

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Wednesday, March 25, 2015*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have received communication from the following Members: the hon. Dr. Lincoln Douglas, Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West is currently out of the country, and has asked to be excused from sittings of the House during the period March 21—27, 2015. The hon. Winston Dookeran, Member of Parliament for Tunapuna and Mr. Patrick Manning, Member of Parliament for San Fernando East, have asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the Members seek is granted.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Second Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Strategic Services Agency for the year ended September 30, 2003. [*The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh)*]
2. Second Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Strategic Services Agency for the year ended September 30, 2004. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]
3. Second Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Strategic Services Agency for the year ended September 30, 2005. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]
4. Second Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Strategic Services Agency for the year ended September 30, 2006. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]
5. Second Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Strategic Services Agency for the year ended September 30, 2007. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]
6. Second Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Strategic Services Agency for the year ended September 30, 2008. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]

*Papers 1 to 6 be referred to the Public Accounts Committee*

7. Budget and Planned Activities of the Regulated Industries Commission for the year ended December 31, 2015. [*The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal)*]

**URGENT QUESTIONS**

**Adjournment of Court Cases  
(East-West Corridor)**

**Miss Donna Cox (Laventille East/Morvant):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Justice. There are media reports of court cases along the East-West Corridor having to be adjourned, can the Minister advise whether this was the result of ongoing negotiations between the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service and Central Government?

**Mr. Speaker:** Before you respond, I am hearing phones going off in this Chamber. All Members are asked to put their phones on silent, all Members, so that we would not have disturbances during our proceedings, please.

**The Minister of Legal Affairs and Justice (Hon. Prakash Ramadhar):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, there are many reason for adjournments in the courts, but having regard to question posed, I caused an enquiry to be made through the Judiciary, and we are awaiting their response on that matter. As soon as we get it we shall return to you.

**Miss Cox:** Supplemental. So, in other words, you do not know.

**Hon. P. Ramadhar:** With all due respect, I cannot speculate as to the causes of adjournments in the courts. As I say, from those who would have experience there—there are many reasons for adjournments. To ask me to do otherwise will not be the appropriate thing for me to do. [*Desk thumping*]

**Protective Services  
(Details of Wage Negotiations)**

**Miss Donna Cox (Laventille East/Morvant):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of National Security. Given the ongoing wage negotiations between the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service, the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service and the Central Government, can the Minister give an update on the status of these negotiations and how he intends to resolve this matter?

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Brig. Carlton Alfonso):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] I am not in a position to answer for the

Prison Service. I think that is the Minister of Justice—would have to answer that one. With respect to the ongoing negotiations with the Police Service and the Fire Service, those are still ongoing. I am still not in a position to answer because I have not been informed, but the matters are ongoing.

**Dog Control Act, 2013  
(Status of Unproclaimed Sections)**

**Miss Donna Cox** (*Laventille East/Morvant*): To the Minister of Local Government. The Dog Control Act, 2013 was partially proclaimed and came into operation with effect from June 2, 2014, however, in light of the recent attack of a toddler by a class A dog, what is the status of the proclamation of the remaining unproclaimed sections of this Act?

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal)**: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Local Government is not in the area at this time, but she is on Government business in the south of the island, and has made a commitment to provide an answer later in the proceedings.

**Mr. Speaker**: Is that accepted?

*[Assent indicated]*

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal)**: Mr. Speaker, we have the Questions for Oral Answer. The Government is in a position to answer question numbers 86, 87, 88, 102, and we will ask for Question No. 103 to be deferred for two weeks, and we can answer Question No. 104.

*The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon (Point Fortin):*

**Petrotrin  
(Details re: New Vice-President, Finance)**

- 103.** Could the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs state:
- a) who is the new Vice President, Finance of Petrotrin;
  - b) what is his remuneration package;
  - c) why was a foreign candidate hired;
  - d) what experience does he have above candidates available locally?

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**CCC Trainees  
(Details of Number Employed)**

**86. Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey (*La Brea*)** asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister state how many CCC trainees were recorded for 2012 and 2013 as being employed in Trinidad and Tobago?

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Brig. Carlton Alfonso):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Civilian Conservation Corps Programmes are State-sponsored, youth-oriented training programmes that are administered by the Ministry of National Security, and managed by the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force. The CCC Programme targets youth at risk between the ages of 16 and 25, who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, have limited or no academic qualifications, and are unemployed.

The programme seeks to engender socially acceptable attitudes and behaviour among the trainees, develop their technical and vocational skills, thus preparing them for the world of work. It also seeks to cultivate greater sensitivity and appreciation of the environment. The programme is conducted in six-month cycles.

Following their graduation from the programmes, and based on their performance, graduates are afforded short-term on-the-job internal employment, for a period of up to three years. The current establishment provides 142 positions for graduates of the programme. These positions comprise 110 assistant team commanders, and 32 junior team commanders. These graduates perform duties mainly in the areas of clerical, procurement, maintenance, ICT services and culinary arts.

Apart from the graduate's eligibility for the form of employment, the job position must be available, bearing in mind that the duration of the internal employment is for a maximum of three years. It should also be noted that some graduates leave before completing the three years, when they receive better employment opportunities.

For the years 2012 and 2013, approximately 400 graduates benefited from the short-term on-the-job internal employment of the Civilian Conservation Corps. While the CCC Programme is not mandated to provide employment for graduates

in external organizations, it does facilitate requests from such organizations for graduates particularly those that provide the training. The administration of the CCC Programme also informs graduates of advertisements for employment, and assists them with the application process, and provide recommendations where applicable.

At present, no formal record of postgraduate employment of trainees is maintained. However, consideration is being given to the establishment of a database of the postgraduates' employment, and other activities of graduates so their progress can be tracked and monitored.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**CEPEP Trainees  
(Details of Number Employed)**

**87. Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey** (*La Brea*) asked the hon. Minister of Housing and Urban Development:

Could the Minister state how many CEPEP trainees were recorded for 2012 and 2013 as being employed in Trinidad and Tobago?

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Planning (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, the CEPEP Company Limited engaged a total nine trainees for the period 2012/2013, under the on-the-job training programme in Trinidad. The CEPEP Programme in Tobago falls under the Tobago House of Assembly; three have been engaged as employees with the CEPEP Company Limited; two are still under the OJT Programme at the CEPEP Company Limited, and four have left the CEPEP Company Limited.

**URP Trainees  
(Details of Number Employed)**

**88. Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey** (*La Brea*) asked the hon. Minister of Works and Infrastructure:

Could the Minister state how many URP trainees were recorded for 2012 and 2013 as being employed in Trinidad and Tobago?

**The Minister of Works and Infrastructure (Hon. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question No. 88, the hon. Member for La Brea enquires about the number of Unemployment Relief Programme trainees recorded for 2012 and 2013 as being employed in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, in 2011—2012, there were 2,817 such persons employed in Trinidad, and 140 in Tobago, bringing a total 2,957. In 2012—2013, 2,623 in Trinidad, and 112 in Tobago, bringing a total of 2,735. They were employed in 2007 in different institutions.

**Petrotrin**  
**(Details of Subsidy Arrears Owed)**

**102. Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon** (*Point Fortin*) asked the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs:

Could the Minister state what is the current quantum of subsidy arrears owed to Petrotrin?

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Kevin Ramnarine):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to the records of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, the subsidy arrears owed to Petrotrin by the Government is \$3,111,827,623.85 or roughly \$3.1 billion as at January 2015; the most accurate information that we have.

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** May I ask, how often are these remittances made to Petrotrin, and is it up to date?

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** The reimbursement of subsidy is the remit of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy. How it works is that the Ministry of Finance and the Economy reimburses the wholesalers, NP and Unipet, and they in turn reimburse Petrotrin. The Ministry of Finance and the Economy has been making great efforts to eliminate or reduce that subsidy or bring it down to zero. It has come down significantly, but there is no specific schedule, but it happens within the fiscal year, right. The aim is to bring that accounts receivable at Petrotrin down to zero.

**1.45 p.m.**

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** Will the Ministry not be guided by Petrotrin's cash flow problems?

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** The Ministry of Finance and the Economy—I am speaking for the Ministry of Finance and the Economy and the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs—is guided by the current cash flow situation at Petrotrin. In addition to that, it is one of the things that was flagged by the rating agencies for Petrotrin when they did their annual assessment of the company. They have asked us to treat with that matter of the accounts receivable, and the

Ministry of Finance and the Economy has made great strides in reducing that from where it was a couple years ago.

This is a matter that goes back to 2009 and it is something that the Ministry of Finance and the Economy has resolved to treat with in fiscal 2015. The Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs was allocated \$6 billion in its fiscal 2015 allocation to treat with the subsidy in the current year 2015 and the arrears.

**Mr. Speaker:** Final.

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** Yes, final. Any particular reasons for the delay though?

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** I do not have that information. What I do know is that the Ministry of Finance and the Economy is making all efforts to eliminate or to reduce that arrears to Petrotrin.

**Petrotrin's Former Vice-President, Refining and Marketing  
(Severance Package Details)**

**104. Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon** (*Point Fortin*) asked the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs:

Could the Minister state what the severance package was for Mado Bachan, former Vice President of Refining and Marketing of Petrotrin?

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Kevin Ramnarine):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With regard to question 104, Petrotrin's policy procedure guide on the handling of employee's personal records requires confidentiality in respect of each employee's personal information. In this regard, a separation agreement between Petrotrin and Mr. Mado Bachan contains a confidentiality clause which prevents the company from divulging the terms of that agreement to third parties.

Accordingly, in conformance with this policy and in fulfilling its legal obligations, the company has advised that it would be in violation of that agreement should that information be made public. I wish to also add that that policy which protects employees' personal information goes back to March 1994. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** Mr. Speaker, if that is the case, why can the Minister not answer question 103 then?

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** We have asked for a deferral on question 103.

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** For what?

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** All the information is not yet with us, and you will get the answer to question 103.

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** Same answer! It would be the same answer.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** No it would not be the same answer.

**DEFINITE URGENT MATTER  
(LEAVE)**

**Police Roadblock Exercise  
(Likelihood of Recurrence)**

**Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 17 of the House of Representatives, I hereby seek your leave to move the adjournment of this honourable House for the purpose of discussing the following matter as a definite matter of urgent public importance, the likelihood that officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service will repeat the events of Monday, March 23, 2015 which saw the collapse of the national security system of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the matter is definite since it refers to the action of police officers that resulted in severe gridlock throughout Trinidad and Tobago, and the use of power arbitrarily and illegitimately by armed police officers for the purpose of leverage in ongoing negotiations for improved terms and conditions.

The matter is urgent because executive members of the Police Service Social and Welfare Association have publicly stated that these roadblocks were previously scheduled and that police officers would continue these roadblock exercises as they felt necessary.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, any repeat of such widespread and deliberate road blockage short of the declaration of a state of emergency, amounts to the abrogation of the constitutional rights of citizens, abuse of power by agents of the State and a clear demonstration that the national security system is vulnerable to sabotage and manipulation by agents of state in whom it is entrusted.

Mr. Speaker, this matter is of public importance since the action of the police officers exposed severe weaknesses in our national security system, and the ineffectiveness of oversight at affiliated agencies such as the Commissioner of Police, the Special Branch, the National Operations Centre, the SSA, the National



Security Council, and if such incident is repeated it will result in millions of dollars of losses by businesses, the shutdown of the public transportation system, which would leave thousands of commuters including school children, infants and the elderly stranded, the delays of domestic and international flights and general public suffering and inconvenience, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, after careful consideration of this submission, I advise that this matter does not qualify under Standing Order 17, and the Member may wish to use the appropriate Standing Order to raise that at the next sitting.

**LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION  
(LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN)**

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise with a heavy heart, but an absolute clear sense of purpose and commitment to move this formal Motion to express censure and condemnation and to express a lack of confidence of this House in the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West and Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the Motion reads:

*Whereas* the reckless conduct of the Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West has given rise to serious concerns in the public domain about his judgment and the exercise of his discretion;

*And whereas* the Leader of the Opposition had a duty to exercise the power conferred on him under Section 6(1) of the Police Complaints Authority Act, Chap. 15:05 to nominate a Director of the Police Complaints Authority (“PCA”) impartially, free from bias and in accordance with the Code of Conduct laid out in the Integrity in Public Life Act, Chap. 22:01 (“IPL”);

*And whereas* there was a real possibility that the Leader of the Opposition was biased when he exercised his power under Section 6(1) of the PCA Act;

*And whereas* the Leader of the Opposition, in making the said nomination, abused his office or could be perceived as abusing his office, by failing to comply with the Code of Conduct set out in the IPL Act;

*And whereas* the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Diego Martin West by this conduct and other reckless acts has brought the Office of the Leader of the Opposition and the House into public odium and disrepute:

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*Be it resolved* that this Honourable House censure and condemn the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West;

*And be it further resolved* that this Honourable House express its lack of confidence in Dr. Keith Rowley as the Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West.

Mr. Speaker, there are some persons who have suggested that this Motion is frivolous, perhaps of no consequence. Colleagues on the other side have suggested that it is vexatious and of no consequence. Mr. Speaker, it may be of no consequence to them, but there are examples in the Third World and in the developing world where political leadership can either make a country or break a country [*Desk thumping*] and, therefore, we have a public duty to examine and to inspect political leadership across the aisle. Political leadership can drive a country to great development, can build a nation, but political leadership can also destroy countries. Today, we have filed this Motion to examine the conduct, the judgment and the exercise of discretion by the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Diego Martin West.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the beginning that this matter was not filed with any malice, hate, [*Laughter*] contempt. It matters not the identity of the Leader of the Opposition. This matter is not being prosecuted as a personal matter. It is an examination of conduct, exercise of discretion and judgment.

My friends on the other side chuckle when I say that, but I wonder whether they would laugh out loud when I remind them that those of us in the Government are not the first to raise the issue of the conduct of the Member of Diego Martin West. We are not the first to have raised this issue. Indeed, the issue of his conduct has been raised by others who have known him longer than we have.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Who others? One person.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** I would get to you, Member for Port of Spain South, very soon.

Mr. Speaker, the conduct of the Member for Diego Martin West that we raise today is in the context of that Member being an aspirant, and truly convinced himself that he can be the next Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. The conduct of this Member was never raised by us in the first place, it was raised by

his own political leader several years ago, who raised his conduct as a matter of national concern. Mr. Speaker, but not only the former Prime Minister and Member for San Fernando East, his conduct has been called into question by the Member for Diego Martin North/East. The Member for Diego Martin North/East alerted us to his conduct and his representation. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Imbert:** When was that?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** We will get to that in a substantive way in a while. But, Mr. Speaker, his conduct was also brought to the fore by a former Minister of Housing, Planning and the Environment, parliamentary and Cabinet colleague. So his conduct is not a matter that is being raised for the first time. It is the first time we have filed a substantive Motion, but it is not the first time his conduct—exercise of discretion—is called into question. In the Motion we will discuss that, and we will bring the information and the evidence to the table to explore this reckless conduct which over the years in public life has been serialized, and several political personalities, including leadership, have brought this issue to the fore.

But, Mr. Speaker, the institutions of the State have also brought to the fore the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition. The Judiciary brought this matter to the public attention. You have had the Judiciary, you have had a sitting judge in a commission of enquiry and a judge at the High Court raise this issue in the public domain.

So when the author here writes that there are serious concerns in the public domain, this is not the first time conduct is being brought to the table. So it is not that there is anything personal at all against the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, but the Motion, we admit, is unparalleled and unprecedented until quite recently. I believe in Bermuda, a Motion has been filed on the Leader of the Opposition following after this Motion was filed in Trinidad and Tobago. I do not know if it is the same member he was visiting in Bermuda all the time, and it is the same Motion on the same person.

Mr. Speaker, the *Newsday* editorial of Thursday March 05, 2015 says, and I would just quote very briefly:

“Like any other public official, an opposition leader is accountable to the public. The post-holder is expected to conform to the standards applicable to all who serve the nation...there is no good reason why an opposition leader, like any other Member of Parliament, cannot be subject to a substantive

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motion criticising his conduct.”

The editorial of the *Newsday*, Mr. Speaker. It goes on at the end of that editorial to say:

“By now it is clear...that serious questions over Rowley’s conduct have been raised. One relates to his use of Parliament procedure to unleash highly scandalous email allegations which began to appear dubious”—which began to circulate and then being condemned—“within hours of them being made.”

Mr. Speaker, the newspaper, citizens outside of the Government have called into question the conduct of this Member. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, he is getting agitated already, which is his trademark and we will come to that. We will try to coax him down in a little while.

You see, Mr. Speaker—and I want to tell him if he comes here with that conduct that would demonstrate—before even doing any research here, if I went to bed last night having done no research, I could have wake up this morning and just come to his House and quote from the *Express* editorial of today in the event I had nothing—“Why accuse churches of taking Govt ‘bribe’”? This is today, Mr. Speaker, and this editorial says:

“Any insinuation that a \$55 million ‘bribe’ could turn politically neutral, or PNM-supporting, pastors”—and so on—“into People’s Partnership adherents must properly be regarded as insulting.”

### **2.00 p.m.**

This editorial says that the Leader of the Opposition has insulted the churches in this country. In fact, minutes after being anointed, he then asked a church whether they accepted a bribe. This is what the editorial is saying. This is the editorial of today. Incidentally, this is the *Express*, “eh”. This is the *Express*. This is how they express themselves. So, had I nothing, I could have brought this and say, “Look, look the case is here”.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin West also raised some issues on his platform last evening about myself, which I will answer later in the event I had nothing else to say here, but I have a lot to say. So, the key issue in this matter involves—and I want to deal with it and dispense with it in a way quickly, surprisingly quickly, because there are so much other matters we need to get to.

You see, Mr. Speaker, it has now been in the public domain for some time, this matter of the appointment of David West. Let me begin by saying, I am

convinced, and I will convince you, Mr. Speaker, and I submit today with all respect to the Member for Diego Martin West, that the Member for Diego Martin West proceeded as Leader of the Opposition to nominate his witness to a position of Director of the Police Complaints Authority and then kept it a secret.

You see, Mr. Speaker, it was on the night of January 24 something happened—not January 24, 2010, which is another big day, but I think January 24 is not a good day for the PNM. On January 24 at 11.00 p.m. in the night there was a headline on the Internet edition of the *Express*, “AG DUCKS”. They were after the former Attorney General on a matter involving, one David West, and they carried an argument. The Attorney General then responded. They did not know that article on January 24, on the Internet, printed on the 25th, would mushroom and snowball into a monumental controversy involving the Leader of the Opposition. So the *Express*, in a remarkable twist of irony, caused us to be here today to question and examine the Member for Diego Martin West because we did not know until then—certainly I did not know, the Prime Minister and many of us—that David West was a private witness, a willing voluntary witness to a private matter involving the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition comes to the Parliament and says on—I know these things by heart now—February 20, 2015, Prime Minister’s Question time, the Leader of the Opposition tells us—and I can quote but I do not want to spend time too much—that, I did not know I was required to indicate when I spoke to the Prime Minister. There was a meeting planned to discuss that, it was a joint advice to His Excellency The President. The Leader of the Opposition could not meet and spoke to the Prime Minister on the phone. The Leader of the Opposition on February 20 said, I did not know I was required to indicate that to the President or the Prime Minister, suggesting that he knew, but he was not required—right here in the Parliament. I mean, we have the *Hansard*, look it there, February 20:

“...I will admit, I did not discuss it with the Prime Minister...as far as I was concerned...there was no requirement to discuss it...”

Jump further, Mr. Speaker, to when the Leader of the Opposition says now in a public meeting on March 03:

I had no idea Al-Rawi had sourced him as a witness.

Now, we need to decide from now, what is it? Did you know he was a witness? Or did you not know he was a witness? Because the Leader of the Opposition then says that the former Attorney General ought to have known that David West was a witness because they were filing this document here, which is an

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application for extension to submit a witness statement, June 23. The Leader of the Opposition says former AG should have known, but he should not have known, both were parties to the same matter. And in an application supported by an affidavit, the lawyer in this case—I believe he was later relieved of that responsibility as lawyer—says, I am duly authorized to swear to this affidavit in support of his application; application of one Keith Rowley and this involved extension of time to file witness statements:

“Both Mr. West and I have been reviewing the working draft...in the”—  
meanwhile—“in order to provide”—greater clarification.

Which Dr. Rowley wanted greater and he wanted it vetted by Senior Counsel and so on. This is, Mr. Speaker, June 23, 2014.

But he is saying later, by March 03, I had no idea he was sourced. So, the Senator is a lawyer, they would meet on Monday or Tuesday when they have their meeting, they would meet in caucus. The Senator is very familiar to these hallowed halls. He is here, generally, on a Friday with his colleagues supporting. I see him snacking upstairs and so on, at times. So, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is telling us and asking us to believe that in three seasons, from summer to autumn to winter, three seasons go by and this lawyer, who is a Senator, did not say, “Boss, we get ah witness on this matter, you know. We have ah witness”, and the witness is someone with some knowledge working in the Attorney General’s Department. So I want to take it from that point. I believe, incidentally, what the Leader of the Opposition—I am accepting what he said on March 03, 2015 that he did not know: “I did not know who he sourced”.

Today I want to ask Mr. West, given the public interest in this matter, the public interest, not a legal requirement, David West should indicate who sourced him, who solicited him, who was the solicitor. He was going down the road minding his business, came to know of a private defamation matter, and says, “Look, you know, I know something about that, you know. I could help the defendant.” Somebody approached him. Given the public interest in this matter, he should indicate whether the Member for Diego Martin West solicited him, asked him, sourced him—to use your term—sourced him.

You see, Mr. Speaker, is either you know or you did not know, because there are grave implications to if the Leader of the Opposition knew, which many believe he ought to have known, and he knew. You cannot tell me you are involved in a defamation matter with the Attorney General, David West is involved—now this David West is a voluntary witness. He is not the DMO going

to court to tell you “ah man dead 9.30”. He is not an expert witness called by the court. No. No. No. He is there because he is willing to provide evidence in support for the interest of and to the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, and the Leader of the Opposition tells us in March, “I didn’t know dat, yuh know. I didn’t know all dat was happening. I didn’t know. My lawyer is dealing with that.” That is what they want us to believe. Many believe he knew.

Mr. Speaker, Valmond Jones, I think is his name, is a character, “Fatman”—they made a calypso out of him. Naipaul alerted us to him in 1962 in the *Middle Passage*, he was the quintessential Trinidadian “smartman”. He sold tickets for a concert of Sam Cooke—*Chain Gang*, he would know that too. Mr. Speaker, there was no concert. He was dubbed the quintessential Trinidadian “smartman” because he tried to get away with it. Mr. Speaker, sometime in life you have a ticket to go somewhere to—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** What is the Standing Order?

**Mr. Imbert:** Standing Order 49, could I just get some guidance on this? This matter is in court, does the sub judice rule apply in this case? Please.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am following very carefully his contribution, if there is prejudice, I shall guide him accordingly. Continue, please.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Valmond Jones was a “smartman”, and I am saying, today, that the Leader of the Opposition knew and tried “ah thing”, and he would probably have gotten away with it, had it not been for that *Express* headline. He could have probably get away with it—knew that this was his lawyer, did not tell the Prime Minister, did not tell the President, know that David West was his witness, and to be appointed. So he nominated his witness.

That, Mr. Speaker, has serious implications, and the implications have to do with bias in the law as to whether or not he stands, as the recital indicated, exercised that function with bias, perceived, possible, actual—these are legal arguments that they can make somewhere else, but the Member for Diego Martin West knew that he had a beneficial interest in a witness who was also his nominee and proceeded to deceive the Prime Minister, His Excellency The President, and have that person appointed.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation is clear on this matter as well, the Code of Conduct, sections 26 and 29, and, again, I do not want to read at length and spend my time at length on these—it is laid out in the Integrity in Public Life Act. It is

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laid out there. So, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition had a duty to exercise his responsibility to be fair and impartial, to afford no undue preferential treatment to any person, to arrange his private interest in a manner to maintain public confidence and trust. I ask you, did the Leader of the Opposition exercise that impartiality, trust and confidence in nominating his witness to be director?

Mr. Speaker, at no time did the Leader of the Opposition indicate to anyone that was his witness. In fact, until March 03, continued to indicate that he was not my—"I did not know". Mr. Speaker, as a fair-minded and informed observer looking on, would he be minded to believe the Leader of the Opposition, that in a matter of defamation against the Attorney General of this country that he did not know who his witness was? Mr. Speaker, that is remarkable. It is incredulous. It is unbelievable. It is bewildering. A gentleman working in the AG's Office who is on television, I think, most times. He was working there, and he is on television speaking to matters and so on, and is known, is fairly well-known.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has to answer this charge of bias, but it is a reckless conduct. It is a series of reckless acts that has brought us here, not only the matter of David West.

Today, I want to find out from Members opposite, who will stand here to defend the Leader of the Opposition? Who is willing to stand to defend the Leader of the Opposition in this matter? Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, I think, has removed the attorney-at-law, the Senator. He has hired, I think, Ramesh Maharaj now, a man who he described as having no principles eh, in this House. You want me bring that too? [*Interruption*]

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker, 48(6), please.

**Mr. Speaker:** This is a no confidence Motion, okay. Continue, please.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** No. No. No. I have ruled.

**Miss Mc Donald:** No, are we saying that all gloves are off, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** No. I am saying, in this matter involving the Leader of the Opposition, all gloves seem to be off. Continue.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, Dr. Rowley on March 24, 2000, "He has no principle. He do not observe the laws", referring to then Attorney General. It has plenty more, I do not want to read this now.



So, brought in that lawyer, one relieved, the other one, I understand, the new President of the Law Association—Mr. Speaker, I saw this headline in the *Newsday*, so I understand he is also out. *Newsday* article of March 24, 2015, is Reginald Armour, “Armour drops Rowley’s briefs”. [Laughter] Mr. Speaker, that is where we go with that.

You see, the Member for Diego Martin North/East sent an email—and I have to come back to this email business now—sent an email to the then Minister of Housing, Planning and the Environment, and this is dated February 26, 2010, and he says, “For your attention, see attached”. And he says here—I like this one—“Don’t scream”, and in this email he submits his statement to the commission of enquiry into the construction sector. Mr. Speaker, all of this is reference I want to get to, I do not have time to read all, but in this document he is saying that the HDC and NHA, under the watch of the Member for Diego Martin North/West—[Interruption]

**Hon. Member:** North/West?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:**—Diego Martin West, under the watch, violated all procurement rules, violated all tendering rules—[Interruption]

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 48(6), he is imputing improper motives. I said no such thing. I said nothing about the direction of the Member for Diego Martin West.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Okay, let me just read.

**Mr. Speaker:** You—

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yeah, I will—

**Mr. Speaker:** Please. Please. Let me just. Yeah, can you provide evidence of what—

**Mr. Imbert:** I said nothing about the direction of the Member for Diego Martin West. Find those words.

**Mr. Speaker:** All right. Okay. If you cannot find it—[Interruption]

**Mr. Imbert:** Move on.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. No. No. [Laughter] I do not want you to direct the House.

**2.15 p.m.**

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, let me move on, to quote you:

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There was a deep conflict between the HDC as it was governed either HDC or NHA under the governance, management of the line Ministry of Dr. Rowley. There was deep conflict.

Page 5 of 51. In this report the Member says:

I have something to say. I am deeply saddened that he—referring to Dr. Rowley—I have known for 20 years, served with him in various capacity and I am saddened that he has chosen to misrepresent the true facts in such an inexplicable manner that he has chosen for no good reason to accuse me of mischief his unwarranted accusations are particularly upsetting.

What you were saying is that “he lie”. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** No, please, please, please, please. Members, Members, please. Let us conduct ourselves with decorum and dignity. That word is unparliamentary.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** I withdraw it then.

Mr. Speaker, I quote from the Member for Diego Martin North/East. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, Member for Diego Martin North/East.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:**

It is with a sense of regret that I now submit to this Commission the true facts that contradicts the erroneous assertions Dr. Rowley has made about Cabinet-approved policy.

They were discussing the financing arrangement for HDC construction. He says that:

The Member for Diego Martin West misled and misrepresented a Cabinet Note.

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

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:**

I do not wish to use the phraseology “sheer mischief” to describe his inaccurate statements. I prefer to think that Dr. Rowley is confused or alternatively in denial, Mr. Speaker. It is to be noted that Dr. Rowley has been unable—hear this, at the Uff Commission.

I want the Member for Diego Martin North/East in his defence today of the Leader of the Opposition to say whether this is true or not, whether the statement

you made under oath at the Commission of Enquiry is true or not, because they accused the Member for Diego Martin West of being the friend and partner of a contractor, and involved in serious—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, this is ridiculous; none of that is inside of there. He is telling untruths.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** What Standing Order?

**Mr. Imbert:** Standing Order 48(6).

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I want to read again. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please; continue hon. Member.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I am reading from page 7; do not waste my time—page 7 of 51. On page 7 of 51, dealing with Cleaver Heights Development Company and the nefarious relationship between the HDC and Cleaver Heights over tendering processes and procurement, he had this to say.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, 14(6); I do not recall using the word “nefarious”.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** These are his words, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Imbert:** You quoting?

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please!

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** You will reply.

**Mr. Imbert:** Stop making up words “nah”!

**Mr. Speaker:** No, no, no Member for Diego Martin North/East, you will have your chance to speak. This is a debate. You will have a chance to speak. Allow the Member to speak without interrupting the Member, unless it is a serious point of order, please.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, the Member has this to say on record. He is referring to the Leader of the Opposition. He is referring to the Cleaver Heights development, and he is referring to one Emile Elias when he says: “He is a publicly acknowledged friend and supporter of Dr. Rowley”, and this is the contractor at Cleaver Heights—

**Mr. Imbert:** So?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:**—which he has accused—the contractor and the HDC under Dr. Rowley—[*Interruption*] you see, he cannot accept it. These are his

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words.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, please.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** This is the argument he led. But on the matter of the Cabinet Note, I want to get to that, he says:

Rowley has been unable to produce any evidence—any evidence that the Cabinet-approved guidelines for joint venture projects were rescinded, and I have been advised by the Secretary of the Cabinet that this was never done.

The Member for Diego Martin went to a commission under oath and accused the Member for Diego Martin West of not having evidence to support his argument, accused him of misrepresentation. You went there and you accused him of being a friend of a contractor, and that contractor obtained the Cleaver Heights development, and that led to an assortment of problems in contract administration, in payment, in procurement. It is here; you did this.

Today, I want to know if you are telling us that what you said here in black and white is not true—under oath, is not true. This is the Member for Diego Martin North/East. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, Member for Diego Martin North/East.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** He wants to be put out.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** I have another document. On 23/03/2010, a Motion by the now Member for Tabaquite was filed in the Senate, the other place, dealing with HDC. The then Minister prepared a brief of about 25 pages outlining:

At the HDC there has been emerging evidence of fraud, corruption and errors in the operations of the corporation.

March 2010, in preparation for that debate filed by the Member for Tabaquite, and went on to castigate the HDC under the former Minister.

This is the former Minister of Housing—and a good one. I have a next one here, a good one. In an email—you know, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin West had accused the Minister, Emily Dick-Forde, of lying in terms of an issue relating to financial authorities in the HDC. She was seeking information from one Andrew McIntosh. Andrew McIntosh had this to say in an email dated January 07, 2010, dealing with financial authorities. He said:

I am happy that the hon. Minister's colleagues are also of the same view we shared relative to not engaging the Rott in the press.

It is signed “Andrew McIntosh”. So when people ask us why we filed this and we refer to the Member in some derogatory term, it is not us. We were not the first to do this. Andrew McIntosh is saying, “Please do not engage the Rott in the press”, when he called her a liar over financial authorities and financial planning at the HDC. You see, Mr. Speaker, they had a fight over tender rules, whether they brought it to Parliament or not, which they never did, and there was a huge concern there.

Mr. Speaker, I said in the recital, the public concern is generated not from the Government per se. In a media release, November 10, 2011, the Judiciary states and I quote:

The Judiciary notes with grave concern certain statements attributed to the hon. Leader of the Opposition publicised in the national media.

The Judiciary expresses its abhorrence of the innuendos by the Leader of the Opposition of collusion between the judge and by extension, the Judiciary and the Attorney General in a decision which was arrived at and handed down by the court.

He made comments about a judge, brought the administration of justice into disrepute, and the Judiciary was driven to state:

Dr. Rowley’s statements are not only outside the bounds of respect and objectivity that should attend the exercise of those rights, but also represents an unwarranted and unjustified attack on a judge and additionally potentially injudicious to the administration of justice in Trinidad and Tobago. This is very disturbing.

So it is not the Government today “come” with a Motion dropped from the sky, it is the Judiciary early in 2011 pointing out this conduct of the Leader of the Opposition. It is former colleagues who knew him, I think, more than we do. It is the Member for Diego Martin North/East who flagged some of these issues—

**Mr. Imbert:** When?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:**—when he raised that important matter.

I continue in the famous report, the Landate Report. I think it was Justice Sealey, at the time still a sitting judge at the High Court—

**Mr. Imbert:** When was that?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:**—in referring to the Member for Diego Martin West in the conclusion of this Landate Report, said that:

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The Commission is of the view that having regard to his ministerial position, whatever part Dr. Rowley played, it displayed a total lack of discretion.

That is what a commission concluded, led by a sitting High Court judge, not the Government—a lack of discretion, the Landate matter. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, the editorials, Justice Sealey, the Judiciary, his own colleagues, his former Prime Minister. Are you suggesting that all of this is wrong? Everybody who speaks to these matters is wrong?

A few hours ago at a political meeting somewhere, the Leader of the Opposition wanted to praise himself about construction of every HDC site, “dat de PNM buil’ dis, dey buil’ dat, dey buil’ dis and now de Government giving out dis, giving out dat. Dey buil’ everything, but dey did not buil’ Las Alturas.” [*Laughter*] They did not build that. They built everything else except that.

Mr. Speaker, I have in my hands here letters dated January 18, 2007. It is CE Management and Services addressed to the project manager Planning Associates Limited. A meeting was held on the project site of the Lady Young Gardens apartment on Thursday, January 11, 2007, at 1.00 p.m. Among those present were the hon. Minister of Housing, Dr. Keith Rowley, Noel Garcia and the contractor, China Jiangsu International Corporation.

As a consequence of these meetings, the Planning Associates is requested to forward to the HDC immediately all outstanding approvals, designs, drawings.

He met on the site of Las Alturas and demanded that they move full steam ahead with Las Alturas. “Look it here”; he was on site. [*Dr. Moonilal displays document*]

Another letter, May 20, 2004—we go back now to 2004:

From the Physical Planning Officer to the Senior Project Engineer at Ministry of Housing.

As per our discussion, Minister Rowley has indicated a desire to have sod turning ceremony for these two sites—Lady Young Road and Champ Fleurs Gardens apartments—sod turning ceremony by the second week in June 2004. It is therefore imperative that community meetings be held so that the sod turning ceremony can take place. Senior Project Engineer, Housing.

So the Member for Diego Martin West was telling the Ministry of Housing and HDC and NHA, “Move full steam ahead, move quickly. I want those apartments

built.” Today they do not take ownership of that; they do not take paternity of that; they do not take paternity of nothing, they do not take ownership of that. These are examples of this conduct that I speak about.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin West—I will attack this problem frontally—asked on a platform last evening whether I know anything about a shopping mall in Holland. You know, that makes my argument today. This is a gentlemen who will go and “stand up by de market, and anybody hand him basket he take it. [*Laughter*] Anybody hand him basket he take it.” So somebody put a “mauvais langue”, a mischief, a little bacchanal somewhere. As Leader of the Opposition, somebody “give” him an email, read out the email and accused high office holders of committing murder. Somebody “write” somewhere that I have six houses, a rum shop in Penal and a shopping mall in Holland—me. I do not own a tulip or a windmill in Holland. [*Laughter*] I have never been there since I became a Minister. The last time I called somebody there was to express condolences, the wife of my professor died. That is what he would take, “mauvais langue”, mischief and “put it on platform” asking me to explain.

Mr. Speaker, nothing is wrong with that if you have some evidence, some information. If you could come here and stand in this Parliament and say, “Listen, I have this document, look. It is signed by the Dutch City Council,” any Moonilal, “it have seven of us”, own something in Holland, bring it. But you go to create mischief, and this is not the work of an Opposition Leader, prime ministerial aspirant. This is why we have a cause for concern in this country. If you would do this as Opposition Leader, what would you do as Prime Minister when much more information can come your way? What will you do?

But I do not talk like that. When I talk I have documents in my hand; when I talk I have documents. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** You have six more minutes.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Of original?

**Mr. Speaker:** No, six more minutes.

**2.30 p.m.**

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, let me get to it. I have the documents in my hand, so I want to ask the Member for Diego Martin West: is it true that the Member for Diego Martin West is the owner of an apartment at One Woodbrook Place? I have here some legal documents suggesting that he is an owner there.

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You see, I do not own an apartment in One Woodbrook Place. I do not own a property in Goodwood Park. I do not own property in Tobago. “I living in meh mudda house where I was born. Yuh understand? But you see, they own all ah dis but dey does want tuh throw mud on everybody else.” This is a property, One Woodbrook Place, owned by the Leader of the Opposition, he is correct, and this property coincidentally received outline approval to build when the Member for Diego Martin West was Minister of Planning.

So, in 2002, outline permission to build, Minister in charge of planning; 2004, final approval. One Camille Robinson-Regis is Minister of Planning. And it just so happened a few years later, that is a nice place to buy an apartment. Nothing is wrong with that. “I wish I coulda buy one.” I cannot afford. I wish I could have, but this is it. So when you go asking people to explain mall and explain shop and Marks and Spencer or whatever you talk about, let me try and explain. Explain that it is so coincidental that a Minister who would have had to sign off on a project—because that project would have violated certain Town and Country policy, density and that type of thing—just happened to own one a few years later. That is—but he can explain himself, Mr. Speaker.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that—and I have said before—in judging leadership, we ought not to judge leadership by what leaders say but we must judge them on they do because deeds do not lie. Deeds do not lie. What you do, do not lie and the deed I have in hand, Mr. Speaker, do not lie. But they are accumulating property all over the place but they are watching to see what anybody on this side—

Mr. Speaker, I am the Minister of Housing. If I build an outhouse, he will ask me who design and outfit the basement. He will ask that. He will ask me who designed the basement. That is how it is in this country. “You cyah own nothing, you afraid.” That is how, but they could buy and own everything in town. They could buy and own everything.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the issue of the conduct of the Member, and I want to end how I begin as well. This matter of the West—the 45 minutes are coming to an end? Mr. Speaker, I myself like the Member for Diego Martin West, I am shocked that the time fly by so fast. I want Members opposite, when they speak in defence, to tell this honourable House whether they believe one Sen. Al-Rawi, who on February 3rd on the CNC3 morning show, when he said on that show, and they have the tape, that Dr. Rowley:

Well, of course, Dr. Rowley would have known that David West was a witness in a matter insofar as David West had a settled witness statement.



I want to know if this is true from Sen. Al-Rawi, or I want to know if March 3rd is true, that he had no idea of who his witnesses was. Which one is the truth? And stick to one story. Do not give us two. Because both have implications. It is either there is a monumental degree of ineptitude and dishonesty or there are serious charges to be laid, in terms of violating the Code of Conduct of the Integrity in Public Life Act. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, in this House, we are not judge, jury and executioner. A court of law will determine all of those matters. We will not determine them here. We will not. We can come here and raise the issues and indicate to the Leader of the Opposition that these are the charges that have been led, that you abused your office as Leader of the Opposition to nominate your private and voluntary witness in a pending matter before the court when you should have indicated, when you should have made material disclosure to those persons who you were charged upon by the Constitution and the law to share a decision-making function.

You know, the Member had the audacity to say in a next article here: that was the Prime Minister's choice. He said David West was the Prime Minister's pick. "Not me I did not do anything yuh know; is de Prime Minister who pick he. I just did not tell her he was my private witness. But she pick him." That is the response, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by asking my colleague and colleagues opposite to come to their senses today. Indicate if this is the leadership you wish to have at the Office of the Prime Minister, this is the leadership you wish to have in Caricom, this is the leadership you trust that will do something like that and cover it up.

Mr. Speaker, the charges have been made, the charges have been established and the charges, I verily believe, are unanswerable. I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I definitely beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Colm Imbert** (*Diego Martin North/East*): Mr. Speaker, before I continue, does this Motion not require a seconder?

**Mr. Speaker:** No.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** It does not. I see.

**Mr. Sharma:** "So long yuh in de House and yuh eh know that?"

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Oh, be quiet!

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, allow the Member. [*Continuous interruption and crosstalk*] Members, please, allow the hon. Member to speak in complete silence. Continue hon. Member.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened carefully for the last 45 minutes and I must say this is a bit of a let-down, because I thought that the Member for Oropouche East would bring some startling disclosure, some new information into this Parliament or something that would justify this foolish Motion, which is a Motion calling on the House to express its lack of confidence in the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, if am permitted to use a word, you could tell me if it is unparliamentary or not, afterwards, but I found the presentation of the Member for Oropouche East childish in the extreme. Because we are here wasting precious parliamentary time, Mr. Speaker—[*Desk thumping*—]—when all sorts of issues afflict this country.

Just, was it yesterday we had this gridlock or the day before yesterday? Just Monday, the whole of Trinidad was shut down in a gridlock because of the Government's inability to discharge its responsibility, pretending that they do not know what is going on, pretending that they cannot do anything about it. The whole country was shut down but we are wasting time this afternoon with this foolishness.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Now, Mr. Speaker, I would not even bother to respond to some of the points made by the hon. Member for Oropouche East, so puerile they were. But let me just make a point. How on earth could we be debating a matter, a Motion, an attempt to express no confidence in the Leader of the Opposition, and the Member for Oropouche East refers to matters—I took notes, you know—that occurred in 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009? Unless my memory fails me, the hon. Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West was only appointed Leader of the Opposition in the year 2010. Am I missing something here? The Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West was not the Leader of the Opposition in 2005, 2008, 2007.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** He was a Member of Parliament.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Yeah, all right. No problem. No problem. Mr. Speaker, that is why I was waiting to hear some infraction committed by the Leader of the

Opposition who has only held that position since 2010. Instead, the Member for Oropouche East read out public documents. These are all public documents. “He ain bussing no mark!” That is already in the public domain. That matter has already been adjudicated. And for the record, Dr. Rowley was exonerated in Landate, exonerated in the Uff Commission. What is all this nonsense about? [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, “I cyah” waste time with this foolish presentation from the Member for Oropouche East.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think you should withdraw that. You cannot say a Member’s contribution is foolish.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw. I do not wish to waste time with the empty, vacuous presentation of the Member for Oropouche East.

Now let us deal with the substantive matter. Let us deal with the substantive matter as we waste our time here today. What are we doing? We have a Motion of No Confidence in the Leader of the Opposition, and what we heard was fluff, nothing. Can you imagine? You are condemning a man because he has bought a property, an apartment in a development that was initiated and approved under the UNC Government?

I even heard the innuendo. I happen to be familiar with One Woodbrook Place. That was a project of the City Corporation that overlapped from 1995 into 1996, when the Panday administration came in and the project was initiated under the Panday administration and I have to hear this kind of vacuous rhetoric today that is the Member for Diego Martin West that approved the project and he bought an apartment there and it is something wrong with that. So you are telling me that a distinguished Member of Parliament, a geologist, a professional with a professional family, cannot buy an apartment in One Woodbrook Place? Is that what you are saying? And you are trying to compare a mall in Holland to an apartment in One Woodbrook Place? “Look gih me ah chance, eh.” [*Desk thumping*]

I am not wasting time with that nonsense, that—I cannot use unparliamentary words. I would just say nonsense, wasting time with that stupidity.

Let me go to the Motion, Mr. Speaker. What is this Motion? A Motion of No Confidence in the Leader of the Opposition, moved by the Government. Let us go to the Constitution. What does the Constitution say? At section 77:

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“Where the House of Representatives passes a resolution, supported by the votes of a majority of all the members of the House, declaring it has no confidence in the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister does not within seven days of the passing of such resolution either resign or advise the President to dissolve Parliament, the President shall revoke the appointment of the Prime Minister.”

Now, I have searched the entire Commonwealth. I have looked in every one of the 27 Member States of the European Union. I have checked in Japan. I have checked the whole world, east, west, north and south and what is the definition of a Motion of—[*Interruption*] Go into the dictionary. I looked at *Collin’s English Dictionary* this morning for the definition.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is babbling and she is disturbing me. I seek your protection. I seek your protection. [*Crosstalk*] She is muttering. I seek your protection.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, please. I am on my legs. You want me to rule? Hon Members, I would like to appeal to Members to observe Standing Order 55(a) to (m), please and allow the Member to speak in silence. Continue, hon. Member.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have looked all over the world and when you look for the definition of a Motion of No Confidence, it is a Motion of No Confidence in the Government of a country. [*Desk thumping*] As simple an example is go and check the *Collin’s English Dictionary* and look for the words Motion of No Confidence and you will see the definition is:

A Motion brought by the Opposition declaring its lack of confidence in the Government.

So it is in Italy. So it is in England. So it is in Belgium. So it is in Turkey, every country in the world. Do you know why? Because it is the Executive that has the responsibility to manage this country and if you have a Motion of No Confidence in the Executive then the Executive must resign.

Let us look, however, at the learning. Let us look at the learning. What does the learning tell us about a Motion of No Confidence? I have before me the Australian House of Representatives practice manual and I am reading from page 316:

“Motions of No Confidence and Censure”

The heading:

“The Government

Perhaps the most crucial motions considered by the House of Representatives are those which express censure of or no confidence in a Government, as it is an essential tenet of the Westminster system that the Government must possess the confidence of the lower...House. By convention, loss of the confidence of the House normally requires the Government to resign in favour of an alternative Government or to advise a dissolution of the House of Representatives. The importance of such motions...is recognised by the rule that any motion of which notice has been given, or amendment, which expresses censure of or no confidence in the Government, and is accepted by a Minister...”—takes precedent over all other business.

That is our parliamentary convention. That is the Westminster convention, a Motion of No Confidence in a Government, because it could lead to the collapse and a change of a government, a loss of confidence in the Executive of a country.

Let us go on through this document, the manual of parliamentary practice from the House of Representatives in Australia. It goes through, you know: Motion of No Confidence in a Government, Motion of No Confidence in a Prime Minister and Ministers, Censure of a Member or a Senator and then it goes on to talk about some ill-fated attempts to censure the Opposition, Mr. Speaker.

On page 322 it says:

“The House has agreed to a motion censuring the Opposition collectively, and on other occasions motions of censure directed at the Prime Minister or another Minister...or condemning the Opposition. Again, such motions and amendments are not consistent with the traditional parliamentary convention...and the passage of a motion censuring the Opposition has no substantive effect. On one occasion a notice of motion for the purpose of moving that an Address be presented to the Governor-General informing him that the Opposition invited the censure of the House was ruled out of order on the ground that it was frivolous.

On one occasion a notice of motion for the purpose of moving that an Address be presented to the Governor-General...”

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is carrying on a running conversation. She is disturbing me. I call upon you, Mr. Speaker. Control the Prime Minister for me, please. I am being disturbed, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** All right, you have my full protection.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Are you sure? “Dey still talking yuh know. Dey still talking.”

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, Members. Members, please, allow the Member to speak in complete silence. Continue, hon. Member. [*Interruption and crosstalk*]

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Who is running this House? Is it you? [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, Members, allow the hon. Member to speak, please? Please, Members.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Let me repeat this.

“On one occasion a notice of motion for the purpose of moving that an Address be presented to the Governor-General informing him that the Opposition invited the censure of the House was ruled out of order on the ground that it was frivolous.”

Mr. Speaker, if you want further information on that. That occurred as long ago as 1912, and it goes as follows.

“In 1912 a notice of motion to the effect that an Address be presented to the Governor-General informing him that the Opposition merited the censure of the House and the country for a number of...reasons (which parodied the Leader of the Opposition’s...)—Motion against the Prime Minister—“was ruled out of order on the ground that it was frivolous.”

Now, that is not enough.

I was very intrigued when I saw that reference in the Australian manual of parliamentary practice and it is in all of them, New Zealand, House of Commons, all of them, that these Motions are entirely frivolous. But I was very interested to see that one in 1912. So I went and I got 1912 *Hansard* from the House of Representatives, Australia. I happen to have it in possession.

House of Representatives Official Hansard Commonwealth of Australia, No. 40, 1912, Tuesday, October 01, 1912.

By the way, when you hear this, that is Speaker. That is a serious Speaker. We go to page 3621 of the *Hansard*.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You are imputing improper motives.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** I am imputing nothing. Mr. Speaker, please. I am being disturbed by the Member for Caroni East.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yeah you said something that is Speaker. So everybody here aware. So I am just listening to you very carefully as you continue, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I said the Speaker in this instance is a serious Speaker. Those are words in the English language and this hon. Member says I am imputing improper motives. “I know dey cyah take it, yuh know.” Page 3621: Notice of Motions.

Mr. Higgs: I rise to give Notice of a Motion of Censure. I beg to give notice. I shall move on Wednesday, October 02...

That is the following day, so he is giving notice. This is the Government giving notice that the following day they are going to raise a motion of censure. *[Interruption]* Child!

I shall move that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor-General informing him that the fusion known as His Majesty’s Opposition merits the censure of the House and the country for:

- (a) its failure to realize its national and constitutional obligations;
- (b) for neglect of its duty to vote against measures which it does not believe in;
- (c) for unduly taking up the time of the House in moving amendments.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Higgs: Which if one may judge by the remarks.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Higgs: *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, allow the Member to speak, please, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** If you do not want to learn, that is your problem you know.

Mr. Higgs:—made in support thereof ought to be put.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Higgs:—to a vote and a division recorded thereafter.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order!

And then Mr. Higgs ignoring the Speaker. Mr. Higgs, the Member of Parliament, a Government Speaker, ignoring the Speaker goes on:

For its grossly inconsistent actions and speeches.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

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And he ignores the Speaker again.

For the notorious lack of harmony between its leaders.

The Speaker now says:

I name the hon. Member for disobeying the Chair. Higgs continues ignoring, the Government Minister, the Speaker for its general incompetence.

He keeps carrying on about the Opposition and then the Speaker says again—  
[*Continuous interruption and cross talk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, could you?

**Mr. Speaker:** Please Members, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** What is wrong with them?

I name the Member for Capricornia for disobeying the Chair.

And then the Speaker goes on:

I wish to remind hon. Members that they placed me in this position to conduct the business of the House in an orderly way. [*Interruption*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 48(1). I mean, how long we would hear about Mr. Higgs? I mean, come on man.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am allowing the Member to continue. Continue, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, this is an example of an attempt of a Motion of No Confidence in the Opposition, in the Commonwealth, under the Westminster system. How on earth could that be irrelevant? Come on man, you are being frivolous! But let me move on.

I wish to remind hon. Members that they placed me in this position to conduct the business of the House. Unfortunately it falls to my lot at times to take extreme measures. On this occasion, I am being compelled to do so. The hon. Member can see, as well as every other Member, that no other course was open to me.

And then he goes on to say that:

The Member was deliberately disobeying the *Chair*.

The fella gets up again:



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I wish to raise a Point of Order. I was proceeding to give notice of the Motion.

The Speaker goes on to say:

The Member must understand that had I permitted Motions of that character to be brought forward every day, the business of the House would get into a state of chaos.

So this is the Speaker in the House of Representatives in Australia, making the point, if he allowed the Government to file Motions of No Confidence in the Opposition, the House would descend into chaos and he is not going to allow it. That is why I said that this was a serious man. And he goes on at the end:

The Motion of which the hon. Member desires to give notice is out of order on the grounds that it is frivolous.

I could have read much more. The Speaker of the House of Representatives in Australia went to great lengths to point out that these Motions of this nature make absolutely no sense.

For example, he says:

If I permitted such a Motion to be brought such forward I conceive of every Member who may desire to say something against another Member or against any section of the House framing a Motion in such a way that it would practically be incorporated in any speech. In such circumstances I can see no finality to the business of the House.

So the point he was making, if you allow the Government to file Motions of No Confidence in the Opposition, the Government has the majority. They set the order of business.

**Mr. Speaker:** Member, I think you are now bordering on reflecting the decision of this House. I would ask you to refrain and go back to maybe some other aspect. And if you have a challenge and you have a problem with the Motion before this House being approved by the Speaker, well in any event, that is a matter once the Government files a Motion, that goes on the Order Paper. So, as far as I am concerned, you are going down a dangerous road and I am asking you to come back to the Motion. Okay? Please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, I am on the Motion. I am talking about the precedent. [*Desk thumping*] It is a precedent. I am not casting any aspersions against you. Mr. Speaker, do not take basket from the other side. I am not casting aspersions on you. I am talking about a precedent, about a motion. This is from

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the Commonwealth of Australia, 1912. It is the only documented case of a government bringing a Motion of censure against the Opposition—[*Desk thumping*]*]*—and it is important that people understand these things and that people are properly educated to understand that this Motion is without precedence and it is frivolous and vexatious, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Now, let us move on. I am not talking about the Speaker. I am talking about “all yuh. Is all yuh bring de Motion.” And the Speaker made the point that once the Government filed the Motion, what is he supposed to do? It is all “yuh” I am talking about. I am not talking about the hon. Speaker. Let there be no misunderstanding about that. It is the Government playing the fool. Now, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please. I know that we tend to get a little emotional. But I would ask the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East, I know that you are more elegant in your eloquence. I would ask you not to use words that are unparliamentary in the context of Members of this honourable House and you know better. So, please, use more elegant language. Thank you.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** I thank you most sincerely for that vote of confidence in my speaking ability. Now, let us go back to some of the issues raised by the mover of this Motion. The Member for Oropouche East introduced the Motion even though, apparently, this thing was supposed to be brought here by the Prime Minister.

I heard the Member for Oropouche East say, in an amazing manipulation of language, that Mr. David West was nominated by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, amazing. Because my understanding of this and I am saying this without any fear of contradiction, is that the Prime Minister contacted the Leader of the Opposition, informed the Leader of the Opposition that she wished to nominate Mr. David West as the head of the Police Complaints Authority and asked the Leader of the Opposition whether he was in agreement or if he had any objection to her nomination. But the way this thing has been portrayed, it is not the Leader of the Opposition who called the Prime Minister and said: Hon. Prime Minister, I would like to nominate David West as Chairman of the PCA. It was the other way around. The Prime Minister called the Leader of the Opposition and asked him if he had any objections to her proposal. This is the most incredible manipulation of facts that I have ever seen. That is how it went. It was not this way. It was that way, Mr. Speaker.

**3.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, one would assume, one would assume—because if you look at PCA legislation, you see that the person is nominated on the joint advice of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. It is the two of them. Once the two of them agree then the joint advice goes forward to the President and the President appoints the person. That is how it is done. But it is the Prime Minister who initiated the entire process, and one would assume that when a responsible Prime Minister like this one—let me repeat—a responsible Prime Minister like this one is calling the Leader of the Opposition with respect to the exercise of the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister’s constitutional—sure—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East has expired. Would you like an extension? May I be guided?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Of course. Of course.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

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

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, one would expect a responsible Prime Minister, such as our Prime Minister, exercising her constitutional duty to seek the agreement of the Leader of the Opposition on a joint proposal to be made to the President with respect to the PCA head, one would expect the Prime Minister to undertake some minimum due diligence. Did the Prime Minister “ketch a vaps” one morning and just have a brainwave and say, “I like how David West does comb his hair”, so that I am going to recommend him to the Leader of the Opposition to be head of the PCA or “I like how he tie his shoes or I like the colour of his tie”. No!

Clearly the Prime Minister would not have arrived at that decision to make that proposal to the Leader of the Opposition by “vaps”. I cannot accept that. I cannot accept that the Prime Minister operates by “vaps”. Because if I did, then, you know, there would be a lot of consequences flowing from that. So, I am assuming this is not a “vaps”. This is a deliberate action of the Prime Minister seeking the agreement of the Leader of the Opposition to appoint somebody to a constitutional office.

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I would assume that the Prime Minister would consult with the Attorney General because we are dealing with matters that deal with the administration of justice or the criminal justice system—let us put it that way—the criminal justice system. What does the Police Complaints Authority do? The Police Complaints Authority is an independent body that investigates complaints of misconduct on the part of the police. So it is part of the criminal justice system.

So, one would assume that a responsible Prime Minister would, when making an appointment to someone to head a body that is part of our criminal justice system, consult with all of the persons involved in the criminal justice system, would consult with the Attorney General, the most important Member of the Cabinet by our Constitution, Mr. Speaker. We only have a Cabinet when the Attorney General is appointed. The Prime Minister and the Attorney General together make up the Cabinet. We only need two people to make up a Cabinet—Prime Minister and AG. So, one would assume that the first thing that the Prime Minister will do is consult with the Attorney General.

We also learnt, Mr. Speaker, that the nomination of Mr. David West came from the Minister of National Security—the former Minister of National Security—and that was made to the Prime Minister who agreed. So, one would assume that when the former Minister of National Security made a recommendation to the Prime Minister that Mr. West was a suitable person to be head of the Police Complaints Authority, the Prime Minister did her due diligence which must include consulting with the Attorney General.

I cannot believe that she would not do such a thing. I would assume that the Attorney General would have told her of anything that could possibly affect Mr. West's suitability to be head of the Police Complaints Authority. And after the Prime Minister had satisfied herself fully, after consulting with all the persons that she should have consulted with, I assume they did a security check on Mr. West, a background check. This is all my understanding of how these things are done. So that when you are going to put somebody in a position like this—you do a security check. You get a police report. You do all sorts of checks on the person.

So, one assumes that you have a national security report on this person. The Prime Minister is head of the National Security Council, has the Strategic Services Agency at her disposal, and has all sorts of intelligence gathering capability. One would assume that when the Prime Minister went through all of that—background check; police report; security check; Special Branch; SSA; Attorney General, all of that, the conclusion was arrived at that Mr. West is suitable.

I would also be very surprised if the appointment of Mr. West was not discussed with Members of the Cabinet. I would be very, very surprised. So could someone explain to me now, since it was the Prime Minister who spoke to the Leader of the Opposition—not the other way around—and it was the Prime Minister who called the Leader of the Opposition and said, “Look, I would like to appoint Mr. David West. He comes highly recommended. What do you have to say?” One would assume, any normal person would assume that all of the due diligence and all of the background checks would have been done. [*Desk thumping*] Normal people.

Maybe we are in an abnormal situation here where one would expect that a Leader of the Opposition must expect that whenever the Prime Minister is recommending somebody, that the Prime Minister has not done the proper due diligence. But I cannot accept that. I cannot accept that.

I would also put the question, Mr. Speaker, how, how did Mr. David West’s appointment as head of the Police Complaints Authority [*Crosstalk*] benefit the Leader of the Opposition? How? Because this is the insinuation that is being—this is the nasty insinuation that we are hearing, Mr. Speaker. That it is somehow because Mr. West was a witness in a private lawsuit between the Attorney General and the Leader of the Opposition, by agreeing to the Prime Minister’s proposal, Dr. Rowley, the Leader of the Opposition, somehow has enriched himself and benefited himself. It defies logic. It defies logic.

I hear these references to integrity in public life—how does that come into play? How does the appointment of Mr. David West as head of the Police Complaints Authority affect the Leader of the Opposition? Does the leader have a matter? Is he a police officer? Is there some police matter that he has an interest in that he would want to somehow influence the head of the Police Complaints Authority? It defies reason and it defies logic.

I am very afraid that one of the purposes behind this Motion or the thinking is to damage the credibility of Mr. David West. [*Desk thumping*] That is the inescapable conclusion! That the intent of this whole “tra-la-la” is to damage the credibility of Mr. David West as a witness in a private lawsuit.

What is all this fuss about, anyhow? What is this witness statement? I have read it, you know? I have read this witness statement—it is 12 pages long. Not once do I see any reference to the conduct or otherwise or any approach or anything from the Leader of the Opposition. This witness statement is about the former Attorney General. This witness statement—12 pages long— speaks about

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things that, if they are true, if they are true, are awful, Mr. Speaker.

This is a public document eh. This matter has been filed in the court. It is available to anybody to go to the registry and get a copy of this document. It is a public document. When you go through this witness statement, the things that Mr. West is saying has nothing to do with a defamation matter, you know. All Mr. West is testifying to is what happened with respect to the extradition of Mr. Ferguson and Galbaransingh—the famous Ish and Steve duo. That is all this witness statement is about.

He speaks to where he allegedly in his witness statement which I said is a public document—he speaks to being approached by the Attorney General and told to rescind instructions given to the police to arrest Ferguson and Galbaransingh and to have nothing more to do with the extradition of those two gentlemen, Mr. Speaker. That is what is in there. That is what is in here. So, I have to wonder what is the hidden agenda in all of this? [*Desk thumping*] What is the agenda? Because this witness statement does not say Dr. Rowley was speaking the truth—the hon. Member for Diego Martin West—or he was not speaking the truth as the case may be, or that I was talking to him and this is what he told me. No!

This entire witness statement is about a recital of the proceedings with respect to the attempted extradition of Steve Ferguson and Ishwar Galbaransingh and alleged attempts by the Attorney General to get him to call off the police and to stop getting involved in the matter. That is all this witness statement is all about—a public document. A public document. It has been published in the newspapers. I do not need to repeat what is in there. It has been published in the newspapers, that in this witness statement Mr. West has alleged that the Attorney General told him call off the police and Mr. West alleged that the Attorney General told him have nothing more to do with this extradition matter with respect to Ferguson and Galbaransingh.

That is why we are here today because they do not want people to know what is in this witness statement. [*Desk thumping*] They do not want people to know what is in here. It has nothing to do with the Leader of the Opposition—absolutely nothing. So when I go to this recital, Mr. Speaker, where it says:

“...the Leader of the Opposition had a duty to exercise the power conferred on him under Section 6(1) of the Police Complaints Authority Act...”

and so on and so on and so on to—what did he have the duty to do? To nominate a director and that he was biased when he exercised his power. Biased, Mr.

Speaker? They have accused the Leader of the Opposition of bias because he agreed—I have never heard this construction before. The Prime Minister nominates somebody, calls the Leader of the Opposition and says, I want to nominate David West. Do you agree? And they say when the Leader of the Opposition said yes, I agree. They say he is biased. I have never heard this construction before. Never. When you look—and the whole thing revolves about an alleged witness statement. When you look at the witness statement, the witness statement has nothing to do with the actions of the Leader of the Opposition. Nothing could be further from the truth. [*Desk thumping*]

The entire witness statement is about the circumstances that took place with the section 34 fiasco [*Desk thumping*] and the whole question of allegations of witness tampering by the former Attorney General. It has nothing to do with the Leader of the Opposition. That is why I say this Motion is absolutely frivolous.

I could not believe—I could not believe, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Member for Oropouche East would build such a weak case in his contribution. [*Desk thumping*] I could not believe that he could be referring to matters that have been in the public domain since 2005, five years before the hon. Member for Diego Martin West was Leader of the Opposition—five years before. You are using things that happened five years before to question the confidence that we on this side—because let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. Let me read out the Constitution as it refers to the appointment of the Opposition Leader. Let me read it into the record for people who do not know.

“The President shall,”—section 83(2)—“if the person concerned is willing to be appointed, appoint as Leader of the Opposition the member of the House of Representatives who, in his judgement, is best able to command the support of the greatest number of members of the House of Representatives who do not support the Government.”

Let me put that into simple English. The Opposition Leader is chosen by Members of the Opposition, not by the Government. [*Desk thumping*]

I could not believe that in support of a Motion declaring no confidence or purporting or attempting to declare no confidence in the Leader of the Opposition, that the Member for Oropouche East could be so weak to bring matters that have been adjudicated upon 10 years ago, five years ago, eight years ago, matters that have been well ventilated in the public domain and he took pains to read—of course, misread, embellish, add, put words in my mouth that never happened, make all sorts of allegations against me which were false, misleading and untrue,

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Mr. Speaker—and I am not taking that back because he did not speak the truth when he alleged that I said certain things which I did not say.

But in the Uff Commission of Enquiry let me tell you what the findings of the Uff Commission were. After all that was said and done, Dr. Rowley was exonerated. So what is all this “tra-la-la” all about?

Mr. Speaker, this Motion is frivolous and vexatious. This Motion is childish. This Motion has no basis. This Motion has no purpose. This Motion is empty. It is vacuous. [*Desk thumping*] It is tenuous. [*Desk thumping*] It is absurd! Mr. Speaker, I not staying in this Parliament to continue this foolish debate! I am leaving now! We are getting out of here. You could say what you want! Whatever you have to say—whatever you have to say, say it outside! [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Mc Intosh:** Goodbye! Goodbye! Goodbye!

**Mr. C. Imbert:** “If yuh name man—if yuh name man”, come outside! Do not stay inside! Bunch of cowards! I gone from here! [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Member:** It is a lynching. It is an intent to lynch!

[*Members of the Opposition leave the Chamber*] [*Crosstalk*]

**3.15 p.m.**

**The Minister of Legal Affairs and Justice (Hon. Prakash Ramadhar):** [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, as we allow the Members of the Opposition to scurry out of the people’s Parliament, as mere cowards when pushed into the light of their own—please stay, I beg of you. Please? But go if you wish [*Interruption*—of who they are and what they represent, it is not surprising. This is who they are. They are misrepresenters of the fact and obfuscators of the truth.

And Socrates had told us 2,500 years ago, “An unexamined life is not worth living”. I want to say in Trinidad and Tobago that an unexamined leader is not worth having, and this is why we are here today. To have heard the Member—and forgive me, this is not any allusion to any physical issue, but I think he reached an all-time low today before this Parliament. Because all he did was shout and scream and then run, like an unforgiving unmanly act, and I shall speak to the unmanliness of the acts of the Opposition as I proceed. But to put technical matters to rest. When this Parliament—this is a new Parliament. When I say new, there are many things that many had complained about for eons, and particularly for the last two generations, of the need to fix and maintain the systems and



strengthen the democracy, and this Parliament put in place our Standing Orders of 2014, and in that after due deliberation, just to be reminded, this is their section 34, it shall read, with your permission:

“Subject to the provision of the Constitution and these Standing Orders, any Member may produce any Bill or propose any motion for debate in the House and the same shall be disposed of in accordance with these Standing Orders.”

There is no restriction on it, and if there was even a restriction on it, what has been the practice in the short period? We have had no-confidence Motions ad nauseam in the Prime Minister. With all due respect, those no-confidence Motions were nothing other than a futile effort to create an image, to create a stain and to create a propaganda for the campaign of 2015 from that time on till now.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And I never walked out. I stayed.

**Hon. P. Ramadhar:** And you never walked out. [*Desk thumping*] We stood firm with the Prime Minister because the truth, I always believe, shall set us free. And today, maybe their departure from the hallowed halls of this institution called the people’s Parliament, I think it should signify to the population what we should do with them come election day. [*Desk thumping*]

Having read the Standing Order, having reflected on the no-confidence Motions on the Prime Minister, what have they also done? For the first time in the history—and I think it is important and good, really, for us to be transparent and to examine those who hold political office. There was even a no-confidence Motion in the Speaker, unprecedented we say. There was also a Motion in the Minister of Finance and the Economy, but what is significant about that, as in reference to that, it is about matters where he as a banker in his personal and private life, on actions or so, that happened then. So, to hear the hypocrisy coming now, the lack of forthrightness and truthfulness to deal with what is before us—so, when we talk precedence, we have precedent, but then to ignore it and then say that there is no precedent, it really is a child’s game. But that is an insult to children.

Let me just say, when he refers, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, about something from 1912, 102 years ago, where were we? The First World War was not even a thought, the Second World War, well, wow. I do not believe even in some states in the United States of America certain of the citizens were not even allowed to vote. It is a world away, but that is the precedent that they speak to. But, let me just say this, by that logic, Columbus would have remained in Europe; by that logic man would only have been looking at the moon and

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wondering, wow, what was it made of. Will we ever step onto it? Will we ever leave the shores of Europe? Would we have ever left the gravity of the earth? And that is the hypocrisy we deal with.

But, let me just put this in context too. For the first time in the history of this nation, Trinidad and Tobago, this beloved republic, something most significant, when we speak of history, history was being made in this Parliament some months ago, when for the first time we introduced here in this place, and at this time, the ability for Members of the Opposition to put questions to the Prime Minister. Remember that? I was so excited as a Member of Parliament, as a citizen, and as a patriot, that all the transparency and accountability we had spoken about had come to that crunch moment of history being created, and I waited with bated breath for the Member for Diego Martin West as Leader of the Opposition to have risen, and I am saying, my God, what is it? The Prime Minister rises in response to a question, you know what the question was? What about the fishing depot in Carenage? Which was his responsibility. *[Interruption]*

Yes, the reason I am raising this is to show you the insignificance they place on this body. Things and matters that were within their responsibility and their fold for not having done, they put to the Prime Minister in a moment of high history-making effort, it was almost like akin to the rising of our flag on independence night in that year when we gained independence. To have defiled it with a question of such insignificance, really tells you about the merit of the man who now holds the position of Leader of the Opposition.

But, gentlemen, we are here about something far more important than just regale ourselves with history. We are here today now to examine the Leader of the Opposition "A Prime Minister in waiting". Why are we afraid to examine each and every one of our lives? But, particularly one that is in a position that is a constitutionally recognized office, and I want to say offices are good, but who occupies them is more important, because there are some offices which are defective, but you have great people and therefore they make them great offices, and there are great offices and you have defective people and destroy the offices.

As a friend of mine told me, Trinidad and Tobago must no longer be a place where low men occupy high office, and this effort today is really turning back that opportunity that has been abused for so long for us to finally take responsibility and fix the things that we need to in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I am hearing the condemnation and the criticisms of the Member for Oropouche East about raising matters from 2004/2005 and

onwards. Well, those are matters with date, but I want to suggest that nothing is wrong in looking at the life of a man, from his birth even as I am reminded from the Member for Chaguanas East, to today, to examine the character of what we are dealing with and who we are dealing with. Because, character is something we have not discussed in the politics, but I think it is about high time that we know what character is.

And, indeed, Mr. Speaker, it was Abraham Lincoln who had said that “Character is like a tree and reputation is like its shadow”. The shadow is what we think of it, the tree is the real thing. What is the real thing we are dealing with here today? The Member for Diego Martin West—and it is always, you know, difficult to speak ill of one, especially behind one’s back, but one has no choice here today because this is where I speak and they chose to leave rather than to face the truth. Apart from his long history, before he became Leader of the Opposition, what have we seen since he became Leader of the Opposition? And I do not have the energy nor do I have the disposition today to go through all of the ills of this gentleman, and I use that term extremely guardedly.

Mr. Speaker, may I reflect on not what I am saying alone, but what those who have known him well, have had to say about him, and indeed I will refer to no other than Prof. Selwyn Cudjoe, in a column dated April 2011, in a newspaper known as the *Guardian*. He says:

“Rowley is turning out to be an inefficient and perhaps uninspiring leader for which the PNM will pay dearly if he does not get his act together. Rowley believes that leadership consists in attacking continuously and vehemently everything the Government does (and does not do); holding an occasional press conference; and calling on the government to fire everyone from office...If the government takes his advice soon there will be few office holders.

Leadership consists of a different mettle. A leader must be able to inspire and fortify his troops with uplifting sentiments and, more importantly, an alternate vision of the world.

Since then Rowley has not outlined one policy initiative.”

Now, this was in 2011. Today we are in 2015, and you know what he said then holds true today as it did then, since that time he has not outlined one policy initiative.

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“For example”—and this I go back to the goodly Prof. Cudjoe had to say—  
“what is the PNM’s position on public sector wage negotiations?”

But you hear questions here today about wage negotiations, but I am proud to say this is the first Government that after much effort was able to have settled, is it 75 or more wage negotiations in a minimum period of time. These are things that we took on board and have continued to ensure that there is parity and fairness in wage negotiations in a speedy time as is possible. And then he closes:

“Rowley’s political mode is attack, attack, attack.”

Now, I do not have a problem if you are an attack dog, that is fine, but if you are a leader in waiting, a leader is far much more than an attacker. It is easy to attack but it is far more difficult to build, and this nation does not need any more attackers, it needs builders. [*Desk thumping*] That is a fact that we must not and cannot turn our eyes on.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, there is so much more, and maybe it is better that I really reflect on what others have had to say rather than what my own thoughts are for fear that one would believe I have a personal vendetta against the goodly gentleman. I have none. All I wish is for all of us to rise to a level that our children will be proud of by our conduct and by the things we say and the things we do. But, that brings me to a big question, and the big question is this—he is not here to answer them, but I hope at some time this nation would get the answers. Did Mr. Rowley on any political platform say words to the effect that I shall beat her in the face, I shall beat her in the waist and I shall beat her in the Peyton Place?

Now, I do not know what the Peyton Place was. I remember it, there was a soap opera many, many years ago and I could not make a connection.

**Hon. Member:** It used to be on at 11 o’clock. Yes, Peyton Place, in black and white. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. P. Ramadhar:** Peyton Place, in black and white, and Mia Farrow, you know—now, I do not want, please, gentlemen this is a very serious matter, this is not a joke. I did not understand what it meant.

I made enquiries as to what he possibly could have meant and, Mr. Speaker, it is disgusting beyond compare, that a political leader of the PNM that will bring a great institution of Dr. Williams and I repeat even of Mr. Manning, into such disrepute and ridicule and odium that he really, really does not understand his role in society and more so as a leader of a political party, and also as a Leader of the

Opposition and also—because this could happen, eh, madness happens in some countries and we pay a dear price for generations. If you have a leader like that becoming Prime Minister, what message would you have sent, because I did not hear it myself and I want to know if he did, “beat her in her face, beat her in her waist” words of utter violence to women. What terrible message are we sending to menfolk, boy-folk and others? This is violence to women, you know, “and beat her in her Peyton Place”. It does not end there.

We hear about a certain lawyer sucking at the nipple of a Prime Minister. Listen, is this rum shop talk where we are so intoxicated with our own self-esteem and belief that we are great and immune? Because, there is a sense in the society that certain people could say and do what they want and others come to their defence, but others, even a suspicion is thrown at them to hear now about, what? Mall in where? In Holland? And they will run with that, insinuations and allegations, on us on this side, I tell you we like Velcro, anything they throw at us sticks in the media, but they are like Teflon, nothing sticks.

### **3.30 p.m.**

When I hear about—forgive me, I does cuss in certain words but I cannot bring myself to use the words because I knew full well what he meant when he talked about dog and the other animal. Look, Mr. Speaker, what troubles me the most, as the paragons of the society’s conscience rise and start to reinterpret what the man said as if it is acceptable, as if it is decent and is to be expected in the society. These are the things that worry me most. But yes, there is a glimmer, there is a light and there is a hope, because I read Suzanne Mills. And I want to tell you, this good lady, Ms. Mills has put Rowley to the grind, when she says:

“Raw sexual innuendo on the platform is definitely not a matter of public interest, don’t you know? Only corruption is. But being sexist and talking about women’s private parts is a non-issue. It’s a Trinbagonian ting. Picong. And we women must take the verbal licks and like it.

Opposition Leader Keith Rowley must feel he’s in like Flynn so he doesn’t have to respect us. Because how can he expect to gain female support when in order to protect himself from a political thrashing he does none other than go for his opponent’s female ‘jugular?’ So crass, this gutter talk about ‘she cat’—oops, sorry—“a clear reference in TT language to female genitalia. And he claims a lawyer is sucking figuratively on the nipple of the PM...When Rowley looks at the PM, what is he seeing? Cats and nipples? What does he see when he looks at all women?”

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And that is the question I have to ask. This is not a man as I say, “in ah rum shop” liming with his partners, you know, he mounts a political platform that is paid for live both on TV and on radio, with media present to report these things to all and sundry across this nation, and speaks like this.

One can only imagine what he might say in the private moments, when the evil side rises, when the wickedness is given cover by the solace of confidentiality. And if this is an insight to the man who will be leader of this nation called Trinidad and Tobago then we are in big, big trouble, unless we wake up today and for those who wish to protect him they must say this is not good enough, this is totally unsavoury and unacceptable at all levels of the society. [*Desk thumping*] But you know, if it was just that, that would be enough to condemn him into the abyss of political history and not of his future of Trinidad and Tobago. But he is here now and we must deal with him, and that is why I must commend the Prime Minister for having the intellectual capacity to appreciate that this new transparency of the democracy requires each and every one of us to answer questions before this House. [*Desk thumping*]

But, you know, I am not surprised they ran away, because the Leader of Government Business posed a question, which is it, Sir, which is it? Did you know he was your witness or did you not know? I too want to know, because there are serious consequences as we have been told either way. If he did not know, well then something is incredibly wrong. Because then I must reflect on one of the best journalists this country has, Mr. Andre Badoo, who reported in brilliant writing style as he does, on a difficult topic on March 22, 2015, at page 15, and I shall quote with your leave, Sir:

“At the same media briefing on February 4, Rowley was quoted as saying that Ramlogan had gone to the High Court in June 2014 to prevent West from giving a statement and, having won, Rowley said, he went to the Appeal Court where Ramlogan also went to prevent West from giving a witness statement.”

If this was in June 2014, if I am reading accurately and if Mr. Badoo is reporting correctly, then he must have known that Mr. West was a witness since June. And if he did not know directly, let me tell you why he must know, circumstantially. He said:

“...he went to the Appeal Court where Ramlogan also went to prevent West from giving a witness statement. The Appeal Court gave the judgment to allow West to issue his statement...”

Now, I as a lawyer will tell you when you leave the High Court to go to the Court of Appeal to get an order, there are additional resources required. You have to pay for certain things, you have to pay for it. You must report to the client, listen, I have to go to the Court of Appeal to get an order for this matter. Are you willing to fund it?

So I want to—is the Member for Diego Martin West funding his own case or somebody else is doing it? Totally oblivious and careless as to what is happening to a matter that if he should lose, an award for damages shall be made against him for him to pay. Or is it that funds, there are endless sources of funds available to him so that he could, with a flip of non-caring, say, carry on, carry on, I do not need to know, tell me—wake me up when it is over. You go to the Court of Appeal to get an order to allow this witness to give a statement and you do not know. I shall continue reading, Sir, because I could not put it better than the goodly Mr. Badoo. He says:

“Yet, it seems that what was engaging the court’s attention was the issue of an application for an extension to time to file a defence and statements, one of which was a statement of West. In any event, is it that Rowley, too, was unaware that West was a witness in his own case, even as an appeal on an administrative matter directly relating to it—which touched upon the preparation of a witness statement by West—was taken to the Supreme Court?”

He did not know this?

“Questions loom here”—Dr. Rowley—“Rowley’s passing the buck to his lawyer is deeply unconvincing.”

And that is the most gentlemanly of language. It goes on:

“And while Rowley stated he has no relationship with West, the issue being raised is the fact that West is a witness in defence of Rowley in a private defamation litigation. That itself is the narrow relationship at issue in the first place.”

Obfuscation of the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, whether Dr. Rowley had a matter before the PCA and so, is irrelevant and a totally ridiculous suggestion. [*Desk thumping*] What is at hand here, Sir, is this. Of course, the Prime Minister makes a recommendation, but without, and I repeat this, without the consent and approval of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. West could not have gone to the President as a candidate. [*Desk thumping*] If Dr. Rowley had

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said, I do not want Mr. West or Dr. Gopeesingh or Mr. Gypsy Peters, the Prime Minister could not have even forwarded that name to the President, His Excellency.

But when the name came to him, he had an option, “yay or nay”. But he also had another duty, if he said “nay” he did not need to give an excuse, but once he said yes to this man, understand this, and I want to make no aspersions on the goodly Mr. West who I have known for years, once he said yes, it means that he has put his official stamp of approval on this thing, as a result of which, whatever candidate it was, west, east, north or south, they get the job, a good paying one and a highly responsible one and great power, a powerful job.

The very least he was required to do under law, under the integrity, because they dismissed the integrity in public life legislation as if it had no value. Of course it does not, because the only persons ever prosecuted on it were non-PNM people. But the point I make is that he ought then to have told the Prime Minister, of course I approve this man, I think he is worthy. However, are you aware or are you not aware? Oh, you must be aware that he is a witness for me in my private capacity and let us not mix the issues. He is sued not as Leader of the Opposition in that matter, you know, he is sued as Dr. Keith Rowley. Unless I am mistaken, I believe that is the case.

Therefore, it is a private matter and therefore he has an interest to protect himself in that private matter. And this witness, voluntary or otherwise, is coming to his aid to fend off the attack by the former Attorney General in the courts for slander and libel, and you do not know. We passed the point, I am assuming now that you do know, because logic tells me, and the surrounding facts tell us that you must have known. And if you must have known or ought to have known, why you did not just say that other thing, oh, Prime Minister, oh, Prime Minister, of course you know Mr. West is a witness for me. You must know, everybody knows, the whole country knows.

By his failure to do that, he is in breach because he ought also to have made it known to His Excellency, to advise this thing better as to whether the nomination was based on total independence, because you do not know, we have a great Prime Minister today, but in the future you do not know where they could collude, and we have had instances of that in the past. Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, you have heard rumours of these things, colluding on matters. We do not wish to see that ever again. And that is the essential essence of why we are here today but it is not the only thing. There is much, much more because we speak of a recklessness in the conduct of this man.



Remember I spoke about character and reputation. He has a reputation for recklessness and the character over time is what you are disposed to, who you truly are. Your character is, and I want to thank my wife Jay for doing this research for me: the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. The personality, nature, disposition, temperament, temper, mentality, turn of mind, psychology, psyche, constitution, make-up, make, stamp, mould, cast, persona, attributes, features, qualities, properties, substance, individuality, identity, distinctiveness, uniqueness, spirit, ethos, key, tone, ambience, air, aura, feel and feeling.

This is an angry, angry man. Whatever he does and says is imbued with a sense of almost hate and bitterness and we have heard the description from those who have known him for a long, long time. But to me those things are irrelevant. If that is your personal thing—but when you come into public space it becomes my business and every citizen's business. And that is why we must condemn any person who is coming into the political space to have qualities that are not befitting of a leader.

And maybe at another time I shall go into what are the real qualities of a leader. And just, a very quick moment to say, a leader is one who must inspire.

**Hon. Member:** Inspire walk out. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. P. Ramadhar:** What we are seeing are aspirations without ability. What we are seeing is ambition without quality. What we are seeing is expectation without work. And Mahatma Gandhi had spoken about these things, about what brings violence, and one of which was really politics without principles. And we have an unprincipled politician now holding the position of Leader of the Opposition.

It will be infra dig of me to go back into the long history of the allegations of apartments that were given and so on, and there was a matter that was threatened to go to court, and I shall not go there. But to me the most significant failure of this gentleman is when he walked into this Parliament with a no confidence Motion against the Prime Minister and several Members, high ranking Members. And I remember when I spoke in that Motion I had said that if it was true, Trinidad and Tobago will never be the same. I had also said then that if it was not true, Trinidad and Tobago should not be the same. It was the famous emailgate thing.

Now that we await with bated breath the final report from the police as to the fallacy the whole thing is conjuring up in the mind and bosom of wicked souls

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and beast, because they are nothing short of this, to have traumatized this nation whether you support the PNM or the UNC or the COP, every citizen who cared about this nation was troubled and the anxiety levels were so high.

And what was the foundation for all this thing called emailgate? Somebody put a piece of paper in “he email box”. I want to make that clear you know, maybe we have forgotten. There was not a single email produced to this nation. There was a piece of paper with, I would not even use the term “cut and paste”, because that suggests that it came from an email, they cut and paste. Somebody typed up something with some little email addresses and made the most heinous allegations against a sitting and most loved Prime Minister; the Attorney General, whether you like him or not, allegations were made against him; the Minister of Works and Infrastructure, and on, and on, and on, of conspiracy to murder and of high corruption and bribery. He kept that information to his bosom for, I think it was six months, where there was a possible conspiracy to hurt, if not kill a member of the media.

**3.45 p.m.**

What more insidious and sinister thing could you do as a government, than to plan an attack on the media? This is not like the former Prime Minister leaving his haircut and going into a radio station and “buffin up dem fellas an tell dem shut dey mout”, this is about actual physical harm. He kept it for six months. He did not tell the police, but he scurried at midnight into the home of the chairman of the Integrity Commission to whisper, in silence, with him and conjure this evil thing that he brought into the public domain. To this date, not an iota of evidence—

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Minister of Legal Affairs and Justice has expired. Would you like an extension?

**Hon. P. Ramadhar:** Absolutely, please. Thank you.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** You may continue, hon. Minister. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. P. Ramadhar:** Thank you very much. Not an iota of evidence has been placed to support that reckless disregard for governance, for the safety of democracy. Because in that moment of torture, evil forces could have arisen, and we have seen, in this nation, what has happened already, where our social fabric was ruptured in 1990 because of these things where the legitimacy of a government was so destroyed by a fracture, and that they wanted—and I made the

point earlier about the efforts over and over and over for No Confidence Motions and allegations of corruption, and I want to tell you, not a single person has been charged for corruption on this side of the Bench. [*Desk thumping*] Now, that to me, is very significant because of all the allegations and all the resources given to the authorities to do their investigations, including the FIU and others, I would have imagined if there was any truth in it, like the email—I am not saying there may not be; it is not for me to say, but what I am saying it is for the institutions to have taken action if there was merit in it.

So that he created this horrible environment—and you remember what happened outside the Parliament where marches and so came about, where persons held hands in rapt formation in the streets of Port of Spain, marched together as if, you know, Armageddon was upon—the end of time had come for the People's Partnership. It fizzled into nothingness. But if that was it, that in itself should have been cause for him to hang his head in shame and leave in disgrace—as they have today, out of these Chambers—never to return. But there is far, far more.

You know, when the Member, my friend, the Leader of Government Business, rose today and spoke about this man's attack on the churches of Trinidad and Tobago, we took a position when we came into Government because we—you know, when we went to the platforms we made a promise that we are the People's Partnership. What did that mean? That the resources of this country will not be frittered away on mega projects, but we shall look after your needs in health, and in education, and in infrastructural development, and in the social fabric that has been so frayed, dishevelled, because of lack of care and attention; that we needed now to embrace all of the nation, and one of the finest and best ways to do that is to use the institutions, the NGOs that already exist who had done tremendous work in saving the soul and conscience of this nation by the work they do with the young people, the dispossessed, the old, and those who were most in need: the churches, the temples and the mosques.

So from very early on, we had started ensuring every year that they were nurtured, not by anything other than the basics, of giving them financial assistance to do the work that they had done for so long without help; to do the things that are necessary, to succour and to give comfort to those old and the young and the dispossessed. We continued that, and the Prime Minister was very clear there must be equality across the board. So churches, temples, mosques, and so, were given basic resources, nothing compared to the billions of dollars that we saw wasted when Petrotrin could run up—I could never understand an oil company

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digging for oil, getting a God's-given gift to us, and bringing up a debt, instead of profits to us, of TT \$9 billion, or how much billion. I never get that.

So we decided that we shall help these institutions where our Government could not work as effectively as they have. This is what we did. But he has now accused persons of good and noble intent, who had nothing other than a willingness to give and to help, that if you receive from—your money, eh, because this “eh no Gopeesingh money or Ramadhar money, yuh know”, this is the people's money, tax dollars, oil and gas revenue dollars—to give back to the people for them to do their work; that if you accepted it, it is a bribe?

That tells me more, because if you wish to see into the heart of a man, look what comes out of his mouth. So that if it is that you could so easily be bought by these things that were so—everybody knew; everyone, every MP was invited, including Members, especially Members from the other side, to put forward names of churches that are recognized in that last effort. So he is suggesting that everybody in this Trinidad and Tobago could be bought? If he could be bought—that is the message that, yes, he could—we, on this side, have nothing to sell other than our love to this nation and to help it in every way by empowering these institutions.

So even if that alone, he should have walked out of here in shame and disgrace. But there is so much more and I know my colleagues are yet to speak, and there are many things, as I take my seat, I will say I should have said, but did not because of the shortness of time. But the country has an election coming, yes, and, therefore, we will hold ourselves, each and every one of us who proposes to come into leadership to take the people's power and authority to do things on their behalf—to be examined.

This is the age of examination and for transparency. This is a new politics that we have spoken about, that no one could hide in cover and because you are a “crapaud” belonging to one party, that you could put a tie around it and it will win. No longer will we have a situation where all could bark and bray and be ignored. This is a society that has started to awaken itself. Yes, there are negative ends to that, but there are questions that have to be answered and this Government has shown its willingness to answer questions because in those questions come accountability, and that no longer will we countenance ill-doing, ill-will, on the basis of blind loyalty because we are now lifting the shades, or the blinders from the population. And that is why we are here today. We are unafraid. *Manos y manos*, “wومانos”, as they say, whoever it is, if you have answers to questions, you must stand and give them, not run away and hide.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that the conflict of interest issues are alive. We have two versions from the Member for Diego Martin West. He must stick to one. Both cannot be true. So we know if he has actually said these two things, one is a lie and therefore, he is a—I shall not say it. I shall not say it. I do not need to. If he said two things are diametrically opposed and one is not true—oh my, I do not wish to use unparliamentary language. But it is for us here in this Parliament to lift this nation to a higher expectation.

When these awful sexual innuendoes were put into the public space, it reminded me of what had happened down in San Fernando. But that wine has gone sour. It is not to be remembered with fondness. The passage of time did not make it better, because what has happened then was that there was no apology when, indeed, it was brought to the attention of the goodly gentleman—and I say that again, guardedly—that it was an underaged child that he did his thing with. He wanted to play the macho card, but real men respect women. Real men know [*Desk thumping*] who is a daughter, who is a mother, who is a child, who is a sister, and if you do not have respect for children, and particularly young girl children, for our mothers, for our sisters and for our wives, then how dare you hold yourself out to hold power! Because power in the hand of a man with poor character—and this is what we are talking about here, character—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** Reckless.

**Hon. P. Ramadhar:** Forget reckless, you know. Reckless is when you take a calculated position and afterwards you say, “I doh care what happen”. That is reckless. Right? You take it one way or the other, and it could happen. “Is either ah damage it or ah build it, it doh matter.” That is reckless. These are deliberate insights into the nature of the man, and the nature of the man will tell you the nature of the society if they are put into leadership.

I am reminded that a nation becomes that as a shadow of its leader and that is why you would have seen in this five years, for all of us—because we are all leaders here in some way. The Prime Minister big, we small, but we are leaders. What has happened to this nation? The economy has been saved; unemployment, all time low; food prices have gone down; the weak and the dispossessed, the poor, the hungry, have been fed and looked after. The social network has been strengthened. The educational institutions have been made far better. Our hospitals, a far way, have gone in improving them—new medical institutions. The protective services are given far more resources. We have much more to do, yes, but the country itself has lifted. There is a brighter today than there was a yesterday. [*Desk thumping*] And that once we continue not to be blinded by the

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darkness, but be enlightened by the light of the people's will, and we are continued into a second term, Mr. Speaker, this country's future will be far better than anyone imagined.

I thank you very, very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for Tobago East. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of the People and Social Development (Hon. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to join the debate in this honourable House and I must begin by saying, it was Abraham Lincoln who said:

“Nearly all men can face adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.”

Mr. Speaker, ordinarily I derive no pleasure from speaking negatively about anyone, and it is especially painful that I must examine the stewardship of my Tobago brother in this honourable House, but in the present circumstances I have to be mindful of the fact that I have pledged to serve my country without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.

Let me lay my case as to why I support this Motion. Mr. Speaker, the child is father of the man, and in Tobago we say, “When yam ah go bear, yuh ah see em ah de vine”. Even as a child—[*Interruption*]

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

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** “When yam ah go bear, yuh ah see em ah de vine.” Even as a child people said “de pickney ignorant like a donkey back foot”. He was always confrontational. Even when you “out” him in cricket, he want to bat still, or he will take his bat and ball and go home. He was always changing the rules to suit himself.

Dr. Eric Williams denounced standpipe politics. He meant to disparage the “he say”, “she say”, “dem say” mauvais langue, devoted to distraction, and without substance or edification for the children in the audience, the youth, our future.

Mr. Speaker, Edmund Burke, in his seminal work, *Reflections on the French Revolution* said we have a contract with our ancestors and ourselves to leave a legacy for our children and their children's children to the end of our generations. But we will get to that presently. Be patient that we may hear the facts, the

evidence, the truth, that we have been sold a fraudulent prospectus as a prospect to inherit the seat of the late great Dr. Eric Williams.

Walter Bagehot wrote in the English Constitution, inter alia:

“The greatest teacher of all in the Parliament... must be the Prime Minister.”

By his policy and speech, or by her policy and speech, she “embodies and expresses public opinion”. The teaching task of Parliament is the worst it does. The Prime Minister has an influence to give a great tone to discussion or a mean tone.

Lord Palmerston educated us down to his level. His style had no substance. He left no noble teaching, no words which fascinated his age. He taught no great truth. He embodied no distinct policy which years after, men will not let die. He had a Kant insincerity. The House, since it caught its tone from such a man, has taught the nation worse and elevated it less.

Mr. Speaker, after reading such wisdom, I was fixed on the notion of this “No Confidence”. What are the noble words children will remember at the end of time that fell from the lips of the MP for Diego Martin West these past 28 years, or especially the past five years; words which fascinated our age and inspired the children of Charlotteville, of Debe, of Felicity, of Laventille? What were the great truths embodied in his constant harangue against anyone and everyone. As a straw man, he purposed to pillory or vilify, the better to promote himself as the great black hope.

#### **4.00 p.m.**

Was it words about ANR Robinson? The *Hansard* record reveals that even Basdeo Panday never deconstructed or abused Mr. Robinson, an honest Tobagonian, as a liar, a fraud, who fooled Tobagonians telling them oil and gas were under the waters around the island. This honourable man, for so he is, declared that Mr. Robinson scraped a duck pond in Scarborough. He boasts of being one of the longest serving Members of Parliament, yet he did not mention that David West was a witness in a private court matter against the former Attorney General. He was strangely absent in any activity designed to improve the quality of life of Tobago.

He criticized anyone who defended Tobago. He called ANR Robinson, Chief “Coonoomoonoo”. Even at the funeral of the late great statesman, first MP for Tobago East, first Chairman of the THA, first Prime Minister from Tobago, President of the Republic, he never attached the correct salutation to his name. He

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kept referring to him as Robinson. In fact, he spoke disparagingly of every non-PNM Tobagonian in this august House. Thus to him, Mr. Robinson was more than a liar. He was callous, heartless, vindictive and devoted to destroying the great work of Dr. Eric Williams by bringing back “Massa Day”. There is a hidden purpose in such crass attempts to reduce or to revile the character of Mr. Robinson, and it is revealed when we look at how this honourable man dealt with Dr. Morgan Job.

Mr. Speaker, on July 28, 2000, Dr. Job spoke in the House saying presciently, profoundly, factually, crime must not be linked to skin colour, but the bogus idea of race or religion or ancestral origin. We need to look at the adoption of foreign inner city ghetto culture as the explanation for any association of crime in Port of Spain, with the disadvantaged youth. Only quality parenting, quality education or a change of the PNM nurtured ghetto culture is the solution, not any appeal to race. The honourable MP, the subject of this Motion of no confidence in his accustomed manner rose immediately as Dr. Job sat down, he put into the record that Dr. Job said only little black swine in Laventille committing crime. It is in *Hansard* and was reported all over the world. Dr. Rowley said he could not allow Dr. Job to say only little black swine in Laventille committing crime. Dr. Job never said that. The *Hansard* reports will show.

There is a pattern, Mr. Speaker, misinform, distort, fabricate, but focused on the fraud that one is defender of the race, the black people or the African race, or whatever is the more emotive or opportunistic label, but set yourself up as the great black hope, triumphantly standing on the destroyed character of ANR Robinson, Morgan Job, Pamela Nicholson, Vernella Toppin and every other non-PNM parliamentarian. Fact or truth does not matter to his method. This is the method of the Gestapo, the Nazi party, the fascist of every colour and we must not forget that Adolf Hilter won an election using such methods. Be warned, we are in danger here from this mirage, a bogus idea that some of us need a great black hope, some black 21st Century Dessalines. It is fiction devoutly to be feared.

Mr. Speaker, that idea of our need for a great black hope, a great black tribal leader is the only common feature of every failed state, and the chronology of horror unfolding daily over vast swaths of earth, blighting millions of lives, sectarian leadership, it is Boko Haram a great black hope in Nigeria. In Iraq, al-Maliki was a great Shai hope who created the sectarian conditions for the Sunnis to seek a great Sunni hope in al-Baghdadi and ISIS. It is the same in Syria, communalism, sectarianism, millions of people divided into Turksmen, Kurds,



Yazidi, Christian, Coptic, Alawite, Jews, each seeking a great sectarian leader to save them from a savagery of others who will do them ill.

That is not our problem here. We speak the same language, share the same values, the same Constitution, the same courts and schools even as we worship in different ways, but we do not need a great sectarian hope. We need truth, we need love, we need to build a state together, we need hope, bereft of colour. We need leaders who appeal to all of our people, not leaders, who as Martin Joseph did, spent millions in Tobago to promote the idea of the Calcutta ship coming for you.

The house to house campaign from Charlotteville to Crown Point and on the platform was to promote sectarian leadership of an allegedly African tribe in Tobago, fighting against an invading Indian tribe. When Hilton Sandy spoke, the entire head table applauded. Sandy spoke for the PNM party, the scene was obviously rehearsed, orchestrated, deeply discussed and who was their leader. Both the PNM political leader, the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, and the Chief Secretary sat at that head table and applauded. What was the message telegraphed to our children? Fratricide, sectarian war, domestic strife. Was it about peace, love, human brotherhood or sisterhood? That is the question I raised at the beginning, the symbolism of leadership.

Of what is the honourable man a symbol? From what he has said and done, his great words, ideas, this brings me to a *Newsday* article dated February 26, 2015, page 17, headlined: "Keith Rowley is a grandfather... again". The article reads and I quote from the article:

"OPPOSITION LEADER and People's National Movement (PNM) political leader Dr. Keith Rowley, 65, is a grandfather.

A post on the Facebook page of Dane Wilson said, 'Congratulations to Dr. Keith Rowley's daughter and her husband on the birth of their first baby. It's a boy.' *Newsday* understands that Rowley's grandson, Lucas Kristian Cuffy, was born on Monday at a private nursing home."

I quote:

"...sources said this was"—Rowley's first grandson and his second grandchild.

"*Newsday* understands that Rowley has a granddaughter from his son Garth, who lives overseas. Garth is Rowley's son from a previous relationship."

**Hon. Member:** Is that Garth Alleyne.

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** “Garth is Rowley’s son from a previous relationship.”

Mr. Speaker, what is the model? “Rowley’s son from a previous relationship.” What is the model, the legacy, the example of this previous relationship? Following on the newspaper article of February 26, 2015, Rowley has not denied that Garth Alleyne is his son. He can take a DNA test to confirm whether or not Garth Alleyne is his son.

Mr. Speaker, we must submit all records to scrutiny. We need to know of the so-called previous relationship mentioned in that article. It is important for the children of the nation to learn the truth, to know the truth. It is important that at the screening process that we do in our political parties extends to a national consensus. It is important for the nation to know all of our stories, past and present, if we must be parliamentarians. None of us is a God beyond fault or error, but there is confession which is good for the soul and there are people in Tobago who have knowledge of a persistent pattern of child abuse by a particular former teacher which we must not ignore. This MP has deliberately engaged in a career of destroying by fabrication the character of every Tobagonian politician who challenged what he perceived was his triumphant march to leadership of the African tribe, and there is no such tribe in Tobago.

We need the leaders of the children to be role models, men of vision, women of vision, leaders to give hope to all our citizens fearlessly, to comfort and console them in sundry ways of grief and in their despair. We need no great sectarian hope, or this beautiful place must descend into some version of sectarian cauldron of death across the world, across Africa, Egypt, Syria, Israel, Iraq, the Balkans, Afghanistan or Pakistan. The people of this country need the truth of the man, the teacher, the dean of discipline who destroyed rather than educate several of his students. The people of Tobago know the story, the history of deception to promote a sectarian careerist.

This country deserves better than tawdry political opportunism. We need leaders we can respect. We need honest visionary leadership that is not symbolic of our worst animal passions. We need symbols of integrity our children must admire. The record is there. I have not scratched the surface of a horror story too difficult to contemplate or of such a man controlling all evils of power in this country. The evidence is there.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great scam going on for too long. This is time to end it. This Parliament must lead this country to expose the empty monstrous obscene

charade parading as leader of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. But latterly, the spectacle at Carnival in San Fernando where another young girl is violated and degraded by the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, his life mission, destruction of the character of those into whose shoes he cannot step to rob T&T of good governance to put himself as king.

This Parliament abhors the behaviour that is unstatesmanlike, crass, caustic, **crubus**, cantankerous; as we say in Tobago, “caba caba”, and as the British say calumniates. He viciously pursued the Member for Chaguanas West to the ends of the earth, relentlessly stripping him of all credibility, maliciously cutting him down and now he embraces him as friend and ally. The Member speaks out of both sides of his mouth.

Mr. Speaker, if I may approach the throne of grace, I cannot pursue a brother with the venom with which he pursued me and others. I cannot sink to such depths. But the story is told where a UWI typist was kicked down a flight of stairs because of an error in her typing by a malignant, malicious, malevolent, mal-efficient, and all of this time allegedly involved in malfeasance in Cleaver Heights, according to honourable former Prime Minister Patrick Manning, in NHA according to Annestine Sealey report.

Tantie in Mason Hall said she paid \$2,000 for a house for her son in Trinidad to the NHA boss man, and others said they paid him in other ways. But, Mr. Speaker, the village of Charlotteville maintains a story about a young mother, a minor, a secondary school girl, who was made pregnant and had to abandon her education by a teacher who taught at the Roxborough Secondary School. The hon. MP for Diego Martin West knows that story and cannot deny that statutory rape is a crime, or that only females over the age of 18 can legally give consent for sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Mr. Speaker, Act 61 of 2000 defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years old, and the Sexual Offences Act of 1986 states an adult is a person 18 years of age or more and a minor is a person under 18 years of age.

We need to focus on meaning of pederasty or child molestation as a serious scourge in our society, destroying countless boys and girls. We must not promote child molesters to eminence. Were the Member for whom we are debating the no confidence Motion here today, I would ask him some questions. I will sit down and give way for him to answer some questions.

Question 1. Does he know of any teacher at Roxborough Secondary School who was a tenant at this house in Chapel Street in Charlotteville?

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[*Member displays picture*]

Does he know of any teacher from the Roxborough Secondary School who was a tenant at this house in Charlotteville?

Was he a tenant of this house in Charlotteville?

Does he know whether or was he boarding from Mrs. Ufema Grey, better known as Tantie Gremie; or does he know of any teacher who was boarding from Mrs. Ufema Grey, Tantie Gremie, at this house? “Boarding” meaning getting meals.

Was Mrs. Grey in the habit of sending her niece, a student of Roxborough Secondary School, to the house to deliver meals on weekends?

**4.15 p.m.**

I would ask him: did you know of a planned “four-man sampat” for the unsuspecting young girl? Did he know that the girl was kidnapped and kept detained for four hours against her will? Did he know that an inappropriate evil encounter resulted in the conception and birth of a boy child? I would ask him: does he know who is the father of that boy child?

And I am asking these questions not from any stories that are going somewhere around the world, I am asking these questions because my name is Vernella Alleyne by birth. This is my name, that is my father’s name and I am from that stock, that excellent Methodist family, the Alleyne clan from Charlotteville. I am speaking to circumstances that involve my family.

Mr. Speaker, this Member came to this honourable House on March 02, 2012 and brought a no confidence Motion against our hon. Prime Minister, the Member for Siparia; a woman into whose shoes he cannot step and, in trying to debase her, he walked all over me. But should I now resort to my Tobagonian genealogy to quote the Leader of the Opposition and evoke the concept of tit for tat of the Tobago speech band or should I just leave him to walk all over me, to destroy my fledgling political career with untruths, half-truths, innuendo and say nothing? I want the national community to know and the world to know that I must defend myself.

Mr. Speaker, I must place today on the *Hansard* record I never abused the Government-issued credit card. I never went shopping with the Government-issued credit card. I was the victim of a conspiracy by senior PNM operatives of

the Ministry of Tobago Development, among them, one whose husband is now a PNM candidate for the upcoming general election—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Rambachan:** Who is that?

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:**—and who told me that another Permanent Secretary, actually, the one in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, had crafted the entire subterfuge and handed all of the information to the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West. That was told to me by a Permanent Secretary about another Permanent Secretary.

How can it be that two Government credit cards issued in the Ministry at that time—one for the Permanent Secretary and one for myself. The Permanent Secretary's credit card was always reconciled after use and mine never was. In fact, the submitted bills for my credit card were purposely hidden so as to not effect payments, all in a skilfully, designed plot to embarrass me and my Government, derail my fledgling political career and tarnish my family name to posterity. How disgusting!

Mr. Speaker, in weaving his web of untruths, half-truths and innuendo in the Parliament, the Member of Parliament expressly said, these cards are not to be used for local entertainment expenses when the Ministry of Finance and the Economy—and the Ministry of Finance and the Economy could tell us—specifically states otherwise. He ridiculed me in all kinds of ways. He said I went to buy “benne balls” and “nut cake” in every platform, all over the place, at the same time when he was talking about Calcutta ship and all of that in people's homes. He set me up on the international arena as a fraudster. A lawyer in the law school in Cave Hill in Barbados had a whole class on me and he named the class “white-collar crime”.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Who was that lawyer?

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** And a student who was sitting in the class from Tobago sent all the information back to us while the class was in process.

**Dr. Rambachan:** Put that lawyer's name on record today.

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** The Leader of the Opposition boasted on platforms across the country that he got me fired from Cabinet. He vowed that he would take me to the Integrity Commission. Indeed, the personality of a malignant narcissist.

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But, Mr. Speaker, he brings to us now as a candidate—you will see—Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis. He brings her as a candidate; he brings her into the Senate. There is absolutely no evidence on my credit card statement, which I saw for the first time, on the *Express*, that I went shopping to buy anything, contrary to what has obtained with her. So what is the issue with me? [*Crosstalk*] My hon. colleague there said he did not know and he went and did some shopping online with his credit card, just as I did not know I could withdraw. And nobody tore the Member for Barataria/San Juan to pieces. I was on the *Express* 42 days. But the child is father of the man and “my navel string bury in Mason Hall very close to where the Leader of the Opposition navel string bury”, so I know him as a child. We sat in the benches together in school. And what makes the man? The circumstances of one’s birth, the nature, the nurture, the sum of all experiences.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you a story that was given to me by an old man from Mason Hall. One day in Mason Hall, Tobago, a young girl went to take lunch for her father—Mr. Speaker, look at the nexus. A young girl went to take lunch for her father in a coal’s pit. When she got there, her father had gone to change his cow. It is a true story. She, however, met her father’s best friend and co-worker alone in the coal’s pit. “We does call it coal’s pit, if yuh want English, yuh say coal pit.” This young girl was then raped by her father’s best friend. The product today is the aspirant to lofty office.

Mr. Speaker, can you imagine the mother carrying this pain and shame for nine months and the impact it had on the unborn child? A child was born and grew to become aggressive, arrogant, bombastic and spiteful. I am not a psychologist although I have taught psychology, but now, we get a glimpse into why a man could be, today, the sum of his experiences. So what choice do we have as an electorate? I can offer you Barnabas or I can offer you Christ. I can offer you the excellent prime ministerial qualities embodied in the Member for Siparia and our Prime Minister [*Desk thumping*] and not the dubious, dangerous, indiscreet leadership of the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West.

A good leader must be imbued at the fruit of the spirit as the espoused in Galatians 5:22 and 23: love, peace, joy, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control and forbearance. Pelting teacups, pelting paper across the floor of this honourable House, irascibility, walking all over people’s lives, leaving a trail of destruction. What of teenagers? Betty and Sherma? What of the secretary who was kicked down a flight of steps? What of Susan, of Mona, Jamaica and what of young Ravina?

**Dr. Rambachan:** Who do all that? Who?

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister Manning warned this nation. He said:

Mr. Speaker, “I see hate”. Mr. Speaker, “I see bitterness”. Mr. Speaker, “I see acrimony”. Mr. Speaker, “I see animosity”. Mr. Speaker, “I see a man completely out of control”. Mr. Speaker, “Completely out of control” and “That problem is not a new problem to me”—you know. “I was aware of the tendency” of “the hon. Member” for Diego Martin West “since 1987”. Bring your case. “Everybody has a chance to do it” but “the minute you oppose my good friend, he gets very, very angry and if you oppose him strongly, he becomes a raging bull.”

That is a testimonial written and articulated by his last boss. This is the recommendation. That is his endorsement. After having uttered the infamous statements and in his arrogance defied all criticisms and refused to admit his error, now today, he is apologizing for the crass statements he made, repeating doggerel, doggerel to infamy. Doggerel, verse poetry, meant to amuse. Doggerel to infamy, hiding behind the time honoured tradition of the Tobago Speech Band.

According to *Trinidad Guardian* of today, March 25, 2015, page A3—  
[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** The *Guardian*?

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** *Guardian*, page A3:

“...Rowley noted that if he had resorted to his ‘Tobago genealogy’ in ‘invoking the concept ‘tit for tat’...’—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Tobago East and the hon. Minister of State in the Ministry of the People and Social Development has expired. Would you want an extension?

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** Yes, please.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Everybody in Tobago who knows speech band knows that the speech band is risqué material, full of double entendre. It is war and it is designed to debase all that it is directed to. His words were designed to debase all females and especially the hon. Prime Minister. And if that quip that he calls his genealogy, the speech band genealogy is what he is using, how then could Suzanne Mills in her article talk about cats

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and nipples and talk about other things, including Peyton Place? How then? Where is the speech band clip in that?

Mr. Speaker, I write for the speech band. I own a—I am artistic director in a company, in a group that has a speech band to it. I have studied the speech band. I know where it comes from. It comes from our Moorish tradition, it comes from Morocco; it has come through the British theatre, and we use it as war in the streets. When we use the speech band in Tobago, we ensure that the children cannot understand what we are saying. So if we say “dog”, the children understand it at its surface value, and if we say “cat”, the children understand it at its surface value, but when we put it together in rhyme, we put it together for adult audiences.

So there is double entendre, there is innuendo and there is a message that is completely different from the message that the children or the uninitiated will get, and I speak that with authority. So do not let anybody fool you, Trinidadians, about our speech band. We have brought our speech band to all kinds of nice little social things, but essentially, it is meant to insult and it is risqué to use a very ordinary word rather than using the word “vulgar”. Mr. Speaker, what a farce, indiscreet and reckless.

But you know, even as he speaks of genealogy, I want to urge all the men of our nation, please resort to your genealogy in a different way. Invoke your genealogy. Never deny your children saying that that is not your child. “Be ah man.” “Man up.” Stand up. “That is yuh child. If it is not yuh child, prove that it is not yuh child. Man up!” Because what is the pain of the child whose father is looking at him and saying, “He not my child”, who knows that his mother is telling him, “That is yuh father”. What is the pain of that child? How can you sustain something like that over all the years of a child’s life, a child who is 45 years old? How can you keep denying that child? The child has a child, how can you now say to the child, “You have no grandfather” and child saying, “That is your grandfather over there”, you know.

That man in that high place is your grandfather. This is a travesty. The *Bible* says you are an infidel if you do not leave a legacy for your children, and support your children.

**4.30 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I am urging the men in Trinidad and Tobago, to “man up”, seriously. I sat in the court in Scarborough, and there was this man, he brought his wife with him, and they when through a paternity test, and he was saying, “That is



not my child! That is not my child!” And the test came back for all of us to see, it was indeed his child. I said to the mother, not the mother, the wife, listen, encourage—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, it is now 4.30, with the leave of the House, the hon. Member has until 4.41 to complete her 15 minutes. Is it the wish of the House that we continue?

**Hon. Members:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Then we will take tea at the conclusion of her contribution. Hon. Members, do I have the agreement of the House?

**Hon. Members:** Yes.

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

**Hon. V. Alleyne-Toppin:** [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I told the wife, encourage your husband to support that child. It is his child, undoubtedly. He is embarrassed, but try and help him. Support him, and ensure that the child is well fed, the child has medical attention, the child has time with his father, and that the child is nurtured right. You never know—and the man sat and he listened to me—when that child will bring you a cup of water. You never know the circumstances that will unfold.

Mr. Speaker, as a mother, as a citizen, I plead on behalf of the innocent girls and boys molested by their teachers, their priests, their leaders, their elders, and I come before the conscience of the world, on behalf of our children yet unborn, to save us from this enormous calamity, a burden our children will never deserve. It is a symbol of Babylonian depravity. It is moral squalor at best, and the worst corruption of power, to symbolize the best things we must desire. Let this cup of woe pass out of memory for girls and boys, and truth and righteousness. Let us claim again our heritage, our patrimony, our genealogy. Let us claim the children rather than claim the eminent office. Let us claim the children and nourish and nurture them, rather than hide them away and claim the eminent office.

Mr. Speaker, I do not need to go to 4.41. I want to say to this honourable House, I support this Motion. I support the Motion. I have no confidence in the Leader of the Opposition. I have been in this House, and heard all kinds of fabrications. I have seen all kinds of honourable people debased and degraded here by the Leader of the Opposition and I am quite sure that a Prime Minister-in-waiting, cannot have the character that I have just described. There is no excuse. There is no way the people of this nation could in all conscience support such a

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leader. It is a travesty that the party once founded by the late great Dr. Eric Williams, should come to the point where their leader is so hollow at the bottom. The foundation cannot stand.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to be a part of this debate. I want to applaud my hon. Prime Minister, for the person that she is, for the character that she has carried, for the strength that she has, and for being my leader, and the leader of the People's Partnership, and for leading by example.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** I understand that we have a long evening. When we return, I recognize the hon. Member for Chaguanas West. We will suspend for tea and return at quarter past five. This sitting is now suspended until 5.15 p.m.

**4.35 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.15 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not need your applause. Thank you very much. I would try to be very brief today, because there is not much in the Motion that I could talk about. Since for me, it is almost what I would call an irresponsible Motion. I listened to the Leader of Government Business, the Member for Oropouche East, and he went at length into issues 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, to prove that the Member for Diego Martin West, and the Leader of the Opposition should be censured. He went back as far as 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, to show why the Member for Diego Martin West should not be Leader of the Opposition, and should be censured.

The history does not make sense to me, because that very same Member for Oropouche East, I want to remind him 2008, the UNC party internal election, he was on Mr. Basdeo Panday's bandwagon as you were too, Mr. Speaker, and I was on another wagon. I remember the Member for Oropouche East saying some of the worst things about the Prime Minister. That did not affect him from being the Leader of Government Business today. It did not affect him from being the Minister of Housing and Urban Development. In fact, Mr. Speaker, at one of the meetings in Penal, when the Prime Minister was passing, it remained—  
[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, Sanding Order 48(6). The Motion is not about me.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yeah. Hon. Member for Chaguanas West, what we have before this House, is a substantive Motion against the Leader of the Opposition. It is not about any other Member of this honourable House at this time. You are going into an area where you are reflecting on the character and the conduct of a Member, and that matter is not before us. So, I would ask you if you could confine your contribution into the Motion that is before us. I want to make it very clear, no other Member is before this House as it relates to the question that has been put to this House.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Mr. Speaker, clarification on the ruling please. Am I not allowed to speak on any submission of the previous speakers?

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes. You are allowed, but all I am saying is, that if you are reflecting on a Member's character or conduct, then it will be contrary to the Standing Orders. That is all I am advising you, but you can speak and respond to any submissions that were made, but do not reflect on a Member's character or a Member's conduct. That is all I am appealing to you on.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Well, well, well, well. Okay, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

I will, of course, say however, that the mover of the Motion, the Leader of Government Business, in a past incarnation, that did not affect his performance or his role or his status of him being appointed as a Minister or Leader of Government Business. Therefore, I do not see how, what the Member for Diego Martin West would have done in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, could affect his performance as Leader of the Opposition. Am I okay, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I heard the Member for St. Augustine speak about blind loyalty. And in making reference to people with blind loyalty in terms of supporting the Leader of the Opposition, all I want to say is, the Member for St. Augustine is adequately qualified to talk about blind loyalty, because if ever a person practises blind loyalty, he does. But worse yet—  
[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** Standing Order 48(6) again, please. It is the same thing he is doing, picking up everybody and attacking their character.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yeah, yeah. Member, all I am trying to do is to at least guide you. Now, I understand where you are going. In other words, you are responding to his contribution, but in doing so, I am just asking you to refrain from reflecting

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on a Member's character or raising a Member's conduct. That is all I am asking you to do, but you are free hon. Member for Chaguanas West, to respond to any contribution made by previous speakers, without reflecting on their character or their conduct. As you know, you can only reflect or raise a Member's conduct on a substantive Motion, not in an ordinary way. Okay?

**Mr. J. Warner:** Mr. Speaker, I feel cabined and "cripped" here this afternoon, but I will continue, notwithstanding. Whatever happens, I will continue, because the fact is I thought I was on safe and solid ground, by referring to the speech made by the Member for St. Augustine, when he said about blind loyalty. If, of course, you rule I cannot say that, I would not say that.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. I am not saying that you cannot say "blind loyalty", but all I am saying is that do not reflect on a Member's character.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Well, let me go one step further. The Member for St. Augustine spoke very derisively about a document submitted by the Member for Diego Martin North/East. He said it is 100 years old. It has no relevance, but the *Magna Carta*, to which he subscribed is 800 years old. Therefore, I am saying, it seems, of course to me, to be some way inconsistent, in terms of one 100 years old, and one 800 years old. Mr. Speaker, I will not say much more on that.

I go to the Member for Tobago East. The Member gave an explanation about her credit card fiasco. To be on the safe side, all I would say is, it is a pity her explanation did not resonate with the Prime Minister, who demoted her to the point where today she is still a Minister in the Ministry, but somebody else from outside has now become her Minister. If her explanation was so solid, why was it not accepted by the Prime Minister?

Also, I want to make the point that it is difficult for me to sit here and hear a Member of Parliament denigrate another Member without any evidence whatsoever. There is no charge. There was no mug shot. There was no fingerprint. There is no report, and the Member for Tobago East comes here and regales this House in activities purporting to be relating to the Member for Diego Martin West. I find it to be a sad day, because there are Members here in this House who have been arrested, who had mug shots, who were fingerprinted, and today they are Ministers. Today they are Ministers. Therefore, I could not see how you could tie in the fact that somebody who never had a single report, offence or charge, and we come here, something is wrong, Mr. Speaker, something is radically wrong.

Mr. Speaker, what I have heard today, I am convinced that this Government has abandoned its job. In fact, every time an election is in the air, this Government

abandons its job, abandons its responsibility to run this country. The Government engages in tunnel-vision electioneering. This is the same thing this Government did in the Chaguanas West by-election, when everybody lock, stock and barrel came down to Cacandee Road, Felicity in droves. For three weeks, things were at a standstill, because election was in the air. It was the same thing the Government did in local government election. It was the same thing the Government also did in the St. Joseph by-election. So whenever there is an election, you are almost sure that since “Your Government Working for You” on billboards, cannot do it; since, of course, there are no issues discussed at political meetings, this is the style, the norm, that the Government uses. Because, Mr. Speaker, there are so many pressing issues for this Government to deal with, and the Government has—*[Interruption]*

**5.25 p.m.**

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 48(1). Is the Member speaking to this Motion or not?

**Mr. Speaker:** Well, I am following the Member and if it is anything, I would guide him accordingly. Continue, please.

**Mr. J. Warner:** That is number three. I will continue, Mr. Speaker. I am saying there are several pressing issues for the Government to deal with before a Motion of this kind. This Motion is meaningless. It has no substance, but the Government has dropped everything to come to Parliament to engage in one-upmanship against the Leader of the Opposition. There are so many pressing issues in the country. How can this be an issue, this Motion against the Member for Diego Martin West?

Mr. Speaker, nothing the Government has said here it could not have said or has not been said on a platform outside. Everything has been said here. They come here with a Motion to censure the Member for Diego Martin West based on all they have said on the platform outside. What will be accomplished here today, Mr. Speaker, if all the Members voted for the Motion, as they will, then what next? What next? Will they tell the Member for Diego Martin West he cannot be Leader of the Opposition and he goes? They did not put him there. They did not appoint him as Leader of the Opposition, his Members did. And, therefore, to come here with this Motion is, in my humble view, is an abuse of parliamentary time.

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Mr. Speaker, admittedly, the Government has its numerical advantage—they will always have it—and, therefore, the Motion will pass, but I ask the question one more time: what effect will it have on the Leader of the Opposition?

I recall 2010 when I was in the Opposition, like many of them were in those days, we moved a Motion of no confidence against the then Patrick Manning Government, as the Opposition, and the results of that are there now for everybody to see. That, in my humble view, justifies a Motion of this kind. Nowhere I have searched, nowhere I have looked have I ever seen this example in any Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the question, today after they vote yes, then what? Then what? I want to repeat again. It is not the Government that appointed the Member for Diego Martin West as Leader of the Opposition. They did not. I did not and, therefore, as far as I am concerned that is not our business.

It seems to me that based on this Motion, the Government has a kind of “tabanca” for the Opposition but, if that is the case, Mr. Speaker, they do not have long to wait; they do not have long to wait. This has to be an abuse; this has to be a waste of time—Parliament time and resources—because this Motion will have no consequence. And, therefore, for me, whether the Motion is passed or not, the Motion would have failed, because it has no consequence. Nothing would be achieved by it, it would have failed and, in fact, so too, would have been the Government that brought it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask myself: who is advising the Member for Siparia, the Prime Minister, to bring this Motion? I ask myself: who really are her advisors? I ask myself another question: is the Leader of the Opposition her enemy? In bringing this Motion, is he your enemy? Because I am going to tell the Prime Minister, the Member for Siparia, from where I sit, there are more enemies within her party and Government than without. All she has to do is look on the left and look far down on the right, but to say you bring this Motion so as to unseat the Member for Diego Martin West, it is absolutely frivolous in the extreme. In fact, it tells me the kind of advisors the Member for Siparia has.

Mr. Speaker, when you look and see what is happening in the country, people who are listening to us this afternoon have a right to ask: why are we not taking care of the nation’s business? Gridlock Monday! No court yesterday! Education is in shambles! The school for the blind in Santa Cruz had to be closed. They are in a house. There is absolutely nothing for them.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** It is a new school. The school for the blind is a new school.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please.

**Mr. J. Warner:** The blind—parents have children at home not being able to go to school for three months; crime on the increase; health problems, Mr. Speaker. Why are we not dealing with those? The economy is tethering on the brink. Oil prices are low, the lowest ever in six years. Why are we not settling with those? This Motion comes here today, and all these issues are there. These issues are not on the platform. The platform is tit for tat and so on. I do not want to say anything else. If these issues are not in the Parliament, where will they be? Where will they be, Mr. Speaker?

This is a Motion that has been touted all over the country as the mother of all Motions—“the mother of all Motions we coming with”—and we come here and it is nothing but a dead squib. In all of that, the Government does nothing to prioritize the problems of the country—it does nothing to do that—but the Government prioritizes this Motion against the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, last Monday, the private sector said they lose \$100 million, it could be more. Does that not worry us at a time when the economy is bleak? Does it worry us, Mr. Speaker, that international flights had to be cancelled at a time when we are trying to build a name for ourselves? Are those not issues to talk about, Mr. Speaker? Why come here with this Motion that has no value; that has no value?

We have problems with the trade unions and their salaries—increases in their pay and so on—how would we deal with them? We have given one 14 per cent and, therefore, we have to find out where you are not getting the other 14 per cent for police and fire and so on. Are those issues to be dealt with? And we come with a Motion here like this? Mr. Speaker, it is not fair; it is not fair, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are other issues they could have raised; other Motions they could have brought. Had they brought a Motion against Tiger Capital Limited here, I would be happy to take part in it, but this Motion here has no value. While this is happening, Tiger outside having fun, but more about that another time.

Mr. Speaker, young people today are frustrated; they are angry. Many of them who are highly qualified seem to have no hope. They are follow on. What can we tell them, Mr. Speaker? What hope can we give them? But no, we come with a Motion against the Member for Diego Martin West hoping to demonize him on the platform, and they use the Parliament to demonize him. That does not help us. It does not help us as a Parliament; it does not help the country either.

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Mr. Speaker, I want to say this Motion only came here because of the perception out there that there is a Hindu cabal that has kidnapped the Prime Minister and, therefore—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 48(6). I mean, please, kidnapping, murder! What is this?

**Mr. J. Warner:** A Hindu cabal that has cordoned the Prime Minister—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And he is still saying it. Mr. Speaker, 48(5), ask him to withdraw please.

**Dr. Moonilal:** What this has to do with David West?

**Mr. Speaker:** Yeah, Member for Chaguanas West, I would ask you to try your best in your remaining period—if you could probably—when you are making your statements, try to link them with the substantive Motion that is before us so that it does not appear that we are going outside of the Motion. Now, you could go outside of the Motion. I am not saying you cannot, but try to link it with the Motion so, at least, we could see relevance and, therefore, nobody would have to rise on a point of order. I want to give you the opportunity and so on to speak as you normally would do, but try to link it so that there would be no further interruptions.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Mr. Speaker, in the beginning, I heard you say “all gloves are off”.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr. J. Warner:** And I thought—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** No, when it comes to the Member—let me just explain something. Remember, this is a substantive Motion against one individual—that is the Member for Diego Martin West and the Leader of the Opposition—so it has nothing to do with any other Member here. So that is when I say “gloves off” in terms of that Member, but no other Member. You could make references to what has been said, but do not impute improper motives to any other Member, do not reflect on another Member’s character or conduct. The only person under the spotlight in this Parliament, at this time, is the Leader of the Opposition. That is the purpose of a substantive Motion. Okay, hon. Member?

**Mr. J. Warner:** So I cannot say what I believe to be the reason why this Motion is here.



**Mr. Speaker:** You can, but without making reference to people that you offend the Standing Orders. That is all I am asking.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Mr. Speaker, in the *Bible*, the shortest line is “Jesus wept.” This will go down in the record here as my shortest contribution. I now weep, Mr. Speaker.

**The Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (Hon. Errol Mc Leod):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for the opportunity to make a two-cent worth intervention in this very important debate. Members speaking opposite—well, only one of them left now—suggested that this is a waste of time; suggested that there is nothing that is going to come after this debate and a vote is taken; how will the country benefit from what we are doing here, at this time and, immediately, I remember, I think it would have been in 2012, short of two years—a couple months short of two years—of our being in office when the Leader of the Opposition brought a Motion calling for the Prime Minister to eject the hon. Minister of Works and Transport at that time, and the Member for Chaguanas West. What benefit were we to get from that?

I consider the opposition to this Motion to be quite facile, ridiculous and out of any sensible character. [*Desk thumping*] They suggested, Mr. Speaker—well, before I go there. When news about this Motion being filed in the Parliament so that Members of the Government, Members of this House can scrutinize the role, the character and the conduct of the Member for Diego Martin West and Leader of the Opposition, when news of that reached the Opposition, the Leader of the Opposition is on record, at least in the newspapers of having said: “Bring it on. I am ready for it. Bring it on!” You know, it is like a boxer being prepared for an important bout, and they ensure that he is wearing proper boots and all of the protection that he would require and he determines that he wants a 10-ounce glove as against a 12-ounce gloves so that perhaps he can move with a little bit more speed. They are taking him to the ring, and as he sees the opponent—you know, warming up and so on—he takes off. [*Laughter*]

#### **5.40 p.m.**

They say that this Motion is irresponsible, and they went to 1912 when Mr. Higgs said, whatever, and they sought to reduce the stature of our sitting Speaker, and that is what I thought was most ridiculous about them. They complained that one must not bring a Motion of censure, a Motion to examine the role and conduct of anybody, any Member in this House. Indeed, Motions have been brought against Ramlogan and against the Hon. Larry Howai, after we had taken the vote

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on those Motions, Mr. Speaker, how would the citizenry have benefited from the work that we would have done?

Mr. Speaker, they offer themselves as viable and appropriate candidates for office, not just to occupy the Opposition Benches but to lead and run the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, and we are scrutinizing them. We are assisting the public of Trinidad and Tobago to see behind the veils so that the public can determine the character of those who offer themselves to run this country. And, therefore, we have a responsibility, much as they claim to have, when they bring Motions against this Government, we have a responsibility to unmask them to the extent [*Desk thumping*] that we can unmask them. Therefore, there is nothing irresponsible, nothing ridiculous about this Motion that has been brought here.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to lend support to a whole lot that has been submitted here by the decent, responsible and hon. Member of Parliament for the constituency of Tobago East. [*Desk thumping*] I shall return to that a little bit later. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that everybody here recalls the great leader of the People's National Movement, many years ago, suggesting to a considered hapless electorate in this country, that all they needed to do was to put a balisier tie on any "crapaud" and that "crapaud" will be returned to Parliament. The difference between what Williams said then and what we have today is that some of them have taken off the balisier tie, but "crapauds" we still have to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, they are without any vision. They have absolutely no courage, and they are devoid of the good character that the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago deserve to lead them, either in Government or even in Opposition. But they will run—and as has been said before, and I think it might have been with regard to the very Member for Diego Martin West—they can run but they will not hide. We will find them out.

This debate helps me to recall a parable, a parable of the man who built his house on stone and the one who built on sand. The rains came, Mr. Speaker, and the man's whose house was built on stone stood resolute while the man whose house was built on sand washed away. I say this to state that the facade of integrity that the Leader of the Opposition portrays is not as solid as he would like us all to believe and, certainly, the submissions by the Member for Tobago East bears relevance to this. Like the man who built the house on the sand, we can seriously call into question the credibility and judgment of the Leader of the Opposition.

We can recall the Opposition Leader, as well as Members of his party, joining the public outcry, asking for answers with respect to the section 34 issue. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we have on record in the Parliament of Friday, November 18, 2011, the Member for Port of Spain South stating the following, it is in the *Hansard*, and I quote:

“...thank you for the opportunity to join this debate this evening, the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Bill, 2011.

...I want to tell the Member for St. Joseph, the Minister of Justice,”—that—“this was not a new idea. I went back and I looked. I researched and basically, this PNM Bench supported, back in 2009,”—we came to office in 2010, eh—“when the then Attorney General discussed with us the abolition of the Indictable Offences (Preliminary Enquiry) Bill. We supported it then and we support it now. I just think we should put that on record.”

They supported the measure that was brought here, Mr. Speaker, and then when the public started to call on them to state what their position is, they danced, they gyrated, they did all kinds of things to get away from the responsibility that they must share for the section 34 issue that came before this Parliament. [*Crosstalk*] Yes.

Why then would the Leader of the Opposition ask the Government for answers with respect to section 34 when his party unanimously supported the same Bill? Rank hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker. Outside of the Parliament Chamber he and his party continue to raise questions about section 34, instead of answering the public’s demand for the “why”. Why the PNM supported this Bill in the first place if it was indeed poor legislative policy?

They cannot answer that, and they will never answer that, and you bring a Motion to examine their record and, particularly, the record of the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Diego Martin West, and their response is, “Call election now”. They do not want their records to be examined because they have a whole lot to hide, Mr. Speaker. They have a lot to hide, and the Member for Tobago East mentioned that she has only just scratched the surface. There is a boil there that is just waiting for it to be pricked by a pin, and you will see the kind of pus that will come out.

The Leader of the Opposition as a Member of Cabinet sat silently while every single UDeCOTT project was delayed and riddled with cost overruns. It is only when he was politically marginalized by the PNM did he choose to become the whistle-blower with respect to UDeCOTT, and the corruption of his friends and

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Cabinet colleagues. All of that is being unmasked. The Leader of the Opposition has displayed that he is not a leader, Mr. Speaker. He has displayed that he is visionless and cannot be trusted in a crisis.

In 2014, when the Government, by our distinguished Prime Minister, co-sponsored a resolution of the United Nations Security Council against ISIS, and ISIS's continued acts of terrorism, the Leader of the Opposition said that as a result of the Government partnering with the United States through the principles of mutual cooperation and responsibility for the achievement of the universal goal of eradicating terrorism, the Leader of the Opposition said that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has put Trinidadians and Tobagonians, at home and abroad, at increased risk.

Well, it is a risk. Terrorism is a risk that all of us face, whether we say anything about it or not, whether we condemn it or whether we are prepared to embrace it with open arms. It has to be the height of being most ridiculous to suggest that we are exposing our citizens at home and abroad to risk by the Prime Minister supporting a measure against terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, despite Trinidad and Tobago's size, we have a history of a high level of global diplomacy and interaction with the international world. I mean, you go to some of these conferences abroad and when you mention that you are from Trinidad and Tobago, everybody wants to have a conversation with you, everybody wants to come to Trinidad, and we have been most effective in our foreign affairs and our relationships, international relationships, whether it be on UNESCO, ILO, the United Nations, wherever.

**5.55 p.m.**

The Leader of the Opposition exercising his usual poor judgment, Mr. Speaker, chose to divide the country, and also reflected his lack of understanding of the concept of international cooperation and morality, when the option was there on the table, for him to instead choose to unite the country around issues such as social justice and national security.

They raise questions here, and I will sit here and sometimes I am burning. A rage sometimes is building in me, when you have to witness the puerility that the Member for Diego Martin North/East brings to the deliberations in this House. He will be babbling while others are on the floor, but when he is on the floor, he appeals to the Speaker every couple of minutes. You are sharing a quiet conversation, "They are disturbing me". You see, so narcissistic he is, he wants to ensure that he is the centre of attention all of the time. But as I told him some time

ago, I will ignore him so hard that he too will begin to doubt his own existence. That is how you are made to treat them.

They are asking, “What is the position in the collective bargaining process with organization A, trade union B,” and so on, and it is like they want you to conduct collective bargaining here in the Parliament. When we signed up to convention 89—and is it 97 or 98 I think—we committed to facilitating the free and open collective bargaining between employer and trade union. The Parliament, to the extent that it can provide an environment that encourages that free collective bargaining process, it is to that extent and nothing more that the Parliament must engage in. They want to know what is the new offer on the table and why does the Government not make a decent offer to avoid blockages in traffic and so on, as we experienced last Friday and again on Monday.

I have been called upon—so many people have called me—including some Johnny-come-lately Seukerans—to make statements on the industrial relations issues affecting the country. Mr. Speaker, as most of us would know, the Chief Personnel Officer is identified, I think even in the Constitution, as the employer insofar as those of us employed in government services are concerned. It is the Chief Personnel Officer who will negotiate with the prison association, with the fire association, Public Services Association, police social and welfare and so on.

The Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development does not interfere in that, but the Minister of Labour, if he is invited in situations where illegal action is taking place, it is then and only then that the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development would intervene. In the other situations, if there is no agreement at the bilateral level, matters are referred to the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, and the Minister may sit in those meetings so that he can exercise some influence to bring people together. He does not do, and he ought not to do, as the Industrial Court will do. The Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development is not an arbitrator. The Industrial Court is the arbitrator in our jurisdiction. The Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development is a conciliator.

If in a case where the CPO is negotiating with these organizations, and they fail to agree at the bilateral level, what the CPO does is report that dispute to the Minister of Finance and the Economy—not so?—who, in his judgment, will refer to the Special Tribunal of the Industrial Court.

They do not know it, and if some of them know it they are pretending not to know. Some of them have been egging people on, even to take action that would

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normally be deemed to be illegal, and that is wrong; it is immoral.

You know, it came to the Parliament, Mr. Speaker, such is their behaviour—they have become so reckless, as the Motion says—they came to the Parliament to have a former Minister hurriedly do a letter, dated sometime January 2015, suggesting that he gave authority to implement terms and conditions and salaries in a particular negotiation that went awry. They clearly went outside—this is the report that we have—of their mandate, and certain people made adjustments to pay ranges without authority. The hon. Member for Chaguanas West does a letter, January 20 I think it is, 2015, saying that he authorized—[*Interruption*] February 25, 2015—the implementation of a salary of \$26,500 for a particular classification of worker at the Airports Authority.

**Mr. Cadiz:** He had no authority.

**Hon. E. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, no Minister in this Government has authority to implement any such condition, and what is multiplying the immorality of what was taken by the Member for Chaguanas West, was that this thing happened in 2012, and now in 2015, egging on people, he says he gave authority. I do not think that we have heard the last of that. I do not think we have heard the last of it at all.

It is not an argument here against people getting more pay and other improved terms and conditions of employment, but in any organization, in any structure, you will have schedules of classifications and rates of pay attending those classifications. Classification A, at the lower management level, will have a relationship with classification Z at the lower employee level. That is what we call “relativity” in the process.

But some people do not know what they are talking about, and they want only to engender confusion and to infuriate people who, yes, are working hard and they would like to have much improved conditions, but we have to come to the reality that you will not get out of the pot more than the pot contains. It is time that we develop a level of maturity, and see Trinidad and Tobago as one whole, and determine the equitability of our distribution of whatever resources that we might have. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre has expired. Would you like an extension, hon. Minister?

**Hon. E. McLeod:** Yes, Sir.

*Question put and agreed to.*

## ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that we adjourn debate on the Motion before us at this time and proceed to other matters.

*Agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Earlier on there was an outstanding answer to question No. 3 under Urgent Questions. That was a question posed by the Member for Laventille East/Morvant. I understand that you would like to respond to it? The Hon. Member for Oropouche East.

## URGENT QUESTION

**Dog Control Act  
(Unproclaimed Sections of)**

**Miss Donna Cox (Laventille East/Morvant):** To the Minister of Local Government: The Dog Control Act, 2013, was partially proclaimed and came into operation with effect from June 2, 2014. However, in light of the recent attack of a toddler by a Class A Dog, what is the status of the proclamation of the remaining unproclaimed Sections of this Act?

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, as we promised earlier in the day, the Minister of Local Government indeed sent in her response to a question filed by the Member of Parliament for Laventille East/Morvant, who is not in the House at this time, but for the record the question:

The Dog Control Act, 2013, was partially proclaimed and came into operation with effect from June 02, 2014. However, in light of the recent attack of a toddler...the status of...proclamation of the remaining unproclaimed sections...

The response: Cabinet has approved indeed the Dog Control Act Regulations, which were required prior to the remaining sections of the Act have been proclaimed. The President has signed for the remaining sections of the Act to be proclaimed, and this will take effect from March 31, 2015. The document was sent to the Government Printery to be published in the *Gazette*.

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Mr. Speaker, thank you.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Wednesday, April 08, 2015 at 1.30 p.m.

May I also place on record that the fourth Friday of the month is generally reserved for Private Members' Day. It has been the practice in this Parliament. It has been the practice at this time, on adjournment, that the Chief Whip on the opposite side would alert us and serve notice as to the business to be done on Private Members' Day. The practice has been that that notice would be served on the record of the *Hansard*.

I am not seeing the Member for Port of Spain South at this time. I am not seeing anyone from the Opposition at this time. I have waited to see if anyone would return. But the Member for Port of Spain South, if she was here we would have seen her, [*Laughter*] but she is not here, and no Member of the Opposition is present in the House at this time.

**6.10 p.m.**

So that the day set aside for the Opposition business, we are in a limbo, we do not know what to do because they are not present here. So, we cannot guess what they would seek to do. That, Mr. Speaker, may I remind you, in our practice in this session of the Parliament, in the Fifth Session of the Tenth Parliament, our practice is that the Member for Port of Spain South will serve notice on the record as to the business they intend to do. By being absent we will not—and no one had remained, no one has been delegated to carry out the responsibility of the Members of the Opposition. The Member for Chaguanas West also collapsed in his contribution and left.

So, Mr. Speaker, on that note we would like to move on with Government Business to serve notice that Wednesday April 08, 2015 at 1.30 p.m. we will continue debate on this matter before us, the Motion before us, and, time permitting, we will debate Motion under Government Business, Motion No. 3:

*“Be it resolved that the House consider the findings and recommendations in the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Ombudsman.”*

And Motion No. 4:



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“*Be it resolved* that the Police Service (Amendment) Regulations, 2014 be approved.”

So, Mr. Speaker, the order of business on April 08, 2015 will be continuation of debate on the Motion before us today and Motions Nos. 3 and 4 on the Order Paper. It may not necessarily be in that order because we are dependent on some Ministers to be joining us and so on. So, Mr. Speaker, that will be the order. I beg to move.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, before putting the question, at a sitting held on Friday, March 20, 2015, the Member for Diego Martin North/East had raised a matter on the Motion for the adjournment of the House for the response of the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development. I do not know if the hon. Leader of the House would want to guide us on whether somebody is here to respond to that particular—

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, again, may I place on record, there are three Motions before us: an answer and two Motions. We have taken the pains to invite Ministers to come to the House to have them on standby from their Ministries since five o’clock intending that we will deal with Motions on the adjournment.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin North/East has also fled. There are no Members opposite to raise these Motions. Ministers have been on standby in their offices since five o’clock—have been told to wait until 10 o’clock tonight, if need be, to answer Motions on the adjournment. The Members to raise the Motions are not here. It puts us in a further difficulty where we will not be able to continue with the business of the Parliament, because the Opposition Members are not present in this House to conduct the business for which they were voted into office and for which they are responsible.

Mr. Speaker, by this act of gross irresponsibility and recklessness on the part of Members opposite, the Ministers have been prepared—we will have to wait on another occasion.

**Mr. Speaker:** So we are not going to be responding to—*[Interruption]*

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** They cannot even raise their own Motion. There is nothing to respond to.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay. Well before putting the question for the adjournment, we are aware that our country celebrates the anniversary of Spiritual Shouter Baptist

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Liberation Day which came into existence in 1996 after decades of struggle by the Baptist community, and that takes place on Monday, March 30, 2015.

We are also celebrating Easter, as hon. Members are well aware, of the Christian community. They will be observing Easter very soon before we return here. It is a very sacred celebration of the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I recognize the hon. Prime Minister who will now bring greetings on the occasion of the Spiritual Baptist Shouter Liberation Day. The hon. Prime Minister. [*Desk thumping*]

**Spiritual Baptist Liberation Day/Easter  
(Greetings)**

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very privileged, honoured to bring greetings on behalf of the Government and, indeed, on behalf of my family and myself as we move into the celebrations of the Spiritual Shouter Baptist community commemorating Spiritual Shouter Baptist Liberation Day which will be Monday, March 30, 2015.

I very am very proud to do it, as I said. I feel very privileged because, as many of you know and I have said repeatedly, I was baptized into that faith [*Desk thumping*] and I am very proud to stand here today to speak.

Regrettably, the hon. Member for Diego Martin West who only recently was anointed—I think he was anointed—was it last week, I think? Last week. Regrettably he is not here to bring greetings on behalf of the Spiritual Shouter Baptist community on his own behalf and that of his party. So that is indeed very regrettable, but I take great pride and pleasure today as we celebrate this very special day; a day that holds a special significance to the community here in Trinidad and Tobago. It was on that day 1951, the Shouters Prohibition Ordinance of 1917 was repealed, and so allowing the Spiritual Shouter Baptists to worship and practise their faith openly without any continued discrimination and repression.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what liberation is all about, as well, to be truly free to worship according to one's conscience and, indeed, our Constitution guarantees freedom of worship. We are fortunate to have that enshrined in our nation's Constitution. It is something that we must uphold and defend. So in this very

multiracial, multicultural, multi-religious country of ours we are blessed with unity and diversity in our social landscape and, I dare say, Mr. Speaker, we are the envy of many nations around the world.

This afternoon I pay special tribute to the Spiritual Shouter Baptist community. The Government and the nation recognize and appreciate the impact and contribution this community has made to Trinidad and Tobago. We are all aware of the immense struggles that the Baptist community had to face for acceptance and recognition. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I think we are both not so young as others and so we will have good memories of knowing persons who were of the Spiritual Shouter Baptist faith, had to worship in secret, had to be ashamed that you would not even come out to say that you were a Baptist. I have been always proud to say that I was baptized in this faith. But I know for many that they were underground. They had to worship according to your conscience and the way that they thought best, but had to do it in secret.

Gone are those days and we thank God for that blessing that they can now celebrate, as all other faiths do, in openness and in great humility to God. Their perseverance, their unity of vision, their commitment, their fidelity to the values of their religion and their indomitable spirit are things to be commended and emulated. We can all certainly follow in their footsteps when faced with our own struggles and challenges knowing that through perseverance we can achieve and accomplish many things, personally and collectively.

Today, the Spiritual Shouter Baptist community constitutes a most colourful and vibrant part of our country's religious mosaic. Indeed, many of our sons and daughters of this faith are highly respected not only amongst their own, but in the wider society. Many of them are professionals who hold substantive positions in both the public and private sectors.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will recall that in 1996 under then Prime Minister Basdeo Panday, the Baptist community was granted its own public holiday and lands were granted to them by Government for the construction of their very own school. That indeed is the holiday that we will be celebrating next Monday. Again, I am very proud of being part of that administration, the Panday administration, [*Desk thumping*] which allowed the public holiday and then the granting of lands.

I was also very proud to be able to assist in the construction of the school—very proud to say that under this Government we have built the St. Barbara's

*Greetings*

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Spiritual Shouters Baptist Primary School. [*Desk thumping*] We began construction in 2011 and it was completed and officially opened in 2012—the first ever Spiritual Shouter Baptist school in our country. Also, attached to it is an early childhood care and education centre.

My Government continues to give support to and to partner with the Baptist community—Spiritual Shouter Baptist—as we do with all other faiths, and we do so to build a better society, to proudly highlight that our country is as a beacon for all other countries where, indeed, in the words of our National Anthem every creed and race does indeed find an equal place. [*Desk thumping*]

I thank the Spiritual Shouter Baptist community for their tireless efforts in the process of nation-building and economic development, and I offer, on my own behalf and that of my Government, prayers for them as they celebrate this very important occasion.

I think it would be remiss of me, hon. Speaker, if I do not also pay tribute to one very vibrant, strong and dedicated member of the Spiritual Shouter Baptist community and that is Archbishop Barbara Gray-Burke. [*Desk thumping*] At that time I sat with her, we were in Opposition together, and may I remind some of us, hon. Speaker, was also then on the Senate Bench as Leader of the Opposition business in the Senate. We sat side by side and we really debated a Motion to make the holiday, the Spiritual Shouter Baptist holiday a reality. Of course, the then Government that is now in the Opposition, they resisted all our efforts but God, as I say, does not sleep and only wears pyjamas, so that when we came into office thereafter, went into Government under Prime Minister Basdeo Panday, we were able to make the holiday a reality. [*Desk thumping*]

So, we have a lot to be proud of, a lot to be grateful for, and I look forward, as many of us do, to joining the Spiritual Shouter Baptist community on Monday as they celebrate that very important holiday.

To all of you I say thank you for this opportunity, hon. Speaker. Enjoy the weekend coming for the Spiritual Shouter Baptist Day and thereafter on the following weekend we will celebrate another very important matter, another important event in the history of our country and in the lives of our people and that will be the Holy Week going into the Easter weekend and Easter Monday.

I wish the Baptist community, I wish the Christian community holy blessings in these very special times of blessed days, and I know my colleague, Mr. Rodger

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Samuel, will speak a little more on the Easter holiday. But I, too, want to record my congratulations and to wish everyone a safe and holy Spiritual Shouter Baptist Day and, of course, a very happy Easter Holy Week starting from Holy Thursday into Good Friday into Glorious Saturday into Easter Sunday, Easter Monday and, of course, we all know what happened on Easter Monday, we had the rising of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, we are in very special times. Remain blessed and thank you all very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration (Hon. Rodger Samuel):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to obviously join with the hon. Prime Minister as she pays tribute to the Christian community in the celebrations of what is known and what is celebrated as the Holy Week leading up to Easter Sunday, the day that is celebrated as the time of resurrection.

But to do that, Mr. Speaker, it is necessary for me to just give a little background into why the Christian fraternity and community hold highly this period of celebration and commemorations. For it was for generations that people who lived then, after the many toils and journeys through the many periods of history, and a period which we recall, from a biblical perspective, the dark ages where there was no specific word coming out from God to humanity, some 400 years, that it had been prophesied that a Saviour would come, a Messiah would be born. The Jews who were living in expectation of this Saviour because they were under some Roman brutality at the time were looking forward for someone to save them out of their situation.

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And a virgin was found with child, and at the end of the day the expectation of the Messiah was realized and when the virgin gave birth or was pronounced to be with child, one of the prophetic words was that it is he that would save his people from their sins.

So that expectation was in the hearts and the minds and the lives of every person who was expecting the Messiah to come, and that the expectation of him coming and then having to sacrifice himself for humanity was really what is celebrated at this time as we look towards this period from the whole week into Good Friday, into Saturday and into Sunday.

History itself would tell you of the brutality and the sufferings of the Messiah, as it ended exactly in fulfilling the prophetic utterances of the Prophets of old where he was really crucified and he was buried on what we call the Good Friday. Good not because he died but good because the purpose for which he died was

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going to save and affect mankind for generations.

And, Mr. Speaker, the greatness of all of this, whether one wants to believe it, accept it or not, is that history has recorded the fact of the sacrifice of the Christ, the Messiah. And that when they had paid those that gathered in the tomb of the Christ, money to keep silent when they did not find him in the tomb—as a matter of fact people have been trying to pay money for a lot of stuff—but they tried to keep it a secret. They tried to say that his body was stolen, not realizing that because of the awesomeness of the creator that he was resurrected and then he appeared onto them in many ways subsequent to that.

So, the Christian community commemorates, they celebrate. This is an important aspect of the existence of the Christian, not just the birth of Jesus, but his death, his burial and his resurrection, which really when you hear the word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, really what you are actually hearing and declaring is the message of his death, his burial and his resurrection.

We are today tremendously proud that as Christians we can celebrate, we can commemorate, and the impact that this has had on the lives of the believers of Christ and the Messiah, says that it changes us tremendously knowing that there is hope before us.

So, I want to again join with the hon. Prime Minister who likewise celebrates, and to wish the Christian community a happy celebration, a happy commemoration, and that the impact of the life of Jesus Christ would really be seen in our everyday walk, in our everyday talk, in our everyday behaviour, and that we would adopt his mannerisms and his love as we go forward in our own society because we need that type of love in the world today.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Christian fraternity and the community and to wish them a happy commemoration and celebration. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, may I join the hon. Prime Minister as well as the hon. Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration, in commemorating very important celebrations that are to take place on Monday, March 30, 2015.

And of course as we celebrate Easter, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, I would like to extend to the Spiritual Baptist community greetings on this very special occasion, having fought for so many decades for a national holiday, for a sense of belonging, for a sense of identity in our country, where we say in

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our in national anthem, “Here every creed and race must find an equal place.”  
[*Desk thumping*] And I want to really join with the hon. Prime Minister in wishing the Baptist community a very warm and happy Spiritual Baptist day on March 30, which is Monday of next week.

And also to take this opportunity to extend to the Christian community warmest greetings as we celebrate both the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And may we have a very prayerful, a very safe, a very happy and a very peaceful Easter.

Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.31 p.m.*