

*Leave of Absence**Friday, March 23, 2012***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, March 23, 2012*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

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

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from the following Members who have asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House: Hon. Dr. Delmon Baker, Member for Tobago West, who is currently out of the country during the period March 17—25, 2012; Hon. Jack Warner, Member for Chaguanas West, from today's sitting, March 23, 2012—[*Crosstalk*] can I have your cooperation—Hon. Winston Peters, Member for Mayaro, from today's sitting of the House of Representatives. The leave which the Members seek is granted.

PAPERS LAID

The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, may I also take the opportunity to welcome back to the Chamber, yourself, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and the Member for Moruga/Tableland, from what would have been a productive and enlightening trip to the Republic of India.

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the National Library and Information System Authority for the year ended September 30, 2008. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the National Library and Information System Authority for the year ended September 30, 2009. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]

Papers 1 and 2 to be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

3. Annual audited financial statements of Taurus Services Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2008. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]

To be referred to the Public Accounts [Enterprises] Committee

4. First Citizens' annual report for the financial year ended September 30, 2011. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Upper McKai Lands**(Supply of Utilities)**

45. Mrs. Patricia McIntosh (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*) asked the hon. Minister of Public Utilities:

Could the Minister indicate:

- (a) When would the residents of Upper McKai Lands receive a supply of pipe-borne water;
- (b) When would the residents of Upper McKai Lands receive a supply of electricity?

The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me say that I am happy to be in this House, and I appreciate the welcome that has been given to me, and I hope that upon my departure that I will receive—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Moonilal: A warm farewell.

Sen. The Hon. E. George:—a warm farewell. *[Laughter]* Answer to question No. 45: with respect to the water supply, the residents of McKai Lands receive a supply of pipe-borne water by gravity feed from the Picton 1 reservoir, and this supply reaches a height of about 340ft, however, the water supply does not extend to the uppermost regions of McKai Lands which lie above the reservoir, and therefore, cannot be fed by gravity.

The Water and Sewerage Authority has embarked on the exploration of the possibilities for the provision of a water supply to the uppermost areas of McKai Lands. This will involve undertaking a feasibility study for a possible pipe line extension, and the installation of a booster station. Discussions are under way with representatives from the area who accompanied representatives from WASA and the Ministry of National Security personnel on their most recent tour of the area on Tuesday, February 14, 2012. The outcome of the feasibility study, along with the GIS model and cost estimates are expected to be completed by April 2012. Depending on what is revealed by these exercises, it is expected that the project will be placed on a priority listing for implementation.

The Minister wishes to give the assurance, Mr. Speaker, that this Government is pursuing the goal of providing water to the many citizens who do not now have an adequate supply, and gradual progress is being made in that regard. I am

certain that the colleagues of the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West will testify to the fact that gradual progress is being made via certain projects that have started in various constituencies.

In respect of part (b) of the question; Upper McKai Lands already has a supply of electricity. To date, the commission has only one outstanding request for the area, and the serving number is 0928/11, which was surveyed in June of last year. My information is that the customer was informed on July 15, 2011, to collect the conditions of supply and the capital contribution letter. However, as at February 23 of this year, the documents had not been collected. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West
(Reinstatement of CEPEP Teams)**

46. Mrs. Patricia McIntosh (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*) asked the hon. Minister of Housing and the Environment:

Could the Minister indicate when would CEPEP teams be reinstated in the constituency of Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West?

The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I proceed with the answer for question No. 46, may I for the record indicate that we do have one written question for answer, it is question No. 39 on the Order Paper, and the Government would ask that the answer be deferred by two weeks. It is a very comprehensive answer required, two parts and five sub parts, and in the interest of having a comprehensive reply to that written answer, we will ask for two weeks.

Question No. 46; the CEPEP Company Limited commenced a comprehensive review of the CEPEP programme in January 2011. Initial findings revealed that there were a number of irregularities in the recruitment practice, and non-compliance with the national insurance system, NIS, and Board of Inland Revenue requirements by contractors in the programme. Almost 40 per cent of contractors then in existence had difficulty in meeting their commitments to either NIS or BIR or both. It was discovered that quite a number of contractors were also in the programme for as long as nine to 10 years, and contractors were not evenly distributed in communities across Trinidad. In some communities there were many contractors while in others there was a complete absence of CEPEP workers conducting relevant work.

These findings suggested to us that further analysis and examination should be conducted. This is an ongoing exercise, and where areas are identified as requiring changes, these are being done on a phased basis. The exercise is expected to be completed by June 2012.

In the constituency of Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, between December 2002 and December 2010, six work teams comprising 60 workers belonging to a single CEPEP contracting company, namely, Hibiscus Services Limited—I think Members opposite are very familiar with Hibiscus Services Limited. This contractor who operated for eight long years in the constituency was being deployed in the Port of Spain North/St. Ann's environmental work area, EWA. Hibiscus is someone that is known to colleagues opposite.

Miss McDonald: I do not know who is Hibiscus. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Okay, fine. On April 29, 2011, the engagement of this contracting company came to an end and was replaced by another CEPEP contracting company which employed three work teams.

As of today, for the northern constituency areas of Barataria; Diego Martin Central; Diego Martin East; Diego Martin West; Laventille East; Laventille West; Port of Spain North; Port of Spain South and St. Ann's East, the environmental work area—whereas at May 2010, there were 31 contractors, I am pleased to announce for this area, today, there are indeed 41 contractors operating in the north.

Mr. Speaker, with an overall coverage of 41 contractors as opposed to 31 which obtained before, we are in a position to indicate to the hon. Member, that it is expected on completion of the review of the CEPEP programme by June 2012, that more teams may be necessary in the constituency area of Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, and we will be in a better position to offer increased services post June 2012. I thank you.

Mr. Imbert: Supplemental question, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has indicated that there allegedly were 31 contractors in this northern area, prior to the general election, and now there are 41—a difference of 10—but in terms of the 31 that were employed prior to the general election, how many of those contractors are still with the programme?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: If the Member would like to file another question, I can get that exact data for you, but I can assure you that in your area, I think there was the continuation of one of your contractors.

**Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West
(Reinstatement of URP)**

47. Mrs. Patricia McIntosh (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*) asked the hon. Prime Minister:

Could the Prime Minister indicate when would URP teams be reinstated in the constituency of Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West?

The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): On behalf of the Prime Minister, I wish to respond to question No. 47. Mr. Speaker, the Unemployment Relief Programme was transferred from the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprises Development, to the Office of the Prime Minister in November 2011, and was simultaneously separated into three Ministries, namely, the Ministry of the People and Social Development, which focused on the integration of URP workers into social development projects that were people-centred and could have operated within a short time frame to bring relief to citizens who are underprivileged and in need of immediate social intervention.

The other Ministry, the Ministry of Local Government, which undertook to continue important capital projects and important work programmes of the URP, and finally, the Ministry of Food Production, Land and Marine Affairs, which at this time, has a very hectic and aggressive programme of absorbing URP labour into agricultural farm programmes where URP labour is now being used to produce farming products and food. [*Desk thumping*]

May I remind the honourable House that on several occasions, in the press, you would have seen that the food produced by the URP workers in the Ministry of Food Production has been distributed to orphanages, children's homes, churches and other areas in the national community. The food crops produced by the URP are being distributed widely to such social programmes.

The programme is in the process of transformation and restructuring. We believe that increased efficiency in the utilization of human resources and funds will be derived from this transformation as we advance the social and economic development of Trinidad and Tobago.

1.45 p.m.

The URP proposes to be a stronger community-oriented mechanism primarily designed to empower persons through the provision of short, short-term temporary employment opportunities, and indeed, training to ensure a better

Oral Answers to Questions
[HON. DR. R. MOONILAL]

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skilled labour force while delivering tangible projects to enhance the infrastructure in communities throughout Trinidad. [Interruption] The URP's restructuring exercise seeks to reprioritize its work plans to bring greater focus on management, monitoring, control and value for money propositions. It is geared towards achieving optimal efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and—[Interruption]

Miss McDonald: Mr. Speaker, I want to hear please. I want to hear!

Mr. Speaker: I too, would like to hear. So, I would ask Members to—the temperature, especially on this side of the House is rising, so I would ask you to just cool—[Interruption]

Yes, the hon. Minister of Housing and the Environment.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Yes, thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, the restructuring exercise is geared towards achieving optimal efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and productivity as well as equality in the distribution of jobs. The programme has a rotation policy aimed at equitable distribution in a number of communities; the number of daily paid employment opportunities to be expanded; and maximizing the number of persons, particularly women, being offered employment via its work crews in various field operations.

The combined total number of persons employed on the programme as at March 2012, stood at 14,458. [Desk thumping]

Hon. Member: Repeat that, please.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You did not hear. It stood at 14,458—[Desk thumping]—disaggregated into the core programme 11,101, and the women's programme 3,357—needy and deserving women. Effective April 04, 2011, the programme was suspended for 14 days to ensure that the restructuring exercise was properly under way. Work crew levels were gradually increased over time as indicated earlier and at present there are 14,458 workers.

This restructuring exercise is continuing and involves a review of work crew levels in all 12 regions of the programme and more rigorous selection, distribution and placement of work crews. The distribution of work crews among the regions is based on several factors, including, but not limited to, localized relative densities of unemployment, relevant socio-economic indices and differing short and long-term goals among targeted potential beneficiaries.

The Unemployment Relief Programme currently offers employment to 420 persons on a fortnightly basis in the constituency of Port of Spain North/St. Ann's

West. Can I repeat? The URP offers currently employment relief to 420 persons on a fortnightly basis in the constituency of Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West. [Interruption] You have to look for your constituents. These persons are employed on 60 work crews, each comprising seven workers.

The programme may consider a marginal increase in the number of work crews in the constituency of Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West in the upcoming three months based on the results of the ongoing restructuring exercise. [Desk thumping]

Gas to Olefins Project (Information on)

49. Miss Marlene McDonald (*Port of Spain South*) on behalf of Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*) asked the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs:

Could the Minister indicate:

- (a) The procurement process that was used by his Government to obtain proposals for the gas to olefins project;
- (b) The specifications of any RFP which related to this project;
- (c) The companies both foreign and local, which were initially and later evaluated and who made up the evaluation teams;
- (d) The gas price requested or considered for the three top ranked companies;
- (e) If any subsidy is involved in the project could the Minister quantify and state the value in TT dollars, as well as any other facilitation offered by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Kevin Ramnarine): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and welcome back from your trip to India. [Interruption] Mr. Speaker, this is my third appearance in the Lower House in the month of March and I must say I am always warmed by the welcome I receive here. [Desk thumping]

This question is related to the methanol to petrochemicals and methanol to olefins project which was the subject of my contribution on March 03, 2012.

The answer to part (a): Cabinet agreed in March 2011 that requests for proposals be issued for a project involving methanol to petrochemicals and

methanol to olefins, subject to the NGC confirming the availability of gas. In April 2011, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs issued an expression of interest to 27 companies for a methanol to petrochemicals project and to 24 companies for a methanol to olefins projects.

Mr. Speaker, just on a point of clarification, when I spoke in the Parliament on March 03, 2012, I had indicated that 27 expressions of interest were issued for both projects. Upon further investigation in the Ministry, it was revealed that 27 were issued for the methanol to petrochemicals and 24 were issued for the methanol to olefins project, so, I just wish to clarify that for the record.

There were 14 responses expressing interest in both projects. These responses were received in May 2011; separate RFPs for both projects were issued by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs to the respective companies on May 06, 2011. There was a bid clarification meeting in Trinidad and Tobago on June 01, 2011; attendance at the clarification meeting June 01, 2011 was optional. All questions and responses from that meeting were sent to all invited bidders in accordance with established process.

In response to the RFPs, five companies submitted proposals for the methanol to petrochemicals project in September 2011, and three companies submitted proposals for the methanol to olefins project in November 2011. A cross functional team of senior professionals from the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, the National Energy Corporation and the National Gas Company was selected to evaluate the proposals based on the Cabinet approved criteria under the guidance of a steering committee. That steering committee comprised the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, the President of the National Gas Company, the President of the National Energy Corporation and the technical advisor to the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs.

The evaluation team then submitted their report to that steering committee. The report of the evaluation committee, including its recommendations, was submitted to the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, together with a draft Cabinet Note in December 2011. The committee recommended the consortium of SABIC and Sinopec as the first rank for both methanol to petrochemicals and methanol to olefins proposals. These recommendations were taken to Cabinet in January 2012. In February 2012, Cabinet accepted the recommendation of the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs for selection of SABIC and its partner Sinopec as the preferred bidder for the two RFPs. A public announcement was made by the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs on February 09, 2012. That completes part (a).

I would now answer part (b). For the methanol to petrochemicals project, the RFP invited investors or a consortium of investors to submit proposals for the development of a project utilizing methanol as feedstock to produce downstream petrochemicals. For the methanol to olefins project, the RFP invited investors or a consortium of investors to submit proposals for the development of a project utilizing natural gas as feedstock to produce olefins. Companies were asked to present their proposals which should include but not be limited to the following:

- (a) project conceptualization with flow diagramme;
- (b) general features and parameters of the project including technology selection, natural gas demand, utilities; that is, electricity, water, et cetera; products and production level, footprint, that means, land requirement, manpower requirement during the construction phase and during the permanent employment phase, preliminary estimate of capital expenditure and operating cost, financing, environmental impact and risk analysis, product and product disposal, market analysis, sensitivity analysis.

Proposals were evaluated according to the criteria mentioned earlier, agreed by the Cabinet, which comprised the following:

1. degree of value added in the production process—15 per cent of the mark;
2. environmental impact, very important—15 per cent;
3. capital expenditure—10 per cent;
4. early construction plan in terms of utilization of natural gas—10 per cent;
5. degree of local content—10 per cent;
6. projection of local content during construction and operation of the plant—5 per cent;
7. energy efficiency measures—5 per cent;
8. extent of variation between key terms and conditions of gas contract with NGC—15 per cent;
9. extent of variation between key terms and conditions of contracts for power and water—5 per cent;
10. extent of variation between key terms and conditions of estate and pier user contracts—5 per cent;

11. additional benefits, for example, CSR, cooperation with universities and technical institutions, research and development, available in country assets used, et cetera—5 per cent.

Part (c) of the question: the five project proposals were received in September 2011 for the methanol to petrochemicals project. Proposals were received from—and these are the five companies that submitted proposals:

1. Methanol Holdings Trinidad Limited;
2. Integrated Chemicals Company Limited of the United States—it should be noted that this company said in its proposal that they would be in a partnership with Mitsubishi of Japan;
3. Celanese Corporation of the United States;
4. The Consortium of Mitsui of Japan, Saudi International Petrochemical Company of Saudi Arabia and Daicel Chemical Industries of Japan; and
5. The partnership SABIC-Sinopec—SABIC, of course, being SABIC of Riyadh of Saudi Arabia and Sinopec being Sinopec of Beijing, China.

Three project proposals were received with respect to the methanol to olefins; the three companies that submitted proposals were:

1. The partnership of SABIC-Sinopec;
2. Vinmar Projects Limited of the United States, UOP LLC of Illinois, USA and Bourse Securities of Trinidad and Tobago; and
3. SYN Energy Technology Company Limited of Dalian, China.

The Members of the evaluation committee comprised—which is part of question 49(c)—Mr. Errol Baldeo, Advisor, Special Projects, Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, who was the team leader; Dr. Vernon Paltoo, Energy Industry Development Manager, NEC; Miss Shazeda Hosein, Assistant Manager Commercial, NGC; Mrs. Merlyn Remmy-Brown, Team Leader, Business Development, NEC; Mr. Iwer Superville, Business Analyst, Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and Mr. Sheldon Butcher, Senior Chemical Engineer, Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. [*Interruption*]

The evaluation committee reported to a steering committee as mentioned earlier. That steering committee was chaired by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, and included the President of the National Gas Company, Mr. Andrew McIntosh; the President of the National Energy

Corporation, Mr. Andrew Jupiter and Technical Advisor to the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, Mr. Frank Look Kin.

The answer to part (d): with regard to the methanol to petrochemicals project, the first ranked bidder, their price was 36 per cent less than the NGC price. The second ranked bidder was 36 per cent less than the NGC price; the third ranked bidder was 53 per cent less than the NGC price. With regard to methanol to olefins project, there were three proposals submitted as earlier indicated. The top ranked project proposal submitted a price that was again 36 per cent less than the NGC price, so that is the SABIC-Sinopec Consortium.

2.00 p.m.

With regard to the other bidders, one was 40 per cent less than the NGC price and the other proposed gas prices could not be determined based on the manner of submission.

The answer to part (e) of the question is that no subsidy or special facilitation has been provided by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the proposed methanol to petrochemicals or methanol to olefins project.

Hon. Members: Repeat that!

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: No subsidy or special facilitation has been provided by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the proposed methanol to petrochemicals or methanol to olefins project.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, could you control the hon. Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara?

Mr. Roberts: Who talking to you, boy?

Miss. McDonald: Who you calling boy?

Mr. Speaker: All right, please, please! Hon. Members, could we have silence.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The price of natural gas will be negotiated by the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago, and will be in accordance with established pricing, process and structures. All facilities, utilities and services are to be provided with prevailing terms and conditions. So there is no sort of subsidy being offered.

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

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, just one supplemental to the hon. Minister. In the light of the correspondence which you might have received from the Japanese and

the American Embassies—the missions here, has the Government of Trinidad and Tobago responded in writing to the concerns raised by these foreign friendly countries?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We replied in writing to the American Ambassador and at the time there was no Japanese Ambassador. We now have a new Japanese Ambassador so we communicated with the embassy that a correspondence would be forthcoming to the Japanese Embassy. But both letters basically raised the same issue and the American Ambassador's letter to us was copied to the Japanese Ambassador. So we have communicated with the Japanese Embassy and a letter is forthcoming.

Dr. Rowley: In the light of that, is the Government in a position now to say when this project is likely to be crystalized?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Thank you very much again, Mr. Speaker. We are now putting together the entire structure for negotiations with the SABIC-Sinopec Consortium. Those negotiations, if they are successful, the project will proceed. If they are unsuccessful, the intention is to move to the second ranked bidders. That negotiation should take us three months which would take us to the month of June, and we are advised that it takes approximately one year from there to have all your design work and your CEC work and so on done. So we are looking optimistically at a start date sometime in the first quarter of 2013.

Dr. Rowley: Finally, Mr. Speaker, we have been told at an earlier time that the project had to be relocated from La Brea because of the land space required for the scaled of the project. Now that the position is accepted by the Government, are you in a position to tell us what is in store for La Brea as a replacement for this project?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Hon. Leader of the Opposition through you, Mr. Speaker, if you file another question I would be willing to answer that. There is a similar question from one of your Senators in the other place too.

Mr. Sharma: “All yuh doh talk or wat?”

Mr. Roberts: “They doh talk.” “They doh talk.”

Mr. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplemental to the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. With respect to part (d), the Minister referred to the NGC price and referenced all prices to that, for example, 36 per cent below, 40 per cent below—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please! Please!

Mr. Imbert:—what is the NGC price?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, I anticipated such questions, so I was speaking to the technocrats of the NGC before. I will tell you what the methodology was. The methodology was that based on the price that was proposed by the NGC—they worked out the total amount of revenue that the NGC would realize from the project over the life cycle of the project, and then that was compared to the revenue that they would receive from the proposed price over the life cycle of the project. That is where the negative 36 per cent comes in. It is a disparity in revenue because as you know, revenue is price multiplied by quantity. [*Desk thumping*]

Thank you very much.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister unable to give—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: The Minister answered.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Could we have silence, please? Could the hon. Member raise his question?

Mr. Imbert:—is the Minister unable to give a figure, a unit rate in millions of cubic feet or any other standard measurement?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information on me right now. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Imbert: In answering part (e) of the question, the Minister stated that no special facilitation is being offered or given. But that is not what the question asked. The question asked, “facilitation”. There was no word “special” in front there. Is any facilitation being given to the company? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: Please just ignore.

Mr. Speaker: Everything is relevant.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry if there was a misunderstanding of the use “special facilitation” versus “facilitation”, but I thought the answer was clear.

Mr. Roberts: It was pellucidly clear.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: I would again repeat, if you would allow me to repeat. Let me read over the answer. “No subsidy or facilitation—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: “You take out ‘special’?”

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: I could take out "special". You okay with that? "No subsidy or facilitation has been provided by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the proposed methanol to petrochemicals or methanol to olefins project." Okay?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEMS
(DISMANTLING OF)**

[Second Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [January 27, 2012]:

Be it resolved that this House take note of the systematic dismantling of the national security systems and structures in Trinidad and Tobago and call on the Government to cease this action and to take steps to put in place an effective national security system which would have the effect of securing the borders and, by extension, the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago, to bring about a reduction in crime in Trinidad and Tobago.

Question again proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Those who have spoken thus far: Member for Laventille East/Morvant, the mover of the Motion; the Minister of National Security, and the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

The Minister of Justice (Hon. Herbert Volney): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week our nation has seen the Opposition reach to the lowest—
[*Desk thumping and interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Standing Order 36(1)—point of order, 36(1).

Mr. Roberts: "Just so—man now start." But what is this? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker: Overruled! Continue. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. H. Volney: Mr. Speaker, in attending to the Motion itself, in responding to it, I anticipate that by the time I am through, the hon. Members opposite, bedecked as they be in black, will be heading to the political cemetery for the PNM. [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

I noticed on the way coming in, that there was a hearse making its turn [*Laughter*] and I anticipate that this Motion, which is another of a number of vacuous and empty Motions that have been brought to this House, will be proven once again to be a phenomenal waste of parliamentary time.

Mr. Sharma: Total waste!

Hon. H. Volney: But, Mr. Speaker, today is Private Member's Day, and we have to respond out of deference to those opposite. When I took the time to listen on the last occasion to the last speaker, the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East, I said to myself that had it not been for the Motion itself, that I had been the next speaker, I would have stood and simply said, "Mr. Speaker, like the last speaker, I have absolutely nothing to say". [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

That was the contribution of the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East. And you know it is disheartening that we have certain Members on this side who live in the constituency of Diego Martin North/East. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Cadiz: That is me.

Hon. H. Volney: The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry and Member for Chaguanas East, is one such Member of this honourable House.

Mr. Roberts: Poor victim.

Hon. H. Volney: I could have seen the utter shame in his face as the hon. Member who is his parliamentary representative was speaking for the sake of occupying valuable parliamentary time. Mr. Speaker, we waited and we waited with bated breath for at least one point. Having reviewed his speech in the *Hansard*, I am afraid I have to say that there is precious little to which I could respond. [*Desk thumping*]

So I would for the purpose of this Motion, like to bring this honourable House and the national community down the road, down the memory road of this country. Because it is important that when we consider the Motion in all its audacity and its boldness, that we never forget the reason why we, the People's Partnership Government are here and why the People's National Movement is in Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, those of us who have short memories need to be reminded of the days when we used to hear this noisy balloon of hot air, which reminds me much of many of the contributions from those opposite, passing over our homes at great expense to the taxpayer. That would be the blimp. It was a virtual MV *Su*. It was a ghost ship in the sky. [*Laughter*] It passed and everybody looked at it and laughed. You know the thing about it is, when we were having our rally down at Aranguez in my constituency, it visited us and it was able to establish for police purposes, that there were approximately 80,000 people at Aranguez—[*Desk thumping*] in my constituency of which a good 10,000 were from Aranguez and the surrounding areas.

2.15 p.m.

So, Mr. Speaker, that was part of the plan of the People's National Movement of the day, and they, today, through the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant, have brought this Motion that this Government, the People's Partnership Government, has weakened the national security systems and structure in Trinidad and Tobago.

It goes on to say that we have taken steps to dismantle an effective national security system. Nothing is further from the truth. [*Desk thumping*] There was never any effective security system in this country. There was never! Because if there had been, the level of the spillage of blood on the streets of this country would not have been; the level of corruption would not have been; the culture that was allowed to take root in this country, of corruption and nepotism, would not have been allowed to take place. [*Desk thumping*]

One recalls what was happening in this country, where citizens of this country were not allowed, by gangsters who roamed freely, to walk the streets. During the course of the night we heard gunshots from all over, awakening the quiet of our national night. Over and over people cried for the hon. Senator, who then headed the Ministry of National Security, to resign, to resign, to resign, because he accomplished absolutely nothing. In the face of all of that, he remained and he came up with different plans; plans like Anaconda, Baghdad, A to Z, Zero Tolerance, to name a few. All of them failed. And, you know, the culture of bloodshed continued and it built and it built and it built.

I am happy to say that that which we have dismantled has resulted in the crime rate going down and down and down in our beloved country. [*Desk thumping*] So what we have done is to dismantle the wastage of the national patrimony, the money the taxpayers pay that was being wasted over these years under an inept and incompetent People's National Movement Government.

We have had to deal with situations where we have come into government and we have met the most ridiculous contracts and purchases; purchases of offshore patrol vessels that were not required, we have had to put a stop to them. Most of them—in any event, the one that was prepared, could not work properly; could not fire shots. It was like the *Su* that could not float. [*Desk thumping*] This was a ship that could not even fire a shot.

So what was it that the Opposition wanted us to do? Obviously, the duty of any responsible Government is to put a stop to the haemorrhage and wastage of valuable funds, taxpayers' money in our country, and that was one of the first

decisions that we took. What we have done was, we have studied different crime fighting systems; we have quietly implemented them; we have appointed a Commissioner of Police and the top administrative hierarchy in the police service. These persons have been given the opportunity to produce plans for rolling out, and at this time the plan that is being rolled out is a smart plan called the 21st Century Initiative and 21st Century Policing.

What we got rid of, what we dismantled, were systems from the Second World War, because the People's National Movement Government seems so much mired in the past that they cannot wake up as yet to realize not only that we are in the 21st Century, but that they lost the election and they are in Opposition, and it is for us on this side to be smart about administering the affairs of the country.

That is why, now that we are doing that and we are well on the way, they have embarked upon a series of measures, using the Parliament, and using the press, in order to be dirty in the politics of the land. I would like to refer, in particular, to this low of the lowest that has been attracting national media of late, and all I have to say out of deference to the hon. Member for Port of Spain South, shame on you! Shame on you, Member for Port of Spain South. Shame! [*Desk thumping*] If you have any respect for the sanctity of family life, you would never, never, have attacked our Prime Minister in the low way that you did. [*Desk thumping*] You have reached a low, low ebb, and I hope that you are listening to me, because all the people in this country know how low you went this week.

To link it back, Mr. Speaker, to the Motion, you know, what is happening is that this House has a very serious Motion to speak upon. The hon. Prime Minister, in her wisdom, on becoming Prime Minister, first of all, established the Ministry of Justice. That Ministry was born out of a need to address critical issues whereby persons who were allowed in the past to walk the street, having committed crimes with impunity, will no longer walk the street but will see the sure face of the criminal justice in this country.

In that regard, the hon. Prime Minister has established, as I said, the Ministry of Justice. [*Crosstalk*] The hon. Member for Siparia has also strengthened the police service by providing it with the resources, financial and otherwise.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East, we cannot have many conversations. If you wish to meet with the Leader of the Opposition or the Member for Port of Spain South, the Chief Whip, you can do so behind my Chair. But I think it is disrespectful to the House whilst a Member is on his legs, we have

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conversations taking place in this House. Please, the Member for St. Joseph is on his legs. Give him your undivided attention, and anybody who wishes to speak in conversational form, please retire to the back of the Speaker's Chair. Continue.

Hon. H. Volney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And you know, the amazing thing, Mr. Speaker, is that this sort of disrespect is still continuing, and I have not even brought out the willow yet. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: Bring it out, "man".

Hon. H. Volney: Having watched Pollard use his small willow, I have a big willow here to bring out today. [*Desk thumping*] But I allowed the hon. Member to leave the House.

One of the things that the hon. Member for Siparia did was to create the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Justice is a new Ministry which is intended to transform the criminal justice system. Now, there are two aspects to dealing with crimes: one is interdiction of crime, that is to say, among other things, detecting crime and bringing the criminals, surely, to justice, and the second one, the other aspect, is to ensure that there is a criminal justice system that works.

Over the years of the reign of the People's National Movement—and I keep repeating the expression, the People's National Movement, because I recall on our campaign trail leading to memorable victory of the people on May 24, 2010, I recall over, and over, and over, our People's Partnership pointing out that this Opposition, then in Government, had presided over the total destruction of the criminal justice system by providing no support, logistic, financial or otherwise, thereby allowing it to decay and to reach the stage where it was like a vehicle without rubber tyres, rolling on the metal of the wheels.

That has changed at this time. The sort of reforms that the Ministry of Justice considered that should come all in time and as soon as possible, have begun. You would recall that this honourable House has already passed the Administration of Justice (Criminal Procedure) Act, which has been assented to by His Excellency, and which will be proclaimed as soon as a date has been settled between the Government and the hon. Chief Justice so that that Act, and its provisions, will see speedy delivery of justice, so that persons who have been charged will be set for trial within six weeks, as opposed to six years. Now, that is a phenomenal achievement in such a short space of time, and it has been spoken of for years. Those who practise at the criminal bench would appreciate the significance of this bit of legislation.

On a recent visit to the United Kingdom Criminal Justice Agencies, I led a team from the Ministry of Justice and I held strategic talks with the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, Law Lords of the Privy Council, Ministry of Justice officials, Court Design and Construction officials; I visited Her Majesty's prison at Brixton; I spoke on the prison radio, that is, Electric Radio Brixton, and I had a number of other meetings of great significance concerning parole board for England and Wales.

Hon. Member: You met Calder Hart? [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. H. Volney: On my visit to the Brixton prison I did look to see on the list whether there was the name of one Calder Hart, [*Desk thumping*] but he has not been intercepted yet in the United Kingdom.

I also visited the South Crown Court and I had meetings with Lord Justice Thorpe at the Royal Courts of Justice. My visit was at the request and on the invitation of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

I do not recall any other Minister who has the responsibility for the criminal justice, ever being invited to the United Kingdom as guest of Her Majesty's Government in order to carry out these kinds of discussions. And that is significant.

2.30 p.m.

What I discovered on the visit to the United Kingdom was that the British officials and the British Government have recognized that we in Trinidad and Tobago are on the right path of changing systems. We are 21st Century pioneers in bringing about the sort of changes as an emerging Commonwealth country, soon to be of First-World status. This is a recognition of the work of the Ministry of Justice and of the People's Partnership Government. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, the delegation which comprised of state attorneys as well as the Minister's advisor visited and held discussions with Kier Starmer Queen's Counsel. These discussions surrounded the various reform initiatives which have greatly impacted and improved criminal case management in the United Kingdom by ensuring quicker justice within the United Kingdom's criminal justice system.

We in the Ministry of Justice are not like what obtained under the People's National Movement, simply about putting plasters over sores. We are about viewing the system that has decayed in our country—the criminal justice system, and finding proper medicines to solve those problems in the shortest possible time.

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The Director of Public Prosecutions shared the United Kingdom's experience with respect to the use of criminal hearsay evidence and on the value of closed-circuit television and deoxyribonucleic acid evidence as tools of interdiction. I am able to say that the Bill as has been approved by the Senate, which has returned to the House, has been seen by the Director of Public Prosecutions and he is very proud that we in this country could take steps in our Legislature to consider a Bill of such magnitude in the way of criminal justice interdiction.

Arising from these talks, the Trinidad and Tobago delegation was able to gain tremendous insight into the potential utility and practical application, these game changing initiatives and strategies.

Next, we met with the Attorney General and Solicitor General of the United Kingdom, the Rt. Hon. Dominic Grieve QC, Member of Parliament and Edward Garnier QC, Minister, Member of Parliament (MP). The Attorney General shared much information on the legislative reform measures which have been introduced into the UK criminal justice system. That is why I say, that we in this Government, we do not just adopt old ways of dealing with current problems. We talk to people who have been there in order to hear of their experiences and also to see whether what we are doing is what places us on the right path. And, quite clearly, Mr. Speaker, I can say that the Ministry of Justice is on the right path with our legislative agenda.

We were granted the honour of a meeting with Law Lords of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and we discussed many matters of importance there. Of course, our conversations were restricted to the criminal justice side of the administration of justice in our country.

The Minister and his team held talks with officials of the United Kingdom, Ministry of Justice on the issue of court design and construction. When we had a layout of the—a presentation, of the way the United Kingdom was going in terms of building new special purpose built courts, it was quite clear that the design and prototype conceptual drawings that have been approved for construction purposes in our country are more advanced and relevant to those going out for construction in the United Kingdom.

So, when our courts are built—and built they will be, because Cabinet has already approved three of the four courts—we would be the shining light in the Commonwealth, if not in the world, for courthouse construction. And, that is something that this country has got to know from early. Look out for the turning of the sod, because very shortly requests for proposals would be going out. I did indicate, Mr. Speaker, to the honourable House—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Members, St. Ann's East, please. Just listen and observe Standing Order 40(b) and (c). Continue, hon. Member.

Hon. H. Volney: Thank you very much for your invention and your protection from the noise on the other side of the House. Mr. Speaker, very shortly, as I was saying, requests for proposals will be going out—we are speaking about in the next week—inviting proposals for construction of courthouses on a design/finance/build, basis. What this would mean is that in the next three years of our first term in office, and I emphasize, of our first term, behind which, you would find that there would be many terms to come—
[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: [*Laughter*]

Hon. H. Volney: Did I hear sour grapes over there? What would happen is that by the end of our first term, we would be opening these courts at different parts of the country. Let me remind you, Mr. Speaker, Members present and the national community, that there has been no new courthouse built since Tobago, and that was in the time of the NAR Government.

The Judiciary and the administration of the criminal justice have been neglected so much over the years, that I wonder how it is the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant, could have the audacity to bring a Motion like this; quite clearly she is out of her depth to speak on matters of criminal interdiction and dismantling. If she had understood—if the hon. Member had understood the importance of support for the criminal justice system, she would never, never have brought a vacuous Motion. What has happened is that there are over 460,000 cases in the Magistrates' Court that have been built up during the time of the PNM; no new courts, no new judges. That is neglect. It is the same type of neglect that the PNM had during their seven years last gone, before this country on May 24, saved the nation from them.

When these new buildings, these edifices, which would reflect the forward thinking of the People's Partnership Government, are opened, we would be bringing justice to the people in their communities. Persons would be able to participate in the criminal justice system like never before. We would have a judicial centre in Sangre Grande comprising of a magnificent building with four high courts and four magistrates courts with all the facilities required.

We have already amended the law to allow for legal aid to be extended. So that more people—pensioners included—because we raised the bar to allow pensioners, people with salaries or income of \$3,000 or less per month to access

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legal aid. Since back in the 1970s, these Members opposite in their different times in Government did absolutely nothing to improve the legal aid system and to help the poor. But, in 2010, they were playing their tune, “We care, we care”. Who did they care about? Calder Hart and Uthara Rao, that is who they cared about.

They built tall buildings but they did not build hospitals in Point Fortin. They have done little, little, Mr. Speaker. When the hon. Member for Chaguanas West pointed it out, the hon. Member for San Fernando East jumped up and he tried to defend the little that his Government had done and within 10 days, regrettably, we have not seen him since. The fact of the matter is, we wish the hon. Member well; we want to see him back as quickly as possible. But, there is no way that that position taken could have been defended because while buildings were going up the rest of the society was being disregarded. The roads were not being paved, the box drains were disintegrating and the whole country was being neglected. And, what you have now are a set of tall buildings, empty: the Education Tower, empty; the Treasury Tower, empty; Legal Affairs Tower, empty; all of them empty. And an empty Treasury too, [*Desk thumping*] because, when we came into office, we found this country in a financial mess—empty. All we found was “empty”. And, unfortunately there are many empty heads that we have to contend with on the other side. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: I know you are quite capable of using more elegant language. Could you withdraw that, “empty heads”, we do not have empty heads here.

2.45 p.m.

Hon. H. Volney: If my hon. friends feel belittled, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw it. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: But Louis said it.

Hon. H. Volney: I do not know about that, hon. Member—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Ask Louis.

Hon. H. Volney:—but I will ask Louis. [*Desk thumping and laughter*] I will ask Louis.

Mr. Roberts: Ask Anil and then Louis.

Hon. H. Volney: Mr. Speaker, our Government will be building these courts—these lovely buildings—not only in Sangre Grande to bring the criminal justice administration at all levels to the people in the eastern counties so to speak, in the eastern regional districts so that the people from Sangre Grande, Toco,

Matelot, Sans Souci, Grande Riviere and Cumana will no longer have to come all the way into Port of Spain to give evidence, to seek justice in the courts.

Mr. Speaker, I once presided in a trial when I was a judge and could you imagine there were witnesses who had to get up at three o'clock every morning to travel all the way from Matelot to Port of Spain, in order to seek justice because one of their numbers had been killed? Under this Government that will be a thing of the past because we are bringing the justice to the people in their communities. We are decentralizing the administration of criminal justice in this land. Apart from the Sangre Grande courts, we are building another high court comprising four courts in the Trincity area. We are building a large judicial centre in the Carlsen Field area that will take care of the needs of the central community for the next 50 years—four high courts and four magistrates' courts, and these will address the issues of backlog in the courts where there are no proper facilities.

Mr. Speaker, if you have had the distinction of speeding on the highway and you only have to go into the Chaguanas Magistrates' Court, you will want to leave this country. That is the way it has been since 1956 and nothing has been done about it.

Mr. Roberts: Archaic PNM.

Hon. H. Volney: But this Government, under the astute leadership of the hon. Member for Siparia, is taking steps. She is supporting these measures in order to ensure that the delivery of criminal justice is 21st Century bound, so that people can see the face of justice in their own communities. There will also be another large court building in the deep south, in the constituency of Siparia, [*Desk thumping*] that will cater to all the areas. So when we build a hospital in Point Fortin—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Stop squatting.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I am not squatting.

Hon. H. Volney:—and when we build the highway that Eric Williams—

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member! I do not think anybody is squatting here. I am hearing this word going about the floor and maybe finding its way in the *Hansard* record, and we have no squatters here, so I would like Members to desist from using that expression. Hon. Member for St. Joseph, Minister of Justice, you may continue.

Hon. H. Volney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The point of the matter is that all these new initiatives of our Government were promised as far back as the time of Eric Williams who led this country into Independence. That was 50 years ago. All

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these were promised. We, this Government, those of us on this side of the House, are delivering, and those on the Back Bench on the other side. The Member for Oropouche West has even learned to drive a backhoe. [*Desk thumping and laughter*] She has put her hand to the wheel to turn it in order to bring the highway, finally, from Golconda to Point Fortin, and it will happen. [*Desk thumping*] It will happen under our People's Partnership Government. So when we have the connector road, not only will we have the Point Fortin Hospital, we will have a highway to Point Fortin. We will have a large Supreme Court building in Siparia so that those who commit crimes in Point Fortin can now go to Siparia to see the face of justice. [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: On the highway!

Hon. H. Volney: On the highway.

Mr. Speaker, apart from constructing court facilities that will take care of the needs of the country for the next 30/40 years and to address issues of backlog, we have started the process of changing the laws that direct the systems that have been allowed to prevail since Independence. Nothing was done by the PNM; nothing was done by those Members opposite. When I consider the quality of the contributions made during the debate in that Bill before the House, I could well understand why it is that the PNM when it was in Government did not bring these initiatives. It is because they do not have people in the PNM, today, who understand the need for change and to bring about the suggestions that would lead to these forward-looking bits of legislation.

When you hear the contributions from this side of the House—do we have any lawyers opposite? Yes, I think Mr. Imbert has a law degree from—[*Crosstalk*] But the point is, nothing was done all these years and in the short space of 22 months we are ready to roll out on the construction of those courts. [*Desk thumping*] So, when we come towards the end of our first term in Government not only would we have new buildings with new judges and magistrates, but we will have systems that work, that will deal with criminal offenders so that those who commit crime will see the time and will see the time quickly so that they will be deterred from committing crime.

You see, I keep saying that those on the opposite side do not understand that in this age of the 21st Century you have to be smart about going about the business of government. You have to be smart—

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. C. Sharma*]

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. H. Volney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The way of the 21st Century is being smart. We are not mired in the past. We are about facing the problems. We are about facing the problems of our country in a smart way. There are two ways of doing it and I will give you a simple example.

2.55 p.m.

We can have strategic alliances with friendly governments and we can even pay for the facility of having satellite surveillance of our boundaries, of our borders, where we can stay in a room and see ships, and see all kinds of aircraft, and even the *Su* if it could have floated into our waters.

We would have the knowledge to intercept, we would be able to listen to conversations by our special systems that I do not want to speak of. You see, Mr. Speaker, I am the Acting Minister of National Security as I speak. [*Desk thumping*] I have been taught that there are matters of national security that I should not speak about. But, rest assured that where we are going is the smart way of dealing with protecting our borders. The smart way of protecting our borders, not buying a blimp that goes blimp, blimp, blimp as we go along, and that everybody who is committing a crime will hear blimp, blimp, blimp—[*Laughter*—you know, so that they could run and hide. Now, that is what we dismantled because we want to be smart, Mr. Speaker. We want to be smart. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: Or a *Su* that does not sail.

Hon. H. Volney: Or buying a *Su* that does not sail.

Mr. Roberts: Or a blind “eye in the sky.”

Hon. H. Volney: Not even sail, the *Su* could not even float. So, Mr. Speaker, we are about being intelligent and smart in the way that we spend public money in this country. That is the way of approaching governance in the 21st Century.

When we came into office, everything was a mess. Money was owed. Money that we could have used to develop systems for surveillance much quicker, we have had to slowly and strategically take our time to deal with and acquire these systems. They are being acquired, yes, but the pace of doing so, Mr. Speaker, has had to be on a slower basis, for the simple reason, that when we came into office,

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the Treasury was empty, and it is not just a matter that the Treasury was empty, but also, they left bills long from here to Los Iros—bills upon bills.

Mr. Speaker, that apart, we found a situation where you have people who have retired from different jobs, and still occupying housing that the Government needs to put people into; people who occupy posts. In the army, we have situations of retired people still in Government quarters but we are paying allowances to people so that they can rent. All that was the PNM's way of doing their business of the State. That has stopped. When we came into office, we promised, and when those on the other side were saying, "Where you going to raise the money?",—the hon. Member for Tunapuna made it abundantly clear, as did the hon. Prime Minister, "If we cut the corruption of the PNM by even 10 per cent, we would be able to balance our budget." [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, this Government does not have its hands in any cookie jar because; that is one thing the hon. Prime Minister will not tolerate in her Government. Everybody knows that what you earn has to be your salary and your allowances as Ministers. [*Desk thumping*] Make do with that, and if you cannot, then go somewhere else. In other words, this is a job of service. That is why in this country, what needed to be done when we came into office, what we needed to do was to change the culture, to uproot the PNM way of doing just about any and everything, including crime interdiction.

Miss. Cox: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 36(1).

Dr. Rowley: "Cyah take no more ah dat."

Hon. H. Volney: I said we had to do—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Wait, wait. Connect.

Hon. H. Volney: Mr. Speaker, the connection that I made was that we have to do things to provide the money to be able to deal with the crime interdiction—[*Desk thumping*]

Miss. Cox: "Yuh did not say that."

Hon. H. Volney:—and that is the connection. That is the connection, but the hon. Member does not want to hear it. She does not want to hear it. [*Interruption*] Thank you, hon. Member; I am in your debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that apart, we have a system that we met in the prisons, and I know that this is a pet of the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant where she did service to this nation. We recognize that she did service to the

nation, it is just that I have not seen it, you know, in terms of offender management. The groundwork to take the way we deal with prisoners and offenders into the 21st Century was never laid because part of dealing with crime, in the smart way, is to curtail the level of recidivism. What has happened is that the last Government, the PNM, they did nothing to uplift persons who found themselves in the penal system. They maintained an 1838 set of prison rules. Shame on them, Mr. Speaker! They did absolutely nothing about it!

At this time, the prison rules will be laid in Parliament shortly. That is the prisons rules of 2012, and that is after 22 months in Government by the People's Partnership. So, there are different ways of dealing with crime. What we are dismantling is what the PNM failed to deal with, and we are doing it in a smart way. Because, Mr. Speaker, when you treat an offender with dignity, you allow him to maintain a certain humanity and dignity. Many of these people—*[Interruption]* Yes, you could call Brad Boyce. Your mind is mired—the hon. Member's mind is mired in the past.

Dr. Rowley: We will never forget you.

Mr. Speaker: Member for Diego Martin West, please, we cannot impute improper motives to any Member. *[Interruption]* No, no, I am saying you cannot sit there and across the bow and make statements that impute improper motives.

Dr. Rowley: I am not doing that, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, that is what you just did.

Dr. Rowley: No. I said I will not forget him.

Mr. Speaker: You may not forget him, but you used language that reminded me of the Standing Orders, and I am saying that you are imputing improper motives. *[Interruption]* No, no, no!

Listen, Member for Diego Martin West, we had something called a no confidence Motion where you had your say and I did not stop anybody. But, we are now in the ordinary course of business, and therefore, the Standing Orders will be upheld by me. So do not impute improper motives whilst you are seated. Any Member, do not do that. Could you continue, Member for St. Joseph?

Hon. H. Volney: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will move on after being so rudely interrupted by the Member for Diego Martin West. Now, part of dealing with criminal activity is to addressing the high rate of recidivism. In this regard, the Ministry of Justice has developed new prison rules. These prison rules, when

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implemented together with new facilities which we propose, in the fullness of time, to take to the Cabinet as a suggestion for the Ministry of National Security, would result in the construction of purpose-built correction facilities.

Now, the first correction facility named as such is the one in the east—the Eastern Correction Facility. What would happen is that persons who can be rehabilitated will be rehabilitated in the shortest possible time. The time of the concept of the thinking: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, has gone. Those we do not subscribe to, Mr. Speaker. What we want to do and what we are about, is going into the system that would allow that when someone comes into the penal system, they know that if they are rehabilitated quickly, as for example, if they participate in the process of rehabilitation, they would see the free world much quicker than as presently obtains. So if a term, for example, to give you a roll-out indication of how it would apply, if a person comes into the penal system and he is to serve six years as a sentence of the court, he would sit with an officer in the penal system who would explain to him that if he engages and he accepts the training in the system, that he could be out of prison, out of behind bars, as short as after two years instead of what presently obtains.

Mr. Speaker, this would encourage inmates to adopt such methods, such way of life as good hygiene, obtain life skills, obtain training, manners and anger management. So, you see when an offender enters the system, and he accepts this sort of facility, these trainings, he is open to this sort of thing, what would happen is that he would benefit from a merit point system so that when he reaches the end of the first third of his sentence, he would then appear before a parole board. Parole is something that the PNM clearly did not understand, because had they understood the system of parole, they would have done something about it, because parole aids in rehabilitation. It gives inmates and offenders an opportunity to behave themselves, and to benefit from behaving themselves, to acquire life skills so that they could be restored to goodness.

You see, what has happened and it is the PNM way, you “get lock up”, they throw away the key on you and they do not care. They did not care, at the end of day, whether you came out as long as you did your time. That is the thinking of the past. That is not the way, Mr. Speaker, our People’s Partnership views prisoner management, offender management. We want to give everybody a chance to participate in the nation’s development.

There are many times—and I could give examples—a man who has lived a perfectly good life is at a function, and some miscreant comes and slaps his wife, and he turns around and he cuffs the person, the person falls and hits his head on

the ground, goes into ICU, never recovers and dies. That man is not a criminal but he has committed an assault which the legal system frowns upon, and he attracts, in most instances, a peremptory term of imprisonment.

3.10 p.m.

That person has to do his time as quickly as possible, so he could return to make his contribution. We do not want that type of offender to remain in prison, because remaining in prison beyond the time he should be incarcerated will create in him an anger. It will give him an opportunity to become a criminal through association within the prison system.

Mr. Speaker, these are the types of initiatives that our Government is embarking upon; when an offender has reached the stage of serving the first third in custody, learning life skills, working on the compound, what we propose to build, which would be factories, where they can actually work, earn money, learn skills and develop skills.

As simple as it is, when we order a bicycle online, you get it in a box and you have to sit with your children and try to figure how you will put on the wheels, how you have to turn the nut one side and the other side the other way. All of those kinds of skills, they have to be learnt and unless we have people who can exhibit those skills in life and who can sell their skills so they can be self-sufficient, we will have a country wanting those skills.

The whole concept today, if the sole of your shoe comes off, you throw it away and buy a new pair of shoes. If we were to develop cobblers, men from the prison system who know how to repair shoes, they could establish their own businesses. When they leave the prison system, they could open their own little shop where “they could fix people shoes”. So often, I have seen female members of our society, hopping on the road because the heel of their high-heeled shoe has come off. They do not have the money to go and buy a pair of new shoes, but they could go to a cobbler, if they could find one, and in a short space of time he could repair the shoe for them. Could you imagine the amount of money that would be saved for this country, if we as a nation, rather than buy a new shoe when the old one can be fixed, would have the old shoe fixed? That was the way we did it years ago. When your shoe needed fixing, you sent it to be fixed. It is only since we have had the taste of prosperity in this land, more so now under our People’s Partnership Government, that people no longer fix shoes.

I just gave that simple example, because the man on the street will understand what I am speaking about. Hon. Members, I have made it in a simple way because some of you have difficulty understanding more difficult concepts so I have come

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with the shoe repair concept. Could you believe if we taught our prisoners who are not academic or intellectual how to repair shoes, how much money this country would save on importing shoes.

I could give other examples. For instance, if you buy a nice chandelier, whether it be a cheap one or an expensive one, you get it completely knocked down in a box. Have you ever tried to assemble a chandelier? It is an experience you will not want to have, you prefer to put your hand in your pocket and pay somebody who knows how to put it together, rather than trying to assemble it yourself. That takes no rocket scientist; all it takes is a man who has to be given an opportunity to learn a trade or to learn a skill. When you go into the prison, you learn these trades, simple as they are, so that our society would have skilled workmen who could make a living on their own.

If you, Mr. Speaker, give a man a trade that when he comes out of prison, he can make a living, he will not go and rob somebody, he will not go and steal because he knows the experience of his incarceration and he knows that there is a good business in what he has been taught in the prison system. These are the kinds of interventions. This is the kind of thinking of our People's Partnership Government, when we move to the restorative, as opposed to the punitive, in this paradigm shift of our Government in dealing with offenders.

Mr. Speaker, when someone has served the first third of their sentence, they could now be allowed out on terms. They could be allowed out, with an electronic tagging device, so that they could be policed, in terms of their curfews. Our Government has brought legislation to the House in order to allow for this. These things were there available all the time and the last Government never did anything about it. We are cutting the way for other Governments of the People's Partnership to follow in years to come, so that when they come, they will find a healthy nation; healthier than what we have.

I could go on and on and on as to the initiatives of our Government. I have to bring all these initiatives to the national attention, because when I see the audacity of this Motion, it is quite clearly made, it is brought to the House by someone who is mired in the past who does not understand that you do not have to have blimps in order to be intelligent in dealing with crime interdiction.

Mr. Speaker, we have the 21st Century Policing Initiative whereby so often at every corner you will see a police car. When you go to countries overseas you do not see police stations, but you see police cars. This is brilliant. Anytime somebody commits a crime here, you would see police cars from all directions

coming at them. They will be deterred. There will be a deterrent and it is being rolled out. Right now, it is being rolled out in Tobago. It is being rolled out in central. It is being rolled out in the west. It is coming all around. This is 21st Century that we are living in. We are not living in the past.

For the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant to bring this kind of Motion, while she wants to hear the kind of things we are doing, I consider the Motion insulting. It is very insulting. It is devoid of any intellectual content. It shows the thinking of a mind that is in the past. Unfortunately, the hon. Member, with that kind of thinking, I would see her like the Member for Port of Spain South being grey-haired on that side of the House waiting to come on this side. By then the hon. Member for Diego Martin West might have grown a fresh set of hair, because they would be on that said of the House with that kind of Motion that we have had to stand here and answer in this honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to make this contribution. The Motion is so devoid of any merit that I did not even have to reach for my willow today. The sooner that those opposite concede that there is really nothing to push with this Motion, we could go and see the West Indies “finish off” Australia, just as I have totally “finished off” the Opposition. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Nileung Hypolite (*Laventille West*): Thank you kindly, Mr. Speaker. I stand to support my colleague, the Member of Parliament for Laventille East/Morvant, in this Motion which ends:

Be it resolved that this House take note of the systematic dismantling of the national security systems and structures in Trinidad and Tobago and call on the Government to cease this action and to take steps to put in place an effective national security system which would have the effect of securing the borders and by extension the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago to bring about a reduction in crime in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, as I sat here, I listened to the Member for St. Joseph, who indicated that the Member for Port of Spain South should be ashamed of herself, and he said it at least three times, she should be ashamed, should be ashamed, should be ashamed. I actually thought that we lived in a democratic country. If an issue is brought to the attention of the Members on this side, I expect that, as a good and responsible Opposition, we would ask the necessary questions and get the answers, because it is not just we on this side who are requesting answers, but the general public outside there. When they see something that is abnormal, and they want answers, they will come to a responsible group of persons to ask on their behalf.

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Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do what we were assigned to do, which is to keep a watchful eye on this Government, and once something comes to our attention, we will ask the necessary questions and as such, I support the Chief Whip in asking that question on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago and will continue to do just that. We do not need the permission of the Government to ask questions. [*Desk thumping*] We do not need that at all.

The Member for St. Joseph also stood there and spoke about empty buildings under the People's National Movement. Mr. Speaker, we are, right now, in a building built by the People's National Movement which they are all enjoying. Those across at the next building, Tower C, are fighting. The various Ministers are fighting to get office space inside that building, and that was another PNM building. [*Desk thumping*]

3.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Joseph spoke about construction of courthouses. I can remember specifically a discussion with respect to one of the courthouses being built in the Trincity area. So it is nothing new this Government is coming up with, it is something that had been on the table and would have been discussed by the then PNM Government.

This Motion speaks about dismantling the various security systems that the People's National Movement would have put in place. In the People's Partnership Government's Manifesto they said:

“We will prepare an immediate action plan for containing criminal activities and reducing the number of murders—this first phase will be from June 2010 to December 2010.”

They also said:

“We will deploy police on the streets, on the beat and in the communities and increase police presence everywhere.”

They also said:

“We will initiate a process to make every police station a centre for crime containment and reduction, crime fighting, community policing, statistical information gathering and communication linked to the National Operations centre and we will establish five (5) model stations as the pilot.”

Mr. Speaker, again, let me put on record that because of the various measures which the People's National Movement would have put in place, we started to see a decrease in murders in this country under the People's National Movement.

A report from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service CSO indicated in 2008 that murders stood at 544; the People's National Movement was in office then. In 2009, the murder rate dropped to 509; the People's National Movement was in office. In 2010, the People's National Movement was in office for the first quarter of that year and the murder rate ended at 474. Again, there was a reduction and that came about because of the measures which the People's National Movement would have put in place. What is taking place today, Mr. Speaker, is that this Government is dismantling all the various initiatives and measures that we would have put in place.

They have cancelled the OPVs, and what was the reason for the OPVs? to patrol our borders. They dismantled SAUTT. And what was the reason for that organization? That organization did a number of intelligence work, so much to say, Mr. Speaker, that at one point in this country, kidnapping was 100 and because of this agency it came right down to five. As a Government they are not servicing the 360 degree radar, that radar system at this is not working properly and that is a measure which was put in place to assist in the reduction of crime.

Even the vehicles—because the Member for St. Joseph spoke about vehicles coming from all over, left, right and centre, 300 rented cars were returned to their various owners—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: What is the point?

Mr. N. Hypolite: The point is, they have been dismantling all the systems which had been put in place to take care of the criminal activities that are taking place outside there. Three hundred cars being returned, that is a lot, which could have done much in this country.

In fact, even police officers are a problem. At one stage there was a senior police officer indicating that there are not sufficient police officers in the service. On the other hand, you have the Commissioner of Police indicating that we have enough cops. Mr. Speaker, here is a retired Deputy Commissioner of Police indicating—and this is on August 20, 2010—he has revealed that:

“The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is short of 1,600 officers.” He further indicated that regarding gang-related crimes—and that retired officer in question was Asst. Commissioner of Police Piggott, who said the best form of attack was to dry up pools belonging to gang members.

“We should be tapping into their not-so-traditional sources by focusing on the youth. That is where the gang leaders get their pool,”

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Then comes this present Commissioner of Police who has indicated that he has enough cops. Actually, the President of the Police Social and Welfare Association, Sgt. Anand Ramesar, also agreed with him. Ramesar, however, also indicated that the proper utilization of the current force would allow the police service to meet its manpower needs.

Mr. Speaker, a senior police officer then cried out that they needed more officers. In fact, just recently, the Minister of National Security indicated that they need to recruit more officers for the service. So really and truly what are the facts?

The People's National Movement had a plan prior to May 24, 2010, and we continue to hold very strongly to our plan of action in securing and providing safety for the people of this country. We on this side have always been about improving the quality of life and standard of living of all our citizens towards that which obtains in a developed society, we have always been about that. [*Desk thumping*] So much to say that we looked at the administration of justice; we looked at governance and institutional structures for development; we looked at law administration and legal affairs; we looked at national security and public safety; all of those were things that we as the People's National Movement sat and looked at. We also had a budget in place for that, and that budget started since 2000. We had allocations assigned in the year 2000, we looked at \$1.4 billion; 2001, \$1.4 billion; 2002, \$1.6 billion; 2003, \$1.8 billion; 2004, \$1.9 billion; 2005, \$2.3 billion. We had a comprehensive plan to look after the national security of this country.

Mr. Speaker, we even looked at the restructuring of the Police Complaints Unit; creation of a homicide prevention working group; re-establishment and formalization of the Homicide Bureau of Investigation.

I am reading from the People's National Movement policy with respect to national security all within the Vision 2020 document—restructuring of the Police Complaints Unit; the establishment of the homicide prevention working group.

We also looked at the Homicide Bureau of Investigation—[*Interruption*]—and yes, I will continue to speak about this and other matters coming out of Vision 2020, because Vision 2020 was a comprehensive plan to look at the development of Trinidad and Tobago, and this Government today is dismantling every single thing that was put in place to secure the lives of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, we looked at developmental training for police officers. Within that was a training programme which included high impact supervisory training;

training of trainers; homicide investigation; crisis negotiation; strategic crime control; all of those were things we looked at under a People's National Movement Government, and today we continue to ask the Members on that side, Members of the Government, what is their plan? And we still cannot get an answer, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: Yeah!

Miss Cox: Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. N. Hypolite: When we speak—[*Interruption*—the Member behind there is speaking about misleading the House. On January 12, 2012, the PM promised more police/army patrols; that was a promise then and we are still waiting to see where these army and police patrols are. [*Crosstalk*] The Member for St. Joseph wants to believe that I need glasses, I do not need them. [*Desk thumping*] In Brasso they closed the police post, so much to say that the police station doors are opened from 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m., and the people there have been complaining simply because again, whereby we would have put police stations and mobile units in place, bringing the police service closer to the people, this Government also would have dismantled that.

3.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, even in Mango Rose, Port of Spain, they closed the police post there. The police post in John John, they got rid of that. They were attempting to get rid of the one up at Fort Picton. This Government continues to dismantle every single piece of apparatus, system and structure that PNM put in place to safeguard this country. Nonetheless, they are coming up with plans and one plan that was identified was a \$5,000 grant for ex-prisoners. I did not hear the Member for St. Joseph mention that. The Prime Minister boasted about that; a \$5,000 grant for ex-prisoners.

Mr. Speaker, it might be worthwhile to go to prison because right now this Government continues to fire persons left, right and centre. The thing about that is that when you fire people left, right and centre, that will affect the whole crime situation in this country. It will contribute towards an increase in criminal activities because poverty has a lot to do with crime.

As I speak about poverty, let me also mention that there are a number of individuals in this country who continue to receive letters from HDC, threatening that if they do not purchase those units in 90 days' time—and some of these people have been renting these properties for the past five-plus years—they will be evicted. Some of these people are 80 years old. Some of these people may

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never ever be able to qualify for a mortgage; but here it is, HDC—and I am right now making a plea to the Minister of Housing and the Environment to look into this situation because, as simple as that may be, it may also create more criminal activities in this country.

When an individual cannot be comfortable in his home; when he is threatened with eviction, what do you think he will do? He would look at other means and avenues of getting whatever it takes to make sure he secures his home. This is a very, very important issue that must be dealt with immediately.

Again, I am pleading with the Minister of Housing and the Environment to do something about these letters that people from San Fernando, Chaguanas, Champs Fleurs, Tunapuna and Mount Hope are receiving. Let us be aware that some of these people would have been paying their rent—they are up-to-date with their rent—and they are even saying that they would have made some kind of agreement with HDC to have a rent/purchase arrangement put in place. Some of them even indicated that 60 per cent of their rental payments should have gone towards a down payment on their properties.

Mr. Speaker, I have been advised—

Hon. Member: By whom?

Mr. N. Hypolite: Not by you for sure—that some of these individuals were told that if they could not purchase these properties, they would have to find somewhere else. Some of the places they are being advised that they have to go are places such as Nelson and Duncan Streets.

Hon. Member: Good areas, man.

Mr. N. Hypolite: Good areas, yes, but all those apartments are also filled. What you will find taking place is that somebody somewhere will have to be put out of an apartment at some time. What we will see taking place is more street children, more vagrants and more crime.

Mr. Sharma: PNM is the expert on making crime.

Mr. N. Hypolite: And the UNC Government is a professional in maintaining criminal activities. [*Desk thumping*] They are experts.

Mr. Speaker, under the People's National Movement, we continued to look at the infrastructure upgrade of every single community and constituency. When we speak about crime, we speak about poverty; we speak about how we get the people in a community more involved in developing themselves and their

communities. When I look at constituencies such as Laventille West, Laventille East/Morvant, Port of Spain South, Diego Martin West, Diego Martin North/East, Diego Martin Central, on an annual basis, you would see \$6 million worth of road repairs being authorized. You know what, Mr. Speaker? Under the People's National Movement, under a distinguished gentleman like Mr. Colm Imbert, Member for Diego Martin North/East, you would have seen infrastructural work being done throughout this entire country—east, west, north and south.

In addition to the main roads and the secondary roads within constituencies, you continued to see the infrastructural works being done on highways. There were five major highways from San Fernando to Point Fortin. That was also one of the projects under the People's National Movement. I would not be surprised if very soon you hear about the causeway from Port of Spain to Chaguaramas. I would not be surprised. We are talking about crime.

They continue to dismantle all the various structures and systems we would have put in place and they have decided to come up with some kind of a plan; and the only plan they could have come up with was something called the state of emergency. That and all was a failure because, with the state of emergency being in effect, you still saw a minimum of 30 murders during that period of time. To date, they still cannot tell this country what the plan to reduce criminal activities in this country is.

It is the Prime Minister who spoke about an assassination plot. In fact, I want to quote from the *Guardian* of December 07, 2011, Tony Fraser:

“When Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar accepted the advice of Commissioner of Police Dwayne Gibbs that the police had uncovered a plot that was hatched to assassinate her and three of her senior ministers and adds her political responsibility to it, then that decision becomes her own. When she took on board the wisdom of her national security adviser, Gary Griffith,—” [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, I want to read over that part:

“When she took on board the wisdom of her national security adviser Gary Griffith, that she should make information on the plot public, then she also takes political responsibility for the disclosure and the decision is then her own.”

To date, we still await some kind of positive response with respect to our Prime Minister's—because she is the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago—life being threatened, no matter how alleged it may have been. To date, not one single person has been arrested and charged and brought before the court on that matter. It is our Prime Minister.

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I also want to indicate that in May 2010.

Mr. Sharma: Wrap up! Wrap up!

Mr. N. Hypolite: The Member for Fyzabad just indicated: “Wrap up! Wrap up!” As he said that, hear this one. Please remember that plot attempt number one was in May 2010, just prior to the general election. The Member of Parliament for Fyzabad, Mr. Chandresh Sharma, reported to the police that there was a \$5 million hit on the Opposition leader, Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar. The police promised to keep a close eye and investigate the issue. Mrs. Persad-Bissessar was offered police protection, but she bravely—that is my Prime Minister—declined such.

Mr. Speaker, there was an attempted plot, before the election—

Hon. Member: An attempted plot?

Dr. Browne: That is exactly what it was.

Mr. N. Hypolite: That is exactly what they have here. It was plot attempt number one. That is how they have it here. Again, to date, you have not heard one single thing about that; nothing about that and we are talking about national security. The life of the Chief Executive Officer of this country was at risk, as she said and as the Member for Fyzabad indicated, and that was the end of that. That was only number one.

3.55 p.m.

They continued to say that the then Minister of National Security, Mr. Martin Joseph did absolutely nothing about crime and all those different things. Mr. Speaker, he got a red card, a white card, a blue card, a yellow card, all kinds of different cards. He even got a letter all right, but the strange thing is the person who presented that letter, that red card, I am certain after tomorrow, he will get a red card. I am certain. [*Desk thumping*] Unless, of course—

Dr. Moonilal: You interfering in the election.

Mr. N. Hypolite: —it is football, right? It is only football you can get red cards. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, would you agree with me that it is only in football you can get a red card? [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Moonilal: “Yuh supporting Panday.”

Mr. N. Hypolite: And for you to play football you “gotta” kick something.

Dr. Browne: Generation Next!

Mr. N. Hypolite: So let us see. Do not worry, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Oropouche East has our support for leader. [*Desk thumping*] [*Mr. Hypolite snaps fingers*]

Hon. Member: “Dat is where you reach?”

Hon. Member: “Cool yourself.”

Mr. N. Hypolite: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Joseph presented to this House a number of times a comprehensive report on our national security measures. Many a time he would have come to this House—in fact, he even answered a question, No. 20 of 2007-2008 Session of Parliament on matters pertaining to moneys spent, in fact, the amount of money paid to date to obtain his services, which is Prof. Mastrofski’s services. How many recommendations did he propose? Whether the Government implemented all these recommendations, he came to this House a number of times and answered questions and put forward a number of different initiatives and ideas and plans on the way forward with respect to the People’s National Movement. That is what he would have done. Mr. Speaker, we have a plan, we always had a plan and will continue.

The Prime Minister, who continues to indicate to this country that things are so nice and those who have eyes and open their eyes tend to realize that things are not as nice and hunky-dory as the Prime Minister and other Members of this Government tend to bring out to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

In April 2011, at the US Brookings Institution the Prime Minister addressed that gathering on April 4, 2011. Mr. Speaker, allow me just to identify certain parts of her presentation:

“It is especially important for me since I understand it, the Brookings Institution is ranked as the world’s top think-tank.

This reputation is well-founded.

For almost a century, your organization has conducted independent research and provided recommendations which have helped to shape the policies of the US Governments.”

She continued in her presentation to identify that:

“As Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, I see a role for the Brookings Institution as a useful go-between.”

Mr. Speaker, what is taking place here is that the Prime Minister is admitting that there is a serious, serious problem with crime in this country, okay. [*Desk thumping*]

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“Your Institution can bridge the gap among the power brokers in Washington in devising short, medium and long-term policies to assist my country and the wider”—[*Interruption*]

Miss McDonald: Mr. Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 40(a), (b) and (c). I am hearing a drone from along there. Please, I am not hearing. [*Crosstalk*] Well, even on my side we are not hearing properly up here, please.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, I would ask Members on both sides, the front and the back to, at least pay attention to the hon. Member for Laventille West and observe Standing Order 40(b) and (c). Continue, Member for Laventille West. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. N. Hypolite: Thank you kindly, Mr. Speaker. This is the Prime Minister speaking on April 4, 2011. It was her keynote address to the Brookings Institution, Washington DC, actually admitting that there is a big, big problem in this country. And as she indicated to those persons:

“Your Institution can bridge the gap among the power brokers in Washington in devising short, medium and long-term policies to assist my country and the wider Caribbean community as we strive to play our part in fostering the economic and social welfare, as well as the security and provision of opportunity for all our peoples.”

Mr. Speaker, this is the Prime Minister talking about security in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean region. We are not immune to terrorism and increased levels of crime and violence. But while she was mentioning that in 2011, they continued to dismantle the various systems and structures that were put in place to do just this; to avoid the increase in criminal activities and terrorism and violence. She continued:

“We have the misfortune of being located between the major producers and consumers of illegal drugs.”

Mr. Speaker, the OPVs were to be purchased to assist with that aspect of reducing criminal activities in this country, to look after our borders of which the Prime Minister indicated here: “We have the misfortune of being located between the major producers and consumers...” So we needed to have our borders under control.

She continued:

“We have sought to confront these issues both nationally and with the support of our Caricom partners as well as those outside of the region.

For us, organized crime, drug trafficking and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are cross-border in character and therefore require the cooperation of all states at both the regional hemisphere and global levels.

In my capacity as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, as well as in my portfolio as Prime Minister with the responsibility for crime and security in the quasi-Cabinet of CARICOM, I am aware of the debilitating effects that escalating levels of crime fuelled by the illegal arms trade and the illicit trade in narcotics are having on the socio-economic fabric of CARICOM countries.”

Mr. Speaker, this is the Prime Minister admitting that there is a very serious problem with drugs and crime and violence in Trinidad and Tobago and yet still we continue to dismantle all of our various structures and systems.

While that is taking place and while we are admitting that there are big, big problems, you have now the police—

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. N. Hypolite: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you my colleague, Member for Port of Spain South, and also all Members on both sides, I say thanks.

Hon. Member: You deserve the extra time.

Mr. N. Hypolite: Mr. Speaker, here it is you have a senior police officer who admits that the police strategy is a big failure. This is in 2011, and between 2011 and to date, we still have not seen or heard of that crime plan. This is what the senior police officer is admitting. This is again an article on Friday, January 14, 2011, *TnT Mirror*. This is one of our senior police officers who said:

The police service was certainly not in control anymore, the police service was certainly not in control anymore.

Mr. Speaker, that is a very, very strong statement coming from a senior police officer. And yet still this Government got rid of the OPVs, they dismantled SAUTT, they removed the police posts.

That senior officer also continued by stating:

The police now have to partner with the social activists and devise plans and programmes in order to curb the murder rate.

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That is something that the People's National Movement was doing. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we had things such as the Citizen Security Programme. The Member for Laventille East/Morvant can tell you the amount of work that she would have put in, in that Ministry of National Security when it comes to things such as the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force, the same organization that the hon. Minister of National Security boasted about.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, if I could remember clearly, appointed the present Minister of National Security to the Cadet Force Advisory Committee. If he comes back into this House, I am certain if you ask him whether or not that question of putting a cadet unit in every secondary school was not just started—that was there long time.

4.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant spearheaded many of those schools being opened. We also had things like the Pride in Gonzales Project, Public Education Programme and the Dial 555 initiative. Let us not forget about the MILAT and the MYPART Programmes, CCC, Crime Stoppers. What about safety on the roads? Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago: new equipment, two aerial surveillance helicopters; while we speak about those surveillance helicopters, you read in the *TnT Mirror* where these helicopters are now being used as—[*Interruption*]

Miss Cox: Taxi!

Dr. Rowley: For the cabal.

Mr. N. Hypolite:—used for all kinds of different things. You are hearing—[*Interruption*]

Miss Cox: Cabal taxi cab.

Dr. Browne: It is a cab.

Dr. Rowley: It is a cab for the cabal.

Mr. N. Hypolite:—of these helicopters having to go to Toco to pick up a jacket, and all those different things. [*Interruption and laughter*]

Dr. Rowley: “And look at the jacket nah.”

Mr. N. Hypolite: You are hearing of these things, Ministers leaving their jacket in Toco. [*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: And pants too.

Mr. N. Hypolite: And pants in Toco and the helicopter having to [Interruption and laughter]

Mr. Imbert: That is the “Ministry of the people”.

Dr. Rowley: What was going on in Toco?

Mr. N. Hypolite: Under the People’s National Movement those were equipment purchased to assist in keeping crime down in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, on more than one occasion, would have requested from the Commissioner of Police a crime plan, and here it is the Commissioner of Police is highlighting his crime plan and gives four points:

- (1) The reduction in crime and the fear of crime;
- (2) Improvements in customer service from the Police Service;
- (3) Improvements in the effectiveness of the policies and elimination of inefficiencies in the service; and
- (4) Road safety.

That is the “Gibbs crime plan”. That is not “Nileung Hypolite’s crime plan”, that is the “Gibbs crime plan”. [Interruption]

Dr. Moonilal: Dr. Gibbs?

Hon. Member: Huh! Master Gibbs.

Mr. N. Hypolite: And then Commissioner Gibbs—[Interruption]

Mr. Imbert: “Boy don’t discredit Dr. Gibbs.” [Inaudible]

Mr. N. Hypolite:—goes to the people of Trinidad and Tobago and says: “Our crime plan is working”. That is what he said. To date, this is about what?—the eighty-third day of the year and we have close to 90 murders already in this country, and the commissioner is saying our crime plan is working. [Interruption]

Dr. Browne: So it is, as he was just boasting.

Mr. N. Hypolite: While the commissioner is indicating that “our crime plan is working”, our Prime Minister is indicating to the people of Trinidad and Tobago that the findings of the first United Nations Development Programme Survey into Issues of Crime and Security in the Caribbean would be used to guide national security policy decisions. So again, I ask the question, what is the plan? [Interruption]

Miss McDonald: That is right.

Mr. N. Hypolite: You see, we keep jumping here and jumping there, what is the plan? The Commissioner of Police is saying one thing, the Prime Minister is saying something else, and the Minister of National Security is saying absolutely nothing at all. What is the plan? *[Interruption]*

Dr. Browne: Silence of the lamb.

Miss Cox: Silence of the lamb.

Mr. N. Hypolite: Mr. Speaker, the dismantling of all of those measures, structures and systems that we would have put in place would have cost this country, at least, approximately \$1 million to start with, that is because they would have forced the Director of the Special Anti-Crime Unit out of office. They forced him out of office and now it is at least \$1 million they have to pay to that person. Mr. Speaker, they even appointed this young lady—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Browne: Reshmi?

Mr. N. Hypolite: Reshmi is it?

Miss Cox: Shahmi?

Hon. Member: “Reshmi changed her name, boy”.

Mr. N. Hypolite: She changed her name? *[Interruption]*

Dr. Moonilal: Shahri Browne?

Dr. Browne: *[Inaudible]* let us not go there.

Mr. N. Hypolite: I heard she is living somewhere in south in two apartments.

Hon. Members: No! No! No!

Mr. N. Hypolite: I heard so. She moved?

Miss Cox: “She in south now.”

Dr. Moonilal: Diego Martin Central.

Mr. N. Hypolite: No! No! No! I heard she moved there again, so we have to look at that. *[Interruption]*

Miss Cox: “She leave Aranguez Villas boy.”

Dr. Moonilal: Regardless, she is living in Diego Martin Central.

Mr. N. Hypolite: Mr. Speaker, another major issue of which the Prime Minister and this Government never ever gave a proper answer to the people of Trinidad

and Tobago. Why was Reshmi appointed to that position? The thing about that is the Minister of National Security indicated that he felt as if he was set up, not me, I did not say so—it is the Minister of National Security. In an article on January 26, 2011, *Newsday*:

“Embarrassed by being kept in the dark over the appointment of Reshmi Usha Ramnarine to the post of director of the Strategic Security Agency (SSA), and also being forced to read a statement in Parliament on Friday that Ramnarine was the holder of a university degree...”—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: Lie!

Dr. Browne: Forced to read?

Mr. N. Hypolite:—“...an angry Minister of National Security Brig. John Sandy met on Monday afternoon with Attorney General Anand Ramlogan to vent his concerns over the appointment and the questions being asked over his integrity.”

Mr. Speaker, this is the Minister of National Security who has not indicated to this country, to date, the policies of the Government in keeping crime down in this country.

When the PNM had a Minister who was, on a regular basis, addressing this nation about the policies of the Ministry of National Security, people had the world of things to say, but this present Minister who is very silent on everything, very, very silent and absent, still has not come to this nation and indicated why the murder rate in this country is somewhere around 90 in 83 days, and they indicated that in their first 120 days being in government, they would have been able to deal with the crime situation in this country.

Not only did the PNM deal with the Ministry of National Security and the police service, and not only did we look at all of those organizations that dealt with our young people but we dealt with immigration. We dealt with the enhancement of the forensic capabilities. [*Interruption*]

Dr. Browne: They said they had all the answers, you know.

Mr. N. Hypolite: We also dealt with issues pertaining to the military and defence. We looked at defence management. We also looked at the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service and the ODPM. We had a comprehensive national security programme, unlike what we are getting now from this Government: a piece of thing here and a piece of thing there, and the Member for St. Joseph coming in this House to debate this Motion and actually giving a report on his trip to London. [*Interruption*]

Dr. Browne: Shame!

Mr. Imbert: Shame!

Mr. N. Hypolite: Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of Laventille West—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Volney: Great constituency.

Mr. N. Hypolite:—my constituents continue to feel very, very insecure—
[*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: Because of their representation.

Mr. N. Hypolite:—and that is so because this Government continues to take issues that are affecting Laventille and put them on the back burner. Mr. Speaker, Laventille needs lights on our recreation grounds. We need our community centres to be completed so that individuals can go there and have various training sessions and classes. They can go there and have different social programmes, and this Government is preventing that from happening. We need to get our roads fixed. You hear about \$119 million being spent in the constituency of Siparia, and yet every Monday morning you are hearing and you are seeing fiery protests taking place.

4.25 p.m.

They indicated that they would be forming the Ministry of the People. [*Interruption*] I support you. What position are you going up for, Chairman? [*Laughter*] They created the Ministry of the People so as to prevent more protesting. That is why they have the Ministry of the People. [*Crosstalk*] Every single Monday morning there is a protest taking place.

They said no more traffic, but there is traffic from Port of Spain to Arima; traffic left, right and centre. They said no more flooding, but we are in the dry season and the place is being flooded. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, they said they would take care of the crime situation in this country, and they have failed. [*Desk thumping*] This Government has failed the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and they continue to fail the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Continuous desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, it is time that the people of Trinidad and Tobago realize what this Government is all about: nepotism, themselves, fete, cronyism—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Cabal!

Miss Cox: “Cabalism!” [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Rowley: Friends and family!

Mr. N. Hypolite: I would say that they are not really and truly about the development of Trinidad and Tobago—[*Desk thumping*] and my colleague indicated the welfare of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Rowley: Cabal!

Hon. Member: “Is a hijack group.”

Mr. N. Hypolite: This Government has broken all contracts with the people of Trinidad and Tobago. They would have broken all the promises they had put forward to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, they are serving some of the people and not all of the people, and it is time for them to leave office. As my good friend from La Brea—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: La basse?

Mr. N. Hypolite:—tends to say, it is time for them to call an election. We all know that the election they called is the one that would be taking place tomorrow. With that election what you are actually seeing [*Crosstalk*] is the UNC eating up the COP like Pacman; eating up the Members of the COP like Pacman. [*Desk thumping and Laughter*]

I feel sorry for my colleague, the Member for St. Joseph. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Cannibalism!

Miss McDonald: “Look him there.”

Mr. N. Hypolite: Yes, I feel sorry for you. [*Crosstalk*] What position is he going up for, deputy political leader? I feel sorry for you. We support the Member for Barataria/San Juan. [*Desk thumping and laughter*] And more so, Mr. Speaker, I feel even more sorry for the Member for St. Augustine—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Members: Oooh!

Mr. N. Hypolite:—because the UNC continues to use the Pacman approach and eat up everything. As I end, let me say these three things: one, fact—under the PNM this country has become the indisputable leaders of the Caribbean Basin. Under the PNM, fact—all races have flourished and prospered; fact—the PNM has the best track record of any Government in the Caribbean Basin in housing, education, commerce and human development, just to name a few.

I thank you. [*Continuous desk thumping*]

Adjournment

Friday, March 23, 2012

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, I summon the strength, as I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at 1.30 p.m., and to serve notice on our friends opposite that it is the intention of the Government to debate Bill No. 4, the Legal Aid and Advice (Amdt.) Bill 2011, to be followed by Bill No. 2, the Regional Health Authorities (Amdt.) Bill, 2011.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 4.31 p.m.