of Arouca/Maloney and on behalf of all people in this nation, to reconsider their decision to extend the state of emergency for another three months. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Before I call on the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla, I just want to advise Members, it is not proper for anyone to read or to speak for 75 minutes and quote extensively from newspaper articles. I am making it very clear. You can make reference, but it cannot constitute your entire speech.

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security (Hon. Colin Partap):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise today to participate in this debate, a debate of such great national importance, a debate which is Trinidad and Tobago's Waterloo. Today the tides of criminality in this country will be turned back and we are here today to stand and be counted together with, and support, our hon. National Security Minister, Brig. John Sandy and our hon. Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar in the decisions that were taken not more than two weeks ago.

You know, the Member for Arouca/Maloney—she is not in her seat—asked, "What crime plan?" Let me tell you something. For eight years there were many crime plans by the Opposition, then government, and it just led to an escalation in crime, an escalation in murder and serious crime, kidnapping, rape, you name it. It was a crime to have them in office! [*Desk thumping*] The Member for Arouca/Maloney questioned the money that is being paid to the Commissioner of Police. They said we brought in a Canadian to run the police service. What about Professor Mastrofski? How much money was he given? Eighty five million dollars and they cannot account for it! What has $85 million brought for us? Nothing; an escalation in crime!

I want to quote from a newspaper article. The hon. Member for Arouca/Maloney quoted the Governor of the Central Bank when he said that the economy would fall, and stuff like that, but there is a newspaper report here:

"Williams: If emergency cuts crime rate economy will benefit", by Joel Julien, and that was the Trinidad and Tobago *Express*, August 27, 2011. I will quote a bit.

"Central Bank Governor Ewart Williams says if the State of Emergency is successful in achieving its primary focus of reducing crime then the economy is certain to benefit in the future.

Rising crime has been affecting investor confidence in this country for some time, Williams said.

While businesses are pointing to losses since the declaration of the State of Emergency last Sunday, if the stringent security measures are successful in curbing crime then the economy is bound to benefit, Williams said."

That is not me; that is the Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago.

As I listened to the contributions of the Members of the Opposition, the 12 below me, I felt nothing but disappointment; nothing but disappointment! [*Desk thumping*] They have learnt nothing in their year in Opposition. They have not matured since their epic defeat. For them, the ills of this country started on May 24, 2010. Everything bad happened then! Crime escalated! There was no crime problem before! But I want them to know, it started under you—you—the 12 here! It started under you, and we are here to clean it up! [*Desk thumping*]

When the people of Trinidad and Tobago collectively rejected the PNM, they did not reject the candidates only, they rejected the PNM's standard operating procedure of excuse, excuse, excuse! [*Desk thumping*] Yet they come to this honourable House more than a year later with the same tactics; excuse for their failure in crime; excuse for their failure on works and transport, excuse—I could go on and on and on. I think somebody texted me 33 excuses, but if I read them out I will go on beyond my time, and I do not want to do that. [*Interruption*] I could go on with more.

I am advised that one definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over and expect different results. [*Desk thumping*] I do not know what the Opposition is expecting to achieve by this pathetic and desperate act that they are going on with here today, but it is clear, as they had one year ago, the peaceful

and law-abiding citizens of Trinidad and Tobago will reject them again, because they are fully in support of extending the state of emergency; from doubles vendor to store owners, to teachers, to students. They support it, because they are seeing tangible results in the reduction of crime and criminality in the country.

I urge the Members of the Opposition below me to be mindful of the words of Thomas Kempis who advised: "Activate yourself to duty by remembering your position; who you are and what you have obliged yourself to be."

The hon. Leader of the Opposition lamented about what he perceives to be an abuse of Parliament and the Constitution, and so forth, yesterday, but when they took office way back when, they ran this country without a Parliament for over nine months, and that was not a breach of the Constitution back then. No, it was not. But everything that this Government has done so far in regards to the state of emergency, we have respected the laws of Trinidad and Tobago and the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, we are here today to speak about the Government's commitment to upholding the principle of constitutionality and parliamentary accountability. That is what we are here for. We are here today to discuss it; something the PNM cannot credibly speak about.

We were not the ones who attacked constitutionally-protected rights and institutions. We were not the ones interfering with a sitting Chief Justice and threatened him that he should resign, or else. I will not say which Member said that, but he is not here—number 37, the Member for San Fernando East. We were not the ones who presided over rank discrimination in the matter of the Maha Sabha's radio licence. We were not the ones. We were not the ones who discriminated against Feroza Ramjohn and Devant Maharaj, and I know Devant was here. I wish he was here now. We were not the ones. We were not the ones who refused to listen to people when they said, no smelter.

No, we are the ones who fought against such abuses of democracy under the PNM. It is our dedication to struggle against tyranny that today reinforces our resolve to reject any forms of constitutional and parliamentary abuse. Not under this Prime Minister and not under this Government will you ever see that! You will never see it!

The hon. Leader of the Opposition complained; he kept speaking about the rank neglect and gross mismanagement of national security under the former PNM, but we have to include all of these facts here today. We have to let the people of this country know that the state of emergency was imposed because of what they—the 12 below—have left us with. It is because they turned a blind eye

to the criminal elements which seized hold of our once peaceful society that we are here today. They criticized us when we brought the hanging Bill. They did not support it. They did not support it! And we are bringing the state of emergency extension and they said they are not going to support it also! Anything to deal with criminality in this country, you will not get support from the 12 below! You will not get it!

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** Calm down, calm down.

**Hon. C. Partap:** This situation—no, I would speak! You all had your chances! You be calm when you talk; I will talk here! [*Desk thumping*] Because it is a state which you have put you us in and I am not going to be calm!

**Mr. Roberts:** Yes, man.

**Hon. C. Partap:** It is time to wake this country up to what you have left behind! [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Member:** "You giving me a headache."

**Hon. C. Partap:** There is Panadol in the pantry for headaches! [*Laughter*] Panadol in the pantry!

The situation built momentum under the PNM until it reached a point where the criminals thought that they could inflict an unprecedented reign of terror on the people of Trinidad and Tobago, but we, the Government, took swift and decisive action. Yes, it was the decision of the Prime Minister. Tomorrow will make it two weeks, that swift and decisive decision to put the state of emergency that stopped not only criminality, but also other elements that were brewing to destabilize the Government and the country.

Hindsight, it is said, is 20/20. We made a decision based on information that we had at a particular point in time. A good decision is one which would still be made even after we have had some time to see the implementation and some of its consequences. History will judge us that we made the right decision at the right time to the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

On the evening of Sunday, August 21, 2011 when the hon. Prime Minister addressed the media and this nation and announced a state of emergency and the intended imposition of a curfew in crime hot spot areas, she did so after consulting and receiving the support of every Minister of the Government, and the relevant heads of the protective services and members of the National Security

Council. I assure you that the decision to declare the state of emergency was not an easy one to make or to support. It was a decision not taken lightly, given the obvious and wide-reaching effects it was bound to have.

Today, having had some time to reflect on the immediate effects of that decision to declare a state of emergency, I want to advise that I am more convinced now, more than ever, that it was the right and it was a good decision at the time. [*Desk thumping*] As our Prime Minister continuously underscores, we are answerable to the people of this country for every action that the Government takes. In the end, we are answerable to the people. That is the essence of democracy. I am convinced that history and our people will not judge us by the problems and challenges we face now, but how we responded to them and the response over the last two weeks.

As such, it is my hope that when citizens and history judge us, they would say, we stood by their side and confronted the criminals head-on and defended this nation against the criminals who seek to rob, kill, rape, pillage and destroy our people and our way of life. I had hoped that they would say that the Parliament, their elected representatives, the Opposition included, would have put aside their partisan political bias and stand together, shoulder to shoulder, creating an impenetrable wall of protection against the invading criminal elements, as together we aspire to achieve the objective of safety and security for all Trinidad and Tobago. But, sadly, that is not the case.

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** "You sounding like Basdeo Panday now."

**8.30p.m.**

**Hon. C. Partap:** I do not care who I sound like. Today we debate the state of emergency and you can make all the jokes you want. Criminality is not a joke; crime is not a joke in this country any more. Yes, we are taking a hard stand, a hard stand [*Laughter*] not a soft one, a very hard stand.

Mr. Speaker, the circumstances under which we are meeting here today could not be more severe. We are here to debate the issues directly related to protecting the lives of our citizens and stamping out the power and influence of the criminal elements, who, for almost 10 years, have held this country to ransom—all of us to ransom.

It feels like the people of Trinidad and Tobago are liberated. They are going out more—I mean the curfew is there, but they are going out. They are happy they can walk the streets. They could walk the streets for the first time in 10 years—

and night. The curfew starts at 9.00 in some areas, and in some areas there is no curfew so they can walk the streets. In my constituency they are very happy, they are very happy. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** Your people were protesting the other day.

**Hon. C. Partap:** Aww, Point Fortin, I will not get into that. The hon. Jack Warner and myself are going up there to take care of that problem. That is why we are in government, to treat with people and to make sure their needs are taken care of, and they even came to your constituency to make sure your needs were taken care of. So I dismiss your little—[*Interruption*]

In addition, based on the intelligence gathered previously, both under this Government and the last, let me make it clear, we developed a clear idea of where, how, when and what strategy to employ in order to decisively intervene and quell criminal and gang activity. As a Minister in the Ministry of National Security, I am happy to report to this House and to the nation through you, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of the People's Partnership has started to turn back the tide of criminality and criminal activity.

I know that the Opposition is fired up because they expected to find fertile ground for all their arguments in favour of protecting and defending the criminals—all arguments. They come here and they say we use the gang legislation, but when we pass laws this Government intends to use them. We intend to use them. When they passed the DNA legislation—and the hon. Member for St. Joseph, the Minister of Justice, will know—it was not effected. A custodian was not appointed and once a custodian is not appointed it is ineffectual. We pass laws to use them.

How long was the DNA bill passed? For a long time, for a very long time and still. I know the Minister would be bringing it in his next legislation push soon, the amendments to that Bill, so that we can use it, we can operationalize the DNA legislation, and I thank him. Because it would be one more bullet in the chamber against the criminals.

I would urge them to listen carefully, and I would also urge them to take note that despite their fervent efforts at misinformation and their deliberate attempts to misrepresent the focus and the purpose of the state of emergency, the vast majority of people in this country patriotically stand beside us. They are in support of it and you know they have not found any grounds whatsoever. In fact, I heard one man say yesterday they were at their worst, the Opposition was at its worst yesterday. When they came across TV they were at their worst.

Using the intelligence gathered through the agencies of the State, we mapped out a clear intervention plan and moved to implement it. The state of emergency declared in our nation was meant to ensure that we used the intelligence that we gathered in our operations and to focus our protective services and defence resources, so that the outcome would have been to corner, extract, detain and bring to justice the criminal elements in this country, and, Mr. Speaker, I am here to say it is working. Over 1, 000 people have been detained and I know almost 400 under the gangs have been detained.

The state of emergency was declared so that, as we engage the support of the defence forces, we also take our people off the streets through the implementation of the curfew. That is what it was meant to do. It was to ensure in the operations that we smoke out and detain the criminals, so that we do not leave the law-abiding citizens vulnerable and none of them will be left vulnerable after the extension of the state of emergency.

The hon. Prime Minister has said time and time again that the protection of the citizens of this great country is our first priority and that has not changed. We will not stop until this country is safe again. Our hon. Prime Minister is a leader who leads by example. She has put the safety and security of her people first. [*Desk thumping*] She has responded to a looming threat with courage and conviction, and I am proud to stand here today as a Minister in her Government. [*Desk thumping*] As was rightly said yesterday on the other side, what a man could not do, a woman is doing.

While many are asleep, the members and heads of the protective services, which include the defence force, the coast guard and the police, have been doing yeoman service: securing our streets and our homes. I want to personally express my sincerest thanks to them for their dedication not only to duty but to country. I am overwhelmed by the level of commitment that they have demonstrated during this state of emergency, and I today want to pay tribute to their courage and their loyalty to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

To all of those who have called and provided information which has led to busts and arrests which have been made, I say to them thank you for your courage—thank you for your courage. This proves that this is not only the Government and security forces fighting this war, but the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago have joined in the effort to defeat the criminals who have invaded their communities. It is no longer the Government against the criminals; it is Trinidad and Tobago against the criminals, and if the Opposition does not want to join, they will be left behind as they have been on May 24, 2010. The people of

Trinidad and Tobago, like the People's Partnership Government, believe that our way of life is worth fighting for; not the way of life that they have been forced to adapt to under the PNM of the last nine years, where the average citizen was forced to imprison themselves behind burglar proof bars and to adjust to self-imposed curfews.

That, Mr. Speaker, is not the true Trinbagonian way of life. That is not the true Trinbagonian way of life. Our way of life is one of river and beach limes, free from bandit terror, of enjoying the fruits of our labour free from the covetous eyes of a kidnapper, of a peaceful, close-knit community free from the threat of gangs. This is a battle to restore our way of life, and it is a battle that we, the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will win. [*Desk thumping*]

For the sake of a peaceful future for our children, in the honour of the fallen innocent who have been claimed by the murderous frenzy and inspired by the tenacity of our citizens and our security forces to win this war, I pledge to you today that we will not stop until we have reestablished law and order in Trinidad and Tobago. We will not stop until we have secured justice for every murder victim, so that their families can finally rest in peace. We will not stop until every kidnapper is put behind bars, so that their survivors could no longer live in fear that their tormentors are on the loose. We will not stop until every bandit and rapist are made to account to the courts for their crimes.

As I sat in the Chamber and I listened to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday, I could not believe my ears. I heard him say that the former PNM Government dealt with kidnapping. In the words of my friend from Diego Martin North/East, I say: "What arrant nonsense and dotishness." They never dealt with anything!

**Mr. Speaker:** Let us be careful with our language. Arrant nonsense, I want to eradicate that from our dictionary and that other word that you used. What is the word?

**Hon. Member: "**Dotishness."

**Mr. Speaker:** Let us not go there, please. You can express yourself eloquently. Thank you, very much.

**Hon. C. Partap:** My apologies, Mr. Speaker, and I withdraw the statement.

From 2003 to 2009, there were over 1, 310 kidnappings committed in Trinidad and Tobago. How many of the kidnappers did the previous administration arrest? How

many of them are behind bars? Tell us, Mr. Speaker. Let them tell us how many of them are behind bars. They stand here to extol the virtues of SAUTT, an organization that they refused to bring under the ambit of the law, despite numerous promises to the contrary, while maligning the character of one of the most honorable men I have ever met and have the pleasure of knowing, the hon. Minister of National Security, Brig. John Sandy.

This is a man who served this nation with distinction and whose life is the very definition of duty to one's country, and I am humbled to go every day to that office and sit with the Minister—humbled every day. He is doing what the former Minister of National Security had failed to do and that is to act.

Then again Albert Einstein said "Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds", but despite such resistance we continue to pursue our cause. Winston Churchill wisely noted, and I quote "The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end it is there."

Our detractors cannot deny that the PNM failed to deal with the criminals, our detractors cannot deny that this Prime Minister has the courage to risk her own personal safety and to face the violent enemy.

**8.45 p.m.**

They cannot ignore the strides that we are making in arresting notorious villains who have previously thought themselves to be untouchable in this country.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I remember yesterday they were saying, "You haven't picked up anybody in suits and you only picked up people in three-quarter pants." We are taking them all! Big fish, small fish, we are taking all the fishes down.

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

**Miss Marlene McDonald** (*Port of Spain South*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker; thank you Members on both sides of the House. Mr. Speaker, I have been privileged to be a Member of Parliament from November of 2007 to date—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Warner:** Same time with me?

**Miss M. McDonald:** That is right—and I want to state that I was also privileged to be the recipient of a sound PNM education. That education will allow me to behave in a particular way. I have armed myself with the rudiments of speaking and speaking properly, the use of language.

Mr. Speaker, as I stand in this Parliament, I will not shout at you, I will not bawl at you, I will not scream at you. I will use my basic education to explain myself. I would always remember that I am in the hallowed walls of the Parliament Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago. I am not in a "rum shop". The national community is looking at me and so they expect—even my constituents, as I address them—a certain level of behaviour from me. [*Interruption*] I said my constituents. They are looking at me and I will not be deterred or distracted by the other side.

Mr. Speaker, what I have witnessed was the first time I have seen this for the three and half years that I have been in this Parliament and, believe me, it pains me. On a serious and critical issue as the state of emergency that we now find ourselves in, to sit here and to stomach that type of behaviour, I think it is very unbecoming of any MP on either side of the House.

We are here today seeking an extension of the state of emergency for a further three-month period.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

I have listened yesterday and today. I think I have listened to over 10 Government MPs and tried to assess what might have been a proper justification for this state of emergency. I have arrived at a decision, or conclusion I should say, this evening that for reasons best known to the Government this state of emergency was called. For whatever reason, the Minister of National Security cannot share with this House, and cannot share with the national community, what is this looming crisis that would have caused this massacre.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to tell you that before May 24, 2010, this is the same group who were running up and down this country, lambasting the People's National Movement that we did not have the will; we did not have the temerity; we did not have the wherewithal to deal with crime. So, I looked at their policy document because I recalled the Leader of Government Business, the Member for Oropouche East, said that the manifesto of the UNC—this is the policy document. I looked at the 120 days of immediate action and at point 11 on page 12, it says:

> "We will prepare an immediate action plan for containing criminal activities and reducing the number of murders—this first phase will be from June 2010 to December 2011."

At No. 13:

> "We will deploy police on the streets, on the beat and in the communities and increase police presence everywhere."

That was in the plan. I do not know if the Minister of National Security is aware of this because when I talk about issues in my community, I will be talking about the police post and whatnot. So this is certainly not in keeping with the 120-day plan.

At No. 14 it says:

> "We will initiate a process to make every police station a centre for crime containment and reduction, crime fighting, community policing, statistical information gathering and communication link to the National Operations centre and we will establish five (5) model stations as the pilot."

Nothing has been done.

When I went on to read the chapter on crime, there was nothing in there which speaks to any state of emergency. Absolutely none! There were several little programmes, and actually the Member for Arouca/Maloney spoke about the Repeat Offenders Programme. That was in there. As a matter of fact, they are going to rejuvenate it. I am sure that that programme was well equipped, but now we have stopped it and have affected some of the very hot spot areas, like my own, because I have a hot spot constituency, especially the eastern proportion of my constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that on the PNM side—and this is what all the MPs would have said over the past two days—the PNM's position is that we do not support criminals and we do not support criminal activities. That is clear, [*Desk thumping*] but we know that each government has a responsibility to curb and to deal with crime. Each government has several options open to it in order to deal with crime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, no one could deny the fact that this Opposition has acted responsibly in the whole session of Parliament, and we have collaborated with the Government on several pieces of legislation. We have collaborated with the Government on the Procurement Bill which went to a joint select committee. We voted for the 2010/2011 budget because we recognized that they were basically the PNM's policies which were still being utilized, and how can we vote against our own policies? So we support the Government. We collaborated on the Anti-Gang Bill and the Bail (Amdt.) Bill. Both went jointly because they work hand in hand. They were like complementary goods. They work hand in hand and both Bills went to a joint select committee. We collaborated on the Interception of Communications Bill. We collaborated on the Firearms (Amdt.) Bill.

I sat here—it pains me—and listened to the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla saying that PNM has done nothing, and many of the MPs said it. But I want to say that this country has adjudicated on the PNM's performance last year May 24. You are in the chair now. It is not the PNM's action that is being determined. It is the action of this Government. [*Desk thumping*] It is you who said that you are able to deal with crime. We did not have the wherewithal to deal with it.

**Miss Hospedales:** That is what they said.

**Miss M. Mc Donald:** And to sit here—Member for Chaguanas East, every single thing was the PNM and the PNM and the PNM. It is over a year. It is 16 months. It is time to settle down and get down to doing the people's business. [*Desk thumping*] You just have 44 more months in prison. [*Interruption*]

**Dr. Rowley:** In prison?

**Mr. Roberts:** In prison?

**Miss Hospedales:** Sorry. Forty-four more months in government.

**Dr. Browne:** Until they go to prison.

**Miss M. Mc Donald:** Forty-four more months before we go to election.

**Dr. Rowley:** That is the maximum.

**Miss M. Mc Donald:** That is maximum. Sixteen gone and we are still hearing about PNM. We are still hearing about the PNM, and I thought— because some of us made light on the Government side of this debate. Some of you certainly came here unprepared, laughing, "gerrying" and giggling. This is something that I took very seriously because when you are about taking away the rights of people, you cannot—for example, I will tell you what. I started a walkabout in my constituency in the West, in St. James and coming through, I am about to approach Woodbrook and I could not go last weekend because those regulations stopped me from doing so. I am walking with a team of persons from my constituency. We could not do it. So I look at this—you have taken that away from me. You have taken away two days of walking from me.

So when I came here I expected to hear cogent arguments from the Government as to why this thing was called, and you are now asking for an extension of three months. A question then came up: why could the Government not utilize our mechanisms? We as the PNM, we see an effective police service as being the response to crime. Yes, a state of emergency will have gains here and there, short-term gains, but that is only temporary in nature. You need a more

sustained plan to deal with crime, and the PNM's answer was having an effective and efficient police service. That is your response to crime. First, you detain the person; you garner their evidence; you charge that person; and you go to get a successful conviction. Tell me, how did we reach in this situation? Tell me how this country is in this situation today. I would like to know.

I came here to get answers. I did not come here for people to bash me because I am a PNM. I stand proud. PNM is my party. [*Desk thumping*] I love my party and I love my country. So I came here to get answers. I am not going to be disrespectful to my colleagues on the other side. Certainly not, and I do not think any one of them could say that I have ever been disrespectful. I will not do it. We are all elected Members of Parliament. We are representing the people's interest in here. We must respect each other. We must do that.

Mr. Speaker, the question I have is—I want to examine, I should say, mechanisms which this Parliament has given the Government on the request of the Government. I do not want to be too long. I want to be brief. I want to take you to the anti-gang legislation and show this House and, by extension, the national community, the clauses in the Anti-Gang Act.

**9.00 p.m.**

I would like to show you how it works with the Bail (Amdt.) Bill and I want to show you the Dangerous Drugs Act, how people could have been charged. Those three pieces of legislation could have done a lot of the work that I see is happening now. You are holding people—yesterday in the newspapers, my leader here showed me, 124 persons were arrested for varying reasons and hear for what: outstanding warrants, possession of drugs, suspected gang members. Now tell me?

You know, when the Minister of National Security opened the debate this morning, this is what he said, and I do not know if he understood because I took note of it. He said the existing anti-crime laws—I took it down verbatim— will be enforced. Now, now, why did you not enforce those laws—they are there available. Why did you not utilize them? Those are your tools. You utilize your tools. And the state of emergency is really the last-ditch effort. That is where you go. That is the last tool; that is the last that you should utilize.

Now you have played your hands, some of those criminals sit there waiting. What we are doing—going around the country—look at my constituency, Nelson Street, George Street, Duncan Street. My constituents know that I am coming here today and so they sent to me a list of names. I hope I can find it. I am not going to

call any names, but basically what they are saying is—here it is, residents of George and Nelson Street who are not gang members but were detained. I know basically—[*Interruption*]—no. Do not worry.

There is one name here—I know basically the names here. I know them but there is one here in particular. I know he is about 60 years old, a very decent man. They call him Birdman. He has a birdcage, also walking along George Street whenever you go to the soup kitchen, when I go to visit my chairman there, and you see him walking with his birdcage. He was just nabbed and as my friend from Diego Martin, my colleague, said, it was so humiliating to see these young men being herded like cattle in the back of these vans, all because of their stereotype, these particular areas because they are wearing a pants that is falling off their behind and a vest, and their hair might be in plaits, and wearing slippers or sneakers—all along Duncan Street and "they just grabbing".

Now, yesterday, I also learnt from the Minister that 1, 143 people were detained. Now that tells me a story. If you knew what you were looking for, would you detain 1, 143? And on what basis were these people detained—and 24 guns? Tell me. But I will hold my thoughts there for a moment whilst I go through the Anti-Gang and the Bail (Amdt.) Bill.

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was part of that Joint Select Committee established here in Parliament to deal with the Anti-Gang and the Bail (Amdt.) Bill. And Mr. Deputy-Speaker, my political leader and Opposition Leader stated all the people who were on that committee, and basically there were seven members of the Government, three from the Opposition—two from the Lower House, one from the Senate—and two from the Independent Bench and the chairman who was Mr. Anand Ramlogan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this committee met in eight sessions commencing from January 11, 2011 down to the February 28, because Mr. Ramlogan, the AG said to us that we needed to report in three months back to Parliament, because the crime—they had recognized as we did and we came together—was spiralling, and we needed this draconian legislation to curb and suppress gang warfare in this country, and that is what we did. The committee met and we looked at the Anti-Gang Bill which was to make provision for the suppression of associations created for unlawful means and gains in this country.

I want to share with this Parliament and the national community how we went about doing our business in that committee, and I must say that it was indeed a pleasure working with all the Members on that committee, and of course, the hon.

Minister of National Security was also on that committee, and he will remember the many Monday mornings we met from 9.00 or 10.00 until sometimes, two o'clock on Monday afternoons.

What the Committee did was, we decided we would not have all the answers, and so we decided we are going to co-opt people to assist us, to guide us, people with special skills, and so we had two people coming in, two technocrats: one from the Law Reform Commission and the other one from the Chief Parliamentary Counsel's department. We also requested written submissions from the Criminal Bar Association to guide us on the Anti-Gang as well as the Bail (Amdt.) Bills. The committee agreed that a specialist from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service should come to the committee and do a special presentation on street gangs in Trinidad and Tobago and to deal with the psychology, the mentality and consequences of gang and gang-related activities. So it was quite an interesting committee and we went about this very diligently and very conscientiously.

From this presentation, we gained a greater insight into the operation of criminal gangs and gang-related activities in Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Deputy-Speaker, the committee was told by that representative—he was an assistant superintendent—that if the Anti-Gang legislation is passed in the Parliament, it will assist greatly in the fight against crime because you now have a tool. This country never had that tool. The PNM never had that tool of this Anti-Gang Legislation. We never did.

As a matter of fact, when we demitted office, the then Attorney General, Mr. Jeremie, had done a draft and left a draft, and that is the draft that came to Parliament, and of course, we worked on it in the Joint Select Committee, so actually, it was really the PNM putting things in place. It so happened that we demitted office. But, the point about it is that we did not say that we are not going to be responsible. We recognize that crime is a problem, and so we joined hands with our brothers and sisters on the other side and the Independent Bench and we sat and we worked on this.

I am saying we were giving the Government a tool, a crime-fighting tool, to work with, and that would have been Parliament's response to the crime. Why did you not use it before calling a state of emergency which is the last-ditch effort? Because, by the admission of the Minister of National Security, he said this morning, they will—the existing anti-crime laws—will now be enforced, and he is correct. Because I have the Proclamation Order here, even for the Bail (Amdt.) Bill because you see they work hand in hand. So both of them—first and

foremost, the Anti-Gang Bill was assented to on May 23 and went to the President. He signed off on the twelfth day of May to make it operationalized on August 15—both for the Anti-Gang as well as the Bail.

Now, we were hustled to do this; we saw the urgency to do this. And having gotten it, what did the Government do? They sat on it without trying to implement it. We know there is a gang problem in this country; this was Parliament's response. You know what that gang Bill did? That gang Bill created offences against gang members and association with gangs and harbouring of persons, children and adults. It created all these offences and these were new offences.

As a matter of fact, if you peruse the anti-gang legislation, 25 new offences went into that legislation, and that was done from the Joint Select Committee. Why did we not use it? We went through those clauses in the Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, clause by clause as if we were in committee stage in the Parliament. It was agreed—the first thing—that the objective was to outline measures to provide the society with protection from criminal activities.

The next important point is that we introduced stiff penalties—you know that Minister of National Security—which we knew were draconian but we wanted it to act as a deterrent to would-be gang members. That is what we were doing. We were setting up what you call a demonstration effect—you do this, it is $500, 000, it is a $100, 000, or 25 years in jail. We looked at the area; we deliberated on children at risk and those youths who would have fallen through the crack. And you know what the committee said? Minister, could you recall? That these children are at risk and the youth must attend the MILAT and the MYPART Programme. If you read the report, it is in here, that those children should attend.

Do you know why? Because it is under the Ministry of National Security, and there is a component in those two programmes which speaks to discipline, and what better place to learn discipline than the army? You would know, Brigadier. What are they doing now? They are moving MILAT and MYPART from the Ministry of National Security, placing them in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education before they kill it, and therefore that component of the discipline and the training would be removed and it is now, as far as I am concerned, educational driven. How will this help those children we identified and those youths at risk that we spoke about at the Joint Select Committee? How will it do it?

I feel very passionate about this because I was part of this; I was part of the decision-making. In this a lot of people said it was draconian but we said, and you recall the AG boasting, we have to deal with the rude boys and the bad boys. That

is what he said. He said that tough times need tough measures. "You know the AG always talking tough" and we gave you all the tough legislation to deal with the tough times we are living in. And what did we do with it? What did we do with it?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, after we completed all of our deliberations on the Anti-gang, the report says at 14.2, and I have to read it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

> "…that an aggressive public education campaign should be implemented as promised and with haste to ensure that members of the public are informed about the legislation and the penalties applied for violation thereof."

**9.15 p.m.**

Do you know why we did that? The Attorney General took the undertaking that he would do that, because we recognized that it was draconian in nature. We recognized this was the first time that Trinidad and Tobago would have been receiving such legislation. And so we said a public campaign telling people, notifying people and educating people on this Bill, should be done. This was never done, but we run out there and we call a state of emergency without giving this a chance. We did not give this a chance.

I want to do the job of the Attorney General tonight and I want to go through some of the clauses in the anti-gang legislation. I want to demonstrate to this House and the national community that we did not need a state of emergency. If we had done what we set out to do in this Bill, what you are doing now, we would have been able to do it here. Let me read it. These are new offences. Under section 6—Mr. Deputy Speaker you are also part of it, so you know that I am on the right track and all that I am saying here is quite correct.

Section 6 states:

"Coercing or encouraging gang membership

A person who, by any means, coerces, encourages, entices, aids or abets another person to be a gang member commits an offence and is liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for twenty-five years."

So you coerce, you force, abet somebody or aid somebody to become a gang member, 25 years for you.

"Preventing gang member from leaving gang"

We looked at that situation. Sometimes you join the gang, but they have their little culture inside there. "Yuh cyah leave de gang. Yuh fraid tuh leave de gang. Dey threatening you. Yuh know if yuh join something yuh cyah come out; listen to this."

"A person who prevents or attempts to prevent a gang member from leaving the membership of a gang, whether by coercion or otherwise, commits an offence and is liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for twenty-five years."

Hear that? This is it now.

"Possession of bullet-proof vest, ..."

We looked at all this.

"firearm or ammunition for benefit of gang

A person who has in his possession or under his care or control a bullet-proof vest, firearm or ammunition, whether lawfully obtained or not, which he intends to use or ought to know will be used"—in any kind of gang activity—"is liable on conviction on indictment...to imprisonment for fifteen years."

We did not stop there. We created another offence:

"Harbouring or concealing gang members

10.(1) A person who harbours a person whom he knows or ought to know is a gang member or is wanted by any member of the law enforcement...for any gang-related activity commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to...imprisonment for five years."

When you know that this person is wanted by the police or any other authority and you know the person to be a gang member and you deliberately conceal and harbour that person in your home or wherever and you are convicted, it is five years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us look at police powers of entry, search and arrest. This is what is instructive. Section 12 might be mindful for all of us; section 12(1), (2) and (3). Look at them. I want to read it so the national community could hear it because they were not educated so I am educating them. Section 12(1) states:

"A police officer may arrest without warrant a person whom he has reasonable cause to believe to be gang member or whom he has reasonable cause to believe has committed an offence under this Act."

Now, now, now. This is without a warrant. You did not need a state of emergency giving wide powers to do something like this. It is contained in here.

Section 12(2) states:

> "A police officer may, with a warrant issued by a Magistrate so enabling him to do, enter any dwelling house and search the same if he has reasonable cause to believe that a gang member may be found in that dwelling house."

This is the only one where you need to get a warrant if it is a dwelling house. If it is a dwelling house, you need to get a warrant issued by a Magistrate. Do you need a state of emergency to do that? Do you? The answer is no.

Section 12(3) states:

> "A police officer may enter"—without a warrant—"and search any place or premises not used as a dwelling house...if he has reasonable cause to believe that a gang member may be found in such place or premises."

So, therefore, do you need a state of emergency for this? The answer is no.

When we go to Nelson Street, because I have to talk about my constituency, George Street and Duncan Street and we just pick up everybody and pelt them in the van, you did not need a state of emergency to do that. [*Desk thumping*] You had the powers under the anti-gang legislation to do that, when you are dealing with gang members. The hon. Minister of National Security said yesterday when he was giving his figures, 366 people we detained under the anti-gang legislation. That is what he said, 366. Do you need, or do you think it was necessary to use, a state of emergency to capture these 366? No, you did not. It is all in here.

Of course, at section 13(1) down to subsection (7), we look at all the rights of the detainee. But this must be read in conjunction with—let me, for the purposes of this Act—the law enforcement authorities, that is what you would see. My colleague from Laventille West asked who is a police officer. It is in the interpretation section under "law enforcement authorities". It includes, (a) a police officer, that is somebody—the Police Service, established under the Police Service Act.

Of course you have the Customs and Excise Division which can also carry out that type of activity. There is the Board of Inland Revenue established under the Income Tax Act. There is the Defence Force established under the Defence Force Act; the Prison Service established under the Prison Service Act and any other agency of the State in which investigative powers have been vested, and all those powers are contained in the Act. You did not need, and I will argue this right down, a state of emergency to deal with gangs and gang violence in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you were there and I know that the second part of it would be the Bail (Amdt.) Bill. At the committee stage we also looked at the Bail (Amdt.) Bill. Basically, what the Bail (Amdt.) Bill did, having created the offences under the anti-gang legislation, it now kicked in to confer on the court the right to deny bail to a person who is a gang member. So, we have criminalized gang membership in this country. We also said that the court shall not grant bail to a person who is over 18 years and is charged with an offence under the proposed anti-gang legislation. So, when you are reading the anti-gang legislation, it must be done in conjunction with the Bail (Amdt.) Bill. As you create the offences, you look to the Bail (Amdt.) Bill to see what type of punitive action, what is the bail and whatnot and what is going to happen there. This was not utilized.

As if that was not sufficient, I also understand that some people were detained for being in possession of dangerous drugs. According to the Dangerous Drugs Act of 1991, as amended by the Dangerous Drugs (Amdt.) Bill of 2000, Act No. 44 of 2000, this is, if you catch someone with dangerous drugs, this is the tool the Government has in its hand. Section 5 states:

> "A person who cultivates, gathers or produces any marijuana, except where he does so under a licence…or where he is acting under the supervision of a person having such a licence, commits an offence…"

All those growers of marijuana and cultivators of marijuana, you did not need a state of emergency to detain them. It is said upon summary conviction that person is liable to a fine of $50, 000 and to imprisonment for 10 years, or it could be upon conviction on indictment to a fine of, very draconian, $100, 000, or where there is evidence of the street value of the marijuana, where that street value is 10 times the street value of the marijuana, whichever is greater, you get imprisonment for 25 years to life. That is the tool you have. That is marijuana in section 2. In section 3, it states that the same thing applies if it is cocaine.

If you want to discuss the trafficking, subsection (5) states:

> "A person who commits the offence of trafficking in a dangerous drug or being in possession of a dangerous drug for the purpose of trafficking, is liable upon conviction on indictment to a fine of one hundred thousand dollars…."

Where the street value is three times the value of whatever dangerous drug, be it marijuana, opium or cocaine, you are to be imprisoned for 25 years to life. It is all here. You can go to the parent Act; the Dangerous Drugs Act of 1991. The

amendment is Act No. 44 of 2000. You have the tools. We have the tools to deal with the blue-collar crime, because that is the crime that we see. It is very visible. "Ah little 19-year-old boy with $21 million worth wrap up in two suitcases, I ask the question: 'Dis boy, unemployed, unemployable, who finance that?'" He is the—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made*: That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Dr. K. Rowley*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**9.30 p.m.**

**Miss Marlene McDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And thank you Member for Diego Martin West, and thank you Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara, thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my own opinion is that the Government panicked. They panicked when they saw 11 murders in 48 hours. They pushed that panic button. As some people described it, it was a knee-jerk response.

I would say that the PNM did not panic years ago, and I want to share something with you with respect to the problem we had many years ago with kidnapping. [*Interruption*] That is right.

The PNM's response was not a state of emergency, but instead, what we did, we strengthened the technological capabilities of gathering evidence by the police—that was what we did—which eventually led to a reduction in kidnapping. In 2001, there were 155 kidnappings in the country and it came all the way down to just four in 2011. There was indeed a new class of kidnapping which reared its head in about 2001, and that was kidnapping for ransom. There were seven of them in 2001; 31 in 2002 and by 2003 that figure went to 50 kidnappings for ransom.

What was the PNM's response? We did nothing! We did nothing, according to this Government. But, what was the response? We made a major intervention and we said, yes, this is the problem and we made kidnapping for ransom a non-bailable offence. And they opposed it! When you look at the *Hansard*, it was opposed. By 2003, that figure went to 50; 2004, 28; 2005 it went up to 58; and what we did is that we strengthened other pieces of legislation to make it easier for the passage of some of these in court. We also established an Anti-Kidnapping

Squad (AKS) with a battery of carefully selected and trained officers. In 2006 that figure went to 17; in 2007 it went down to 14; 2008, 17; 2009, 8; 2010, 7; 2011, well I have to be advised by the hon. Minister of National Security.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we did not have to call a state of emergency to do that. Our response was to have an efficient and effective police service; that is what we did. [*Desk thumping*] Just by way of example, just a couple of weeks ago we witnessed that debacle out in London with the riots. The riots then spread to Manchester and Birmingham. Did they call a state of emergency? No! What did they do? They beefed up their police service and they sent the police out into the communities. That was what they did, with all their capabilities and whatnot.

And then I read yesterdays newspapers about the Notting Hill carnival, one would have thought well, listen, no carnival this year because "the place hot", it is a hot spot; these places are hot spots. Oh no! Notting Hill carnival came off. And do you know what they did? They placed 6, 500 police officers on the streets, all right, no state of emergency. It is the will to utilize your legislation—it is your will. It is your will. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Government is asking for an extension, but I ask, how do you measure success or failure currently? We are coming to the end of the 15 days. It will end on Monday 05. How do you measure? Was it successful? I heard the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla say it was successful. What did we do up to yesterday? These are yesterday's figures: 1, 143 persons were detained. I hope to God—because I have to live here in this country—that when these persons begin to go to court that there is the evidence to have a successful conviction. I just hope—we will see when some of those hotshot attorneys begin to go to court then you will see the backlash of all of this.

Twenty four guns were discovered. Tell me, so what have you done? Abrogated the rights of individuals, your citizenry in the country, for 1, 143 persons? You do not know who—and these are the sardines and the "guabines". That is what! These are the little sardines, the little "guabines", the little "fry-dries", the anchovies. Which big fish do you have? Which shark, and which whale do you have on George Street, Duncan Street and Nelson Street? They are not the financiers of crime in this country. [*Desk thumping*]

When I am being told that "we caught a big fish"—now, I know Mr. Burkie. I know Mr. Burkie from Sea Lots east. I know him very well. All of a sudden he is "ah big fish", he is "up in the presidential suite"—I have never been there, you know. [*Interruption*] He is "up in the Hyatt" in a presidential suite "eh", with the

Government contract, $16, 000 found in a safe; every day he was going to pay by cash. "Poor soul, he could not even self understand that when you go to a presidential suite you need to use a card". You need to have a card, all right.

The point about it is, right now he has a self-help contract. As a matter of fact, a text came in to me today telling me—I showed my Leader here—showing me that self-help is now making way to pull back the contract from him. Yes, you are going to pull back the contract, because you have him detained. So you have frustrated the man's contract! You have frustrated it because he is in prison. One way of stopping a contract, frustrating it, is by being in prison. That is basic contact law—basic—and I am saying, listen, it is time—if the Government can show me out of this group here, all "dem little boys", my constituents on Duncan Street, Nelson Street and George Street, "all up in Picton", right across the board, show me the big fish inside of there. Show me.

There was a drug bust down in—let me see if I can find it. There was a drug bust in Chacachacare and $1.1 billion worth of drugs was discovered. Then in June last year a yacht which came from Chaguaramas was intercepted off the Spanish coast with $1 ½ billion worth of drugs. Which little gang leader staying in the Hyatt with $16, 000 in a safe, could finance that level of drugs? How could that happen—[*Desk thumping*] and living down in Sea Lots east? I know where he lives. You understand? Which one? Tell me.

If we are going to make—and that is why one of my constituents on Duncan Street, Miss Hazel Smith, said: "It smells like racism." She said "it smells like racism". "Who you are holding?" Who are you holding? Which one of these little boys—and you know what is going to happen? These big fishes in the country that we have not—the whales and the sharks they are still outside there laughing at all of us, and they are going to recruit a whole—because right now their little soldiers are in jail. So they are going and recruit a fresh set of soldiers. You know when this is going to stop. When we nip it from the head. "You got to go to the head and nip it from there." That is what you have to do.

So "doh" try to fool this country and say that you caught a big fish here, you caught a big fish there and—you have caught no whales, you have caught no sharks, you have caught "guabines", sardines, anchovies and fry-dries. That is what you have done! Make light of it! That is what you all have been doing since yesterday; making light of this state of emergency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, permit me to bring —sorry I turned my back on you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let me bring a constituency perspective to my debate. Mr.

Deputy Speaker, I am the Member of Parliament for Port of Spain South, and there are basically eight electoral districts there. We have St. James East, St. James West, Woodbrook, southern Port of Spain, St. Ann's River South, St. Ann's River central, we have East Dry River and Picton, eight electoral districts. And may I say that we have in Port of Spain South the largest number of polling divisions. There are 63 polling divisions in my constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from time to time you would have heard me talk about my constituency. This is really addressed to Minister Sandy, because the Minister knew that I had spoken to him about two or three times with respect to two of the police posts in my area; one in Plaisance Terrace, which took care of the Beverly Hills and the John John area and, of course, Picton, and one in the Mango Rose area which would have taken care of Nelson Street, George Street, Basilon Street and Belgrave Street. Both posts were removed and my constituents came to me. I thought it was serious, because you see these posts help to suppress crime in their area.

I spoke to the Minister about two or three times; Minister promised that something will be done. Now, I was also told on one occasion there would be police patrols. There are no patrols in the area—none whatsoever—and then we saw a spike. There are none! There are none! You know, just about three weeks ago I heard and I said okay and I told my constituents, I said that I am happy to hear that the Minister launched a confidence patrol which is supposed to be manned by the Defence Force, Minister? Good. To date you have removed my police post. You have deemed there now hot spots, but you replaced it with nothing; and not a confidence patrol in that area, not a police patrol in that area! And now you forced a state of emergency.

All the persons there in Mango Rose, if you go into Mango Rose—Minister, you know the area. You know they sell their punch and they sell the little hamburgers and whatnot at the entrance. People are suffering. They are suffering. That is in the east. In the west, Woodbrook is mine, St. James is mine, the Western Main Road. Think about all those punch men, all those people selling their little roti, their hamburgers, they have to send home their workers by at least 7.00 p.m.; because people might be living out of the area. Loss of income, mothers crying, St. James shut down, the stretch down in Vegas, I call it Vegas, that is Ariapita Avenue, shut down! I am saying, Sir, we need to look at this.

I have heard nothing about the adjustment in the curfew hours. I am saying, listen, and I am making a bold request that this curfew in these areas be lifted immediately; immediately—must be lifted. [*Desk thumping*]

The Member for Arouca/Maloney gave a full dissertation on what happened. She read all the supermarkets and the chicken and chips places. I listened to the names of all the shops "up by her", and what has happened. She showed you the economic losses to her constituents and I am talking about the economic losses in St. James, in Woodbrook and behind the bridge.

I need to tell the Government that you have lost credibility and when I sat here I might have been smiling, but you know what? When the Member for Laventille West did his presentation and he finished, he finished with a lovely literary phrase and it reminded me, it brought back days when I was at university. This is how I feel now in this country, because the words are so apt. I read this book called *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, who is a celebrated Nigerian writer. The prologue of the book says and I quote:

"Turning, and turning in the widening gyre;

the falcon cannot hear the falconer;

things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

mere anarchy is loosed upon the world…"

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is how we feel. The centre of this country we have lost it, it just cannot hold. This Government just cannot see. They have lost their way. [*Interruption*]

**Dr. Douglas:** [*Inaudible*].

**Miss M. McDonald:** I am not speaking to you! We have lost our way! They have lost their way! [*Crosstalk*] [*Interruption*] Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask for your protection, please!

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** And you have my protection, Member. But if you can address all your conversation to the Chair, you would avoid any crosstalk with other Members in the back and other Members on the other side. Please!

**Miss M. McDonald:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you, I thank you. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I call on the Minister to look at those hot spots, look at the removal of the police posts in the east portion of Port of Spain South, and see how best you could remedy that situation.

I want to also talk about certain projects in Port of Spain South. Before I demitted office as Minister of Community Development, we handed out a contract, through the Self-Help I believe, for the construction of the Picton Folk Performing Theatre on Picton Road. It would have been the first dance theatre in

east Port of Spain, and this group is responsible for attracting young persons from the streets in Beverly Hills, John John and Picton and bringing them to learn to play drums and dance. You will know about them, Sir, all of that. [*Interruption*] Yes, certainly, certainly.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**9.45 p.m.**

The foundation has been laid and the project was stopped when I demitted office and every week they come to my office.

For the second project, the Basilion Street Community Complex, a contract was given to a contractor via the self-help. We looked at the area. What we were trying to do—the PNM did nothing—but we were trying to get the youth off the street and channel their energies into sport and whatnot. I am sure the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara would agree with me. It would have housed the first swimming pool in East Port of Spain and the project—they stopped the contract even before it got started.

I have to thank the Ministry of Works because—

**Mr. Warner:** Ministry?

**Miss M. McDonald:** You did not wait for me to finish, Sir. [*Interruption*] I am being advised that you are getting your dollar salary.

Let me look at the housing. I am going to look at the housing in my area. The last PNM administration recognized, through the Vision 2020 Operational Plan, that one way to eradicate poverty was via housing. Indeed, there is a housing problem in East Port of Spain.

I recall, when I was a mere candidate in 2007 seeking political office, in October 2007 I accompanied the Opposition Leader, who was then the Minister of Housing and Settlements, to a sod-turning ceremony on Clifton Street and that was going to build four high-rise apartments. It would have been the first phase in the redevelopment of East Port of Spain. Seventy-eight units were built. That would have been the first phase.

The then PNM government then acquired all the lands down along the bus route, just opposite the abattoir by the market; all those lands there, which are now the detention pond and along the St. Joseph Road area.

We acquired all those lands because we were going to build housing. That would have been the second phase. We would have taken the people from the

apartments on Duncan Street, Nelson Street and George Street, because those buildings are past their life span, and we were going to house them in that second phase of development, which, when they moved out, we were going to start the third phase of development of East Port of Spain by redeveloping Nelson Street, George Street and Duncan Street. That was the plan.

I am asking again—sometimes when you take someone from a particular environment and take him to a better one, it does something to their mind and that was what we were looking at. Of course, I would not elaborate on the various social programmes because my colleagues would have dealt with that. I am not going to repeat them, but along with all the various social programmes to be utilized—

Mr. Speaker, from where I stand I do not think that the Government, the 10 speakers so far whom I have heard, have given me any justification to support an extension. First, they give me no justification for supporting the current one and certainly none was forthcoming to support the extension by three months to November 07.

I am saying, as I have demonstrated here tonight, that there were a number of crime fighting tools via legislation given by this Parliament that could have been utilized and it was not done. Instead, we heard from the Minister who said that the existing anti-crime laws will now be enforced. I hope they do, but they have played their hand using this last-ditch effort. I wish them all the best, but I cannot, and we on this Bench cannot, support an extension of the state of emergency.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Minister of Local Government (Hon. Chandresh Sharma):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have heard from speakers on both sides and, having heard the last speaker, perhaps it is a good place for me to start.

What does Trinidad and Tobago need now? What are the challenges we face? Where have we come from? Where do we intend to go? What appears to have happened in Trinidad and Tobago for many years is that the wrong energy was at work. For some reason, PNM got elected many years ago in 1956 and a number of things happened over that number of years of rule.

It went on to 1971 when, on a no-vote campaign, all seats contested in that election, 34 or 36, were won by the PNM. In fact, a PNM member had to become Leader of the Opposition in the person of Roy Richardson from Point Fortin. That

began to contaminate the process. The former Prime Minister, the Member for San Fernando East, came in 1971 on a no-vote campaign. Nobody voted for him because there was no contest really.

Then came 1986 when there was an election in which the PNM lost to the then NAR. There was a recount for that particular seat for San Fernando East and at some point the NAR-elected MPs or party officials said: "Let us not have a recount for that seat; let us give it up". Merle Stephens should have been the Member of Parliament in 1986. Again, that seemed to have contaminated the thinking of the leader then; started to make him feel like a little God, which is a dangerous thing.

My colleague, the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, is reading a book, *In Sickness and in Power*: *Illness in Heads of Government during the last 100 Years*. If this book had looked at the Caribbean, the former Prime Minister Manning would have been in this book.

What you had obtaining in Trinidad and Tobago is the contaminated energy of the PNM, contaminated with greed, corruption, discrimination, inequality of treatment, going after goods and services. What we are reaping today are the products of the PNM. All the Members want to find solutions today without looking at what has brought us here.

Our young sons and daughters who are in the gangs were infants only recently—18 years ago. Their own admission tells us that the population of the gang members is between the ages of 17 to 25. They are largely children born 17 to 25 years ago, born during the period of the PNM rule and they got contaminated. The PNM introduced programmes only for political gain; not for any other purpose.

When you look at what obtains, you also heard of the URP. So much has been said about the URP. You also heard from the PNM members themselves about the use of gang leaders to win elections. In an election in San Fernando West, two or three elections ago when the PNM won, they had gang leaders with guns. [*Two Members get up to leave*]

Look at the level of intelligence. That is the contaminated example of which I speak. [*Desk thumping*] It obtains all over this Parliament. This is what we end up with in government sometimes. This is the risk we run in this country.

My distinguished colleague, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, the former Minister of Works and Transport, the record will show that we have sat in this very Parliament and not a single project under that former Minister came in within budget and we are paying a price for that today. And the list goes on.

What does this contamination lead to? Let us look. This country has been blessed with energy resources, the richest in this part of the world; more money than we can spend. As Dr. Eric Williams, the former Prime Minister himself said, it passed like a dose of salts. At the end of the day, we have nothing to show for it. Absolutely nothing! So coming from those days to the period in which I have been a Member in this Parliament, the last 20 years, this previous PNM administration has not delivered a single project and the last that we can all count and be acquainted with is UDeCott.

Under the previous administration, UDeCott spent billions of dollars and has not delivered a single project within money budget and within time budget. In fact, when we look at the industry standards we apply all over the world, whether in the United Kingdom, Germany, Hong Kong, India; wherever, buildings that were built here—the residence of the Prime Minister is a good example, it is seen as one of the most expensive buildings in the world per square foot.

How do you arrive at that? It is what you put into the building. Today the building is a failure. You look at gypsum ceilings and tiles that are falling out and when you look at other buildings, the Member for Caroni East has presented a list to the national community; Hyatt is a good example and every single building—

**Miss McDonald:** Mr. Speaker, relevance please—36(1).

**Mr. Speaker:** I have allowed a certain laxity and the reason for it is that the nature of this debate is so wide and broad that I have not entertained any point of relevance. I wanted this debate to be as liberal as possible because of its national importance, hence the reason no one has been brought up on a point of relevance because of the interconnection between the first Motion and this second Motion.

I hear your point, but in the interest of ensuring that every Member has his say, I have allowed it. I have also allowed Members to read their speeches today. Again, because of the nature of the debate I will allow some flexibility.

In those circumstances, you may continue, hon. Member for Fyzabad.

**Hon. C. Sharma:** Thank you very much. I also thank the Member for Port of Spain South. The Member for Port of Spain South is preparing to become, after a career in politics, I think it is in scrap iron? [*Laughter*]

**10.00 p.m.**

The Member did indicate that earlier today, but that is not the point. That is not the point. I was making the point, Mr. Speaker, and you know one of the

things that has contaminated the minds of the PNM is truth. They cannot face the truth. They have lived in a false world. When they became ministers of government they became ministers of God. They thought they controlled everything. Everything in this country was theirs, from the employment practices to contracts being awarded to occupying State lands to breaking the rules to promotions, every single thing the PNM contaminated. They are paying a massive price for that. Mr. Speaker, it is clear, crystal clear, that the people of Trinidad and Tobago have rejected the PNM and will continue so to do. There is no coming back of the PNM for a long while.

So what did we end up with? We ended up with the PNM administration saying to the supporters of the PNM, "Do not worry. We will take care of you". So employment in police service was PNM contacts, getting an HDC house was PNM contacts. In fact, during our period, both the Member for Diego Martin West and Members of Parliament at the same time—[*Interruption*]—yes. CEPEP contracts, more than 100 were given to friends and family of the PNM. There was no process. Look at how it obtains differently today. There was absolutely no process.

You heard about HDC contracts being given out to friends and family of the PNM. So they thought they owned everything in this country. They did not understand that governance was separate from political party and the country is paying a dangerous price for it. While the Members for Port of Spain South and Arouca/Maloney and others are crying crocodile tears, they are not crying for those who that are being murdered. They are not crying for the victims of those who have murdered. [*Desk thumping*] The lowest detection rate in this part of the world was under the PNM. The lowest detection rate for any crimes in this country was under the PNM because they contaminated the process. In fact, it was the former Prime Minister who called the Marabella Police Station to "free up" his driver. Again, you still—the contamination from the days of the former Minister Solomon, who entered the police station to get his stepson out. You have seen Ministers of government interfering, under the PNM administration, in every single thing. [*Interruption*]

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order under Standing Order 36(5), in the absence of the Member for San Fernando East. I do not think it is fair for my colleague to say that the Member for San Fernando East called the police station to free anybody. It is in Marabella. It is in the public domain that a call was made enquiring about the whereabouts of his driver and I

know of no information which says that the Member for San Fernando East called the police station to free any prisoner. That is imputing motives to a Member of this House and I ask that he withdraw it. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Speaker:** I have made it very clear; I want to sustain that point. I have made it very clear the conduct, the character, of any Member of Parliament if you want to raise it we do it on a substantive Motion. So, hon. Member, I would ask you to kindly withdraw that remark about the Member for San Fernando East, and if you are willing to bring a substantive Motion on that matter, you bring it, but kindly withdraw it, please.

**Hon. C. Sharma:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker; matter withdrawn. I was making the point of political interference by former Ministers of government under the PNM, and it is sad—again I make the point of the award of contracts. When we saw—when this national community saw taxpayers' money being used to award contracts without due process, it means to say that for PNM supporters or for the PNM to contain power, they were prepared to engage in illegal activities and again we are reaping that benefit today. So the gangs did not come about overnight. When we saw the engagement of gangs and gang leaders campaigning with the PNM—that is what got them into office—it tells you something. [*Interruption*] Good! And my friend just confirmed it, Member for Laventille West. You see, at some point they would accept truth. Thank you, Sir. The point is, having used the PNM, having used the gangs to campaign, having used the gangs and awarded them contracts, what were you producing? What was going to be the fallout from it?

**Hon. Member:** [*Inaudible*]

**Hon. C. Sharma:** Exactly. So the murders that we see today, the gang warfares that we are seeing today and the loss of life—I was making the point that so many Members opposite were saying families are crying today. They did not have food for two weeks or they did not have income for two weeks as the case might be. But they are forgetting how many thousands have been murdered, how many victims of crime, and not a tear for them, because it is emotional to do it today. Not on one occasion did they go to a family who was murdered and say, "We are so sorry." [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Member:** No compassion.

**Hon. C. Sharma:** In fact, when we look at the records, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the records of engagement by Members of Parliament opposite, they come to the Parliament only because they do not want this country to succeed.

They do not want good for this country, because they are prepared to hold on to office regardless. That is their style, to hold power and nothing more, nothing less. When you look at the levels of discrimination that obtained under the PNM, there must be a fallout from it. When you saw citizens of this country in the likes of police officers having to go to the court to obtain justice, public servants—in my own constituency Ms. Ramjohn—having to go to the Privy Council because of political interference—the drug trade did not happen overnight. So this story they are claiming today were not the drugs and guns coming in under the watch of the PNM?

In fact, I remember a former Minister in the PNM administration operating a boat between the islands so that all of this that was happening over the years was under the watch of the PNM and the PNM was benefiting from it. There is no—that is very clear, the PNM benefited from it. Thank you. The PNM benefited from it. So today all that is happening is the seeds planted by the PNM, contaminated, contaminated. And they ended up planting seeds of hate, seeds of violence, seeds of inequality, seeds of favoritism and the list goes on because they were prepared to hold onto office regardless of cost. They did not care for Trinidad and Tobago.

When you look at the spread of projects, state expenditure in the constituency of Fyzabad, Mr. Speaker, I remember having to do self-help projects where we held barbecues and raffles to raise money to do water projects. In the PNM areas, no such thing was done. The projects were done through WASA. I remember having to raise monies to do electricity projects. Under the PNM areas, that did not obtain. So there was no equality of treatment, so people were looking on, and after a while people get fed up of that.

Nelson Mandela said it very clearly. He said, for 27 years the people looked on and at some point they said, "We have had enough of it". When you look at HDC homes, before this Government of 15 months no one knew how homes were awarded. They were secrets of the PNM. In fact, the Member for Port of Spain South, in closing of her contributions identified three, four, five projects. In the PNM areas, any number of projects could be had.

Theatre, we are the proud owners of steel band in Trinidad and Tobago and we have many steel band theatres in this country. But side by side with the steel band derived over the last 100 years is the tassa. There was not one tassa theatre to be had under the PNM, but "time for campaign" they are engaging all the tassa players in the country. They are not paying them, by the way. They are not paying. When the Member for Port of Spain South and the Member for Diego

Martin West have to present the nomination papers, they are going with tassa. But they did not build one tassa theatre, not one single tassa theatre. So, people are looking at that, Mr. Speaker. They are looking at those levels of inequality. So it is convenient to us.

Mr. Speaker, in this Parliament, meals are served as is required. I remember for the first, almost 25 years of my traveling life, traveling to Canada and Miami. The meals on the aircraft, on BWIA, I could not eat because—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, please; just now. Member for Port of Spain South, I was not here for your entire contribution but I did follow on the screen and I think that you got the full attention of this House. It is wrong to describe a Member of Parliament as a comedian. It is wrong to say this is comedy hour. If you and the Member for Diego Martin West believe that the Member's contribution is comical, I would ask you all to retire. [*Crosstalk*]—because you remarked "comedian". I heard you. Then I understand the Member for Port of Spain South said "comedy".

So I am just advising both of you to have respect for the Member of Parliament for Fyzabad. When he makes his contribution, could you allow him to make his contribution in silence? Just as how when you made yours, I insisted and protected you, Member for Diego Martin West, and therefore, I am asking you to give full attention to the Member for Fyzabad. You may continue, hon. Member, and you have my full protection. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. C. Sharma:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, after many hours of sitting in Parliament you may become a little tired and you may start conducting yourself like Stanford and Esther [*Laughter*]—[*Interruption*] but I mean, there is hope. Mr. Speaker, I was making the point—

**Mr. Speaker:** Withdraw that remark—

**Hon. C. Sharma:** Withdrawn, withdrawn!

**Mr. Speaker:** [*Crosstalk*] Yes, yes; please, please, quiet Members, Members, Members. Hon. Member for Fyzabad, focus on your contribution, ignore all crosstalk and would you kindly withdraw those remarks you attributed to the Members, please?

**Hon. C. Sharma:** I withdraw and I apologize to Stanford and Esther by creating any disturbance. I agree.

**10.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I was on the point of where we have found ourselves. The PNM engaged a firm from the United Kingdom called MORI, the MORI polls. The PNM

administration engaged in the MORI polls. They kept the reports hidden, because initially the reports were not favourable to the PNM administration, but they had signed a contract, so they had to continue. So, during the PNM administration, the MORI polls showed that the country was fed up with corruption under the PNM; they were fed up with inequality; they were fed up with the failure of WASA to deliver water; they were fed up with the services offered by PNM Members of Parliament. In fact, UNC Members of Parliament then scored higher than the PNM. So the contract ran up to a couple months ago.

What the MORI poll currently shows, that 78 per cent of the national community is pleased with the performance of the People's Partnership in crime fighting. [*Desk thumping*] In fact, it is the first time in almost 10 years that crime has dropped. The first time, with 15 months of this new Government, the murder rate, as we speak, is about 60 less than it was the last time. So the PNM do not like that. What do they have? What can they come up with? So far their arguments have been null and void, of no value.

They have introduced the race factor, and the Member for Port of Spain South concluded with racism. But who introduced it in the first instance, assuming it obtains? It is the PNM, because everywhere that the PNM had influence—and they peddle influence all over—you would have seen the inequality of treatment across the board in the country—from the engagement of persons in the public service, to promotions, to engagement in the police service, to promotions. In the public service, when others did above average, the PNM did everything to pull them down as far as going to court as well. Even when the courts ruled in favour, they appealed that too. They said they did not want the Privy Council, but when it was convenient they took matters as far as the Privy Council.

Mr. Speaker, the Government's performance to date is critical to examine and to appreciate. What does the MORI poll say about the Government's performance to date? The majority of those polled are satisfied with the Government's performance. This same survey which was conducted previously for the PNM, that result did not obtain for them and, by the way, they are aware of it.

Mr. Speaker, one of the questions polled was, "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country?" The majority polled is satisfied with how the People's Partnership is running the Government, because there is openness, there is transparency and accountability, and that is critical in governance.

I spoke earlier about changing the energy. If you want to get different results, you have to change the energy. The People's Partnership has brought in people's

energy. We are engaging more and more people. People are feeling satisfied across the board. We are seeing the distribution of the resources of the country going into every community. We are in Laventille, Cedros, Barrackpore, Port of Spain South and in Diego Martin West, everywhere in the country. For the first time, in the Ministry of Local Government, since its history, we have been able to do projects in every single electoral district at the same time, and under the PNM that did not obtain. The Prime Minister insists on fairness across the board. We represent the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and we are working for the people of Trinidad and Tobago 24/7.

Mr. Speaker, in the polls conducted, 48 per cent of the men polled was satisfied; 53 per cent of women; of young people between the ages of 18—34, 52 per cent was satisfied. This never obtained under the PNM; 35—54, 51 per cent—across the country—north, 55 per cent; south, 55 per cent; central, 58 per cent and Tobago, 52 per cent. What are they seeing? They are seeing fairness; they are seeing equality; and they are seeing an opportunity to breathe fresh air. The Prime Minister invited the national community to become part of the governance of Trinidad and Tobago. For the first time, citizens across the board—whether they came from NGOs, CBOs, business organizations, PTAs, business houses, church groups or sport groups, they saw an opportunity to participate.

For the first time the national festivals of this country started to get a window of opportunity; whether you were celebrating Emancipation; whether you were celebrating EID, Divali, Christmas or Carnival, the resources of the State reached everyone. Last year for Independence every community observed fireworks for the first time sponsored by the State. Under the PNM that did not obtain. So the fallouts we are seeing today would take some time to change, because we are putting new energy into it; pure, fresh and uncontaminated energy, and that is what is required.

In the area of roadworks in this country—roadworks include bridges, box drains—never before in the history of governance of Trinidad and Tobago has a Minister of Works gone to every community and done work. This has never happened before—[*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Member:** Never!

**Hon. C. Sharma:**—in such a short space of time. In every single community, new energy! [*Desk thumping*] The resources of the State are for every citizen regardless of where you live. This is what obtains under the People's Partnership.

At the Ministry of Education, as we speak, almost all our schools are ready for opening.

**Miss Hospedales:** That is not true.

**Hon. C. Sharma:** You do not understand the meaning of "almost'. [*Laughter and desk thumping*] Again, contamination! It would take some time to remove that contamination, because there is a mental block. There is a prayer in the mind of that Member of Parliament who made that comment: "I pray God doh leh all schools open. The People's Partnership must not look so good."

**Hon. Member:** Shame! Shame!

**Hon. C. Sharma:** That is how they operate. It is a contamination in the head; it is a culture. You know, I said they have planted and cultivated the seeds of disgust, of hate and of not wanting to see good. It has manifested itself, "doh matter how dey try."

Mr. Speaker, people are happy that the Government is performing. Why are they happy? They are seeing the resource of the State meeting them halfway. Today, under the PNM, they are talking about we did not bring information to them. They hid every bit of information they could. So many things were removed from under the Freedom of Information Act; the loans for small businesses. They hid that information, and the list goes on and on, and they benefited whenever they could from their own, and we saw that in the Clico issue where the former Minister of Finance was able to go and get her money from the fixed deposit using information that the Minister was privy to and sharing the information among her own.

Under the Ministry of the People and Social Development, which is a new ministry created by the hon. Prime Minister—one of the few in the world in governance—that ministry has been able to deliver without fanfare to every need that has come to its counter—in Port of Spain South, in Diego Martin, in Fyzabad and in Siparia. No longer did it have to be a favour from a Minister of Government. It was an obligation of the State to provide for those who need and, certainly, if there are families who have found themselves in situations that require needs, they will be attended to.

I was surprised to hear the Member for Arouca/Maloney, again, the contamination, not being aware that the State provides school books for our children; that the State provides breakfast and lunches for our children across the board. It is available.

In fact, at the Public Transport Service Corporation, 80 per cent of the buses were down. Under this people's administration, we were able to put close to 400

buses, both in Trinidad and Tobago, in all the communities. Under the PNM, it was only in PNM areas. Rural communities did not get it—Fyzabad did not get it; Oropouche did not get it.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, do you know that CEPEP was the PNM's private campaign party? Oropouche constituency did not have a CEPEP gang; Siparia constituency did not have a CEPEP gang; Caroni did not have a CEPEP gang, because the PNM owned it—"This is we own". They called it the "blue shirt army". So people are protesting that. So it will take us some time to replace the contaminated PNM energy with fresh new energy. New energy will bring new hopes; and it will bring new thinking into the society. Today people are feeling a lot better. Even the PNM Members are looking better themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I would have loved to say a lot more, but since I am qualified to stay in Port of Spain—[*Interruption*]—we will save costs tonight.

Mr. Speaker, the last point I want to make is, what do people expect? What are people's hopes? People's hopes are that the new governance of Trinidad and Tobago will continue to embrace all; and that we all will be able to subscribe to the National Anthem for the first time in Trinidad and Tobago, "here every creed and race find an equal place." Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise at this late hour to make a few observations and to ask a few questions of the Government in the hope that a few questions could be answered. This has been quite an enlightening debate; it has been quite long and a very serious debate, and the Government has participated. A series of Government Ministers have spoken but, for me, unfortunately, I have not heard the answers to a few of the questions that I would have liked answered. I would raise them again in this intervention in the hope that maybe the Minister in winding up might be able to point the country to some answer, because it would be a pity if the debate ends without such answers.

I know the Government has the votes to pass the measure it wants to pass. The Government has indicated that it would pass the measure. The outcome of the debate is pretty much a foregone conclusion on that basis, but it would be a pity if when we leave here tonight, or whatever time we leave, that questions that ought to be answered, if only for the record, are not answered, because it is an undisputed fact who the Government is, and it is also an undisputed fact who the Opposition is.

When we speak in this House, we do not speak as a mutual admiration society. The Opposition's role is very important, and that is to hold the Government

accountable and to show the other side, if only for the benefit of a third party looking on from the outside, because every issue of governance has, at least, two sides. This issue, notwithstanding the breadth that you gave my colleague from Fyzabad, we are really here talking about an action of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago at this time.

**10.30 p.m.**

Many of my colleagues on the other side spent a lot of time massaging their anti-PNM sentiments. We know what you think of the PNM. We know what your views are on the PNM. You have said it so many times that even if I was not in here for the debate, I would know what they said, because some of them are close to being properly described as "PNM haters". That is not the point. The bottom line is that the PNM was the government at one time, certain policies were pursued and the PNM is not the government now. That issue is behind us.

In front of us today are the questions being asked about your actions. What bothers me is that I started with the first intervention by saying that a state of emergency was called by accident. Not one of the Government Members challenged that—not one—because I do not know what they would challenge it with.

We were told that a limited state of emergency had been declared in Trinidad and Tobago, and it took quite a while for it to be clarified that that was not so. It was, in fact, a state of emergency covering the entire nation and that the curfew to come would be limited to a few areas. One has to ask, "How did this happen?" We got no explanation from the Government.

But one Member, my colleague from Cumuto/Manzanilla, made a very surprising comment. He said that the decision to call a state of emergency was a difficult one. That struck me as odd because, prior to that, all his colleagues chastised the PNM for being delinquent, incompetent and uncaring for not, in its time, making this automatic, an easy call of a state of emergency. Which side is correct?

The Government has put two positions to us on the use of a state of emergency. One is that if the PNM was responsible and serious, I think my friend from Chaguanas said that it would have been called before, 2005, 2006. He gave a number of instances when it should have been called, automatic, and by not calling it the PNM should be hoisted an excoriated. Our position was it was always an option that was considered and not deemed to be the best one, and we went on

to provide another option, which the Government agreed with up until August 20 this year. That is our understanding. Lo and behold, up comes a Minister who said that it was a difficult decision to call a state of emergency.

I took that to mean, and I could be wrong, but my understanding of that statement was that they had to look at it, see all sides of it, agonize over it and eventually took the decision to go ahead, knowing that there were negatives and it was not as automatic as the debaters have said all along. I think that might be true. If that is true, that the Government had some difficulty concluding, "Notwithstanding the difficulties associated with it, we go along with it because there are benefits to be had", it makes nonsense of all the arguments that it was the easy and automatic thing to do, and that the PNM was irresponsible and uncaring. That was the kind of logic I was taught from our class in primary school. That is how I understand it. As we say, there are always options.

On this occasion, the option was to call a state of emergency. Of course, one of the frontline Government spokesperson said, "The Ken Gordon committee had recommended it since 2003." That is true; it is an undisputed fact, but even at that time a similar response would have sufficed. It was looked at and found not to be the best thing to do.

However, by the time it was called in 2011, the Ken Gordon recommendations were irrelevant, because in 2003 and 2011, the situation was examined ad nauseam. The PNM government had lost the election, you might very well say for not calling the state of emergency, that could pass muster, but then the new Government and the PNM came together, and we could say that with a certain amount of confidence, without fear of contradiction, looked at the issue for two months in the early life of the new Government and agreed to do what my colleague from Port of Spain South said should have been done.

I congratulate my colleague, the Member for Port of Spain South, for a most excellent and lucid contribution. [*Desk thumping*] I could tell you tonight, thousands and tens of thousands of persons in this country who did not understand this issue up until she spoke tonight, if they had the privilege of seeing her on television or hearing her on the radio, would better understand the issue before the Parliament today. That is what we are about in the Parliament. This Parliament is also to educate the public on the issues it deals with.

So first the state of emergency, but after we did the anti-gang response with all those provisions not requiring a state of emergency, we ask the Government today, "Why did you call a state of emergency?" It had nothing to do with you

convincing me about how gory the crime was. It had nothing to do with you telling me all the paraphernalia that go with criminal conduct and who contaminated the country; no. It has to do with the specifics of the action. A state of emergency has been called, and the Opposition is not the only body asking that question. We heard that question being asked by members of the media doing their job, asking the question: what was—"what the Americans call it—the deal breaker? What caused the emergency to be called?"

After a few days, at least one authoritative Government spokesperson said to the media, "We will reveal the real reason in the Parliament." "We are going to Parliament next Friday and we will reveal the answers there." The debate is almost ended. There are very few speakers left to talk in this debate, on the Government side. I can say now, without fear of contradiction, after hours of intervention by Government spokespersons, from the Minister right back, not one Government spokesperson has provided one sentence of new information that could be classified as revealing the real reason for the state of emergency. That is a fact.

Everything that has been presented here was out there in the public domain before. We came in here, and in a very orderly manner, it was rehashed. The PNM bashing went on, the need for the emergency was repeated; the life and times were repeated, but no information was presented to this House, in response to the promise that when we go to Parliament, "Hold your fire, hold your horses; the Parliament will meet next Friday and when it meets the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will tell the country the real reason."

That was against a background, where, before we got here, there were Ministers of Government saying that there was a crisis which we had to avert, which we have averted, and they intimated that this crisis had something to do with drug dealers and particular instances of policing that took place just a few days before. Okay; we waited to hear what the real problem was. The debate is about to end, and the Government has not chosen to indicate to us any information that says, "Okay, it was gang A from so and so", or gang B, or the Venezuelans who were to come and invade us, or the Colombians were coming, or that they were importing guns from the Grenada revolution. The Government gave us no information. It was a complete presentation of what was presented outside this House, and we are none the wiser.

This debate closes with me believing what I believed when I came in, that this Government was confronted with a gory weekend and misconduct on the part of persons who we quite properly categorize as gang members, and whatever else,

and the Government chose an option, which, up until then, was not the preferred option of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. It was not the preferred option.

Up to now, no Government Member has convincingly argued. My friend from Chaguanas West tried to argue it, but, of course, it was not his forte. He tried to argue that the anti-gang legislation was not a crime plan. I beg to differ. It might not have been a party crime plan, but it was the country's crime plan. It was the Parliament's crime plan, because to get those clauses into the legislation, Parliamentarians discussed the operational aspects, discussed the nature of the problem, discussed the potential loopholes, discussed the efficacy of the clauses, and Parliament came up with its own plan. Government and Opposition agreed to that plan. That is why, for the first time in the history of this country, gang membership, gang organization and all the attendant criminal aspects of that endeavour became a criminal offence in Trinidad and Tobago. It came into effect on August 15, 2011. [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Warner:** Thank you, Member for Diego Martin West. I really appreciate it. My only question is: is a crime plan one specific thing?

**Dr. K. Rowley:** It is not one specific thing—but you would not get me off the track that it is one specific subject, crime, and in this case crime particularized: crime generated from gang activity. That is what we were told was the basis for the calling of the state of emergency. So I do not know what is the point you are trying to make, but my point is, and I am crystal clear about it, we were told that the state of emergency was in response to a threat that had its origin, its basis, in gang activity relating to narcotics trading and criminal conduct so attendant.

But the point that my colleague, the Member for Chaguanas West, tried to make, which fell flat, was that the Anti-Gang Act cannot stand on its own. We on this side dispute that most vehemently. It was made to stand on its own. As a matter of fact, my colleague just pointed out that there are amendments of other legislation to make it effectively stand on its own. I asked a very simple question, and nobody has answered me. I am going to ask it again, and I hope the Minister would answer it, because in one of the newspapers yesterday, Friday, at the bottom right-hand corner, the population is told of the fruits of the state of emergency.

We have heard of a lot of fruits. I have seen it mentioned that one of the fruits is noise abatement. We did not see a state of emergency for neighbourhoods to have noise abatement. We have the EMA Act for that. We read about reduced

traffic. I did not know that you declared a state of emergency to reduce traffic to zero in the roads. Whose idea was that? We heard about improved family life. I did not know that my colleagues in here needed Government to get them to their wives and vice versa. I did not know that. If these are spin-offs, then so far, but they certainly could not have been the motivating factor for the call of the emergency; but look at the fruits.

This is the Government's information provided to the media: a total of 1, 143 persons arrested. From that total let us disaggregate it. Of the 1, 143 persons, 82 are for breach of curfew. Let us dismiss that; if there was no curfew, there would have been no breach of curfew, and those 82 persons would have been free to go about their business; so take that away. Mr. Speaker, 216 persons have been detained, and charged, I presume, for drug-related offences. I ask my colleagues on the other side: what were you able to do, in terms of treating with these individuals, that you could not have done and that you could only have done under the power of a state of emergency? Not one Government person could answer that question.

**10.45 p.m.**

Because you see drug offences, I am sure for every single person who has been charged for a drug offence, he or she has to go before the court, they could have been charged the day before the emergency, they could have been charged now and if a similar offence takes place after the emergency ends they could be charged. In other words, policing that does not require a state of emergency—216 picked up for drug offences.

Outstanding warrants—this one concerns me a bit because I saw the Commissioner of Police playing, you know, Sancho Panza and Tonto, the Attorney General who assumed the role of Prime Minister, Attorney General, Commissioner of Police, DPP, there was no governmental role he did not assume. For the moment the Attorney General had taken over the Government. And he would speak on every subject and it worried me. That is for another time and another day. But the bottom line is, the Commissioner of Police is walking behind the Government, happy to be an echo of the Attorney General at press conferences, and tells me with great aplomb, as though "he do God service", that one of the fruits of the state of emergency is that you picked up 228 persons on outstanding warrants. You know what that tells me? That tells me that there is huge inefficiency in the police service and that the police service is not functioning.

How you could come and want me to praise you for the output of a state of emergency, take away my rights, have me locked up at home like a rat, me, a law-abiding citizen, and the fruit of your emergency is 228 persons who are known to you for offences that you are interested in, for charges laid, for warrants that exist and there are 228 persons roaming this country and it took a state of emergency for the police to pick them up? That should tell all of us in this Parliament on both sides of the House that we have some serious issues with the police service.

And it reminded me of a conversation that I had many, many years ago under the PNM, where a Commissioner of Police, Jules Bernard, sorry, Eustace Bernard, who told me at the time, and I am talking about many years ago, that at that time there was $25 million worth of fines levied at court on people who were found guilty and fined; fines that were not paid and not collected, and I wonder what the figure is today? But between 228 known people for whom warrants exist, is the Government telling us that you needed a state of emergency to pick up people who are wanted on warrants?

I would think what we need is an effective management of the police service so that all police officers who know that these warrants are cases in which they are involved, should have been doing their job and picking up these people and did not need a state of emergency. So take out those 228, serious offences I presume like wounding, burglary, assaults and so on, 181, these are normal, routine policing items. Which of my colleagues on the other side will tell me, which of my colleagues on the Government side will honestly get up with a straight face and tell me that we need to suspend the fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution to pick up people under the heading of serious offences, burglary, assault, armed with a deadly weapon and things like that? These are matters that can be done and could have been done before, are now being done during the emergency, and I dare say will be done when the emergency comes to an end.

And of course, homicides—I heard the most ridiculous comment coming from the Government or from the police, I am not sure who, because nobody can be sure who is who, that Robocop was wanted for murder—he was an interested party, a suspect in a homicide that took place in 2008. And what attracted my attention is this. How in heaven's name can the police, headed by the commissioner, want to impress me by picking up the gentleman in 2011, dramatic pick-up, breaking news, invoking a comment and inviting a comment from our hardworking Prime Minister who made a comment, a man who was suspected of a homicide, an offence in 2008, and it took a state of emergency for him to be

picked up by the police who wanted him in connection with that? Should that not tell this country that something is radically wrong, either with the police or with the information being given as justification for a state of emergency?

I am not talking to you as a Member of Parliament—even though I hold a seat here—I am talking to you as a citizen, I am talking to you as a fellow citizen. When you heard that information, did it not strike you as something odd? What kind of police service can we have that in a place where we are so concerned about homicides, a known person—known to the police—for a homicide in 2008, and somebody is waving a flag to me now that this gentleman has just been picked up and that is a fruit of the state of emergency? No! To me it is a cause to examine the effectiveness of our policing.

Mr. Speaker, when you take out all of those extraneous matters, there is one column that is left that would be of interest to us now. It is the column of 366 persons who are detained and I presume charged under gang-related matters.

I happen to know a little bit about how the United States city of Los Angeles dealt with gangs, and I think it is a classic example of treating with gangs. Gang warfare, gang existence in West LA is a matter of movies and books and tutorships, and one of the things that happened there, if you follow the history on how it started, what happened and how it was curbed, the most important thing was that the police built contacts within the criminal empire, took their time, identified the chief perpetrators, set them up, gathered information, had contacts in their agents and built up a body of evidence against them, and it was only when they had that evidence they would move against a gang or individual and they kept breaking the back of gangs in that way.

This Government did not do that. This Government got its gang legislation power on August 15, 2011. I know of no person whom the Government, the police, picked up on that legislation. Maybe I am wrong but I am not in the government so I am not fully informed, but I know of no person who the police went against under the Anti-Gang legislation. What I do know is that when the Government chose to declare a state of emergency, the police went out there and picked up 366 persons. My concern now is this. On what basis were they picked up? Up until August 20, did the police have good enough information—and by that I mean reasonable suspicion. That is what my colleague read for you this evening, that is what the law wants, that is what the law asks for, if the police has reasonable suspicion that John, Harry, Tom is in fact a gang leader or a gang member, the law that came into effect on August 15 gave the police the power to pick up that person, no need for any state of emergency.

So the question arises: of these 366 persons that the police had information on up to August 20, how many of them were picked up? To the best of my knowledge the answer is zero, none, zilch, nada. But I also ask, had the Government, under the Prime Minister's guidance, not taken that decision on August 21 to call a state of emergency, would the police have picked up any of those persons under the provisions of the Anti-Gang Act? And you see, these questions need answers so that you would be able to understand what is going on, because there are people trying to tell us that the Government needed a state of emergency to go against the criminals.

How did the police know that there was going to be a state of emergency? They did not know. Members of Cabinet who went to the special meeting on Sunday—and tell me I lie, tell me it is not true. We were at football. My partner behind there, we were in football in Tacarigua. When you were leaving I saw your face. Did you know where you were going? You did not know what it was for? [*Laughter*]

Members were going to Cabinet. In fact, members of the security services did not know that a state of emergency was on the cards because the Government told us it was a discussion that took place. My colleague, the hon. Minister of National Security, said, it was discussed, it was the Prime Minister herself who gave us the time frame, when you said that the National Security Council met, they discussed the matter, this option was put on the table, after discussion the council decided, "We are going to do this."

**Hon. Persad-Bissessar:** The sequencing may be correct but the actual content of those discussions, may I say respectfully, is not correct. There were discussions with the National Security Council which included the head of the defence force and the operational head of the police service and others from the security council which included some Ministers. Several options were discussed, so when we went to the Cabinet we did not go to the Cabinet with one option. The Cabinet fully discussed—I think only one Cabinet Minister was probably out of the country, but all others were there. So we did not go and say this is the decision. It was a discussion and a consensus in the Cabinet thereafter.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Thank you very much, hon. Prime Minister, for embellishing my point. That is the point I am making. I was not really going into the content. I was going into the sequence. The point I want to make is that the police in its normal policing duty was not to know that there will be a state of emergency, and my concern is, what would have happened had the Cabinet not taken a decision to have it? Suppose when the Prime Minister went to Cabinet, as she just

explained—carrying these options and again the Prime Minister is agreeing with me. I said from yesterday morning on the other matter, that is always a matter of options, and on this occasion the Cabinet choose this option and not the other option.

But let us, for argument's sake, say that Cabinet did not choose the option of a state of emergency. For those who are wanting to put forward an argument that the police could not have acted on these categories of criminal conduct outside of a stage of emergency, do you really want us to believe that even though we have an Anti-Gang Act, and other subsidiary supporting legislation to deal with the bail after you charge them, and Dangerous Drugs Act and so on for the drugs that they might be involved in, you want us to believe that the police service would have been totally impotent and do nothing on these matters on the information that they had on these people and it is only by happenstance and by serendipity that the Cabinet decided to choose the option of the emergency that now freed the police to act? Mr. Speaker, that cannot be correct—cannot be.

I am saying, had the Cabinet not chosen to go with a state of emergency, like previous Cabinets, and like this Cabinet itself between May and August did not choose, the police was free to act from August 15, 2011 without the cover of a state of emergency. That is all I am saying. And the operational aspect of it by using the raids and whatever, all of those operational aspects were available, and if they needed additional manpower to back up the police, army/police arrangements are nothing new in this country. They have been done before and they were done outside of a state of emergency.

**11.00 p.m**.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I need not belabour the point. I think by now we have used fact, we have used the clauses of the law, we have used elucidation to point out to the public and to my colleagues aside—I mean I am not trying to convince you, you know. I know that I cannot convince the Government persons that I am right and that it was unnecessary. In fact, I am not going to try anymore, because a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still, not wasting time, and I am not talking to them. I am talking to the population that would have been misled firstly that the emergency was a limited emergency; that was the first misrepresentation.

The second one is that you had to have an emergency for the law to be invoked against gang members and gang leaders and, of course, while they are doing that, those of us who are required to show the other side, required to point

out the Government's shortcoming, the Government's misstep, in this very serious matter, they paint us as being lovers of criminals and encouragers of wrongdoing. But we can take those barbs. I guess it comes with the territory. It comes with the territory.

In the adversarial politics of our democratic society there are those who would have been for and those who are against. There are some people in this country for whom reason is not a part of their operation—"I am supporting this side, it does not matter what they do." There are people in this country who would support the PNM no matter what and there are those who would support the UNC no matter what and there are people in the middle who have the potential to say, "Let me hear this argument and see if it makes sense."

We are convinced that the argument that we have put forward and that we are putting forward to show that this Parliament had taken steps to give this Government the wherewithal for the police to act without a state of emergency, that those arrangements were foregone as an option chosen by the Government.

I thank the Prime Minister for telling us in her own words in this House that the Cabinet had in front of it a series of options and it chose the option of a state of emergency. That is what it is. There is no maths. It is a simple straightforward matter. There was no need to fabricate stories. No need!

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar:** What fabrication?

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Fabrication? Who generated the story that the reason for the state of emergency was a crisis that would have generated bloodbaths on the streets that would have made 1990 look like a tea party? [*Interruption*] I am saying that. Because at the end of the debate you have produced no evidence, no information, no logical conclusion to show that it is so, and if you have such information without compromising national security—if this Government has information that the average man on the street was in danger of being mowed down by somebody warranting a state of emergency, and is not in a position to even tell us who, where, from, why—I mean, give us some ideas, and until you do that you would stand accused of making up a story to justify an emergency that should not have been taking place. That is all. You do not have to agree with me.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the way it came into being slowly over the horizon, Sunday night we had the dramatic address to the nation, limited state of emergency. I noticed the word "limited" has dropped out of the lexicon of all those who spoke today. Not one of them, not one of them today used the phrase "limited state of emergency." I presume that by now they have accepted that that

was a misrepresentation. That is one good thing. One good thing, they have accepted that, but the record will show that this Government had an address to the nation and offered the nation the new development of a limited state of emergency. They have since disowned paternity of that stillborn baby.

And, of course, Mr. Speaker, it took up until Tuesday morning when a prominent influential lawyer, very public-spirited, made a comment that caused the Government to be very uneasy, and the comment was that if the Government did not fill up Nelson Island with detainees, then this whole arrangement of a state of emergency would be nothing more than a waste of time. Up until that statement was made by Senior Counsel Martin Daly, one gets the impression that this Government had nothing in place and probably no intention to take up anybody. But after they realized the political exposure for a state of emergency the Government embarked upon picking up people left, right and centre.

Now, I do not know one person who the Government picked up as compared to have contrasted with my colleagues who are in Port of Spain East/Port of Spain South. I do not know anybody who was picked up by the Government. But of the 360-odd persons the Government picked up, and I presume are being charged under the Anti-Gang Act, given the way the police was before the emergency, given the nature of information not forthcoming now and given the requirement to go before the court and produce the little matter of evidence, I am not very optimistic that the outturn of this would be very positive.

My colleague read out some very serious punishment arrangements: 25 years in jail, $100, 000; these are the penalties, but as my colleague from St. Augustine would know, the penalty is the last stage in the process. If it is that that decision, taken at Cabinet on that fateful Sunday of August 21, generated the process of treating with these people whom they have picked up, when we go to court to present the relevant evidence to get a conviction on these people—to get a conviction based on evidence and to get a sentence within the context of what was read out by my colleague for Port of Spain South; if as I suspect the picking up of people was to justify a state of emergency that should have not been declared and was declared in an unprepared way, and that the police was unprepared with evidence against these people, I am predicting here tonight that the vast majority of these people picked up in this state of emergency would walk out of the courts and the exercise would have been a general mishandling of public business. [*Interruption*]

That is how it looks at this stage. I want the Government to convince me that it is not so. I want the Minister of National Security to come here tonight, in

winding up, and put his reputation on the line as Minister responsible and tell the country that the people picked up by the police were picked up on the basis of solid information which would have been used against these people, emergency or not, and that his police officers who engaged in the exercise are ready, willing, able and prepared to stand in the court and lead justiciable evidence against these people.

If the Minister could do that tonight I would leave here comforted. If he cannot do that tonight then I would know that the whole thing was mishandled from the beginning. Because, you see, an option to do something does not mean that it has to be done.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Tunapuna made a stirring intervention and I want to just comment on a couple of things he said. He did something in his contribution—the style he used was to throw up some straw men, ascribe the straw men to us on this side and then put the straw men to fire, tear them down. Listen to what he said. He said, you all are saying, "Let the disorder continue." But, Mr. Speaker, nobody on this side has said that. [*Interruption*] But he said it so as to ascribe it to us and then he said, "No, we cannot allow that to happen." Our conduct in this matter is not the conduct of people who are saying let disorder continue.

We are the ones who took part in the creation of the offences; the offence of becoming a gang member, a gang leader, of handling drugs, of handling firearms. We are the ones who worked with the Government. Where did you get those stories from, that we are saying let the disorder continue? That is your story. You put that straw man up, ascribed it to us and then spoke very passionately in tearing it down. He said, "let the chaos continue." Who is saying that? Nobody on this side is saying that. Nobody in this country is saying that.

This country wants a successful conclusion to this period of hurt that we have been going through with respect to the assault on our citizens by criminals; those who choose a life of crime as a way of life. We have no sympathy for such and no encouragement for such and we have to account to no one for our good conduct in this matter. Up comes the straw man. We can do nothing about it. That is something that you are saying. Do not ascribe it to us. We have done something about it. We gave you a tool that no other Government had. That tool became available to you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

*Motion made:* That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Ms. M. Mc Donald*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank my colleagues for the extension. Yes, I was talking about the straw men that were put up by my colleague from Tunapuna, while we were saying that kidnappings and murders are matters that can be and will only be properly dealt with by an effective policing strategy, and we hold up the success that we have had as a country, the success we have had with dealing with the kidnapping menace.

In fact, there are countries that had a kidnapping problem before us and they still have it. There are countries I could name where kidnapping is the order of the day, but they have not been able to bring it under control. Kidnapping appeared on the scene in this country, it took us a few years to respond and through policing we responded.

We are saying that the same approach can be made to work with respect to murders, and I repeat it because my colleague from Chaguanas West kept asking, what about murders? There is nothing different. It is the same way you approach it, that those who are required to secure the state and our person and provide us with security, they have to find control and treat with those who would murder us. I have no doubt that with effective policing the murderers would then be the losers in this battle.

**11.15 p.m.**

And then he goes on to say, Mr. Speaker—he spoke about talking to international financial institutions and giving them his guarantee, to use his word, a guarantee of the integrity of the financial system in Trinidad and Tobago in the context of the matter before us. And that brings me to the aspect of the financial side of this crime fighting exercise.

A lot of persons have been using the phrases, “big fish” and “little fish” in this whole debate since August 21. What they have not noticed is that the major tool for dealing with the financing of the drug trade in Trinidad and Tobago has not formed part of the recent actions and discourse. I speak specifically, Mr. Speaker, about the existence, the use and the appearance of the provisions of the Financial Intelligence Unit. It was in this government’s lifetime that we did not create, but upgraded by way of amendment, operationalized, a Financial Intelligence Unit

and it strikes me as odd that the Government is so gung ho about the action it is taking against distributors of drugs in Trinidad and Tobago, some of them got quite wealthy doing it because it is big money involved—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Dookeran:** Thank you for giving way, Member for Diego Martin West. Would the Member wish to admit that within 2005—2010 the then government failed to put into place all the necessary legislative and administrative requirements to have the FIU functioning, and it is this Government, faced with that problem, that had to put it together in a very short space of time to give us a status which is not yet a full status, but much improved to what you gave us when we started off? [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. K. Rowley:** I would have been surprised if a successive government was not in the position to improve on a foundation. [*Laughter*] The coming into being of the FIU and the role that you played was like putting paint on a well built structure. [*Desk thumping*] It is not the flicking of a switch that gave us an FIU. It was a whole series of activities that took a number of months and years, including getting external help, drafting the legislation, bringing it to Parliament, tweaking it, and the very last thing that happened and all along the way you had our support, all along the way. It reached the point where last year August was the closing of the door where the new government give an assurance to have certain things done by last year August. Granted you came in May and there were some things to be done by August. You failed to do that.

When my colleagues spoke here in September in the budget debate and drew it to your attention that by not doing what you committed to do in August you are putting us at risk of being blacklisted, he was ridiculed. All of a sudden blacklist is now your favorite word. When Diego Martin North/East raised that here in the budget debate last year about you missing the August deadline, he was ridiculed. I think it was you yourself who accused him of being irresponsible. He sought to present evidence to show what the blacklist would mean to us, and he was ridiculed. And of course it came to a point where the door was about to be closed on us and we had to act in emergency mode to get it done.

But, that is not the point I wanted to make. I just make that point to let you know there are no points to be scored here for you on that. But the point I was making is this, that we do have now a Financial Intelligence Unit. The big problem we have in Trinidad and Tobago, especially as dramatically demonstrated now, is that if we want to act, we can act and work against fellas who own a drug block on the corner—and many of them kill to protect that block—distributors of product within the country, middlemen and lower

middlemen. But the key to the whole thing for which there is no answer—questions are being asked high and low in this country for which there is no answer: why is it so intractable, why is it so difficult to find at least one person who is financing the shipment of drugs into and through our country?

That question is being asked against the background of the existence of a Financial Intelligence Unit whose job it is, not to look at the drug blocks on the corner or the distributors in the street, but to look at the finances in the finance houses, both local and international, to see whose financial business could be financing the drug trade through Trinidad and Tobago, a trade which is the source of our pain and suffering.

And here we have a state of emergency in response to this item of misconduct in our country, and people are being picked up on the streets left, right and centre, innocent and guilty, and the Government appears to be happy with that, but not one word about any output from the Financial Intelligence Unit with respect to the financing of the drug trade or any other misconduct in the country. Is it that the FIU is irrelevant to these matters? Is it? Because at the end of the day, if you do not find the financiers, all that you would do is prune off the branches and the financiers will ensure new branches grow because they will continue with their business.

I know I am not making any news here but I would think that in a state of emergency the Government with all its PR exposé as to the outcome of the state of emergency could have, should have, must have been able to point to some output from the Financial Intelligence Unit that links financing with street management of drug blocks. We do not have that. We do not have that. And until we get there, the population will feel that the Government is only interested in dealing with distributors on the street corner and middlemen and mules.

The Government should extricate itself from that allegation. You have the tools that no other government had. And even if I concede to you that the FIU was slow in coming, it does not change the fact that we have a Financial Intelligence Unit in Trinidad and Tobago at a time of a state of emergency aimed at the drug trade and drug dealers and gangs and their employers and you have not been able to produce one employer, one financier, or one line of information as to what the FIU played with respect to the drug trade and its nefarious existence in Trinidad and Tobago. If that does not bother you, it bothers me and it bothers a lot of people in this country. And while they are talking, some Members are screaming like a banshee in their presentation, some pious in attacking the PNM.

The same FIU was the subject of discussion in this Parliament where the Government attempted to handpick a director, in violation of the law. It was in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. You were here in this Chamber when we had a confrontation with the Attorney General, not an ordinary Member you know. It was the Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago who in this Chamber talked down to us, lectured us, hectored us, that he was right, the Cabinet was right, the law allowed it and the Opposition was the worst when we objected to the appointment of Susan Francois as the director of the FIU, not on any other grounds but that the process was flawed.

The only grounds that we objected on was that the process was flawed, it was in breach of the law and the appointment was required to be made by the Public Service Commission. The Government shouted us down. This is the unit that is supposed to be able to find the drug financiers. The Government attempts to appoint its own handpicked person and does it improperly. It took the Opposition outside of the Parliament to force the Public Service Commission to intervene and assume its rightful place in the appointment of the director and deputy director of the Financial Intelligence Unit. Okay. So what happened?

I must raise this because we are discussing here the whole question of the drug trade and its effect on Trinidad and Tobago and the financiers who are behind the drug trade and the need for the FIU to identify those financiers so the penalties of the relevant law can be brought to bear on them. What happens? The Government, having made the wrong appointment by bad procedure, had to beg the Public Service Commission to allow it to stand, because if no one is in the post there would have been consequences as the Minister of Finance just pointed out.

The PSC agreed against the background that the job will be advertised, all persons who feel they are qualified could submit an application and the process, as is required, would be gone into. That was done; process was done; public advertisements, persons applied, evaluated in the proper way by the Public Service Commission. The Commission selects the best person for the job, for director and deputy director and of course as per the requirements of the Constitution and the law, they are required to be cleared by the Prime Minister.

While the country is being shut down in a state of emergency to pick up drug block owners, drug mules on the street or, as my colleague says, "guabin" and sardine and small fry, the Prime Minister vetoes the appointment of the Public Service Commission and fails to comment on the deputy. So the FIU which is supposed to identify the big fish, the financiers, the ones who are passing through

the net, financing the lives of destruction of those on the street, that FIU is not being given the same seriousness as we see with the state of emergency.

We are in such bad state that we need a state of emergency to deal with street crime, blue collar effects on the ground, but white collar effects in the banks and upstairs both local and foreign, the Prime Minister stands in the way of veto. I hope she will enter the debate tonight and tell the country on what basis she is vetoing the appointment of the Public Service Commission which is rectifying something that her Government stands accused of doing wrong in the first place.

Her Attorney General fooled the country and the Parliament that he was right, forced by law to go the right way and now that the Public Service Commissioner has gone the right way to make an appointment to the director of the FIU, the Prime Minister vetoes it. In the spirit of transparency enter the debate so I can tell the Parliament what is the basis for the FIU not having a substantive head and why there is no deputy or director of the FIU.

I do not raise this as any challenge to the prime ministerial authority. That authority comes with the office. I do not hold the Prime Minister responsible for anything being done wrong, I am simply saying in the context of a state of emergency where our fundamental rights and freedoms are being abridged, where there are people now automatically jailed by virtue of suspicion that they might have been involved in a gang that might be involved in a drug block somewhere, who is protecting whom in this country? Is it that the Financial Intelligence Unit is not being made to function to protect the bank accounts of persons who can be exposed as financiers of the country's drug trade? Tell us that and we will know that you are serious about fighting crime in this country.

**11.30 p.m.**

**Hon. Persad-Bissessar:** Thank you very much, hon. Leader of the Opposition. What you are saying is true, that there was a veto exercised and I will get that and present it to you at a later stage and the reasoning behind it. But I think in the way that you are framing your contribution, it would appear that this veto took place when the state of emergency was in effect. I just want to clear the record. When that transpired, it was not at the time of the state of emergency.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Thank you for the information. Information is always useful, but I was making no such assertion. I was simply saying that the idea of going after the root of the problem that Parliament took steps to put in place another tool and it is the tool where the questions are being asked loudly: where are the drug financiers? Because logic dictates that for these fellows on Duncan Street,

Laventille, Enterprise and Diego Martin, where they are killing people, fighting for rank and turf in the districts, they are doing it on the basis of financing provided by others. They do not have the means to do that.

And we are asking, what is the input from the tool that the Parliament gave? And the Prime Minister is saying, "I am vetoing the appointment of the work of the Public Service Commission." That is all I am saying. Tell us why. Tell us why. I do not want to interpret it tonight, but I would like to hear from the Prime Minister, why, especially when the FIU has now produced a big, fat zero in this particular climate of a state of emergency where we are going after everybody involved. Apparently some people are being protected.

I want to end on this note, and it has to do with the record of the Parliament, because I like to keep my eyes on the record of the Parliament in the context of what the Minister said when he was preparing—the Minister of National Security; I am sure he means well. I have no basis to think that he means otherwise and I hope he succeeds in his job, because if he succeeds, we all will benefit; if he fails, then we are all in big trouble. I saw him talking about his ethnicity in the debate and it reminded me of an earlier time when some of my colleagues who are still here—some of them are still here—when a matter came before the Parliament with respect to the behaviour of young, black men in Trinidad.

Under the UNC there was a pilot project to identify young men at risk and to zero in on those persons by targeted, focussed action to steer them away from the life of crime and destruction that they were on and to guide them to safe harbours where they could be decent citizens.

The pilot project, I think, was under Minister Manohar Ramsaran, and it formed part of the text of the Public Sector Investment Programme when the Government changed. It came to the Lower House. It had to do with COSTAATT developing programmes to target these men at risk and to provide them with focussed attention to guide them, as I have described, from negative to positive. That document passed the Lower House, eventually ending up in the Upper House, and a particular Senator—who shall remain nameless—challenged that information in the Upper House.

I just happened to have been in the Upper House that day answering a question, and the idea of targeting young men at risk in the East/West corridor, in particular—the project actually, I think, took place in Laventille—and the COSTAATT recommendation of designing projects for these young men became an issue in the Senate, and there was some prevarication on the part of the government in responding to the challenge from the Opposition.

I entered the debate, knowing the details of it, because having been in the Ministry of Planning and being familiar with it at the PSIP stage, I entered the debate to provide the factual clarification. I was excoriated by my colleague on the other side.

**Dr. Moonilal:** And on your side.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** I was accused of advancing racism; I was accused of discrimination. Now, this was a project that was not even a PNM project, eh; it was a carry over from the UNC days. It was in the PSIP documents, and I still hear up to now on radio stations, people calling and accusing me of racism and using that incident of the defence of the COSTAATT programme targeting young men at risk in the East/West corridor who just happened to be young, Afro-Trinidadian males. But this country's narrow-mindedness and its burying of its head in the sand is not new to me.

But lo and behold, that having been part of the country's history, part of the Parliament's history, I find it passing strange that you could have behaved that way in response to a targeted programme to prevent a problem from ballooning out of control, to provide a safe harbour for these people. But look at what happens now.

**Hon. Persad-Bissessar:** What happened 10 years afterwards?

**Dr. K. Rowley:** What has happened now—

**Hon. Persad-Bissessar:** What happened 10 years afterwards?

**Dr. K. Rowley:**—is that the very said people—[*Interruption*]—I would appreciate it if the Prime Minister pays respect to her own office. What has happened now is that the very same people are deemed to be so far gone and that their neighbourhoods are now so comfortably being labelled hot spots, that we have moved from a focussed programme with positives as the outcome, with a potential to guide them to the fatherliness that my colleague, the Minister of National Security "say could happen", to a state of emergency to deal with their conduct, their criminal excesses and the automatic life in jail that they will get.

I want to ask this question: do you now, as a Government, especially those of you who objected to the attempt to deal with the problem 10 years ago, or eight years ago and who labelled it the way you labelled it then, now that you are the architects of a state of emergency, now that you are the deliverer of the vengeance on the street, I ask you now, do you think that this last state is better than the first, and do you still accuse me of being racial by—[*Interruption*] Yes. The Prime Minister—yes.

**Hon. Persad-Bissessar:** I did not speak to you, Sir.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Who you spoke to? Who you telling, yes?

**Hon. Persad-Bissessar:** I am speaking to Mr. Warner.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Speaking to you, telling you, yes.

**Hon. Warner:** Yes.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** I do not want to go there; I am not going there. This is a serious matter. As a matter of fact, I am not even talking to you all; I am talking to the national community. I am talking to the national community and the question is: let us revisit the incident of the COSTAATT matter and young men at risk in 2002 and compare it with the governmental action of 2011 and see if we have made any progress, and see whether the options of 2011 are an improvement on the positive intervention that could have been made in 2002.

**Mr. Dookeran:** Thank you for giving way. I am just trying to understand your argument. Are you saying, Member for Diego Martin West, that a matter that was raised in 2002 has relevance today and should have been done at that time without recognizing that between 2002 and 2010 it was your government that was in office? [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. K. Rowley:** I am not saying that at all. I am saying that the programme was not allowed to go forward. The programme was identified and labelled as discrimination—

**Hon. Member:** By who?

**Dr. K. Rowley:** By who? You have the gall to ask by who? By you!

**Dr. Moonilal:** So why you did not implement it?

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Because we tried to please you. [*Crosstalk*] [*Desk thumping*] And the moral of that story is that the PNM government of the time should have had the courage of its conviction to stand by that programmes and today some of those young men may have been in a different place. That is it. [*Crosstalk]* You could say what you want! I am simply—I am simply—[*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order! Order, please.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, I am simply visiting the country's history and I am simply examining your conduct in response to a particular problem which has not gone away, and to advocate to you, finally, that the project that you condemned in 2002, the project that you labelled as discriminatory and racially

driven, I want to advance it to you, the Government, that as part of the assault on crime and general criminal conduct in this country, that you may want to revisit the idea of focussing on youth at risk, especially in the urban areas. That is all I am saying to you. You may want to revisit that.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have much more to say, except that we have demonstrated our responsibility throughout this Government's term. Throughout this Government's term we have demonstrated our responsibility which this Government never demonstrated when they were in the Opposition. This Government has the singular and unique honour of saying that it was the only Government that got the Opposition to vote for a national budget brought by the Government.

We have worked very hard in committees with this Government and we have supported more Bills than we opposed in this House, and if on this occasion we found it in the public interest to support the state of emergency, we would have supported it. But, sadly, we do not think it was the best option. It is not in the public interest. The Government has acted very capriciously in this matter and I dare say, the Government has been very deceitful and, therefore, we have not been convinced and will not support this measure.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I join this very informative debate on a key national issue, one of the most important issues facing this country and, indeed, the business of the House over the last 48 hours or so demonstrate that this is, indeed, a critical and most serious matter before us.

We have been debating today, nonstop, for 13 hours and 42 minutes; almost 14 hours of debate, nonstop, coming on the heels of a debate yesterday on a related Motion of about 10 hours. So we have been debating for 23 hours and 43 minutes—over 48 hours.

I am now tempted to take my 75 minutes to continue this very important debate.

**Mr. Roberts:** We want to hear you.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** In the last 23 hours and 45 minutes we have heard from our friends opposite; we have heard from several speakers on the Government side on this issue of the extension of the state of emergency, Motion No. 1 on the Order Paper, and in a related Motion dealing specifically with the statement of His Excellency the President.

For the record, it was originally the intention to debate both matters together, since we believe that it was essentially dealing with the same subject matter and would have lent itself to being debated together and the Parliament may have dispatched its business in a more timely manner if both Motions had been done together. But as we are all aware, that approach can only be taken with the support of those opposite, and the support for that approach was not forthcoming and, therefore, the Government had to embark upon two debates over two days on essentially the same subject matter.

That being so, that explains in some part, but not totally, the constant and monotonous repetition—

**Hon. Persad-Bissessar:** Repetition ad nauseam.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:**—ad nauseam and, maybe I could say, painfully so, that we experienced over the last 23 hours and 45 minutes.

**11.45 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, that may also have been a strategy. It may not be only, because it is two Motions, but it could have been a strategy as well because, it is believed by some opposite that if you say the wrong thing often enough and you propagandize that, soon persons in the national community will grow to believe that that is so because of who is saying it and how many times they hear it, so that the repetition may relate not only to the two Motions but towards a strategy as well.

That has been a painful experience that could have impaired our mental health as well; listening over and over to that. I will not single out any particular speaker, but some of that has been very challenging.

Over the debate, some patterns have emerged as well on some of the issues. You can separate and come down to about three or four core issues that have been raised by our friends opposite. They are very important issues, and I want to say that within the last hour and a half or so, we have heard from the Member for Port of Spain South, and we have heard from the Member for Diego Martin West, the honourable Leader of the Opposition, and they have both raised, in some more detail than had been done before, some very critical issues that require some discussion and require some analysis and responses for both, because they have gone into some issues in more depth than was done before.

It is our intention to respond to some of those issues raised by both the Member for Port of Spain South on the Anti-Gang Act—specific issues—and the Member for Diego Martin West who came and dealt with issues of the Financial

Intelligence Unit and related matters, and asked some very pointed questions. We will not want this debate to finish without significantly responding to those questions, not only for the record, but for the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, I would like, at this stage, to adjourn this House, so that we can continue this debate tomorrow and respond with some measure of detail and certainty on some of the issues raised here which we believe are very critical issues.

With that in mind, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to tomorrow, September 4, at 10.00 a.m. when we propose to complete debate on Motion No. 1 on the Order Paper. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

*Question put*

The House divided:

Ayes 29 Noes 10

AYES

Moonilal, Hon. Dr. R.

Persad-Bissessar, Hon. K.

Warner, Hon. J.

Dookeran, Hon. W.

Mc Leod, Hon. E.

Sharma, Hon. C.

Alleyne-Toppin, Hon. V.

Gopeesingh, Hon. Dr. T.

Peters, Hon. W.

Rambachan, Hon. Dr. S.

Seepersad-Bachan, Hon. C.

Volney, Hon. H.

Seemungal, J.

Roberts, Hon. A.

Cadiz, Hon. S.

Baksh, Hon. N.

Griffith, Hon. R.

Ramadharsingh, Hon. Dr. G.

Ramadhar, Hon. P.

Khan, Hon. Dr. F.

De Coteau, Hon. C.

Indarsingh, Hon. R.

Baker, Hon. Dr. D.

Samuel, Hon. R.

Douglas, Hon. Dr. L.

Roopnarine, Hon. S.

Ramdial, Miss R.

Partap, Hon. C.

Khan, Miss N.

NOES

McDonald, Miss M.

Rowley, Dr. K.

Cox, Miss D.

Hypolite, N.

Imbert, C.

Jeffrey, F.

Browne, Dr. A.

Thomas, Mrs J.

Hospedales, Miss A.

**Mr. Speaker:** Member for Diego Martin North/East, please.

**Mr. Imbert:** He called me names.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, but do not respond please.

**Mr. Imbert:** I did not respond.

**Mr. Speaker:** No, you used expressions a short while ago. [*Interruption*] Please, please continue.

Gopee-Scoon, Mrs. P.

*Question agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly*

*Adjourned at 11.52 p.m.*