

*Leave of Absence**Monday, May 20, 2013***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Monday, May 20, 2013*

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 hon. Dr. Fuad Khan, Member of Parliament for Barataria/San Juan. He is currently out of the country and has asked to be excused from sittings of the House during the period May 17—24, 2013. The hon. Colm Imbert, Member of Parliament for Diego Martin North/East is currently out of the country and has asked to be excused from sittings of the House during the period May 20—26, 2013. The leave which the Members seek is granted.

DOG CONTROL BILL, 2013

Bill to provide for the control of dogs and to regulate the manner in which certain breeds of dogs are kept by their owners or keepers; to repeal the Dangerous Dogs Act, 2000 and for related matters [*The Attorney General*]; read the first time.

**CARIFORUM (CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY AND DOMINICAN REPUBLIC)
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BILL, 2013**

Bill to give effect to the Economic Partnership Agreement between CARIFORUM States (Caribbean Community and the Dominican Republic) and the European Community; to effect consequential amendments to the Customs Act, Chap. 78:01 and for related matters [*The Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment*]; read the first time.

**PRIME MINISTER AND GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
(LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN)**

Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*): [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Whereas the sanctity of the Parliament and lawfully constituted institutions and other public bodies are fundamental to our democracy and must be protected at all times;

And whereas by a series of actions, the UNC-led Government of Trinidad and Tobago, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, has attacked and conspired to undermine key institutions of State, namely:

- The Judiciary;
- The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions;

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- The Parliamentary Opposition; and
- The Media;

And whereas other Members of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago, specifically, the Attorney General and the Minister of Local Government have also participated in such attacks against these important institutions of our democracy:

Be it resolved that this House confirms its loss of confidence in the Prime Minister and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, in this Motion, when I say "House", I use it in the broadest possible sense. In the resolution it says:

"Be it resolved that this House..."

And for clarity, Mr. Speaker, I am not talking about the 28 Members on the other side or the 12 on this side today. "House" here means the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker: Well "House" for us—[*Laughter*]

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker—[*Laughter*]**—**Mr. Speaker—[*Laughter*]**—**Mr. Speaker, I trust—

Miss Cox: What is the joke?

Mr. Speaker: A practice has developed in this honourable House to speak to the public of Trinidad and Tobago and to speak to audiences outside of this honourable House. When Members rise to speak in this honourable House, it is a conversation and discussion among the Members of this House and you direct your remarks to the Chair. It has nothing to do with the people in terms of our discussions. So I just want Members to know that you direct your remarks to the Chair and the discussions will be taking place among Members of this honourable House. Please be guided accordingly!

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that you interrupted me because I was expressing an opinion which I think I have a right to express. [*Desk thumping*] Had I not been interrupted, I was going on to point out that we are not here for our own benefit or of our own birthright. [*Desk thumping*] We are here as representatives of the people and that is how we manage; [*Desk thumping*] and it is on that basis that we are put together as a House as you have described. [*Desk thumping*] So I take no objection to your comment, Mr. Speaker, except that it was a bit previous as Jamaicans would say.

Mr. Speaker, however, the point I—in fact, since you have put me there, I think I should begin my presentation by quoting a couple of understandings on

my part, and I do not ask others to agree with me and I speak to you, Mr. Speaker, so that you will understand my understanding of my role in this House and my understanding of the role of this House in treating with the business of the people outside of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence at the beginning of this presentation to quote three statements from some very prominent people in the context of freedom of speech, which seems to be very apt at this point today. I want to quote from *May's* in the context of freedom of speech and it says from *May's*:

"Subject to the rules of order in debate—a Member may state whatever he thinks—in debate, however offensive it may be to the feelings or injurious to the character, of individuals, and he is protected by his privilege from any action for libel, as well as any other question or molestation."

It is the personal responsibility of every Member of Parliament to maintain those standards of conduct which the House and the electorate are entitled to expect; to protect the good name of the Parliament and to advance the public interest. I quote that, Mr. Speaker, to locate where we are at, particularly in the light of our beginning.

I also want to quote from Enoch Powell, a very prominent Northern Ireland parliamentarian in the UK where he said, in May 1978, he had this to say on the same subject:

"...it is part of the privilege of"—the—"House"—of Commons—"and...individual Members to—say in this place not only what they could not say outside without the risk of process but to be able to say that to which grave objection is taken by—other"—honourable—"Member. Unless an hon. Member could do that, or if it were possible for his doing of it to be"—somehow—"undone, we would have lost our power to serve those who"—have—"sent us here."

1.40 p.m.

And, thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from one of your colleagues, the Speaker of the House in Australia, Speaker Snedden, who I am sure you are familiar with, and he had this to say:

"...I feel that we do not need to invent any rules whereby a Speaker or anybody else should make the judgment as to whether a Member should be allowed to proceed with his privileged attack on an individual. It would not be within the capacity of a Speaker to make the right judgment because he would not have the facts. He would not know. Therefore the person raising the matter

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must bear the consequences himself. But I would not like to see that privilege limited or diminished in any way. All of us can think of not one, but many examples where, if it had not been for the freedom of speech and the attack on an individual in Parliament crime would have gone undetected and unpunished. Some people who were being seriously disadvantaged by rapacious people would not have been protected had it not been for the freedom and absolute privilege that this Chamber has to raise matters and to ventilate them so that inquisitorial efforts could be taken by other people, and so that the matter can be circulated with the qualified privilege of the media."—will act.

Mr. Speaker, Speaker Snedden went on to say:

"...In the final analysis, however, it is for the Member to resolve whether or not it is in the public interest to raise a matter in the House, and his or her own actions will be judged accordingly."

That is where I am located today.

Mr. Speaker, the Motion that I raise before this House is not brought here lightly, because I do not take serious business lightly. I have been in this House for 20-odd years and during that time I have had to treat with matters of all kinds and this Motion today is specific to the particular matters identified in this House: the Government's action to the Judiciary, the Office of the DPP, the parliamentary Opposition and the media.

Mr. Speaker, six months ago, or may I say a year ago, certain developments descended upon Trinidad and Tobago which have caused a certain amount of unease, loss of confidence, discomfort. I refer specifically to the Government attempting to pass legislation to reduce the backlog of cases in the court. That was over a year ago. I think it came to the House in November 2011.

As a House, Mr. Speaker, we passed legislation and we went home and we existed in relative comfort until—during the period December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July and August, there was no real problem in the country with respect to what the Parliament and the Government had done, but something happened in August 2012 when the Government secretly, surreptitiously and unannounced proclaimed a select portion of that legislation that we passed in this House, and since then Trinidad and Tobago has not been the same.

A series of questions have been put to the Government for which today, Mr. Speaker, answers are still not forthcoming. A series of positions have been taken by the Government, a lot of it quizzical, some of it inexplicable, some of it

radical, but none of it brought comfort to the population to allow the people of Trinidad and Tobago to come to the conclusion, once and for all, that something is not right about what happened on August 31, 2012.

The Government stood accused and still stands accused of having favoured its friends. The allegation against the Government in this particular matter is that the Government went out of its way knowingly to use its office to favour people who were friendly to the Government. The specific allegation was that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago destroyed the confidence of governance in Trinidad and Tobago, and while this was going on, the population reacted—the population reacted.

Thousands of persons took to the street in this country to express their concern and their disgust at what had happened and, more importantly, the Government's inability to explain what it had done and why it did it. The Government used its entire machinery and its overall control of the State and the private sector machinery to try to defend itself and to explain, but as I speak to you now, Mr. Speaker, nobody in the Government has been able to answer a simple question: why was section 34 extracted surreptitiously, piecemeal, and in the face of all the evidence that it should not have been done, including an assurance to the Parliament that we are in today, why was it done? The Government has never been able to answer that, and the Government's effort was to tell us, "Let us move on."

Mr. Speaker, this Motion today is to tell the people of Trinidad and Tobago that we cannot move on, and, based on what I am going to put on the table today, it would tell the people of Trinidad and Tobago that we should not move on until we get the answers to what we have been asking.

Mr. Speaker, in response to these developments, I led a group to the President of Trinidad and Tobago, a group representing the Opposition, other political interests, NGOs and a significant chunk of the labour movement, and in October last year we sought an audience and we told the President in the form of a formal complaint—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, 36(2), I was letting—I thought it was en passant, but this is before the courts; 36(2).

Mr. Speaker: I am listening to the hon. Member very closely. When I believe that he is going too far as it relates to the sub judice rule—I am very familiar with the case—I will advise accordingly.

As I am on my legs, may I advise, the name of the President of the Republic ought not to be introduced in debates in this House that could influence the outcome in one way or the other. So I want to caution Members, the name of the

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President of the Republic, consistent with the Standing Orders, ought not to be brought into debates in this honourable Chamber. I advise accordingly. Continue, hon. Member.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for not being the one to interrupt me, because I am sure you understood where I was and with relation to the Standing Orders. Mr. Speaker, I most certainly have no intention of violating the House's Standing Orders.

I was saying what I did—and I expect that that is what you understood—and a complaint from me leading a group, Mr. Speaker, to the President, was to lodge an accusation against the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that inferences drawn from developments of information which we had at the time, based on the situation, was that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was engaged in criminal conspiracy. That accusation lay at President's House.

1.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, sometime after that I received a package, and when I received the package it occurred to me that there were people in this country, somewhere in the country, who must have heard the Government saying how important it is in the interest of furthering transparency and accountability and ferreting out wrongdoing, that the Government promised that we will have legislation sometime in the future to protect whistle-blowers. And, Mr. Speaker, I took it to mean that the package that I received came from a whistle-blower, and the content of the package was a series of emails which someone, in a position to package, thought that this country should have access to, based on what was before us, what was being said to us and what it meant for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, when I saw the emails, my first reaction was to ensure that it was not frivolous and, therefore, I did not take it to my colleagues, I did not take it to the media, I did not publicize it; I wanted to be satisfied that what this whistle-blower had presented to the Office of the Opposition was information that should be taken seriously, and when I was satisfied that that was so, I took the information to the Office of the President.

Mr. Speaker, I waited for six months to see what would happen with the information that I consider to be extremely important, because it points—if it is accepted for what it is, the information in my position at that time which I still have—to grievous wrongdoing on the part of officers who had, in fact, failed to answer questions to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. So, Mr. Speaker, after six months and the offices of State, to the best of my knowledge, not treating with the

matter in the way I expected, I thought, and it is my position, that today the people of Trinidad and Tobago should be advised as to what the information is. [*Desk thumping*]

In keeping with the House's Standing Orders and being my view that this is a matter for the Parliament, because it is in the Parliament that provision is made under the Constitution for a Member like myself, having information which is of interest to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, particularly in the kind of condition that we have been in the last year, that I could not raise it in a normal business, I had to follow the Standing Orders and to be able, Mr. Speaker, with your leave, which you so kindly granted, brought it as a substantive Motion so that I could now put on the record for the benefit of you, Mr. Speaker, the information passed to the Opposition by a whistle-blower who wished to know—the people of Trinidad and Tobago to know what happened.

Mr. Speaker, I have extracted this package, this prepared package. This is the body of emails which I have put in sequential order. And the important thing is that they are not just emails, they are emails which, when corroborated, the known and the unknown, paints a very frightening picture, and in the limited time available to me, I want to point out and put on the Parliament record, for today and the future, what it is that caused me to be so concerned and why it is that the people of Trinidad and Tobago should pay attention and to look for the answers that they had not been given so far.

Mr. Speaker, the emails represent some addresses which are known to me, and, of course, in a couple of instances I do not know some of them and there seems to be some kind of problem here and there with one or two of the addresses, but, suffice it to say—I would make reference to 31 emails in my presentation, 31 of them—and the vast majority of them are emails from the following addresses, which again would be known to a wide cross-section of this country, and as I go I will indicate where the information is coming from and where it is going, so we press on.

1.55 p.m.

The body of the emails I will refer to today, in this instance, is a body of the emails covering 17 days in September 2012, that period when the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was called upon to answer for its conduct in treating with the matter that we talked about a little earlier on, which my colleague so previously jumped up to talk about sub judice.

There is an email from September 02, at ten o'clock in the night, and the subject is "Update". So obviously there was something happening and somebody was

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updating somebody else. It goes from anan@gmail.com to kmlapb1@gmail.com and the subject is "Update". It is a two-liner:

"My lady, please relax, everything is in place, nothing to worry about. We will soon chat."

Innocent.

Mr. Speaker, at two o'clock in the morning a reply comes; another email, this time from the kamlapb1 to anan@gmail, September 03, two o'clock in the morning:

"I am worried AG. I do not want this to blow up in our faces."

—It— "has to be done seamlessly."

Mr. Speaker, reply comes at 2.15 in the morning:

"How are things going with this, do you need to brief me on anything. Did you make contact yet?"

Will he be on board. I don't want surprises."

Next email—this is from again, anand [sic] to kmlapb1 [sic]:

"Nothing will be traced back to you. We are always united."

[Laughter]

Bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, this was at a time—[Laughter]—yeah, they could laugh. As they laugh, Mr. Speaker, just remember Gordon Liddy, his handful of small burglars, Richard Nixon and Watergate. Let them laugh. [Crosstalk]

There is an email from kamlab1 [sic] @gmail.com to anan@gmail.com. This is at 11.38 on September 06. The subject is "Monies owed" and the email reads as follows. Mr. Speaker, I take no ownership of this, "eh". I take no ownership of this. I put this Motion here today so that this, which was sent to me in my office, from a source which I believe wants the public to have it, I put it here for the benefit of you, Mr. Speaker, and the rest of the public. So the email says:

Are you sure everything is in place. Did you chat with the DPP and ask him about"—this—"? Try and find out.

The email goes on to say, "By the way":

"...she says you are asking for much money."

"I hope when the Prime Minister finish laughing and she enters the debate, she will tell us who is this person who says that the Attorney General is asking for much money." [Laughter]

The other email that follows the response to that, this came at 12.15. It says:

"I scoff that it's too much. We are the ones taking the risk. At the end of this, I want a helipad on my roof top."

[Laughter and crosstalk]

"There is no price for freedom, they know this. I do not know why you engage her.

I am yet to approach him, but will do soon."

When the Attorney General enters the debate, I hope he will tell us who is it whose freedom is being bought, where this email coming from anan@gmail.com at 12.15 on September 06, 2012, to kamla@gmail.com refers to "no price for freedom". Whose freedom was being discussed? Whose freedom was being bought?

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: This is scandalous! *[Crosstalk]*

Dr. K. Rowley: I go to—the response to that email from the receiver under the same subject of "Monies owed"—*[Crosstalk]*—Mr. Speaker, I consider this serious business. "If the Members doh want to hear, I want to speak in silence, please." I crave your protection.

Mr. Speaker: Members, I would want to advise that you allow the Leader of the Opposition to speak in silence. But as I am on my legs, let me just again put on the record, all letters being read in this House, all emails that are being read in this House, the person who is presenting, in this instance the Member for Diego Martin West, must take ownership and full responsibility for its content. *[Desk thumping]* You cannot speak through anybody else except yourself. So I just want it known, any Member who is reading letters and emails, they will take full responsibilities for and ownership for those emails. It is not coming from anybody else except the Member who is reading them. Continue, hon. Member.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I thought I made that quite clear when I quoted from eminent authority in the beginning of my presentation. *[Desk thumping]* If I may repeat that quotation, I did say earlier on it is the personal responsibility of every Member of the House to maintain their conduct. I did say that, and therefore I understand your admonition.

The email goes down to say:

"Tone down"—the—"requests and focus elsewhere for now."

And the response was:

"As you wish my lady."

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What bothers me about this sequence of developments up to this point was that it could mean anything, but then there is an email from anan@gmail on September 08 to Captain Gary Griffith, and the subject is "Help needed". Just remember what was happening in this country at September 08. The email goes on to tell Captain Griffith there is an article from the *Guardian* that:

"...a reporter from the *Guardian* called me...involving our boys. I need you to get your feelers out there and nip the story. Call the *Sunday Guardian* Editor and threaten her with ads if you have too [sic] just make sure the article does not come out."

That person—what is it that the Attorney General would be worried about, this article that should not come out? The email—Mr. Speaker, this is September 08, and the email makes reference to an article that was supposed to come out. Lo and behold, the next day, which is September 09, these articles came out in the *Guardian*. The article is:

Piarco Airport cases to be dropped.

And it goes on in a subheadline:

as Preliminary Enquiry scrapped.

[*Dr. Rowley displays document*]

So here it is we have an email coming from an address of anan@gmail.com to Captain Gary Griffith asking for help to block a story coming out from the *Guardian*, and the story in fact came out.

Interestingly enough, another email the same day at 14:06 [sic], says [*Interruption and crosstalk*]:

"Call a meeting, we need to talk urgently."

And, Mr. Speaker, you look at the corroboration, date, time and place, and the next thing I see in the newspaper on the following:

PM calls special meeting to discuss controversial section

And she chaired a special Cabinet meeting at St. Ann's to discuss section 34 problems which was raging at that time.

2.05 p.m.

So the email seems to have—is a harbinger of things come; and it came. "Call a special meeting." The meeting came on Monday 10. So an email of Saturday 08 is asking for a special meeting. A special meeting took place on Monday 10. I leave it to you to draw your own conclusion. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, another email, this is now Kamla asking—kamlabpl@gmail.com [sic] asking anan:

"What is going on? Did you see the article. I thought you had friends in the Guardian. How could this happen?"

Because, of course, the previous email, Mr. Speaker, was the Attorney General asking for help from Captain Griffith to stop the story. He was not successful. So somebody is asking him now; "How could this happen?" Interestingly, the reply comes:

"I saw the article. Not to worry, remember"—the—"Opposition supported this. That will be our defense."

That is the email at 2.51 p.m. from anan@gmail.com.

Mr. Speaker, you may recall the effort that the Government made, and is still making, to convince the country and the world that whatever happened with section 34, the Opposition is to be blamed as well, but there is an email here of September 09 where the germ of that idea came out. "Remember the Opposition supported this. That will be our defense."

Mr. Speaker, but the public was not sidetracked. The temperature began to rise and the Government had questions to answer and there were strong calls for the dismissal of the Attorney General and the Minister of Justice. So an email goes out at 10.27 p.m. on the ninth of the twelfth, and this goes again from the head of the Government, according to the email, to the Attorney General:

"Deal with this mess."

"Deal with this mess.

Did she speak with James? You said she [sic] could be trusted. Does she have a copy?"

A copy of what, Mr. Speaker? [*Crosstalk*] What is this copy that she may have, and "she" being the reporter who the AG was so concerned about, according to the emails? What is—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, please. While the Member is using emails, addresses and so on, please do not refer to Attorney General and Prime Minister.

Mr. Ramlogan SC: I have no such email address.

Dr. Moonilal: Refer to the email address that you have there on your paper. There is no issue of Prime Minister or Attorney General.

Mr. Ramlogan SC: No, exactly. I have no such email address. Ridiculous! [Crosstalk]

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, at 10.30 p.m. an email goes out from "anan", whoever he is—[Interruption]

Dr. Moonilal: That is right. Right. Good.

Dr. K. Rowley:—and it says—[Interruption]

Mr. Ramlogan SC: "Neemakharam". [Laughter]

Dr. K. Rowley: "James knows"—this is 10.30 p.m.—"he cannot say anything. I doubt she has a copy. She is bluffing. I will retain him to write a letter refuting what she said."

James there, Mr. Speaker, in my investigations, in the understanding of all of this, is James Lewis, who was the advisor, the QC advisor, whose advice at the time the Attorney General was telling the country he took that advice and decided not to appeal the matter.

But he went on to say in the email at 10.30:

"I sent out a release already. Remember everyone supported this. The PNM will loose [*sic*] out for allowing this to happen. Do not worry."

So this is in an email coming from an A-N-A-N-D, whoever that person is. But then interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, 23 minutes after this email is recorded to have been sent, a release is posted by the Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago on his website and the release is saying he is taking issue with the article. This is a release that went out 13 minutes—23 minutes after a notification in an email to whoever he is writing to—kmala@bp of whatever it is, saying "Doh worry, I have just sent out a release."

The release is here and it is interesting to look at the content of the release, and you corroborate the release with the email and it says—just to give you a little taste of what the email said:

Attorney General, Anand Ramlogan, yesterday condemned an article in the Sunday *Guardian* newspaper headlined, James Lewis QC upset at preliminary enquiry is scrapped.

Then he went on to put up a spirited rejection of the article which was uncomfortable to him and the rejection was:

This is false, mischievous, malicious and quite utterly absurd.

This is the release referred to in the email and it goes on, as per the previous emails, to point out:

It was passed unanimously in both Houses, and the Senate, where it was supported by both the Opposition and the Independents.

As, of course, that was the content of an earlier email that I read coming from the same source.

2.10 p.m.

So, Mr. Speaker, I view this as corroboration of an intent in the email and it arriving a few minutes later on the website. The emails go on. It says—now things did not boil down for the Government, trouble kept getting worse, so, by 1.00 a.m. on the 10th an email goes from anan@gmail.com, whoever that is, to garygriffith@hotmail.com, whoever that is [*Laughter*] and it says:

"We have a problem. Things are getting heated."—We—"Need access to taps in DPP office."

Hon. Member: "Oyoyoy"!

Dr. K. Rowley: "I want to know...his next move..."

Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat this, because I do not expect them on the other side to do other than what they are doing now. I simply want to repeat it.

"We have a problem. Things are getting heated. I need access to taps in"—the—"DPP office."

Hon. Member: "Haiaiy"!

Dr. K. Rowley: "I want to know what his next move is. How soon can you arrange?"

And, of course, the captain, whoever he is, Captain Gary Griffith, replies seven minutes later.

"I will call SSA and get B."

Just bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, the head of the SSA is Bisnath Maharaj. This email, coming from whoever "Gary Griffith, Captain", is, to whoever "anan" is, says:

"I will call SSA and get B. Ganpat is out of the country, he would be against this move. You know he leaks."

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Now, Mr. Speaker, checks have shown that officer Ganpat was, in fact, out of the country at that particular time, and the B, in our interpretation, is the head of the SSA. Now a response comes to him almost immediately by another email.

"I—which is the "anan", whoever that is—"I gave instructions to B to sent [sic] him Germany for two weeks. I want someone to monitor DPP for this week. He made some statements."

Cast your mind back, Mr. Speaker, to what was being said in and around the office of the DPP at this time.

Lo and behold, another email comes out, and this one comes again from whoever the captain is to whoever anan is, and he says to him, and bear in mind there was a request for access to taps in the DPP's office. This one says:

"Everything is already in place in the DPP office."

Miss Mc Donald: "Hmm".

Dr. K. Rowley: "Nothing"—is—"out of the ordinary yet."

In other words, "I have nothing to report yet but things are in place."

"Spoke with PM and she is furious..."

I do not know who he is referring to. I do not know who "PM" is, but she might be somebody we know. But the email says:

"Spoke with PM and she is furious about the article. What about the reporter, tag her as well?"

This is the Griffith who is referred to here, whoever that is, asking the anan if he should tag the reporter.

"...Guardian said she has a copy of the Lewis' advice and is just toying with you. She does have someone in the US Embassy and is asking questions. Last time we checked she contacted Counselor [sic] to the Attorney General Channing Phillips. Do you think someone there is feeding her?"

Next email from the "anan" and it goes like this:

"That"—effin—"whore don't have"—s—"on me. More than likely she called Thomas at the Embassy."

This is, whoever that person is, the "anan", panicking that a *Guardian* reporter might have a source at the Embassy and the Thomas referred to here is Thomas

Smitham who is the chargé d'affaires at the Embassy in the absence of a US Ambassador. He believes that she is talking to Thomas there, and he instructs the "Griffith", whoever that is:

"Do a trace on her, every reporter has skeletons in their closet and post it to our"—Facebook—people. Find out how the"—F—"she quoted from something she has no access too [sic]. I want this by this evening and I want to know who is her source"

Mr. Speaker, interestingly enough, this is the content of that email, and almost like clockwork this slanderous email that went viral on Denise Renne got into the Internet by the Facebook people, and let me repeat what the email said, you know. The email said:

"Do a trace on her, every reporter has skeletons in their closet and post it to our"—Facebook—"people."

Mr. Speaker, soon after, a most vicious and slanderous attack on Denise Renne circulated, and I leave it to you to come to the conclusion as to whether there was any connection between the intent and the instruction of this email and the arrival on the electronic media soon after. And when that instruction was given, the answer from the captaingarygriffith@hotmail.com, whoever that is, to anan@gmail.com and anand@tstt.net.tt was:

"Yes boss."

"That will take the heat off"—for—"a while when...things pop up."

Mr. Speaker, another email, this time from whoever is kamlabp1@gmail.com. This is now at nine minutes to midnight, because this is now September 10, "they cyar sleep. The country in uproar over the reaction to section 34 and all that went on there. When the rest of us are in our beds, seven minutes to midnight, whoever is kamlabp@gmail.com cyar sleep." An email goes out to whoever is anan@gmail.com, and that subject of that email is "Urgent". That is the subject, "Urgent", and it says:

"The US contacted me and are"—effin—"angry. I thought you had a hold on this. This will cause major backlash. They even threatened to black-list us. Come up with a plan AG."

"I assume whoever 'AG' is, is the person who the email going to, instruction to come up with a plan." The date of this email is Tuesday, 10 September, at seven minutes to midnight. "The next day, the 11th, all hell break loose for the Government, because the following things happened, and you could understand why it is urgent and why whoever it is "cyar" sleep, because the following day

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three things happened. The first was a release from the US Embassy taking serious issue with how the Government of Trinidad and Tobago had handled the extradition matter with Galbaransingh and Ferguson.

Also, there was an article coming out from the *Guardian*:

“QC on appeal over Ish and Steve extradition. AG ignored legal advice” by Denise Renne

The same person who was the subject of this huge slander by the bloggers of their people. And, of course, more importantly, coming out on that same day was a statement, a multi-page statement, from the Director of Public Prosecutions, saying:

It took me by surprise.

Mr. Speaker, so here is the email pointing to the state of mind, the state of play and the reaction to trouble that was coming in the morning, and in the morning all this trouble came for the Government, who was working overtime trying to steer the public away from being concerned that something terrible had happened in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago with respect to efforts being made, those efforts resulting in persons who had to face serious criminal charges at home and abroad. Actions of the Government, wittingly or unwittingly, had resulted in those persons' conditions being improved. And at this time I remind you, Mr. Speaker, the country was demanding answers because a lot of what the Government was saying to us then just did not make any sense.

2.20 p.m.

The main question was, why did you extract section 34 and proclaim it overnight like that, on its own, knowing that you had given the Parliament an assurance not to do that, knowing that things were not in place? Subsequently we saw for a fact that things were not in place because the Government itself deproclaimed [*sic*] the law to give itself more time for things to be put in place. Up to now, we have no answer from the Government as to what drove the process.

What we had was the Government offering us the head of the Minister of Justice as a palliative, as a placater, saying, "We hold him accountable", and he was there kicking and screaming and saying, "Not me." His very first statement was, "The Attorney General is the man you should look at." I tell you all this, Mr. Speaker, so you can understand and place in context what these email conversations were saying and the corroboration from the actions that flowed from them.

Mr. Speaker, they were still worried because the problem was not going away. So the subject "Urgent" was there, and, of course whoever kamlabp1@gmail.com

received from anan@gmail.com and anand@tstt.com, this time at 9.21 on the night of September 11. This is the night of the day when all those things became public, the DPP's statement, the US Embassy's position and the story in the *Guardian*, and the email goes, and listen to it. It says:

"Right now our best bet..."

Now, they are looking for a way out. The Government has failed to convince the public, and has failed to put out the raging storm. So the advisor advises, whoever it is:

"Right now our best bet will be giving Gaspard a position on the bench..."

Let me repeat that, Mr. Speaker:

"Right now our best bet will be giving Gaspard a position on the bench and bring in a replacement."

Now, they could laugh, but we in this House may not be in a position to know whether any action or any suggestion or any recommendation of that nature was taken, but it might very well be that there are other people who are not in this House, who, when they hear this, will be able to say "Ah-ha, somebody did approach me on that." We do not know. But then, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say:

"We could also feed our media people that Gaspard was part of the consultation at the Hall of Justice this year and he did not have a problem at the meeting. Let's try the judge position first."

So clearly, Mr. Speaker, what the email is pointing to, is an intention to place the DPP in the situation where he would be deemed to be complicit in an action which the Government could not explain. So it says:

"We could..."

This is all a suggestion, you know:

"We could also feed our media people..."

Because they have media people apparently, whoever it is writing there:

"...That Gaspard was part of the consultation..."—and he had no problem with it.

Cast your mind back, Mr. Speaker, to the number of times Government's spokespersons seek to blame the Director of Public Prosecutions for an action that was entirely the action of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago. Cast your mind back. [*Desk thumping*] It has been a mantra, it has been a mantra, coming out of the Government that the Director of Public Prosecutions—as a matter of fact, the

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same way it has been a mantra that the Opposition must take blame for it. Now these emails are pointing to an interpretation that we never had before, that they would not accept—even now they would not accept it.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, the "kamlabp", whatever it is, @gmail.com who received that advice from the "anand" had this to say:

"Have a chat with Archie, let them offer him the position. Archie is normally co-operative."

So they are not content, Mr. Speaker, whoever that writer is, blaming the Opposition, blaming the DPP, all of that was not working, but clearly they had a problem apparently with the DPP, and that problem could only be solved by him being removed and somebody else—as they say, "bring in a replacement". I was not aware that somebody could bring in a replacement without interfering in the judicial process. That is there for record.

2.25 p.m.

Then, Mr. Speaker, "the thing not going away at all". The next email says:

"Have you dealt with the mess yet? We are getting bad press. Deal with this AG."

This is September 11. Cast your mind, Mr. Speaker, cast your mind back to what was happening in the country at the time, and, of course, by the next morning another email. "They have jiggeree, cyah sleep. Whoever writing these emails, whoever they are, whoever "a-n-a-n-d" is, whoever Captain Griffith is."

"How things looking? The media—having a field day. PM"—whoever that is, probably project manager—"is angry. The US also on the case."

Next email, and this email, also under the heading "Urgent" to captaingarygriffith@hotmail.com from whoever anan@gmail.com is, it says:

"Something is not right with that bitch...she knows too much. Did you find out her source? I was the only one who had this and she does not know Lewis. She does not know any QC. that I found out from her court colleague. She quoted things and asking questions to lawyers that no one knows...did you find out anything"—over—...how are things at the DPP"

Now, in these emails there is a fixation with wanting to know what the DPP is up to, what is happening over there. And now, Mr. Speaker, the other one:

"Will check with DPP...and give you a report later. The reporter does have a history. She has a file...it's really touch and go."

"In other words, file ain really good. She file ain really good to touch and go."
 "She was in Florida at an institution in...2003, attempted suicide. Her family are PNM, dad was in jail and recently released. Also added some stuff and sent it to"—Facebook—"They will take it from there"

So in other words, the touch-and-go file was not enough. All that he was digging up was not enough, that—whatever that Captain Griffith is, was not enough. "He say, 'I will add some stuff.'" And of course, Mr. Speaker, since then we have heard the particular reporter making reference to things ascribed to her which were not true, but now we see in an email that somebody is going to set out to defame and slander her and also added some stuff; and, of course, we have the corroboration of the email attacking the reporter in the context of the timing of this email.

Mr. Speaker, the thing still would not go away. We are now dated September 19, and an email goes to a new party and this party, the email goes from the said anan@gmail.com Wednesday 19, 2012 and it goes to, I do not know who this is, it goes to surujrambachan@hotmail.com—whatever that is. The title of that email is "Deal with"—the—"Problem".

So we know that the Government has a massive problem which is not going away.

Hon. Member: Like you.

Dr. K. Rowley: We have seen so far—

Mrs. Mc Intosh: "Dats right."

Dr. K. Rowley:—desperate, frantic efforts to deal with it.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: "We eh goin nowhere."

Dr. K. Rowley: It is not going away. So this email goes to s-u-r-u-j and so on @hotmail.com and the email is as follows:

"This bitch is becoming a problem to me. I'm told she has copies of documents and possibly cheques. I don't want to leave anything to chance. I want that dealt with, find a way. I passed info to FB"—that is Facebook—"and they would"—F—"her up...thats not enough—do something"—else—"to slow her. PM is angry. I assured her"—that—"things will be good. I feel like i failed—just deal with that bitch soon. If she has what I think, then we will all be implicated."

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, who is this anan@gmail.com, who is so panicked by a reporter who might have cheques and who might be in a position to implicate all of them?

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These are the questions I want you to ask yourself, Mr. Speaker, as Government mutterings seek to dismiss this. I ask you to look at the corroboration; ask you to cast your mind back to the state of the situation in the country and the content to what these emails are pointing to.

Mr. Speaker, next email. Same subject—*[Interruption and crosstalk]*—Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak undisturbed.

Mr. Speaker: Yes! Members, could you allow the Member to speak in silence. Continue, hon. Member.

Dr. K. Rowley: Next one, under the heading, "Deal with the problem", and this one is going to some anand *[sic]* @gmail.com and anand@tstt.net. It is a reply from the suruj@hotmail.com and so on, and his reply is this. Remember the previous email was a panic station about the described reporter in the way she was described, who may have copies and who is in a position to implicate everybody, and that there was anger at PM—at project manager—and he had given certain assurance that things will be well and then s-u-r-u-j replies asking, because he had asked that something be done. This has to be stopped and he asked:

"What do you have in mind?"

Hon. Member: Hmm!

Hon. Member: Huh!

Dr. K. Rowley: That is, what do you have in mind to deal with the reporter?

"Does she drive, walk, do you know her movements. We should meet and discuss."

[Laughter]

Mr. Speaker, they could laugh. *[Crosstalk]* They could laugh as much as they like. What this email points to is a writer who is interested in the personal movements and whereabouts of a reporter who may have information, who may be detrimental to somebody in the Government as far as I interpret it. *[Crosstalk]* If anybody in this country knows how countries have lost their way and they see an email of this nature and they know the fear that exists among some reporters in treating with issues in this country, they will know that this is a harbinger of terrible things. Mr. Speaker, one does not find this in functioning democracies. This is when the Mafiosi meet to discuss people who are in their way and they ask, "What do you have in mind? Does she drive? Does she walk? Do you know her movements?"

We were disturbed as a country a while ago, Mr. Speaker, when a Government Minister went on television—I think it was a press conference he had

called—and pointed out to a reporter: "I know where you live and who you live with and who paying your rent." Remember that, Mr. Speaker? I want you to take this email in that same context, whoever the writer might be. And then, under the same heading, "Deal with the problem", anand@gmail.com replies to suruj@hotmail.com and that this is now 10.00 p.m. on the night of Wednesday, September 19, and it says:

"I don't care what you do."

Hon. Member: Wow!

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat that. Panic stations, a lot at stake, "We can all be implicated", so says the email, "the reporter may have cheques, I want her out of the way", and the writer who wrote that says:

"I don't care what you do, just deal with the problem soon. Gary has the file on her. Whatever is done, let it be done through a third party."

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, did you hear me?

"Whatever is done, let it be done through a third party. This is getting out of hand.... PM"—whatever that is, whoever that is—"is frantic and is begging me for a distraction. I don't think anything on Hart will provide that."

"Hart" there I presume is Calder Hart.

"I don't think anything on Hart will provide"—this distraction that PM—project manager or people mover—is asking for—"I gave her...assurance that things will be ok. I also advised her to get rid of Volney,"—Volney has not gone yet, eh—"but, she is weighing her options."

This is September 19 and within a matter of which day after, the following day, Volney was no longer the Minister and the Prime Minister since has been trying to convince us that Volney's head on a platter should put section 34 to bed. According to these emails and the writer of this email, we now know where the original advice came from.

"I also advised her to get rid of Volney. But"—of course—"she is weighing her options."

And, of course, the options were executed and we know what happened after.

Mr. Speaker, under "Deal with"—the—"problem", the situation continues to worsen, and if I may take you back to what was happening in the country then, there was tremendous disturbance in the country in response to what was exercising the Government at the time. On September 29, the Joint Trade Union

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Movement (JTUM) was calling for the removal of Attorney General, Anand Ramlogan, and Justice Minister, Herbert Volney—the trade union movement in response to the Government's problems which the Government could not and has not yet properly explained, the Joint Trade Union Movement was calling for the dismissal of two Ministers, one of whom was dismissed the day after this email is registered and, of course, the email to the concerned person were who—anan@gmail.com coming from suruj@hotmail.com says, in the face of tens of thousands of people in the street, an Opposition threatening not to cooperate with the Government, civil society demanding accountability from the Government, the Law Association making statements that are uncomplimentary of what the Government had done, a series of independent civil bodies and business organization testing the Government of this matter, the email from "s-r-u-j" and whatever else in the address, it goes on to say:

"She will face opposition if she even contemplates getting rid of you. But don't worry, we will chat tomorrow and finalize plans for that girl."

Mr. Speaker, that is the body of information that I received and it is corroborated in part, as I have pointed out, and the corroboration should be worrying and troublesome to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Member—

Mr. Speaker: Yes, but both of you all cannot speak at the same time.

Dr. Moonilal: May I just enquire of the hon. Member, having read those purported emails, whether you are now prepared to circulate those emails to Members of the House?

2.40 p.m.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: I want to see it! [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem in circulating it to Members, because, as I said, when I received them and I was able to interpret them and corroborate them with the developments in the country, the actions of the Government and otherwise, I saw it fit to treat it seriously, and that is why I have brought this Motion to this House, because, after six months of this matter being known to me, I thought, Mr. Speaker, it was time that this matter be brought to the attention of the people's House. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I do not expect the Government to embrace this—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Fabricate it.

Dr. K. Rowley: I expect that—I am hearing from down there, I fabricated it—

Hon. Member: Not you, Sir.

Dr. K. Rowley:—or somebody fabricated it. Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind you that President Nixon, who was holding down the highest office in the world as a President, took the same position, said the same things, used the State machinery, fought the court [*Desk thumping*] in trying to convince the American population that the matter of a burglary at Watergate, [*Crosstalk*] which pointed to wrongdoing at the office of the President, [*Continuous interruption*] they did everything possible—[*Interruption*]

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

Dr. Moonilal: I have to respond.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I sustain that particular point and I ask Members to observe Standing Order 40(b) and (c) respectively. Continue, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all those who would pay attention, go back and look at the Watergate situation, look at how the President reacted, look at how his advisors reacted, look at how the machinery of State—at one point, Mr. Speaker, the machinery of President Nixon sought to use the CIA against the FBI in an attempt to prove that the White House was not involved in the Watergate matter.

Fortunately for the American people, they have institutions that were able to persevere, to investigate, to pursue and to hold people accountable. For us here in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Speaker, our record is a sorry record. Even where we have institutions, they are either compromised or ineffective, so we are in no position to pursue with dispatch in the way the Americans pursued it with Watergate.

This sitting today in this House, Mr. Speaker, this Parliament, is what is available to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and maybe one or two agencies outside, one of which is the Integrity Commission, and I dare say, Mr. Speaker, as I checked recently, there is no Integrity Commission in place—

Hon. Member: Hmm!

Dr. K. Rowley:—and has been so for quite some time with the changeover from one to the other of the Presidents. This matter, because of the nature of it, because of the nature, is one that requires urgent attention on the part of the State of Trinidad and Tobago, [*Desk thumping*] because the one thing we cannot do and

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move on is to take the word of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago on this matter. [*Desk thumping*] Because if there is one area the Government has distinguished itself—if there is one area this Government has distinguished itself since it has come into office, is its inability to speak the truth to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

But, this matter, Mr. Speaker, with all that it portends [*Crosstalk*] requires urgent attention, because it may very well be that the mandate that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago received on May 24, with a proper examination and corroboration of these emails, would show that the Government sold its mandate for financial gain and is in the employ of persons who use the Government mandate to protect themselves from the court, both at home and aboard. It points—Mr. Speaker, this package of emails points to high crime in the office of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Crosstalk*] We could dismiss it if we wish, join them in and giggle and dismiss it. [*Interruption*]

2.45 p.m.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker—thank you very much for giving way. It is the intention of the Government to respond on this matter as soon as you are finished. Can you please allow us to look at these emails? [*Crosstalk*] We intend to respond to you immediately after.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: We intend to respond after you have finished.

Dr. K. Rowley: Why? Mr. Speaker, we will not be—[*Continuous interruption and crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: All right, Members, please!

Dr. K. Rowley: We will not be—[*Interruption and crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader, hon. Leader—just—I know that the Leader of the Opposition is coming to a close, to the end of his contribution. Allow him to make his contribution in silence. Continue, hon. Member.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I do not have a problem with passing the emails, but I just do not want to pass it and not be able to finish properly. How much time do I have left?

Mr. Speaker: You have exactly two minutes and seven seconds.

Dr. K. Rowley: What it is he said I have?

Miss Cox: Seven seconds.

Mr. Speaker: No, no, no, no, no, no; plus, please.

Dr. K. Rowley: Yes, Mr. Speaker. So, we could do one of two things. We will not be the only country that would have been threatened in this way and take it as a joke or allow the wrongdoers to prevail by telling the rest of the country, "You have nothing to worry about", because that is what the Government has been saying to us.

I simply want to draw your attention to when the Resmi Ramnarine matter was raised and it came to the attention of the Opposition that this Prime Minister, known to us, had appointed a telephone operator as head of the security services of this country. The country could not believe it, and when I raised the matter in objection, the Prime Minister's reaction was to defend the indefensible, to defend her appointment. She went as far as to accuse me of being racist, not wanting to support her because of her race, of her gender and, of course, of her age.

It took a week of outrage in this country to cause the Prime Minister, whose initial reaction was to defend it—we had Government Ministers coming to the House and defending and establishing qualifications which she did not have, getting themselves humiliated and having to come back to the House after and apologize. I put all this on the record for the people of Trinidad and Tobago to understand, do not take this Government at face value. Do not believe anything they tell you. [*Desk thumping*]

So, Mr. Speaker, the contents of those emails point to interest by the Proceeds of Crime Act. It points to possible violation of the FIU statute. It points to public officers who may be guilty or having questions to answer for misbehaviour in public office and that will bring the Integrity Commission into place.

So today I end on this note. I end that having brought it here, after looking at it and waiting for six months to see what is going happen to it, I call today on the DPP to look at what was said here in this House today and protect the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] And I also call on the Integrity Commission to discharge its responsibility and oversee the conduct of public officers in Trinidad and Tobago. And insofar as there is no Integrity Commission in place, I call on the President to immediately ensure that there is an Integrity Commission in place so that these matters can be properly investigated in short order. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

[*Indication for need of seconder*]

Mr. Speaker: You need a seconder.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion and I reserve the right to speak.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Motion being seconded, I shall propose the question for debate.

Question proposed.

The Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. Anand Ramlogan SC): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute in this Motion. Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting and curious Motion but one which has serious undertones and overtones. It alleges that the Government is involved in a conspiracy to undermine the Offices of the DPP, the Judiciary, the Parliament and, indeed, the Opposition and the media and it alleges that the Government has in fact attacked these institutions.

I came here prepared to respond to something that would lay a foundation for a Motion of this kind because this is a very serious procedure. It is the ultimate sanction that the Parliament gives a Motion of no confidence and it must therefore be rooted properly. It must be rooted in clear, compelling and cogent factual information by way of evidence to substantiate the allegations that are made, that formed the factual matrix of the Motion. [*Desk thumping*] But when I listened to my learned friend from Diego Martin West, I wondered if he just came out of Movie Towne and saw Star Trek in the darkness because he was going beyond the frontier. I mean, this is patently absurd! It is ridiculous in the extreme!

But for starters, my name—I have just had sight of the so-called emails—perhaps, the Member for Diego Martin West is not familiar with the spelling, but it is not A-N-A-N, it is A-N-A-N-D. [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: The fabrication was wrong.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: So that any email that comes from "a-n-a-n", it could be some other Anan, but not Anand Ramlogan. [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: "They set him up. They set him up."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: The second point, Mr. Speaker, is that—let us take this—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: "They set him up. They fool him."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC:—conspiracy theory at its highest and let us assume for a minute that the two most senior officials in the Executive Arm of the Government, namely the hon. Prime Minister and the Attorney General, wanted to

conspire in some way to undermine the Judiciary and the DPP's office. Two lawyers, Prime Minister and Attorney General, you really think—[*Laughter*]—you really think that the—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: It is outrageous.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC:—Prime Minister who lives five minutes away from the hon. Attorney General, that instead of actually speaking face-to-face, "that we will sit down and type email whole night"? I mean, Mr. Speaker, how ridiculous are we going to get?

Dr. Gopeesingh: It is hilarious and laughable.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: "Yuh know, tuh think that we will sit down to plot this massive conspiracy, these 'conspirational' overtones that we will plot it and carry it out from two gmail account in odd hours of the night, threatening to call people all sorts of names and so on—ah mean, this is scandalous!" It is an abuse of Parliament. It is a waste of Parliament time and it is a malicious attack on people's character.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Scandalous!

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: It would have been hilarious, were it not for the fact that it is the hon. Leader of the Opposition who condescends to make these baseless allegations.

Miss Hospedales: They are not baseless.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: You are grasping at straws.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Like he was in Washington.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: But this is not the first time that I have been accused by the hon. Member for Diego Martin West of something that he has had to apologize for and something that has turned out to be completely inaccurate, totally wrong and a figment of his imagination.

Miss Hospedales: Figment?

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: The very first thing—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Lie.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC:—he did when I entered the Lower House was to say that he had paid a visit to the New York mission and when he was at the New York mission, he said that the staff members came to him to complain that I, the Attorney General, made racist statements to them as the staff members of

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the mission and he said he had two witnesses and they were sitting next to them, the two Members of Parliament seated next to him. "Yuh know", I pointed out quickly, via a text message, to one of my colleagues that I have never been to New York since my appointment as Attorney General and it could not, therefore, be me.

2.55p.m.

I offered to produce my passport; I offered to speak to anyone, he insisted, maintained and repeated it, ad nauseam, ad infinitum, that it was the Attorney General who made those statements. He said he had received an email concerning that matter, it seems as though he has a habit of receiving the wrong email, from the wrong people, to say the wrong thing at the wrong time. [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: "He making ah habit out of it."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: "He is de email man." You see, he maintain that position, he repeated the lie, not once, not twice—

Hon. Members: Not true. Not true.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: Yes, that is untrue. Mr. Speaker, it was only a year and a half after, when he thought perhaps the damage and the character assassination would have done untold damage, then he came to the Parliament and he said, well, well, well, am, it has now turned out that I must apologize to the Attorney General, he really was never in New York and it was never him. A year and a half later. It took him a year and a half to realize that the email he received was a complete and utter fabrication, and it had no merit, no truth whatsoever; it took him a year and a half. I do not know how long it will take to realize that these emails are a joke and a complete fabrication and really designed to achieve a political objective on his part.

You see, Mr. Speaker, there is wisdom sometimes in silence and inaction. There is wisdom in silence and inaction. And when the hon. Member for Diego Martin West took this bundle of email correspondence to the Head of State, the President of the country and he said he treated it so serious, he took it to the President. "When he realize dat one week pass, and this big bombshell he dropp on de President", the President eh call him up. When he realize one week pass and he eh hear from de President, he probably should have thought well, listen like something wrong. "When two weeks pass and he eh even geh ah text message from de President saying come to see meh, something should have occurred to him ah well, ah should look at dis thing again. When one month pass and yuh eh hearing from de Office of the President on this matter, you should do ah double take." But when two, three, four, five and six months pass and the Head of State of the country has ignored you, then is

ah message in that for you, and that is what you have submitted is baseless, it is malicious, without any foundation and regard to the truth and, therefore, the Head of State completely and totally disregarded it. Because any five-year old student, any SEA student who "pass de SEA exam, and was given ah free laptop courtesy the Prime Minister and the People's Partnership could tell you, it takes three seconds to set up ah gmail account—three seconds. If yuh eh know how to spell de person name correct, den yuh go make ah mistake, yuh go trip up and yuh go geh ketch."

Dr. Gopeesingh: "It woss. It woss."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: "It woss." [*Laughter*] "Buh today I want to tell the Member for Diego Martin West, if yuh name man, repeat dis outside de Parliament and I will see you in court." [*Desk thumping*] This is an utter character assassination. Repeat it outside the Parliament and you will pay the consequences. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Bankrupt him further!

Dr. Moonilal: "He owing yuh money."

Dr. Gopeesingh: "He owe yuh money, bankrupt him."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: You see, this is an abuse of parliamentary privilege to come here and slander the good name of the hon. Prime Minister, someone who is not in the House, Capt. Gary Griffith, and the hon. Attorney General, to come here to spin this web of some kind of grand conspiracy that is completely without facts.

Let us, you know, think about it for a minute, yeah? Let us think about it. This is the same Member that has consistently been attacking me since I have entered the Government. Not content with the New York falsehood, he then said that I had abused my powers by seeking private banking details of citizens through the Financial Intelligence Unit. It was the FIU that came out and said, that is completely untrue, I have nothing to do with them. Absolutely nothing.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 36(2) matter sub judice.

Mr. Speaker: Yeah, well, section 34 is sub judice as well. [*Laughter*] I will exercise my discretion. Continue. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: I am grateful, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, it is before the court.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: "Sounds to me like ah case of do so eh like so."

Dr. Gopeesingh: "Deh eh want to hear de truth. Dey doh want to hear de truth."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: And then furthermore made the scurrilous allegation that 51 per cent of all state briefs have been going to my former law firm.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I have a lawsuit in the court to defend myself, this matter is sub judice—

Dr. Gopeesingh: "De judge rule already."

Dr. K. Rowley:—I draw it to your attention. There is a lawsuit in my name in the court on that matter. I draw it to your attention.

Dr. Gopeesingh: "De judge rule ah ready, he say yuh must pay."

Mr. Speaker: I will exercise a discretion on this matter. Overruled, continue please. [*Desk thumping, crosstalk and laughter*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: I am grateful, Mr. Speaker, I am grateful.

Dr. Gopeesingh: "You want to raise everything and he cyar talk, wha'm to yuh?" [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: You see, so is racist statements to the New York Mission—

Hon. Member: Racist?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: Yes, that is what he said, racist statements. "You yourself forget, buh you was ah witness." You were supposed to be there. He said you were there.

Mr. Roberts: "Buh she is ah witness." [*Laughter*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: The witness cannot even recall it now. [*Laughter and crosstalk*] "Then it was, you know, there is this attempt to cast you in this Machiavellian, dark sinister role, so they come up with New York racist statements, FIU getting people private banking details, then 51 per cent of state briefs going to your former law firm. Not a single state brief has gone to my former law firm. Not one. Not one. [*Desk thumping*]

Then in the height of the OPV matter when the settlement, negotiations had reached the most sensitive stage, the Member for Diego Martin West went in "ah" rally and proclaimed that the Government had lost the OPV arbitration, and predicted and he said that not only did we lose the OPV arbitration, but that the

Prime Minister and the Attorney General were conspiring—probably by email again "nah"—[*Laughter*] probably conspiring by email again, conspiring to hide that fact from the people of this country, that we had to pay out hundreds of millions of dollars to British Aerospace Engineering in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Somebody set him up by email again.

Hon. Member: Same person. Same person.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: And then he went further—you know, what is incredible about the Leader of the Opposition is, he just does not know when to stop. He does not know when to stop! If you make that allegation that we lost the arbitration, and we would be liable to—and we have to pay hundreds of millions of dollars, that is okay. But you go one step further, he then made the allegation that so deep was the conspiracy between the Prime Minister and the Attorney General to hide this fact, that we had entered a line item in the budget for the Ministry of National Security, and we had hid the settlement money under purchase of equipment. [*Laughter*] "He reach de budget in the Ministry ah National Security to say we hide de hundreds ah millions we have to pay British Aerospace." [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: May I advise Members, do not refer to Members in the third person. It is the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, the hon. Member for Siparia, third person, I want to discourage that. So try when Members are speaking to refer to Members by their electoral area or constituency and not in the third person. Continue, hon. Attorney General.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: I am grateful, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Diego Martin West accused the Government, the Prime Minister and the Attorney General as part of this political conspiracy to hide the defeat in the arbitration, by having a line item in the budget for the Ministry of National Security and concealing the moneys that has to be paid in that line item under purchase of equipment. He said that nationally. I waited because every single day was a different statement from the hon. Member for Diego Martin West. I waited because I knew that we were at a very sensitive stage in the negotiations.

3.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to cite from some of the articles. The one to which I referred was in *Hansard* on Friday, October 22, 2010, and on that day the Member for Diego Martin West, he said, he labelled me as incompetent and irresponsible for acting on sound legal and technical advice—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The hon. Member.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: And the hon. Member said:

"Given what I have put here and what other documents made available, the Prime Minister is irresponsible...She is incompetent and she is under the direct control of persons with whom she is too familiar...

Public decision-making is"—not—"based...on clear judgement but on sound bytes and on other considerations such as political expediency and possibly worse."

He then went further—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The Member.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: I am sorry; beg your pardon—the Member then went further to criticize me at the PNM's 44th Annual Convention on Sunday, October 28, 2012, when he said, and I quote:

The Government hid funding in the national security's budget allocation to fund payments for the OPV settlement.

The Member for Diego Martin West said that he had asked the Minister during the budget debate what a certain million-dollar funding was for and he told him it was for equipment. He said the Government should now be served with a pre-action protocol letter from his lawyers over the OPV issue. "What good for the goose", he boasted, "is good for the gander. They did not listen to me." That is the grand charge. That is the grand charge.

He then, again—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The Member.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: The Member, on Friday, October 22, 2010, then said in this honourable House, he said we are bound to lose the arbitration. That is the gist of what he was saying and he cited that the Sultan of Brunei had lost one and I quote:

"...I will tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not the only ones who cancelled contracts at BAE, 'eh'. The Sultan of Brunei attempted to do the same thing on a €700"—million—"contract, and if we think BAE will give us a pass or give us a 'bligh', especially, since the Prime Minister has made the case for the BAE lawyers, I expect that if the Government continues along this path, cancels this contract, that we will, in fact, be heading for the courts and we would not have many legs to stand on because we are talking about delays."

The Leader of the Opposition was predicting that the Government would have no legal leg to stand on and that we "bound to loss" the arbitration.

The Member for Diego Martin West went on to vilify the Prime Minister and Member for Siparia. He concluded that the Government would not succeed in getting a red cent from BAE and he went further to say that even if it were possible, a refund of moneys will not be possible because the money was in a trust fund and there is, therefore, no money to be had.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin North/East made the bold public prediction that on June 15—he said the Government had lost the OPV arbitration and the country may be liable to pay out moneys to BAE Systems to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars; and they went on like that.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I bit my tongue; had precious little to say; but the facts revealed that soon after they were given enough long rope to hang themselves, the truth emerged that the BAE instead had to settle and pay the Government of Trinidad and Tobago \$1.4 billion. [*Desk thumping*]

Far from losing and having to pay hundreds of millions of dollars to BAE, it was the other way around; but it shows how they get their facts muddled. It shows how the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, what he says cannot be trusted because he has had a habit of saying the wrong things, getting it wrong and failing to get it right. That has been a regular pattern, a regular characteristic and feature of what he says.

You see, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of sensationalism. I heard a couple oohs and aahs from the media gallery because they probably felt terrified; but, Mr. Speaker, let us take this case and return to it at its highest. The allegation is that I was plotting with the most sinister, deadly and ulterior of motives, at any cost; even prepared to inflict physical harm and injury—this coming from, you know, people who pelt teacup and so on—that I was prepared to inflict injury. So the allegation is that this conspiracy between senior Members of the Government that they not only had access to people [*sic*] email, which is not true, but that, in addition to having access to people [*sic*] email, they wanted to have them monitored and the reason they wanted to have them monitored is because they want to bump them off.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us take it at its highest. Let us assume that I really had a criminal mind and there was this criminal plot in the Government. I asked the Member for Diego Martin West, "Tell us which journalist was bumped off. Tell us which journalist suffered at the hands of this Government as part of that conspiracy." You really think that if that level of Government, if that conspiracy with such criminal intent existed, that that would be the case? You really think

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that, according to him, if I could call the editor in the Sunday—ask Gary Griffith to call the editor of the *Sunday Guardian* to block a story. Well, the hard thing is the story came out, so clearly the tenor and the force of the—the pith and substance of the email and the tenor of it, clearly it did not work because the story came out. And in all of this, what he did not realize is; what he does not realize; what the Member for Diego West does not realize in all of this is that each and every time he said something, as though it was part of the conspiracy to prevent it, it happened.

Every single story on section 34 you could think about has been published in the media; and everything that can be said about it has been said, by the round table, by the square table, by the triangle table. It has been said, so what is all this about conspiracy to prevent people from saying what they want?

You see, Mr. Speaker, let me say, I was trying to text my office to find out—just to be on the safe side—if I ever had a gmail account because I have had one email account for the past about 15 years. Until I became Attorney General, there is one the AG@gov.tt, the Government Internet service at gov.tt. I have had one email account. It is anand—A-N-A-N-D—@tstt.net.tt. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: "So dey fool im again."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: So I do not know where this is coming from. I mean, this is hilarious.

Dr. Gopeesingh: He want [*sic*] to be Prime Minister.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: And my learned friend wants the DPP and the Integrity Commission to investigate this matter. [*Laughter*]

Listen, Mr. Speaker, I have no problem. I will bring the whole laptop; put it on his lap and if he wants he could take it by hand. I really have nothing to hide in the matter because I do not have any gmail account; have never had a gmail account; it is one TSTT account. And this is a "boldface", disgraceful, shameless attempt to assassinate the character of the Government, the Prime Minister and the Attorney General by fabrication. It is pure and utter fabrication. [*Interruption*] You could email me later and we go [*sic*] talk. [*Laughter*]

"With respect to—yuh know just—yuh know, just perchance, I could go right now on my computer, get my lil son and he could create ah address, rowley@gmail.com, and he could create ah address—ah lookin for somebody, you know, mcdonald@hotmail.com." [*Crosstalk*] It takes less than three seconds and you send email up and down and what you do really is you set up people by having this kind "ah"—you have a jigsaw puzzle and you could fill in the parts of the jigsaw puzzle to match what you have.

So he refers to a press release that I put out to condemn an article in the *Guardian*—and permit me to say, "eh", if I really want to call an editor in the *Guardian*, I would not have to go through no Gary Griffith and "ting". I was a Sunday columnist with the *Sunday Guardian* for over 10 years in this country.

3.15 p.m.

I know the editors. I know them. And if I have something to say, I will call them myself. But on the press statement that was put out—yes, I did put out a press statement. I remember it very well, and it was because they purported to quote from an opinion and the headline was "James Lewis QC upset", and when one read the article, nowhere in the article did it mention anything about Mr. Lewis being upset, that they contacted Mr. Lewis; that they spoke to him, nothing of the sort.

The reason I had put out the retraction, quite frankly, is because Mr. Lewis himself—Mr. James Lewis Queen's Counsel himself contacted me about the matter and said that it was a violation of the code of ethics that govern barristers in England because the relationship between the client and the attorney is privileged and he said, "Well, look, I never tell anybody I was upset. That would be a breach and it could lead to disciplinary action against me." So, it was on that basis I said, all right, fine, I put out a press release. I had constant communication with Mr. Lewis. And in the press release, what my learned friend from Diego West, did not read, is the rest of the press release which I have gotten here and I will read it and it says:

The article is based on quotes from certain unnamed sources that are allegedly close to Mr. James Lewis. It states that he expressed concern that his advice was misconstrued. The AG has personally spoken with Mr. Lewis who has categorically denied this and is satisfied that the article is fabricated and false. Sen. Ramlogan has a very good relationship with Mr. Lewis who continues to advise the State in extradition matters.

The decision not to appeal was taken in good faith based on discussions with and advice from Mr. Lewis. The rationale was fully explained in a detailed statement which was carried in two daily newspapers and need not be repeated here.

Mr. Speaker, if my learned friend wants the James Lewis advice, it was published in the newspapers, you know. You could go and have a look at it. It is there.

I think sometimes, you know, they tend to forget that it was this Attorney General that signed the extradition order, and when there was an application for leave to seek judicial review to review that extradition order, not only did we resist it, but we were successful.

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The hon. Madam Justice Joan Charles, in fact, dismissed the application. [*Desk thumping*] It was when we went to the Court of Appeal—the Court of Appeal, chaired by the hon. Mr. Justice Wendell Kangaloo, gave a judgment and reversed the hon. Madam Justice Joan Charles; nothing to do with the Government.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I heard mention of access to tap the DPP's office; Mr. Thomas Smitham, who is the present Ambassador [*sic*] to the United States Government. I mean, these are all very serious allegations. This is designed to harm Trinidad and Tobago's international reputation and sully our image on the international scene.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And he wants to be Prime Minister!

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: It is designed to drive a wedge; a diplomatic wedge between the United States of America and Trinidad and Tobago. You see, when you look at it, it cannot be that the Office of the Attorney General would want to have wiretaps on the DPP, on reporters and so on. That was the modus operandi with which they are familiar. They were the ones who presided over the illegal SIA and had them wiretapping journalists, editor, judge, chief justice, people who suing the State and everything. [*Desk thumping*] It was this Government that regularized that. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Vincent Clement. Let them talk about Vincent Clement—Nigel Clement.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: So what is happening here, we are being judged by their standards.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Nigel Clement had files on all "ah dem."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: But, you see, this is an act of political desperation because what has happened is, having gotten rid of the insurmountable political foe, the former Prime Minister, Mr. Patrick Manning, they thought that this Government would not last. So after they waited one year, on March 02, 2012, they brought a Motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister.

They waited another six/eight months, October 26, 2012, Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, brought a Motion of no confidence in the Attorney General. [*Interruption*] Yes. And, you know, interestingly, as I am reminded by the hon. Prime Minister, on October 26, when the Motion of no confidence was brought against the Attorney General—a substantive Motion of no confidence is brought against the Attorney General—the Leader of the Opposition had in his possession all these fabricated emails, and in that substantive Motion of No Confidence, not having heard from the President "who eh take yuh on" you did not, in fact, bring it

to the attention of the House, lay it here to have the Motion of no confidence in the Attorney General properly dealt with. "You back squeeze it and hold it on to get ah tack back, so you would get ah next no confidence Motion!" You see, every no confidence Motion, he is in search of a political bombshell and it is always egg on the face. The last time, the big bombshell was that somebody changed their name by deed poll. [*Laughter*] That was the big bombshell, you know.

Hon. Member: He has Motion sickness.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: You see, and then he came on April 26, 2013 with another Motion of no confidence and, today he brings another Motion of no confidence, the fourth Motion of no confidence he brings today against the Prime Minister, the Government and so on. I want to say the Member for Diego Martin West, having brought all these Motions, by now he must be suffering from Motion sickness. [*Laughter*] He is probably suffering from Motion sickness. [*Crosstalk*]

You see, Mr. Speaker, you do not abuse what is really a sacred ancient procedure given to you by virtue of the privilege of the Standing Orders to bring a Motion of no confidence unless there is some genuine issue and some realistic prospect of success. You cannot bring a Motion of no confidence willy-nilly, "Like if yuh going for ah haircut by the barber every year or yuh pelting ah teacup at everybody every month, or yuh pelting ah slap at political councillors who come in for screening as well." You do not bring a Motion of no confidence like that every minute willy-nilly.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, 36(5); 36(5). [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Overruled. Continue.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: Indeed. But, you see, Mr. Speaker, so that in search of a political bombshell to substantiate and justify the waste of parliamentary time by bringing these Motions, today he comes, running out of ammunition on section 34; running out of gas on Resmi—the country fed up hear those things—running out of that, he comes now—the Member for Diego Martin West comes with this email story.

Mr. Speaker, this Motion of no confidence is entirely misconceived; it is totally devoid of merit and it is completely unjustified. It is an abuse of Parliament and a waste of precious Parliament time. [*Desk thumping*] The first thing wrong with this Motion is the wording—the wording of it. It speaks of the UNC-led Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, that is deliberate, and it reveals a psychological condition which is an obsession and fixation with the UNC by the Member for Diego Martin West.

They do not even—he is donning gear to do battle with the UNC without realizing that it is the People's Partnership Government in power [*Desk thumping*]

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and this People's Partnership Government has its genesis in the Fyzabad declaration signed on April 21, 2010. And that Fyzabad Declaration which gave birth to the People's Partnership was signed by five persons and all five persons who signed that Fyzabad Declaration are still in the People's Partnership very strong and very committed to the governance of this country. [*Desk thumping*]

3.25 p.m.

From the Labour Movement we had Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, Mr. Errol McLeod. [*Desk thumping*] From the NJAC we had his Excellency, Chief Servant, Mr. Makandal Daaga. [*Desk thumping*] From the TOP in Tobago we had Bro. Ashworth Jack. [*Desk thumping*] From the Congress of the People we had the Member for Tunapuna, Mr. Winston Dookeran—[*Desk thumping*]—and, of course, on behalf of the UNC, the hon. Prime Minister and Member for Siparia, Kamla Persad-Bissessar. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, when one brings a Motion to allege attacks—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Look them here—[*Inaudible*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: [*Holding up the UNC Manifesto*] Yeah, look the five here. See that? Those are the five faces on the manifesto. When a Motion is brought to allege that the Government is attacking the Judiciary, and that the Government is conspiring to undermine the Judiciary and the Office of the DPP—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Serious allegation.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: A very serious allegation. What would one expect to substantiate such a Motion? One would expect evidence of a bad, disruptive working relationship between the judicial arm of the State and the Government. One would expect evidence from the presenter of such a Motion about the Government starving those two critical institutions, the DPP's office and the Judiciary, of resources to try and cripple their operations. One would expect there to be allegations that the Government was trying to interfere with cases and manipulate the justice system. One would expect there to be allegations that the Government was wilfully violating court orders. One would expect there to be allegations that the Government was criticizing judges, their judgments or the DPP. One would expect there to be allegations that the Government was interfering with judicial appointments and trying to influence the process. That is the kind of evidence one needs to bring, to ground a Motion, and bring it on the basis that the Government is attacking the Judiciary and the DPP's office and undermining it by way of a conspiracy.

I listened attentively to hear what the evidence was. I listened to hear the Member for Diego Martin West connect any email, anything he had to say to the

words of the Motion. That he failed to do. I listened and waited because when we look around the world to see when these kind of Motions could be brought and we see what really an attack on the Judiciary is all about in—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: Yes. In Pakistan in 2007, General Musharraf suspended the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Chaudhry. That led to allegations of state sponsored violence against lawyers and journalists. That reminds us of when the PNM told the former Chief Justice, Sat Sharma, of this country, get out of office. Issued an ultimatum in effect to a sitting Chief Justice and hounded him out of the office.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: "Lock up de Speaker."

Hon. Member: "Lock up de Speaker."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: That would have perhaps justified a no confidence Motion on the ground that the Government was attacking the Judiciary. Where was your voice then, Member for Diego Martin West?

Hon. Member: Wired up the DPP then.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: In Papua, New Guinea, in April 2012, the Government passed a Motion directing the Governor General to appoint a tribunal to facilitate the sacking of two judges, and that law gave the Government the power to suspend the judges whilst they were being investigated. That is an attack against the Judiciary. Which law has the Government passed to remove or interfere with judges? In Sri Lanka in March, 2013, the Chief Justice, Shirani Bandaranayake, she was dismissed—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Bandaranayake.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: Well, Bandaranayake—that good. She had declared a Bill introduced by her brother, by the President's brother, the Minister for Economic Development as unconstitutional. Charges of misconduct, judicial misconduct were laid against her and the charge was? She misinterpreted the Constitution, when the hon. Chief Justice in fact got it correct.

But that is the kind of situation, the kind of socio-political environment that such a Motion as this would be rooted in. What are the facts about the relationship between the People's Partnership and the Judiciary, and the DPP's office? What are the facts about the relationship? Among the first things the Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, did, when we assumed office, was to appoint a high-level inter-

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ministerial committee to deal with the Justice Sector Reform, and that inter-ministerial committee was to meet regularly with the Chief Justice and his team to dynamite the logjams, to cut through the layers of bureaucracy in the public service to try and facilitate a more expeditious implementation of projects by the Judiciary.

That inter-ministerial team is in fact led by myself as Attorney General, and includes the hon. Minister of Justice, Minister of Legal Affairs and the Minister of Public Administration, and at those meetings the business of the administration of justice and how to improve the workings of the court system—that is what we discuss. There is no evidence of any fracture or any breakdown in that relationship. In fact, the inter-ministerial committee appointed by the Prime Minister from this Government has been working hand in hand and partnering with the Judiciary for the better, greater good of the society.

There has been no allegation by the Judiciary, emanating from the Judiciary or the DPP about an attack upon the officers from the Government. In fact, if anything, the Persad-Bissessar administration has brought a sense of equanimity and calm to the troubled waters that existed before with respect to the Judiciary and the Executive. Who could forget that Lord Mackay of Clashfern had in fact sat as a chairman of a commission of enquiry to look into the administration of justice because the then Attorney General, Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj, had locked horns with the then Chief Justice, Michael de la Bastide. A lot of time and resources spent.

Who could forget that former Attorney General in the PNM administration, John Jeremie, locked horns with Chief Justice, Sat Sharma, and publicly hounded him out of the office? It was in the aftermath of those two disasters that the People's Partnership came into office and since then to now, "yuh cyah hear ah bad word" about this Government, the Judiciary and the DPP—you cannot. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, permit me to cite by way of evidence the statements made by the hon. Chief Justice himself about the Government. At the opening of the Law Term 2012/2013, the hon. Chief Justice said, and I quote.

"I wish...to acknowledge the high level of cooperation received from the several government ministries involved in this project and I am confident that if they continue to afford due attention and priority to our needs this eagerly awaited reform can be a reality early next year.

The information and communication technology reform initiative was greatly enhanced by a visit to the New Jersey State Courts by a team comprising representatives from the Judiciary...the Ministries of National Security, Justice, Legal Affairs and the Attorney General to see an integrated system in operation and exchange ideas with their counterparts."

What we did, we sent a team from the Government from those Ministries together with a delegation from the Judiciary, and we sent them so we can partner and collaborate. That is what the inter-ministerial committee, appointed by the Prime Minister, for Justice Sector Reform has been doing. The hon. Chief Justice continued, and I quote.

"I know that the Hon Minister of Public Administration, who has inherited...—"

And I want to stress this.

"I know that that Hon Minister of Public Administration, who has inherited a dire situation..."

Who you think we inherit from?

"...who has inherited a dire situation, and her executive team have shown a keen appreciation of our current challenges and what lies ahead and more importantly a willingness to work with us..."

...Cabinet, in an attempt to address the challenges facing contract employees, has approved the standardization of some job descriptions and designations as well as salaries so as to provide more flexibility. "

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

Motion made: That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh*]

Question put and agreed to.

3.35 p.m.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: I thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact, from day one this Government signalled its intention to accord respect to the separation of powers and to partner with the Judiciary. At the opening of the law term for 2011/2012, the hon. Chief Justice at the beginning of his speech said this:

"I am encouraged by the fact that the Prime Minister has expressed her concern that judges be fairly and adequately compensated."

Listen to this. The Chief Justice is saying that he is encouraged by the fact that the Prime Minister has expressed concern that judges be fairly and adequately compensated. "Does that sound like a Prime Minister who attacking a Judiciary?" Does that sound like a disappointed, injured Chief Justice, speaking out against the Prime Minister?

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He says:

"I know that there are other negotiations currently engaging her government's attention and accept as genuine her assurance that we will not be forgotten."

And he goes on to say that the SRC has to do its work. Then he concludes and he says:

"It has been some time since we have had a sitting Prime Minister join us and her presence today at what must be a particularly taxing time for her underscores the"—very—"cordial and collaborative atmosphere that has characterized our interactions during this past year. "

This is the Chief Justice. Look at the way he phrases it, it:

"underscores the cordial and collaborative atmosphere that has characterized our interactions this past year."

"Nutten bout no attack. Nutten bout no conspiracy." None of that foolishness. No undermining.

"The occasions when the holders of the three highest offices gather in one place for an event of national significance are rare, and it is important symbolically that we do so at a time when"— now—"more than ever, our nation needs to come together."

The hon. Chief Justice goes on to praise the commitment of the new administration to the improvement of the administration of justice as a priority. He says that initial talks with the Executive have been positive. Does that sound like a Judiciary under attack by a Government?

Mr. Speaker, one would expect in a Motion like this evidence that the Government was guilty of starving the Judiciary or the DPP of resources. What are the facts? If we really wanted to undermine the Judiciary, in 2008/2009 the budget for the Judiciary was \$316,000,474. In 2009/2010, when we came into office, the budget rose to \$349,184,000. In the 2010/2011, the budget, for the first time in the country's history since independence, crossed the \$400 million mark under Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar and the People's Partnership, and we gave the Judiciary an unprecedented whopping \$431,106,000. Those are the facts. This is not about email and Gmail and Hotmail. "This is about budgetary allocations, hard, cold figures and I eh geh it in no mailbox and no letter." These are the facts; so that there is no way you can say that the Government is on a collision course with the Judiciary.

How was that money spent? It was spent to introduce a customized dispute resolution pilot project, to have judicial settlement management conferences. It was spent to have remand by video conferencing and to install video conferencing technology throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago; Magistrates' Court in San Fernando, St. George's West in Port of Spain; the prisons in Port of Spain; male and female prisons at Golden Grove, Arouca; the judiciary staff training centre at King's Court in Port of Spain. We have introduced this technology in the Magistrate's Court in Arima, Tunapuna, Couva, Mayaro, Point Fortin and the remand prison in Golden Grove. What does this do? It reduces the security risks associated with the transport of prisoners and of course it reduces the actual cost of the transportation itself.

Mr. Speaker, we have a drug treatment pilot court, because there are over 5,000 drug related arrests made every year—over 5,000. So the Government has partnered with the Judiciary to create two forms: an adult drug treatment court and a juvenile drug treatment court, because we recognize that where someone is addicted to drugs and they are not violent, the Prime Minister, the Government, together with the Judiciary, have recognized that the best way to treat that person is not to lock them up in jail—when they come back out “dey worse off”—is really to have a programme of rehabilitation as an alternative to incarceration. That is what we have been doing with the increased funding we have given to the Judiciary.

We have a centralized coroner's court, and of course, a matter very dear and close to my own heart, because it is a personal matter that I did in the court for the President of the Disabled Peoples Organization, George Daniel, when I had sued the judicial arm of the State, on behalf of George Daniel, for not having access for people with disabilities. It was only after I won that case, several years later, we now have wheelchair access, by way of a mechanical lift, to take those who are physically challenged straight up to the court. A lay-by has also been constructed to accommodate persons who are driven by. Imagine the PNM was in power from 1956 to 1986, and after that for another nine years. In all, the PNM has ruled this country for almost half a century, and they could not even cater for people who are physically challenged to enter the court, to access justice.

Mr. Speaker, I would have thought a Motion like this would have evidence of interference with cases; that they would bring evidence to show the Government was somehow trying to interfere with cases. When this Motion should have been brought, there was silence from the Member for Diego Martin West. The late Desmond Allum, a former PNM Member of Parliament, on July 18, 2008 as President of the Criminal Bar Association, wrote to the DPP. He called for an

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investigation into whether the PNM's Attorney General, Mr. John Jeremie, had attempted to pervert the course of justice or misbehaved in public office, arising out of the repurchase of land at Millennium Park owned by Chief Magistrate Sherman Mc Nichols. Mr. Desmond Allum made it plain that Mr. Jeremie had approached the Chief Magistrate about a suspicious land transaction involving an attempt made by the Chief Magistrate to resell the lands. He had purchased those lands from Home Construction Limited.

There was a conspiracy to undermine the Judiciary then. That is the conspiracy. "The meetings and the correspondence—and this eh no email correspondence. We had it laid out before Lord Mustill, in the Lord Mustill Commission of Inquiry, not no fabricated email." The meetings and the correspondence were between the Attorney General under the PNM, John Jeremie, Andre Monteil, a senior Clico executive and the then PNM treasurer, Andrew Fifi, a director at Home Construction Limited, and the Chief Magistrate. An Attorney General and a Chief Magistrate meeting with the PNM's treasurer and a director of HCL. All of this taking place at a time when Mr. Jeremie himself was a witness against the Chief Justice in the Naraynsingh 137 proceedings.

This is what the *Newsday* article published on May 29, 2009 said there were allegations:

"that Mc Nicolls was 'sweetened' by a controversial land deal which was facilitated, in part, by Jeremie. Some of the allegations against Sharma became the subject of the Mustill Inquiry."—but he failed to show up for cross-examination.

You see, the PNM has a habit of making wild, spurious malicious statements, and when "the time come to man up" and own those statements, repeat it outside the Parliament and come for cross-examination, they run—they run.

You know, in the eight years that the PNM was in power, the UNC when it was in Opposition brought one motion of no confidence, just one. That motion of no confidence was brought by the then Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Siparia. When we brought that motion of no confidence, the PNM ran and hide. They did not allow us to debate it, Mr. Manning dissolved the Parliament and called fresh elections.

Dr. Gopeesingh: "They were afraid."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: They were afraid. "Dey could not take de music. Dey couldn't take de jamming. Dey couldn't take the heat."

Dr. Gopeesingh: Widespread corruption.

3.45p.m.

I continue. This is Lord Mustill and he says:

"there is evidence", not email, evidence, "the weight of which we are not in a position to assess, that on May 8, 2006, the Attorney General had attempted to use the Chief Magistrate's first statement as a means of pressuring the Chief Justice"—of pressuring the Chief Justice. "The picture presented to this Tribunal almost defies belief..."

That tribunal was Lord Mustill, Sir Vincent Floissac and Dennis Morrison QC. They said, "the picture presented to this tribunal almost defies belief". That is evidence.

Today, what was presented to us also defies belief, but not because it is evidence, but because it is a pure and utter fabrication.

"The concept of the separation of powers seems to have been ignored... The picture is troubling indeed, both for the Tribunal and for the peoples of Trinidad and Tobago."

You see, that was the time for Member for Diego Martin West to file this Motion, to say the Judiciary was under attack by the Government, but he did not do so.

Mr. Basdeo Panday had his case and after an expensive trial, the whole thing had to be quashed. Why? Because in the Court of Appeal Madam Justice of Appeal, Warner—Margot Warner—said it was:

"...a cause for concern; the fair-minded and informed observer's apprehension would be heightened by the nondisclosure of those matters."—They—"...would have been sharpened by the manner in which the out of court communications were brought to the appellant's attention. He would be aware that the Chief Magistrate failed to inform counsel not only about his suspicions, but"—about—"his conversations with the Attorney General..."

Hon. Member: Hmm.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: "...the cumulative effect of these extraneous factors ... was a real possibility of bias... "

So an Attorney General, a PNM party treasurer, a PNM financier, all get together with a chief magistrate and there was a real possibility of bias. That is interfering with the Judiciary.

Dr. Gopeesingh: To pay out for his land.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: The then Justice of Appeal, as he then was, Mr. Justice Ivor Archie, said that:

"The fair-minded observer might take the view that it was unwise for the Attorney General to have become personally involved, instead of leaving the investigation to someone in the Corruption Investigation Bureau.

The delicate circumstances that prevailed required him to maintain a conspicuous detachment, particularly since information was being sought from his personal friend, Mr. Montiel."

He continued at paragraph 59:

"It would do nothing for the confidence of the hypothetical observer to note that the Chief Magistrate sought the intervention of the Attorney General when he no longer wished to testify and that the Attorney General thought it fit to intervene personally. It does not"—says, Mr. Justice Ivor Archie, as he then was, "it does not matter whether he erred as Chief Magistrate to fulfil his duty as a witness. He"—simply—"has no constitutional role in the discontinuance of prosecutions. His willingness to intervene personally, even to the extent of arranging meetings, in respect of both the criminal prosecution and the land matter...is regrettable."

That was the time to file a Motion of no confidence in the Government on the basis that there was an attack against the Judiciary, but the Member for Diego Martin West lost a golden opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, if there was evidence that the Government was guilty of some form of misconduct in the eyes of the Judiciary, by manipulating the judicial process, by concealing evidence or suppressing evidence, that would justify a Motion like this.

Permit me to quote from the historic Maha Sabha radio licence case and the judgment of the Privy Council and what they had to say about the PNM Government. I quote paragraph 26:

"...the Court of Appeal was allowed to proceed under a serious misapprehension in and throughout the course of two substantial hearings. The Court of Appeal was twice"—not once, but twice—"allowed to give judgment on false premises... That"—the "Cabinet had never considered the"—licence—"application, still yet reached any decision on it prior to the Court of Appeal's first judgment."

Again, no explanation has been tendered as to why or how this could come about, although it is obvious that one would be expected.

Mr. Knox QC, who appeared for the State conceded this position was unusual and unsatisfactory. The Lordships said "that is an understatement."

You see, the Member Diego Martin West was part of the Cabinet at that time. He was part of the Cabinet that decided to discriminate against the Maha Sabha and award a radio licence in favour of their friend and party financier and supporter, Louis Lee Sing. And at that time when the evidence was concealed from the Privy Council, the Court of Appeal and the High Court, by the Government of the day, and it led to the Privy Council making these statements, no-one brought a motion of no confidence on the basis that the Government was undermining the Judiciary. The Government was suppressing vital, relevant evidence from the court to conceal its discrimination against the Maha Sabha, but that did not merit a motion.

You see, Mr. Speaker, if one had to ground this Motion properly, one would expect there to be allegations that the Government was attacking the DPP. Mr. Speaker, the one Government that is famous or infamous for attacking the Office of the DPP is the PNM. In 2006, Mr. Jeremie waged war on the then DPP, Mr. Geoffrey Henderson. [*Crosstalk*] He tried to pressure him, as DPP, into laying criminal charges against the then Leader of the Opposition, Basdeo Panday.

In a letter dated November 09—"not no email", I have the letters—2006, Mr. Henderson bitterly objected to the erosion of his powers and the pressure that was being put upon him. He said and I quote:

"Mr. Attorney General, in this regard and with specific reference to your letters, I would be failing in my independent duty under the Constitution if I were to initiate a charge under your direction where investigations are incomplete."

The AG wanted to direct him to charge people even though the investigations were not yet completed.

He wrote again on December 11, 2006 and Mr. Henderson, who is now a High Court judge, had this to say:

"That as incumbent office holder it was my duty to uphold the law and enforce it fairly without malice or fear. In deciding to initiate charges against any citizen of this country, I shall be guided by the law and the facts that persuade me that there is a proper basis upon which to prosecute.

In so doing, Mr. Attorney General, I rely on my own judgment and may take advice from my legal officers or members of the private bar, but I am not subject to your directions."

Why would the DPP, Geoff Henderson, have to tell the PNM that he is not subject to their directions when they were trying to pressure the man to charge Basdeo Panday, then Leader of the Opposition?

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Why did the Member for Diego Martin West not bring a motion of no confidence then to show that the Government was trying to manipulate and oppress the DPP to get him to exercise his powers to charge a political opponent?

Mr. Geoff Henderson termed the actions of the then PNM AG to be imprudent and highly improper. He said, "Any decision to prosecute in these matters is mine alone." In other words, butt out.

You see and that is why having gone through those rites of passage, when the time came and Mr. Henderson was appointed a High Court judge, what did the PNM do with the replacement? The first nominee put forward by the independent Judicial and Legal Service Commission was Miss Carla Brown-Antoine. This is the JLSC—and never before in the history of this country you will see that a Prime Minister will veto a recommendation of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. What did they do? The then Prime Minister vetoed the nomination of Miss Carla Brown-Antoine.

Then secondly they put the second candidate, Mr. Roger Gaspard, the present DPP; what did they do? They vetoed his appointment as well.

Mr. Speaker, you know, they tend to forget, you know, but I want to show and remind them this is what the headline said, "PNM vetoes DPP again. PM vetoes DPP again." Manning blanks JLSC nominee, Roger Gaspard." [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, September 2006—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: The same DPP now?

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC:—2009, sorry, Thursday, September 10, 2009: "PNM vetoes DPP again, Manning blanks JLSC nominee Roger Gaspard, not once, but twice because he had blank Carla Brown-Antoine just before.

You see, Mr. Speaker, not only did they keep the office of DPP in a state of flux and vacillation; they appointed no Integrity Commission. They appointed no confirmed DPP. They appointed no confirmed Commissioner of Police. They appointed no Police Complaints Authority. They appointed no Firearms Appeal Board for four years. They appointed no Solicitor General. They appointed no Chief Parliamentary Counsel.

[*Cellphone rings*]

Mr. Speaker, what they did was to consistently and systematically undermine the various institutions provided for in the Constitution in the most vile and reprehensible manner. That is what they did. Permit me to repeat, they are saying—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: I am hearing some noise—who—continue, hon. Member.

3.55 p.m.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: I am grateful, Mr. Speaker. They seek to stand here to accuse this Government of undermining institutions. Let me repeat the institutions that they undermined and let me remind the Member for Diego Martin West and ask him, why were you biting your tongue then? Why the silence then? "Let me remind you of what your Government did and you were a Member of the Cabinet—no Integrity Commission, no DPP, no Commissioner of Police, no Police Complaints Authority, no Firearms Appeal Board, no Solicitor General, no Chief Parliamentary Counsel." None. A systematic undercutting of these independent offices set up by the Constitution to protect the rights of citizens. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, every time a nominee came forward independently, they blocked it. When Mr. Stephen Williams, in 2008, was put forward by the independent Police Service Commission, they voted it down in Parliament. The same way they vetoed Carla Browne-Antoine and they vetoed Roger Gaspard. But, Mr. Speaker, these are the facts, and when one looks at the PNM history, it has been a history of wilful disregard of the law. We are all famous with the Patrick Solomon case in 1964 when he went inside there and he opened the cell and he tell [sic] them cancel those charges. We are all familiar with the case with the former Prime Minister calling Marabella Police Station to enquire about "Well, wha all yuh pick up my driver for"? [*Interruption*] We are all familiar with the case of Marlene Coudray, when the Prime Minister predicted that the independent Statutory Authorities Service Commission will be transferring her because she was insisting that they comply with the bye-laws of San Fernando City Corporation. And what happened? His prediction came through, we went to court and the transfer was quashed.

Let us not even go down the road with the former Chief Justice Sat Sharma, they told him leave or be charged. They threatened him. You see, sometimes the words we speak they come back to haunt us, and the Member for Diego Martin West said words on February 04, 2009 which today I want to repeat and own. On February 04, 2009, Member for Diego Martin West said, and I quote:

"Manning is all about character assassination for his enemies."

Well, today I want to say, Member for Diego Martin West, you learnt well, because you are equally assassinating the character of your perceived political enemies, because this Motion is nothing but character assassination. [*Desk thumping*] Nothing but!

Mr. Speaker, there will have to be evidence to substantiate a Motion like this. You have to show that the Government was wilfully violating court orders. The evidence in our political history shows that it was the PNM that has had a history of

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violating court orders. When the Privy Council ordered them to give the Maha Sabha radio licence, for one month they dilly-dallied. They asked them to make a fresh application. It was only when I threatened them with contempt proceedings and imprisonment for failure to obey the order of the Privy Council, then they granted the licence. That is a fact. In Glen Ashby's case, they executed a man in cold blood; the State sponsored execution while the man had his matter pending before the Privy Council; a blot on the administration of justice that even today haunts us when we go to the international law conferences and people refer to us as the Glen Ashby country.

Mr. Speaker, to ground this Motion, one would expect to hear that a Government was guilty of criticizing the Judiciary and the DPP. *[Interruption]* You see, one would expect that the Judiciary would have been criticizing the Government. Permit me to read since we have been in power there is only one press release from the Judiciary.

Mr. Speaker: You have four and a half minutes.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been only one press release from the Judiciary since we have been in power concerning any Member of Parliament and it is dated November 10, 2011 and it reads as follows:

"The Judiciary of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago notes with grave concern certain statements attributed to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Keith Rowley, and publicised in the national media relative to the Judgment delivered by Mr. Justice Ronnie Boodhoosingh...

In particular, the Guardian Newspaper...reported...as follows: Rowley said it was (Anand) Ramlogan...who 'facilitated the whole process...so having got the expected result, I wouldn't call it a defeat.'"—he said—"...he found the 'intervention to be very timely'...and 'persons made political commitments and...delivered.'

Since there has not been any denial of the above report to date by Dr. Rowley, one can only conclude that"—its—"contents, including the direct assertions, are accurate, and it is in this context that the Judiciary expresses its abhorrence of the innuendoes by the leader of the Opposition."

That was an attack on the Judiciary.

"...the Judiciary expresses its abhorrence of the innuendoes by the leader of the Opposition of collusion between the Judge and by extension, the Judiciary, and the Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago..."

So, Mr. Speaker, that was the Judiciary's press release. Mr. Speaker, whenever the PNM lost a case in court they had a habit of attacking the Judiciary. When Feroza Ramjohn, a mere public servant, when I fought her case and we won, the then Minister and Leader of Government Business in 2007 said the judge, Justice Amrika Tiwary, was a UNC judge and you know—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: "And that was not an email eh."

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: And that was not "ah" email; "he say it in Parliament; we coulda hear him", and Mr. Speaker, you know what happened, the hon. Madam Justice Amrika Tewary was vindicated because both the Court of Appeal and Privy Council upheld her findings. [*Desk thumping*] So, it would have been that the Privy Council, the Court of Appeal and the High Court, "all ah them was UNC judges".

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: If you believe them.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: If we believe them. You see, Mr. Speaker, when they forget where they come from, we must remind them. This is the headline of the *Newsday* of June 08, 2009:

"Justice"—of Appeal—"John warns legal system in state of emergency
Judiciary falls apart—"

This was the headline under the PNM, the Judiciary falls apart; Judiciary in a state of emergency. And they have the unmitigated temerity and gall to come here to bring a Motion of no confidence against this Government on the basis of fabricated emails alleging that we have been guilty of attacking the Judiciary. [*Desk thumping*]

The Judiciary was falling apart under the PNM. [*Interruption*] Then when the media complained and reported the attacks on the Judiciary, this was the response of the Prime Minister on Friday, November 07, 2008:

"Manning's personal agenda: I'll take media to court".

A next headline November 07, 2008:

Media fed-up with Manning. Manning says I run the country.

You see, Mr. Speaker, they forget, they forget. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Indarsingh: And you will remind them.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: And I will remind them. We will remind them throughout the course of this debate. We will account to the people for our stewardship and performance to show that this no confidence Motion is bogus and

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malicious and designed to waste time. [*Desk thumping*] We will account to the people of this country to tell them what the Government has been doing and we will treat it with the contempt that it deserves.

Hon. Member: What is your email?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Give them your email again.

Sen. The Hon. A. Ramlogan SC: Mr. Speaker, my email address, in case anyone wants to email me, is anand—with a "D", a-n-a-n-d—@tstt.net.tt, not gmail and not a-n-a-n. [*Desk thumping*] That must be Anand Yankaran or Anand Ramesar or somebody, not this Anand. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

You see, no other Government has been on the receiving end of so many judgments of the court and been found guilty of discrimination, political victimization and unfair treatment as the former administration, and I think I rather suspect, Mr. Speaker, that is why they have brought this Motion. This Motion is frivolous—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: It is vexatious.

Hon. A. Ramlogan SC:—it is vexatious, it is totally devoid of any merit, it is vacuous, it is a waste of parliamentary time, it is an abuse of Parliament and it is deserved to be treated with the greatest contempt, and that is what the Government shall do.

I thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Before I call—you are next? [*Points to Miss Mc Donald*]—on the next speaker, may I just indicate that in keeping with the high standards of decorum and dignity of this House, certain expressions were placed on the record of Parliament.

4.05 p.m.

When I looked at them, subsequently, they are totally unparliamentary and I shall expunge those expressions from the record of the Parliament.

Who is next on the Opposition side, please? [*Pause*]

The hon. Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Marlene Mc Donald (*Port of Spain South*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is always a pleasure to join the debate in this honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, today is a bit sad for me. It is sad because of the nature of the Motion brought before this House. Before I get into my substantive contribution, I

want to respond to some of the points made by the Attorney General and, as usual, the Attorney General has not answered the Motion. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, a substantive Motion has been brought here and the Opposition leader painstakingly went through the Motion, and that debate carefully; and the Attorney General has not responded to anything, I would say, more than just make light of what has been said. He described it as absurd; he described it as ridiculous, ill-conceived and a waste of time. They laughed; they jeered at the Opposition leader; the hon. Member threatened the Opposition leader.

Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that we are here to put something to the honourable House. As an elected Member of Parliament, I also too, through this honourable House, speak to my constituents. Therefore, I believe that when something like this comes here, we need to clear the air on it.

The Attorney General took issue with the Opposition leader concerning this Washington visit, but I thought that was dealt with already. It was dealt with and the matter was closed. I want to put on record that no email was involved. [*Desk thumping*] No email was involved in that Washington issue; no email was involved. The Attorney General also wants to put in a disclaimer with respect to email addresses.

Mr. Speaker, some of those emails that the Opposition leader read out to this honourable House, some of them had—I do not know who it is—anand@tstt.net.tt. [*Desk thumping*] Many people have two and three emails. For me, I have two email addresses: marlenemcdonald18@gmail.com and marlenemcdonald18@yahoo.com. [*Interruption*] Interpret it how you want; marlenemcdonald18@gmail.com. I have two.

Mr. Speaker, but we expected them to deny this, eh. [*Desk thumping*] We expected it. [*Desk thumping*] But, the point about it is: Can you deny what the Opposition leader has put there as his corroboratory evidence? Can you deny that?

Hon. Ramlogan, SC: Yes, I can, it is false.

Miss M. Mc Donald: No, no, no, do not shout at me across the floor. Mr. Speaker? I am not taking that today, do not shout at me!

Mr. Speaker: Member, Member, you cannot threaten anybody and "yuh not taking that". You address the Chair.

Member for Port of Spain South, the problem is that you are addressing the Attorney General. If you turn to me, and you address the Chair, you would not have to get involved in crosstalk. Follow your leader; the Leader of the Opposition addressed the Chair. Could you address the Chair, please?

Miss M. Mc Donald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take that under advice and if you can protect me for the rest of my contribution.

Mr. Speaker: I will.

Hon. Member: All of us will.

Miss M. Mc Donald: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General also advised that if this matter was so important and the Opposition leader had these emails six months ago. The Opposition leader did not have this six months ago. He said we had a motion here. The motion of censure against the Attorney General—I want to clear *Hansard*—was in October of 2012. The Opposition leader was not in receipt of those emails in October of 2012. The Opposition leader was in receipt of those emails in December of 2012 and immediately, it was sent to the Office of the President.

Now, the Office of the President has since sent it to the Integrity Commission. If it is that the Office of the President felt, at that time, that there was nothing in it, or there was not a case to be answered, I could only suspect that it would not have gone to the Integrity Commission.

I want to clear that air with the hon. Attorney General, that in no way did the Opposition leader have those emails in October when we were doing the censure motion. It was, in fact, Mr. Speaker, received in December of 2012 and not October, as the Attorney General wants to make it out to be.

Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General, has not denied writing those emails and I noted with care how he chose his words carefully. He is normally very "bravay danjay" and whatnot. Today he has been very sober. As a matter of fact, he was fumbling and bumbling at the beginning of his presentation. [*Desk thumping*] And drinking a lot of water; he was under pressure; under pressure.

Mr. Speaker, he also stated—[*Interruption*] You see, what I am trying to do is to clear the *Hansard*. He also stated that we, the PNM, the former administration—there was a period when there was no Commissioner of Police. This current Commissioner of Police is acting as Commissioner of Police for longer than Mr. James Philbert had acted.

Miss M. Mc Donald: James Philbert had acted. So, the Attorney General, when he comes here, you must not come here and mislead the House.

Mr. Speaker: No, the Member cannot mislead the House.

Miss M. Mc Donald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point, I also want to call on one of the partners in this Government. One of the partners is the COP, the Congress of the People. I do so because I remember, with great fanfare, in 2010,

the Member for Tunapuna—the main protagonist in all of this—it was new way of life; it was new governance structure; it was new politics; it was transparency would be the order of the day. What do you have to say on this? What do you have to say about this? What do you have to say about the breach of the sanctity of Parliament? I call on every Member of the Congress of the People to stand up because the sanctity of this Parliament has been breached. [*Desk thumping*]

We have brought something here to Parliament, let us debate it, and debate it in a manner that is befitting of legislators in this country. I call out the Members of this House, all other Members of Government and, as representatives of the people, I too call out, Mr. Speaker, through you, the members of my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, as far as I am concerned, we are here because it is important enough—this debate is important enough and which prompted the Opposition leader—to come to this Parliament. It is a serious Motion and it brings to the fore, deep-seated concerns of the Opposition Bench and, by extension, the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

4.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, in all democratic countries across the globe there are certain key institutions which exist to support the mechanism of democracy, and these are, as the Motion states: The Judiciary, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Parliamentary Opposition, as well as the media. And how I am going to craft my debate this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I will be looking at each one of these headings and see how—what has happened, and I am going to line it up with what the Opposition leader has said, and how we have brought and undermined I should say, the Office of the DPP, how we have undermined and attacked the Parliamentary Opposition, how we have undermined the media and how we have undermined the Judiciary. So we are calling to question this afternoon, the behaviour of public officials, the behaviour of some Cabinet Members in this country, Mr. Speaker, whether or not they like it.

Hon. Member: They do not have to agree.

Miss M. Mc Donald: Exactly, they do not have to agree with me, but the point about it is, let us put it out in the open, let us discuss it and there are questions to be answered.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the question, what is the importance of an independent Judiciary in a democracy? For a successful democracy to exist, you need, you must need a free Judiciary. Without an independent and free Judiciary, we resort

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to dictatorship. That is what we resort to, dictatorship, Mr. Speaker. Judiciary—we see the Judiciary as the interpreter of the Constitution. The Parliament is a creature of the Constitution, and the Judiciary has a duty to correct their errors, if at all they cross the limits. I will demonstrate how the limits have been crossed in what the Opposition leader has placed in this honourable House today.

What is the role of the Director of Public Prosecutions? Again, in any democratic society, the role of the DPP is to fulfil its constitutional mandate by providing the citizens of that country with an independent, professional advice, an effective prosecution. It serves to operate, the DPP's office supposed to operate with integrity, it is supposed to inspire public trust and confidence and safeguard the administration of justice. That is the role of the DPP—the main role, to safeguard the administration of justice. And in Trinidad and Tobago, the office of the DPP is a creature of statute. That is section 90 of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago which sets out the appointment, the tenure and the functions of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

And the next one, Mr. Speaker, the next key institution, the role of the parliamentary Opposition, and democracy is the Government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is the most common form of Government in this world. So in a democracy, what is the role of that Opposition? The Opposition has a role to play, and I will tell you, I will quote for you one of the United Kingdom's early Prime Ministers, Benjamin Disraeli and this is what he has to say. He said, and I quote:

"No Government can be long secure without a formidable opposition."

Mr. Speaker, we have found and experience will show, that this is quite true and valid then; it applied then, and it is quite apt in today's world. So the Opposition plays a significant role in a democracy. With this view the Opposition can quite rightly criticize the Government in case the Government ignores them, or conceal facts, and then the Opposition can resort to filing a Motion of no confidence or what they can do, they can have protestations at the public level to highlight their concerns if the Government is not taking them on.

The Opposition, Mr. Speaker, in a democracy must account for their awareness among the people of specific issues of national importance. We are the watchdogs of this country. That is what the Opposition is there about. We are supposed to highlight and bring to the fore major critical issues, issues like what is happening now, the undermining of our institution, undermining of our parliamentary system, undermining the Office of the DPP, undermining the Office of the Chief Justice, undermining the Judiciary, that is what we are here to deal with and the media. And all the speakers there, they can stand after I have spoken and if they do not address these issues, then

coming here would have been in vain for them, but what we would have done, we would have achieved what we wanted to do. [*Desk thumping*] We would have achieved that, Mr. Speaker. There seems to be a common misconception that the role of the Opposition is just limited to just opposing. No, Mr. Speaker, we do not see ourselves like that. We are a responsible Opposition. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, when we came into office as Leader of Opposition and we occupied this bench from May 2010, one of the things the Opposition Leader said to us before we took our seats, he said: we are going to support any Bill that will redound to the benefit of the citizenry of this country. [*Desk thumping*] Our history here from 2010, as a matter of fact, for the past three years, we have acted responsibly. We say yes, when it redounds to the benefit of the citizens. We say no when we see breach of constitutional rights. We abstain when we feel that—because we have no confidence, when we feel that you ought to do some more cleaning up with the particular Bill, and we do not trust that it will be done, we abstain until you come again, clean. So we have acted again responsibly, over the past three years.

Mr. Speaker, there is a common belief that a healthy parliamentary opposition is essential for the sound working of democracy, which implies that we the Opposition, we must be constantly vigilant, we must be constantly on alert and ever so watchful of the Government action, of the Government plans, and therefore, if we are not vigilant, then the Government can become tardy, they could become complacent. So when we come here with a Motion and we ask for questions, do not take it personal. What we are doing will redound to the benefit of the citizens of all of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I turn my attention to the media. What is the role of the media? And the media plays a crucial role in shaping a healthy democracy. The media, I see, as the backbone of our democracy. The media makes us aware of various social, political and economic issues, not only national issues, but international as well. The media is like a mirror which shows us or they try to show us the bare truth and the realities of life. We must never, never, as a people, as legislators, try to stifle the media. The media exposes loopholes in the democratic system and it is always good to have that type of information, so we can work on it. We cannot criticize and criticize, we need to see it, understand what they are trying to do and assist, because whenever these things are unearthed by the media, do not look at it personal, say, let us confront it and let us put right to wrong and which will again redound to the benefit of all in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, a democracy without a media is like a vehicle without a wheel, you go absolutely nowhere.

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So, Mr. Speaker, over the past three years, we have witnessed the reckless—the reckless attacks against these institutions of democracy; against our Judiciary, against our media, against the Opposition and the DPP.

Mr. Speaker, when I proceed with my debate, I would look at and examine the behaviour of some Members of the Cabinet, but I will do so in relation to what the Opposition did. I will tie it back to what the Opposition leader has placed in this honourable House this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, it was on Thursday, April 25, 2013, about minutes to eight in the night, I watched with concern the former Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West and he was at the Pierre Road recreation grounds, Charlieville, where he addressed his constituents and something stood out. Something he said stayed with me. I do think that I could have even put it even better myself. I want to quote it. He said: why is it, that the very party and the Government of which all of us have been so proud, we have been so proud of these past 35 months, have moved from being a beacon of hope to a dungeon of despair? Thirty five months he said. We have moved from being a beacon of hope to a dungeon of despair. That is the former Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Speaker, it is this dungeon of despair that this country has arrived at that has prompted this Motion here today. Mr. Speaker, it is this dungeon of despair that we have arrived at under the stewardship of this hon. Prime Minister, that we the Opposition have lost confidence in the Prime Minister and her Government to govern this country. [*Desk thumping*] That is why we are here today.

Mr. Speaker, it is like *déjà vu*. This section 34 would not go away. It will not go away. Section 34 represents one of the darkest, darkest periods in our history. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I spent sleepless nights last year September. Just how they could not sleep, those people named, we do not know them, but those named in the emails they could not sleep one, two o' clock in morning. They could not sleep.

Sometimes I would be snoring, but I could not sleep for other reasons. I could not sleep because I participated in giving this Government my vote. I could not sleep because of that. "Ah say how I couldn't spot that?" What happened? I went this over and over and over in my mind. At one point in time I thought I was personally responsible, but then I had somebody to—you know, a little head to cry on, Mr. Imbert, it was the both of us. I said what has happened?

Hon. Member: "He keep you awake?"

Miss M. Mc Donald: I say what has happened? That is the problem that I am having and here we are back again. Mr. Speaker, we have not as the Opposition leader said, we have never, ever, been given an explanation as to why, why, there was this early proclamation of section 34, never, never. [*Desk thumping*] But, Mr. Speaker, one thing is sure, is that somewhere along the line last year, we figured out there was some kind of conspiracy.

Miss Hospedales: That is right.

Miss M. Mc Donald: We figured out there was a conspiracy, it is just that we could not put our fingers on it. [*Desk thumping*] But, Mr. Speaker, what in the dark always comes out, one, two o'clock in the morning, it coming out, because, you see, after night is day. After night is day.

Mr. Speaker, the Government can dismiss our concerns as being nonsensical, but if you examine the track record of this Government over the past three years, you realize this is—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, it is a good time for us to take our tea. The sitting is now suspended until 5.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Miss M. Mc Donald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just before the break, I said I was stating that the Government will dismiss our concerns as being nonsensical, but if we examine the track record of this Government over the past three years, we will realize this is—you recall the Resmi Ramnarine fiasco? [*Interruption*] And we will continue saying it. Just how you continue talking about Calder Hart and whatnot, we will continue talking about this.

The state of emergency, Mr. Speaker, and the use of the anti-gang legislation; or I should say the abuse of the anti-gang legislation. And then this section 34 fiasco, which would not go away. But, Mr. Speaker, if one examines all these missteps, or mistakes, they all contribute to calling into question issues of governance, issues of trust, and it is the whole approach to how this Government manages the affairs in this country.

Mr. Speaker, when one examines the content of the various emails which were placed in this House earlier this afternoon, it is definitely in keeping with the modus operandi of this Government. When I examine those emails, they demonstrate to me an orchestrated, planned and executed attack by members of

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this Government against important institutions, against the Judiciary, against the DPP, against the parliamentary Opposition and against the media, so I intend to look at each of these institutions and see how the behaviour of these Government officials, how the behaviour, has affected the Judiciary, the media, the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, that Parliament is a creature of the Constitution and the Judiciary has a duty to correct their errors. Mr. Speaker, when I looked at one of the emails that the Leader of the Opposition presented, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, it was very clear. It says:

"Right now our best bet would be giving Gaspard a position on the bench and bring in a replacement."

And it goes on:

"Let's try the judge position..."

So, for whatever reason, these people speaking here: one Kamla, and one Anand—we do not know who these people are; we do not know them. But here they are speaking—stating, "our best bet", because of the pressures brought by the media, they are saying "the best bet would be" to give "Gaspard a position on the bench and bring in a replacement"; a replacement that would be more accommodating to them.

Mr. Speaker, what the actions of these people—the actions here—sought to do, was to violate the doctrine of the separation of powers. And the separation of powers, Mr. Speaker, that doctrine, that is where our democracy is built. And the doctrine—and we are looking at—there is supposed to be separation between the Judiciary, the Legislature and the Executive. And the very people who are supposed to protect us, are the people who are violating our Constitution. Mr. Speaker, they sought to do this yet by another email read out by the Leader of the Opposition from one kamlapb1@gmail.com to one, anand—A-N-A-N-D—@tstt.net.tt:

"Have a chat with Archie, let them offer him the position, Archie is normally co-operative."

Mr. Speaker, all I am saying here is that I am looking at the emails which I am using to support the fact that these actions by these people contribute to the undermining of the key institutions of democracy in our country.

Mr. Speaker, there is no other word I can use more than scandalous. What these people, PM and AG, whoever they are, have done—what they have done is to collaborate to undermine the Judiciary by bringing the Chief Justice into their

plan to remove the DPP, and to get someone—[*Interruption*—and to cover up wrongdoing,—who is more amenable to their plans.

Mr. Speaker, they seem to forget, as I said, the separation of powers. And you are dealing with attorneys of repute. You are dealing with, whoever they are. I am sure they could get—whoever it is—I suspect they could get some attorneys with silk; some persons with silk, who can advise them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I turn my attention to the parliamentary Opposition. Mr. Speaker, as I said the parliamentary Opposition is the watchdog of this country. We have to be very watchful of Government's plans, and watchful of the agenda.

Mr. Speaker, you would recall that the Government came to Parliament requesting the Opposition's support for the Bill, the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Bill, 2011. This was in October/November of 2011. And the main purport of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, was to remove the existing Preliminary Enquiries and replace it with something called a sufficiency hearing before a Master of the High Court. After much debate, the Opposition supported this Bill on certain conditions and those conditions were:

- (1) That the Criminal Proceedings Rules be prepared and brought to Parliament for approval.
- (2) That the Minister of Justice should go out there and hire criminal masters to operate in the High Court so as to avoid bottlenecks.

And the third issue, the main one, to deal with the issue of inadequate infrastructure, the construction of all the judicial centres; six, I think, were identified.

Mr. Speaker, we took the Government at their word. We gave the assurance—the Minister gave the assurance to the parliamentary Opposition and to this honourable House that the Bill would not be proclaimed until all mechanisms were put in place. The *Hansard* will reveal it, and the *Hansard* will also reveal that the Attorney General took an active part in the debate.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at one of those emails—and I want to put it on record—to support what they have done in undermining the Opposition, the email states—and this is an email, Sunday, September 09, 2011[sic]; and this is coming from one—someone—Anand, it says:

"I saw the article"—meaning, the article in the *Sunday Guardian*, Sunday the 9th; a story by Denyse Renne—"Piarco Airport cases to be dropped" as the preliminary enquiry is scrapped.

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This is what the email said:

"I saw the article. Not to worry, remember the Opposition supported this. That will be our defense".

Mr. Speaker, I could recall after that, speaker after speaker on the Government's Bench, whenever the Opposition lamented the fact that the Government did not put mechanisms in place before proclamation, one after the other said, "But you all supported it." That was their mantra. "You supported it. You supported it." Mr. Speaker, here it is in the email:

"Not to worry, remember the Opposition supported this. That will be our defense".

That is what was said.

Mr. Speaker, I look at another email.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, just allow me.

Miss Mc Donald: Sure.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure you are aware of Standing Order 43(1). The Leader of the Opposition has spent a lot of time on all those points that you are raising and I just want to guide you that repetition and belabouring the same argument that has already been advanced is in violation of 43(1). So I am just guiding you, you know, in terms of your line of argument. Do not repeat an argument that has already been advanced unless you are bringing new points to the argument that has already been laid by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Miss M. Mc Donald: And Mr. Speaker, I thank you for that advice, but, I am bringing new information. When I say new information, my structure is different from my leader's structure, Sir. So, what I have done, Mr. Speaker, could I please explain myself? Mr. Speaker, what I have done—what the Leader of the Opposition did was he outlined email, after email, after email. What I am seeking to do, I am looking at my Motion as crafted here and I am fitting pieces. I am not going to go through the 31 pieces of email. I am looking at those that affect the four key institutions here, Sir.

I am saying, if it is that we are looking to undermine the Judiciary, how—based on what he said, how have they done so? And I may pick one or two. That is what I am doing. I am showing you, I am tying back what my leader has done to the Motion before us. So I have taken a different structure to my leader, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, we look at—and just a little piece, and I will not be too repetitive—where one of them said—it was dated Sunday 09 at 10.30 p.m. where it came from one "anan". And it says:

"I sent out a release already>Remember everyone supported this>The PNM will loose out for allowing this to happen>Do not worry."

Mr. Speaker, I look at this, I take a very dim view of this. I take a very dim view because the parliamentary Opposition, as I said, in any democratic country is the watchdog. We are the one who are supposed to criticize. We are the ones who are supposed to look at—we are here representing the people's business, the people's interest. And we are supposed—this is our duty. It is our duty to oversee what the Government is doing, and if it is that there is a government who comes to the House and does something like this—because up to now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have not had a response as to why the early proclamation of section 34. And the Opposition lent support, and what has happened thereafter? This is now being used against us. It is being used against us, Mr. Speaker, and a different strategy, and I am saying that this undermines the working of the parliamentary Opposition. This is what I am saying.

Mr. Speaker, what about the media? The media, I said, is in a democracy. In a democracy, it is supposed to be effective. The media must keep us apprised of what is happening. The media must be fearless. They must be objective also. And it is the media's duty from tomorrow morning, tonight, to begin the process of investigating this. We have brought it there, no malice, absolutely no malice against anyone, none. I will still talk to Pointe-a-Pierre nice, I will still talk to Chaguanas East—[*Crosstalk*]—yes, yes. I always smile with you, Sir. I will talk to D'Abadie/O'Meara, and of course Caroni Central. I still have my respect for my friend, Caroni East and Couva South, and my new photographer, Arima, certainly, certainly.

Mr. Speaker, I am a magnanimous woman. I am magnanimous but I stand on principle and ceremony, and when we come here to debate, I take my debate serious, and I feel hurt. I feel as if I have been abused, and it is very difficult to abuse me, Sir, [*Laughter*] but I feel abused that I came here, and I researched, and I shared my intelligence and my knowledge with this House, not knowing that I was being hoodwinked. That is not easy to swallow. That is not an easy pill to swallow, Mr. Speaker.

What has happened here has demonstrated a systematic and vicious attack against the media of Trinidad and Tobago, against journalists in this country. It represents an orchestrated plan to suppress the media in this country so as to cover up what? To cover up wrongdoings? No, Mr. Speaker; no, Mr. Speaker.

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We look at another email, just to understand what I am saying; and this one is coming from one "anan" to captaingarygriffith, whoever he is. "We doh know these people." He said:

"There... ' is an article a reporter from"—the—"Guardian called me about involving our boys"—'our boys' we suspect Ish and Steve—"I need you to get your feelers out there and nip the story. Call the Sunday Guardian Editor and threaten her with ads if you>have too<just make sure the article does not come out. Will call you later."

Mr. Speaker, how can we, in a democratic society, ask ourselves, search ourselves, look inward now, do some self-introspection, get involved and embroiled in something like this? How can we?

Mr. Speaker, I go to just one other, where it says Monday September 10, 2012 from one, a-n-a-n-d@tstt.co.tt, and where it says:

"Do a trace on her"—meaning the reporter, one Denyse Renne—"every reporter has skeletons in their closet and post it to our"—Facebook—"people. Find out how...she quoted from something she has no access too. I want this by this evening and want to know who is her source."

Mr. Speaker, I am very, very concerned about the legal advice—because this is where an investigation has to take place—the legal advice given to the Attorney General from James Lewis QC.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the Member for Port of Spain South has expired.

Motion made: That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mr. N. Hypolite*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: You may continue, hon. Member.

5.20 p.m.

Miss M. Mc Donald: [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you my colleague from Laventille West and, indeed, the rest of my bench, I thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I look at another attack on the media here. When—and it is coming from one captaingarygriffith@hotmail.com to one a-n-a-n-d@tstt.net.tt. It says:

"Will check with DPP status and give you a report... The reporter does have a"—story, and that reporter is Miss Denyse Renne—"The reporter does have a

history. She has a file...it's really touch and go. She was in Florida at an institution in late 2003; attempted suicide. Her family are PNM, dad was in jail and recently released. Also added some stuff and sent it to"—Facebook—"They will take it from there."

And yet another one coming from one a-n-a-n-d to one s-u-r-u-j-r-a-m-b-a—some surujrambachan@hotmail.com, I do not know that guy. I do not know the person. But this is what was said from one "anan" to one surujrambachan:

"This"—"B"—"is a becoming a problem to me. I'm told she has copies of documents and possibly cheques. I don't want to"—leave anything to chance. I want that dealt with, find a way. I passed—it—"to"—Facebook—"and they would"—deal with—"her..."

I cannot say that word; unparliamentary.

Mr. Speaker, what this is saying is that whoever these people are, they would go at no lengths in order to cover their tracks. And, actually, Mr. Speaker, even to threaten, threaten the media in this country, suppress them and threaten the media in this country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, having received this document and after careful consideration, these particular emails, I can tell you, unlike what the Attorney General said, it was, indeed, sent to the Office of the President and the Attorney General said if you did not see one month or two months, or three months, fine. But it has been lodged at the Integrity Commission's office, it is just that there is no Integrity Commission in place. But I also want to put on record that the President, in fact, sent a letter to the Prime Minister asking the Prime Minister to explain certain things surrounding the early proclamation of section 34, and to date, Mr. Speaker, absolutely no response from the Prime Minister to the, well, I would say the former President's letter. So we await that.

Mr. Speaker, what we have done, we have done our duty as a responsible Opposition. [*Desk thumping*] We have filed a substantive Motion where we can highlight the abuse of our democratic institutions. We also highlight, Mr. Speaker, what we have been saying all along, that there exists a conspiracy, that time last year there existed a conspiracy to hoodwink not only Parliament, but the parliamentary Opposition and the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Where do we go from here now, Mr. Speaker? What is the procedure in other countries? And the first thing that came to mind is that Watergate scandal. The Watergate scandal was a political scandal. There was a break-in at the Democratic

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National Committee's office at Watergate Office Complex in Washington, and the then administration, the Richard Nixon administration, attempted to cover up its involvement. The scandal eventually led, Mr. Speaker, to the resignation of Richard Nixon. The scandal also resulted in the indictment, the trial, conviction and incarceration of 43 persons, a lot of them being Nixon's top administration officials.

But what is worthy to note, Mr. Speaker, is that the administration, just as the Attorney General behaved here this afternoon, the administration and their supporters accused the media, they accused the media of making wild accusations—just how they accuse us of making wild accusations here this afternoon and putting too much emphasis on the story, from tomorrow you would hear them—and having a bias against the administration. The media noted that most of the reporting turned out to be accurate—that is United States—and the competitive nature of the media guaranteed massive coverage.

Mr. Speaker, this just aside, it was reported that application to journalism schools reached an all-time high in 1974, for the way people saw how the media handled that Watergate scandal, a lot of people decided to go into journalism. But, Mr. Speaker, due to the vigilant press in the United States, they got the type of outcome, the US citizens got the type of outcome that they wanted. So, Mr. Speaker, the time has come that all right-thinking persons in Trinidad and Tobago should call, should call for a proper investigation into the circumstances surrounding the early or the premature proclamation of section 34. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, when I looked at this, I thought the best way to go would have been under a commission of enquiry. You would recall that the former administration, when there were lots of concerns about the construction sector in this country, we initiated, the Attorney General initiated—remember the Uff Commission of Enquiry into the construction sector. But we had the temerity, we had the courage to investigate ourselves. But, Mr. Speaker, you see under the Commissions of Enquiry Act, it is the Government that holds the purse strings, and it is the Government that would have to fund the commission of enquiry. Mr. Speaker, knowing the track record of this Government, it would never get off the ground; never.

So, Mr. Speaker, what do we do, because we, the Opposition, must protect our democracy at all times. [*Desk thumping*] Our democracy, Mr. Speaker, is priceless. We must protect it. So, Mr. Speaker, we, the Opposition, would call for international investigation. We want international investigative assistance. We want assistance from the FBI; we want assistance from Scotland Yard. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, this is too serious and this has gone too far; this has gone too far. Section 34 has gone too far.

Mr. Speaker, I expect that the Government would put up a fight. I expect them to say this is hocus-pocus information. But, Mr. Speaker, up to now the AG has spoken, but the AG has not denied, has not denied writing any of those emails. He has not denied it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I call on, I call on—I looked at what the Prime Minister herself said when she debated the Interception of Communications Bill, November 26, 2010, this is what the Prime Minister said, I quote her:

"Nobody has a more sacred obligation to"—uphold—"the law than those who make the law."

So I call on the Prime Minister and her Government, and we make this call from the Opposition Bench to forthwith, to forthwith launch some kind of investigation, tell us, come clean, what is happening with section 34, come clean. The country, the citizens await, await this call.

5.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, and I call out, I call out one of their partners in this Government; I call out the COP; I call on the Member of Parliament for Tunapuna, the hon. Winston Dookeran, I call you, stand up and be counted. I call on the Member of Parliament for San Fernando West, hon. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan. I call on the member for St. Augustine, hon. Prakash Ramadhar. I call on the Member for Arima, Pastor Rodger Samuel—you remember you stood up here and you told us about a year to two ago, Mr. Speaker, he said to us that the PNM must atone for their sins. But you see, I want you now, I want you now to do the same thing with your side. I want you to do that. [*Desk thumping*]

What is good, Mr. Speaker, what is good for the goose, must be good for the gander. Remember that. I call on the Member of Parliament for D'Abadie/O'Meara, the hon. Anil Roberts. I call on the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air, Mr. Lincoln Douglas. [*Interruption*] "Yuh know what I waiting for?" I want all of you all and I will sit here, if it is until 2.00 in the morning, 6.00 in the morning, I want to hear all six of you stand up here and pledge your undying support to this cabal on this issue. I want to see you all do that. I want to see you all do that. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the DPP and what has happened with the DPP, the attack on the DPP, and, again, what is the role of the DPP? The DPP is supposed to give us independent advice, he is supposed to be monitoring our criminal justice system in this country. And what has happened, they have conspired, whoever these people are, whoever they are. Mr. Speaker, I think one of the worst ones that

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I have read, one of the worst ones that they are going to send, they are going to tap the office of the DPP, instructions are being given to tap that office; and also the DPP, to offer the DPP a position as a High Court judge and get him out of the way and then get the Chief Justice to appoint a new DPP.

Mr. Speaker, I have placed these things on the table this afternoon, and now I ask this honourable House to do the right thing. I always say that this House has no place for egos, none. Some of the Members in here on the Government side, might be the first time you are hearing this, and I am sure it might have—you should have some sort of concerns. But, Mr. Speaker, I call on this Government, I have called on this Government who, as I said, under every—under each key institution, the Judiciary, the DPP, the parliamentary Opposition and the media, they have abused, they have undermined and, therefore, we have lost confidence.

I, therefore, say, Mr. Speaker, that I support the Member for Diego Martin West and hon. Leader of the Opposition in this Motion and we hope it will not die here and I, certainly, Mr. Speaker, will tell you it will not die.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*].

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara, Minister of Sport.

The Minister of Sport (Hon. Anil Roberts): Mr. Speaker, I am indeed concerned, I am indeed terribly concerned that a learned attorney, a parliamentarian, an intelligent patriot of Trinidad and Tobago, would have just given a contribution here in this Parliament and, throughout it, refers to a document that she has no idea where it came from, she has no idea of the authenticity, she has no idea of the veracity, she has no idea of who wrote it, who talked about it and yet she makes her entire contribution on the suitability of a government to lead, on the suitability of a Prime Minister, on the suitability of the entire governance structure in Trinidad and Tobago, an entire argument on something presented here to this Parliament that the hon. Member for Diego Martin West said he had for six months, yet Port of Spain South is calling on the FBI, on Scotland Yard, on all international agencies, yet for six months the Leader of the Opposition who had these pieces of paper, could not present here in six months.

He could have gotten anybody, FBI, Scotland Yard, SSA, Commissioner of Police, anybody to verify this. The author, the gentleman—the Member of Parliament came here, it is his Motion, he came well prepared, there was a nice podium, glass, he came up prepared to present, and for six months he could not come to this Parliament and say, "I got a consultant in IT, forensic IT to suggest, to investigate and give the veracity and read out", a consultant, an expert, somebody

of note to say that these emails were absolutely 100 per cent legitimate. In six months, he does nothing but come here and reads out some emails. In six minutes I have just noted some glaring issues with this document. And having been on radio in a past life and knowing full well that there is no cover of privilege and receiving many documents in mailbox, under mat, under door, under all sorts of things; the Calder Hart so-called email that came, I had it two years before it became popular, never used it once because, on one scanty glance, would show that it was filled with innuendo, hypothesis, emotion and not facts. Here we are in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, and let us say how serious this is, let us pretend for a moment that what the Leader of the Opposition has presented here is fact, that it is absolutely 100 per cent correct, let us pretend that. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Partap: That is not possible.

Hon. A. Roberts: Well, let us pretend. This means, while you may think it is funny, this already has gone out internationally, global. This means that the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Attorney General, senior Cabinet Ministers, advisor to the Prime Minister, possibly guilty of conspiring to commit murder, assassination, pervert the course of justice *[Desk thumping]* while they clap, they think it is a joke, Mr. Speaker. I cannot help them. They think it is a joke, so let us pretend that this is correct. Then I ask, if this is so serious, and a Leader of the Opposition had this for six months: Did he make a report to the police?

Hon. Member: No.

Hon. A. Roberts: He should have come and said as he got this and he checked out and corroborated, he immediately went to the nearest police station, and these are serious criminal charges with penalties of life imprisonment. But the Leader of the Opposition did not go to the police and ask them to investigate, to investigate the serious charges. He did not do that. He holds it for six months, comes here, puts up a big show and starts to say that this Government—not only that, he makes up a Motion that none of his colleagues knew about. And when you read the Motion, the entire motion is based on these pieces of paper.

I thought I was going to come here and I will go through in my contribution and show you that in the past, when you are talking about attacks on the media, DPP, Parliament, Judiciary, the electorate and so on, the PNM knows about that. I will get into that in a while but I am deeply disturbed by what is presenting itself today in the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago as a serious debate—just glancing at these, just the first page. So the honourable Leader of the Opposition is saying that an Attorney General will email Prime Minister and put

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subject "Hide details", "Money owed", all of these great, sensational headlines on an email, first and foremost.

Secondly, in this document there is an email, anan@gmail.con, c-o-n. In six months you did not see that and say, "But something is wrong with that. If you send, it would not go, there is no ".con", so how it came here? How it print out? Who it went to?" anan@gmail.con. [*Crosstalk*]

Furthermore, but, furthermore, if I am sending an email to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, he might have two or three emails, if I am sending it to him, do I put all three? I send which one, whichever one if he has many. I do not take my time to go and put three emails to send to one person. Here they have an email, a message to anand—[*Interruption*—excuse me, I sat quietly and listened, Mr. Speaker, I sat and listened and now they are disturbing me.

Mr. Speaker: You have my protection.

Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Sir.

Here it is, they put anan—a-n-a-n—@gmail, and then they put a colon, and then anand@tstt. So you sending an email to one person at two addresses, you want to make sure they get it. Also, when you see, if you know emails, you would see the normal structure of an email, and these appear to not be the norm. Are you telling me in six months the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the entire PNM team could not get some experts to go through and check the veracity and come here with a sworn affidavit of some expert to say these things make sense? You mean the hon. Leader of the Opposition came here by himself, did not share it with his learned colleagues and came here and brought us and in presenting a case that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is involved in a conspiracy to assassinate?

Furthermore, in one of the emails, and Port of Spain South—I am very disappointed—Port of Spain South read one, and here it is, this one came from this so-called a-n-a-n@ gmail.com on Saturday, September 08, to captaingarygriffith and so on, and it says:

"There's an article a reporter from *Guardian* called me about involving our boys.."

Well, they determined who "our boys" is. It is brilliant. I thought our boys are the Soca Warriors or the Red Force or George Bovell. "I eh know", but:

"involving our boys.. I need you to get your feelers out there and nip the story. Call the Sunday Guardian..."

I want the media to listen to this very carefully because I need the media to assist me, because it says:

"Call the Sunday Guardian Editor and threaten her with ads if you have too<just make sure the article does not come out."

All right.

So the hon. Attorney General is instructing an advisor to call a *Sunday Guardian* editor to tell them "doh print ah story or else and we eh read that in de *Guardian*. That woulda be the story. How come we didn' read that in de *Guardian*?" And this did not strike the Leader of the Opposition as maybe questionable? The *Guardian* who he is very friendly with, would let a member of the People's Partnership call the editor and say, "Listen to me, take out da story or else no ads, no money", and that did not make it to the front page of the *Guardian*? I find that a bit strange. I find that very curious.

"We moving along", and I have only looked through this, Mr. Speaker, not six months, you know, six minutes, like Doug E. Fresh. I did not have six months to go through this. And the Leader of the Opposition comes in this House—I thought it such an honour to be in this House but today is a sad day when we look through here, I read an email, and the Leader of the Opposition said—read it out. I will not deal with some of the language. When I checked some of the language and so on, I can tell you that in three years I have never heard the hon. Attorney General refer to the Prime Minister as "my lady," whether in Cabinet, in Parliament, in relaxation, in political meetings, I have never heard that. So when you go through some of the English, you would see that there are certain things that we do not say, but this is very interesting.

There is an email here that the Leader of the Opposition alluded to, involving the US Embassy, and he read it out and he said that they spoke to Thomas, and he said Thomas Smitham—and I hope I am pronouncing it—Smitham, the chargé d'affaires at the embassy. There is one big problem, Mr. Speaker. The date of the so-called email is September, September 19. Mr. Thomas Smitham did not arrive in Trinidad and Tobago until November 2012. [*Desk thumping*]

5.40 p.m.

Thomas Smitham, *Hansard*, Leader of the Opposition, six months, September 19, email about Thomas, say Thomas Smitham, Thomas Smitham was not in the country, check—call national security, call Immigration, call the Embassy, check it out. And we are here discussing that we have no confidence in a Government

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and a Prime Minister because somebody collected a bunch of paper with a bunch of stories on it and we are actually listening to the Opposition debate this.

I thought the Opposition would come with some facts and go through in the Motion how this Government has attacked the Judiciary, how this Government has attacked the Office of the DPP, the parliamentary Opposition and—well, you attack the Opposition because you all are not really worthy of being inside of here that—we could say that one, and the media.

But let me also just indicate, and I will leave this—and for the media, please, before we embarrass the country on words that were said in this august House, I would love the media to investigate, get a copy of this, check it out. "Doh" take six months like the Leader of the Opposition and bring it back here like this, check it out, check this veracity, see if it makes sense to you, see if the English adds up, see if the addresses add up, see if that is the form and fashion of what takes place, see if Mr. Smitham was here and not here. You all do your investigation before you spoil and damage the reputation of our beloved country. That is why I am a little sad. I am a little sad today because, you see me, I love the politics, I love it, "yuh understand". I want to make sure they never come back, but I would not go to any and all costs, Mr. Speaker, I will not make up things, I will not come in this House and discuss things that are not factual. So let us get into a little bit of facts. I do not know what Twitter is, Mr. Speaker, "ah just hear it, ah see it, I know George Bovell does tweet, and people does follow." I have no idea.

About two weeks ago, I was talking to a friend and she said, "You know, I am following you on Twitter." I said, "How you could be following me on Twitter? I have no Twitter. I doh know 'bout Twitter, I doh know how to set up Twitter and I doh know how to spell Twitter." I have never sent a tweet, nor can I tweet.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me just tell you and all hon. colleagues, as I scroll up to find it, I can now tell you all that Anil with my old Gayelle picture—I had a website when I was Spalk in a blue jersey in a position like this, you know. Well, they have that picture and they have anil@anilroberts, you all can go check it out. I have 283 followers and I have sent 36 tweets, me, I have sent 36 tweets, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: "Yuh" have plenty time.

Hon. A. Roberts: And at the time of this—this was sent about an hour ago, six people were following my last tweet. [*Laughter*] So, Mr. Speaker, I want to know if next week when somebody tweet something on this, the Leader of the Opposition would take six months to come and tell me that I was disingenuous and not doing the right thing because he saw a tweet from me.

So you see, when they sit down here and they play games with serious business, it is not funny. This is the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. That is the Leader of Opposition standing up in the Parliament and going live on Channel 11 throughout the world, going immediately on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, all of this and talking about two piece "ah" paper, that he had for six months and with just a cursory glance, this cannot even be utilized in a place of more comfort.

Mr. Speaker, I move on. I thought we would come and we would see, we would hear some issues that the Leader of the Opposition wanted to bring about to call a Motion of no confidence in a Prime Minister. You see, I am not sure if he understands it, if he makes good points, and this is about his third try, three strikes and he should be out, but in the PNM success is ensured when you do not perform well, you stay there long. But you come here and does [*sic*] not present an iota of evidence to show, other than some fabricated pieces of paper that anybody could see. I "doh" know where that come from, to show that this Government has disrespected any of our institutions, but I can tell you, if I was to come here and move a Motion of no confidence in the PNM, the first thing I would start with is the electoral process.

5.50 p.m.

Everybody in this country knows that since 2006 local government elections were due and those over there postponed it for four long years until the people vote them out, and we on this side, under the Member for Siparia and the Prime Minister, called local government elections. So let us face it. The essence of democracy is when the people have the opportunity to vote. Those on that side did not—they denied the people their constitutional right to vote for four long years and they come here to talk about us, disrespecting institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I also heard in one of these emails—and let me just say that before the honourable Chief Justice was Chief Justice, I happened to know him very well. I coached his children and he is a man of impeccable character and I would not bring him in the debate. I hope and I was saddened to see that the Leader of the Opposition would read out one of these things and mention Chief Justice, and state that somebody could influence the Chief Justice in appointing somebody else. That is a total impossibility. If anybody lives in this country and understands the Chief Justice, they will know that he is beyond reproach. He cannot be influenced in any form or manner. He is an independent soul and an intelligent man. So that alone would have told you that something was wrong with this document. But for six months, the Leader of the Opposition had this and could not do anything to test its veracity and comes and stakes his political career on this document.

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In fact, before I go forward, when it is proven by the other intelligent members of the People's National Movement that this document is totally ridiculous, totally false and is of no merit, I call on the General Council of the PNM to institute the Constitution and have the Leader of the Opposition removed as political leader of the PNM as soon as it is proven that this document is false and should have never been brought to the Parliament and disseminated worldwide. [*Desk thumping*] So we will see if the PNM is a serious party or if they are going to make the ghost of Dr. Williams even sadder, because today is a sad day.

Hon. Member: Manning is shopping; "he buying" shirts already.

Hon. A. Roberts: The PNM Government, if we recall when we are talking about institutions—and this Motion suggests that the Prime Minister and this Government does not respect our independent institutions. The People's National Movement Government presented the population with a document towards constitutional reform of which 11 versions were brought about, of which they knew nothing about it—but the Leader did—and everybody, every constitutional authority in the land, on seeing that version, said that they had nothing to do with it because it was the most dictatorial undemocratic document ever purported to be foisted on the people of Trinidad and Tobago, with the Executive President having control over the arms of the Parliament, the Judiciary, the DPP, making appointments across the board. That was the PNM consultation. That was the PNM constitutional reform. We have constitutional reform now under the Minister of Legal Affairs, that across Trinidad and Tobago—I think the last one just occurred this weekend.

Hon. Member: Tomorrow evening.

Hon. A. Roberts: Tomorrow evening is the last one—

Hon. Member: Point Fortin.

Hon. A. Roberts:—in Point Fortin—so, Point Fortin take note—where anybody and everybody can give their opinion on where they want to see the document, where they want to see the Constitution, any changes. That is how the People's Partnership does it, in consultation, asking, putting together. The PNM came with documents, people—the documents so scary nobody wants to own it. Everybody say not me; not me and that. That is the PNM. And you bring a Motion of no confidence here.

Mr. Speaker, as far as I see, I am not bringing you into the debate, but the Speaker is an integral institution that must be independent. This Government has not interfered in the Speaker, or attempt to move the Speaker, or attempt to chastise the Speaker, or attempt to lock-up the Speaker in his house. This Government has not done that.

In 1995, they put up the poor Speaker, a female Speaker—she had to drink coconut water in Woodbrook because she was not allowing them to go with their agenda. The PNM even attacked the Speaker, but yet they come to us and saying that they have no confidence in our Prime Minister and the People's Partnership.

These are the sorts of things I thought I will come here today, Mr. Speaker, and hear the Leader of the Opposition come with, hard cold facts that cannot be disputed, but instead he comes with some fantasy. I could come with a fantasy too. If we come back tomorrow, I could write a nice fantasy for them about emails and what he did and what he did not do and what happened in Tobago and why they went Jamaica. I could do a whole fantasy emails tomorrow, but I will not do that, Mr. Speaker, because that will not be fair.

Mr. Speaker, the DPP. This Motion talks about our Government, the Prime Minister's interference with the DPP. This Government has not interfered with the DPP. This hon. Prime Minister, Member for Siparia, did not veto any DPP appointment, did not determine or try to figure out who should go and who should not go. There has been no interference whatsoever in the DPP. What they have is this fabrication, this fantasy Star Trek 4, stating that somebody says they going and tap. When we say "tap", Mr. Speaker, we mean water. "Bring some government juice; geh me ah tap ah water; geh meh a glass of water from the tap." We do not even use that terminology. But here it is, all of a sudden, the Leader of the Opposition, because he talking about Watergate, start to talk about "tap". We are going to tap the DPP. I mean, in Parliament, let us be serious.

Hon. Member: We are going to tap the DPP.

Hon. A. Roberts: No, that is what he is talking about; talking about Watergate and Nixon and this Government is going to tap the DPP. When we hear about tap is when you have a head like mine and it sweet; give you a "calpet", you get tap in school, but he is talking about this tap. But the DPP, people who live here and know the facts will know that the PNM veto DPP appointments. The PNM Prime Ministers used to use their veto powers to determine who will get into that office. We live here. I thought we will get some facts like this.

Well, the Integrity Commission is another independent institution. This Government has not attacked the Integrity Commission. They have been allowed to do their work without interference, with full funding, no problems whatsoever. But, this hon. Prime Minister, we are here defending a Prime Minister from a Motion from the Leader of the Opposition. The Prime Minister has an entire country to run, an entire constituency, a Cabinet, entire Government and yet the

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Prime Minister had the time, found the time, to respect the Integrity in Public Life Act and file her declaration on time. The person who filed this Motion could not file on time and he has less work to do. Yet, we are here talking about a Motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister who filed and respect the law, but the person who filed it, for whatever reason did not respect the law.

We have other institutions like the EMA. The EMA right now under the People's Partnership operates and gives their instruction: the CEC and all the—you have to fill out the form; you have to make sure to get a project going, you have to get their clearance. The aquatic centre, the velodrome, the tennis centre; before tractor could move we get clearance and we make sure that everything is there.

Under the PNM, EMA, DMA, they did not care about anything. They went down Tarouba with Calder Hart with \$124 million upfront and they went and started building without CEC—without certificate of environmental clearance. The taxpayers then had to pay a fine of \$150,000 because the PNM did not respect independent institutions and did not follow the law. "Dem so big dey doh care bout de law, go and build. And here if you have a fine, take the taxpayers' money and pay it." I thought I was coming to hear something like this, some facts; not a set of dreams works; not a set of—let me not even hold that, I might get rash.

The Commissioner of Police, and I say "police", yes, because police could investigate anything including people who bring scurrilous, spurious allegations of a serious nature in the Parliament with some fabricated email.

6.00 p.m.

Commissioner of Police—and for Port of Spain South, I am sure she misspoke, because she is a lady who checks her information and so on, to make the categorical statement that this Commissioner of Police acting now, acted as long or longer than James Philbert, is patently false. James Philbert had three—

Mr. Cadiz: Renewals.

Hon. A. Roberts:—renewals, each one six months or about 18 months. I do not think the Canadian Commissioner of Police, who was resigned or removed or whatever, has gone more than 18 months ago, so it is patently false to say that Acting Commissioner of Police Williams is acting as long or longer than James Philbert. That is totally false.

But even then, the Commissioner of Police, James Philbert, nice "fella", but the PNM utilized or maneuvered the Speaker at the time to extend a break so that the then Prime Minister could go down, stop Parliament, stop the serious debate

in the House, to go and walk through Woodford Square. We would never—"People's Partnership would never put God out our thoughts to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to extend a break so we could go and walk down on Wrightson Road because our supporters down dey". We did not do that; we would not do that; that was the PNM way, and they are talking about we are attacking independent institutions? They attack everything from independent come down the road to the ground. Nothing was safe under the PNM.

I thought I was coming here to hear something like that, not to hear a Leader of the Opposition have some jokey thing in his hand for six months, do nothing about it, do not investigate it, do not try to get some facts, come here looking for headlines, when it is totally irresponsible that across the globe—now, one or two headlines—some of the media might get it wrong—and hear that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was plotting to kill a reporter.

Then when our rankings go down internationally, they are going to say it is because of this Government, "yuh know", not because of the irresponsible statement of a 20-year parliamentarian. "So this is not ah jokey debate, this is not ah kicks debate; this is ah serious thing" and I am deeply disappointed, whether he wants to believe it or not, in the Leader of the Opposition today. Today is his worst day in Government, in Parliament, in the history of his political career. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: Worst!

Hon. A. Roberts: The public service, "yuh not hearing that the People's Partnership is trying to impact on the public servants and who geh promotion and who not". There were countless cases at the Privy Council. Ramjohn—

Mr. Sharma: Feroza.

Hon. A. Roberts: What? Feroza Ramjohn—about six or seven cases, even current PSs when they scored high in their appraisal, that former PNM regime would not allow them to be promoted. They had to go—public servants had to go to the Privy Council to fight for their right to perform in their duty and service to God and country, because the PNM "didn' like dem". I thought I was coming here to say—for them to say that "we just so, but we not so, what we hear is ah set ah email".

Then, there was also the element of contract Permanent Secretary, Mr. Speaker. I know it sounds like "ah" oxymoron, but the PNM wanted to get—now, the reason you have a Permanent Secretary is to ensure that all the checks and balances, transparency and accountability are there, so the Minister will have policy and would like to get things done, the Permanent Secretary will make sure

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that all the t's are crossed and the i's dotted. "But the PNM didn' like dat, they wanted ah PS who dey friendly with so dey could do dey own thing. They concocted to contract PS, yuh know." So you have a Permanent Secretary on contract for three years. Now, if you could understand that, I saying it and I cannot understand it, Mr. Speaker. That is PNM!

Mr. Cadiz: Permanent contract!

Hon. A. Roberts: Permanent; and they are coming to talk to us about attacking institutions. They came here with nothing, they leave here with nothing, and "ah calling upon Balisier House, general council, when it is proven that this is ah total fraudulent document", to remove Diego Martin West as the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the PNM.

Hon. Member: Patrick ready, boy.

Hon. A. Roberts: Next thing, I thought the Leader of the Opposition was going to come and tell us that we attacking labour; that we do not want to settle negotiations, that we are terrible. [*Crosstalk*] Well, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, in 2009, Hilton workers under the PNM, since December 24, 2001, the PNM took over, Hilton workers worked on 2003 salaries until 2009 and they are saying we attack labour. When we came in—where is the Minister of labour, I wish he was here right now—there were over 59 unsettled wage negotiations from 2008. Who was in charge then? Not Partnership.

Who can recall in 2005 when oil was \$148 a barrel and gas was 13.61 per mmbtu? Money flowing! They had budgeted, Mr. Speaker, at 6 US per mmbtu, so that gap, plenty money, the PNM told the labour unions "tighten yuh belt". Here it is we have to come and deal with 24 billion Clico, 2 million in back-pay for VAT and 5 billion in back pay for contractors who did work under them, and they are saying that we attacking independent institutions? The institutions did not exist for them to attack it, they obliterated all.

"I thought I was gonna come here and hear some ah dat, but the hon. Leader of the Opposition, who want to be Prime Minister, come here with ah set ah email—ah set ah email that he had six months" and could not come here and say, "Listen, I got this six months ago, I went to the FBI. I called in the US and asked them for some experts. I got my financiers, my rich boys, who getting plenty rent from the Government to pay ah company to analyze these and get through the back of it, and here I present a report that these emails are totally 100 per cent accurate" and not six months and nothing. Yet, "yuh come here and questioning ah Prime Minister" who has now carried the economy into growth where even

ANSA McAL, Neal & Massy, all of these companies are saying they are seeing the wheels of business churning, job creation, and you come here to waste Parliament time.

"In another place somebody was saying when I bring the anti-doping Bill, I was wasting Parliament time, I want to know what that person have to say about this here today. Ah waiting to hear." [*Interruption*] Because if "ah" Anti-Doping Bill to protect our athletes to ensure that Trinidad and Tobago is not embarrassed, to move towards sports tourism, is wasting Parliament time, I want to know what fabricated fantasy emails mean. I would like to know. "Ah see he looking so ah know he will answer meh, cuz he ah good fella, yuh know. His only bad point is he is ah PNM." [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, now we move onto the media—the media, the media! I nearly choked—"cause I was al'right, I was ah lil media practitioner, radio, TV and newspapers. I was, yuh know, was al' right, not too bad."

Mr. Cadiz: "Yuh thought yuh was good."

Hon. A. Roberts: "Ah thought ah was good, buh, yuh know, no big thing." But, when I read this Motion that the Leader of the Opposition was accusing the People's Partnership and the Prime Minister of attacking the media, I must say "ah choke on meh channa [*Laughter*] with plenty pepper. Ah really choke, ah had to swallow down with ah red solo".

Let me tell you about PNM and the media. "Ah doh have enough time." I will have to try to make it short. In 1960, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Williams—the great Dr. Williams—1960, April 22, the PNM organized a rally with speeches in Woodford Square, and on the platform, Dr. Williams ceremoniously burnt the seven deadly sins of colonialism of which number six was six copies of the *Trinidad Guardian*. So the PNM start off—"People's Partnership, we ent burn no *Guardian*. We might be taking one or two ah dem to court because dey didn' check dey stories and so on, but dats normal". That is what the courts there for; that is not an attack.

In 1970, the PNM again—in the early 1970s, Jimmy Bain Saga, Chairman of the State broadcasting entities, TTT and Radio 610, carried out a virtual reign of terror against the Radio 610 newsroom, firing those he saw as errant professionals, who allegedly were defying PNM orders not to cover certain events and not to give airtime to certain public figures.

Chief among these figures was George Weekes in particular. He had, in my view, long been regarded as public enemy number one.

6.10p.m.

Well, let us move up now closer to home, March 24, 2010, election time.

"Prime Minister"—then, the hon.—"Patrick Manning has accused"—this was from the *Guardian*—"the country's drug dealers of being 'against me'"—against San Fernando East—"ever since his government's acquisition of tens of millions of dollars worth in security technology..."

The Prime Minister said—the minute, ladies and gentlemen, the minute those boats were properly deployed, this is our fast patrol crafts and our interceptors, we began to notice attacks on the Prime Minister in the media.

"Yuh getting de message?"

"We began to notice attacks becoming more and more strident."

The PNM is saying the People's Partnership "attacking the media". This is PNM telling the media, basically accusing the media of being in cahoots with drug dealers. I think that is an attack. "I eh sure, but ah feel that is an attack."

Then we had the Member for Diego Martin North/East and I noticed he is conspicuously absent from this debate.

Dr. Griffith: "He dust it."

Hon. A. Roberts: "Ah mean" he is the best orator. He is the best debater on the PNM side. I would think that when there is a Motion of no confidence of such a critical nature "yuh doh leave yuh Lionel Messi on de bench. You come tuh debate tuh remove a Prime Minister and a government and make yourself Prime Minister and you leave yuh big player, yuh Russel Latapy on de bench? I doh understand that one." I cannot understand that. And when the Leader of the Opposition is wrapping up I hope he lets me know where Diego Martin North/East is, why he is not here and why he did not think his Motion of no confidence was worth staying here, delaying a trip, unless, of course, it is a health issue, but you could clear it up.

Well, here we have Saturday, May 22, 2010, because the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. leader says the People's Partnership "attacking the media, we doh like media, we fraid media, we fighting media." Let us hear what the Member for Diego Martin North/East had to say at that time.

"Works and Transport Minister Colm Imbert has called on supporters of the...(PNM) to deal with the media over coverage of the 2010 general election..."

'You must deal with them this media that we have, this television station and these newspapers,' he added." You must deal with them.

"Now, what that means?" You see, when we are on a platform, politicians, we have all our supporters. They are very animated. They come from a wide cross section of the country, different intellectual backgrounds but all of them passionately supporting their party. What would an hon. Member of such great intelligence mean when he tells supporters: deal with the media? "Well ah doh know" but all I know is that if we go back to PNM in 1986, we could see what could happen when you say things like that.

In 1986, then Prime Minister, George Michael Chambers of the PNM declared that he was not going to speak under the lights at a political meeting leading up to the general election. The crowd used his stated objection as a signal to almost "mash up" the place hurling insults, including pelting cups in the direction of not only the PNM crew but of any and all journalists that were present. I think that is an attack on the media. I "didn" hear any one of my colleagues from any of the parties on any platform telling people/supporters to deal with the media, that "dey not talking cause the media there and if the media there, they not—we doh do dat. Yuh cyah do dat. How yuh go do dat?"

Then there is another one, Laventille East/Morvant. In 2007:

"Don't call me junior minister. I'm a Minister of State,' an upset government minister told a Guardian reporter...

MP"—Minister Donna Cox—"for Laventille East/Morvant, wants the media to stop referring to her as a junior minister. I'm not a junior minister. There is no such thing as a junior minister. The correct title is Minister of State, that's what I am. So you all must stop calling me that..."

and all yuh better listen because yuh see wha' happen in Balisier house. All yuh be careful." [*Laughter*]

"So we attacking media? Not the People's Partnership." We love the media.

Miss Cox: And if—

Hon. A. Roberts: July 14, 2009. "Ah just showing yuh. Yuh see, dey bring ah Motion. Dey bring ah serious Motion and dey give no evidence that the Motion is even deserving of being tabled in this Parliament. It is ah waste ah time. But yuh come and talk about some email, some fantasy document, that in six minutes I could see if somebody brought this for me on Patrick Manning and the Member for San Fernando East or Diego Martin West, when I on radio and so on, I would put this right—just walk out, turn right for about 10 paces and four paces so, because that is where the water closet is, Sir. That is where I woulda put this" because I would have seen it as being totally malicious, fabricated and not based on fact.

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Furthermore, in six months, even if wanted to—because I was emotionally—I wanted get at them, in six months, I would have done something. I would have tried my best to verify the veracity, to make sure these things, if it was possible that they could be correct. But the Leader of the Opposition, he has all the resources, all these intelligence people and he did nothing. "Come here with this and embarrass himself, embarrass his party, embarrass Dr. Williams, embarrass the legacy of the PNM."

So I am waiting to see when it is totally proven that these things are fabricated. I am waiting to see what the General Council of the PNM—"cause they could wha dey want. Ah was born dey, ah will not dead dey, but ah know that they try to be proud." They try to do the right things, but today the PNM is embarrassed. "Dey have egg on dey face. They have fry egg, scramble egg, poach egg, all kinda egg" because this is not becoming of a Prime Minister in waiting and a Leader of the Opposition. This is not becoming of an eight-year-old debate. I am not even motivated to debate here. I am so disappointed. "It is like coming to swim ah Olympics and dey disqualify everybody and you alone hah tuh swim and then pretend yuh go and get ah gold medal." That is not nice. "Yuh like tuh beat people."

Let us go, July 14, 2009

Manning slams media

Now, remember "dey saying People's Partnership. We attacking media yuh know. We eh attack nobody."

Prime Minister Patrick Manning slammed the media Monday night for jumping all over Independent Senator Gail Merhair for voting with the Government to pass a Bill to postpone the local Government election for another year, while remaining silent on the no-vote of other Independents.

Manning lectured his audience on the role of the media, which he said is to educate and inform. He declared that he is not sure the media was performing their proper role. He was roundly criticized for that, although some of his supporters, like media owner Louis Lee Sing, said he was right.

Mr. Speaker, and that brings another point. You are talking about independent institutions, yet how can it be that Independent Senators at that time could possibly see the logic in postponing an election for another time? How is it that Independent Senators could agree to deny the citizens their right to vote for another time? One vote to postpone and the other stay quiet. "I doh see that happening now. I think that they doing a great job now. They very vociferous."

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. Dr. R. Griffith*]

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought when the Leader of the Opposition takes his time to create and fashion a Motion of No Confidence in the Prime Minister and the Government and state categorically that the People's Partnership is interfering in independent institutions, the media, the DPP, I thought he would come with some facts like this. "But I feel next week I going tuh file" a Motion of no confidence in the PNM from since 1962 and bring it back here because it looks like the argument is over.

6.20p.m.

He comes here, brings the entire Parliament, we are going to sit down here for 24 hours, where all of us could be working to serve people, could be passing legislation, and we are going to sit down here and debate some fanciful emails. This is what he brought us here for, Mr. Speaker? I think our time is a little bit more valuable than this. When you are talking about the media—look, in 30 minutes I cannot even go through it, these attacks by the PNM on the media, "and yuh talking 'bout de People's Partnership attacking media?"

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are some very intelligent PNM, "ah see one or two of them looking at meh, dey now worried, but ah will see dem, I will listen to dem, if they act correctly as their heart, minds and spirit are, because dey have some good PNM yuh know. Yuh hah to dig hard to find them, but yuh have some—[*Laughter*] and dey" are embarrassed by what has taken place here today, and I am looking forward to the next General Council meeting of the People's National Movement, because they brought a party with a great history into disrepute here this afternoon, with this spurious Motion, wasting Parliament time, the Speaker had to—everybody have to sit down here, *Hansard*, all the strangers—"ah doh like to call out dat, but that is how dey say ah have to say—in the House, media sitting down waiting for what? Not an iota of proof that we, the People's Partnership, attack de DPP. Where? Attack de Judiciary, where? Attack de media, where?" Yes we attack the Opposition because the Opposition is not very good. You cannot blame us for that.

But dealing with the media again, we now come to a few of the terrible attacks on the media. There was one, so much so, that a reporter of the *Newsday*, Andre Bago, the PNM ban him! Ban him from the parliamentary chamber, take him to

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the Committee of Privileges and came through, "put ah report and ban de man, banned ah reporter from doing his work," but luckily the UNC members were part of that Committee, luckily for democracy and they refused to sign such a document that will be an affront on the freedom of the press, that will attack "ah" reporter and prevent that reporter from plying his trade and earning a salary and doing his job. Good thing there were UNC Members at that time on the Privileges Committee, and they filed a minority report right here in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. Paper No. 12 of 2009, Committee of Privileges, House of Representatives 2009 session, PNM was in power—on the premature publication, right—"the facts there."

But the introduction of the minority report states:

"the undersigned members, constituting a minority within the Committee of Privileges (the Committee) hereby submit this report to be annexed to the Committee's report—because here we have the Committee's report", which was the PNM report which said to ban Andre Badoo, but the minority report says that this report is attached and the matter of banning a working journalist from Parliament.

"2.0 The undersigned members are categorically and emphatically against the banning of a working journalist from attending and covering the proceedings of Parliament as contemplated by Recommendation 2. We do so for the following reasons:"—reason—

"2.3 Recommendation 2, if accepted by the House, can be viewed as authoritarian, dictatorial and contrary to the expressed commitment of Trinidad and Tobago, to the fundamental right of *freedom of the press* as enshrined at section 4(k) of our Republican Constitution.

"So de PNM ban media, tell dem get out de Parliament, you cannot come. Even back then the UNC say, no, no, no, no, doh do dat, freedom ah de press is enshrined. It is too critical and they had the testicular fortitude not to sign that report, they put in ah minority report."

The second reason, they said:

"this punitive measure"—hear de language, they chose their adjectives very seriously, but de PNM did not care, ban reporters, no big ting, and you saying we attacking the media? We did'nt attack media, you all attack de media—"can also be interpreted as a violation of the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago to the principles of the Inter-American Press Association's, *Chapultepec* Declaration on press freedom."

This is why this year, two months ago they say that we moved up high in the ranks of press freedom, because they know the People's Partnership is for freedom of the press. [*Desk thumping*] "We not banning people, we not running down people, we not inciting people to pelt ting at media, we doh do dat, da'is de PNM way, not our way."

Dr. Gopeesingh: What year was that?

Hon. A. Roberts: This was 2009. The third point:

"this matter can lead to regional and international condemnation of the Parliament."

So the UNC Members were trying to protect the aura and stature of the Parliament, that the PNM did not really consider, they just want to ban "de man, ban him, throw him out, they did not understand the repercussions of banning ah reporter, but they are saying we attack de media."

"I thought Leader of Opposition coming to tell me dat I do dat. He come with some fabricated email and come here as ah serious man. I am so disappointed. I cannot believe it, but here I am giving him facts of why de PNM should never come back in power, people will not forget how they attack de media." [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: "Dey could never come back in power."

Hon. A. Roberts: Number four:

"this is also a denial of the enshrined fundamental right"—this is the minority report going against the PNM Government—"to work and the right to property without due process of law, contrary to the Constitutional provisions. The journalist in question is effectively suspended from his employment and deprived of his right to work as a journalist of Parliamentary Affairs."

Now, the three UNC Members go on to make recommendations as opposed to the PNM recommendation which was "ban him".

"In the circumstances, we cannot support Recommendation 2 and, for the above reasons ask that Members of the House reject the report of the Committee in its entirety."

The minority, the Members of Parliament of the UNC who signed this and refused to support the banning of "ah" journalist are: Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP, Member—"all yuh geh dem ah pong, because dey fought for press freedom." [*Desk thumping*] Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, Member—[*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: What! What!

Hon. A. Roberts:—and Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar—

Hon. Member: Ohhh yes!

Hon. A. Roberts:—Member—[*Desk thumping*] but look we sitting down here, "de Leader of the Opposition bring ah Motion, he cyar even sit down to listen to what we have to say, but wasting time". The Government—[*Interruption*]—ah?

Hon. Member: Who was on the PNM side? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. A. Roberts: North East, "me eh hah time with them." [*Laughter*] So we moving on, Mr. Speaker, "de PNM had de audacity to say that the People's Partnership attacking media. I went by my barber this morning, not to cut much, ah do hah much, but just to neaten up, to make sure ah look good for you, yuh know in de House, make sure we uphold ah kinda level, you understand? I listened to de radio, and his radio was on *I95.5*, well, yuh know *I95.5*. If *I95.5* see me now, dey go say dis suit eh looking good, right. So doh bother, all de ladies looking, dey smiling, ah looking good and so on, but *I95.5* go say ah was looking scruffy, scraggly and so on, dat is de way dey go, no big thing, dat is *I95.5*." But I did not call Mamu, my driver, and say: "boy leh we go down by *I95.5*, burst in there and shut down de place, but then again I am not de Prime Minister." Well in 2008, October 25—

Dr. Gopeesingh: "Yuh not de former" Prime Minister.

Hon. A. Roberts:—"ah, the Member for San Fernando East, PNM, was quite in south, yuh know. He does look sharp. Former Prime Minister, wah! His suits, nice black suit. I see de PNM have relaxed their standard of dress right now, but back then, when yuh ah PNM MP, you come out in ah spanking black suit, white shirt, looking good and San Fernando East was getting ah little fade, yuh know, trimming de sides and so on. Listening to de *Boom Champions* and two lil young boys, talking about CNG and the conversion and talking about how much it will cost to put ah conversion cylinder in dey trunk, is 10,000 Eh-heh, San Fernando East, de Prime Minister leave, he buss it with half ah fade, piece ah afro and piece come down—[*Laughter*] and he jump in he car, head down at 100 miles per hour, heading up de road to the North, block off Abercromby Street, and rush in de radio station to ensure dat those two lil young boys who talking CNG were off de radio. And we attack de media?"

6.30 p.m.

Dr. Gopeesingh: "And we doh like de media."

Hon. A. Roberts: "And we doh like de media; and this Motion is no confidence in the Prime Minister? The Prime Minister eh leave wherever she getting her hair set, whatever style and fashion, to go in any radio station because they talking something 'bout CNG that she doh like. I think we have to be ah little bit more careful."

"And then, of course, the famous or infamous people, ah mention it, Maha Sabha radio licence case. Attacking the media? We not attacking anybody. The People's Partnership is all for media. Yuh could talk wha yuh want, say wha yuh want. We may not answer you; that is our choice, but you could say what you want; do what you want; whether it is factual or whether it is like—we will have ah new word; we will call this Diego West—whether it is factual or Diego West because we cannot describe this as any other thing. This is a total affront to the respect, knowledge, ability, intellectual capital of the Members of Parliament who duly representing 700,000 people in here. We have 422,000 and PNM 289,000 people and we wasting time with Diego Martin West on some email that he had for six months and he shoulda just rested it next to the commode and left it there because this and nutten is the same thing."

But in the Maha Sabha case, unfortunately, some learned justices, the Privy Council, in describing the PNM and their ability or lack thereof, to be fair in the ability to allow citizens the ability to disseminate their message and to allow an enhanced freedom of the press, media and so on.

The PNM ensured that the Maha Sabha that represented a large portion of the population could not get their licence, but their friend and family got their licence in about two days. But that was okay under the PNM.

The independent institution of TATT, the Telecommunications Authority, who have to go through their processes in applications and so on, the PNM waived all those rules for Louis Lee Sing and I95 because that is their friend and you come here and talk about governance, transparency and equity? *[Interruption]*

Hon. Member: The Prime Minister at the time said he wanted to save the jobs.

Hon. A. Roberts: "Yes, but he didn't care about the jobs of the others." He wanted to save his friend job, and I wish him all the best. I hear he is not returning. Good riddance!

Hon. Member: He shopping, you know, he buying shirts.

Hon. A. Roberts: Now, moving right along, another attack on an institution—and this is why I really was shocked—how much time "dere"?—that Diego Martin West would bring this frivolous Motion because the Integrity Commission is an independent body appointed by the President to oversee all of us; to ensure that we follow proper procedures and we take care of the public purse. The Integrity Commission must not be hampered with in any way, form or fashion.

Hon. Member: Sixteen minutes.

Hon. A. Roberts: The Leader of the Opposition has not mentioned one time that this Government has attempted to or succeeded in influencing or impacting the work of the independent Integrity Commission, yet he, as a member of the PNM, he—good thing there was a Judiciary—was able to save himself from an attack by a member of the PNM, who usurped the authority of the Integrity Commission, who tried to guide them in a particular direction and led to the demise of the entire Integrity Commission; all people of high standing who had served this country; had impeccable records in jurisprudence; professors—the intellectuals of this country.

"But what happened? There was an issue—we not going into the details about Landate and so on—but the Integrity Commission, as with the laws of natural justice, if they investigating someone, supposed to let dem know: 'Ay, bossman, we investigating you. These are some of the claims against you. Present your arguments.'"

For some reason, these learned gentlemen and ladies did not do that, but what happened was, there was a letter from the then chairman, Gordon Deane, to the then Prime Minister, asking what to do, when to do and let us know how to do it. That is PNM style; not gangnam style. PNM style. They influenced the Integrity Commission to act against their own, far less for anybody on this side. God forbid the PNM coming back in! They are not talking about an external enemy, you know. They utilized the independent institution; they used the power of the Prime Minister to influence the Integrity Commission into acting, in the words of Justice Rajnauth-Lee, with misfeasance. That is a serious word, you know. That is a serious word to be applied to the behaviour of citizens of calibre who had gone through their entire careers and were successful in their professions but because the PNM put pressure on them to act in a wrong way, they are now scarred for life because they listened to the power of the PNM interfering in independent institutions.

"Yet I am here today, when the Leader of the Opposition does not even have the respect to sit dong and listen to his own Motion. He talked ah set ah ting bout some email, some fantasy, and run. He must ha gone Movie Towne now to watch Star Trek because Star Trek and wha he say is about de same thing; but he cannot siddong here, but he has an entire Government sittin dong here" to answer his Motion and he has brought nothing; he has done nothing; he has not researched; he has just made a joke of the Parliament and it is embarrassing for the PNM and the PNM—well, good luck to you all.

Hon. Member: Where is Rowley, boy?

Hon. A. Roberts: "Doh worry! Leh him go."

Hon. Member: "Where de President?"

Dr. Griffith: And the Prime Minister?

Hon. A. Roberts: Where is the Prime Minister? The Prime Minister "didn't" bring any Motion and I am here defending my Prime Minister and all these Members here and she has to defend herself from a spurious attack by the Leader of the Opposition. She has to defend the reputation of the country internationally because your Leader of the Opposition came with some rubbish, fantasy thing that cannot be proven, did not come, miles fabricated and comes here internationally and embarrasses the country. The Prime Minister is defending our nation now and that is where she is.

"So leh meh tell yuh", Mr. Speaker—

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Dr. Griffith: Matters of State.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, let me just say that it is clear—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Griffith: Matters of State.

Hon. A. Roberts: "No, no. Ignore flim. He is on flim, you know; do not worry bout that." Yeah. Ignore Laventille West, he is on "flim".

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is really a sad day in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago when a party with so much history, so much quality, that has done quite a bit for the country over 53 years, but for today to come into this Parliament, when the whole country is holding their breath, for a Motion of no confidence in Government—remember we are the Government now, you all may be the Government sometime next 20 years; not next few years, maybe in 20 years when "all ah allyuh gone". Your children might come back with a better brand, but when you are the Government, you do not waste time of Parliament; you do not do things to embarrass your country; you do not fabricate. You research, you bring facts and let the facts deal with the situation and let the chips fall where they may.

There is no need to fabricate things and today is a sad day, not only for Trinidad and Tobago, it is a sad day for the Leader of the Opposition. It is a sad day for the people of Diego Martin West. It is a sad day for the PNM and it is a sad day for governance since all that we can discuss is a bunch of emails fabricated, not authentic, not validated in any way and we come here now and we will sit here for the next 24 hours, wasting time, while the Leader of the Opposition goes to look for gravel to move by some hospital.

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

Dr. Griffith: Who is next?

Hon. Member: What is that? Nobody else want [*sic*] to stand up? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: It is their Motion.

Mr. Speaker: Anybody? Is anybody else going to speak on the Opposition Bench?

Hon. Member: No. [*Crosstalk*] [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Anybody else going to speak? [*Desk thumping*]

6.40 p.m.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, I am looking for the Leader of Government Business.

Mr. Roberts: [*Mr. Roberts sits in the chair of Leader of Government Business*] I am the Leader of Government Business. [*Laughter and desk thumping*] We have no more speakers right now.

Hon. Members: Close the debate. [*Crosstalk*] Go ahead, your Motion. Close it!

Mr. Roberts: "Where is de man to close it?"

Hon. Member: "He gone home; he embarrass! [*Crosstalk*] Bring Al-Rawi." [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I move that this debate be completed and wrapped up right now.

Mr. Speaker: Members, I want to make it very clear. It is a very serious matter.

Miss Mc Donald: That is right.

Mr. Speaker: If there is nobody else to speak, I am going to put the question—

Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker:—for conclusion. So, Members of the Opposition, it is your turn to speak in terms of the debate. If there is nobody else to speak on your bench, I would have no choice but to put the question for determination.

Hon. Member: Close the debate.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Diego Martin Central, please. [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

Hon. Member: "Oh my God!" [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Amery Browne (*Diego Martin Central*): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this debate. I want to thank my colleague, the Chief Whip, for the additional clarity so that we can proceed. I want to tell Members of the Government, be careful what you wish for, you just might get it, and I believe you are going to get it this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the contribution of the hon. Leader [*Interruption*]*—*Mr. Speaker, the Member for Couva South is disturbing me.

Miss Mc Donald: Yes. Always.

Mr. Speaker: Member for Couva South, if you are disturbing the hon. Member, I would ask you to observe Standing Order 40(b) and (c). Continue hon. Member.

Dr. A. Browne: Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to the presentation of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Diego Martin West, and then I listened to two Members opposite who attempted—well, who spoke on this Motion. First it was the Attorney General and then it was the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara and I can summarize their contributions into one phrase: take our word for it, this Motion is not true; take our word for it, this Motion is not true. But, Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough for the Lower House of Parliament and for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

They have broken—the Government has broken its word to the people of this country way too many times, and we have learnt. They have betrayed the trust of the people of this country way too many times, and they are not going to get away with that blasé dismissal today. We are not going to allow them to escape with that.

Mr. Speaker, they have gone through sector after sector; they have gone through community after community; and they have betrayed the trust of the people. All they have done is to remind us of the words of Dr. Eric Williams who bizarrely, his spectre was raised by the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara.

Hon. Member: He is a good man.

Dr. A. Browne: They remind us of his words. They remind us of the words of Dr. Eric Williams. The only alternative to the PNM is chaos and confusion. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, once again, I rise on a Motion of no confidence and I feel compelled to tell the Members of this Government after that very loud and boisterous contribution, I need to tell them, Members calm down, calm down. This Motion is not the end of the world; this Motion is not the end of the nation;

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this Motion is not the end of the Parliament, but it is my feeling, my suspicion, that this Motion will eventually be the end of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] This Motion spells the beginning of the end of the so-called People's Partnership in this country. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, but the writing was on the wall from very, very, early on. From their first week in Government, the writing was on the wall. I think what we are seeing today—[*Interruption*—Mr. Speaker, the Member for Couva South is defiant and obstructive, and he is affecting my contribution. I am not going to—

Mr. Speaker: Member, please.

Dr. A. Browne: Mr. Speaker, we saw it from the very first week that they were in Government. Members of the population have been awaking over time. Members of the various political parties have also been coming awake over time, and they have recognized that after all of these—well, at first, we thought they were mistakes, but then we realized this is a pattern. These are much more than mistakes, these are transgressions and this is a look into the DNA of the United National Congress. What we see there, Mr. Speaker, and what we heard today is something very ugly; it is very bizarre and it speaks to a very vicious mentality, unfortunately, right at the head of governance in this country at this time. I have no pride in saying that, Mr. Speaker, but the evidence presented today suggests exactly that; the evidence suggests exactly that.

So they started with the betrayal of senior citizens and then they have just about betrayed everyone else, including Members of their own Government. I am going to have to speak a little more about that under this particular debate, but I feel that this Government has run its course at this point; this Government has run its course. [*Desk thumping*] It has taken this nation far enough down the road to perdition, and I feel the nation is going to tell the Government this far and no further. [*Desk thumping*]

We can no longer call this a People's Partnership Government, Mr. Speaker. Remember the MSJ departed some time ago when they felt that they could not bear contributing to the corruption anymore, they left the Government. Mr. Speaker, the TOP also departed under different circumstances when they found themselves red washed earlier this year. The other component, the NJAC, come on, the NJAC is dead like fried chicken. [*Laughter*] It is basically an effigy that they bring out once a year and dance in front of the population, but it really does not exist. There is no currency there.

I see the Member for St. Augustine is back in his chair and he is smiling, maybe someone gave him some reassurance, but he should be a very, very, unhappy man today, because Members of his own party, about two years ago, began calling louder and louder and louder for the leadership of the COP to come

to their senses, and to recognize that this is a Government that no right-thinking person should remain a part of. Those calls were coming louder and louder, but for some reason that party has remained locked in a death dance with the UNC and neither side seems to want to release their grip. They are going down and down and down and punishing the nation with their transgression.

So, Mr. Speaker, just like the Member for Port of Spain South, I want to say, but with a different meaning, we need to send a message to our colleague from St. Augustine, through you, to our colleague from Tunapuna—very distinguished colleague from Tunapuna—and to our colleague from San Fernando West. It is a different message and that message is, it is too late for you. politically [*Desk thumping*] It is too late. The membership begged and begged and begged and they refused and now, Mr. Speaker, they are now part and parcel of this Motion, just like every other Member of the Government and the Cabinet. They are now joined with the UNC in this. It is too late to disconnect at this point under these circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, they could have been much more comfortable today with these serious allegations being laid. They could have been in the public gallery; they could have been at home looking on at the television like Mr. Warner is doing right now but, no, they wanted to stand by the cabal and now they are going to have to stand and face the same investigation and the same scrutiny that this Government is going to be subjected to at this time.

6.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I join with the Leader of the Opposition; I join with every single colleague on this Bench—all my colleagues—and I join the people of the People's National Movement and the people of Trinidad and Tobago, every right-thinking citizen, who has lost all confidence in this Government. [*Desk thumping*]

When I listened to the sequence presented by the Leader of the Opposition today, I feel very sorry for those who were deceived in the year 2010. I feel very, very sorry for those citizens, because they took the Prime Minister; they took this Attorney General, Members of this Government, at their word. They took them at face value, and they took them into their hearts; and they placed their trust in them. Then they recognized that what they took in was really a Trojan horse, filled with incompetence; filled with deception; filled with discrimination and filled, unfortunately, with the type of corruption that is laid out in this particular Motion; a Trojan horse of the worst kind.

Mr. Speaker, no one wanted it to come to this. If Members of the Opposition had to sit down and think up some sort of scenario which would bring the UNC into ruin, it certainly, would not be anything of this nature because this is almost too horrific to

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contemplate. Persons who are sharing this Chamber on a weekly basis with members of the PNM, sitting across the floor, have—according to the Motion and the evidence presented—been engaged in the most heinous conspiracy that I have ever heard of in Trinidad and Tobago. I take no pleasure in this; I take no joy in this; that is why this is a very serious occasion and event. This motion is a very, very serious one in the history of Trinidad and Tobago.

They talked about shaming the nation and so on and, somehow, are trying to blame the Leader of the Opposition—blame the Leader of the Opposition—for the emails that are being exchanged among Members of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, if anyone has brought this nation to shame, in the eyes of our regional partners and the world, it is the Members of the Government. [*Desk thumping*] It is the Prime Minister, it is the Attorney General, it is the Minister of Local Government, as named in this Motion. That is where the shame lies. We need to call a spade a spade today. They have been hiding behind the PNM for too long. We need to expose them for what they are. This is a disgrace.

No one wanted this. People wanted—let me tell you what people outside there want, even in listening to this Motion. People want a decent job; they want transportation; they want a sense of fairness in their society; they want a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. They want to open a newspaper and feel a sense of trust in people leading the country, as opposed to a sense of nausea; a sense of revulsion, that everything that they trusted, in terms of governance, has been frittered away. It has been squandered by the Government on a roulette wheel of corruption. At the heart of this sequence of emails, in my opinion, is a word called "greed". That is the explanation of many of the actions of this Government; plain and simple, greed; and that, unfortunately, is a characteristic that links the individuals named in this particular Motion. I am very, very sorry to say.

No one wanted this. No one wanted the kinds of horrific headlines that will be generated out of these discussions; no one wanted this, but that is the reality of Trinidad and Tobago; that is what we have. That is the reality of the Government that the majority of citizens went to the polls and elected. It is a very, very, very sad reality. So, citizens do not ask for too much, but they just want a sense that there is somebody working for them who cares about them.

Mr. Speaker, everything that we have heard today, from this side, and everything that we heard today, even from that side, leads us to the conclusion that this Government does not care about the welfare of any of the citizens of this country, except themselves. [*Desk thumping*]

Those simple things that the citizens want are only possible if we have effective governance; if we have leaders who are concerned about developing the country as opposed to concern about covering their tracks and developing their bank accounts. It does not happen by magic; and, unfortunately, we are going to need almost a miracle to pull ourselves out of this one.

They complain about too many motions of no confidence, but again, how dare they blame the Leader of the Opposition for that? The only individuals responsible for all of these motions of no confidence is the Prime Minister and her Cabinet. [*Desk thumping*] No Government has been so deserving of zero confidence than the UNC and its partners. [*Desk thumping*] It is as simple as that.

I predict, Mr. Speaker, by next week, guess what? They are going to sink even lower. The citizens have realized this Government is very predictable, because just when you thought you had seen it all, or heard it all, by next week they go lower and lower and dragging us deeper and deeper into the abyss because of their vicious, visionless agenda of a few Members that, sometimes, have been called a cabal, sometimes have been named in motions, sometimes have been even called out by Members on their own side, but we are starting to see the fingerprints of that small core, all over the transgressions that are affecting the people of Trinidad and Tobago—bad talk the PNM, bad talk the PNM, talk about the general council and Eric Williams and this one and that one, but if you listen to them, not a single one, so far, has directly answered anything that was laid by the Leader of the Opposition. They have not responded to the allegations made. The Attorney General stood up here for—what? —over an hour, and he could not bring it to himself to say, "I never sent those emails." He could not say that.

Mr. Speaker, if you walk into a court of law today—the criminal court—and the accused is given a chance to speak, you would hardly hear them get up and say, "Well, okay, we did it, let us call that". No, you are going to hear all sorts of denials, "I was set up", "I was not there", "I was framed"; that is what you tend to hear. But, when you hear that, what happens? Does the judge say, "Well, okay, a denial has been made, let us close the courts", everyone goes home. It does not work like that. A functioning system does not work like that.

Given what has been presented here, Mr. Speaker, we just simply cannot accept the blase dismissals of persons who, themselves, are named in the Motion and, therefore, if we believe the Motion, we have to question the ability to tell us the truth in this debate and we cannot rely on the words of the persons who are named here.

So, if we cannot rely on them, who are we going to rely on? Are we just going to pack up our books, walk out of here and move on to another debate next week?

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It is my opinion that this evidence and these allegations are sufficiently serious to make anyone who is more serious than the Member for Chaguanas East, sit up and say, "We need, as a Parliament, to take a responsible decision, on a matter like this. We need, as a country, to take a responsible decision on a matter like this," Mr. Speaker. But, I do not expect the Government to make any of the right decisions here because they have never made any right decisions at all. [*Desk thumping*]

So, we cannot rely on them. We are going to have to rely on the Constitution that the same Eric Williams helped us write. We are going to have to rely on the Constitution. We are going to have to rely on the same Director of Public Prosecutions that they have been attacking left, right and centre, at two in the morning. We are going to have to rely on that independent office and we are going to have to rely— [*Interruption*] You hear the attitude towards the DPP on the Government Benches? We are going to have to rely on the Integrity Commission— [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition made a point—I do not know if yourself and Members on the other side really understood that. Because, we have not had a board of the Integrity Commission in this country for several months now. [*Interruption*] Six? That is unacceptable. [*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: So what, we need the DPP—

Dr. A. Browne: Hold on, hold on, Mr. Speaker. Hold on, hold on. [*Interruption*] Hold on. [*Interruption*] We have not had— [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, I am making a point of fact.

7.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Please, the Member has my protection. And could you not engage in crosstalk? Continue.

Dr. A. Browne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you Member for Diego Martin West. Over three months now—let us not state anything that is incorrect. But that is way too long, Mr. Speaker. And when the outgoing President had taken cognizance of that issue—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Mr. Speaker, 36(8). [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Member, I think that you are aware that we should not really be questioning the decisions of a President in this instance. And you are bordering very closely on raising the issue of the appointment of members of the Integrity Commission. You did not call the office by name, but the implications are clear. So I would ask you to stay away from that, because it could be interpreted as an

assault, or a possible implication—not implication, but an imputation in a negative way towards the Office of the President. Please.

Dr. A. Browne: Mr. Speaker, you are absolutely right, and I mean no such imputation. But, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to move on at all, because I will do nothing to please Caroni East here today. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker—I am not moving on. I have to be concerned about one day, one minute, one second of existence in Trinidad and Tobago, under this Government without an Integrity Commission. I will leave it at that. And in the light of this Motion, and the evidence presented, I think any sensible member of society would now be sitting up and saying, "We need an Integrity Commission, post haste in Trinidad and Tobago." [*Desk thumping*]

I will now move on from that particular point, Mr. Speaker. Because who else do we turn to? Do we turn to the executive council of the COP? I am sure they are going to have an opinion on these matters. They have been becoming more and more opinionated and strengthened over time. But I do not think we could rely on them to solve this for us. We are going to have to rely on independent institutions, apart from the politics and the cut and thrust, to help us answer the question: should this Government be indicted for the most serious crimes ever committed against private citizens in this country? That is the question we need to ask. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: 36(5), Mr. Speaker, 36(5). He is accusing the Government Members of committing crime; 36(5).

Mr. Hypolite: He never said that. He never said that.

Dr. Gopeesingh: That is not the Motion before the House. That is different. He should withdraw that statement. He should withdraw.

Mr. Hypolite: He never said anything like that.

Mr. Speaker: Members for Caroni and Laventille West, okay, this is a substantive Motion that we are dealing with at this time. If I believe that the Member is going off course, I will intervene.

Member for Diego Martin Central, continue, please. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. A. Browne: I salute you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move on. Mr. Speaker, and the behaviour of Caroni East—yes, go ahead, go ahead. You do not need to hear me, the citizens. Mr. Speaker, I speak to you. I speak to you. You see what happens. You see what happens, Mr. Speaker. And that is defying the Chair.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: He is in contempt.

Dr. A. Browne: Mr. Speaker, sometimes when you listen to the behaviour of senior leaders in this country—

Mr. Hypolite: Yeah. And that is the Minister of Education.

Hon. Member: Move on, move on.

Mr. Speaker: Let me handle any infractions. You just concentrate on your contribution, please.

Dr. A. Browne: I agree. I was not dealing with Caroni East. I am making a broader point, that sometimes members of the United National Congress can be likened to political infants; political infants, Mr. Speaker. All they can do—it is like ungrateful children, bad talking their political parents, all the time, all the time; PNM, PNM, PNM, PNM. [*Desk thumping*] Anything that you tell them, it is the PNM, the PNM's fault; ungrateful politically.

Then they inherited something in 2010, and they squandered it all, squandered it all while still bad talking their political parents. But the good news for the citizens, Mr. Speaker—

Hon. Member: "Leh me hear it."

Dr. A. Browne:—the PNM is on its way back. [*Desk thumping*] The PNM is on its way back.

Hon. Member: That is the worst news I get.

Dr. A. Browne: That is the good news. Today, and every other day, these political brats will receive a political spanking, because they deserve it.

Dr. Ramadharsingh: Mr. Speaker, 36(4).

Mr. Speaker: I do not think you could refer to Members of Parliament in that language. Withdraw that and move on.

Dr. A. Browne: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the phrase, "political brats" but the political spanking is still being administered by the Members of the PNM. [*Desk thumping*]

They had the trust of the population, including Caroni Central, and they frittered it away. I listened to the Attorney General, and these are the phrases he used, Mr. Speaker, on a serious matter: "patently absurd". Did not deny the allegations, but "patently absurd", in his flowery way; "ridiculous", talking—"frivolous". Not saying, "those emails were never sent by me", you know; "frivolous". "Stuff from Star Trek." And D'Abadie/O'Meara took up that mantle, so I expect we will hear it from all the speakers. "Stuff from Star Trek."

"Mr. Speaker, thing to cry, they laughing; thing to take seriously, they making joke". But that has always been their modus operandi. So, if the population is trying to judge from their demeanour, the seriousness of the matter before us, they will again be deceived. But you cannot judge from their demeanour. Because the most serious things are the things they take the most lightly.

Mr. Speaker, material was presented in this Motion that points to criminal—the possibility of criminal conspiracy, misbehaviour in public office, fraud, possible conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm; possible conspiracy to commit murder, possible treason against the State, and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice in Trinidad and Tobago.

They want us to accept their denial and move on to the next debate. That would not be a responsible position of any Opposition. This must be thoroughly investigated. Let the chips fall where they may. [*Desk thumping*]

This is serious business. And Members before us spoke about Watergate and Richard Nixon. And we could recall Ronald Reagan, Mr. Speaker, and the Iran contra scandal, and all of the denials, official Government denials—"We did no wrong. We are doing no wrong"—when the truth was that there were sinister crimes being committed against the people, Mr. Speaker.

We recall the Bush conspiracy to go to war against Iraq. Again, denials; the Government's hands are clean. But the Government's hands are not clean at all. They are very, very dirty.

We recall President Bill Clinton and his impeachment hearings. And again, it was all a claim of innocence, but when the evidence came out, it was a lot less than innocence. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Caroni—how do we describe those kinds of interruptions. I also recall the OJ Simpson trial. Remember that? It was a worldwide sensation. And, Mr. Speaker, there was a—

Mr. Speaker: Members, I am hearing—please, Member for Port of Spain South. Members, can I ask for your cooperation, otherwise I am going to ask Members who continue to interrupt the proceedings, to take three hours away from the sitting.

Continue, hon. Member.

Dr. A. Browne: Well, Mr. Speaker, you see when a threat has some teeth, silence is created.

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Mr. Speaker, I recall the OJ Simpson murder trial, and the courtroom proceedings. And I remember one of the lawyers—there was a famous saying, "If the glove don't fit, you must acquit." Remember that, Mr. Speaker? "If the glove don't fit, you must acquit." But, Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Member for Diego Martin West, the Leader of the Opposition, and he linked the emails to press releases. He linked the press releases to meetings. He linked the meetings to Facebook postings. He linked those to events, to dates, to times, to responses. Mr. Speaker, this glove fits. We cannot simply acquit. [*Desk thumping*]

7.10 p.m.

We cannot acquit, somebody else might have to after they investigate but we cannot acquit because it appears to us this glove fits. [*Desk thumping*] What are we going to do? We cannot just pretend that the Member for Diego Martin West did not bring this to our attention. I am a Member of Parliament; this has been brought to my attention, I cannot pretend I did not hear his presentation here today. We have to deal with this responsibly, and as a Parliament we need to come to some understanding of what that means.

Mr. Speaker, I think back—anyway, I will come to that point a little later because the Government has some history in how it deals with allegations, and we are going to have to talk about its history in dealing with allegations. We are going to have to talk about that and, well, let the chips fall where they may. The Attorney General and the Prime Minister, wherever she is, cannot pretend that they have not been exposed to these contributions, and they are going to have to respond a lot more forthrightly than we have heard before, thus far. We cannot just do nothing with these allegations. We cannot accept their flippant denials.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Tabaquite's constituency—the great constituency of Tabaquite—has a page. It has a Facebook—it has a website, tabaquiteconstituency.com, and, Mr. Speaker, if you check that page, tabaquiteconstituency.com, it might give you a little insight into one of the email addresses that has been disclosed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. This is an official page, and let us take a look at that page, and you, Mr. Speaker, or anyone else is free to check tabaquiteconstituency.com—one word—and let us take a look. Because, Mr. Speaker, on that page there is a letter from the Member of Parliament for Tabaquite, the Minister of Local Government, and well 4G is like "3½G" right now—[*Laughter*—]but it is opening. Do not worry, do not panic. It is opening—and there it is with a lovely photograph of our erstwhile colleague. Letter from the MP to the constituents, and I will just probably read the last line of the letter just to give us some veracity.

In addition—yes, talking to the people—several councillors have requested water projects. These have been forwarded to Minister Ganga Singh who has assured a national programme will be presented in six weeks. Under the URP programme, many box drains are being constructed and other signature projects—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Dr. A. Browne: Yes, and we are getting veracity here as well.

Please liaise with your MPs and the Regional Managers or myself—not myself, [*Pointing to the Government side*] myself—so that we can look after the requests you have been making. I invite you to contact me at—and there is a cell number, but, Mr. Speaker, I have a heart, I would not read the cell number—or by email to s-u-r-u-j-r-a-m-b-a-c-h-a-n@hotmail.com. [*Desk thumping*] Again, my sincere thanks and appreciation for your dedication and commitment to the Partnership, and to a better quality of life for our people.

Mr. Speaker, you heard the Attorney General saying, "Well, that is not my email address", but we will get to that one, but I turn to the content of the presentation of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and there is something familiar here: s-u-r-a-j-r-a-m-b-a-c-h-a-n@hotmail.com. Mr. Speaker, if the glove fits you cannot acquit. We cannot acquit.

Mr. Speaker, it is the same thing on the Facebook page if you want to cross-reference of the hon. Member for Tabaquite, entitled "Champion of the people". Nice photographs and so on, "Champion of the people" and the same email address is there given to the nation, contact me, communicate with me. So we are happy to claim it there, but when it is linked to deeds at an official level that no one wants to be associated with, well we are going to hear what the response would be in a little while.

Mr. Speaker, another email address is well-known to the nation, and I have expected while the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, that someone would rise and make the audacious claim that the other email address k-a-m-l-a-p-b-1@gmail.com is not known to them. But, Mr. Speaker, the truth is that email address is very well-known to every Member of the Government, and what it suggests is exactly what it is.

Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General's email address—unfortunately, he is indicted by his own words here on the *Hansard* record, because he leapt all over a term the Leader of the Opposition used and he trumpeted for all of us, loud tones. We had two loud speakers on the other side today, started off with volume. "My

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email address is Anand, a-n-a-n-d@tstt.net.tt". Mr. Speaker, if you are backing the AG, you would have assumed safely that that email address could not be anywhere in this sequence of communication.

I was horrified when I received the document in my hand to see all over this thing: a-n-a-n-d@tstt.net.tt, an example from captaingarygriffith@hotmail.com to that a-n-a-n-d@tstt.net.tt, Wednesday September 11, 2012:

"Will check with DPP status and give you a report later. The reporter does have a history."—God help us!—"She has a file.. it's really touch and go. She was in Florida at an institution in late 2003, attempted suicide. Her family are PNM, dad was in jail and recently released. Also added some stuff and sent it to FB"—Facebook—"They will take it from there."

Mr. Speaker, right here the Attorney General was indicted by his own words. He took ownership of that email address, so I do not know if the rules allow him to return to clarify further. I do not know, maybe it does not, but he is on the *Hansard* now taking ownership of some of these communications via email.

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]—bad boy.

Dr. A. Browne: Well, what could I say? Mr. Speaker, we cannot just bury the allegations because it all connects. This is very, very serious. Mr. Speaker, let us do a little reality check. Mary King—remember Mary King?

Hon. Member: Yes.

Dr. A. Browne: She was dismissed for a lot less than this. The allegations against Mary King were a lot less than this on the face of it. Therese Baptiste-Cornelis; remember her? We should. She was dismissed for allegations a lot less than this. The Member, my friend from Cumuto/Manzanilla, who tried to get our attention earlier was dismissed—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Partap: "Doh bring me into your thing." [*Laughter*]

Dr. A. Browne:—for a lot less than this. Other Members, my friend from Tobago East, a lot far less than this, and, Mr. Speaker, the "big-goonks" himself—[*Laughter*]—Austin Jack Warner—[*Desk thumping*]—in his opinion, was also dismissed for a lot less than this. In his opinion, as far as he is concerned, was dismissed for a lot less than this.

Mr. Speaker, so what is the Government really to do in these circumstances? Listening to the Attorney General, listening to the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara, it is clear that we have come to a bit of an impasse. It is clear, and we would expect speaker

after speaker on that side to get up to talk about, "Well, you can create an email, espionage. Maybe the Israelis were involved, maybe somebody burned a file", we can expect any sort of contribution all adding up to the same nexus that I gave at the beginning. Take our word for it, this is not true. We cannot accept that, Mr. Speaker.

We have come to an impasse. The Leader of the Opposition has laid a Motion and has presented evidence of the most serious nature. I did not think in my fledgling political career that I would ever hear anything like this about any Government and senior official. I really did not think so—very, very serious, and he did so in a highly credible fashion. Predictively, the Government just wants us to move on as usual, but we cannot and we are not going to. We cannot and we are not going to. They threw more red herrings today than we have ever seen.

7.20p.m.

Mr. Speaker, can emails be fabricated? Yes, emails can be fabricated. Can documents be forged? Yes, documents can be forged. But the implications here are so horrific, so difficult to contemplate. The consequences of getting this one wrong are beyond contemplation, are unacceptable to any right-thinking citizen. The only acceptable recourse in the face of this is for the Integrity Commission with its board to act with dispatch. It is for the Director of Public Prosecutions to become immediately and directly involved in taking Trinidad and Tobago out of this and into some degree of clarity, and for those independent investigations to be completed in the shortest possible time—most thoroughly, in the shortest possible time.

Mr. Speaker, based on what I heard today and what was presented by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, it is my view that the cabal is real as named here in this Motion. This Motion is supported. This Prime Minister, this Government, this Attorney General, this Minister of Local Government deserve no support, no confidence whatsoever. This Government has to go.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure (Hon. Stacy Roopnarine): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is always a pleasure to be able to join in any debate in this august House; however, I must express my disappointment with the Motion before us. I understand that it is the democratic right of the Opposition to bring to this Parliament motions, from time to time; however, I believe that these motions must bring some kind of value and some sort of meaningful outcome at the end of the day. When I look at the Motion before us, I am left in awe at the level of disrespect of the Motion brought in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

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Firstly, this Motion speaks of the UNC-led Government. I do not know what is this UNC-led Government. As far I know, the people of Trinidad and Tobago in May 2010 voted for the People's Partnership Government which today represents the people of Trinidad and Tobago in this House. [*Desk thumping*]

In addition, the Leader of the Opposition made some very serious allegations, allegations against the hon. Prime Minister; allegations against the Attorney General and allegations against the Minister of Local Government, but when you look at the evidence brought to support these allegations, it really does not match.

The Leader of the Opposition brought here a series of emails to support his claims in this Motion. The Member for Diego Martin Central went on to put on a big show in this House: he took up his phone, he pulled up the website for the Member for Tabaquite and he showed this honourable House this, this email address for the Member for Tabaquite is indeed, Member surujrambachan@hotmail.com, I believe. But what does that prove? It proves that perhaps might be the email address for the Member for Tabaquite.

What I do not understand is that this information is available on the website of the Member of Parliament for Tabaquite, therefore it is public knowledge to the global community.

Miss Cox: Exactly.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: But what does that say? Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you, I could produce a document here typed up, which shows emails coming from saroopnarine@hotmail.com to ramonaramdial@yahoo.com. That shows nothing, and therefore I do not believe that that is evidence enough to support the claims made in this Motion today. Therefore that is my disappointment. I am disappointed first to begin with in the Motion brought before us and secondly in the evidence brought to support the Motion.

I do know if perhaps there is some kind of motive behind this. [*Interruption*] I will tell you about the drains just now. I do not know if perhaps we might have a local government election in the air and perhaps there is some kind of political motivation behind this Motion. I do not know, perhaps.

I want to talk first about something that the Member for Diego Martin Central said. He said that no right-thinking citizen would want to be a part of this Government. I want to ask him if he was not part of the government responsible for the \$1 billion Tarouba Stadium, because I consider him a right-thinking citizen. I do not know. I want to ask him if he was a part of the Government that failed to call a local government

election, the biggest contempt of the democracy, where the past administration refused to call a local government election because they were too afraid to go to the polls. [Crosstalk] The hon. Prime Minister has indicated her willingness to call a local government election because we are not afraid. We are not afraid. [Desk thumping]

Dr. Browne: If you say the Prime Minister never said those words— [Inaudible] The Prime Minister said those words.

Mr. Speaker: Member for Diego Martin Central, I sought to protect you earlier when you were being disturbed. I think you are too close to Oropouche West. I do not know if you want to get nearer, [Laughter] but please, allow her to speak in silence. Continue, hon. Member, please.

Mr. Partap: He would like to. [Laughter] [Dr. Browne exits seat]

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but before my colleague departs the House, I also want to ask him if he was not a part of a government who engaged in discriminatory practices. We heard the example of the granting of the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha radio licence. We heard the issue of victimization of Devant Maharaj at NLCB. Was he not a part of that Government? I ask these questions because of the allegations made by the Member for Diego Martin Central. You see, when the shoe is on the other foot, it is quite easy, it is quite easy to make these statements, but they really need to look at themselves before they cast stones.

I want to ask the Leader of the Opposition to tell this House and the wider public what this Motion is really about. He said he had this information six months ago. He came here to this House and told us that he had this information six months ago. But why now? Why now? I ask the question if it has anything to do with a local government election in the air, but I also want to bring another point. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin West would have brought a similar Motion last year, which was defeated, as this one will be defeated, and so it is my hope that he has not invoked one of the most sacred elements of the Constitution, simply to score cheap political points.

7.30 p.m.

As I stand in this Parliament I stand here as a proud woman representing the constituency of Oropouche West, and I want to ask the question: if this Motion before this House has anything to do with the Member for Siparia being a woman leading his country? [Crosstalk] [Desk thumping]

Hon. Members: Ahhh!

Miss Ramdial: Good question.

Mr. Speaker: Wait. Wait. Please. Please. Please. Members! Members!

Dr. Rowley: Ahhhhh!

Mr. Speaker: Wait. Wait. Member for Diego Martin West. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: Oh God, man! [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: You advised me very early when you began to speak that democracy is a very difficult thing and hard. Sometimes, criticisms are made that are very hard, but you must take them in the interest of freedom of speech. [*Crosstalk*] Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Rowley: "Yuh must make sense."

Mr. Speaker: Hold! Hold! Well people might say that what you said did not make sense.

Dr. Rowley: People?

Mr. Speaker: Yes. What I am saying, but you spoke and you spoke with the full protection of the Chair [*Crosstalk*] and I am saying that the Member for Oropouche West will be given the full protection of this Chair. [*Desk thumping*] Continue, hon. Member, please. Please.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: I thank you for your protection, Mr. Speaker. So I was asking the question—[*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Member for Diego Martin West.

Hon. S. Roopnarine:—if this has anything to do—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Full protection for the Member for Oropouche—[*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: "No doh repeat that."

Hon. Member: Repeat it.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: I was asking the question, if this Motion had anything to do with the fact that the Member for Siparia is a woman leading this country.

Hon. Member: Aaahhh. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. S. Roopnarine: I asking a question because it is no secret that Opposition Members continuously chastise this Prime Minister, whether it is for the clothes that she wears—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Ooohh!

Hon. S. Roopnarine:—whether it be if she likes to sing, these things were never an issue before. So I have to ask the question.

I want us to look at the facts. Let us look at *Express* editorial November 01, 2010, an article entitled "A cloud over Dr. Rowley" speaking to the issue of hurricane Thomas and the Government's preparation for it. The editorial says:

"...Dr. Rowley, describing the issue as one of governance, thought it fit to add: 'Because you have a woman in charge does not guarantee you good governance.'"

Mr. Speaker, does this not solidify to the population that the issue is that a woman is at the helm of this country?

Miss Mc Donald: Oh lawd.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Even the women of the PNM attack her at times.

Hon. Member: What?

Hon. S. Roopnarine: But I want to say that while the Leader of the Opposition brings this Motion before this House to show the loss of confidence in the Prime Minister, meanwhile one of his Senators who heads the PNM Women's League is singing praises of the hon. Prime Minister.

I refer to an article dated today—today's *Newsday*—Monday, May 20, 2013 an article in the *Newsday*, front page. The headline is "Penny: PNM WOMEN 'MADE' KAMLA."

So here you have the women of the PNM taking credit for the rise of the Member for Siparia—

Hon. Member: That is an embarrassment.

Hon. S. Roopnarine:—but you have the Leader of the PNM coming to this House to bring a Motion to show loss of confidence. "Mr. Speaker, left hand doh know what right hand doing and vice versa", and they come here and talk about the partnership and that the COP is separate, but there is a divide within the PNM. So you all need to look inside your own party before you look to criticize those of us who are Members of the People's Partnership Government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that this Motion before us is baseless because this Prime Minister has been committed to delivery. We have been delivering for almost three years now, and we continue to deliver to the population.

You see, one of the first things that the hon. Prime Minister did when she took office was that she mandated all of her Members of Parliament, all of her

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Ministers to deliver to the people, and this is exactly what we have been doing. When the Prime Minister delivered to this country the Children's Life Fund so that people do not have to go and sell their bar-b-que and have a cake sale and so on to raise money to have surgeries for their children. When that was done, does this not show a leader that we can have confidence in?

[MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair]

Madam Deputy Speaker, does it not show a leader whom the people of this country can trust to take care of their welfare and their well-being? That Children's Life Fund, all MPs on the Government's side contribute to that life fund so that we can save the lives of our nation's children.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our Prime Minister delivered to our children upon entering secondary school. Form 1 students given laptops, but you see the PNM was against that too because they do not understand what it means for a child to have a laptop.

When I was growing up I was not afforded these luxuries.

Miss Mc Donald: Neither me.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: I was not afforded the luxury of having even a computer at home, much more for a laptop. And you know I really understand what this means to a young child coming out of SEA going into secondary school having access to this laptop, but they did not want that. They did not want the children of this nation to have access to technology. They did not want them to continue learning, Madam Deputy Speaker, but they bring a Motion before this House, "No Confidence in Prime Minister" because the Prime Minister delivers to the children of this country.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Government turned the sod to start the construction of the very first University of the West Indies, south campus, so that the youth of South could have equal access to tertiary level education. But the PNM did not want that. They said this had no place in Penal and Debe. So I refer you now to an article in the *Newsday*, Tuesday January 25, 2011 entitled, "Rowley knocks Debe campus plan". He is quoted as saying:

"I want the Government to tell me and show me one document of correspondence from the University of the West Indies on this matter to determine that the relationship between this Government and the rest of the region has taken place, and that the establishment of a campus in Debe is part of the civilized governance of Trinidad and Tobago, and the region as a whole."

Madam Deputy Speaker, what was the Leader of the Opposition saying? Was he saying that the people of Penal and Debe were not civilized in their development

or that they were not good enough to have a campus, to have easy access to tertiary level education? But, you see, they do not understand the challenges that parents and students—students who attend the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus and their parents—face in trying to get a degree.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I attended the University of the West Indies—*[Interruption]*

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Courtesy the PNM.

Hon. S. Roopnarine:—St. Augustine campus.

Dr. Indarsingh: Courtesy the taxpayers.

Hon. S. Roopnarine:—and I had very long commutes coming *[Crosstalk]* from south, very expensive rent to pay and my parents would have to prepare meals on weekends and carry it up for me. So I understand the challenges that persons who are coming from south, maybe even central, face in trying to attend the University of the West Indies to get a degree. I really think that this university will bring tremendous benefits for persons in the constituencies of Point Fortin—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. S. Roopnarine:—of La Brea, Mayaro, *[Crosstalk]* the southern constituencies and I really feel that this is something that will benefit Trinidad and Tobago in the long run.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, this Government's legacy will not be one of high rise towers, glitz and glamour, but it will be one of hospitals, it will be one of schools, it will be one of proper road infrastructure, and it will be one of pipe borne water, basic necessities that were not afforded to the citizens of this country. That is the delivery of the Member for Siparia, and the Prime Minister of this country. That is her vision for Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin Central came here and he said that this Government does not care about the welfare of the citizens of this country. If you permit me for a couple of minutes, I shall tell you about the delivery of the Ministry of Works in terms of the benefits and of the welfare of the citizens of this country.

7.40 p.m.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Ministry continues to perform and deliver key infrastructure relating to that of roads, drains, landslips and bridges. Madam Deputy Speaker, we remain committed to the upgrade of the repair of our existing

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road network, while at the same time looking at new roads, the expansions of our highways, and so on, to eliminate the challenge of traffic congestion and to provide easier access to communities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me tell you some of the key projects that we have delivered to the citizens of this country. You would recall that it was this Government, Madam Deputy Speaker, that completed the dualling of the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway from O'Meara to Santa Rosa.

Mr. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, 36(1).

Madam Deputy Speaker: Thirty-six (1)—overruled. You may continue, Member.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: For the benefit of my colleague from La Brea, your colleague the Member for Diego Martin Central, said in the House and I quote, that "this Government does not care about the welfare...of the citizens of this country". I am simply responding to the Member to tell him about the welfare of the citizens of this country, and how they have benefitted under the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure. So, Member, I do urge you to pay attention. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I was saying, you would recall that it was this Government—you see, they do not like to hear it, they do not like to hear the delivery of this Government. But it was this Government that completed the dualling of the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway from O'Meara to Santa Rosa. This had been an eyesore for six years before we came into office, six years. That is the legacy of the PNM.

Mr. Indarsingh: Piles of gravel.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Yes, piles of gravel, yes, it was a stockpile before this Government came into office. That is the legacy of the PNM and then they come here today to say, no confidence in the Prime Minister who delivered on this project, one of the first projects that we completed when coming into office.

Hon. Member: Hypocrisy.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Madam Deputy Speaker, it was this Government that completed the Aranguez Overpass, which reduces the traffic congestion along the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway. It was this Government that completed the interchange at Balmain, Couva, which assists tremendously with the traffic in that region. [*Desk thumping*] I know the Member for Couva South and the Member for Caroni Central, the Member for Couva North are very pleased with that project, and their constituents.

Mr. Indarsingh: All of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Madam Deputy Speaker, it was this Government that did the Port of Spain access project, which involved the widening of the Beetham Highway from market overpass to the lighthouse to three lanes, plus shoulder, eastbound and westbound and associated drainage work.

It was this Government that paved the southbound lane of the Solomon Hochoy Highway from Tarouba. It was this Government that added a new lane along the Uriah Butler Highway from Chaguanas to the Bird Sanctuary, approximately 9 kilometres. It was this Government that did the Movie Towne intersection upgrade. And it was this Government, Madam Deputy Speaker, that completed the Maraval access, which involved the widening of Saddle Road and work on the intersection of Long Circular and Saddle Road.

I say this, Mr. Speaker, [*sic*] with a heavy heart—Madam Deputy Speaker, my apologies, with a heavy heart, because this project was planned for 11 years in the Ministry of Works—11 years, Madam Deputy Speaker; 11 years. And the Member for Diego Martin North/East, who was Minister at the time, also represented that constituency. But they did not have the care for their own constituents to deliver on projects in their own constituencies. That was the care of the PNM. That was the legacy of the PNM, Madam Deputy Speaker. But I shall tell you some more. I shall tell you some more about the care of this Government, about the care of this Government on delivering on our infrastructure projects in this country.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I move now to the PURE Programme, the Programme for Upgrade of Road Efficiency, which has brought to this country the paving of roads like never before. I want to tell you that this programme brought relief to persons faced with poor road and drainage infrastructure across the country. Prior to this Government taking office, there was an immense focus only on urban areas, so that persons were left to face rural neglect. Communities were faced with the challenge of bad road, poor drainage, flooding and so on, but when we took office in May 2010, it put an end to that level of rural neglect. I want to tell you I stand here as the Member of Parliament for Oroupouche West, representing a rural constituency. When I took office, Madam Deputy Speaker, there was not a single good road in my constituency, perhaps with the exception of the SS Erin Main Road.

Mr. Indarsingh: Repeat that for them.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Not a single good road in my constituency.

Hon. Member: And in a lot of other constituencies.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: And that was the legacy of the PNM. That was the care of the PNM.

Dr. Ramadharsingh: Rural neglect.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Rural neglect, Madam Deputy Speaker. But I want to tell you that today I apologize to those people for the neglect that they faced under the past administration. I also want to tell you that it is a neglect that we have started to rectify in only three years, Madam Deputy Speaker, and it is something that will take us a long time to rectify because of the state that the PNM left these constituencies in. I know that even you, Madam Deputy Speaker, representing Princes Town, would have been faced with the same challenge. My colleagues from Moruga/Tableland, Couva North, South, Caroni, Fyzabad and all of these constituencies, neglected—rural neglect.

And, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, the mover of this Motion, the Leader of the Opposition, sat as a Minister in the last Government and did nothing to correct rural neglect. Interestingly, one of the grand plans of the PNM now is the creation of a Ministry for Rural Development. I refer to an article in the *Guardian* newspaper dated Thursday, January 26, 2012. The headline reads:

"Opposition Leader promises: PNM will dismantle Ministry of the People".

The article goes on to say:

"The Ministry of the People and Social Development will be dismantled and replaced with a Rural Development Ministry established if the...(PNM) forms the next government of Trinidad and Tobago."

Hon. Member: Never.

Miss Ramdial: Oh come on. That is deception.

Hon S. Roopnarine: Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to tell this country that it was the PNM that created rural neglect, [*Desk thumping*], so to come now to say that you would create a Ministry for rural neglect, for their rural neglect, it is absurd; it is absolutely absurd. And so what does he want to do? He wants to close down the Ministry of the people. And that article goes on to say:

"In order to ensure that rural communities are not left behind as we progress as a nation, there will be in the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago a Minister of Rural Development whose responsibility will be to co-ordinate what the nation has to offer to ensure that rural communities get their fair share and they get it in a timely manner."

Madam Deputy Speaker, can you believe this? This is an organization, an administration responsible for the creation of rural neglect in this country, now coming, 40 years later to say, okay, we will create a ministry for rural neglect to address the rural neglect that we created. We have rectified the problem of rural neglect in our almost three years of governance without a Ministry of Rural Development. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: That is true.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: That is because one of the principles is equity and fairness in distribution to the people of this country. [*Desk thumping, laughter and crosstalk*]

Hon Member: Oh! Oh!

Miss Ramdial: Come on Paula.

Hon S. Roopnarine: Madam Deputy Speaker, under the PURE Programme I can list roads upon roads upon roads for you, roads that have been neglected for many, many years. [*Crosstalk*] And I am hearing some of my colleagues calling some of them, but I would not even go into that list because it is so lengthy. [*Crosstalk*]

I want to put on record in this House, Madam Deputy Speaker, that under this programme from May 2010 to present, we have completed over 900 projects, paving over 500 kilometres of roads across this country. That is the delivery of this Government. [*Desk thumping*]

7.50 p.m.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

Madam Deputy Speaker: At this time there is a Procedural Motion to allow this House to sit beyond 8.00 p.m. I call on the acting Leader of Government Business.

The Minister of Tourism (Hon. Stephen Cadiz): Madam Deputy Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 10(11), I beg to move that the House continue to sit to continue the debate on the Motion under consideration.

Question put and agreed to.

PRIME MINISTER AND GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN)

Madam Deputy Speaker: You may continue, Member.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I want to repeat what I just said: from May 2010 to present over 900 projects done under the PURE unit, paving over 500 kilometres of road across this country. That is the care of this Government; that is the delivery of this Government. [*Desk thumping*] We are

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not focused on development that does not reach the people; we are focused on the issues which affect citizens daily and that is where the focus of this Government is.

Madam Deputy Speaker, landslips were done under the PURE Programme. The Fort George landslip, Mount Pleasant landslip in Arima, Tenant Trace in my own constituency; bridges were done. Just recently we opened three bridges along the Southern Main Road—MP for St. Augustine was present—The Assaraff Road Bridge. We had a replacement of the Marianne Bridge in Blanchissuere, Bailey bridges deployed, and a new bridge on the Cunapo Southern Main Road. *[Interruption]* And while we are here, while we stand in this House, work is ongoing on the Calcutta Bridge in the constituency of Couva South. *[Interruption]*

Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the biggest projects that this Government is intent on, in delivering to the people of this country, is that of the Solomon Hochoy Highway extension to Point Fortin. *[Desk thumping]* As you know, we would have turned the sod in January 2011 and the hon. Prime Minister announced then that she would ensure that there was at least 40 per cent of local labour and 40 per cent of material, equipment and so on.

It is our belief that the people of Trinidad and Tobago must benefit from the development of this country, in particular, when it comes to infrastructural development, especially projects that are so large. This is one of the biggest infrastructural projects ever undertaken by any Government in the history of this country and it is in the south-western peninsula, *[Desk thumping]* a promise of the PNM for many, many years started under this administration. That was the care; that was the legacy of the PNM. I do not need to tell you that the benefits of this project are tremendous for our people. We are improving the transport network for those who travel all the way from Point Fortin to Port of Spain. We are creating jobs; stimulating the economy. There is now a greater demand for material—aggregate, sand, cement, bitumen, asphalt—resulting in several downstream industries, stimulating the transportation sector, service contractors, small entrepreneurs who even provide food for workers who would work there.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is often said that this Government did not have consultations and so on, but I want to tell you that one of the principles is consultation with the people—the major stakeholders—and this is something that we continue to do on a continuous basis. We have had consultations, several consultations since October 2011 where Ministers, Members of Parliament and so on, would have met with persons who are so affected by this highway. Such is the care of this Government that we understand that persons will be affected by this highway and that was the reason we opened a Nidco office in Debe, so that the

people affected do not have to go all the way to Port of Spain to file their claims and so on for land acquisition.

Nidco has also embarked upon community outreach where they will be doing play parks and so on in various communities. This is something that is on an ongoing basis and Nidco is currently in the process of assessing projects. *[Interruption]* Yes, Member for Point Fortin, we will make sure we do something in your constituency. *[Laughter]*

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I am talking about a highway to Point and we have to come to Debe to make a request.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: And the Member for Point Fortin is now making a request for an office in Point Fortin. We can give that consideration.

Hon. Member: Sorry, you are not coming to Point so you do not have to worry about that.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the issues is that of compensation and land acquisition.

I want to put on record in this House that Nidco has settled over 70 claims to date and has approximately over 200 claims from persons willing to negotiate via private treaty negotiation with the Government. So, while we are seeking to settle with these persons, we also recognize that there are a number of communities which have to be relocated. It was to this end that we have acquired land in the Petit Morne area which can be made available to residents and we are also in the process of preparing lands in Golconda which can be made available for farming as well as land in Cedar Hill which can be made available for those who are squatters.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are a responsible Government—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Member: Yeah.

Hon. S. Roopnarine:—we are committed to the development of this country, to the development of our people, and therefore we understand that in matters of displacement, in matters where persons have to be relocated for the benefit of the State, for the benefit of the development of our country, we understand that we have a responsibility to take care of those persons.

We have a responsibility to help them rebuild their communities. It is a social responsibility to persons who are so affected, and that is why we are trying to recreate the community, rebuild the schools and the recreation grounds and the religious institutions, so that persons who would have lived amongst a community

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can also be relocated as a community. That is the care of this Government; that is the care for the welfare of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I spoke to the Solomon Hochoy Highway extension in the south and while that is going on, we are also pursuing the Diego Martin Highway.

Hon. Member: And the Valencia Highway.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: So, we have started in the south, we are continuing the Diego Martin Highway, and there will be other highway expansions and extensions to come.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Diego Martin Highway, this project was divided in four phases in order to fast-track it. Phase one was constructed 2010; phases two, three and four, including demolition and barrier wall packages are now being pursued. I want to say that for phases two, three and four, we have already obtained CEC clearance, with respect to acquisition, sections 3 and 4 notices have been served and with respect to utilities, we are actively and aggressively pursuing the relocation of those utilities. So, I just want to give an update on that project as I know there are three Members of Parliament here on the Opposition side that I think are keen on the development of this project as it directly affects their constituents.

Phase two, Madam Deputy Speaker, involves the widening of the existing southbound carriage way from two to three lanes from Morne Coco Road to the Western Main Road, inclusive of acceleration lanes and deceleration lanes, sidewalks, retaining walls and so on. This contract was awarded in accordance with Nidco's tendering process in March 2013 and as soon as our utilities have been removed, work on that will continue. Phase three comprises the main drainage structural works. So far, all of the culverts on that phase have been completed with the exception of one which will be done in a subsequent phase.

Phase four involves modification and upgrade to the two-lane southbound carriageway between Morne Coco Road to Acton Court; the introduction of a two-lane northbound carriageway between Victoria Gardens to Acton Court; improvements to the Morne Coco, Diego Martin Highway Intersection, and this contract was also awarded in March 2013 in accordance with Nidco's tendering process and shall also start upon the removal of T&TEC utilities.

8.00 p.m.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, work continues on this project. There is also the construction/demolition package which is almost complete with the exception of one HDC site, the barrier wall package which was awarded in February 2013. So

work is well underway with the Diego Martin Highway; work is well underway with the Solomon Hochoy Highway extension project in the south.

So we spoke about the development of local roads, we spoke about the development of our highways, but the Ministry of Works is also very focused on road safety. It was to this end that we put measures in place to try to assist with the issue of road carnage.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the things that this Ministry did, was that in May 2011, the Ministry would have installed 10 kilometres of high tension cable barriers on the median of the Solomon Hochoy Highway in the vicinity of Claxton Bay. It was because of the success of this project that this programme has been continued. And for those of us who utilize that Solomon Hochoy Highway on a daily basis would quite often see a number of times, accidents happen and the car either remains in the median or is blocked by the barriers even before it reaches the median. Therefore, you can see for yourselves that these barriers actually work in preventing accidents.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it was in light of this success that in 2012, work started on 25 kilometres of high tension cable barriers on sections of the median of the Solomon Hochoy Highway between Chaguanas and Golconda. This means that this Government would have implemented approximately 35 kilometres of cable barriers along the Solomon Hochoy Highway to save the lives of our nation's road users. We also have an additional nine kilometres of high tension cable barriers approved by the Central Tenders Board which will begin, probably around July 2013.

I am advised by the technocrats in the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, that to date these barriers have taken 57 hits preventing potentially dangerous crossover accidents from before the period November 2012 to March 2013. If these barriers have saved at least one life, they would have done—it would have served its purpose. [*Desk thumping*] And therefore, it is because of the success of this programme that we are actively continuing the installation of these cable barriers along our nation's highways.

In addition to the cable barriers which I spoke about, we are also implementing New Jersey-type barriers. These New Jersey-type barriers can be used to redirect vehicles keeping them on their side of the highway. They are ideal for locations with narrow medians or where there is very little room for deflection. During the 2010 fiscal year, 330 safety barriers were installed on the median of the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway in the vicinity of the San Juan River

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Bridge. Eighty-two barriers from this contract had to be used as an emergency measure to block the east to north right turning lanes of the intersections of Aranguez and El Socorro with the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway. These barriers have been working quite well and it was to this end that in 2012 an award was made for 1,450 metres of reinforced concrete New Jersey barriers which would be implemented to prevent the potentially life threatening cross over accidents in the areas of Trincity between Savannah Drive.

So with respect to decreasing the road carnage on the roads, I spoke to you about the cable barriers and I spoke to you about New Jersey type barriers. But that was not all that we did, Madam Deputy Speaker. One of the measures we implemented to assist with traffic management on the whole, road safety, was that of the Traffic Wardens Programme. Madam Deputy Speaker, this Ministry proposes to continue to control the lawlessness of our nation's road by expanding this programme. You would recall that in March 2011, the first batch of traffic wardens graduated.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to tell you, that these plans had been in the Ministry of works for 18 years before this Government came into office—eighteen years, Madam Deputy Speaker, that was the legacy of the PNM; that was the care of the PNM eighteen years they planned and could not implement. When we took office, in less than nine months traffic wardens were on the streets in Trinidad. These traffic wardens, they have the ability to issue tickets to drivers much in the same way—[*Interruption*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Oropouche West and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues for allowing me an additional 30 minutes. I was speaking about the Traffic Wardens Programme and I was saying that it had been 18 years of planning under the PNM administration and nine months of delivery under the People's Partnership Government. [*Desk thumping*] So these Traffic Wardens, they have the ability to issue tickets in the same way as police officers for offences such as breaching of parking laws, seatbelt laws, mobile phone regulations, road traffic signs, traffic lights and to order the removal of illegally parked vehicles.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I cannot tell you how many requests we get for these traffic wardens in various parts of Trinidad and Tobago. We started with approximately 66 wardens in March 2011; to date, we have approximately 192 Traffic Wardens on the streets of Trinidad and Tobago. They can be seen in Port of Spain, Chaguanas, Arima, Tunapuna—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Partap: Sangre Grande.

Hon. S. Roopnarine:—Penal, Princes Town, Point Fortin, San Fernando and they are used on an ad hoc basis in Diego Martin, Gasparillo and so on. So these Traffic Wardens are assisting with the traffic situation in this country—192 officers out on our streets. This has been a highly successful programme and I am advised by the technocrats in the Ministry again, that over the period January 2012 to April 2013, it is estimated that revenue in the sum of \$5,158,700 was derived from the issuance of fixed penalty notices over the period, January 2012 to April 2013—approximately \$5 million derived from the issuance of fixed penalty notices from our Traffic Wardens. I really want to take the opportunity in this House to commend those officers, those wardens, for the fantastic job that they have done in serving this country. [*Desk thumping*]

So, we will continue to expand that programme. We also recognize that when it comes to road safety, that walkovers and pedestrians bridges and so on, are of value. And so, it was to that end that we implemented the Tumpuna pedestrian bridge in the vicinity of UTT. It was to this end that we commissioned the Maloney walkover on the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway and we did this on Shouter Baptists Day; the Member for Arouca/Maloney was present at the commissioning of this.

Miss Ramdial: What!

Hon. S. Roopnarine: And I think that this surely goes a long way for the school because the Baptist School is right along that highway, and the Oropune walkover, that my colleague the MP for St. Augustine had been lamenting over for some time. So we are taking measures to continue in the delivery of pedestrian bridges and walkovers and so on.

While we are doing that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to remind the House that it was this Government, that in February 2011 would have implemented new regulations made under the Motor Vehicle and Road Traffic Act to prohibit the use of cellular phones while driving in order to save the lives of our children and in order to decrease road carnage as a result of cell phone usage.

8.10 p.m.

So there are many things we are doing in order to decrease the road carnage. We have spoken about cable barriers, we spoke about New Jersey-type barriers, we spoke about the Traffic Wardens, we spoke about the walkover and pedestrian bridges and I also want to speak a little bit about an issue that we saw very recently with respect to the Sea Lots community, Madam Deputy Speaker.

As you know, on Sunday, February 24, six members of that community were involved in an accident where three of those persons, a mother and two daughters, would have succumbed to their injuries. We see this as a very serious matter. We see it as a matter that requires the urgent attention of the Government, and this is why the Ministry of works has been working with a team of the Sea Lots residents in order to meet some of the requirements of that community, because we believe in dialogue, we believe in consultation and we believe that sometimes it is the residents who have the solutions to the problems facing their communities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to tell you that so far, in working together with those residents, we have put in a number of measures in that community. This includes the installation of New Jersey barriers along the south side of the Beetham Highway, from Abbatoir Road to the lighthouse. We also had installation of rails on the sidewalk, installation of a pedestrian push-button crossing at Abbatoir Road, also installation of a pedestrian push-button crossing at the lighthouse.

In addition, Madam Deputy Speaker, there was the construction of a bridge of the East Dry River to link Pioneer Drive and Production Avenue, and I have passed there many times and seen persons using that. This is directly off the highway between Pioneer Drive and Production Avenue. In addition, we have had the institution of a safety zone with new traffic management markings to alert drivers to the pedestrian crossing.

We have had a reduction of the speed limit from 80 kilometres to 50 kilometres per hour and, Madam Deputy Speaker, the technocrats in the Ministry are also going to be engaging in a public awareness programme, together with members of the community, so that we can continue to educate persons on how to use these facilities for their own safety and for the safety of their children and their families. While all this is being done, the designs for the walkover in the vicinity of the market have been completed, and we have to work now together with utility companies in order to relocate some of those.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, there are many things that the Ministry is focused on in terms of the development, in terms of the reduction of the road carnage, and I also want to talk to you a little bit about the national traffic

monitoring system—National Traffic Management System, sorry. In addition to these measures, the cable barriers and so on, we are also deploying to assist with traffic management the National Traffic Management System.

You would recall that prior to May 2010, our manifesto indicated that we would begin the introduction of camera technology at traffic lights. I want to tell you that last year we commissioned the intelligent transport system, a traffic surveillance and control system, at the Ministry's head office, corner Richmond and London Streets. And this system is part of the new traffic management plan designed primarily to reduce traffic congestion. The National Traffic Management Centre now monitors 11 major intersections from Ana Street in Woodbrook to the Grand Bazaar Mall at the intersection of the Uriah Butler and Churchill-Roosevelt Highways.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we recognize that we have to use technology in terms of fighting the problem of road carnage and in terms of ensuring that we have visibility on our nation's roads. We have also implemented traffic management schemes in order to alleviate the problem of traffic in some areas. It was to this end that we launched the traffic scheme at the Endeavour flyover in Chaguanas, and upgrades are constantly being done on that, as it is a trial by error process where the technocrats would monitor for a period of time, and then look at the upgrades that are required. So that traffic scheme at the Endeavour flyover has been working very well.

We have also removed all of the traffic lights coming from Golconda into Port of Spain. There is not a single traffic light when you leave the bottom of the Solomon Hochoy Highway to come to Port of Spain. [*Desk thumping*] And so these are the things that the Ministry continues to focus on, in addition to which, we continue to have discussions with the residents of St. James and Woodbrook, to see how best we can implement a traffic scheme that is amenable to both the business community as well as the residents. We have had some success in the St. James area and we intend to continue the dialogue, conversations, consultations, to focus on the Woodbrook area as well.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we spoke about the issue of road carnage, we spoke to the issue of traffic management, we spoke to the issue of using technology in the fight to reduce road carnage, we spoke about the development of highways, we spoke about the development of our local roads, of our bridges, of our landslips and I wanted to speak for a few minutes about the Port of Spain East/West Corridor Transportation Project. I want to tell you that this project is well on its way.

I am advised, again, by the technocrats that this project is actually ahead of schedule. I want to tell you that so far contract one and contract four have been completed. Contract one entailed the construction of two bridges to divert the

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existing Uriah Butler Highway over the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway. This contract would have started in February of 2011 and was completed in July 2012. This completion date was approximately five months ahead of schedule within budget and with no additional claims. [*Desk thumping*]

You would recall that under the PMN, projects had major cost overruns, projects kept going on and on and on, with no completion date. To date, those projects perhaps are still not completed. In addition to contract one, there was also contract four which involved the widening of the bridge over the San Juan River by 5.5 metres. This structure, once completed, would accommodate the realignment of the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway eastbound, back to its original alignment with three lanes and shoulders. This contract, Madam Deputy Speaker, was completed in January 2013, four months ahead of schedule.

This Government is committed to the delivery of our projects. We are committed to delivering our projects within stipulated time frames, and we are committed to doing so within stipulated costs. Contracts two, three, five and six, are ongoing. Contract two is 63 per cent complete; contract three, 74 per cent complete; contract five, 31 per cent complete; contract six, 44 per cent complete; contract seven, 30 per cent complete. And while all of this is going on, Madam Deputy Speaker, all of this work is happening seven contracts on that particular project, the Ministry is committed to ensuring that we have discussions, that we have dialogues with members of those communities.

In fact, it was only two weeks ago that the hon. Minister of Works and Infrastructure, the Member for Tabaquite, would have been present at a consultation in Bamboo No. 2, and it was only last week that the Minister, then Acting Minister Ganga Singh, together with MP for St. Augustine and myself, would have been present at a consultation in Bamboo No. 3 so that we can tell the people, we can communicate with the people, what this Government is doing, so that they can understand their role, how they fit into it, and so, also, so that they can contribute towards the development of infrastructure, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I also want to tell you about the Ministry's BLT Programme. The BLT Programme means the Bridges Reconstruction Programme, Landslip Repair Programme and Traffic Management Programme. At this time we have, under the bridges programme, under Phase I of that programme, the design of 26 bridges started in March of 2012. In the first quarter of fiscal 2013, tenders were invited and to date the work has started on the B13 Calcutta Road No. 2, in February of this year and we also have work ongoing on the Landslip Repair Programme and the Traffic Management Programme. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have told you about the delivery of this Government. I have told you about the care of the welfare of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago by this administration, but as I stand in this Parliament, I stand here as a young person, I stand here representing the youth population of Trinidad and Tobago, like my colleague for Diego Martin Central, and as I stand here representing that youth population of approximately 35 per cent of young people in this country, I want to tell you that this Government is very focused on youth development.

8.20 p.m.

I can safely say that young people are the core of the sustainable development of this country as they are at the core of sustainable development of any nation and that the development of our youth is directly proportional to the development of our country. And, therefore, it is imperative that any government recognize that youth are an important partner in social development programmes and that they play a vital role as agents for effecting change and should continue to be a critical part of the decision-making process.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Prime Minister and Member for Siparia has shown her commitment to the development of young people. She has done so by the numerous appointments she has made, not only in her Government, but also across state boards, across local Government representatives. And this is very important, because it ensures that there is some level of succession, not only within the Government, but in the country, in our nation.

I also want to tell you of some of the initiatives that this Government has pursued in the development of our young people. My colleague from Diego Martin Central is very keen on hearing these initiatives.

Hon. Member: You have my attention.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: Thank you. And these initiatives include the National Youth Mentorship Programme. The Prime Minister not only recognizes the importance that young people play in the country, but she also recognizes, Madam Deputy Speaker, that it is important to keep young people on the right path. And it was to this end that she was present when this programme was launched by the Ministry of National Security and I think that this shows her commitment to the development of our young people, Madam Deputy Speaker.

There was also the LIFE sport Programme under the Ministry of Sport launched by the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara which I understand continues to assist approximately over 2,000 at risk young men which gives them an opportunity to

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develop skills in football, basketball, cricket and, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, these are the programmes that really keep young people out of trouble. These are the programmes that give them something extra to do, so that their hands are not left idle and it also helps to put food on their tables, Madam Deputy Speaker.

There was also the Hoop of Life Programme. And not to mention that we have continued our training programmes such as YTEPP, HYPE, YAPA and others being expanded into different regions. In fact, in my own constituency we now have YTEPP programmes which is something that they did not have access to before, in the Woodland area.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we also gave a commitment to the review of the National Youth Policy and I know that the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development under Sen. The Hon. Marlene Coudray, is working very hard on that. That Ministry also had launched a National Youth Volunteerism Programme. And not to mention, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this Government continues to expand the GATE Programme and the OJT Programme so that persons can have access to tertiary level education and then when they leave that tertiary level institution, they can also get employment as an OJT, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So I really want to say that the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar has shown this nation that she has the ability to lead. I think that we can be rest assured that we can continue to put full confidence in the hon. Prime Minister. As I said here before, I only spoke to you about the Ministry of works and the Ministry's achievements and I am sure that many other Ministers here would speak to the achievements in other areas. I know in education we have many accomplishments, in the area of agriculture, in the area of WASA and so on, social development, national diversity, I know we have many things to say.

And so I want to spend a few moments to tell you about my constituency, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is my pleasure to represent the constituency of Oropouche West in this House. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, you know I said earlier on that when I inherited that constituency, I inherited a constituency without a single good road and that was no exaggeration. It was the truth and that was the neglect of the PNM administration [*Desk thumping*] in the constituency of Oropouche West. And Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to tell you that since we took office, we have had numerous roads paved in that constituency. We have had Suchit Trace, Gopee Trace, Tenant Trace, Rago Trace, Durbas Trace and others. And the reason for the delivery in these rural constituencies is not a matter of inequity, Madam Deputy Speaker, but it is a matter of correcting the wrongs that occurred for the past 40 years. And that is why this Government had to play catch-up in these areas that were considered rural areas, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I want to tell you that we had rivers that were not cleaned in years, 40 years rivers not cleaned in the constituency, Bhagmania river, the Drudge river, Black Water Channel, and so on. Madam Deputy Speaker, so these simple, simple basic necessities and basic amenities were not afforded to these people.

I also want to tell you, as I have said in this House before, that my constituency in 2008, I believe, there was a school in my constituency called the Tulsa Trace Hindu School. And that school, Madam Deputy Speaker, collapsed in 2008. And when that school collapsed, Madam Deputy Speaker, the children attending that institution had to operate out of the annex of a nearby temple. Madam Deputy Speaker, that was the care of the PNM. Those children would get wet when "rain fall". That was the care of the PNM. They never rebuilt that school.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when we took office I spoke to the Minister of Education and he gave a commitment that he would ensure that that school was reopened and returned to its original location. Today I say thank you to the Minister of Education [*Desk thumping*] for the reconstruction of the newly opened Tulsa Trace Hindu School.

Madam Deputy Speaker, so we did not have schools, we did not have roads, we did not have water, we didn't have pipe-borne water, Madam Deputy Speaker. So many areas were left without a supply of pipe-borne water in Banwari Trace and Banwari Branch Trace, Antilles Trace, Ackaloo Trace, Santa Cecelia Trace, Baig Trace, New Village Extension, and that is just to name a few, Madam Deputy Speaker. So this was the neglect. There were parts of my constituency that did not have street lights; grounds, out of 11 recreational grounds, two had lights. And that is the rural neglect that I am faced with in the constituency to rectify in this term.

Hon. Member: Yes, all of us.

8.30 p.m.

Hon. S. Roopnarine: I give the commitment here that we have started to correct that process, we have started to correct that rural neglect created by the previous regime, and I give the commitment that we will continue to correct that level of neglect as we continue to distribute the resources of this land in an equitable manner across Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in closing, I say that this Motion before this House is baseless. It is brought here to score cheap political points. There has been very little evidence shown to support this Motion and I think I have shown this House that this Government, under the leadership of the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, the Member for

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Siparia, Madam Deputy Speaker, is committed to delivery. She has shown her ability to deliver and she has shown that she has, indeed, the full confidence of the nation of Trinidad and Tobago, who put her as Prime Minister in May, 2010.

I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon (*Point Fortin*): [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. [*Interruption*]

Please Couva South, do not start off on the wrong foot and do not eat into my time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, Member for Point Fortin.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Please save me from Couva South whilst I present.

I want to say to the Member for Oropouche West that executive responsibility is executive responsibility, whether you are a man or a woman, male or female, executive responsibility is that. [*Desk thumping*] It is serious business and there is no gender discrimination. You have to do your job. You have to do what is required of you. [*Desk thumping*]

However, as a female Prime Minister, there are some expectations, and you could use your office, I would say, to benefit women and, I suppose, to speak on behalf of all of us in this Parliament, but I will speak to that later. You brought it up. I will deal with this aspect of expectations of a female Prime Minister. [*Desk thumping*]

Member for Oropouche West, I am really wondering if you were in the Parliament today, whether you were in Trinidad, or you are just bodily here or not I think you have completely forgotten the disastrous claims that have been brought against your Government. [*Desk thumping*] And I say disastrous because the effect on your Government is going to be disastrous.

Hon Member: For the email?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: That is against your colleagues, your Prime Minister, and yet still you have ignored it. You have forgotten about the Motion and what it is about [*Desk thumping*] and you have dusted off your same old speech and come here, your budget speech, repeated things, roads in rural areas but only talking about the roads in your rural areas, not roads in Point Fortin and La Brea and so on. You did not mention a road belonging to any of us on this side, [*Desk thumping*] right, but we did not expect anything differently, you know. We did not expect anything differently, Mr. Speaker [*sic*]. What we expected is that they will

ignore the allegations and that speaker after speaker will come here and try to talk about how you are performing, [*Desk thumping*] and they ignore the allegations that have been—very serious allegations that are brought here in the House today.

And it happened with the former Member for Chaguanas West, you know, where allegations were being made and they just ignored. He was saying, they were saying, "I am performing", "We are performing." [*Desk thumping*] and it took an eminent legal mind from Barbados to bring some seriousness to the claims and this is how they had no choice but to dismiss the Member for Chaguanas West. [*Desk thumping*] But that is their style. So we expect to hear speaker after speaker talking about what they have been doing in their constituencies and in their Ministries, et cetera. [*Interruption*]

So that the last speaker was doubting the veracity of the claims brought by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and, Madam Deputy Speaker, if the Member is going to doubt the claims that have been brought here today, then what she must do is completely deny it.

Hon. Member: Yes, deny it.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: She must say that it is not true [*Desk thumping*] but the point about it is, she could not, and I doubt that there is any in fact, none of the speakers on that side today have come up here today and to completely deny—it is not true. [*Desk thumping*] They have not said anything like that. And you know what? They have gone as far as doing—and I am ashamed of it. The Prime Minister, I understand, has been on television and she is trying to say that an email can simply be fabricated. So what they have done is, they have set up an email from the innocent Member for Arouca/Maloney [*Crosstalk*] to the Member—apparently to the Member for Diego Martin North/East, Mr. Speaker, trying to say that any email could be fabricated and, therefore, the email today was fabricated, Mr. Speaker. You see that kind of logic, Mr. Speaker—Madam Deputy Speaker, we do not believe in it.

Hon. Member: Where is that email? First time I am hearing that.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: I am not going to repeat what the Diego Martin Central has said and the Diego Martin West has said. The emails, I believe it, and each and every one of us on this side believe it as well. [*Desk thumping*] And you know what? [*Interruption*]The media believes it as well [*Desk thumping*] because all of these email addresses that are here, have been proven, have been verified, they have been matched—

Hon Member: By who?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: And these are the very email addresses whom the—

Hon. Member:—gmail.con.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Give me a chance, Member. You should go back to your seat.

Hon. Member: I going. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: But these are the very email addresses which the media uses to contact these very Ministers. [*Desk thumping*] They cannot be denied. It is the truth, Mr. Speaker [*sic*]. [*Desk thumping*]

So today—and the only thing that the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara has said that is true, that it is a very sad day, and today I hang my head in shame for my country, the once revered Trinidad and Tobago, diminished in the eyes of the region and diminished in the eyes of the world, Mr. Speaker, [*sic*] and, really, locally—

Hon. Member: Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is horrific, and you can just imagine, all of this information has gone viral; all of the Ambassadors and High Commissioners in Trinidad and Tobago have already reported these things to their principals in their capitals, Mr. Speaker [*sic*]—

Dr. Browne: Reuters.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—and the point about it, it is the truth. Nobody can deny it. [*Desk thumping*]

I want to congratulate my leader, the Member for Diego Martin West, for ending the secrecy on this matter, Mr. Speaker [*sic*]. It is an extension, it is a verification of the entire section 34 concoction [*Desk thumping*] and, as I have said, not the Member for Tabaquite, not the hon. Prime Minister, not the hon. Attorney General—I do not know why I am saying honourable, but none of them has been able to deny thus far their participation in the entire scheme, Mr. Speaker [*sic*].

Dr. Rambachan: Have I spoken yet?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: And the people of Trinidad and Tobago must insist on answers. Do not, do not accept this blanket denial.

Miss Hospedales: That is right.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Insist. And if you think we have walked for section 34, then we must walk in the hot sun, we must walk in the pouring rain, Mr. Speaker [*sic*], for the truth of section 34, which has now been revealed. [*Desk thumping*] The country—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member, if you address the Chair and if you look on the Chair, you will see it is Madam Deputy Speaker. I am a lady, thank you, and I will prefer that you address me as "Madam Deputy Speaker".

You may continue.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I do apologize. It is just that you are seldom there—

Hon. Member: That is okay.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—and I know you have very—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Indarsingh: Yes, that is disrespect.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: No; no, no, no, I am not disrespecting her at all. I am pleased to see you here. I admire your style, *[Desk thumping]* but I must—what I am saying is that the country must insist that this matter be investigated. *[Desk thumping]*

I want to say to the media, Madam Deputy Speaker, do not be afraid. I know you have been threatened, but it is you who must go to the public. You have done it in the past. You must do your investigations. Do not leave it to them at all to do any investigations. You will never hear the end of it. But we are calling on the media and we are calling on the voice of the people to deal with this, and we trust that they can do it very, very well.

As I said, Madam Deputy Speaker, the evidence is all here. We could ignore everything that the Attorney General said. I mean, he just rambled and brambled all over the place.

8.40 p.m.

He could not defend what was before him at all, and his colleagues, all we were hearing from them is a set of giggling. They felt it was a laughable situation and they tried to dismiss it and so on. They tried to trivialize the affair, but I saw the look on some of their faces.

Dr. Browne: Terror!

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: San Fernando West turned white; the hon. Prime Minister, pale because of these allegations. The Member for St. Augustine—*[Interruption]*

Miss. Hospedales: Withdrew.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—he completely withdrew, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Miss. Hospedales: And the Member for San Fernando West.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: None of them, none of them—and the AG did not even defend the hon. Prime Minister here.

Dr. Browne: True. [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: And I would have expected that from him, right. But instead, we heard from him—they started with the usual thing on the Member for Diego Martin West, but I am very proud of my leader in what he has brought today, the package from the whistle-blower. I know that it paints an awful picture of Trinidad and Tobago under the governance of the Kamla Persad-Bissessar administration and we know it is highly scandalous, but again, this is the truth, and this is what we have to deal with, and therefore, we must respond to it all. Really, it has been despicable and disgusting. I do not want to repeat what my colleagues have said, but the backlash I know is going to be enormous for our country if we do not deal with it. [*Desk thumping*]

I know they would want you to believe that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was being emotional and probably came here speculating and so on, hoping that it could be true. But, that is not so. The hon. Leader of the Opposition waited, he investigated, he verified, he acted responsibly. [*Desk thumping*] Not like the hon. Prime Minister where as soon as she picks up something she runs into the Parliament, always with some story, always with some scandal.

You remember with the Interception of Communications Bill, and she came in here before, the hon. Member for Siparia came here with a statement on the interception of communications, talking all sorts of rubbish, talking about the Oath of Office, and that we must be above the law, and oh, all these nice sayings. But she rushed into here as usual and that is not the first occasion as well, Madam Deputy Speaker, at all.

Again, we would remember when the Member for Siparia was in Opposition. Again, she sat in the AG's office waiting for the letter from Dhansook, and then she rushed into the Parliament again to read it out to the Members and so on. But that is still before the DPP. That is the way that the hon. Prime Minister operates, with a lot of emotion and a lot brouhaha and so on. But I must say, what came today was a steady, steady Motion from our Member for Diego Martin West and we are very, very pleased about that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am very, very pleased to join in this Motion and I intend to show that the sanctity of the Parliament and lawfully constituted institutions and other authorities that are fundamental to our democracy must be protected at all times, and I will show as time permits and I will speak to some of

the issues, how by a series of actions, both local and international, this UNC-led Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, has attacked and conspired to undermine the institutions of our State, our dearly beloved State, Trinidad and Tobago. And, of course, Madam Deputy Speaker, I do intend to register my lack of confidence in the Prime Minister, but not only in the Prime Minister, but in all the Members on the Government side.

Madam Deputy Speaker, but what do we expect from the other side, the usual. We expect the same points that they have been making about the Member for Diego Martin West for the last three years. Nothing more than that, that is what they are going to come with time after time. I really think that they should give up now. They should really give up now comfortably. Better than them have tried to do that, but they have not succeeded and the Member is still standing strong. He is a man who has stood up for his principles even if it meant that he was going to become a backbencher, but all of you will do well from learning from this example. [*Desk thumping*]

Well, I am expecting that many of you will get up and express your undying support for the Prime Minister. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Browne: "How much road and how much bridges."

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: We expect that, especially—the Member for Oropouche East is telling me yes. I expect nothing less from you.

Dr. Moonilal: And for you too.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: You know, Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: And for you too.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—what I expect from you today or tomorrow or when you come back in your defence of the Prime Minister, is not how you were always sounding, you know. You were not always supportive of the hon. Prime Minister—

Hon. Members: Oooh!

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: —and I remember—[*Desk thumping*]*—the media, I remember the Guardian, no, no, no. [Crosstalk and laughter] I remember, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Guardian, actually speaking with the Member for Oropouche East who was then supporting the hon. Basdeo Panday for leader of the UNC. He had no confidence in the Member for Siparia then at all. [Desk thumping] And when he was told that the Member was picking up steam in her campaign, you know what he said?*

Hon. Member: What?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: She should just keep on walking. Those were the words of that Member for Oropouche East. Madam Deputy Speaker, that reminds me of that Johnny Walker jingle, that is what that reminds me of, and that came from the Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: And you are supported in Point Fortin—[*Inaudible*]

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: No, no, no.

Dr. Browne: Madam Deputy Speaker, a point of order, Standing Order 40(b) and (c). This is unbearable.

Hon. Member: They are making the most noise.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Please. Member for Point Fortin, you may continue.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Madam Deputy Speaker, things began to change a little bit, you know, because one day—well, all of a sudden he became the Prime Minister's rising sun.

Dr. Moonilal: I am not the substance of this Motion.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: No, no, you started there throwing words at me, but I am with you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Deputy Speaker, 36(1). Clearly you have nothing else to say.

Madam Deputy Speaker: You have gone out of the Motion. I want to ask you to stay with the Motion that is before this Chamber.

Dr. Browne: She is being interrupted.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I am very clear that this Motion is about confidence in the Prime Minister—

Mr. Jeffrey: And the Government. [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—and I am saying that apart from us on this side who have no confidence in the Prime Minister and apart from the population who has no confidence in the Prime Minister, there are those on that side as well, who have no confidence in the Prime Minister. I know there is a very good chance that many of them may want to join us at the end and support us in this Motion. [*Desk thumping*] You know.

Dr. Browne: Calling each who are weary. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Madam Deputy Speaker, but I really believe—

Dr. Gopeesingh: What name, Vashiast Kokaram?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—you are talking about lack of confidence, I really believe that they too lack confidence in themselves, and that this, this is a bunch of persons—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Speak for yourselves.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—riding on a raft. You know about white river rafting—on a raft going down a very dangerous course and what has happened is that raft is deconstructing and all of them are imploding. They have no confidence in themselves at all, at all, at all. But there is a lot of "couyah mouth" on that side "eh", and winking of the eyes and all that kind of thing when it comes to confidence of the Prime Minister. [*Crosstalk*] No, listen to them.

The Member for Oropouche East was not the only one. The former Member for Chaguanas West, it was the same thing. I remember his last speech in the Parliament, and I could quote you from the *Hansard*. He said:

"The Prime Minister is quite right—and you could say what you want , Member for Diego Martin West, I said last night, I say here again for the *Hansard*, I say again tomorrow, that I love the Prime Minister and she is the best this country ever had..."—and there was tremendous desk thumping on that side. But, he went on to say—"I was not drunk last night, I eh drunk now and ah would not be drunk tomorrow, when ah say de same ting."

Madam Deputy Speaker, "couyah mouth". That is what it is. Winking of the eye, one, today is for you, tomorrow is for me. That is how they operate. So, that is it when it comes to confidence, Madam Deputy Speaker, serious erosion all over, inside, outside, et cetera.

8.50 p.m.

I know that lately they seem to be speaking quite a bit about Trinidad and Tobago's image in the world. In fact, when the Member for Tabaquite spoke of the details of the Prime Minister's visit to Canada and, of course, the visit to Washington the previous week, he seemed to imply that the Prime Minister will be doing a lot more of this diplomacy and so on, Madam Deputy Speaker. Yes, I agree that the Prime Minister is the country's chief diplomat, and if you look at the ministerial schedule which has been gazetted, the hon. Prime Minister is in fact responsible for protocols of the State. But I want to say to you that this Prime Minister has presided over the lowest diplomatic standings that this country has ever held regionally and internationally. [*Desk thumping*] That is what they have brought the image of this country to, the lowest standard ever, rock bottom. [*Interruption*]

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So I am being told—and we need to control the crosstalk—that the Chinese Premier is coming and so on, and, of course, we know that the Vice-President of the US is coming, but he is not coming on an invitation by them. It is not so at all, Madam Deputy Speaker. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: He is coming on his own.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: He is coming to visit a number of countries in the region, and he will be stopping off here for a visit to deal with all the Caricom members. They would like you to think differently, Madam Deputy Speaker. They seem to be intimating that the US Government has this special relationship with the hon. Member for Siparia, but that is not so and it was never so even before she had become the Prime Minister of this country.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if you look at the—I want to make reference to a diplomatic cable on April 28, 2006, where it was expressed that even though the Member for Siparia had in fact won the challenge of becoming the Leader of the Opposition, they quoted that the UNC was maintaining a fierce, nearly dogmatic loyalty to the jailed Panday and I am quoting. They went on to say that:

"The UNC is too divided against itself and much of the populace is getting fed up with what they see as political posturing in place of action on issues of concern, such as crime or the cost of food."

And they pretty much said that:

"There is a speculation that"—the Member for Siparia—"will merely be a seat-warmer for the former AG Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj."

But we know, Madam Deputy Speaker, those were very, very prophetic words because we will see under this Government, this discredited UNC-led Government, going out on a wave of corruption just as they did in 2001. And as to whether the Member is a seat warmer, well little did the US know that she is in fact a seat warmer and she is really warming the seat for the Member for Diego Martin West who will be the next Prime Minister of this country. [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Please! Please!

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Madam Deputy Speaker, you would think of all the bungled extraditions and giving protection to individuals, that any Government, any foreign Government, will have a better opinion of our chief diplomat? Absolutely not! And this is what I mean when I say that our standings in international community have really been ground to nothing. That is where we are.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Deputy Speaker, please. Could you just state the source of the document you quoted from earlier?

Dr. Browne: What is that Standing Order?

Dr. Moonilal: No, it is not a Standing Order.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: May I proceed? Thank you. [*Crosstalk*] Madam Deputy Speaker, I was speaking to the image of our country and our relationship with the US, and I just want to highlight that when our former Prime Minister visited the US, he was actually entertained at the Oval Office by the President of the United States. When the current Prime Minister visited the capital sometime very recently, do you know who she met with? It was a Deputy Secretary of State, and that is how far Trinidad and Tobago has fallen in the eyes of the US and the world. It is not only internationally, "eh". It is also regionally.

You remember only just recently there was an ACS meeting held in Haiti. As you know, the Association of Caribbean States is headquartered in Trinidad. It is a very important body from the point of view that it is made up of countries of Latin America, Central America and also the Caribbean. That meeting was held last month with Presidents and Prime Ministers from all over the Caribbean and Latin America in attendance and, really, as chief diplomat and host of the ACS, I would have expected that our Prime Minister would have been in attendance, but she was not.

Madam Deputy Speaker, not even the Member for Tunapuna, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, chose to attend that very important meeting—and he is somebody who acts for the Prime Minister—but instead, it was the Member for Chaguanas East who was chosen to attend. The Minister of Tourism who I am sure will have a lot to say in this debate.

Mr. Cadiz: I do not understand that.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: You would not understand, and I am not surprised, Member for Chaguanas East, because when you attended that meeting you sat there in silence and you made not one contribution—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: "Oooh, you was there?"

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—to that meeting. Not one word. Absolutely no contribution to the meeting. [*Desk thumping*] As a matter of fact, you were in Haiti as a tourist, not as an active participation. This is in the meeting and this is what our taxpayers get in return for this Government. It is a waste of taxpayers' money jaunting all over the place and absolutely our foreign policy just

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diminishing. Our institutions are in fact in decline. A recent PetroCaribe meeting held in Venezuela—we were invited again, and we would want to be there because there—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Madam Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 36(1), please.

Madam Deputy Speaker: As a matter of importance, Member for Point Fortin, I want to ask you to link your contribution to the Motion that is before this Chamber and do not just go helter-skelter. This debate has nothing to do with the US Government, so I want to ask you to stay with the Motion before this House. You may continue, Member.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you. But all I am doing, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I do accept what you have said, is I am responding to the effects of the Motion which was made here today. [*Desk thumping*] I have said it and I will say it again, the image of our country has been tarnished—

Hon. Member: Precisely.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—locally, regionally, internationally—[*Desk thumping*]—and I am showing how they have absolutely no interest in representing this country properly, and at that PetroCaribe meeting, which the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs should have gone to because we want to strike a renewed relationship with the new President, so that we can in fact monetize the resources that are between the two countries. So that would have been an important meeting, but he chose not to attend. But that is all right.

Let us go to meat of this debate.

Hon. Member: Yes, let us go to that.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have been advised that dinner is ready and those wanting to partake in dinner can seemingly proceed out of the Chamber, bearing in mind that a quorum is required to continue the debate. You may continue, Member.

9.00 p.m.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. But, let me get to the meat of the debate [*Crosstalk*] and speak about democracy because one of the goals of any Prime Minister of any country is to, in fact, advance its country's interest to prosperity, but, however, doing so democratically. That is, instituting all the things that are necessary to primarily—especially in a developing country—narrow the gaps in income across the board, fairly and equitably. The Member for Oropouche West spoke about fairness and equity, well I am saying to you that this Government is not operating fairly and equitably to all the citizens of this country. [*Desk thumping*]

There is no democracy under this Government. [*Desk thumping*] The goal really, if you are interested in the welfare of your citizens, the goal is to improve, step by step, the lives of each and every one of the citizens of your country, sharing, again, equitably the fruits of our development, and that means that there must be policy to substantiate our approach to development and democracy, and doing so fairly. There must be fairness of rights, there must be fairness of opportunity, and of course, there must be fairness in the application of rules, but they will never understand fairness in the application of rules because even among them, what is good for one is not good for the other.

Miss Hospedales: Hmmm!

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: But it means, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there must be a focus on narrowing the country's income gap, and therefore—and I would agree with the Member for Oropouche West that—more funding must be allocated to improving the lives of the poorer citizens. The trouble is that this is not being done, and the Member for Oropouche West had the temerity to get up and to list all that is being done in her constituency, and we know that in our constituencies on this side, nothing is happening [*Desk thumping*] and there is no improvement in the lives of the people in our constituencies.

This has not happened at all, and therefore, I can conclude that this Government, under the stewardship of the Member for Siparia, [*Crosstalk*] the hon. Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, that she and her Government, that they have attacked and they have conspired to cripple and undermine the parliamentary Opposition, since, not one, not any of our constituencies have really benefited fairly from this Government. I say to you that there has been no policy to remove this urban/rural divide that the Member for Oropouche West is talking about, there has been none of that—no such policy to remove that divide for the constituencies under the control of PNM Opposition parliamentarians.

So that really, it is no small wonder that under this Government and among the people of Trinidad and Tobago, there is no sense of a common purpose and destiny. There is nothing like that! There is no social cohesion. Persons do not feel that they have an entrenched stake in this country, so that the end result is that this is why the general population is not at all supportive [*Crosstalk*] of the leadership of this country and this Government, and it is because democracy is undermined, and particularly so in the constituencies under the control of the Opposition parliamentarians.

What has happened is that the Prime Minister has put at the forefront their party interest, their constituencies, over and above the national interest, Madam Deputy Speaker. Therefore, that only says that they have been practising the politics of

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divergence and not convergence. This is why they have not been able to mobilize the support of this country. They have just not gotten it right. Even the institutions which were developed under us—I know we have named some—but the institutions of good governance, the institutions of an effective administration, the institution of a very vibrant private sector—all of these have been undermined and derailed by this Kamla Persad-Bissessar administration. This is why the population has come to realize that it is only a PNM administration that can govern this country effectively. [*Desk thumping*]

So that, Madam Deputy Speaker, someone before me spoke about silence and inaction to our constituencies, well, all that silence and inaction amounts to is a definite conspiracy to undermine us—we, the parliamentary Opposition, and to reverse all of the gains that have been made in this country before they came into power.

So, what we have seen is some serious gaps in democracy in the governance of this country. We have seen actions of political tribalism. We have seen corruption. There has been a lack of vision. There has been no plans and policies, no direction—a lot of indecisiveness, a lot of flip-flopping and vacillating, [*Crosstalk*] and really, there has been some moral degradation as well, divisiveness, and there have been many occasions of an intention to deceive the public. [*Crosstalk*] The end result is that the people have been affected, institutions have been affected and our standing has been affected internationally again. [*Crosstalk*] So really, inexcusable behaviour on the part of the leadership of this UNC-led administration, and really, this is really leadership in crisis and an undermining of our democracy. This is not in the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I will speak to the point that was raised by the Member for Oropouche West when she was talking about the female perspective. I want to say, as a female parliamentarian of the Lower House—and we are so proud, there are 50 per cent of us as against 20 per cent on your side, and of course, the 20 per cent on that side, none of them hold any key Cabinet positions at all; none of them are in the cabal as well, but we really do feel strongly that our interest, as the women in the parliamentary Opposition, we feel that our rights [*Crosstalk*] and the rights of the women in this country have been severely impacted and have not been advanced by this female Prime Minister. Everyone expected more. [*Desk thumping*]

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

We, the women in the parliamentary Opposition, feel weakened, we feel derailed and we feel that the interest of the women of this nation has been subverted by our female Prime Minister and her Government. Really, I think the Prime Minister has failed herself there.

Because, I can tell you, there has been no legislation, no effective and exceptional legislation, emanating in favour of women under this Government at all. "Ah lot ah talk in the beginning and we expected so much" and you said—I think the Prime Minister was on record saying that her Government would go further by showing that these offerings of stipend employment programmes cannot work and is not enough, but nothing has changed, [*Crosstalk*] because no other improvements have been offered by the hon. Prime Minister, because she has not gone to the root cause of poverty among women. I do not think she has the political will to deal with that and really the Prime Minister has not led or effected any change with respect to the women in this country.

There has been no suggestion of, let us say, a parliamentary committee on gender affairs. There has been no cross-party caucus—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: The Opposition useless!

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—suggested which will embrace the Opposition parliamentarians in addressing women's issues. I mean, if this Prime Minister was really up to being innovative and truly democratic, perhaps, she may have thought—of course, this is not an indictment on the Deputy Speaker—she perhaps would have thought of appointing a Deputy Speaker from the Opposition side because this is what—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: Who?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: This is what is done in jurisdictions; do your research. [*Crosstalk*] To ensure that there is democracy and fairness, you have a Speaker appointed and a Deputy Speaker, sometimes, appointed from the Opposition, but that could never been done under your Prime Minister, because I do not believe she is in any way magnanimous in her outlook. [*Crosstalk and laughter*]

As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister was on record speaking about—[*Crosstalk*] please!

Hon. Member: "Ah dulahin!"

Dr. Moonilal: "We eh talkin bout you." [*Laughter*]

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister was on record talking about the largest land distribution ever.

Hon. Member: Oh yeah.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Some 3,980 acres going into farming.

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But did the Prime Minister not think that what she could have done was to insist on a quota system that females benefit on a 50/50 basis, bearing in mind that women make up 70 per cent of the poor in Trinidad and also internationally as well? But that will never come from that hon. Prime Minister—

Then, of course, just recently there was a study on women in the labour force, two years ago—Female Labour Force Participation: The Case of Trinidad And Tobago. I do not believe that anybody, none of the women on that side, has read it and has attempted to analyze the outcome because what it revealed is that women do the same jobs in Trinidad but they in fact receive less pay. But I do not think that the magnitude of this and the impact it has on families and single homes and so on, really matter to this Government at all. Instead, under this Prime Minister, a lot of women have been fired, whether it is in contract work, whether it is the ADB, whether it is in the Parliament itself. Many of the women have been fired and really, she has not really advanced the cause of women at all.

But another way in which we feel diminished as the parliamentary Opposition, Mr. Speaker, is with regard to the Legislature. Now, we know that the Government has a propensity to damage everything that is good and to break contracts and so on, and we have had a few cases where the Government feels it could in fact act above the law or act in breach of the law and break the law and so on. I want to remind this honourable House that as parliamentarians, our primary function is to make good law and we in the Opposition take our job very, very seriously. In fact, the hallmark of our existence is that we observe the rule of law. Therefore, whenever that is threatened, you are in fact undermining our very existence in this Parliament.

I will give you a few examples where the Government knew and intentionally intended to breach the laws of Trinidad and Tobago and other international treaties as well. I speak to the Caribbean Court of Justice issue of the adoption of the court's appellate jurisdiction for criminal matters, and so on. [*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: Thirty-six (one).

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Very clearly, and it is not a question of 36(1) here, Member for Oropouche West. The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) is in fact an extension of the Judiciary.

Dr. Moonilal: Of which country?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Of Trinidad and Tobago and I will come to that and explain that to you. Because within the original jurisdiction, they in fact handle matters on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago and also Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, et cetera.

You would remember the Trinidad Cement Limited case (TCL) ably adjudicated on by the Caribbean Court of Justice. So it is our Judiciary but within the original jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, which we have all signed on to. There is an issue with regard to the appellate jurisdiction, but with regard to trade matters, trade disputes relative to companies and countries, it is a part of our Judiciary and you would remember that the TCL case was handled by the Caribbean Court of Justice. So I hope you get that drift. They are a part of our Judiciary.

What I am saying is that—I was speaking to the question of the law and breach of the law—the Government fully understood that they could not go in the direction in which they were going, which is to accept unilaterally the court in its appellate jurisdiction only for criminal matters. I am saying they knew full well—there are senior counsels on that side and yet still they failed us all and—despite the warnings by us with regard to Articles 19 and 28, we knew they were going down the wrong way, they went to the Heads of Government of Caricom to circumvent and sort of breach the legislation which we had signed on to, the treaty we had signed on to. This is what I am talking about, where they have served to undermine the parliamentary Opposition with regard to the observance of the rule of law. They have served to undermine the parliamentary Opposition, Mr. Speaker. So embarrassing it was and embarrassed we were again in the region as, of course, the Heads of Government refused to respond.

Then there was—I will tell you another treaty which, again, they broke and, of course, or attempted to break and, again, this is in contravention of what we are here for, to make law, to observe the rule of law as parliamentary Oppositions. We are really undermined. This is with regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to which both Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada signed on to and, in fact, many other states in the international community signed on to and they are under an obligation to negotiate an agreement between themselves, which would delimit their resource entitlements.

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: I was speaking to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea which we signed on to, which many countries in the world signed on to as well. I, perhaps, believe that it would probably be almost all of the 190 or 191 nation states signed on to this law with respect to delimiting their

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resource entitlements with regard to the exclusive economic zone and also the continental shelves as well. So we have no choice, we are under an obligation as countries that we would, in fact, pursue these international objectives and in fact delimit the lines between countries and so on.

In the case of Grenada and Trinidad, we in fact established a joint commission and we met and we came up with some recommendations. They were very, very healthy recommendations which both governments accepted and that served to strengthen to meet the objectives, also to strengthen our bilateral relations and also strengthen our relations with the rest of the region as well and it also served to give Grenada that lifeline which it needs, in terms of the expected gains with the monetizing of the hydrocarbon resources between our two countries. Everything was constructive and done in good faith.

But, you would be alarmed, the Member for Siparia was then the Leader of the Opposition at the time of the signing and these were her responses to us on this side carrying out our obligations under international law. We were actually responding to our obligations and these were the responses from the hon. Member for Siparia who has earned her right for being there for 18 years. This is what she had to say: "Do not sign the treaty. Do not sign the treaty" and this is in contravention to law and legislation in contravention to the treaty. She said she ordered that the Prime Minister must cease and desist. "Do not sign. Forget the law. Forget the treaty." But she said that the people should decide, the people of Trinidad and Tobago should decide how our wealth is to be utilized. This is our senior counsel commenting on international law obligations, undermining the rule of law, undermining democracy in the region, undermining the parliamentary Opposition, then Members of the Government. The best advice she had had for the population in Trinidad and Grenada was that they should wear black. Needless to say, you will be surprised. The Prime Minister has since flip-flopped. She has flip-flopped.

9.20 p.m.

We have had a visit from the Prime Minister of Grenada only recently and surprisingly, the hon. Prime Minister expressed her commitment to implement the framework agreement for cooperation in the energy sector, and to finalize an agreement on the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in the maritime areas between us.

So, what I am trying to highlight, Mr. Speaker, is that we expect the Prime Minister whether she is in Opposition, whether she is on the Government side, whether she is governing the country, we expect the Prime Minister to observe the rule of law. That is what we on the Opposition are about. We come here to make law and not break the law.

It was the very same thing with the international covenant on—I could give many examples, Mr. Speaker—the international covenant on civil and political rights. According to section 4 and this international treaty has all to do with civil rights of the population so, therefore, at the time of a public emergency, there is a duty to inform the rest of the world that we will, in fact, be curtailing the civil rights of the population. They do not care, they completely breached the covenant on civil and political rights, and did not do what they were supposed to do, which is to inform the Secretary General of the UN that we, in fact, had ordered a state of emergency, that there was a reason for a public emergency and so on, but completely defied the covenant which we had signed on to.

Only more recently in this House, this very House, with the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amdt.) Act; there was breach of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. And try as we may to inform and educate the Member for Fyzabad—well, that is a difficult thing to do—[*Laughter*] they allowed themselves the right under an order to, in fact, issue licence plates to non-diplomats when, in fact, the consuls are not to enjoy this. Again, complete breach and an attempt to breach and they were successful in doing it, another law, the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

So again, Mr. Speaker, they have been highly offensive to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas as well in many instances. They have been highly offensive to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. And also again there is another, the Caricom—I think there is another law which we are in breach of with regard to this whole Caribbean Airlines fiasco. I am not going to go into details on it, but it is simply that we depend so much on the Caribbean in terms of our manufacturing and exports and so on, but here we are, members of the Caribbean are threatening to take us to the very Caribbean Court of Justice, and this is over the question of the subsidy to Caribbean Airlines.

Now, it is that Caricom has been in existence for 45 years. It was first Carifta and so on and, of course, Caribbean Airlines has been in existence for about 60 years and Liat has been in existence for 55 years. Yet still, any problems which occurred during the lifetime of Caricom and during the lifetime of Liat and so on, and Caribbean Airlines have been resolved through quiet and proper diplomacy over the years.

But again, this is when you had a Government which was in control and was able to manage its institutions and that is not happening under this administration. [*Desk thumping*] Here we have the Prime Minister of St. Vincent who is a loyal friend to Trinidad and Tobago under several administrations, threatening to take us to court, again, for the non-observation of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

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There is another clause, I think it is the Caricom—I am going to get it, Mr. Speaker, but two treaties that they are, in fact, ignoring completely.

I mean they have really, in the course of things, mismanaged their relationship in Caricom; that is what I wanted to say. They are prepared to breach the laws and I think this is unforgivable, in fact, this whole Caribbean Airlines fiasco is, to me, entirely disastrous. We left that airline in the black and here it is, it is now in the red; \$704 million. We have lost our reputation as well with regard to safe air travel. In fact, the airline is being used for jaunts by the Ministers and, by the Prime Minister for concerts and, of course, with a retinue of friends and family and so on, and they even went to India and so on, but here we are, the airline is now about to go bust. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, I can tell you I am a devout Roman Catholic and I do have the greatest of respect for my parish priest, but there is no way that I will ever appoint him to the board of Caribbean Airlines—

Hon. Member: What?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon:—but our very Prime Minister, this is what she did, she appointed her pundit to the board of the airline, took him to India along with his wife to advise on air transport matters, a man with no aviation or knowledge or history. So here we are, it is a financial crash under the stewardship of a CEPEP contractor and a tyre-shop operator, appointed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. I am so happy that their tenure has come to an end. I want to wish the new Chairman, Mr. Philip Marshall, all the best. I feel that he is quite insightful and astute, and I am hoping for the best from him.

But again, I started with this CAL issue by saying, you got to take a position, you got to review CAL's intent, CAL's integrity, its vision with regard to Liat, and how they can operate cohesively in serving the region, but it requires diplomacy and at the same time, it requires observance of the law which we, as Opposition parliamentarians, intend to operate by and to defend certainly, Mr. Speaker. So there we are.

I wanted to just speak a bit more, if time allows, about the Caribbean Court of Justice because you know this is an institution which we are spending heavily on, but which we are not using. As I was saying before, that in its original jurisdiction, the Caribbean Court of Justice was established by the Caricom Treaty, to be the sole arbiter in trade disputes involving companies and countries in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. So that really, I made the point and it is very clear that the Caribbean Court of Justice is, in fact, part of the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago which is undermined by this Prime Minister, the hon. Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

So that this court was inaugurated some time in 2005 and all of us became members, all of the countries in terms of its original jurisdiction in resolving trade disputes and other disputes as well; as I said, it is part of our Judiciary. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the anomaly of this situation is that whilst we host, in fact, the Caribbean Court of Justice, we are the headquarters, the headquarters are here located in Trinidad and Tobago, and certainly we contribute most to its funding in terms of something like, I think, \$36.1million, here we have a Government that is rejecting its ability and its authority. It is undermining the Judiciary because to date even though we had gotten somewhat of a changed perspective along the way, we really are nowhere closer to adopting this court as the final appellate institution for Trinidad and Tobago in both civil and criminal matters.

I want to go back a bit because it is this very administration which had agreed to the buy-in of the court on behalf of the people of this country. It was the hon. Basdeo Panday who had signed on to this treaty in 2001, and it was the hon. Member for Siparia who was part of that administration.

9.30 p.m.

She was part of the Cabinet decision which had decided that they would lobby to host the court here and she was part of the administration that had agreed to all the terms and conditions. She was also part of this administration which had agreed to Trinidad and Tobago making that very large contribution as well. Yet still, when they lost the elections and the Member now became a Member of the Opposition, the Member for Siparia found herself, along with her colleagues, not supporting the constitutional amendments that were necessary to replace the Privy Council with the Caribbean Court of Justice. They lost the election; became the Opposition and they flip-flopped, vacillated and it was a different story.

So I am saying, within the context of this Motion—I am contextualizing it, Mr. Speaker—I am saying that the Member for Siparia has, time and time again, undermined and attacked the Caribbean Court of Justice, as a parliamentarian, both in Opposition and when in Government and as Prime Minister of this country.

It was in this very House, in 2005, on the debate on a government Motion seeking to pass an order conferring the relevant diplomatic privileges and immunities on the CCJ and the Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission and the CCJ Trust Fund, in this very House, that the Member for Siparia said about this court that it was illegal and unconstitutional.

The Member for Siparia said that the Caribbean Court of Justice was illegal and unconstitutional, then she lambasted the Government about the pomp and

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ceremony in celebrating the inauguration of the court and spoke about the carnival mentality; but carnival mentality, you will see carnival mentality on their anniversary on Friday coming. I do not believe we will have a sitting in the Parliament, or if we do one at all, it is going to be very, very short because it will be fete after fete after fete, again, with the Member for Fyzabad putting on his dancing shoes as he usually does with the "Rowley Showdown" on a Monday, Mr. Speaker. That is what we expect from them.

The Member criticized the composition of the court. The Member lamented—I am speaking about the Member for Siparia—she lamented that there were no Indians amongst them. She criticized the appointment of the judges. She said that it was susceptible to political influence and she cast aspersions on the Heads of Government, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with this matter of the Judiciary—the extension of the Judiciary—the Caribbean Court of Justice.

I am saying that this is all wrong—wrong, wrong, wrong—and the point about it is that the AG was the one who had to try to refute the statement and to correct the awful statements made by the Prime Minister. That is because the Member could not find it in herself to come to this House and to apologize for her very injudicious and prejudiced and irresponsible statements. She could not find it. She said that the Caribbean Court will become a court of injustice—those were her words—it will become a court of injustice, undermining the Judiciary. To make matters worse, the Member for Siparia filed a claim in the San Fernando High Court; filed a claim in the High Court against the then Attorney General declaring the court of justice unconstitutional, inconsistent and usurping the separation of powers, Mr. Speaker.

Then she went on to say that between 2002 and 2004 not a single case was adjudicated on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago and I want to say today to the Member, who is now the Prime Minister of this country—I want to defend the Judiciary directly to the Caribbean Court of Justice—that it is in fact solid; that it is in fact performing and, to use her own words, the Caribbean Court of Justice is solid as a rock, as solid as a rock, and I am sure you will remember the TCL case which was handled with proficiency and efficiency, Mr. Speaker—very solid, but undermined by the Member for Siparia.

As I close on this particular issue, I want to say that the Opposition—we on the Opposition parliamentary Bench—is in full support of the Caribbean Court of Justice as the final appellate jurisdiction for both criminal and civil matters. So that, too, is the view of many eminent legal persons and Members who have received the Order of the Caribbean Community. They have linked all of the statements, the negative statements made by the Prime Minister about the region,

with her attitude toward the Caribbean Court as well and definitely everyone has agreed that this Government has, in fact, weakened the relationship with Caricom and, of course, it has almost lost all of its strength.

But that is how the Member is. This is the kind of governance we have under the hon. Prime Minister—vacillating, flip-flopping, not serious, Mr. Speaker, and here we are approaching [*sic*] 50 years of independence, ties completely cut off from the British since we became a republic and there we are having no confidence in the region, no confidence in ourselves to adopt the CCJ as a final appellate court. This is very, very, very poor on their part.

But as I said, Mr. Speaker, this certainly is not democracy. The people want the court and it is in fact the people who govern and, therefore, I expect to hear that we will in fact move forward to adopting the Caribbean Court of Justice as the final appellate court of jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I want to go back to the very perilous events of today.

Hon. Member: Perilous?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: The event today was very serious, very damaging, very damaging on our country; very damaging on the Government and I do not believe that there is any way you can resurrect yourselves from the events of today at all and I expect that the Member—Member for Tunapuna, I have the highest regard for you. I want to hear your perspective on this. I am sure that you would want to distance yourself, but you really must come out as a Member with strength and speak to this issue which has very, very serious impact for this country and for the future of this country. [*Desk thumping*]

I want to say today that I very much support the Motion which was brought by the hon. Member for Diego Martin West. It amounts to, very simply, a Motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister; a Motion of no confidence in her Government and the Member spoke to a very particular issue, a revelation made to the public and I expect that the public, the media, will do its work. They will be demanding answers. They will be demanding an investigation on the events which have occurred and no amount of road paving or whatever, box drains or anything could cover the issue that was raised here today.

We are used to hearing all of these budget speech glorifications about work that we are doing and I accept that. I accept that. It will be for the public to deliberate whether you are being fair and equitable and I could tell you that you are not. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: We are.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: You are not. You have conspired and you have weakened and you have crippled our constituencies on this side of the fence and, therefore, you are going to feel the effects by the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, with these few words, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to speak and to say that I fully support the Member for Diego West, the Leader of the Opposition, with this Motion of no confidence. We have no confidence in the Prime Minister; we have no confidence in the Government and I really invite those on that side to examine their consciences as well, Member for St. Augustine, Member for Arima, Member for San Fernando West, and vote with their conscience on this Motion and support the no confidence in the Prime Minister and the UNC-led administration. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Housing, Land and Marine Affairs (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, we have to end this misery now. I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Tuesday, May 21, 2013, at 1.30 p.m. and to indicate that debate on this Motion will continue at that time.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 9.41 p.m.