HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, September 04, 2011

The House met at 10.00 a.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

STATE OF EMERGENCY

(EXTENSION OF)

[Second Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [September 03, 2011]:

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. [*Sen. The Hon. Brig. J. Sandy*]

Question again proposed.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Housing and the Environment was on his legs when we adjourned. He had consumed approximately five minutes of his original time.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Sunday morning, for many of us, is an unprecedented sitting of the House convened to continue and complete our debate on Motion No. 1 on the Order Paper calling, as it does, for a further extension of the state of emergency declared through Proclamation made by His Excellency The President on August 21, 2011, a further extension by three months.

Mr. Speaker, to put this matter in perspective quickly, we have been debating all day yesterday—I believe it was almost 14 hours yesterday—this Motion. This morning when many of us would have been at our temples, churches and Mosques, and most involved in our religious activities, we have come here to the temple of our Parliament to uphold our oath and protect our citizens from criminal elements. In so doing, we serve a higher purpose by saving lives, by providing for order and security and therefore fulfilling our oath.

I want also to compliment all Members of this House for their effort, sacrifice and commitment, and I wanted to note, Mr. Speaker, that at quarter to 12.00 last evening, during a state of emergency, we had a full House with 29 Members of

the Government present and several Members of the Opposition here. [*Desk thumping*] It is testimony that at a time like this, all soldiers are present on duty to uphold our Constitution and to protect the rights of ordinary citizens.

Mr. Speaker, we have listened over the last day or so to 22 hours of contributions from our friends opposite. We have listened to several arguments: some plausible, some amazing. We have heard some recommendations and we have picked up some patterns, and I wanted to reflect on some of the issues raised in the debate by Members opposite, and some of the issues raised as well by colleagues on the Government side who sought to give our explanations and justifications and call upon the national community and the House to support us in this effort.

Mr. Speaker, there comes a time in the history of a country when an administration is called upon to take hard, forthright and determined action to fend off threats to the security of that country, be they external or internal. Mr. Speaker, Winston Churchill at another time faced such a proposition. American Presidents from Roosevelt to today face such threats, either home-grown or external.

This Government, coming in May 2010, made a commitment to citizens that we will meet and treat with the burning social problems of the day; that was our commitment. We campaigned throughout Trinidad and Tobago and told our listeners—the electorate—that if you give us your confidence we will give you a safe and secure society.

Mr. Speaker, apart from crime there were other pressing problems facing the national community including water, including the challenges in the health sector and so on, and we have been working extremely hard to deal with these matters, but it is to the issue of crime that we turn.

While our efforts have reaped benefits, clearly the statistical evidence suggests—and Members on the opposite side agreed—that we have had some reduction in serious crime, serious offences certainly in homicide—some reduction. Last year, I believe, it was in the order of 10 per cent. If we did a tracer study and a basic linear graphing, we would discover that if the trends for 2011 continued without a state of emergency, we would have been on our way to reducing the homicide figure by what could be 18—20 per cent.

So, Mr. Speaker, our policies have been reaping fruit; our programmes have brought results, but, Mr. Speaker, given the immediate threat and crisis faced, as outlined by the Minister of National Security, as we saw with the killings—brutal slaughtering of 11 persons, I believe, in two days, as the national security

agencies and personnel analyzed this information in the aftermath of the seizure of some $22 million worth in narcotics, and Mr. Speaker, the national security leaders advised that there was an imminent threat that will lead to further bloodshed, what do we do?

We had an option that all governments have; we could do nothing. We could say, "Listen, this is a threat. We hear you. Let us do nothing and see how this would pan out." We could have done that! We could have said, Let us continue with the same policies, let us continue with our strategic initiatives and let us see how it goes". We could have done that!

But, Mr. Speaker, the Political Leader, the Prime Minister, the Member for Siparia, Chairman of the Cabinet, Chair of the National Security Council was determined that, under her leadership, we must go to the next level in dealing with crime so that we will get a hold on these criminal elements and meet and treat with them in the trenches early in our term of office so that we do not escalate that homicide figure to 600, to 800, to 1000. The Prime Minister was determined and took the risk involved in that as well—as all political decisions carry risk—that she will lead a Government that will confront face-on the criminal elements. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, we are here this morning, to give legislative authority for that onslaught on the criminal elements.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Security and the Minister of Finance and others have said that the state of emergency is not one cure for all. It will not bring the zero crime level and keep it there. It is an important tool available and it came at a time when they anticipated, based on intelligence, that further bloodshed was imminent and action had to be taken. Mr. Speaker, I compliment the Prime Minister and I compliment the National Security Minister for taking this action. [*Desk thumping*].

The Opposition has had several patterns emerging over that last 48 hours or so. Mr. Speaker, they have said several times, hoping someone will believe then, them what are the reasons for the state of emergency. The reasons were outlined by the Minister of National Security within hours of the declaration. The Minister of National Security wasted no time in telling the national community that the purpose of this state of emergency is to get to the criminal elements and arrest them forthwith. It was to get to the gang members and gang leaders; it was to seize arms and ammunition; it was to seize narcotics. It was to provide for the order and the security of Trinidad and Tobago. Those were the objectives.

So, when people ask again and again what are the objectives—but we told you within minutes. We were very clear. All Members were clear on that. What about that we cannot understand? What about arresting criminal elements; seizing arms and ammunition; seizing narcotics; providing for immediate order to Trinidad and Tobago; what about that we cannot understand? What about that challenges us to inquire? What about that is incomprehensible? To me and to many of us and to all Members of the Government, we are very clear, and I cannot understand that will cause further problems in understanding. I do not think the English is that bad that we cannot understand that those are the objectives.

It happened at that moment when the National Security infrastructure told us that that threat was imminent and the national community saw it building—11 murders in two days. What should we have waited for? Twenty-four murders in three days; maybe 46 murders in four days? The Government had to act and the Government acted with courage and determination. [*Desk thumping*]

Then, we are hearing that nobody knew, this was a secret. We caught—Mr. Speaker, I believe we caught the criminal elements by surprise and we caught the PNM by a bigger surprise. [*Desk thumping and laughter*] We are hearing that the police did not know. So what was expected to happen? We send a circular to constable, corporal and sergeant and inform them that, "Look, later in the day and tomorrow, we are declaring a state of emergency"? What do we do? Put it on a menu card; put it a billboard that this is imminent, we are going to declare a state of. By its very nature, there are two defining characteristics: surprise is one and inconvenience is another. You cannot have a convenient state of emergency. Then you have none.

So, Mr. Speaker, the security agencies went into action on the late evening night of August 21st continuing on the 22nd. It was very clear that a curfew was being declared but the first evening of that curfew was the Monday 22nd. It could not have been the Sunday because it was past six o'clock when announcements and so were made. So what was unclear?

10.15 a.m.

These types of decisions cannot be communicated to a whole big group of people. If you do that, it is like committing treason. The criminal elements in this small society network, as it is, will get that information and take all sorts of actions. They could have been on a plane leaving Sunday night, moving. But, the nature of this initiative required surprise as an element. Did it work? I can confirm today that there are 1,356 reasons to support a state of emergency and

1,356 successes. As of this moment, 1,356 persons have been arrested. As of this moment, 33 firearms were seized. Members are speaking about this lightly; "thirty-three? No, we expected 500 firearms", but 33 firearms will kill 500 people. These are firearms that could have been "moving hand to hand", gunman to gunman. They operate that way; 33 firearms.

I am told that overnight, between the moment we were debating yesterday and this moment, eight firearms have been seized. That is a next 100 people could have been dead, including an Italian made high-powered rifle, including a machine gun that is belt-fed. I think if some people would have seen movies, these gangster movies of the 1930s, they would understand that. A belt-fed machine gun was seized. Do you know what damage that can do? You can go into a place where the public is assembled and just spray bullets and kill "from a side," 33 firearms.

Do you know what we also underestimated when we did this? Over 1,000 rounds of ammunition; that is over 1,000 human beings, lives could have been spared because of this action; over 1,000 rounds of ammunition. I do not think we should take that lightly. Those bullets could have been, by all intentions, for us. They could have been for members of the public gallery. They could have been for our relatives. Those bullets could have found themselves at the supermarket or at your place of worship. This society had reached the point where bandits would go where there is a wake and rob people, at a wedding or at a church. This is a country where, in 2007, the head of the Crime Suppression Unit was robbed three times. This is a country where bandits and criminal elements, over the years, go up with impunity.

Today I am hearing everybody on the opposite side talking about the burger vendor and the doubles vendor, but they could have been shot. The persons who purchase those items were at risk of losing their lives. You hear that; belt-fed machine gun; Italian made high-powered rifle? These are the firearms we got off the street. This Government is in the business of saving lives. That is our sacred oath.

What is the purpose of investment? What is the purpose of big business? What is the purpose of sport, if "everybody dead"? What is the purpose of that? You have to save lives, and we have saved, with this initiative, over 1,000 lives. That must be important.

This is not the only initiative, I want to remind you. On coming into office we instituted and established the Children's Life Fund to save the lives of children who need emergency surgery. When was the last time you heard somebody

passed around selling barbeque tickets for a surgery? When was the last time you heard someone passed around with a form signed by the Commissioner of Police, they want $5.00 for surgery for a child? That has ceased. Under this Government, we have established our Children's Life Fund so that the lives of children will not be lost because they cannot afford surgery.

Another initiative to save lives that goes unheralded is on the highways. In the build-up to the last election, I think it was April, a family that is very close to some of us, the Subiah family, was travelling northbound in the vicinity of Gasparillo, a truck crossed the road and killed an entire family. Attending that funeral were then Opposition Leader and Member for Siparia, myself; the Member for Chaguanas West, Mr. Warner, and prominent attorney, Anand Ramlogan, now Sen. The hon. Attorney General. We made a pledge that if it was the will of God, as expressed by the will of the people, we will institute defensive installations on the highway to protect citizens from dying because a vehicle could cross the median and kill you.

When he came into office, the Minister of Works and Infrastructure caused to be erected those cable links on the highway. Do you know, two weeks ago, a cement truck lost control, ran into that cable in the area of Claxton Bay and the cable, while it was strained, kept a cement truck in the median; in the middle of the two highways? Could you imagine what would have happened if that cement truck went on the next lane? We would have had a bloodbath.

Mr. Speaker, we save lives. How many persons would have died in accidents on the highway if this Government did not erect those cable chain- links on the highway? How many lives have we saved? How much children's lives? Today, we stand before you to say 1,000 lives may have been saved by this action. At the end of the day all political action is about life, liberty and happiness. There is no policy that you pass in government, if it does not concern life, liberty, happiness and prosperity and this is what we are about.

Mr. Speaker, the results are there and growing. Few people would know, because again, maybe we did not chant it like a mantra every day. I am hearing about scrap iron dealership and scrap iron yard. Yes, there has been an initiative by the army; I want to report, by the army—it could not have happened outside of a state of emergency—where, on entering premises of scrap yards and looking for articles, the army came across an underground bunker of sorts that held 80,000 gallons of diesel in the vicinity and under scrap iron.

Those 80,000 gallons of diesel was meant to be exported, bought at our prices, exported illegally and they will make money off of the taxpayers' subsidy. That

may have been there for some time, before May 2010, but in the conditions where the army had certain powers under the Emergency Powers Regulations, they went looking for articles. But, when you go looking for guns and ammunition you will confront other illegal activities on a premise and then discover 80,000 gallons of diesel stored under a scrap heap. You see what has happened? When we talk about you do not need emergency powers—I am hearing that all the time like another recurring decimal. "Yuh doh need emergency powers, yuh doh need. Yuh could deal with it thorough normal law." How was this then not dealt with before?

I was shocked. I sat here in awe, with my mouth agape staring incomprehensively when my colleagues opposite, each one at each turn at the crease, told about where guns are coming in, where the illegal trade in ammunition is and where the marijuana fields are and who is involved. In fact, Members were queuing up to tell us the hot spots, some with envy, that their areas deserve a lockdown. It was almost, you file an application, "Gih me ah lockdown. I know this is happening here."

Where was that intelligence before May 2010, when a Cabinet colleague of yours who has now become the patron saint of insecurity, Martin Joseph? Where was that intelligence? Could you not have met him and said: "Minister Joseph, we understand A, B, C? Could you not have met the security leaders and said: "Mr. Commissioner, Deputy Commission or whoever, we understand this is happening?" Give them the intelligence that you clearly have.

In this debate we heard from our friends opposite and everyone, the Member for Diego Martin North/East in particular, had a panoramic view of all criminal activities, where it is happening and where it is not happening. He said it is in Tunapuna, it is in Chaguanas, it is Moruga and Cedros. Where was this intelligence before, that you could not assist the hapless then Minister Joseph? You could have helped him and the country if you had communicated this.

The time is now. I do not know, maybe they had no faith in Minister Joseph to tell him this, and the other Ministers. There were several Ministers. There were about seven Ministers in the Ministry of National Security and eight advisors. This is the information that should have been given. We have taken notes and we have spoken to the police and the security leaders already, informing them that in Parliament MPs gave us some intelligence and they should look into it and interview them if need be.

All of a sudden, we know all the criminal hot spots. All of a sudden, we know all that we can do, but what happened between 2002 and 2010? Where was the

big fish between 2002 and 2010? That is a next thing we picked up during the debate and the last few days. Those of them who did not have a net are now telling us what to put in our net. We are now being told about we have to "go for big fish". Where was the net before? And then—"where big fish living". I want to tell you sometimes you see people in a jacket and tie and you think they are big, powerful and wealthy but when you open their briefcase you see a newspaper and a piece of roti.

One came to my office, I would never forget, years ago, beautifully dressed with jacket and tie. I think it was Tobiki from Detour. At the end of an interview he gave me all sorts of plans and said: "Yuh could len meh $20 tuh travel back home?" The kingpins in this business do not always wear these Armani suits, although they can buy the Armani chain of stores, but they do not wear that. They do not display themselves. In fact, some may be in foreign-used cars, not even in high luxury cars, because they want to keep off the radar. They do not want conspicuous observation. This romanticized notion of you get the big fish and he is in a jacket and tie and a foreign suit and staying at a particular place and has a house here, you have to revise that.

Sometimes you look at international news and they pick up drug kingpins in Latin America on a farm, in an apartment rented somewhere. They do not pick them up at any palatial mansion or bungalow. They wanted us to fall in that trap to say that they want the big fish and that we are only picking up the little ones. When you pick up little ones, it often leads to the big ones.

The last time a big fish was caught and prosecuted in this country, I submit to you, was in the late 1990s, when they were caught and I think they were executed. Since then, 2002—2010, not one of the so-called big personalities. There was a raid on the islands. The Member for Caroni East is always speaking about it; a raid for drugs. They got a huge haul. I think they charged the janitor and the watchman, not the calypsonian Watchman. That is what they did, but there was no talk then of big fish; only now. There was no talk then of who was behind that and why they did not charge them.

10.30 a.m.

They got drugs on a boat between Venezuela and Port of Spain; again no talk about "Who owns this?" "Who we should charge?" The big. No. And the worst of all, the former Prime Minister stood in this Parliament on this desk [*Taps the desk*] October 17, 2005. He said "We know the identity of Mr. Big". We said, "Good. Go and get Mr. Big". He said, "No we have information, no evidence".

Six years later, five years for him, he still has information, no evidence. And we hear of all the plans and all the strategies, so many things, but, so many things are not working; and not working fast enough. It reached the ridiculous state where the former Minister of National Security came in this House and humiliated himself when he said that there was a decrease in the increase. One felt sorry for him that he was exposed like that, but that was what we found, Mr. Speaker. This did not happen since May. It could not have happened since May.

So, Mr. Speaker, we also heard opposite a statement, "Well it takes time". The US took 30 years, the UK 40 years, to deal with crime. How many barrels of blood would have been spilled had we waited. How many barrels of blood? And you know, we hear so much about the doubles vendor, the hamburger vendor, soup vendor, Elsa or Elsie, somebody like that; we hear so much about them.

You know we do not hear at all—we do not—and we have not heard about the victims, Latisha Jack from Gonzales, Belmont; we have not heard about her family. We have not heard about the victims of violence, about the relatives of those victims. We have not heard about Steve Williams who died on December 30, 2007, from Champs Fleur. We have not heard of Sherwin Williams of Morvant; Mark Millington of Diego Martin? What about his family? Lester Diaz of Maracas, what about his family. David Alexander of Laventille, what about his family? Brian Ramnath of Sea Lots, shot dead while going home. Derrick Gilbert, businessman of El Socorro, shot dead while outside his home. We have not heard about their families, we have not heard about the victims. I

In fact, the victims have not been prominently featured in this debate; not the victims. We were concerned with the short-term inconvenience, to persons who sell hamburgers in the night, but we have not heard about victims. I am sure that Members opposite care about the victims, because many of those victims and their relatives, their families are from constituencies represented by my friends opposite.

Mr. Speaker, if you look quickly, children murdered, assaulted. You will remember names June 2006, Simeon King, 16 year old shot at his home by intruders. Kimo Richards shot in Laventille; Jerome Thomas from Diego Martin shot at home; Keston Lewis from Laventille, gunned down February 09, 2008. I mean, it is a list that goes on, but we have not heard of their families, we have not heard of children who are today without fathers, of wives who are without husbands and providers, of mothers who had to bury children. Over the years there was a story in the newspaper that the cemeteries were full, "mothers burying their children".

Mr. Speaker, in some parts of Trinidad you go from funeral to burial, we have not heard about victims. The victims of crime have been missing in this debate, they have been missing, and today we act on their behalf. We act on behalf of all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago who desire to live in peace. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to make a long story out of it, but several persons throughout Trinidad and Tobago have been indicating in the press, in the newspaper reports, on TV, radio and so on, that over the last 12 days or so, they are comfortable in their homes. One person wrote a letter to the editor. He said that it was the first time in years he went in his gallery in the night and enjoyed the cool breeze. There is a feeling in this country, persons believe that they are on vacation, because of the peaceful nature. They feel now and they are concerned that the vacation may end, but they feel this relaxation.

Many of us, including businessmen, had to go to Miami, and when they reached in Miami, they said that they felt safe. When you leave the country—a businessman told us over the years when he cleared Trinidad and Tobago airspace, he felt safe. You could walk they around outside and go with your family, walk, take your children for ice cream. That is something we have to go back a decade or more to find that moment when you could go safely with your children for ice cream, to the movies. Today we have returned to that and we want to continue, with that level of order, peace and stability. This is what citizens desire and when we come to do this we seek help and support. But what do we get? Well, we "doh" have the big fish.

Mr. Speaker, how many more should have died before the Government acted? How many, 10, 20, 100, 1,000? Should we have waited, until more people were killed, then acted? Not at all! This responsibility we have is a sacred responsibility which we take seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I was raising the issue of the scrap iron yards. Many of those are illegal, but what do some of these so called dealers do? Not all, some. They hide weapons and other illegal substances in those areas. Over the last 48 hours we have read in the newspapers where the police was able to foil a gang which was stealing cars. You know what we do not understand too? Stealing a car is linked to a murder, because generally the bandits and the criminals will be operating in a stolen car. So when you crack down on a gang that is stealing cars you are touching the homicide rate as well. And they have been about to put several of these criminal gangs out of business, stealing cars that is their transport. When you go to commit murder you do not ride on a horse, you go in a motor car and it is generally stolen. So at this time the police and the defence force will zero in on that activity as well.

Mr. Speaker, they come and they read out all the statistics and say, well, gangs, but we have the anti-gang law passed by this administration with the support of the Opposition quite recently. But your anti-gang law would not help you to deal with homicides, other serious offences, stolen vehicles. The anti-gang law is one piece of legislation, and we are extremely gratified that we were able, within one year of coming into office, to pass such landmark legislation, as the Anti-Gang legislation. [*Desk thumping*]

Within one year, and to remind the national community, we have passed legislation to stiffen the penalties for offences related to firearms. We passed legislation to deal with interception of communication, human trafficking, landmark legislation, in one year. Could you imagine after five years? One year and we are using the tools available and strengthening the use of those legislative instruments by emergency powers granted to the police and the defence force. And it is working. What about 1,356 you do not understand? What about 33 firearms, what about over 1,000 rounds of ammunition? It is working. There are challenges as we go ahead but it is working.

Mr. Speaker, we heard a bit from the Member for Diego Martin North/East about matters of human rights and suppression of rights and so on. One colleague in the Government remarked to us a few days ago, he said that this was the first state of emergency where people are talking so freely, making critical comments—newspaper, radio, TV, anywhere; Parliament is meeting. The society—there is no suppression of human rights, there are emergency powers.

Persons go on the radio and say anything they want, but they sought to instil fear that under a state of emergency you might go and hold political dissidents, and it tells you what they are thinking. You will hold political dissidents, somebody with a pamphlet in their hand and who speaks about a Government Minister, you could arrest him. That was in the days of Walter Annamuthodo and all of that time when you went under your house and churned out some document. That is not today! That is not today!

You know, they want to instil fear that under a state of emergency we will lock up artistes. So what would we do, go and look for Solo Gidharee and lock him up, Brother Mudada, the Original De Fosto Himself? No, Mr. Speaker, that is not what is happening today. The police and the defence force are focused on what they are doing—gangs, stolen vehicles, firearms, ammunition. Those are the objectives. They are very clear. The objective is not to lock up a Chutney artiste, put a tassa band behind bars. That is not the objective at all. And those things—the society operates like that. So instilling fear is not an option. We do not do that.

They speak about the trade unions. Now if members of the labour movement would like to cuddle themselves in their self-importance, that the state of emergency was called because of them, that is fine. I imagine a Boy Scout club could say that too. If they would like to believe that, that is fine. But you know, Mr. Speaker, during this state of emergency we have had industrial action at Santa Flora and at Petrotrin. We have had unionists speaking out on their issues, we have had fasting —yeah, I think they missed lunch a day. They have been conducting their activities. There is no clampdown. There is no police going to see this.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Minister of Housing and the Environment has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

10.45 a.m.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We also heard a lot being said about the selection of hot spots. The Member for Chaguanas West gave us a passionate plea. He was driven by tears painfully to demonstrate that these hot spots selected were identified to the last Government and Minister Joseph put on record that these are hot spots. Where else do you want the police to operate? These are the areas selected by the intelligence services. The Member for Chaguanas West was at pains to point that out; selected not by politicians, the political directorate and the Government.

When I heard objections to those areas, casting those—you know, it is fascinating. Several speakers said that they are selected because they are the political constituencies of Members opposite. The Member for Diego Martin North/East—

Mr. C. Imbert: It is a fact.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: He says it is a fact. I challenge this so-called fact. Mr. Speaker, I want to read a June 28, 2003 *Newsday* article by Ria Taitt. Hear the headline:

"Rowley blasts Laventille people

Dr. Keith Rowley was brutally frank in Laventille yesterday as he delivered the feature address at a sod-turning ceremony for the Beverly Hills project."

Dr. Keith Rowley:

> "In a tough talking speech…fired verbal shot after shot at the people of Laventille, warning them that the crime and killing had to stop now. He said that Government was fed up of gun crimes in Trinidad and Tobago, particularly in Laventille. Rowley warned that Government was moving to target the handlers of illegal guns. 'And we are going to be rough and tough,' he stated, to loud applause…He noted that 'one bullet'…could cost the state as much as $7 million to $8 million in legal costs. 'And that doesn't include the split peas and rice you have to feed them in jail,'…"

The now Leader of the Opposition went to Laventille and said:

> "'If you bring up young men and… let them believe somehow that all they have to do is lie down on yuh bed, eat yuh food, wake up any hour in the morning, look at the neighbour daughter, get her pregnant at age 14, 16, without being able to support that child…"—you will face the consequences.

This is the current Leader of the Opposition. He said this in June 2003 and still sticks to this. Then his colleague, over whom he has little control, says that these places identified are political constituencies; that it is politics.

We have faced a disjunctive, incoherent and desperate Opposition. [*Desk thumping*] We are not understanding. The leader said to the people of Laventille: hello, this has to stop; all of these guns and so on, targeted as a hot spot. The Member for Diego Martin North/East says: "you see that; they target that; that is politics." This is what we have to deal with. I could not believe it myself. They have to maintain some consistency.

The Member for Point Fortin came along as well and joined the band indicating that this state of emergency had caused irreparable damage to our image and CNN had a report, not on the Obama grabbing incident, but on the state of emergency and how Trinidad and Tobago was portrayed as crime capital and so on.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Mr. Speaker, section 35(6), imputing improper motives.

Mr. Speaker: [*Gestures*]

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, I agree. Let us ignore her. The Member conveniently forgets. Talking about the international image of Trinidad and Tobago, it was in January 2005 that the Minister of National Security then, Martin Joseph, wrote to the *Los Angeles Times* asking for an apology from that newspaper painting what he called an unfounded picture of Trinidad and Tobago,

describing it as a haven for criminals. So that image of this country was in 2005 and before, when Martin Joseph wrote the *Los Angeles Times*. Imagine him, sitting in Port of Spain in a cubicle, writing the LA Times and asking for an apology because of how they portrayed the country. Today, we are concerned with CNN.

The Member for Point Fortin ignores, in 2006, a story in the *Guardian*:

"Crime killing tourism industry in Tobago…

The latest British advisory, dated February 24, 2006 also noted 'the inability of the Tobago authorities to apprehend and prosecute the perpetrators…'

The British…advisory…'We advise against staying in villas in…area…'"—in Tobago.

This is in 2006, but portraying yesterday that this initiative will cripple the tourism sector and bring damage to our income. [*Interruption*] Yes, a sector where, in 2006 and before, the British were warning tourists. Could you imagine? This is what happens when we move from self-righteousness to hypocrisy. [*Desk thumping*]

There was another article, "Trinidad & Tobago now murder capital of the Caribbean". I really was personally shocked to hear the former Minister from Point Fortin say that, because I know the Minister had also had encounters with the criminal elements. Her son, regrettably— and we are happy— there was a robbery, I believe, at her place in Port of Spain where items were stolen but no harm came to her family. Yes, Mr. Speaker, September 02, 2008, the story was carried in the *Trinidad Guardian* of a robbery at the home where the son of foreign affairs minister, Paula Gopee-Scoon, escaped possible harm when he came face to face with a thief in his mother's residence early yesterday. Now I do not know if there is a denial of this, but this is from the *Guardian*.

The one that is even more interesting—*Newsday*, Wednesday, April 22, 2009. Hear this story:

"4 gunned down

The triple homicide took place at about 9.15 am yesterday, when gunmen shot five…workers at Scoon's plastics factory, Sun Spot Plastics Ltd, Factory Road, Diego Martin."

Imagine that. This factory, it was stated, is the business of the husband of the Member for Point Fortin. Three killed, I believe. It was so bad that the proprietor, Mr. Scoon, called for a permanent base for soldiers to bring crime in this area

under control. So the calls for the use of the soldiers began in their household, 2009.

Scoon went on to say that:

> "'It is very easy for someone to escape because the hills lead to Macqueripe.'"—are easily accessible—"'I don't think that the police are fit enough to handle the hills and that is why we need a permanent army presence…'"—in and around those hills.

The Member for Diego Martin North/East said they are trained to kill; do not use them to fight crime. [*Interruption*] But this is a newspaper report; I did not write it. Onika James did. Today they come and spill crocodile tears about the image of the country, how "the image bad", as if it started last week. [*Interruption*]

I am describing crime, so if I talk about the Simon Williams killing in Laventille, what is that? They spoke about the human rights record of the country and how it is affected. This is a country where they have failed for many years to ratify Conventions dealing with the rights of workers, of women and children, of human and civil rights and reports were not filed for years.

I am sorry if I touch a nerve—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I will touch yours. [*Laughter*]

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: I have a reply for that; but if I reply to that, I will be unparliamentary. I am almost tempted to ask which part of the anatomy would you be interested in. Where will you touch first? [*Laughter*]

Let me proceed. I think that is just to tickle her listeners.

We hear again about the state of emergency and those opposite say: explain the reason to Parliament. It was in August 1995 when several of them opposite came to this Chamber and supported a state of emergency to lock up the House Speaker, then Occah Seepaul. Mr. Speaker, do you know what happened? The Acting President at the time issued a statement in which he said he was advised by the Prime Minister. He did not base his decision on information that he was satisfied; he based it on advice from the Prime Minister that Occah Seepaul was going to overthrow the Parliament. And to lock up one woman under house arrest, they called a state of emergency. Several colleagues were here. There was a defence launched by the government of the day that included the Member for Diego Martin West and the Member for Diego Martin North/East. I have the *Hansard* report. They were there and they spoke.

Today, they talk about human rights and the rights of detainees and prisoners and so on. There was a little lady on Mary Street who had to drink coconut water five days in a row. Thank God she had someone to climb the tree. When it came to Parliament and they raised in Parliament that the Speaker was under house arrest and did not have food supplies that were cut, a Member stood in this House and said:

> "If the Speaker knew that she had no food at home, then she should have behaved herself."

Hon. Member: Who said that?

Hon. R. Moonilal: Friday, August 11, 1995 at around 8.05 p.m., Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley, Member for Diego Martin West. Today we hear about the rights of prisoners. What do I say? What do I do?

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin North/East jumped in the ring. Hear him:

> **"Hon. C. Imbert:** …Mr. Deputy Speaker,"—in explaining the state of emergency to lock up the woman—"the Prime Minister brought certain information to the attention of the President and the President acted on that information believing the information to be correct…"

So the Member for San Fernando East goes by the Acting President and says: "So and so, call a state of emergency." No National Security Council or no committee; no Cabinet.

The Hon. Colm Imbert said:

> "…the President acted on…the information…and…declared a state of emergency. It is simple as that."

Today they say: explain, explain; justification, rationale, reason.

Another important point came up in this debate. I spent hours ploughing through the *Hansard* looking at this debate. The now Leader of the Opposition had an interesting point in responding to an argument from the former Member for Tobago East, the Hon. A.N.R. Robinson. The hon. Member for Diego Martin West said to that Member:

> When the Member had 33 seats, did not his Government have the ability to do as it saw fit? He did not do anything. In fact, let me tell the Member that all he did placed our country in grave danger.

He indicated that the Member had the right under the Constitution to call a state of emergency but did not do so. There was speculation about the build-up of guns before July 1990, but they let it happen first before the Government acted. Even when it happened, 16 hours later they declared a state of emergency and he said that is the difference between the then PNM government and the NAR—they take preemptive action. Today, when we take pre-emptive action we are wrong.

11.00 a.m.

They accused the former Prime Minister, Robinson, that when they had intelligence that could have suggested an attempt to overthrow the State, they did nothing, but their Government took pre-emptive action. On a Thursday night, they put Occah Seapaul under house arrest so she could not appear a Friday afternoon in Parliament. That was it. I want to quote a few more, so when you get up you may have a more comprehensive question. [*Laughter*]

You see, Mr. Speaker, they cited section 2(c) about an immediate danger and threat to lock up Occah Seapaul. That was the immediate, impending danger. Today when we look at 11 persons killed in 2 days; $22 million in cocaine seized; blood bath, that is not an the immediate threat! They were concerned with their Members in Parliament, and they had no other tool. They did not come to the House with a Motion of no confidence in the then Speaker; they did not use any parliamentary instrument. They had this poor lady an Mary Street in a house drinking coconut water. That was the circumstances. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, you see, he says—I want to quote—"so one understands that there is a fundamental difference between this administration"—meaning his then PNM administration and the last one. "If the Government perceives a threat to the State, pre-emptive action is taken to protect the State."

Mr. Warner: Who is speaking?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: This is the Member for Diego Martin West.

Mr. Warner: The same person?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Speaking in support of a state of emergency to lock up Occah Seapaul. This is what he was doing. When the then Prime Minister, the Member for San Fernando East, went to the acting President and advised—because that is what was stated. He acted on the advice of the Prime Minister—today they come and talk for 14 hours non-stop—what is the reason? What is the reason? What was the reason when you jailed Occah Seapaul and locked her up?

What was the reason that you had the city of Port of Spain under lockdown and it was two houses on Mary Street or one house?

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for Oropouche for giving way. Two things I want to address; one is, you may not agree, but the history would show that in Trinidad and Tobago at that time there was a Speaker in the Chair who set about to reduce the Government's majority by suspending Members of Parliament.

Secondly, I want to ask you, in the context of pre-emptive action, what specific threat to Trinidad and Tobago's public safety the Government is responding to with this state of emergency? What is the specific nature of the threat? That is what we have been asking for two days. So now that you have all this to say, could you tell us the specific threat that you averted, the specific threat that you are responding to, who was involved and the nature of the threat?

Mr. Speaker: You have 10 more minutes.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, Member for Diego Martin West, we have told you—I think we will now have to talk in Hindi or Spanish or Italian—that there were this seizure, gangland violence and gangs. You have seen it with your own eyes; 11 murders in two days, bloodbath expected. The intelligence suggests that. If you do not act, you cannot change that course. What is about you that you want to know more? What more? How much more should die?

The other point related to that is in those very hot spots crime has been on a decrease. People in your own constituency are sleeping comfortably and are sleeping in peace today. If you are truthful to yourself, you will stand and say, "My constituents, my neighbours"—if I live in the constituency—"are at peace. They are happy. They are saying not even the dog is barking."

You know another major pattern in this debate—I just want to cover a couple more before the time—they came again and used the debate to eulogize the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago. They are trying to eulogize that it is good, and all the equipment that they bought. If you would hear them in their contributions, Mr. Speaker, they brought two solutions to us: go back with the blimp and bath, the dog before they go in the room and walk on people's bed. Those were the two suggestions; bathe the dog and bring back the blimp. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, in today's *Guardian*; "Blimp…helicopters" described as PNM "toys" in a diplomatic note. This is a diplomatic note! This is not a cashier's slip.

This is a diplomatic note sent to the United States of America security agencies. They described these as PNM toys to satisfy the self-importance of their leaders. This is how it was described; a diplomatic cable.

> "The much-maligned blimps and alleged attack attacked"—describing it as—"crime-fighting 'toys' of the Patrick Manning administration"—and their solution is to go back to the blimp, and go back to SAUTT under a favorite of theirs.

We have indicated that those persons in the Special Anti-Crime Unit have been returned to their jobs in the police service and critical security agencies so they can work. They tell us that we are undermining the morale of the police service. Could you imagine that? They are telling us, this Government, we are undermining the morale of the police service!

Mr. Speaker, they gave police officers and other persons their $5,000 bonus when the hard-working constable and corporal on the beat had to work hard and put his life on the line every day, and do you know what? "An officer in SAUTT get $5,000 more per month"; $60,000 per year more, and they told us that we are undermining the moral of the police service.

It was a former Minister in the Ministry of National Security, now I believe a Senator—how long he will stay there, we do not know, because of his constant challenges with the truth. It was that former Minister, Mr. Speaker, who went to the funeral of a slain constable, Omar Maharaj, and speaking at that funeral said, "That a police dying is in the normal course of duty. All of that is to be expected." That is what he said. The newspapers condemned him for his insincerity; for his lack of compassion to the family—he would go to the home where they were burying their son, a fathe,r and say, "Well all of that is in normal police business, normal police work." That is how they spoke to police officers without compassion; a callous disregard for their sacrifice.

What did we do on coming into office? The police officers received in quick time $1,000 bonus. We are confronting the criminal elements with the support of the police. They are in support of the extension of the state of emergency.

Mr. Speaker, their record on crime is atrocious. And I said last week, and I really mean it and I would repeat it today, I would have thought that the Leader of the Opposition, leading this party today, would have risen in this House and tendered an apology on behalf of the nation for presiding over the massive criminal activity and murders between 2002—2010. The Leader of the Opposition should have begun his contribution by apologizing to the nation, and

pledging that if, God forbid, he was to come anywhere near the corridors of power, as unlikely as that seems, that they have learnt from their mistakes. They should have apologized to this country.

When he was in the Cabinet, he sat in the Cabinet when the chairman and then Prime Minister, the Member for San Fernando East, described Kidnappings as bogus; described murders as collateral damage; and the bombings were unusual, and demonstrated that inability to extend compassion to this nation, to victims. The former Prime Minister and the Member for Diego Martin West sat in the Cabinet and said nothing, and you would think they owe the nation an apology. Before dealing with this issue, apologize, but they would not, because the victims are not close to them, although they are their constituents. Instead they come and attack this Government, our crime-fighting strategies and attack even the personality of the Minister of National Security. They ignore the gains that we have reaped in this short period of time.

Like everyone in this society—I am a citizen, I would like this to continue and we would like this to continue. There are programmes, policies and strategies that we would put in place to ensure that we have a low crime society to return to the old days when you could walk the street, when in the evening if you run out of sugar or salt you could walk to the parlour and collect it on credit. We want to return to those days, Mr. Speaker, where, if you have a church in your neighborhood, you could walk on the road and go to church.

If a function finishes at o'clock in the night—when we were growing up, not too long ago, our parents used to take us in a taxi—pack up all the children in a taxi to go to the cinema, 8.30. The movie would finish at 11.30, and you walk home or you jump in a taxi and you go home safely. In those days "it did not have aircondition" so you would wind down the glass. Those are the times we yearn to go back to. Why do we have to go to Germany, America and England to walk the street in peace, and in your own country you cannot walk the street in peace? That is what we yearn for.

Today this nation has a Prime Minister and a leader who is prepared to take the most courageous of all decisions to defend the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk Thumping*] Mr. Speaker, in the final analysis, the people are the arbiters of all political disputes. They will determine whether we are right or wrong, and in time they will have that opportunity, but for now we will stay steadfast in our duty, our commitment and in our courage, and the Member for Siparia and Prime Minister of this country, one day when history is written, this

generation and generations to come would owe her a debt of gratitude that in August/September 2011, she saved this nation and our youth. [*Desk thumping*]

I thank you. [Desk thumping]

Miss Joanne Thomas (*St. Ann's East*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened to the previous speaker, and I tell myself, "This is what I come here on a Sunday morning, a Sabbath day, to listen to." [*Interruption*] I want to appeal to the young people, those especially, those who are watching us right now, to let them know this contribution that was made is not the true representation of a parliamentarian. [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: It is despicable!

Miss Hospedales: It is disgraceful.

Miss J. Thomas: Parliamentarians do not get on like that—hitting back on people's personal lives! What I want to tell him is to make sure that his colleagues do not have any "cocoa in de sun that has been in the papers [*Desk thumping*] before he comes and talks here about other people on this side". [*Desk thumping*]

Most of the time I sit in Parliament here and listen to this particular Member's contribution, it is always to get back at somebody; always to bring some "low dodge". [*Desk thumping*] I mean, I, as a new Member in this House, should be sitting and listening to learn something from him, but no I have to "blind my eyes" and tell myself do not listen. "Joanne, this is not what Parliament is about. Make sure that you do not follow this pattern." [*Desk thumping*]

Miss Hospedales: That is right. Agreed!

11.15 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I refer to an article in the *Express* of August 20, where the Leader of Government Business said to citizens that they ought not to feel insecure following the recent upsurge in the killings. He disagreed then and said that there was no need for a state of emergency. [*Crosstalk*] He said that. Not mere hours after, a limited state of emergency was declared. In my church that would be considered a sin, lying, telling untruths. [*Desk thumping*] You come and tell me something now and mere hours after the same thing happens, as I said in my first contribution, that "when dey say stand up, run for your life". [*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 40(b) and (c), order.

Mr. Speaker: Sustained. Standing Order 40(a), (b) and (c), allow the Member to speak in silence.

Miss J. Thomas: Mr. Speaker, he said that we asked in all our contributions to identify the justifications, and that "he doh know if we doh understand; dey have said it over and over". The Minister said the 11 murders and, of course, the drug bust of $20 million were the key factors for the state of emergency; then the hon. Member said this morning, arresting criminals, providing order for Trinidad and Tobago and arresting the gang leaders. So wait, we "doh" have a police service in this country? What then are the responsibility and functions of the police service?

Mr. Speaker, he spoke about the 1,356 persons arrested, and you get the impression that the more numbers we have, then that will show it is a success, because he did say this morning, 1,356 arrested, 1,356 successes. Of all these persons who have been arrested, how many have really been charged? [*Crosstalk*] How many have really been charged.

Miss Hospedales: That is right; they need to tell us.

Mrs. Joanne Thomas: In the Marabella area, 60 persons were arrested, 55 were sent back home. [*Desk thumping*] But I am sure that 55 are included in these 1,356 persons. I am sure of that. [*Desk thumping*] [*Interruption*]

Miss Hospedales: That is what they are doing. They are not telling us the truth.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: No analysis.

Miss J. Thomas: We have highlighted the effect of this state of emergency on our burgesses and some of the people in this country. He talked about the burger vendor, and "dat same burger vendor could get shoot". But do you know what is strange? I do not know how many of us have been in the Penal area. There is a little area set aside for selling doubles, saheena and all those things. They are selling now, though. They are making a living. [*Desk thumping*] Those vendors are making a living, because there is no curfew there. If this is a caring Government, you cannot just care for some parts and not care for the other parts. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I listened to him, and I said, "My God!" [*Crosstalk*] Then, of course, he turns his contribution to a story and a particular Member. [*Crosstalk*] Members here are talking about racism, but what I am talking is the truth. It is the truth; I am not making up anything. I am not making up anything. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: I would like Members to be very, very cautious and courteous. Members are making their contributions. We should not be hearing any racial slurs across the floor, from either side. So I ask all Members, including the

Government side, not to engage in language that is designed to incite or to give any negative impression based on contributions being made. So I appeal to Members, this is going live, and we have to conduct ourselves in a dignified, civilized and professional manner. The nation is looking at us, therefore, do not engage in language that is designed to send what I call unnecessary ethnic, racist or any undesirable messages. So I appeal to all Members, Government and Opposition. You see the crosstalk, I would like you to desist from it.

Member, just address your remarks to me, and I ask the Government side to pay attention in silence, while you are speaking.

Miss J. Thomas: Mr. Speaker, I was just highlighting the way the Member spoke about our highlighting the issues affecting some persons in this country who are in small business trade, the persons who rely on this type of business to live. I will highlight it again. People are suffering out there, and that is the key factor. That is the concern for Members on both sides. We have to be concerned. Just as we are concerned about the crime, we have to be concerned as well for the welfare of our citizens. [*Desk thumping*]I was highlighting that in the areas not under curfew, people are living as normal. People can operate their little trade and live like normal.

I cannot highlight enough that when this state of emergency is extended, we are looking at three months. Three months for someone who has no revenue coming in, that is like a lifetime. That is like a lifetime. To other people, it would be, "Okay, three months is nothing", but for somebody who does not have a meal coming on the table, especially if you have to pay rent and you have children, most important, it is unbelievable. I do not think any of us here could understand how mothers, especially, would operate in situations like these.

One of the things I heard the Member say—and, of course, he boasted about the Children's Life Fund, and it is a very, very good initiative by the Prime Minister. I know the Prime Minister has a caring heart for children. But does the Member know if the Children's Life Fund is operational? Does he know that? He comes here and talks without checking. That is why I said in my opening that I appeal to the young persons who are aspiring to be parliamentarians not to use what they saw this morning as an example to deter them from looking in that direction.

I want to highlight again the number of persons, because people have come to us and told us, "Dis ting really, really affecting us." "Dey sure dey going to carry this for three months?" People who have been working seven days, are now cut down to three days. Of course, the casinos have just totally eliminated the night

shift. It is true that some persons work in a casino, but that is what they use. That is their livelihood right now. Think of this, we are going with this for three more months.

I know there is nothing much we could do on this side to probably change the minds of Members of the Government, because they have already outlined this is what they are going to do. But in my small contribution this morning, I again remind them that just as we want to capture the criminals, the police could do their work. We do not have to institute a state of emergency for the police to do their work. Give them the opportunity to do their work, because they were doing it before. As I highlighted, we have a lot of intelligent, committed and hard-working policemen. They are doing their work.

But you know something, Mr. Speaker? I look back at the reasons for the state of emergency, and even for the extension. There is talk on the ground. You hear talk on the ground, and when you listen to it, you realize that could then possibly be the reason and not what was given to us: a container of missing guns, the union march and the police. When you think about it, if the guns get into the hands of these persons, then it could really have a bloodbath. Then is say, the talk on the ground, to me that sounds like a more logical explanation for a state of emergency, and not just because there were 11 murders and a drug bust for $20 million. [*Desk thumping*]

Tell us the truth. If you do not want to tell us the truth, then institute measures. My colleagues on this side, and the Member for Port of Spain South, highlighted all the different Bills that could be used for the different aspects of crime. Utilize that. Do not impose on people's rights to say you are solving an issue. I again just want to appeal to Members. I want to endorse what we on this side have said. We are not in favour of the state of emergency and we are not in favour of the extension. There are members of the public who are suffering, and for those who are listening they would see that we have highlighted their plight. We have done what we could do and put that plight to the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

11.30 a.m.

The Minister of Sport (Hon. Anil Roberts): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just first say I would like to wish the hon. Minority Leader for the Tobago House of Assembly, Mr. Ashworth Jack, a happy birthday; it was his birthday yesterday. [*Desk thumping*] I wish him that—very patriotic man in this country and a Virgo.

Let me just clarify: and I must say, Member for St. Ann's East, that I love to listen to you because: one, your humility shines through, you do to not attempt to play more intelligent than you are as someone "sitting down" next to you and you talk passionately.

Mr. Speaker: Please, do not impute improper motives and do not really attempt to personalize. The problem is personalizing matters. That is what causes the problem. So leave out Member for Arouca/Maloney, she had spoken already [*Laughter*] [*Interruption*] could be La Brea, but whoever. [*Crosstalk*] The Speaker withdraws—I withdraw—but I am asking the hon. Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara, do not impute any negative to any Member on that side, please. Continue.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I humbly apologize to anyone sitting in and around the Member for St. Ann's East. But I agree and the Government agrees and there is no need to keep repeating it. We understand that a state of emergency—and one of the tools of a state of emergency—curfew—brings hardship to citizens, we understand that. Of course, shifts, because people cannot work later hours there is a stress on the economy, on people's pockets. We understand that. We have thought through that, we do not enjoy it. We understand it. However, what you failed to say is that those ladies who work in the casinos, when they are going home at 2.00, 3.00, 4.00 in the morning and they jump out, if they are lucky to get a car, and it is normally a PH—and when the Minister of Works and Infrastructure wants to regularize PH we get opposition on that side, but the regular taxis stop working at 7.00 or 8.00—when they jump into a PH they do not know if they are going to reach home to work again. So, while we understand that they may lose some income now, it is far better than losing their lives; and that is the decision. So, we did not make the decision in a vacuum, so we understand.

Furthermore, I would like to correct you and some of your colleagues, the extension of a state of emergency to three months does not mean that the curfew extends for three months. It does not mean that. It means—excuse me, if you pay attention—a curfew is a tool used within the state of emergency powers, okay. So, to say that the curfew—I do not know. The authorities, the people in charge, Minister the of National Security, the head of defence force, the Commissioner of Police will make that determination when they have reached their goals to make our citizens safer. So, to state to the population that they are going to suffer and not work for three months is irresponsible. The state of emergency, the extension that is being requested, is three months. When the goals are hit—this was not

done by some "vaps"—there are specific goals that the authorities need to get whether in gang members, in arrests, in people on warrants, weapons, type of weapons, all sorts of things they have as their goals, as they hit their goals, then we come back to normalcy. That is how it moves.

When the Member for Arouca/Maloney said that in Jamaica they came with a whole plan, what she failed to say—you see, PNM, you like to talk half the truth. The truth was that after two months of the state of emergency—after two months—the then Prime Minister came with the holistic plan to show what he would do after. This is a stopgap measure. Everyone agrees that over the last eight years crime rate has gone to a ridiculous level, that Trinidad and Tobago is under siege. We agree with that. We have decided to do something. It is a hard, tough decision but we could have sat down here and just thought about ourselves and made the politically safe decision, and worry about the next election and "sitting down" here for 10 or 15 years—as the PNM prefers to do rather than deal with problems—but we choose to deal with problems. We tell people we are coming to handle crime. It was going down, and this is what you all do not understand—it was going down!

And this is what this debate is all about: the inability of the PNM to understand that other people have different benchmarks, different goals, different standards. Our standard is not just to beat the PNM. The PNM is slow! It is like Usain Bolt beating me in "a 100 metre race—I will run it in 16. He would not be happy to beat me, just like we are not happy to be better than you all; that is easy. What we must do is search for perfection, search for what makes us comfortable. "So if we come down 18 per cent last year and this year going down 24, we not happy". You all might have been happy—because you all were happy with a decrease in the increase—we are not happy with that. So, do not say that we were doing PR and now we come—no—focus. Yes, it was coming down but we on this side are not happy with that decrease. We want it to come down faster, further and stay down, and that is why we will do anything to make our people safer.

So, that is what this debate is about. You all have to raise your standards, PNM. You have been there too long and you know you have become a bit jaded. You do not achieve, you do not think outside the box, you do not think you could be world class and brilliant. You are happy to be just the best local derby horse. You are happy to win the Angostura stakes instead of winning at Cheltenham or a Kentucky derby.

But moving right along. I am glad to see the Member for Point Fortin is here. I heard yesterday that the Member for Point Fortin was missing the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara—and let me say at the outset I am very happy that you were

able to notice that I was not in the Chamber for a while and that I was playing football and wearing number 21. Yes, I was with our citizens at the Queen's Park Oval "Balls of Fire" with our national Trinidad and Tobago Cricket team, taking on the best West Indies players: Chris Gayle, Jerome Taylor, Fidel Edwards, Pedro Collins, Kieron Pollard, Dwayne Bravo, Ganga, Bharath, all of them there, and 8,000 citizens and the theme of the event was "Sport for Peace".

So, the Minister of Sport went to the "sport for peace" event, and the Member for Arouca/Maloney up to this morning is making fun as if it was a frivolous activity—it is not—and we are happy that we have a Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs—well Sport now—who can play football, who could play table tennis, who could swim. So, I know it is a shock for the PNM because your former Minister of Sport is looking to be a contestant on Project Runway "when Anya finish winning", but we have a Minister of Sport who could play sport; so understand that.

That also shows the attitude of the PNM. Because these areas—and the Minister of National Security was at great pains to explain that in these areas that are crime-ridden and, of course, the same PNM areas are the same areas because they are not based on politics or race—"because I am dougla so which race I prefer, I doh know"—but it is not based on that. It is based on raw objective statistics, data, not politics and PNM and race and Indian and African—statistics—that is why PNM areas, PP areas, same thing, because the independent Defence Force intelligence services, police service they produce these. Politicians do not "sit down" and say, "Well I doh like St. Ann's East, make she a hot spot". We do not do that. So, please come to the Parliament and let us debate something seriously.

But the Minister of National Security goes to great pains, and everybody understands that the research is there: that one of the ways to attract young people or one of the reasons why they get into illicit activity or they go the wrong way is because the education system does not identify their talent, it does not appeal to them, and sport is one of the ways that you could appeal to someone who does not really like or does not have an affinity for maths and English. They can make a great living, especially, as this Government develops sport as an industry.

Here it is the PNM is ridiculing the Minister of Sport for taking part in a sport activity to show peace for Trinidad and Tobago, to show with the citizens solidarity for what is going on. It shows that you do not believe that sport is important, and this is why we understand why we are here now, because, had you understood that, then you would have been able for eight years to identify talent in primary schools and, rather than stuff everybody down maths and English, you

would have put programmes in place, coaches, —early talent identification— created academies, taken this talent and showed them that this is a way you can make more money than being a doctor or lawyer—if you would have done that—but it somehow seems that you prefer it to "stay hot spot". I do not know why. You have to explain that to me because you had eight years, $300 billion, and you are coming here to tell us to continue what you all were doing. Please, we are not impressed by you all. We are not even impressed by ourselves because we want to do better every day, so you all are not in the race, okay.

Moving right along. The PNM has come here and said, that the Minister of National Security, a man of impeccable character, who has never had any reason at any time to discuss race in any debate, brought race into this debate. Let us think about this for a moment: that the Minister of National Security who led off this on Friday? He brought race into the debate.

Unfortunately, the day after the Prime Minister announced the state of emergencies one—not you Member for St. Ann's East—of your major leaders in the PNM, with newspaper, TV, blogging, said that it was racist and this Indo-Trinbogonian Government—"me ain' know how I fit into that because I dougla I telling all yuh that, right—was pushing race and wanting to lock up young black boys and they were going to get them as soon as it happened. So the race debate started off with the People's National Movement. So, do not say that a debate begins here, we must take things that have been said. Remember this debate was not thrust upon us. It seemed so because the Leader of the Opposition was not prepared because he came here as the Leader of the Opposition and his contribution lacked any form of research, any form of statistical analysis, any form of solutions.

In fact, I was deeply disappointed because I have a lot of respect for the Member for Diego Martin West, I might jab him and so on but I have respect for him. But he was incoherent, he did not have anything to add, yet he knew this debate was coming at least 12 days, but he was woefully unprepared, so much so that I could see it on the faces of some of his colleagues. Even last night when he was speaking, the entire Bench was sleeping—could you imagine the Prime Minister speaking and any man here or woman sleeping? Your leader was speaking yesterday and everyone—Diego Martin North/East even buss a snore—because he was not prepared to add to the debate to debate intelligently.

So the race debate began with the PNM. My Minister of National Security was acting responsibly in answering that, because he is a man from Nelson Street, grew up and came to sit in that chair and goes to talk. You ever see Martin Joseph

walk anywhere and talk with anybody on the ground. That Minister "walk easy kai", anywhere, hot spot, cold spot, medium spot and talks with people because he is on the ground, he is from Nelson Street and he has risen to greatness from there and he tells them that they could do that." But what you come here to do?" Here is it the PNM—same thing—but you all go on every station and saying it is race. How ridiculous! Statistics are facts. They are hard things to debunk.

So, PNM, let me tell you something: when you need to use race in a debate, it means that you have achieved nothing in your life because if I was to come and stand here and just talk "I am a "dougla", I am a "dougla", I am proud to be a "dougla". I did not have anything to do with that. Is meh mother fell in love with my father and I popped out—I did not achieve anything. So, if you come here and talk race, PNM, you have done nothing in your entire life that you could be proud about. Race is a ridiculous argument, it holds no water, so forget that! Moving right along. Moving right along. The deal-breaker, Member for Diego Martin West wants to know about the deal-breaker. What is the deal-breaker that called for this state of emergency? Well I cannot really understand that: 2001—160 murders; 2002—220; 2003—350; 2004—365; 2006—400; they crack 400 beating Lara's record; 2008—547; 2007—589, and you are still waiting for a deal-breaker?

11.45 a.m.

You are really still waiting for a deal-breaker? It should have been called way back in 2003. I want you all to go and call on your bMobile, your Digicel or your BlackBerry, call those 3,800 dead people and tell them, "We waiting for a deal breaker".

You know we come here in this Parliament and I am telling "all yuh" I like to work hard, but on weekends I would like to spend some time with my children and take a "lil lime". Right! But I have to "sit down" here, three days, and listen to this kind of discussion; "What is the deal-breaker?" Eleven people murdered in one day and "all yuh" still waiting for a deal-breaker? "Wha yuh waiting for, a bomb to sink the island?"

Hon. Member: What happen to you?

Hon. A. Roberts: "Wha happen to me? Yuh would never understand wha happen to me. You—leh meh leave you, yes". [*Laughter*]

Now, the Member for Port of Spain South, very intelligent, very eloquent, great contribution, and I agree with you, Member for Port of Spain South, that the

anti-gang legislation that both sides of the House worked on is brilliant, it gives the Government—not the Government, the police—certain authority to move in to attack the crime situation. Your points were succinct, they were brilliant, but they were totally irrelevant because you missed the point.

You kept asking: why a state of emergency when you have this? Why a state of emergency when you could lock up people for 25 years for being a gang leader? Why a state of emergency? For harbouring you could get 10 years because that gives the power to the police. States of emergency give the powers to the defence force as well as the police. Therefore, you have a larger amount of crime fighters simultaneously, independently, attacking the crime problem, and that is why you have seen a dramatic decrease.

So, yes, those are there and whenever the security forces decide and recommend that "the curfew done and the state of emergency done", those would be there along with other measures, positive and what we call negative. Locking up and so on could never be positive. Okay? Proactive responses, all of that is ready to roll, once we have gotten it down to a level of sanity. We need to return some sanity and then continue the crime-fighting plan. So that is what. All of those things are nice, the police have great powers and measures under the anti-gang legislation, but the key point is, the state of emergency gives the defence force those powers also.

On that note I think it highly irresponsible and disrespectful, for at least a few members over there, especially the Member for Diego Martin North/East, to say that army officers, defence force members are only trained to kill. If you understand the training that—[*Interruption*] You want to clarify? Go ahead.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, the offensive word in that comment from the Member for D'Adabie/O'Meara is the word "only". I said that army men are trained to kill. I did not say they were only trained to kill.

Hon. A. Roberts: Oh my goodness. Well, I am subject to *Hansard*, but are you saying—your point that you were making was, and please correct me if I am wrong—that the state of emergency puts these army officers, who can now go out in the community, and they are not able, as police officers are, to interact with the community with more social courtesy or do not understand policing methods and preventative methods, they are more trained in one robotic style and it could lead to some harm to citizens? Is that not the point that you were making?

Mr. Imbert: I thank the Member for allowing me to engage in this discourse. The point I made is that military men are trained to shoot and trained to inflict harm on people. Policemen are trained to protect and serve.

Hon. A. Roberts: Well, clearly you are not a policeman or an army man because policemen are trained in every form of intervention, from discussion, from psychological games to communication, to taking you down, to using mace, to using martial arts, up to using AK 47 and riddle you. There is a scale of how you would like to interact with them. They are trained to use everything and so are army men, so I think they are and if you follow their training—

Mr. Imbert: No, they are not.

Hon. A. Roberts:—and the Brigadier would probably give you an education on that—army men are also trained in all sorts of interventions. They are not only trained to kill. That is myopic, that is disrespectful, and army men, I apologize on behalf of the Member for Diego Martin North/East. That is like saying you as a politician, you are only trained—anyway you are not trained in anything, so it is all right. Let me go ahead.

So, moving right along—Member for Port of Spain South, while you were brilliant, sounded fantastic, you made absolutely no sense in this debate. Maybe in another debate you may have sounded good, because the state of emergency gives the defence force the powers. It is not only in hot spots, because "men eh go stay in one spot, they go try to run", so you need army doing their planning, separate and apart from the police, all coming down at one time, so "when men run so", they fall into my trap here.

I would not go into more details, they know the thing, so therefore the understanding and the difference is that that Anti-Gang Act is there and it would be utilized. The state of emergency gives the army and the defence force these extra powers, also increasing our manpower to deal with the situation, so you could argue that point right down until "corbeaux taste like chicken" but it is still irrelevant.

Talking to "Mr. say whay yuh want" and this is where the Speaker had to make an intervention, because I kept asking the Member for Diego Martin North/East, who is a very seasoned politician and parliamentarian; very intelligent and very well researched; when he was quoting from *The Economist*, I kept asking him, who wrote the article? He kept saying *The Economist. The Economist* is the whole magazine. I was asking you to give me the byline. Was it written by John Brown or Sally Field? You did not know or you could have said a staff reporter located in Trinidad and Tobago, because he started to read from this article and gave the impression to the Parliament and to the population that a foreigner was observing Trinidad and Tobago and this foreigner out there wrote—

Mr. Imbert: Who wrote it?

Hon. A. Roberts: A staff reporter based in Trinidad and Tobago wrote it, number one. So, therefore, he tried to mislead the population by trying to make us believe that somebody out there in England or in New York saw this thing and was writing on their heads and said, you know, "Trinidad and Tobago is so terrible", when there is a simple local right here "writing normal thing", number one.

Number two, he also chose to quote selectively, and he is brilliant at that. So let me quote a bit more liberally from what was written. First of all, the Member for Diego Martin North/East refused to quote the heading. Mr. Speaker, could I just quote a bit from this, not too much? The heading is "Crime in Trinidad Taking on the gangs." "Taking on the gangs", that is the headline. That is the heading. That means that is the theme. Now to me, I do not know if I am biased, but that sounds positive; "Taking on the gangs", that means crime, fight, gangs—fed up of it, we need to take back our country. That is what I get from that. Then we go to paragraph two:

"The aim of the emergency, which grants special powers to the police and"—Member for Port of Spain South—"army",—this person understands it very well—"is to try to break the island's violent criminal gangs. Most"—Trinbagonians—"support the measure. Long overdue, says Ken Gordon, a businessman who chaired a crime task force for a former government."

Mr. Imbert: From one man.

Hon. A. Roberts: From one man? It is your crime task force. You all appointed them and you are now criticizing that, one man?—Okay, well let me tell you Suzanne Mills then, she is just one woman. Hear Suzanne Mills in the *Newsday.*:

"The"—People's Partnership—"is not just talking, but acting. Anti-Gang legislation has been passed and implemented and gangsters are on the run. The murder toll is down, though definitely not fast enough for the PP, which has bet its reputation on crime reduction."

So this is just one man, one woman. We could write a reggae song.

In this article, quoted extensively by the Member for Diego Martin North/East, to give the impression that the state of emergency called by the People's Partnership was going to cripple this country's tourism even though under the PNM "nobody came here anywhere except $2.3 billion was spent in two summits where the former Prime Minister had to sit down by himself and sign ah

empty piece ah paper." Right;, $2.3 billion to do what? Tourism has been on the decline since the PNM came into power with moral and spiritual values in 2001, and now it is goin to pick up, and I will talk about that. But the person also says the murder rate last year, which was 2009, was 36 per 100,000; 36 per 100,000. So in D'adabie/O'Meara we have 60,000 people. In Arima—how much, Arima? Sixty? So within dey, per hundred thousand, you are going to get 72 murders per year."

In other words, "people just biding their time while they cooking their doubles and selling, or while they going in the casino and earning $20 ah hour, they just biding their time to go in a casket", and we say. no, let us stop that so that they could earn that $20 and then move up in five years to a manager and then earn $50 an hour and move up and buy their own casino. That is what we would like to do, because "when they dead they ain go study how much they making ah hour." Do we agree? We could agree on that. So, Member for Diego Martin North/East, again a bit of mischief.

Now, "leh me geh into the substantive portion of my debate. It is very instructive to know that everything said on the other side—one, "the People's Partnership doh note what they doing; knee-jerk; this is the last resort; no reason; why they should do that; how they could do it; inconveniencing; last-gap measure; suspending people's rights." I "doh" even need to make my argument. You know why? I am going to use the argument of the former PNM Attorney General, the late Keith Sobion—great PNM—-I am going to read his argument and they would act as my argument. Quoting from the *Hansard*, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, the hon. Keith Sobion:

"Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government, last evening"—the PNM Government—"advised the Acting President…state of emergency, City of Port of Spain."

Friday, August 4, 1995, the hon. Keith Sobion says the President of the Republic was advised to proclaim a state of emergency, limited to the City of Port of Spain, yet their whole point was that this Government used the word "limited" and there is no such thing. It is so ridiculous. How could you use the word "limited"? Well, let us hear what the PNM Government did in 1995, "to proclaim a state of emergency limited to the City of Port of Spain". So, anybody who understands English understands that a country is under a state of emergency, but the conditions applicable to that state are limited to certain areas. Normal English language, Undine Giuseppi taught me just like you and she was prouder of me than you, Member for Diego Martin North/East. So, the hon. Keith Sobion continued:

"For the past few weeks, the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has been subjected to action by the Speaker which is unprecedented, and which now threatens to usurp the rights of the elected representatives in Parliament, and in particular, those…representatives of the majority."

12.00 noon.

So what does the PNM say? Here it is this Government is saying our citizens are dying, our doubles vendors, our CEPEP workers, our URP, our casino workers, our KFC workers, our businessmen, our mothers, our single mothers, they are dying and we are fed up of them dying, and we call a state of emergency. The PNM says, "We are ridiculous, we are immature; we are knee-jerk and we are irresponsible, but they call a state of emergency to protect themselves. "Dem sitting dong in a seat and dey losing dey power. Dey cyar get through wid what they want to get through, dey call a state of emergency to protect dem in dat leather seat."

That is okay, but when we call it to save our people from dying at the hands of Uzis that shoot fifty bullets per second—"yuh know what dat is? Brrrrr—like dat. They want to kill one person, dey kill de whole balcony! "We going to protect our people from dat." The Members over there are telling us that we are ridiculous and irresponsible, but they call a state of emergency to "protect leather chair"; to "siddong in air condition and siddong dey and siddong in leather chair." That is what you all talking about.

The PNM Attorney General continued.

> "Whilst as a Government we had several options, it was our hope that we would not have had to apply the ultimate constitutional powers..."

"To protect their leather chair and dey tax-free car and dey loan, and whatever else. Point Fortin, you would not know; you were not a PNM here. You just come."

> "At every stage we hoped that good sense would prevail, and…moral suasion and established parliamentary procedures and conventions would prevail. Regrettably, this was not to be."

So their leather chairs; they were going to have to sit "dong on hard chair like in de gallery—leatherette." But they could not take that.

He continued:

> "A state of emergency under our Constitution—"

The PNM Attorney General, the late Keith Sobion—

> "is a vital instrument to be utilized in order to preserve our democracy."

So for them, it is a vital instrument constitutionally to be "utilized to preserve our democracy", but when we use it, we are abusing people's constitutional rights. [*Interruption*] Just now, Member for Diego Martin North/East. You see, yesterday you treat "meh bad". Respect is reciprocal. When I asked you to give way, you did not. [*Desk thumping*] "Yuh understand?" I try to operate in a courteous manner.

Here this one:

"The (PNM) Government are concerned,"—

It should have said "is", but however:

"however, that we, as a country, should return to a normal state in the shortest possible time."

So hear this. The whole country in 1995 "going good, yuh know. All de casino, de doubles vendor and de market vendor, everybody was going good. De only ting was not going good is de people in de leather chair, and dey say that dey are going to return the State to normalcy. So this is why we in this debate." For the People's National Movement, the State means the PNM! But in the People's Partnership, the State means the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

So the PNM's Attorney General continued:

"We, however, believe that this is much more palatable than the state of constitutional crisis in which the Speaker was leading this Parliament..."

So a state of emergency is more palatable to them than them not getting "dey way, like spoil chile. Yuh know when you have de cricket bat and de cricket ball and yuh go dong in de village tuh play and all de children come out tuh sweat, and you go to open batting, and yuh out for duck and yuh take yuh bat and ball and go? Watch dem dey. Watch all ah dem on dah side."

He continued:

"It should be noted that while the regulations would restrict, without permission, the holding of public meetings in the city of Port of Spain..."

Member for Diego Martin North/East, "he gallery" Friday. He say, "What, a gang leader going to call a public meeting; a gang leader going to go on a microphone and ting?" He "gallery". "So, Occah Seapaul, de poor Speaker, was going to call a public meeting? She was going to go in Woodford Square on a soapbox and take a microphone?"

But here it is; no public meeting. So, please, do not mislead us in this House, Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Imbert: Will you give way?

Hon. A. Roberts: "No, ah not giving way."

"The Government is committed to maintaining our democracy…"

Hear it:

"…maintaining our democracy…founded on the principle that the elected Members of Parliament must uphold the Constitution and the law."

Mr. Sharma: "Ask him if Occah print pamphlet."

Hon. A. Roberts: Well, I do not know. It looks like the former Speaker of the House was "going to print pamphlet" and distribute, because they had to stop "dat". Yes.

And they continued—the PNM.

"This Government is carrying out its mandate which was obtained in free and fair elections, and will govern with sensitivity..."

The poor lady had no food. You all heard the sensitivity? "Well, if she know she had no food in de cupboard, she shoulda behave sheself"—sensitivity from a Leader in Opposition waiting to be removed.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: What?

Hon. A. Roberts: What? "And you wasn't in de meeting with Diego Martin Central tuh remove him? I will give yuh time; yuh could clarify. [*Member sits*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: You are disrespectful.

Hon. A. Roberts: "Yuh want to clarify? Aye, aye." I am disrespectful? You are gorgeous. [*Laughter*]

"This government is carrying out its mandate which was obtained in free and fair elections and will govern with sensitivity, caring and resolute commitment to defend the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago."

"Dey lock up a lil ole lady. She had tuh drink coconut water for five days, to defend the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. My Minister of National Security say, 'Listen, we doing well, but we not happy. People still dying. Young people killing young people. Dey ha no respect for life. Dey shooting; dey

riddling. If dey want tuh kill one, dey kill five just tuh get one, and I want tuh stop dat'."

"So he not defending—lemme quote it—'the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Dem was defending it by locking up ah ole lady and dey making her starve. Dat cyar be right. De PNM cannot be serious. And when you see us laughing here, is not about de issue, let me tell the people of Trinidad and Tobago; not about dis issue." It is a very serious issue, but it is laughable at what passes for parliamentarians on that side, with the contributions and the misleading and the ridiculous position that you all could come up with; the contradictions that is the PNM. That is what we laugh at, not the seriousness of this issue.

We are here. Last night all 29—look, even this morning. Where is the Member for San Fernando East? He spends more time outside than inside. Every time I "look tuh talk tuh him, I seeing leather. But dat doh bodder Point Fortin. Where Diego Martin Central, de new leader? And how many reach late?" We are here because this is a serious matter.

"So we moving on." Now listen to the PNM Attorney General, the late Keith Sobion—brilliant man.

"…the (PNM) Government will not be intimidated by or succumb to threats and subversion in whatever form they may choose to express themselves."

A little "ole" lady; subversion; state of emergency. We talking "bout" killers who do not know love, who nobody told "dem" because the PNM was in charge; no programmes in place to let them know that they were important, that they were loved. "Remember de story ah told yuh bout de eight-year-old and nine-year-old in Sea Lots who had built up a philosophy on life, dat why a person on TV must come dong dey; a celebrity, dey say. What I doing dey in Sea Lots?"

They had a concept that they were different, and the People's National Movement, which has ruled this land for 37 out of 49 years, could stand here and talk about moral authority and constitutional rights and disrespect and democracy? "In de words of de youth and dem: 'Res meh nuh. Res meh'."

"Leh we move on." Then the Member for Diego Martin North/East went on to quote our Constitution, once again to misinterpret and mislead—section 8(2)(c) and I read verbatim:

"that action has been taken, or is immediately threatened, by any person, of such a nature and on so extensive a scale, as to be likely to endanger the public safety or to deprive the community or any substantial portion of the community of supplies or services essential to life."

The Member for Diego Martin North/East said that the People's Partnership Government, based on section 8(2)(c), could not call a state of emergency, and he went on to say, "What? Was there a threat at our ports? Was there a threat to our public utilities?" And he says I have a problem with English. Let me read the English for the people, "becor" the people understand English a "lil" better.

"…as to be likely to endanger the public safety…"

Number one: Uzi riddling people; 300 and something dead; over 3,800 dead in eight years. Is that a threat to public safety? I think so. But a threat to public safety was "ah ole" lady in a chair, but people dying brutally is not.

So there has been a threat for a long time. It only took the courage of this Minister of National Security and this Cabinet under Kamla Persad-Bissessar to deal with it. [*Desk thumping*]

Then he goes on to say:

"…or to deprive the community or any substantial portion of the community of supplies or services..."

People in Chaguanas—I heard the Mayor, Orlando Nagessar, saying "people does close dong dey shops six o'clock anyway. People doh go out and eat. People doh move; dey stay home; dey lock up; dey reach home; dey try not tuh work at night." That is people being deprived of supplies or services. It does not specify WASA an ting." That could be another option. But for the Member for Diego Martin North/East to say that only if our WASA installations or our ports are threatened that we could use a state of emergency is disingenuous at best and misleading at worst. So I will deal with that again.

Now, "ah have tuh wrap up. Ah didn't want tuh go too long, yuh know, but the insensitivity of the PNM knows no bounds." How many of you remember—and this is what this debate is about; this is what the difference is. We consider every death, as stated by the Minister of National Security. He stated in his opening remarks that if this state of emergency finds one gun and arrests one criminal, it would be a success. Soak that in. You all laugh at that, but, you see, it shows the mindset of this Government. We may never achieve perfection, but we shall seek it. [*Desk thumping*]

Let me tell you what you think, PNM. Do you know what you think? That anybody dies—[*Interruption*]—I am speaking to the Speaker. He is very attentive. He does not fall asleep when I speak; he is always ready to protect me from a barrage of Standing Orders and especially from you, Member for Point Fortin.

But let me tell you about the PNM. So on this side, one death is too many; one mummy crying is too much. Right? [*Interruption*] No, I like "tuh look at yuh. Yuh thought I was joking when ah tell yuh yuh gorgeous?" I am enjoying looking at you.

One death is too many. But on that side, you know what they will refer to it as? Collateral damage! Who can remember a sitting Prime Minister, when a little 10-year-old girl was found chopped up and "mash up" in a garbage bag under a house, young Tecia Henry, in Laventille, and "dey had a big—well, it wasn't big at dat time; a small convention in Chaguaramas and de former Prime Minister said, and I quote: 'Dat? Doh worry wit dat. It ha more tuh dat.'"

Mr. Cadiz: And they clap.

Hon. A. Roberts: "Dey clap, yuh know."

Mr. Cadiz: "Dey clap de man."

Hon. A. Roberts: "Well we doh want dat; we doh need dat and we go deal wit dat!" [*Desk thumping*]

They get up and they pontificate. All of a sudden we see in the number one PNM-read newspaper, the *TNT Mirror*—I am still awaiting somebody over there to quote from the *Punch* "for meh; ah want tuh hear wha de *Punch* say." We see on the front page, the Member for Chaguanas East, "Robo Cop help him." "De man win de seat by 4,000 vote; he geh seven vote in Enterprise; Robo Cop from Enterprise. With help like that, Robo Cop stay wey yuh is, boy. Seven vote? If dah is de help he need, well, I eh know. Boy, yuh better res Robo Cop, eh." [*Laughter*]

But they go on to say that this Government—remember the story with pickups of money, blue notes and so on, flying; 3-tonne truckload? How much blue notes could fit in a 3-tonne truck, boy? "Ah ha tuh ask you and Bin Hammam, dey say? Dah is what Chaguanas West say. You now, Mr. Truckload, becor yuh come in de Parliament and make a mockery, talking about 3-tonne truckload of money." Right? But let me tell you something, and let me remind the national community that the former Prime Minister convened a "breakfasses" meeting, because it was not he alone; it was him plus 19 community leaders—gang leaders—at Crowne Plaza. He convened the meeting; 19 of them showed up. "Dey have two alive."

12.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Before you continue, I know you like to watch the gorgeous Member, but may I remind the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara, once you are

recognized by the Speaker and you rise, you address your observations to the Speaker. So I would like you to turn to me. I am missing you. Turn to me, please. Thank you. Continue, hon. Member.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I humbly apologize. My natural instinct is to turn towards beauty. [*Laughter*] But I shall force myself—

Mr. Speaker: Just turn to me.

Hon. A. Roberts: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am not insinuating anything on your part. Okay, time to wind up. The former Prime Minister held a "breakfasess" meeting at the Crowne Plaza and 19 community leaders or gang leader were invited. He was the convener of the meeting. There are only two left living: one who is in jail and the convener,! I say no more.

So, Mr. Speaker, also on the PNM side, they had the audacity to suggest that we on this side disrespect the Parliament and the democratic principles and we do not answer questions that are posed, yet in their last term there are still 119 unanswered parliamentary questions from the Opposition—unanswered and probably never to be answered because they shall never return to this side.

I believe—Leader of Government Business—we have already answered 100 questions here, because we understand that when the Opposition asks questions it is for the people and we will answer all. We would not come and say, "Mr. Speaker, that answer is not ready. Could I have another two weeks?" Two years passed. So much so, the former Speaker, Mr. Sinanan, had to pull up the then PNM government for disrespecting the Parliament and not answering questions, and also the former President of the Senate had to do that. So do not talk to us about disrespecting Parliament. One hundred and nineteen questions still to be answered of which many—by the Member for Diego Martin North/East about the Su.

Now, let me deal with the labour issue because it has been insinuated that this Government will call a state of emergency to suppress the protest of labour. Let me state categorically, this Government is labour. This Government's philosophy is of labour, it is of people. [*Desk thumping*] It is not a conservative approach. It is not the Republican approach. It is more of the democratic US model. We believe in labour. We believe in people. We love people. We are of the people and we walk with the people. We do not sit with Calder Harts and Ken Juliens, who never did anything and yet controlled $30 billion. When there are only two working elevators and a staff of 300 at a Ministry of Works and Transport, we do

not "go up in elevator", lock it and say "That is only for me to use. All of you peasants squeeze up in the next one." We do not do that.

At the Ministry of Sport there is only one elevator and when this Minister is in there, he invites people in to have a conversation because we like people. We do not keep people out because the former seamstress would not let anybody ride in the elevator with him. The staff was so shocked—one day I was coming down in the elevator and I stopped on the second floor, three ladies were talking, not paying attention and walked into the elevator and, as they raised their heads and saw me they flinched and "nearly run out". I had to ask them if my deodorant was not working. [*Laughter*] "Where dey going?" I said, "Ladies come." They were so shocked and relieved to know that they could lime with a normal, regular human who happened to be a Minister.

So gone are the days of PNM, pie in the sky, "King Solomon goldmine above everybody." We are of the people, so we do not need to suppress labour. We love labour. We wish we could have given them more. Do you know why we could not give them more? Two reasons. One—this Uff Enquiry Report, have you all read it? I have read it about eight times. This shows the PNM's mischief, mismanagement and corruption, which is why we are here today to deal with the problems that you all left, while Calder Hart, Ken Julien, Uthara Rao and all of these people were going with the people's money, when it should have been applied to the youth in danger, to the children, to the hospitals and to provide infrastructure. The Minister of Works has to be begging for money to fix infrastructure for people. It is no coincidence that these hot spots of PNM areas and their infrastructure are the worst, and you have ruled for 37 years. Shame!

The second reason other than this Uff Report which you all did not read because you all did not know anything about is that there was somebody sitting in this seat, the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara. She sits here no more. She was the Minister of Finance. She purported to negotiate on behalf of those people—the strangers in the House and out there—to save the economy from damage, systemic risk, but she never disclosed that she herself was an owner of the said company by having 10,400 shares. So, therefore, in that meeting, the poor Governor of Central Bank who thought that he had a colleague in the Government who will negotiate with Mr. Duprey and Mr. Monteuil, little did he know it was three on one.

That MOU that was signed by the PNM now has the Minister of Finance and this Government having to fork out approximately $13 billion extra on top of the $5 billion that the PNM spent—$18 billion, that could have been used to give

labour just deserts. So do not tell us that we want to suppress labour. We want labour to loosen their belt and fling it. Unlike the Member for San Fernando East who told labour, in the height of a boom when oil was $147 and gas was $13.15 US per MMBtu, to tighten their belt. I was asking then, "So when is labour to loosen their belt?" When we are in recession labour must tighten, when we are in boom labour must tighten, and you all are over there talking about labour? The Member for Diego Martin West wants to meet with labour. There are Hilton workers working on 2002 salaries; we are negotiating 2008 to 2011. That is your PNM negotiation because you disrespected and ignored labour. So do not say we want to suppress labour. We are labour, we love labour.

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

Mr. Imbert: Standing Order 33(4), Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, you may be given two minutes to clarify.

Mr. Imbert: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, in his impassioned delivery, the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara alleged, insinuated, gave the clear impression, that the article that I referred to in my contribution in the British magazine, *The Economist*, which has a worldwide circulation of millions, was written by someone in Trinidad, by a local. Those were the words that he used. He indicated that I had misled this Parliament when I had given the impression that these were the views of a foreigner.

Mr. Speaker, for the record, the writer of that article in *The Economist* magazine, which I repeat, is a British publication with a circulation of millions of readers, the staff writer whom he refused to identify is an Englishman, a citizen of the United Kingdom by the name of Mark Wilson, not a Trinidadian. He is a foreigner and, therefore, you were getting a foreign perspective.

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

Mr. Sharma: Nonsense!

Mr. Speaker: Anybody speaking on your side? Later? The hon. Member for Mayaro.

The Minister of Arts and Multiculturalism (Hon. Winston Peters): Thank you very kindly, Mr. Speaker. Having listened to all the discourse by my colleagues on both sides of the isles I promise that I am not going to detain you here very long, but only to say that we are here today deprived of our Sunday lunch at home and indeed of our leisure time yesterday to be here this morning when we should be in church somewhere, only to speak about the reason for us declaring a state of emergency in Trinidad and Tobago. I dare say, unless one is a

resident of la-la land or some country outside of the planet earth and knows nothing about Trinidad and Tobago, that question indeed would be rhetorical. But having said that, we are forced to come here and answer this question.

Mr. Speaker, I am not here this morning to speak about who caused the problem in Trinidad and Tobago, why was it not solved; that is not the problem. The problem is simply that we have a problem in Trinidad and Tobago, we have many problems. Among those problems crime is most prominent.

The former administration could not deal with it and if they could, they did not deal with it and so the people of Trinidad and Tobago elected the People's Partnership Government to do something about not only crime, but to make their lives better in general. Crime being a problem and a niggling one at that, we have to ensure that we do somebody about it. I think that alone should answer the question of why we called a state of emergency because everything else that has been tried in this country by the former administration has failed. I take caution in not calling them a failed administration because we cannot say that people did not do anything at all good, but to say that they did not handle crime or our economy in the proper way would be an understatement.

Mr. Speaker, having, given the task of making the lives of people in Trinidad and Tobago better and finding ways to deal with the crime situation, we as a Government must use every avenue that is available to us. As you have heard by the other speakers, calling a state of emergency in Trinidad and Tobago is a lawful act that is supposed to be used by any government in power to ensure that it brings about the desired result if things in a country are out of hand. No one can deny that crime in Trinidad and Tobago is totally out of hand.

When people who have to do basic service to ordinary people like delivery—I remember one young man delivering gas to somebody or to some household in Laventille and just that simple act caused him to lose his life by callous people who did not care.

12.30 pm

Mr. Speaker, when people who are walking on the streets cannot walk the streets in peace, whether day or night; when eleven o'clock in the day, broad daylight, people are being shot and killed on one of our busiest thoroughfares—Frederick Street—Mr. Speaker, it would be irresponsible of any Government not to take drastic actions.

I believe that drastic times call for drastic action! If a state of emergency, as limited as it may be, is what the Government deems to be necessary to curb the

spate of crime in our country, then, Mr. Speaker, I think that they should be applauded. But when I have been sitting here for two or three days and listening to my learned friends on the other side speak about the ills of calling a state of emergency to curb crime, I wonder if they are not the encouragers of such lawless acts.

We speak all the time about our children listening to us as lawmakers; we speak all the time about our children learning from what we do as adults. Is it, Mr. Speaker, or is it true that the people who are listening to us today—the deviants in our society, those people with dubious intent—how would they be feeling? Would they not be encouraged by listening to my friends on the other side when they speak about "people who selling doubles in Debe and not able to do it in Laventille"?

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you that in this country, emotionalism and race take precedence over the most serious acts in this country, and I believe that we should desist from such actions. How could it be that every single thing you do in this country, you see race in it? Mr. Speaker, I know who I am: I am a proud, black man; I am an African, and I understand what Indian people and who Indian people are. But that does not mean that everything that a government does—whether it was them when they were in government or we as we are now in Government—everything that you do for the benefit of the entire country should be mired in some kind of racial or with some kind of racial overtone.

Mr. Speaker, it was me who, many years ago, when I looked at what young black people, what they were doing to themselves in this country, I wrote a song called "Little Black Boy", and the very black people today who are castigating this Government and who are in some way implying that they are calling a state of emergency only to suppress black people, they themselves, when I said to them "Little black boy, go to school and learn; little black boy, show some concern little black boy, education is the key, to get you off the street and off poverty", Mr. Speaker, black people are the ones who came down on my back very, very heavily and said that I did not like black people for telling them that. Well, Mr. Speaker, those who fail to act in advance would, in a lot of ways, bear the brunt of their actions in later days.

The price that we are paying today did not start with this Government; this Government is trying to curb it, and if the people who I listened to—and I do not want to go ahead and go into any name calling or even calling the constituency that they represent, they know who they are so I will generically say—those people who harbour those thoughts and who put those thoughts into the public domain should be ashamed of themselves.

Mr. Speaker, what is happening today is the effect of what we did not correct in years gone by, and so today we have to call a limited state of emergency. I was looking at a chart that was placed on my desk this morning on places that are hot spots. I do not care who, which Government went ahead and say that these are the hot spots, the most important thing here is that it is recognized that these places are the places where we have problems in Trinidad and Tobago, and it is unfortunate that these places are populated by black people.

When I look at the statistics, I see the people who are dying most in this country are young, black people; and when I look, the people who are murdering these people are themselves young, black people. Mr. Speaker, when I look at the jails and in my songs, I did, in fact, say that, "look in the jail and see who you see too. I see a lot of little black boys just like you." Mr. Speaker, nothing has changed.

So when we look at the overall picture, it is blacks who are committing the crimes against black people—mostly black people—but I say to you that when rain falls, it does not fall on any one person's house, it falls on the homes of everybody. So, the crimes that are being committed today are affecting all of us, and the responsibility to curb these crimes falls and lies with each and every one of us who is sitting here today. And those in the general public who know who the criminals are, who know why these crimes are being committed and where they are committed, and do nothing about it—we are responsible. As a responsible Government that has seen all the aspects and run the full gamut of options and could go no further, we decided to call a state of emergency, and that is the reason why we live under a state of emergency today. It is a tool that is there to be used and we are using it.

Mr. Speaker, I said that I was not going to be long. We have my good and learned friends on the other side who are saying to us, "But you are not telling us why you called the state of emergency." Mr. Speaker, we told them why we called the state of emergency. I heard the Minister of National Security went to exhaustible lengths to tell them exactly why we called the state of emergency, but that is not sufficient. They want us to come in the public domain and give you all the details of what you do, why you do it. You know why? Because, as was said before when we were passing another Bill in this House, these Bills are being passed so that we can suppress people in Laventille. I heard that said in this House, you know.

Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that that is not why. We cannot come out in the public domain and give you graphic details of everything. It is a fool who would

do that! If we do that, what we are doing is telling the criminals out there exactly why we called a state of emergency and exactly why we are doing what we are doing, so they will know how to elude you. We are not going to do that, but we are going to suffice it to say that there are things that the Government would know that the Opposition would not know. There are things that the Government would know that the general public would not know, and there are things that we have to do that we cannot tell them why we are doing them because, if we do that, it would be to show our hands and we would not be able to put a handle on crime. That is why they were not able to do it. That is why.

They did not have the will in the first place; and secondly, they believe that if they did this the people in Laventille would not vote for them. If they did that, the people in Diego Martin would not vote for them so they have agreed and consented to allow all the people in Trinidad and Tobago to pay a deadly price. So today we have to come, and in some ways, there are covert things that governments have to do and we are doing that.

As you heard from the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara, we have crime going down but we just believe that it is not going down to a level and as fast as we would want it to, so we are using these other measures. Mr. Speaker, in local parlance, let me say to my friends "all food good to eat but all talk eh good to talk." So we are not going to tell you every reason why we called the state of emergency, suffice it to say that the people of Trinidad and Tobago, they know why we do it and that is why in any poll that you could pull up today, the majority of persons would say they are in favour of the state of emergency because they are feeling the effects—the negative effects of crime.

Mr. Speaker, it matters not what you do. If you are living in a house and you have to renovate that house while you live in it, you are, in fact, going to be inconvenienced in some way. So, there must be some level of inconvenience in this country while you call a state of emergency, but I am saying to you that I am sure that people in this country, right-thinking people in this country, do not mind being inconvenienced for three months and live a comfortable life for the rest of their natural lives in a country than for us to sit here, do nothing at all and inconvenience people by crime and criminality in a country for the rest of their lives.

So, when I hear my friends speak, I am saying to you that we have to be cognizant of the fact that the conditions that we live in today in this country are what brought about the state of emergency. And we are not afraid—we are not a Government that is afraid that we are not going to do this because you are not

going to vote for us in the next five years. So, if you do not want to vote for us for doing the right thing then do not vote for us for doing the right thing, but for God sake, we took an oath to protect the people of Trinidad and Tobago without fear or favor or ill will, and that is what we are doing, and that is what we will continue to do. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I looked on the faces of some of my colleagues on the other side when they were making their contributions, and I can see etched on their faces a kind of pain. They are saying one thing but you can almost read on their faces that they do not believe in the very thing that they are saying. They want the state of emergency, it is just that they do not have the will and their collective responsibility is to follow their leader. Their collective responsibility is to do—and they are doing their jobs superbly—they are the Opposition so they are opposing.

Mr. Speaker, but there comes a time when we have to put country first and party or anything else after. The worst thing for any human being in the world is something called self-deception. Self-deception, you see, is when you are saying something, but you do not believe it at all, and I know that they are intelligent people on that side and they could never believe what they are saying. I do not care how much statistics and how much antecedents they want to bring about, and how this came about and all of that. The fact remains that we are with this today and this is the condition that we live under today, and these conditions that we live under today must be dealt with in today's terms, and that is what we are here to do, Mr. Speaker.

I do not want to just stay here and be talking for the rest of the morning because I, too, would like to get out of here so I could find something else to do for the rest of the day. But suffice it to say that the state of emergency is not an illegal tool. The state of emergency is justified under the conditions that prevail in Trinidad and Tobago today. Mr. Speaker, and just before I go, I want to tell my friends, especially Member for Laventille West, do not castigate us and say that we are going to shut down Laventille to catch two people because you used to be a cadet yourself; and I am sure that you have some military training, and to say to you—[*Interruption*]—I do not care how much—.01 percent—if we could take out— [*Interruption*]

12.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Member for Laventille West, please, do not engage in that kind of heated crosstalk. If you want to discuss, behind my Chair and you can ask the individual to join you, not across the floor. Please, continue hon. Minister.

Hon. W. Peters: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would not forget what I was telling him. I was telling him if he is saying that we are going to lock down a place to catch two people., I want to say to you I would shut down the whole of Trinidad and Tobago. As a matter of fact, I will shut down any country to catch one person who is dangerous enough to cause the rest of our country harm. [*Desk thumping*] That is the kind of fearlessness and the kind of evenness that you must have in a country in order to govern it properly.

To use the word of my good friend from Diego Martin North/East, the people of Trinidad and Tobago have recognized that we are a Government, at the time we were a party, with a plan for this country, unlike what they would like people to believe. We are a party and a Government that have the country at heart. We are people with different thoughts that came together and that is what makes us so powerful, because we listen and we come from different walks of life; "not no one party" that has one kind of thought and one train of thought all the time. Mr. Speaker, that is why we are here, to use the words of the Member for Diego Martin North/East, and they are there, and they will be there for a long time, because we are dealing with the situation in Trinidad and Tobago the way it is today and we would continue to deal with it.

In parting, just let me say to my good friends on the other side, crime is all our business. It is not the business of the UNC, or it is not the business of our Government only; it is the business of all of us in Trinidad and Tobago and whatever we can do to reduce crime in this country, it should be done collaboratively and collectively, so that the people of Trinidad and Tobago can say, "These are my people in whom we are well pleased". Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there anybody else on the Opposition Bench to speak, Chief Whip? I just want to advise you that this is a debate. My information is that the Prime Minister will be winding up this debate shortly. When she takes the floor, nobody else would be allowed to speak. So, I am giving the Opposition every opportunity to get your speakers in. If you fail to do it, and the Prime Minister is called by me to wind up the debate, nobody else will speak, so I am serving notice on the Opposition. We have had a speaker from the Government side. Nobody came from your side. That is Standing order 34(1). I would like to give you the opportunity.

The Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Rodger Samuel): Mr. Speaker, I am elated to participate in this debate. But, as I begin, for the last two days I sat here and, as I listened earnestly, it reminded me of a

song sang just about a year ago, where a prominent calypsonian entitled a phrase in his song that says, "dem fellas so bright, yet dey cyah run de country right." Some 15 months after, because all of us in Trinidad and Tobago would have had a clear idea of who the calypsonian was referring to, and yet today some 15 months after, the said folks still feel that "dey bright", not recognizing that the country has shifted away from their brightness and has looked for further guidance and better guidance through the Government that is now led by the hon. Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

I must quote, Mr. Speaker, a biblical text from Ecclesiastes Chap. 08, reading from verse 11, where the wise man, Solomon, declared, when the sentence of a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong. I want to quote it again, because we are faced with the a situation where, for many years, the sentencing of criminals and the sentencing and the work that is supposed to have been done by the judicial system has been stymied for so long a period that Solomon's words come to life where he clearly says: when the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong. Today we are faced with the reality of such a statement. Today we are faced with the reality of such a prophetic word, that because things were left undone for so long, we face the reality that men, the hearts of the people; the hearts of young people in Trinidad and Tobago are filled with the schemes to do wrong and we are reaping the results of such schemes.

We must recognize, Mr. Speaker, that for too long in this country, we have talked, and talked, and talked, but we have not been accustomed to action. We have heard a lot of promises and promises. We have heard a lot of plans and a lot of plans. We have had a lot of ideas. We have had a lot of measures. We have had a lot of systems. But yet, to this day, we are reaping the results of the failures of all of these things that seem to deal with crime and criminal intent because the things that have failed have brought us to this point in our time and history.

I must pay tribute and I must commend the hon. Minister of National Security for his wisdom, for his approach, for his demeanour and for his attitude in dealing with the situations that plague this country. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we must recognize that the approach of this Government is not one that is draconian. The approach of this Government does not even compare with the approaches of the former government, even in the many years of their rulership in this country. As a matter of fact, when we look back into the times of history we would recognize that there were severe and draconian measures that were undertaken by former governments with regard to any kind of turmoil and any kind of situation that arrived in this country.

Just a few months after 1970, we were faced with situations 11 months after in 1971 with another state of emergency. We found ourselves in a situation where labour leaders were arrested and incarcerated for seven months. We found ourselves where people had to protest for a carnival and then we had a carnival in May. We found ourselves in situations for reasons that were sometimes very political, yet people are saying that many of the little protests that we see in the nation today, where people are burning tyres on the streets, people are protesting and blocking roads, is a sign of unrest that is taking place in the country. Mr. Speaker, these kinds of protests are not new to Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to draw attention to some things because La Brea and Point Fortin had been making the news within recent times and they were crying out to the Minister of Works and Infrastructure to come to La Brea and to come to Point Fortin to look at the situation and they began to block roads and to deal with the situation of bad roads and bad infrastructure in La Brea. The Opposition tends to say that is a sign that there is social unrest in the country.

In 2006, the same La Brea and Point Fortin residents protested because of bad roads in La Brea and Point Fortin. That was not a sign of unrest. That was not a sign that something was happening throughout the country. As a matter of fact, in those days we recognized from the newspaper clippings of the *Guardian* and the*Express* in a story written by Richard Charran that police used tear gas, mace and rubber bullets on the crowd. Yet, under a state of emergency, we recognize that we have not used any kind of draconian measures to really affect any citizens. We recognize that. "Look it here". The police used tear gas, normal situations, mace and rubber bullets on a crowd that was protesting under normal circumstances because of bad roads.

I found out that—and I feel sometimes very sorry for the Minister of Works and Transport, because the Minister of Works and Transport has this task of having to repair roads and rebuild roads that money was spent on; the same roads which we say is the cause of an unrest situation in the country, in February 2006, the Minister of Works and Infrastructure, Minister Warner, would recognize that in 2006, on the same roads—and I am saying this for the Member for La Brea in—some $25 million were passed to the former Minister of Works and Transport to repair the said works in Point Fortin, and yet a few years later, the same people have to come back and protest again, because the work that was done on the very said works in Point Fortin was poorly done. Five years later, they are protesting again and we are saying that it is a state of social unrest in the country. That is a state of bad work done by the former regime.

Mr. Speaker, we can go on and on and on because we recognize from all of the newspaper clippings from the *Guardian*, from the *Express* and Richard Charran again—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: A man of the cloth.

Mr. Speaker: Member for Point Fortin, you are shouting across the floor. I would ask you to exercise decorum and respect whilst a member is on his legs and allow the Member to speak in silence. Take notes and at the next debate, you could raise your points. Could you continue hon. Member for Arima?

Hon. R. Samuel: I will give you time. Mr. Speaker, in the *Express* of March 08, 2006—and I am just quoting:

La Brea road protest gets out of hand

Boiling point, Roads blocked in Sobo, Union Vessigny, Vance and Parry Lands

Boiling point, more protests planned for today.

We have been trying and people have been saying because of the little protest here and there because of bad infrastructure and roads that we inherited that shows that there is some kind of social unrest in the country, and because of some social unrest in the country, we have called a state of emergency. If that were true, then all of these boiling points of the days would have shown that there was a social unrest then and then if there was a social unrest then something should have been done. Really, when we look at it, $25 million on Thursday, February 02, 2006 *Daily Express* states:

> A $25 million allocation has been approved by Government for the resurfacing of the main road leading to Point Fortin whose deteriorating condition drew fiery protest last week and led police to use tear gas on protestors. All I am doing is just quoting what the newspaper said. Why? It is because we realize that in times past, the law enforcement officers used a heavy hand to deal with simple things that were happening in communities and constituencies.

1.00 p.m.

This Government, recognizing the dangers that are lurking in our society, decided at this point in time that it was wise to declare a state of emergency, because of the lurking danger upon the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, again I must quote another newspaper clipping, because the roads in those areas were repaired again.

> Repair starts in Point Fortin road, the article by Ariti Jankie, Point Fortin Mayor, St. Clair Natta says yesterday that work had started on two sections of one of the dilapidated roads which led to a fiery protest by residents that virtually shut down La Brea and Point Fortin on Wednesday.

I am just quoting the newspaper, Mr. Speaker. My purpose is not to cast aspersion, but just to now declare the reality of the situation which took place at the time, that similar things may happen today and we will declare that there is social unrest when, for years, similar things had been happening.

Mr. Speaker, again when we talk about emergency, we recognize an emergency is a situation which poses an immediate risk, a risk that had been declared and understood by the Minister of National Security, by the Security Council, by all of those technical persons who had been studying the state of affairs in Trinidad and Tobago, and have realized that it was wiser to call a state of emergency and nip the things in the bud rather than to leave undone and have to react.

One of the things I commend this Government for is its proactive measure, and it is not a reactive measure. To the Minister of National Security, I applaud your proactiveness; to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, I applaud our proactiveness. It is important for us to understand that we may never be able to put value to this move that we have taken in this country, but history will place value on it and ensure that we go down in history as a Government that has saved this country from chaos and from disaster.

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

Mr. Speaker: Any other Member from the Opposition? Any other Member from the Opposition who would like to speak? Any other Member from the Opposition would like to speak? The Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of State in the Ministry of the People and Social Development (Hon. Dr. Lincoln Douglas): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to join in this debate even to make a short contribution. I want to take off from where the Member for Laventille or—I cannot see from here, but in her comment, the Member ended by quoting something from Chinua Achebe "*Things Fall Apart*" which reflected on a piece of poetry by William Butler Yeats, and it read like this:

> "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,

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 found this quote very apropos. I find it describes basically the situation that we found this country in, and hence I thought she was actually describing the reason for the state of emergency. "Turning and turning in this widening gyre the falcon can no longer hear the falconer." In other words, a falcon is a very powerful bird, Mr. Speaker. In one of the best hotels in the world they have a falconer, or even right here in Tobago at Coco Reef there is a guy who walks around with a falcon on his hand, a very powerful bird; and all the other birds disappear once it appears.

But even the power of the falcon, if it is not controlled it suddenly becomes a very destructive and a terrible animal; a bird that is a destruction to other things around. And what has happened in the history and culture up to this point in time is that the falcon was no longer hearing the falconer. Those persons who had run the country and were in charge of the falcons, those persons had continued to bring terror upon the nation. They were no longer listening. They created this culture of violence, destruction, animosity, fear, anxiety, pain and bloodshed just as it says here. The "falcon cannot hear the falconer; things fall apart; the centre cannot hold".

Since 2007 the political leader of the Congress of the People has been quoting this very same statement: "…things fall apart, the centre cannot hold...". Since 2007 in the previous election, because things had fallen apart in this nation, the centre cannot hold—the centre is the source of gravity that pulls everything that you know that keeps it fixed in its place. And that is what this nation was experiencing, things were falling apart, our culture was falling apart. Incidentally, the quote from Chinua Achebe, in case the Member was just making the quote without knowing the book—I am sure she knows the book, though. I am sure she knows the story—

Miss McDonald: Absolutely not! I studied it absolutely not!

Hon. Dr. L. Douglas: Good. Well, she will tell you that the story is about a culture that fell apart, and this is how the culture fell apart. There was a village that was held together by rituals, by ceremony, by their history, by their past, by

their culture and by strong leadership. There was a guy there named Okonkwo who was the leader. He himself had problems in his own personality and after a while, because of the problems in his own personality, and his leadership style, he eventually brought harm to the village, because he did something which was forbidden. He was chased out of the village. As a result of that, foreigners came in, they took over the village through their own science, religion and so forth and eventually things fell apart.

What a vivid description of what has transpired in Trinidad and Tobago; that the leader went off. His leadership style, his own anxiety, his fears, his frustration with his own people, his inability to lead. His subscription to wildness and "seer people", and funny idea people who he subscribed to, eventually led him astray and led this nation down a pathway where we had all kinds of ideas that caused the centre to crack and this nation began to fall apart. The centre was not holding. It was not holding in our education system. We saw our schools falling apart with violence and all kinds of things.

It was not holding in our medical situation. People were sleeping in the corridors, doctors protesting, et cetera. It was not holding—nowhere in our economic system—when we spoke to the people who were running the economy. A "lawyer lady" who they said could be a finance person, she said nothing, nothing—No nothing is going to happen to us. We are above that", and in a few months, things started to fall apart. Things fell apart—[*Desk thumping*]—and they fell apart to the extent that we reached this place where violence took over. As a matter of fact, that was the same thing that happened in that very same story "*Things Fall Apart*". Violence became the order of the day where the tribe began to destroy itself because the leadership went awry.

And this leadership has been going awry from a long time, you know. When you hear the Member for Laventille West stand talking and quoting Dr. Eric Williams and others, if you read Dr. Eric Williams' own book as he comes to the end of his own story in "*Inward Hunger*" you could hear him falling apart as he starts to talk about these persons in Trinidad and Tobago who would not listen to him no matter how hard he tried, because he did not really have a solution to solving the cultural problem. Read it. I have written a whole thesis on it—Dr. Eric Williams. [*Desk thumping*] So read it some time; all right?

You could see that the centre was not holding then, and the subsequent leaders who came did not have the solution to hold it together, and so they kept guessing with the people of Trinidad and Tobago, they kept trying the same thing over and over, getting the same results and still felt that something else would happen. A kind of internal madness was taking place.

So no longer was the centre holding in Trinidad and Tobago. Things were falling apart, our individuals or persons in our country became resentful, isolated, non-cooperative, non-participatory, and yet they kept doing the same thing. Right in our community there was this voyeuristic approach to crime. Things—persons were getting killed and everybody was just standing by, and it had no impact upon—human life became of no value in that people died and we just looked for the headlines, and we thought that somebody died and was a bad thing, but it did not really impact us.

This is what happened, the culture began to crack, the foundation of our society began to fall apart, and so when it reached the stage where 11 persons, Mr. Speaker, could be killed in one short space of a time, you realized "dat water more than flour", you realized that things had reached a stage where you have to a make an intervention, you have do something drastic that was not done before; because in the past they kept doing the same thing and nothing was changing, that is a kind of madness.

So we reached the stage where we recognized that we had to make an intervention and even though they are asking, "Well, what is the reason", right before their eyes they are quoting the very thing, you know. They are saying:

"The falcon is no longer hearing the falconer;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned; and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned;"

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, this very same Laventille that they are talking about, I was doing a study on the incidences of recruitment into gangs and what it takes. I had a long list of questions which I was asking young persons between 9 to 14 years old about the things that they had seen and experienced. And we were talking about all kinds of things dealing with violence, rape and murder and asking them—and you would be shocked, Mr. Speaker, to hear the kinds of things these little children were seeing on a day-to-day basis. A young "fella" said to me—I asked: "What was the worst thing you have seen?" He said: "On my way to school I see ah man brains jump out of his head, he get shot." This is the kind of trauma that has been loosed, everywhere, "…everywhere the ceremony of innocence is…" drained from our culture, the "…best lack all conviction…" and the worst are full of passionate intensity".

Is that not a description of where our culture has reached? And so today, and in the last few days we have come with an intervention to pull this thing back to give us an opportunity to reset this culture. And yet, they say "Look, this person down the road suffering because they lost somebody". But we have doctors here and tell me, if you have a very, very, very bad pain and they tell you that you need to have surgery, would you do it? You would hold it off for as long as possible? Why? Because everybody knows, every doctor knows that surgery itself is a trauma to the body, and nobody wants to willingly go into surgery, because you have to pass through, you know, unaffected things to get to the real thing.

So we are aware, and we come with this with a sense of compassion, because we know that there will be persons who are affected, there will be innocent persons, persons who ply their trade, persons who depend on the night to carry out their business. We understand that. We understand, Mr. Speaker, that things will go awry, not everything will go according to plan. There will be officers or people or bad men who will take advantage of the opportunity and abuse other persons. We are not in favour of that. We are not in favour of that. Our Political Leader recently said that we have set up a committee to investigate or to look at these kinds of things. So we are not in favour of persons being traumatized, or officers taking advantage of persons, or the army going into communities and doing what they are not supposed to do. We are highly compassionate towards members of the community who are losing their income, who are finding difficulty, or men who just want to go out and lime and are unable to do so.

1.15 p.m.

We are aware that these things are a trauma to people and that nobody likes their life to be constrained; but we also understand, as many speakers have said before, that in order to cure the cancer, you have to do some chemotherapy and sometimes your hair might fall out.

Today we have come with a procedure that we believe will pull this culture back and do a number of things that will help us, first of all, reset this culture. This culture has to be reset, ladies and gentlemen. We need an opportunity for people to begin to understand the blessings they live with in this country and that they can live a life without involving themselves in crime.

Mr. Speaker, I have just returned from Kenya and the conditions in the far corners of Kenya are that people are coming across the border from Somalia and are under the pain of drought and famine and all kinds of difficulties. Many people in Trinidad have been coddled and been made to depend on the government for everything, and past administrations have made them feel that if they suffer any inconvenience they would not vote for them.

We need to reset this culture. People need to understand that we are blessed; that we are living in a country that could afford them the opportunity to live meaningfully without participating in violence. That needs to be reset and that is one of the purposes of this intervention. What else needs to happen is that we need to retake control of our society. We cannot live in a society where the bad men—what does the quotation say?

"…the worst are full of passionate intensity."

We cannot live in a culture where the bad men continue to be intense in their activity and hold our culture at bay all the time. Every time you go out, you have to wonder about your children, your wife and your family. You stop by your gate and you press the remote. It does not make sense because people are waiting by your gate. All of us have suffered these traumas and we cannot go on to live like this.

When you talk about these things in the past, you know what used to be the response? There is crime all over the world. That used to be the response. I heard that as a mantra and I beg to say that there are places in the world where people live without wondering when they are driving to their gates. It is not that there is no crime, but they live without having this constant fear: am I going to be mugged or am I not going to be mugged?

The last survey of living conditions that we did in 2005 says that 50 per cent of the population lives in fear of being murdered. We cannot live in a society where half the population—and that is 2005 you know—believes they are going to be murdered any minute. That kind of fear should not happen.

In some of the work that we have done in domestic violence and other kinds of psychological work, we understand that ongoing micro"trama", daily "trama", is far more destructive than one major "trama". [*Interruption*] A "trama" is like if every day you live in fear of being killed. [*Interruption*] I studied for a long time in the States, you have trauma/"trama", prefer/"preffer". I say "trama".

Mr. Speaker: Please, just speak to me.

Hon. Dr. L. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, this man is getting wired on minor words. [*Interruption*] "You just hush, nah"; you will learn something.

These microtrauma that we experience from day to day are far more destructive. In other words, we have designed a culture that allows for violence and that is where we have reached and part of what will transpire because of the state of emergency is to help us reset the culture; to help us, as the Member for Tunapuna said, to develop a new respect for life and for living.

This ongoing trauma that we face from day to day and the pain that our nation has been going through; this blood that has been leaking from our society; everywhere the blood-dimmed tide is loosed in our culture. We will once again retrain this culture to respect the value of life and I think that is part of the value of these emergency powers we have.

Once again, we want to reset this culture by restricting—you know the appetite of Trinidadians is an amazing thing and I find, with the state of emergency, that people are beginning to appreciate each other. They are beginning to walk with each other a little more.

So, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant has really outlined for us the statement that the President made in this poem she quoted, that our nation—and I will read it again for you just in case you forget.

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things have fallen apart; the center cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed 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."

We have come here to say that for once the best, that is the People's Partnership Government, is full of passionate intensity. We have come here to bring this culture back; to let this culture of Trinidad and Tobago know that once again we will make an intervention. This power of emergency we will use it to bring this culture back so that people can walk the streets and at least we can begin the process of helping people to feel safe.

So I enjoy the cause. I am passionate about the people who suffer and I enjoy the many, many calls of people who say: "I can sleep at nights; even if it is to stop the fellas who drive up and down the streets whole night blasting their car horns." This was a trauma a lot of people experienced. In Arima where I live, that goes on at a repeated rate. If we have a one-hour meeting in Arima, there are at least 15 interventions of people playing their car music at a volume that is excessive.

That is just minor. We had reached a far worse state than that and those of us who are from Arima, the MP for Arima and myself, the MP for D'Abadie/O'Meara

understand, when that took place in our area, the kind of impact that had on our community; the fear, the anxiety and the pain.

We have come here to endorse the emergency powers and the state of emergency, so that we could take this opportunity, once again, to let the falcon hear what the falconer is saying; once again to bring back control of the centre; once again to bring some intensity that good men can have.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Before I call on the final speaker, the hon. Prime Minister, to wind up this debate, I am going to ask Members of the Opposition if they are going to field any final speaker. Are you going to be fielding any final speaker—once? Are you going to be fielding any final speaker—twice? Are you going to be fielding any final speaker—a third time? Are you going to be fielding any final speaker—a fourth time?

The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for permitting me to join in this debate. Before I go into the body of my contribution, I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their contributions. The hon. Minister of National Security, I thank him and congratulate him for the fight against crime. All the Members on the Government Benches who have spoken; indeed, all the Government Members who have supported this measure we thank you and I salute and say that I do believe on a day like today, the Sabbath day the good Lord gave us, we are here doing our duty. I salute you for endorsing and supporting this measure and you can indeed hold your heads very high in Trinidad and Tobago as our people feel safer today than they have for the past 10 years.

I thank the Members of the Opposition for the contributions they have made and the suggestions they have put forward. Indeed, Members on this side have answered some of their concerns and rebutted some of their arguments and I shall also attempt to deal with some of the concerns that they have raised.

As I begin the substance of this contribution, I preface it with a quotation from the father of the Indian constitution, Dr. Ambedker. He reminds us:

"Law and Order are the medicine of the body politic and when the body politic gets sick, medicine must be administered."

It is my respectful view that the paramount obligation of a government is to protect the citizens and guarantee life, liberty and enjoyment of property. Indeed, one of the founding fathers of democracy once said, and I quote from Aristotle:

"The basis of a democratic state is liberty"

A constitutional democracy such as ours is essentially a pact between the citizen and the State. When the State breaches this pact because it is unable to fulfil its obligations to guarantee those basic fundamental rights and freedoms—life, liberty, security—then the rule of law is fractured. However, with the violent and heartless criminal element that we have seen in this country, responsible for rivers of blood that flowed through our streets in the past 10 years, we have lost faith in our State's ability to guarantee these fundamental rights.

When that rule of law is fractured, what happens then is that the Constitution is fractured. The Constitution is a sacred document. However, the sanctity of that document is derived from the respect people have for it. If we are unable to guarantee those rights, we are fracturing our Constitution and not taking the steps, as we are obligated to do, to administer the medicine to the body politic when the body politic is sick. Then we would have failed.

The state of emergency is the restoring of the State's ability to guarantee those rights and freedoms that are enshrined in our Constitution. The state of emergency is a means to an end. The means is the state of emergency; the end is the restoration of our rights and our freedoms, our liberties that are enshrined in our Constitution.

So, under the past administration, crime rose to unprecedented levels. The statistics speak for themselves. If we make a comparison of the years under the former UNC administration and those thereafter under the PNM, the numbers will jump out of the page at you.

In 1995, there were 122 murders. We took office in December 1995 and many will remember the crime spree in 1995. In the year 1996, with one year in office, the murders dropped to 106. In 1997, it was 101; in 1998, 93; in 1999, 98. The year 2000 saw an increase to 118; 2001, 151.

Under the People's National Movement from 2002, 171; 2003, 229; 2004, 261; 2005, 387;—the first time we had more murders than for the number of days in the year—in 2006, 371; 2007, 391; 2008, 537—for the first time in the history of Trinidad and Tobago we had half of 1,000 murders in one year—in 2009, 506; 2010, 473.

1.30 p.m.

So what do these statistics tell us, Mr. Speaker? A spiraling in the murder rate, and the serious crime statistics read by the hon. Minister of National Security also showed that spiraling; that increase. From 1995—2001, there was a total 789

murders; 789 murders too many. From 2002—2008, there were 2,853 murders. That is 2,853 parents crying for a child—a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister—2,853 up to 2009, and we add the 2010 figure, Mr. Speaker, you would see where we are going.

And so, what do we see? There was an increase of 218 per cent in murders on average per year during the PNM's administration. Mr. Speaker, I saw the sanctimonious hypocrisy on the other side. I saw it when they were washing their hands and saying, they will not support the state of emergency". When they are saying that they had done everything, then why is it—if you had done all these things that you say you did—that the crime rate continued to increase?

Mr. Speaker, under the PNM, from 2003—2009, there was a total of 126,978 serious crimes, including the homicides we spoke of; other drug-related offences—serious crimes, 126,979. What was happening? There is an old wisdom that says, if a frog is placed in boiling water, it will jump out right away, because what? If it hits that boiling water it is going to die, it is going to be cooked, but if you place it in cold water and you slowly heat up that water, what happens? The frog does not perceive the danger and it becomes a cooked frog. We were like that proverbial frog, being slowly cooked in the past 10 years, cook to death by the escalating crime in this country. Some of us have become so immune to the heat, we are unable to recognize that, if we let the state of affairs continue, Trinidad and Tobago will become a failed state, and many of us—our children, our loved ones, friends and family—will not be alive.

Mr. Speaker, a failed state is where crime and violence becomes the norm. A lawless society takes over driving law-abiding people out. Is this what we want? Is this what the Opposition wants, those on the other side? Is this what they want when they say they will not support this tool that we have utilized? A constitutional weapon we have used, because the state of emergency is not something we picked out of the sky to break the rule of law in Trinidad and Tobago. It is enshrined in our Constitution. The constitution framers gave us this weapon in order to protect the people of our land and to protect our country, and so they say they will not support it. Time will tell whether their action was justified. We are of the view that they are totally unjustified, in the circumstances, in failing to give support to this weapon in the fight against crime.

Those statistics say one thing. How did we reach here? How did we reach to these thousands of murders and the continuing murders that we see? Where did they come from? Mr. Speaker, there was a reason, and so let us look at the genesis of how we got here. Let us look at that.

First of all, do you remember when the former leader of the PNM, the former Prime Minister, had a meeting with the head of the Jamaat during the 18/18 tie when his party was appointed to the Government? Do you remember when he promised to give back land at Mucurapo to the Jamaat? Do you remember that? He only relented when there was a tremendous hue and cry. Do you remember how the Muslimeen campaigned for the PNM in the marginalized seats and terrorized supporters of the Opposition in Tunapuna and in San Fernando? Do you remember that? In fact, there is an affidavit in the courthouse that speaks to all the meetings held with the PNM leadership and with the Jamaat al Muslimeen, making promises for favours for their support to get votes. Do you remember that, Mr. Speaker? Do you remember the billions spent in CEPEP, URP and the ghost gangs to fund their activities?

What do you think happened with all the alleged contracts that these gang leaders received through the PNM? Their political support for the PNM had come at a price, and this nation is still today paying for it. Do you remember that he was so boldfaced, when one of these gang leaders died that the then Prime Minister dubbed him, what? Do you remember, Mr. Speaker? A national hero! Do you remember that? Do you remember when the political leader of the PNM, the then leader and the Prime Minister, met with the gang leaders at a fancy hotel? You have spoken of it. Do you remember that? But this is 2011. We do not negotiate and wine and dine gang leaders at hotels as that last administration did. [*Desk thumping*] We will not wine and dine with them. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, in fact, you would have seen the reports over the last few days when it was learnt that there were gang leaders at the hotel. What did we do? They were raided and arrested to be taken before the courts. That is the difference. The moment the PNM Government of the day took the decision to negotiate with criminal elements in exchange for political support, that set off a dangerous course of events from which this country is still reeling today. And do you know why, Mr. Speaker? The moment you sit and talk with the enemy such as that, what you have in effect done is to surrender power. You have ceded constitutional power and legal authority to the gang leaders.

How can any Government sit and talk about coexisting with criminals. That is the antithesis of good governance, to sit and negotiate and talk with gang leaders and criminals—coexist with them in the full glare, as we said, of the country and the media. That is exactly what they did, a stone's throw from here, from the Parliament, in a hotel. And why did they do it? They did it just to stay in power, never mind the consequences to the citizenry and the nation; never mind. That

could never be a crime fighting method. It could never be a weapon against crime, because what? Since then the situation has grown worse.

And so the events of Thursday, August 18, 2011 and Friday, August 19, 2011 where we witnessed 11 murders in a 48-hour time frame, those events mirrored the abysmal state of events which transpired since in July 2003 in one week. There were six kidnappings in that week; several murders and there was a bombing in Port of Spain. The Minister of National Security has said he is willing to receive information from the former Prime Minister who told this this very Parliament—I was sitting there—"I know who Mr. Big is.? But what happened? You did not give the information to the police. You knew who Mr. Big was and left him out there, and today you want to come and talk about sardines, "guabines", anchovies and "fry dry' when your former Prime Minister knew Mr. Big, but did nothing to do with that? The Minister of National Security has rightfully asked, if you have the information then give it.

I heard one Member on the other side saying, "The police know who the criminals are." The police know this, they know that and they know the other! How did she know that? Does she also know? Does the Member also know? If you do, share the information. In that regard, I would like to congratulate the Member for Port of Spain South. I would go no further. The Member knows why.

Mr. Speaker, after being plunged into a state of turmoil and lawlessness, those vested with the mantle of power and authority, they needed to act sensibly and effectively, but they did not and the crime soared. They tried everything they could. Alphabet soup! Do you remember operation Anaconda—A to Z—operation Baghdad going right down to Z, zero tolerance; every operation? Again, I heard a Member saying in St. Lucia they have operation something. That is a crime plan! An operation something like Anaconda; that is a crime plan!

That is where it is ridiculous. It is ridiculous when Members on the other side is saying that the Anti-Gang Act, that is a crime plan and the JLC gave a crime plan. One piece of legislation! There are hundreds of pieces of legislation on our books to fight crime, but you say that one weapon that you gave us to fight crime, that is what we should have used, and I would come to that in a minute.

So I am saying that they tried everything. The criminals continued to run amok in this country. The meetings I have mentioned before, and that was tantamount to a constitutional recognition, the criminals had succeeded in creating a virtual substate within the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. It was as if we were conferring official recognition and title to this substate the boundaries of that

sub-state being demarcated by reference to disproportionally high murder rates in those areas and, incredibly, the Government of day—that PNM government—conferred the title of community leaders on gang leaders. That gave them a sense of legitimacy. That gave them a sense that they were in charge. It eroded whatever little hope there was for the restoration of law and order.

The unholy political partnership meant that state resources would now have to be distributed via these gang leaders now called "community leaders", and they became de facto councillors and representatives of the people; undermining the legitimacy of governance, whether at the local or national level. Mr. Speaker, as they tightened their grip on these communities they also expanded their criminal enterprise as the State and people of Trinidad and Tobago continue to lose ground. They became, as I said, a state within a state, a virtual substate.

Mr. Speaker, the state of emergency was recommended to the former administration since 2003 by Ken Gordon. Notwithstanding the growing crime rates on every front, the former government failed to take action in that regard. And so, why? They were concerned about their political failure. They were concerned that the nation would say, "You have failed." That is why they so easily now throw at us, "You have failed, that is why you have gone to a state of emergency", using a constitutional weapon. They accused us of having failed, when they stood by and did nothing when they had the chance.

They did not hesitate though, Mr. Speaker —they were not prepared to take the risk of looking bad even if it meant that rescuing the country and the bandits taking over—for their multi-zillion dollar Summit of the Americans to place Port of Spain into a red zone. They did not use the constitutional provisions. They imposed a curfew without constitutional sanction, when they set that red zone and you could not go into there without a pass, but no Constitution was invoked. You shut down Port of Spain and that is the hypocrisy of the PNM; the hypocrisy of those on the Opposition benches. [*Desk thumping*]

So, likewise as others have mentioned, when they had political problems again—not matters of national security—they did not hesitate to use a state of emergency and lock down Port of Spain again to lock up one little woman, the House Speaker at the time, Occah Seapaul. Remember during that three-day house arrest Port of Spain was also locked down. Hypocrisy of those on the other side! They were not prepared to use the Constitution—they were prepared, I am sorry, to use the Constitution to deal with one person, but they were not prepared to use it to deal with the thousands of bandits out there and criminals on the loose.

In fact, as I said, that is one of the differences between the PNM and this People's Partnership. The moment they took the decision to negotiate with criminal elements in exchange for political support, as I have said before, it set a course of events that we are still feeling the effects of. Mr. Speaker, we are responsible; they are responsible.

A recent joint United Nations World Bank study said the Caribbean region had a murder rate of 30 per 100,000 inhabitants—four times the North American figure and 15 times the west and central European average. I quote from *The Economist* of March 20, 2008.

> "According to a report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime...around 216 tonnes of cocaine pass through the Caribbean and the Guianas...every year en route to US and Europe, accounting for one-half of the US's cocaine imports and one-half of Europe's."

The *Economist* predicted in 2008 that: "This figure is set to rise further—recent crackdowns on Central American drug-smuggling routes have begun to shift more supply to the Caribbean basin."

1.45 p.m.

I continue from *The Economis*" of 2008:

> "The economic importance of the drug trade was estimated by the UNODC as equivalent to around 3.5% of formal-sector GDP in the region overall, and to 7.5% of GDP in Jamaica. Marijuana production and exports are less important regionally, but are locally significant in both Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago."

Let us think about what these illegal drugs represent to this criminal sector of our society.

Illegal drugs are the stock in trade of criminals, of the gangs. In the same way that the stock in trade of a supermarket would be rice, flour, oil and whatever else we buy there, illegal drugs are the stock in trade of these gangs, the criminals. Once their business is deprived of its stock, its ability and commitment to meet customer demand, wholesale and retail, is going to be adversely affected. Their entire supply and distribution network, which utilizes Trinidad and Tobago as a trans-shipment point and customer base, was jolted and weakened by recent seizures.

The criminal underworld was bound to retaliate. Such retaliation could only result in senseless and violent bloodshed and mayhem. The threat to public safety,

law and order was real and imminent. The planned retaliation by the gangs involved in the drug trade represented a clear and present danger to national security and innocent, law-abiding citizens of this country.

Let us look for a moment at the statistics for drug seizures within recent times. When you are deprived of your stock in trade, there will be reprisals and retaliation. I want to give the assurance to the nation that the crisis has been averted. The firm and very decisive action we took, as a Government, declaring this state of public emergency, caught many by surprise. The declaration of war by the State on criminals who terrorize our citizens was something they did not expect. After all, those on the other side had become accustomed to being treated—the criminals had become accustomed to being treated as community leaders.

Whilst we are not at liberty to disclose the sensitive details of national security, it is a matter of public record that the security services have, in recent times, made a number of important drug seizures. These impressive hauls contained large quantities of illegal drugs. Remember what I said to you. The stock in trade of these gangs and criminals are illegal drugs. Due to the good work of our security forces, the discovery and seizure of large quantities of illegal drugs not only disrupted the flow of business and the supply chain but jolted and weakened the entire network.

The last seizure we spoke of, the $22 million, must not be viewed in isolation. It must be taken in context of the overall cumulative effect of the fine work done by our law enforcement agencies. Let us take this opportunity to congratulate and thank the joint services who are working round the clock. [*Desk thumping*]

Let us look at these: marijuana seized for 2011 was valued at $18.5 million; $1,229 kilos of marijuana seized by our law enforcement officers. Marijuana for the same period in 2010 was estimated at $49.5 million, 3,295 kilos; cocaine for 2011, 8,477 kilos, valued at $296.7 million, I am advised; cocaine for 2011, this year, 8,477 kilos, valued at $296.7 million; cocaine for last year, 6,750 kilos, valued at $236.3 million.

Some people are feeling it in their pockets. Some people have debts to pay. Some people collected moneys for a product, and they no longer have their stock in trade to deliver. The wholesale and retail network has been disrupted. This is what, half a million dollars? My colleague is saying about half a million dollars or more within this time frame. So we talked about reprisals—and, again, the hypocrisy on the other side when they say, "We do not know why." "Tell us why;

tell us why." If you read the statement from the President, it tells you why. That is the statement, the justification that was given. The hon. Minister of National Security came here and gave reasons, and this was one of the areas we talked about, reprisals and the spiralling; 11 murders in 48 hours.

So here we see almost half a billion dollars of illegal drugs seized. The hon. Leader of the Opposition expressed shock and surprise at the fact that Government is unable to disburse sensitive intelligence on matters of national security. But it is well established that such matters cannot generally be disclosed. This point was underscored by the Privy Council in the case of *The Zamora*, 1916, 2 Appeal Cases, page 77, by Lord Parker, when he said:

> "Those who are responsible for the national security must be the sole judges of what the national security requires. It would be obviously undesirable that such matters be made the subject of evidence in a Court of law or otherwise discussed in public."

The hon. Minister of National Security told you, "National security concerns", but these matters I am sharing with you are already in the public domain, with respect to the seizure of drugs.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what we did not do, in the face of all these things, in the face of the intelligence that came our way through the Minister of National Security. We did not call the criminals to a hotel to have a meeting with them. We did not promise to give them lands. We did not cower in fear. We did not call the innocent killings "collateral damage". What this Government did not do was to avoid the tough decision to impose a state of emergency to avert a crisis of untold proportions.

What we did with the intelligence that had come to hand, was to ensure that the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago were protected, because we are of the firm view that no one who plots to destroy our society would get away with it. We responded decisively to preserve public safety, and the results to date have vindicated our decision. The planned crisis has been averted. Today, there is not one person who will not admit that the nation is safer today. [*Desk thumping*]

As a Government, we have demonstrated that we will not allow the nation to be held at ransom by marauding groups of thugs who are bent on creating mayhem and havoc in our society. Let us be clear on one thing. The state of emergency has worked. The state of emergency has worked. As of today, since the state of emergency was declared, I am advised that the total number of

persons arrested since August 21 was 1,356; 420 were gang-related; 252 related to drug offences; 255 related to outstanding warrants—255 outstanding warrants; 285 related to other serious offences; 91 related to breach of curfew and 33 related to homicides; by homicides we are speaking of murders. Thirty-three firearms and 1,700 rounds of ammunition were seized. [*Interruption*]

I am advised that police reportedly intercepted a car in the Couva area around 5.30 p.m. yesterday afternoon, with two male occupants. In that car they found a German made submachine gun with ammunition, a tripod and army camouflage. Two persons in the Couva area around 5.30 p.m. yesterday—a German made submachine gun. And you say we are not in a state of war, Mr. Speaker? [*Interruption*] We are in a state of war.

Mr. Speaker: May I ask the Members for Diego Martin Central, Diego Martin North/East and Arouca/Maloney to allow the Prime Minister to speak in silence. Thank you very much.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar: I say the state of emergency has worked, and I have given you some statistics. It has worked, not only because there has been a substantial reduction in killings, but also because serious crime is almost zero and, indeed, road carnage has halted. It has worked, not only because we have arrested over 1,000 persons, it has worked not only because caches of weapons and ammunition have been confiscated, but it has also worked because, from the moment we took the decision to impose a state of emergency, a crisis was averted. That is how I measure the success.

The nation has been saved from a criminal uprising of untold proportions. That did not occur. That was stopped in its tracks. That is what we did. Compare this to what was done by the previous administration. Whilst they continued to rely on trying to placate criminal elements and negotiated with them, relying on normal policing, we took a weapon from the arsenal available in our Constitution, to fight the criminals in our land.

What do our opposers say? What are the arguments against using a state of emergency? Several of them have been put forward. They point to a series of arguments. The first they said was that I pre-empted the authority of the President. I usurped the authority of the President by pre-empting him. That is neither my personality nor my value system. I think they may be mixing me up with a former Prime Minister. [*Desk thumping*] [*Laughter*]

You would recall when I was being sworn in, I had given instructions to remove the presidential insignia from the official car. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, I

would not disrespect the office of the President, nor His Excellency with whom I share a very cordial working relationship. I state, for the record, I had consulted with His Excellency the President, and I had his concurrence before I spoke on live media to the nation.

On the other hand, they said I pre-empted the President, usurped his authority; I saw that in the whole debate. They speak from the left side and right side of their mouths at the same time, totally contrary. I heard one Member saying, "I doh want no state of emergency by me; I doh want any at all, but please put it in Icacos and Cedros." "Is not I want it, you know, but, please"; left side, right side. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Who said that?

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar: Check your *Hansard*, Sir. Mr. Speaker, left side and right side.

They say I should not have spoken at all, because I gave notice to the criminals, and condemned me for not speaking at all on the one hand, and then condemned me for speaking. That would get us nowhere. So that argument that we usurped the authority of the President is totally without foundation, misleading and, indeed, some may dub it to be mischievous, designed to mislead the public and to create false impressions.

The second thing, another argument: the public was not properly informed. Perhaps we could have done a better job in communicating all aspects of the state of emergency. Initially we may not have done enough of that, but since then this has been adjusted. There are now bulletins, print ads, posters and hotlines, all providing the necessary information.

One of the most disturbing arguments our opposers have put forward has to do with the whole issue of ethnic profiling. Minister Warner and others have dealt with that, but I really would like to say a few words on this. The idea that certain sections of our society, communities, have been unfairly targeted by the state of emergency, is unfortunate. It is mischievous and designed to create division in our society.

Let us make this point first and foremost. When someone is killed, it does not matter what the colour of their skin is or the texture of their hair or the colour of their eyes, because the blood that flows on the soil is the same red blood, regardless of those things.

2.00 p.m.

Criminals have no respect for the victim's race, they have no respect for the victim's religion, they have no respect for the victim's colour. Their illegal

activities and murderous intentions affect all. The blood-curdling cry, Mr. Speaker, and as a mother I know it, as a grandmother I know, the cry that comes from your womb as a mother when you lose a child, it does not matter which race you come from, it does not matter. It comes from the depths of your womb when you cradle your lifeless son or daughter. It does not matter. A life lost is a life lost regardless of where the victim lived, regardless of their racial origin.

Our Constitution guarantees fundamental rights of equality. This means the state must not be discouraged or sidetracked in the pursuit of law and order by such extraneous issues. To do otherwise would be to fracture our Constitution that speaks to equal treatment and more importantly, the right to liberty, security and enjoyment of property for all law-abiding citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I would say rest assured, this Government will be relentless in its pursuit of all criminals. We will not be deterred by such political mischief [*Desk thumping*] And to make that comment that you are arresting because of ethnic profiling is a direct and unfair attack on the police officers and the soldiers who have placed their lives on the line to defend our Constitution and innocent citizens of this nation.

No Government Minister selects which persons are to be arrested or to be detained. They are not selected by any MP, that is the work and intelligence of the police and the soldiers who are out there on the streets. That is based on their intelligence and police work.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about the hot spots only being in areas of the PNM—again not true. Arima is the constituency of the People's Partnership. Chaguanas Borough Corporation is the constituency of the People's Partnership; San Fernando Borough Coporation is in the hands of the People's Partnership; Diego Martin, People's Partnership; Port of Spain that you speak of is partly People's Partnership and PNM. How many seats in the Port of Spain Corporation? Four out of— [*Crosstalk*] Is it 4:4? Okay—seats within Port of Spain also within the hands of the People's Partnership. [*Interruption*] San Juan/Laventille is in the hands of the People's Partnership and the PNM. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, order please.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar: So, Mr. Speaker, to say we targeted only PNM areas is totally false, and I think Mr. Jack Warner—and I have the Speaker's permission, again to display these hot spots that were the PNM's hot spots, done by the PNM, Mr. Speaker, and it is the same except for Carrera and Sangre Grande; that Mr. Warner showed. Again, that allegation [map displayed]—it is upside down? That allegation is totally false and misleading, baseless and

without foundation. And you have one on your desk so that you could compare them.

So the idea that the hot spots are, first of all, only in PNM areas—not true, and these hot spots were selected, identified long before our time, long before our time, Mr. Speaker, by the police. I am glad that the Member for Laventille East/Morvant—under the PNM it was by the police but under us it is by us, it is not by the police. [*Interruption*] No, you did not? Madam—did not—Member for Laventille East/Morvant no, but others have said, the allegation that we have played with it in some way, so those hot spots are by the police.

Mr. Speaker, a further allegation—again without foundation—is that we acted by "vaps" because we have no plan, knee-jerk reaction to a surge in killings. Mr. Speaker, time and time again, the Minister of National Security has spoken about the framework of the fight against crime. I have also spoken. These matters include an aggressive legislative agenda, so on the legislative front that is part of our plan. It will not give me enough time to sit here and go through every piece of legislation because there are other matters—because you are Members of Parliament you would know—reforms to the criminal justice system undertaken by the hon. Minister of Justice and together with the AG. Social interventions—Ministry of the People and Social Development, Ministry of Community Development. A programme of rehabilitation and, of course, law interventions which the Minister has been speaking of time and again. That is the framework of the crime plan.

And the raw statistical data from the police suggests that those strategies were indeed working to an extent. The homicide rate, I am advised fell by 10 per cent in 2011 from the 2009 figure. In every quarter the murder, rate was on the decline when compared to last year. In fact, I am advised that even without the state of emergency, the murder rate may have fallen by 20 per cent in this year, so, they were working to an extent, but that was not the pace that would bring greater relief to citizens when viewed in absolute numbers. And so, we are determined not to repeat the delusion of the former Minister of National Security to measure success by the decrease in the increase, if you all recall that infamous statement.

Let me remind the nation that our crime strategy continues, during, and after the state of emergency; the ones that work will be reinforced. Mr. Speaker, I do have some of several measures at the time—time is going. I just want to mention one or two of the other arguments against the state of emergency before I get to those substantive planks in the crime-fighting strategy.

Major allegation—argument by Members on the other side has been that we could have done what we are doing now by using the Anti-Gang Act that had been repeated *ad nauseam*. Mr. Speaker, with all the repetition, noone remains convinced that that one piece of legislation would have been sufficient in this fight against crime now. Yes, it is but one weapon in the arsenal of weapons at our disposal, and we are using it. I mentioned to you already the number of persons who have been detained under the anti-gang legislation. This argument then I am saying is misconceived, baseless without foundation, and is indeed a type of deception to the public to keep repeating that that could have done the job.

Firstly, the threat to national security required immediate deployment of the full power and might of the State. The army does not have the powers of detention, arrest, search and seizure that they are given under a state of emergency, so if no state of emergency they would not have that jurisdiction—arrest search and seizure. The gangs do not possess a monopoly over criminal activity and hence the police and army needed to be legally equipped so that they could go after criminals in every form and fashion.

The power of the police as well, Mr. Speaker, under the Anti-Gang Act, is limited when compared to the powers of the police under a state of emergency. The joint select committee, there was a suggestion that the joint select committee which considered the Anti-Gang Bill chose the Anti-Gang Bill instead of a state of emergency. Should that impression by created it is totally false. The joint select committee considering the Anti-Gang Bill never at any point in time discussed the merits or demerits of a state of emergency—again misleading the public to make such an allegation.

So, the Anti-Gang Act, Mr. Speaker, as I said, is one piece of legislation. There are hundreds of other pieces of legislation; that one that is being held up as a cure-all, Mr. Speaker, could never be with foundation.

Others have dealt with another allegation, suppressing the rights of the trade unions Hon. Errol. Mc Leod dealt with that and others, Mr. Speaker, I want to say once again that is totally false to say that the state of emergency had to do with civil unrest or trade unions.

Another allegation—why did we not use normal policing to deal with the situation? Again, ill-conceived criticism. It ignores the fact that normal policing has not worked for the past decade—completely without foundation. Desperate times require desperate measures.

Inconvenience to the public is another allegation. Yes, there is some inconvenience. But several years ago when Singapore was named as one of the

best places to live and work, an American living there was asked by US TV network if he did not miss the freedoms that he enjoyed in the US. His reply was: "I do not mind giving up some minor freedoms in public in order to have the freedom to walk down any street in middle of the night without the fear of being mugged." Mr. Speaker, we will say without fear of being kidnapped, or raped or murdered. And so these inconveniences are necessary at this time, given the fight against crime and the effort to restore law and order in Trinidad and Tobago.

Many have expressed the concern about international negativity and I think Minister Suruj Rambachan dealt with that and I think also Minister Cadiz and several others may have.

Mr. Speaker, nothing will be more pretentious than to strut around the world stage and looking good on the world stage—as if we are in a paradise in the pristine blue Caribbean waters, when the inner soul of our country is being torn apart by crime and violence. That is why I have said, at this time I am more concerned with the sons and daughters of our land, with the brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers, than I am about the international image. [*Desk thumping*] That is why I said it.

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. A. Roberts*]

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and hon. Members. The allegation of no big fish: well I think Members on this side have dealt with that extensively. I will just add to say that every murderer, in my view, is a big fish, everyone. [*Desk thumping*] Every gang member, every gang leader, every bandit is by definition a big fish because they hold our lives in their hands; and so for everyone else I endorse their arguments as we move on.

The argument also, Mr. Speaker—again without basis—on that issue of big fish, we want to understand the organogram of crime. The gangs, when we say we are way taking out the small fish and the "guabine" and so on, I first of all, said that every one, in my view, is a big fish, but let us look at the organogram.

These gangs and so on are the spine of the animal; they constitute the spine. The gangs are actively involved in the drug trade at the highest possible level. Without them there will be no possibility of trans-shipment and distribution. So, they are the spine that holds the head and feet of the evil animal together—the drug trade. So, to get the head requires regional and international co-operation, and be reassured that your Government is collaborating and sharing intelligence

with international law enforcement agencies to catch even bigger fishes, but the level of organization and sophistication of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago leave me with no doubt that they are big fishes. They operate like military units with a corporate structure and a very rigid, hierarchal chain of command. The organogram is mind-boggling, the strategic plan is of illegal activities—precise and expansionist.

And, so, Mr. Speaker, we say we will continue to gather intelligence on the power structure driving the drug trade and the gun trade, and we will make sure to uphold what we say all the time; no one is above the law and none shall escape unscathed—big, small, medium or otherwise.

We have been accused of police abuse, Mr. Speaker, but I have heard so far the army and police have been professional, mature and responsible in the discharge of their duties. The complaints have been few and far between and again I commend the soldiers and police officers. But there is a remedy, Mr. Speaker. Should you feel that you have been in any way abused by the police or the soldiers, there is the Police Complaints Authority. It has a very vital role to play in this regard and has been very vocal about its jurisdiction. Remember recently with the killings in Moruga the Police Complaints Authority head did come forward to speak and deal with that matter. But I will say, you have remedy should there be any abuse, but I still call on our officers to exercise their powers in a responsible, fair, impartial and fearless manner in the interest of protecting and serving our nation.

2.15 p.m.

People have no rights, they say, on this state of emergency, again totally without foundation, of no merit whatsoever. Persons arrested, charged for criminal offences still enjoy their constitutional rights. The right to counsel or legal representation, the right to be taken before a court promptly, access to legal aid to secure legal representation, an application for *habeas corpus* to have the accused brought before a judge in the High Court to ascertain the reasons for his continued detention, all these remain in place. There is, as well, a tribunal established by the Chief Justice for the detainee. The normal rights to access the High Court remains. Mr. Speaker, persons arrested still enjoy these rights of due process.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there has been an argument, again, without foundation I have heard that some view the state of emergency—that we called it in order to break up the Opposition. [*Laughter*] Mr. Speaker, I want to state very clearly, [*Interruption*] I do not need to do that. They are doing a fine job all by themselves

by their own machination, [*Desk thumping*] by taking positions not grounded in reality and not representing the views of the majority of citizens in our country.

They have talked to us about dismantling the security service—you know I have heard this OPV story, repeat, repeat, repeat; that we have dismantled the security services and the equipment, canceled the OPVs, and that is why crime is going up and we cannot deal with crime. But we never had the OPVs in the first place. The OPVs were never in Trinidad so how can you talk to me about the OPVs being the weapon in the fight against crime and it was never here? It was never here! When we cancelled the OPVs, we did so well.

Mr. Speaker, we canceled the OPVs, but we put in place a total naval operational plan. Time would not permit me, but Brig. Sandy and myself disclosed that entire plan when we did the operation of the helicopters down at the airport—an entire naval plan. When it was held up in this House that we were advertising for OPVs—when we had cancelled OPVs, let us make it very clear, the patrol vessels that we are looking for are smaller vessels.

We were not of the view that these billion-dollar OPVs ordered by the PNM could serve our purpose, not just in terms of money, but in terms of usefulness. Because we are islands we need smaller vessels that can navigate our coasts, and so, what we are putting out the terms of reference for are smaller patrol vessels and not those that would be way out in the ocean when these guys are coming in to land their things on our shores. They were [*Interruption*] 60 metres against 90 metres. So that dismantling story is totally out of the question.

SSA: you want to talk about SIA and SAUTT—two illegal entities, operating outside of the law completely, and you want to hold us up as crime fighting when they themselves were in breach of the law. [*Interruption*] In breach of the law to fight crime, so do not speak to us about SIA and SAUTT. Those matters have been dealt with—brought to intercept capabilities—

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, I would not want to ask both the Member for Diego Martin North/East as well as the Member for Diego Martin Central to retire to the lounge. But would you be kind enough to pay attention and allow—because I am getting the echoes of your contribution. Just observe Standing Order 40(a), (b) and (c). Please!

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, just one other matter that was raised by the Member for Diego Martin West late last night, and it may be a startling revelation to many persons. The Member spoke about in 2003 there was a programme to be put on by COSTAATT to place greater focus on

the recruitment of Afro-Trinidadian males, and it was contained in the Ministry of Finance document, a social development policy which said that COSTAATT should place greater focus on recruitment of Afro-Trinidadian males, and this was 2003.

At that time, and I quote here from the Trinidad and Tobago news bulletin posted November 5, 2003, and it reports what was happening. This came from the news editor, *Express*, Trinidad and Tobago:

"The controversial recruitment issue"—I quote from this—"was raised in the Senate about two weeks ago"—this is November 3, 2003,—"by the Opposition causing some confusion on the Government bench and leading, finally, to Junior Finance Minister Conrad Enill insisting that it was a 'typographical error'." He said it was an error.

"Prime Minister Patrick Manning at the post-Cabinet meeting last Thursday confirmed that an errata sheet would be issued to that effect."

So, the PNM, on its own—in 2003 when crime started to spiral when Ken Gordon was calling for a state of emergency and so on, there was a recognition that there should be focus on Afro-Trinidadian males. But they disowned their own document, and the Leader of the Opposition last night in this House, when he raised the issue, we asked him, well, why did you not do it, why was that not done in the years? Minister Dookeran got up and asked him, in the years that the PNM was in office—I have the *Hansard* here. Minister Dookeran got up and asked him: "I am just trying to understand your argument."—Minister Dookeran—"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 to 2010 it was your Government in office?"

The hon. Leader of the Opposition said, and I quote:

> "I am not saying that at all. I am saying that the programme was not allowed to go forward."

The programme as identified and laid as discrimination. One Member said,—unnamed Member but on the record:

"Hon. Member: By who?"

Dr. K. Rowley: By who? You have the gall to ask by who? By you!" And he pointed across on this side.

Dr. Moonilal: "So why you did not implement it?" the programme to put more focus on Afro-Trinidadian males.

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 programme and today some of those young men may have been in a different place.

So they recognized that there was a problem with young Afro-Trinidadian males, identified a programme and had not the courage of their convictions to implement that programme. [*Interruption*] One said it was a typographical error, the then Prime Minister said he would issue an errata page, removed it and wiped it out completely; wiped out those programmes.

Mr. Speaker, if those programmes had been implemented, today we may have been in a different place. Today you would not have to stand up and cry that we are profiling and targeting Afro-Trinidadian males. When Minister Brig. Sandy read out those statistics for us, I felt it in my stomach, I felt it in my soul and I thought about what we could do, and when Dr. Rowley last night talked about those programmes, by then, before I even came back in the Parliament I had already put a plan in place. I had not even heard him, but when I heard what the hon. Member said, it reinforced the decision I had taken which is this. We will set up, this Government, we will set up a team of persons headed by Prof. Selwyn Ryan—I have already spoken to him since last night and he has agreed in principle. This team will go in to enquire into the root causes of the problems identified as shown by the statistics and to come up with proposals for solutions to the problems that they identify.

They had not the courage to do it, but they had the courage to come here and cry race on every occasion. Every child in this land and every person is a citizen, and therefore, I would place this community to work so that we can deal with those problems identified since 2003. [*Desk thumping*] So, what have we done? What have we done thus far? Apart from social and administrative measures we have introduced—yes, we have done work on the legislative front. These measures are intended to improve the ability of the State to deal with the unprecedented levels of criminal activity. We passed:

- The Interception of Communications Act;
- the Firearms (Amdt.) Act;
- The Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (Amdt.) Act;
- The Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (Amdt.) Act No. 2;
- The Miscellaneous Provisions (Remand) Act, 2011;

- The Miscellaneous Provisions (Kidnapping and Bail) Act, 2011;
- The Anti-Gang Act, 2011;
- The Bail (Amdt.) Act, 2011;
- The Trafficking in Persons Act, 2011;
- The Anti-Terrorism (Amdt.) Act, 2011;

The Death Penalty Constitution (Amdt.) Capital Offences Bill we did not pass because the Opposition failed to give support to it.

Hon. Member: Shame!

Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar: We had also made public our intention to bring to Parliament more crime fighting legislation, including:

- The Firearms and Kidnapping Court Bill;
- The Sexual Offences (Amdt.) Bill;
- The Criminal Procedure Disclosure Bill;
- The DNA (Amdt.) Bill—and you know, Minister of Justice, this is an entirely new Bill that we will bring to the Parliament.
- The Bill to abolish preliminary inquires;
- The Electronic Monitoring Bill;
- Dangerous Dogs Act and new prison rules.

These are some of the crime fighting legislative measures, Mr. Speaker. Some are already in place, others are to come on stream, but there are other strategies.

The state of emergency is by no means our last card. Those who want to say we have nothing else left in the deck, we have far more in that deck. We have several other bold and powerful initiatives and these would help us to ensure public safety is preserved. Together with the people, we will take back our communities, take back our country. It is a plan of action, not announcements and "ol' talk" and these are some of those. We will extend the state of emergency for an additional three months by passage here. [*Desk thumping*]

We will continue to target leaders and criminals involved in gangs, drugs and guns in order to rescue communities; we will continue to flush out guns and ammunition which support criminal activity and impound them to keep them out

of circulation. We will continue to target so-called businesses that support criminal activity and that are aligned with it which provides a cover for crime and criminal activities.

The 21st Century policing initiative which involves the blend of intelligence led, proactive initiatives together with community policing activities, which will be rolled out in due course; a range of social measures already exist, targeting single mothers, support for children, support for the aged, support for the needy, support for communities; these would continue under the various Ministries: Ministry of the People and Social Development, Community Development and ministry of children, gender and youth affairs, and they will be included to enhance a better targeted, well coordinated set of interventions.

On Wednesday of the week to come, Wednesday coming up, together with the Ministry of National Security, we would unveil the Morvant/Laventille initiative as another step in the package of community support initiatives to take place in the absence of the dangerous criminal element in these communities who make it impossible to cross from one street to another or parallel to it. A number of ministerial initiatives will come together in a collaborative fashion, coordinated in an effective manner to achieve human development and community enhancement value. These Ministries will include the Ministry of the People and Social Development, the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development, Ministry of Sport, Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism, Ministry of National Security and the Ministry of Planning, Economic and Social Restructuring to play a coordinated role.

Some of these programmes include:

- sports and recreation for youth;
- a special pan yard initiative;
- a national adopt a school programme;
- the national mentorship programme;
- a US-AID funded programme which involves work in basic education for out of school youth, workforce development for youth and programmes to support juvenile justice;
- programmes to support skills building for women and make them part of a production process and systems, offering them income and flexible hours;

- programmes targeting early childhood youngsters in deprived communities to support this success;
- programmes targeting young males in the primary and secondary system, in culture and the creative arts and related initiatives to strengthen the capacity for development in creative industries;
- the East Port of Spain initiative for the cultural and artistic reinvigoration of East Port of Spain and the generation of creative industries and economic opportunities through culture and arts;
- the designation of east Port of Spain as one of five economic growth poles in Trinidad and Tobago;
- a major investment plan for Invaders Bay to generate opportunities for contracting services and construction jobs in the first instance;
- discussion of a plan for construction of upgrade of the Port of Spain City Centre; and
- revitalization of life and opportunity in the national capital—key business and civil society stakeholders.

Such a project will create economic opportunities and jobs for people in the surrounding districts.

2.30 p.m.

These are some of the social and economic initiatives, but there are other crime fighting initiatives, if time would permit me. One of these—which was a deliverable in our manifesto—was to set up a national security operational plan to reduce crime. This, in fact, is being utilized in our state of emergency to ensure that all law enforcement agencies acquire intelligence in a timely manner and assist in coordination between all law enforcement agencies.

- The Maritime Security Plan: implementation of this plan involving proper information and communication between radar, the three-tiered coast guard vessels in the defence system, the coast guard installations, and army and police patrols. And I said, the details of that we revealed when we had the inauguration for the new helicopters.
- The linkage of the E999 rapid response system, whereby all distress calls from citizens would be received in this centre, and then, by monitoring where the nearest patrols are located, they can dispatch them in real time.

- A National Security Training Academy: the restructuring of SAUTT and SIA to another unit to provide greater value to reduce crime.
- An Offender Management Division, to be rolled out by the Ministry of Justice to serve as the umbrella agency to oversee the delivery of Offender Management services.
- A Lifesport Programme which we have rolled out by the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs to provide an alternative opportunity for 1,888 anti-social young males to be involved in sport and development.

Rest assured, we have the commitment, the disposition and the resolve to take back our country from the criminals and to give it back to the people in the communities in which they live. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, our Government, our aim, our work, our service, is to make Trinidad and Tobago become the best place to live, the best place to work and the best place to play in the world. We deserve no less. Our hand at the moment is in the lion's mouth and the state of emergency has begun to assist us in taking that hand out of the lion's mouth.

Today, having had some time to reflect on the immediate effects of the decision for the state of emergency, I want to say, if I had to do it again I would make the same decision. [*Desk thumping*] I am answerable to the people of this country for every action I take as Prime Minister, and so are the members of my Government. In the end we are all answerable to the people. This is the essence of our democracy.

I am convinced that when history judges us, they must judge us not by what we had failed to do, but judge us on what we took action on and what we did. [*Desk thumping*] When I was elected Prime Minister of this country I committed myself and my Government to protect the citizens of our great land. That is our first priority. That has not changed. We will not stop until our country is safe again, Mr. Speaker.

I want to announce the following:

(1) The immediate establishment of a high-powered legal team selected by the Attorney General in consultation with the DPP to assist the police in processing, case preparation and flow management of persons arrested during the state of emergency. This team will operate under the supervision of and subject to the independent constitutional jurisdiction of the DPP. That team will

comprise the following: four teams each led by eminent and reputable members of the inner criminal Bar, and the names will be not disclosed in the interest of time. I have them here, but they can be made available.

(2) The establishment of a crime reduction committee comprising the Minister of National Security, the Attorney General, Minister of Justice, Minister of the People and Social Development, Minster of Gender, Youth and Child Development, representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and business community, a child psychologist, probations officer and Labour.

(3) The establishment of an information desk in the Public Affairs section in the police service to provide information and assistance to concerned parents and families regarding the status and whereabouts of their loved ones whom they have reason to think may have been arrested by the police. This, of course, is in addition to the right of an accused person to a telephone call for the purpose of contacting or communicating with a friend, relative or counsel of his choice.

(4) That a policy be developed by the office of the DPP to give consideration to an amnesty for cases involving minor offences over five years old. The DPP shall retain and exercise his independent constitutional discretion in this regard. The DPP has given his consent and approval to this measure after discussion and consultation with the Attorney General. This would assist us in reducing some of the backlog in the magistrates' courts.

(5) The creation of a new policy and procedure for the Mercy Committee to enlarge the numbers of persons who no longer pose a threat to society and may be favourably considered for the grant of presidential pardon.

(6) The establishment of a special counselling and rehabilitation unit within the prison system to concentrate on young offenders.

(7) The immediate introduction in this Parliament of the following pieces of legislation:

(a) The Abolition of Preliminary Enquiries Bill;

(b) Electronic Monitoring Bill;

(c) The DNA Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I have already mentioned the team to be headed by Prof. Ryan and I wish to announce that there will be a reduction in the curfew hours. That is to say, effective on Monday, September 5th, which is tomorrow, the curfew will end—beginning tonight from 9.00 p. m.; it remains in place, 9.00 p.m. tonight, but will end tomorrow morning at 4.00 a.m. Thereafter, as of Tuesday, the curfew will begin at 11.00 p.m. and end at 4.00 a.m.

So, on Monday, we begin at 4.00 a. m.—sorry, we start at 9.00 p.m. tonight—I want to get it very clear—and we go to 4.00 a.m. I have been advised that this will assist us with children going to school and several others who have raised their concerns in the business community, to give a little extra time in the evening. Certainly, we will revise it if we are advised by the security forces that it needs to be further revised.

So tonight, Sunday night, the curfew begins at 9.00 p.m. It will end tomorrow morning at 4.00 a.m. Monday night we will begin at 11.00 p.m. and continuing 11.00 p.m. to 4.00 a.m. thereafter, until further revision. [*Desk thumping*]

In the few minutes left, I ask you to, again, allow me this opportunity to thank all those who have been working very, very hard out there. I want to thank not just those in the services, but also to thank the print and electronic media and online, for going well beyond the call of duty, even themselves experiencing some inconvenience to ensure they keep the public wellinformed.

I want to thank every single man, woman and child of our nation who has had to make a sacrifice in one way or another to ensure that the Government and our nation can win this war on crime. The war on crime will continue. In all that we do, we will seek, as a Government, to uphold the rule of law and to afford citizens the right to due process and to the protection of the laws, as guaranteed by our Constitution.

The Government of the People's Partnership is very much committed to the rule of law, but in the same breath, we will not shirk from our duty to protect society and preserve public order, safety and peace. There is a great evil stalking our land, and so I say, we need to band together; we need to call together, all of us; we need to join hands in this war against the criminals. What we are witnessing since August 21 is a slow recalibrating of the situation. Citizens are beginning to feel free and safe once more. So I ask everyone—I will use the words of James Russell Lowell: "A Call to Arms." Now is the time for us to join

hands together, and I quote:

"Once to every man and nation, comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, some great decision, offering each the bloom or blight,
And the choice goes by forever, 'twixt that darkness and that light.
Then to side with truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses while the coward stands aside,
Till the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied."

Today I call on all right-thinking, law abiding citizens to join with us in this fight against crimes so that we can give our children a better future; we can give them a sense of hope; we can give them a fair chance. Do not let them suffer because of silence; allow them to live their dreams; let them live longer so that our sons and daughters can bury their mothers and fathers an not the other way around, where mothers and fathers are burying their children. We are the children of history, but we are the parents of the future. Let us join hands to create a brighter future for the sake of our children. I say it is now or never.

Just one sentence more, Mr. Speaker. Many years ago I stood on that side where the Member for Diego Martin West is now, in a budget debate, and we were talking of all the problems. I was then acting as Opposition Leader and I was doing the budget reply, and in that budget debate I said, "Give me the hammer and I will nail up the bandits; I will nail up the criminals; I will nail up the corrupt ones."

I thank you for giving me that hammer as we begin to nail up the bandits and the criminals and the corrupt ones. [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much.

I beg to move, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I will now put the question.

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.

Question put.

The House divided.

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. Mrs. V.
Gopeesingh, Hon. Dr. T.
Peters, Hon. W.
Rambachan, Hon. Dr. S.
Seepersad-Bachan, Hon. C.
Volney, Hon. H.
Seemungal, Hon. J.
Roberts, Hon. A.
Cadiz, Hon. S.
Baksh, Hon. N.
Griffith, Hon. Dr. 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. Miss S.

Ramdial, Hon. Miss R.

Partap, Hon. C.

Khan, Miss N.

NOES

McDonald, M.

Rowley, Dr. K.

Hon. Members: Shame!

Cox, Miss D.

Hon. Members: Shame!

Hypolite, N.

Hon. Members: Shame!

Imbert, C.

Hon. Members: Shame!

Jeffrey, F.

Hon. Members: Shame!

Browne, Dr. A. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Members: Shame!

Miss Cox: That is not permissible.

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, I agree. [*Crosstalk*] Please, please.

Dr. Rowley: Start over.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, I would want to agree that we start over and let us not say "shame". [*Crosstalk*] Could you take the vote all over again for me? Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

2.45 p.m.

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. Mrs. V.
Gopeesingh, Hon. Dr. T.
Peters, Hon. W.
Rambachan, Hon. Dr. S.
Seepersad-Bachan, Hon. C.
Volney, Hon. H.
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Baksh, Hon. N.
Griffith, Hon. Dr. R.
Ramadharsingh, Hon. Dr. G.
Ramadhar, Hon. P.
Khan, Hon. Dr. F.
De Coteau, Hon. C.
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Baker, Hon. Dr. D.
Samuel, Hon. R.
Douglas, Hon. Dr. L.
Ramdial, Hon. Miss R.
Roopnarine, Hon. S.
Partap, Hon. C.
Khan, Miss N.

NOES

Mc Donald, Miss M.

Rowley, Dr. K.

Cox, Miss D.

Hypolite, N.

Imbert, C.

Jeffrey, F.

Browne, Dr. A.

Thomas, Mrs. J.

Hospedales, Miss A.

Gopee-Scoon, Mrs. P.

Question agreed to.

Resolved, that the Proclamation made by the President on 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.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Wednesday, September 07, 2011 at 1.30 p.m. and to serve notice that on that day, the Government intends to debate Motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4 conjointly on the Order Paper.

Thank you.

Words of Appreciation

Mr. Speaker: Before putting the Motion for the adjournment, may I seek your indulgence, hon. Members? Hon. Members, I wish to say a few words of appreciation. I would like to thank each Member of this honourable House for their invaluable contributions made during the sittings which took place over the past three days. This debate was undoubtedly one of the national importance and Members sacrificed their weekend to ensure that the public's interest was well represented and richly served.

Additionally, I wish to express my gratitude to the members of staff of the Office of the Parliament, who worked above and beyond the call of duty to

provide support to the Members of Parliament throughout this weekend. [*Desk thumping*] The staff of the Office of the Parliament served us all in their usual efficient and courteous manner, and for their continued support I say on your behalf, thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

I would like to extend to the police officers—our own police officers and those of the Guard and Emergency Service, whose commitment to duty was also extremely outstanding and, we wish to thank them as well. [*Desk thumping*]

May God richly bless us all.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 2.49 p.m.