

**THE  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
OFFICIAL REPORT  
IN THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO WHICH OPENED ON JUNE 18, 2010**

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**SESSION 2014—2015**

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Wednesday, April 08, 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. Prakash Ramadhar, Member for St. Augustine is currently out of the country and has asked to be excused from sittings of the House during the period March 30 to April 12, 2015. The hon. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, Member of Parliament for Caroni East, has asked to be excused from sittings of the House during the period March 31 to April 09, 2015.

The hon. Dr. Fuad Khan, Member of Parliament for San Juan/Barataria; the hon. Stacy Roopnarine, Member of Parliament for Oropouche West; Dr. Glenn Ramadharsingh, Member of Parliament for Caroni Central; Dr. Amery Browne, Member of Parliament for Diego Martin Central; Mr. Patrick Manning, Member of Parliament for San Fernando East and the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Member of Parliament for Siparia, have asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House. The hon. Winston Dookeran, Member of Parliament for Tunapuna, has also asked to be excused from sittings of the House during the period March 31 to April 15, 2015. The leave which the Members seek is granted.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Consolidated Audited Financial Statements of First Citizens Bank Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2014. [*The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh)*]
2. Unconsolidated Audited Financial Statements of First Citizens Bank Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2014. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]
3. Audited Financial Statements of the National Commission for Self Help Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2013. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]

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4. Audited Financial Statements of National Infrastructure Development Company Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2013. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]

*Papers 1 to 4 to be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.*

5. Annual Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Securities and Exchange Commission for the year ended September 30, 2014. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]
6. Erratum in respect of Appendix II of the Ninety-Ninth Report of the Salaries Review Commission on the determination of the salary and other terms and conditions of service of the offices of Director and Deputy Director of Electronic Monitoring Unit. [*The Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Nela Khan)*]
7. The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago for the year ended December 31, 2014. [*Mrs. N. Khan*]

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS  
(Presentation)**

**Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 1)  
Police Complaints Authority**

**Mrs. Patricia Mc Intosh** (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following report:

Twelfth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 1) falling under their purview on the administration and operations of the Police Complaints Authority (PCA).

**Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2)  
Community Improvement Services Limited**

**Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey** (*La Brea*): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following report:

Twentieth Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into and report on Government Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2) on the Administration and Operations of the Community Improvement Services Limited.

## URGENT QUESTIONS

**Agricultural Society of T&T (ASTT)  
(Withholding of Financial Allocation)**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): To the Minister of Food Production—

Given the significance of the agricultural sector to the livelihood of many persons in our society and in view of the fact that the elections of the Agricultural Society of T&T (ASTT) were held on January 25, 2015 under the supervision of the High Court of T&T, why is the Ministry of Food Production still withholding the Parliament approved financial allocation to the ASTT?

**The Minister of Food Production (Sen. The Hon. Devant Maharaj)**: [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The level of financial impropriety by the ASTT has been recently highlighted in the same quadrant referred to in the question, that judgment Claim No. CV2014-00563 in Trinidad and Tobago High Court of Justice, between Sylvester Pino, Hassanali Yatali and the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago and the Ministry of Food Production. In that judgment the hon. Justice Frank Seepersad stated and I quote:

“The ASTT is not a private club, it is incorporated by statute and is entrusted with tax payers money to discharge the mandates stipulated under section 6 of the Act”—and—“therefore cannot be in the public’s interest that its financial affairs are not clearly articulated.”

Justice Seepersad also stated that:

“It is evident to this Court that there is a considerable”—amount of—“...unacceptable degree of informality that governs the affairs of the ASTT and its ad hoc manner of operation must be addressed. The MFP may wish to revisit its arrangements with the ASTT and there may be a need for clearer regulations to be enacted so as to govern the day to day affairs of ASTT including the manner and processes that ought to be adopted by the ASTT in the discharge of its obligations under Part 19.2 of the MOU”—between the Ministry of Food Production and the Agricultural Society—“The lack of clear regulations in relation to the manner in which the ASTT election should also be conducted, ought to be addressed by all concerned as a matter of urgency, since the tax payers of this Republic ought to be able to repose confidence in the ASTT.”

As a result of this judgment and the contents therein, the Ministry of Food Production has been in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the

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Economy (Corporation Sole) and Comptroller of Accounts to develop procedures and practices in order to regulate the expenditure of the ASTT, and until such that time funds will be withheld.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The very High Court judge, Frank Seepersad appointed a committee to conduct elections of the ASTT which elections were conducted based on his direction by that committee. As such therefore, do you not believe that the persons elected have a right and a duty to be financed by the Government?

And secondly, if those regulations you are talking about by the Corporation Sole, Ministry of Finance and the Economy are now being considered, why have you not so informed the ASTT?

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Regarding the second part first, we have so informed the ASTT of that through the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Food Production, and the fact that they were elected does not negate the fact that there is an urgent need for regulation of how they spend taxpayers' money.

**Mr. Warner:** And until such time, may I ask, what do they do?

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Well, the ASTT is a body which derives subscription from their members, so they have the ability to raise funds on their own. It is envisaged that subscription would not be substituted for government subvention.

#### **ASTT Paid Staff (Details of)**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, question 2. Given that the offices of the ASTT reopened in November 2014 and closed again in April 2015, what is the present position of the paid staff of the ASTT?

**The Minister of Food Production (Sen. The Hon. Devant Maharaj):** Sure, Mr. Speaker. Given that section 4 of the ASTT Act, 63:01 of the Constitution, the society is mandated to have an office in Port of Spain. Given the current financial status of the ASTT and the stipulation of having an office in Port of Spain, the Ministry of Food Production has identified office spaces which staff could immediately occupy and the Ministry of Food Production has paid the staff of the ASTT.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Where are the staff members at this point and what are they doing? And secondly, why did you open the office in November 2014 and then close it April 2015?

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** There are a number of questions clothed in that single question. The staff of the ASTT performed with whatever functions they are assigned to and they have been located at their Chaguanas Office which is in contradiction to the Act. And it is not the position of this Minister or the Ministry to encourage any officer, Statutory or otherwise to break the law.

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, the Government is in a position to answer several questions, questions No. 89, 91, 92, 121, 126. The questions, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, questions No. 105, 127, 129, we ask for those questions to be deferred since the Minister is abroad on Government business.

**Mr. Speaker:** How many weeks?

**Hon. Dr. Moonilal:** Two weeks.

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper:*

#### **Oil Spill Crisis (Findings of)**

**105.** Could the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs state what were the investigation findings following the oil spill crisis? [*Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon*]

#### **National Gas Company (Details of)**

**127.** Could the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs state the total public relations/communications/advertisement/community relations budget for the years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 for the National Gas Company? [*Dr. K. Rowley*]

#### **“What is HaPPiness” Campaign (Details of)**

**129.** With respect to the “What is HaPPiness” Campaign, could the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs state:

- a) when was it initiated and how long is it scheduled to run for;

- b) the breakdown of the total cost for this campaign;
- c) the recipients of the various payments in this project and how much did each person/agency/company receive;
- d) what is “HaPPiness”;
- e) the significance of the “PP” in the word “HaPPiness” being highlighted and underscored in this NGC campaign project? [*Dr. K. Rowley*]

*Questions, by leave, deferred.*

**URP Trainees  
(Status of)**

- 89. Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey** (*La Brea*) asked the hon. Minister of the People and Social Development:

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

**The Minister of People and Social Development (Sen. The Hon. Christine Newallo-Hosein):** [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Unemployment Relief Social Programme (URP) Social in the Ministry of People and Social Development does not provide trainees for employment in Trinidad and Tobago. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago  
(Details of)**

- 91. Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey** (*La Brea*) asked the hon. Minister of Food Production:

- A. How much was the subvention granted by the State to the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago for each of the fiscal years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014?
- B. Did the Ministry of Food Production receive financial statements for the fiscal years 2010 to 2014 from the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago?

**The Minister of Food Production (Sen. The Hon. Devant Maharaj):** I thank the outgoing Member for La Brea for that question. How much was the

subvention granted by the State for the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago from 2010 onwards. The subventions are as follows:

In 2010, \$3,755,480; 2011, \$3,355,915; 2012, \$4,387,584; 2013, \$5,112,448; 2014, \$1,007,797.

Regard to part B of the question, did the Ministry of Food Production receive financial statements for the fiscal year 2010 to 2014 from the ASTT? Mr. Speaker, the last audited financial statement from the Office of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on file at the Ministry of Food Production was for the year ended December 31, 2000.

**1.45 p.m.**

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for La Brea.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, what is the reason for the reduction in the subvention to the ASTT requirement in 2014 as against 2013?

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Because of the high degree of financial impropriety at the ASTT, the Ministry engaged in an audit, as well as the Ministry of Finance and the Economy. As a result of that, we withheld the funds until those areas of concern were addressed, as I indicated with the judgment in the previous questions answered.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for La Brea.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** Mr. Speaker, Question No. 92 to the Minister of Public Utilities.

### **Recreation Grounds (Flood lights)**

**92. Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey** (*La Brea*) asked the hon. Minister of Public Utilities:

- A. When will the Vessigny Recreation Ground have flood lights installed?
- B. With reference to the Minister's response to question No. 95 on May 09, 2014 in the House of Representatives, could the Minister provide an update on when the following recreation grounds will have flood lights installed;
  - i. Lot 10 Recreation Ground;
  - ii. Palo Seco Settlement Recreation Ground;

- iii. Erin Recreation Ground;
- iv. No. 8 Road Palo Seco Recreation Ground;
- v. Vance River Recreation Ground;
- vi. La Brea Community Recreation Ground; and
- vii. No. 4 Road Palo Seco Recreation Ground?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Public Utilities.

**The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Nizam Baksh):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am always happy for the opportunity to respond to questions on the Public Lighting Programme because I have said before in the honourable House, the People's Partnership administration is the first administration to bring accountability to this programme in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] It is also the first administration to bring equity and transparency to the programme, with a commitment to distribute the benefit of lighted grounds in a fair manner across all constituencies in the country. This underlying philosophy has opened up the programme like never before in the country and it is this transparency which has opened up the eyes of my good colleague, the MP for La Brea, so today he is very comfortable in making his enquiries on lighted grounds on behalf of his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I know that it is since May 2012 that the Member has been making these enquiries about a certain group of grounds in his constituency—almost three years ago. But do you know that the Member is failing to follow up on these requests in a meaningful way? In my view, the hon. Member is fully au courant with the procedure for applying for lighted grounds—[*Crosstalk*—]but do you know that to date, my Ministry has not received—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** Why does he have to follow up? He makes a request.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, please, please. You are answering, but if you could be a little more specific to what is being requested of you.

**Hon. N. Baksh:** Thank you. I was just making the point that there were no formal requests that came to the Ministry for those grounds—some of those grounds—as listed. [*Crosstalk*] That is what I was making the point on there. So you have the questions coming here but no formal requests being made.

But despite the lack of concern on their part, we are pressing ahead with five grounds for which we have requests. The update is as follows: work is currently being undertaken on the Erin Recreation Ground with an expected completion



date for illumination of May 2015; the Palo Seco Settlement Recreation Ground has been approved for illumination and T&TEC will be commencing the required works soon. The three other grounds are down for surveying and the preparation of estimates of illumination is in progress. These are the Lot 10 Recreation Ground, the La Brea Community Recreation Ground and the Vance River Recreation Ground.

So, Mr. Speaker, altogether, there has been commendable movement on the La Brea projects since May last year when I reported on them to this honourable House. What this would mean is that in the course of this year, the constituency of La Brea would have, in total, the benefit of six illuminated recreation grounds, namely, the Rousillac Recreation Ground, the Salazar Trace Recreation Ground, the Point d'Or Recreation Ground, Subnaik Park Recreation Ground, National and Mon Desir Recreation Ground and soon to be completed, the ground at Erin.

As I have shared with this honourable House before, and as the Member for La Brea well knows, the illumination of recreation grounds for his constituency—the people of La Brea—was never a priority for this administration when they were in power prior to 2010. Between January 2008 and 2010, the then Minister of Public Utilities completed a total of 26 illumination projects in the south. Twenty-one of these projects belong to the PNM constituencies, and of these 21, La Brea received only three grounds.

**Hon. Member:** Oh Lord!

**Hon. N. Baksh:** But today this administration is moving in an equitable fashion to illuminate grounds for everyone, without favour or discrimination, and the PNM constituencies which have been neglected for years are now happy for this intervention of the People's Partnership Government. [*Desk thumping*]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for La Brea.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you still have not answered my question about the Vessigny Recreation Ground.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister.

**Hon. N. Baksh:** Mr. Speaker, I indicated that that is one that has not been formally requested and, therefore, when we receive a formal request we will deal with it.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for La Brea.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** A further supplemental. Hon. Minister, are you saying that your record-keeping is faulty? Because I sent several letters to this Ministry on numerous occasions.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister.

**Hon. N. Baksh:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think I need to answer that. I have provided answers before on the other grounds.

**Mr. Speaker:** Supplementals?

**Mr. Jeffrey:** Mr. Speaker, I am still waiting on an answer from the Minister.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Minister has responded. He said he has not received a formal request.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** All I am asking is whether his record-keeping is faulty because I sent numerous letters to the Ministry. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Jack Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question No. 121 to the Minister of Local Government.

### **Chaguanas Market (Details of Contract)**

**121. Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*) asked the hon. Minister of Local Government:

Could the Minister please state:

- a) Whether the Ministry of Local Government has awarded any contract for the refurbishment or upgrade of the Chaguanas Market, and if so,
  - i. the name of the company the contract was awarded;
  - ii. the contract sum;
  - iii. the date of issue of the contract;
  - iv. the scope of works; and
  - v. the date work began or will begin
- b) Whether any state agency or enterprise has requested tenders, is issuing, or has issued, any contract for the refurbishment or upgrade of the Chaguanas Market, and if so, the particulars of such contract?

**Mr. Speaker:** The Leader of the House—Minister of Local Government.

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the distinguished Minister of Local Government, the response to Question No. 121:

In March 2012, the Ministry of Local Government invited tenders for improvement works on the Chaguanas market to enhance the conditions of the said market. Tenders were received by the Central Tenders Board and Saiscon Limited was selected as the successful tenderer. The contract sum, or tendered price, was \$8,952,867 plus Value Added Tax of \$1,342,930.05, a sum total of \$10,295,797.05. A letter of award was sent to Saiscon Limited on July 23, 2012 by the Central Tenders Board. However, no formal agreement was signed by the Ministry of Local Government and Saiscon Limited to order the commencement of the work of the contract.

The scope of works at that time included preliminary works, roof repair works, guttering installation, glazing works, electrical upgrade, tiling works, painting works, air condition and fire system installations. The project duration was expected to be three months. However, the contract was not executed within the fiscal period 2012 and funding allocated for the project lapsed. In fiscal year 2013, funds were requested to start the project, but none was allocated.

The conditions at the Chaguanas market have since deteriorated and additional improvement works were deemed necessary. As a consequence, the scope of works was expanded and the Ministry of Local Government submitted their expanded scope of works for the upgrade of the Chaguanas market to Cabinet for consideration in June 2014. Cabinet, at that time, agreed to the expanded scope of works at an estimated cost of \$20 million. The expanded scope of works include: design of rehabilitation and upgrade of the mechanical, electrical, security, fire detection and fighting, ventilation and air condition systems, and access to the first floor; upgrade of the roof and rainwater system; rehabilitation and upgrade of the public washrooms; repairing and upgrading of the floor at the ground and first floors; enclosure of the first floor; improvement to the ventilation of the ground floor; air conditioning of the first floor and installation of new elevators to access the first floor; installation of new electronic security systems and upgrading of the existing fire detection and fighting system.

The expanded project is being tendered by the Rural Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited which has been contracted to provide project management services on behalf of the Ministry. Works to be undertaken on the

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expanded scope of works were subdivided into components in order to maintain minimum disruption to day-to-day operations of vendors at the market and to deal with the immediacy of the roof repairs.

Consequently, tenders for the first phase of the project were invited in December 2014 by public advertisement in the daily newspapers for the design, rehabilitation and upgrade of the mechanical, electrical, security, fire detection and fighting, ventilation and air condition systems and access to the first floor; for upgrade of the roof and rainwater system and rehabilitation and upgrade of the public washrooms. These works are estimated to commence within the next month as the Rural Development Company has concluded evaluation of tenders and preferred tenderers have already been selected to carry out the works. The tender documents for the remaining items on the scope are currently being prepared by the Rural Development Company.

Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, can you tell this House how many tenders were received, and who is/are the preferred tenderer or tenderers?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that information can be made available to the hon. Member, but it is not in the response that has been prepared.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Dr. Rowley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Question No. 126 to the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development.

**Chaguaramas Development Authority**  
**(Details of Transactions)**

**126. Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*) asked the hon. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development:

- A. Could the Minister identify the specific location(s), size and nature of all properties/assets of the Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA) in the vicinity of the Chaguaramas Hotel and waterfront which have been or are to be disposed to private interests?
- B. Could the Minister state:
  - i. the procurement process involved;

- ii. the terms under which transactions have been or are to be executed?
- C. Could the Minister further state:
  - i. when these transactions were initiated and concluded;
  - ii. when were they approved by the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago?
- D. Could the Minister also state whether all such transactions have complied fully with the Chaguaramas Development Authority Act Chapter 35:02, particularly sections 14, 15 and 18?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development.

**The Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Chaguaramas Development Authority, in keeping with its mandate as outlined in the Chaguaramas Development Authority Act, Chap. 35:02, section 14(3), which states:

“Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing provisions of this section the Authority may, in the North-West Peninsula—

- (a) lay out, construct and maintain roads, construct and maintain buildings, and carry out such other building and engineering operations as may be necessary or desirable;
- (b) provide and maintain car parks, piers, public parks or gardens and other public amenities;
- (c) carry on any business or other activity (whether alone or jointly”—  
[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, may I? I think the Minister is answering the wrong question. I asked question 126.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think he is making an introduction. So I think he is coming to the essence of your response.

Yes, continue please.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** “(c) carry on any business or activity (whether alone or jointly with any other person or authority) that is conducive

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to the development thereof, and in particular the Authority may enter into such arrangements incidental to the foregoing as are considered necessary or expedient for the discharge of its functions.”

On the basis of this mandate, the CDA has leased lands on the peninsula for the establishment of the following specific businesses:

To the University of Trinidad and Tobago, three separate leases—2.83 acres, 5.09 acres, 30.57 acres, to operate respectively, a University campus inclusive of facilities for marine sciences, to operate a marine training institute and related facilities and to operate—

**Dr. Rowley:** I hate to interrupt again. The Minister is answering the wrong question. I did not have that in question 126. My question is specific to the vicinity of Chaguaramas Hotel and the waterfront area. If the Minister wants to speak on other matters, I am sure he can do so, but under our Standing Orders, I have a question in my name under 126, specific to the Convention Centre and the vicinity. So, Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence.

**Mr. Speaker:** I know that you were giving some introduction, but given our new Standing Orders, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition outlined, if you can try to deal directly and specifically with the answers to (a), (b), (c) and (d), it would help to expedite matters.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** I am trying to answer the question—

**Mr. Speaker:** I know you are trying, but—

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:**—as truthfully and as comprehensively as possible. [*Crosstalk*] The question asked for properties in the vicinity of the Chaguaramas Convention Centre and I was simply going to outline all the properties for which we have given leases.

**Mr. Speaker:** Proceed. That is part (a).

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** A restaurant to Chagdeck Limited, 0.8 acres for a period of 30 years for commissioning and operation of a two-storey building which shall be used as a restaurant and bar which will cater for both daytime and evening customers.

**2.00 p.m.**

A water and amusement park to Fouraime Enterprises Limited: 35 acres, 30 years, for a world-class water and amusement theme park inclusive of sea

transportation hub, supporting eateries, shopping, entertainment, cultural and leisure facilities; lodging facilities with CDA's consent and marina-related activities.

Eight facilities to local caterers:

one for local cuisine, cappuccinos, coffee and non-based coffee drinks, seaside grillers—all of these are .02 acres and the leases are for three years for grilled foods.

Mayaro ice cream: three years, 0.2 acres—ice cream; ice cream treats, et cetera.

Fickie's Soup Shoppe: .02 acres, three years—soups and creole food.

D Irie Shack—same terms and conditions and size—Jamaican cuisine.

Southern horizon general services—same: East Indian cuisine.

Italian Hut: same size and length of lease: Italian foods.

Blue Pepper: Same size and years: Chinese cuisine.

Recreation mini golf adventure parks: Starburst Parks, 2.66 acres, 30 years. Development management of Mini Golf Adventure Park.

Remote control cars: Beecham's RC Rentals, .10 acres, three years: Remote control car racing.

Paddy's Aquatic Centre, Kenan Charles, 1.10, three years: Pedal boating.

Caribbean borders and safety strategies for the Bowen Marine and Dragon Boat slipway area: 5.9 acres, 30 years. Development management and operation of a waterfront marina and state-of-the-art entertainment centre.

Environment Industrial Service: 1.8 acres, 30 years: Provision of maritime light industrial services.

Insight developers carry out operations of a hotel of no less than three diamond 4-star rating: restaurant, shopping, recreational entertainment and other facilities on land presently housing the Chaguaramas Hotel and Convention Centre. Site involves 3.1721 hectares.

La Soufriere Marine Limited: 7.9 acres. The construction commissioning and operation of a marina facility, ancillary buildings and structures for the docking, servicing and repairing of pleasure craft and ships.

The other part of the question had to do with the process involved and the transactions. In seeking to attract investors to the peninsula, the Authority sought to engage investors through various means. This does not involve procurement as the question asked. It involves business proposals as expressions of interest for which land space is necessary, and if the business proposal is viable, a lease of land is negotiated. The leasing process involves the following:

Through investment promotions via the Authority's website;

Embassies;

Magazines, local newspapers and through and with InvestTT;

Unsolicited proposals;

Review of applications previously submitted dating back in this particular instance up to 2008, and these applicants were contacted and asked to resubmit their proposals where applicable.

During the evaluation's process all proposals were reviewed to ascertain their compatibility with the Authority's development plan, leasing policy, existing businesses on the peninsula and the impact on the new businesses.

The general terms and conditions are as follows:

Tenants must commence work to be done consistent with the tenant's proposal for the construction and commissioning of the plan in accordance with a business plan, and the grant of permission to develop land subject to conditions issued by the Town and Country Planning Division;

Deposit of one month rent as security for the performance of its obligations;

Additional rent penalties are assessed if project is not completed within the time specified;

A service charge equal to 10 per cent of the annual rent for each calendar year for the services provided by CDA in the maintenance of the peninsula is charged.

In an effort to ensure that leases are not transferred at will or used for speculative purposes, in all leases the tenant shall not assign, sublet or grant any licence, part with possession or dispose of the whole or any part of the premises and/or building prior to the sixth anniversary of the commencement of the year of the lease after which the tenant may assign the premises or sublet the whole or part with the prior consent of the CDA whose consent may not be unreasonably withheld.



In terms of time initiated and contracts concluded:

April 2014, in the case of the Boardwalk, cuisine and pedal boats concluded between September to December 2014;

Boardwalk, water and amusement park: initiated December 2013, completed April 2014;

Leasable lots: December 2013, ongoing;

Mini golf adventure: July 2013, completed January 2014;

Boardwalk restaurant: initiated June 2013, completed March 2015;

Environmental service: November 2013, completed August 2014;

Marina transportation: November 2014 to February 2015;

La Soufriere: October 2006, completed June 2013;

University of Trinidad and Tobago: December 2004, approved September 2014.

In the CDA Act, section 14(4) states:

“Notwithstanding the provisions of this section but subject to section 16 nothing in this Act shall be construed so as to permit or empower the Authority with respect to any land in the North-West Peninsula...to alienate the freehold or grant leases for a term of more than thirty years with an option for a further term not exceeding thirty years, except with the consent of the President.”

Which gives the CDA the authority to grant leases 30 years and under.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Minister, we have five minutes to respond to questions. We are now into the seventh minute. We have until 2.20, Leader of the House, Leader of the Opposition. I do not know if the House is inclined, would you like to—you are finished or you have—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** I am finished.

**Mr. Speaker:** You are through?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** You sure?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay. The hon. Member.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, that is why I was assisting the House in pruning off the excesses at the beginning of the question, however, I would like to ask not a supplemental, but to ask the Minister whether he is prepared to answer question (c)(ii)?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Part (c)(ii)?

**Mr. Speaker:** Right. The hon. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development, 126(c)(ii). Did you respond to that?—whether—

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister is having difficulty reading it:

“when were they approved by the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago?”

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Some of these have been approved by Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago, I do not have the exact dates but not all have been approved. [*Crosstalk*]

**Dr. Rowley:** I would like to—

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

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence. This question was put to the Minister and it specifically at (c)(ii):

“when were they approved...”

The Minister generated all kinds of answers to others things I did not ask, and is now telling me that that is the answer. So I want to ask the Minister again:

Which were the ones approved by the Cabinet and which ones were not?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** If the hon. Min—sorry, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition would indulge me, I would like to answer that question in two parts. I just read section 14(4) which indicates the authority of the CDA to grant on its own leases under the law. That is the first thing. The second thing is that leases are generally, once they are negotiated, they come to Cabinet. I do not have the details of all the Notes that came to Cabinet but I know that some of the leases have not been brought to Cabinet. I am stating that clearly before the House of Representatives, but that does not mean that they will not come to Cabinet. Cabinet generally gets the information on all of these.

**Dr. Rowley:** Is the Minister telling this House that it is now the practice accepted by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, that contrary to the standard

procedures hitherto, that the board of the Chaguaramas Development Authority can now and is free to grant leases in Chaguaramas without the knowledge and/or consent of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** No, I am not saying that.

**Hon. Member:** Supplemental.

**Dr. Rowley:** Is the Minister aware of any lease that is being granted without the knowledge and/or consent and approval of the Cabinet?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** The CDA has granted leases and some of those leases, as I indicated, have not yet come before the Cabinet but Cabinet always has the final say and authority on all matters, however, I did indicate, Mr. Speaker, that under the law and under the rubric, the document which allows the CDA to govern, the rules and the law are clearly stated.

**Mr. Speaker:** I recognize the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister explain why, contrary to the principles of the procurement legislation, competitive tenders were not invited for these parcels of land?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** The question is not pertinent because the assumption is that competitive bidding was not facilitated and I indicated clearly the process that was followed in all of the instances which people made bids.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition. Last supplemental.

**Mr. Imbert:** Two.

**Mr. Speaker:** No, no. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, is the Minister prepared to tell this House whether there are any instances where contracts have been entered into for any of these parcels mentioned, where legally binding documents have been issued before the matter has been brought to the Cabinet?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** It has been the practice before this administration and continuing with this administration, that the CDA would enter into negotiations and on the basis of those negotiations, enter into contracts. Ultimately though, those lease documents and arrangements are brought before the Cabinet. This has happened dating back to the first one done with EOG and continuing now into the present. Cabinet always has the last say and can say yea or nay to anything brought before Cabinet.

**Mr. Speaker:** Five supplementals. We have to move on.

**2.15 p.m.**

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask two questions. Mr. Speaker, on the questions for written answer, question 66, I have already invoked Standing Order 29.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is now being circulated.

**Miss Mc Donald:** It is now being circulated. So my second question. Earlier on the Leader of Government Business, in deferring questions 105, 127 and 129, those are questions to the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, the Leader of Government Business stated that the Minister is out of the jurisdiction. But my understanding is that there would be somebody acting in place of the substantive Minister. So my question to the Minister is: Is this a precedent that we are setting here, that if a Minister is overseas, that the acting Minister cannot answer the question, Sir?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, the relevant Minister exercised his discretion in this matter. The Minister of Local Government today forwarded an answer and asked that it be read. The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs preferred to be in the House in person so that he can respond to those three questions and he may be able to better field the multiple supplemental questions that flow to him. It is a preference of the Minister. It is not a precedent or no precedent, but if the Minister chose to submit his answer and, because of the nature of the question, believes that the supplementals may not be too much or too heavy.

Well in the case of these questions in the energy sector, we are aware, Mr. Speaker, that there is usually a frenetic hurling of supplemental questions across the floor and the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs requests that they be deferred so that he can come in person and respond with the level of detail and respect to the relevant Member.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let us go, please.

#### WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

#### Central Bank of Trinidad & Tobago (Details of)

- 66. Mr. Colm Imbert** (*Diego Martin North/East*): Could the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy provide the following Information with respect to employees of the Central Bank of Trinidad & Tobago?

- a) The names, qualifications and experience of all persons employed by the Central Bank between July 13, 2012 and December 23 2014?
- b) The selection process and criteria utilized by the Central Bank in each case to employ the Bank, and their current position.
- c) The positions that each such person was placed in, or appointed to, when first employed by the Bank, and their current position.

*Vide end of sitting for written answer.*

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### Apology

(Statements made March 25, 2015)

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of the People and Social Development (Hon. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At a sitting of the House of Representatives held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2015, I contributed to the debate on the Motion of the loss of confidence in the Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West.

Mr. Speaker, I sought, during my contribution, to highlight certain sensitive issues in our society, with which I have had direct experiences and which I considered relevant to the matter being debated. These issues included the indelicate but pertinent issues of rape and domestic violence.

In consequent reports in the media, my contribution was unfortunately characterized and exploited as an attack on persons who may have been victims of domestic violence and other such offences.

My long-standing and manifest abhorrence of this type of behaviour has been well established over the many years and particularly within the recent years I have served in this Parliament. It was and is never my intention to stigmatize any person whatsoever who may have suffered the indignity of domestic violence of any kind. Clearly my contribution during the debate in question had no such purpose.

Against this background, Mr. Speaker, I sincerely and unreservedly apologize to this honourable House and any person outside of this Parliament for the mischaracterization which may have been deduced from the statements made during my contribution. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 24(4), please. I would like to ask my question.

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**Mr. Speaker:** You cannot ask a question under “Personal Explanations”, please.

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** Standing Order 24(4), Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is not a Statement by Ministers, it is a Personal Explanation. The hon. Member for Chaguanas West, please. Silence.

**COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES  
(MEMBER FOR TOBAGO EAST)**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 32(2), I seek your leave to raise a matter directly concerned with the Privileges of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the matter concerns the entire contribution, from beginning to end, made by the Member for Tobago East, the Minister of State in the Ministry of the People and Social Development, at the last Sitting of the House, during the debate of the Motion of no confidence in the Leader of the Opposition on March 25, 2015.

During her contribution, the Member made several unsavoury statements about the personal life of the Leader of the Opposition, including analogies to Adolf Hitler and the thief called Barabbas of the *Bible* and even suggested that the Member’s birth was a shameful consequence of his mother being raped by his father, and in so doing she gave the impression that she had intimate knowledge of these circumstances and that her statements were factual and correct.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Tobago East made several distasteful statements and inferences relative to the Leader of the Opposition, but I refer to just a few from the *Hansard* that will support my Motion. At the outset, the Member alleged that the Leader of the Opposition is setting himself up as “the great black hope” using methods similar to Adolf Hitler, Boko Haram and Al-Maliki. The Member then proceeded to make disparaging remarks focusing on the personal life of the Member, and I quote:

“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. We need to know of the so-called previous relationship...in that article.”

Mr. Speaker, the Member continued:

“Mr. Speaker,”—she says—“the village of Charlotteville—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, Members, let us have your silence.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the Member for Tobago East continued:

“Mr. Speaker, the village of Charlotteville maintains a story about a young mother, a minor, a secondary schoolgirl, 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...”

The Member continued. She said:

“We must not promote child molesters to eminence.”

I quote again. She said, I quote:

“A young girl went to take lunch for her father in a coal’s pit.”

“Coal’s” is her word, not mine.

“When she got there, her father had gone to change his cow. It is a true story. This young girl was then raped by her father’s best friend. The product today is the aspirant to lofty office.

A child was born and grew to become aggressive, arrogant, bombastic and spiteful.”

Mr. Speaker, she continued:

“Did he 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?”

I will say it for you again.

“Did he know that the girl was kidnapped and kept detained for four hours against her will?”

I am quoting from your Member for Tobago East.

“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?”

I continue to quote from the *Hansard*:

“I am asking these questions because my name is Vernella Alleyne by birth. I am speaking to circumstances that involve my family.”

*Committee of Privileges*  
[MR. WARNER]

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I continue, Mr. Speaker:

“I can offer you Barabbas 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 and not the dubious, dangerous, indiscreet leadership of the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West.”

There were several, Mr. Speaker, several, but that is enough.

Mr. Speaker, it is now public information that these outrageous statements made by the Member have been publicized repeatedly both here and abroad. Mr. Speaker, this country is now the laughing stock of the Commonwealth parliamentary community. And, Mr. Speaker, it is now indisputable that the malignant and distasteful statements made by the Member for Tobago East were untrue and therefore wholly misleading.

Mr. Speaker, there exists a duty of care that every Member must exercise when speaking in this honourable House, apology or no apology, and this obligation, Mr. Speaker, is one of significant constitutional import.

Mr. Speaker, in several of your rulings in this House, you have stressed the importance of this obligation which is placed upon the shoulders of Members. The statements made by the Member for Tobago East must be considered an absolute violation of the free speech accorded to elected Members of Parliament and this constitutes a disdainful denigration of the privileges afforded to the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, even if the Member believed her statements to be true, she provided no evidence to support the veracity of those statements. She was therefore wantonly reckless in her responsibility to provide accurate information to the House and therefore she seriously misinformed the House in a material way.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the statements made by the Member were not in the national interest but constituted a vile personal attack on the Leader of the Opposition and served the sole purpose of bringing the House into serious public odium and disrepute. This must be a contempt of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore submit that the Member for Tobago East and Minister of State in the Ministry of the People and Social Development committed contempt of this House on the grounds that she grossly and recklessly abused the privilege of freedom of speech in this House, thereby bringing the House into serious public odium, ridicule and disrepute.



Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the relevant Standing Orders, I ask that the Member for Tobago East be referred to the Privileges Committee of this House, not to determine whether a contempt has been committed but for the Committee to recommend appropriate action to be taken in relation to the Member's repugnant statements. Mr. Speaker, I so move. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I received this Motion just a few minutes before the start of the sitting today. I propose to give my ruling on this Motion at the next Sitting of the House.

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

[Second Day]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question* [March 30, 2015]:

*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.

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, on the last occasion the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre was on his legs and has 15 minutes of extended speaking time remaining. The hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Hon. E. McLeod:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last day before the adjournment was taken I sought to establish the hollowness of the defence by the Opposition as articulated in much irrelevance by the Member for Diego Martin North/East against this Motion of censure and condemnation of the conduct of their leader and Member for Diego Martin West.

After much bravado and idle boast, "Bring it on", they said, then they very cowardly ducked out through the back door as they again did a minute or two ago.

Mr. Speaker, have we noted the swing and the dance away from the foundation of the issues, the many matters and things which seriously called into question the credibility and judgment of the Leader of the Opposition? Have we? Have we taken note, careful note, of the notoriety of the opinion-framers, the

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pimps and prevaricators, the hypocrites and deceitfully parasitic in official society? Have we? Have we? You listen to them sometimes and you wonder where their minds have been.

Mr. Speaker, this House must remember and take careful note of statements contained in the *Hansard*, Friday, April 26, 2013, a Motion brought by the Member for Diego Martin West and honourable Leader of the Opposition, and that Motion sought to condemn the Prime Minister's failure to act, in their words, on the tremendous evidence that was revealed by a commission headed by a former Barbadian Chief Justice Simmons, I think, Sir David Simmons and the Leader of the Opposition was insisting that this country needed to preserve its good name, which was being negatively characterised by the dealings of the then Minister of National Security and Member for Chaguanas West.

And it is in that debate that it was being said in this House, by the Member for Chaguanas West, about those who would have been identified as paedophile and that there was one paedophile who ended up in the classroom as a teacher. I am being prompted but I have only 15 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, the *Hansard* reads:

Mr. Speaker, I am not giving anything to the press. Actually, it says:

“...I ent giving nutten’ to the press, man, the press ha enough.”

The Member for Chaguanas West speaking.

“Mr. Speaker—if I quote wrongly, let me know—I heard from the last speaker, he said—while I was in my car—something about paedophile, if one is a paedophile and one ends up in the classroom as a teacher—did I hear correctly?”

And everything, Mr. Speaker. Now, I do not want to inflame any situation, whether it is to condemn the Member for Diego Martin West or to absolve the Member for Tobago East. But we have to take note of the hypocrisy of Members on that side, including the Member for Chaguanas West, when we seek to deal with issues that affect the character and personalities of Members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, let us not disregard, for instance, the subliminal messages in the maelstrom, the strong influence, the powerful dangerous whirlpool of divisiveness transmitted by some voices of unreasoning. Let this not continue to be an environment of different strokes for different folks.

At the start of this Motion and in response to the statements made by the honourable Leader of Government Business, the Member for Diego Martin North/East took us back to 1912 and he said—and that statement was supported by the Member for Chaguanas West—that the Leader of the Opposition became Leader of the Opposition in 2010 and that it was wrong, it was a waste of time, it was vacuous to go back to his conduct before 2010 and I cannot understand how otherwise apparently sensible people will make statements as foolish as that.

Mr. Speaker, the very Member for Diego Martin West is on record as having said—let me find it for you. I do not want to employ anything that is contrary to the many matters that are before us. The Member for Diego Martin West tells us that it is an established fact that the best indication of what could happen in the future is to observe what has happened in the past.

Now if, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Tobago East is correct, and I am discounting that part or those parts of her contribution which she herself has repudiated, but the Member said other things and if any of those other things were to be true, would we not be squandering our opportunity to put in office upright and exemplary persons in the high office to which some of us aspire? But we condemn out of hand all that the Member for Tobago East has said—well they, not us—here.

Our most honourable Prime Minister stayed in here and endured for 27 long hours the spurious charges and allegations brought by the Member for Diego Martin West. Do you remember? Twenty-seven hours of the most horrendous—*[Interruption]* that is all I have? Oh my God? I have 15 more.

**Mr. Speaker:** You spoke for 30 already. You have about two and one half minutes again.

**Hon. E. McLeod:** Okay, yes. Twenty-seven hours of the most horrendous attempts to destroy this phenomenal woman, this woman of such great substance, of class, of intelligence and certainly of profound leadership. Do I go on? And who challenges? A pretender? A cowardly bully? An almost buffoon? A raging bull who would trample and destroy his own? Ask the Member for La Brea. Ask the Member for Arouca/Maloney. Ask the Member for Diego Martin Central.

And I can tell them, that two weeks before the November 5th election in 2007, I was visited at the residence where I lived at that time, in my official capacity as leader of the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union. The Member for Diego Martin West came. He visited me and it was not once. That was the second time that he had visited me. The first time I thought that he looked like Lazarus. But indeed,

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my confusion made me think that he looked like Lazarus, but indeed he attended with Lazarus, and it was to garner support against the leader, his then leader of the People's National Movement, the Member for San Fernando East, and I am saying this for the first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** You have 30 seconds now.

**Hon. E. Mc Leod:** Mr. Speaker, they fear, he fears the incidents of defection from his own Bench when the vote on this Motion is taken. That is the real strategy for their walk out. That is the strategy for their walk out. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I am inviting this House to deliberate on the issues before us, remove all and any assertion as to the circumstances and antecedence of the Member's birth, but let us examine everything that he has done in his accession to office and his aspiration to be the Prime Minister of this fair and lovely country of Trinidad and Tobago.

I rest my case, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before I call on the next Member, may I remind Members that the Motion before this House is about no confidence and censuring of the Leader of the Opposition and the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West. So let us not reflect on the character or the conduct of any other Member of this House.

Secondly, there is a telephone or mobile that keeps going off in this Chamber. The owner of that mobile, if you cannot control it, I would ask you to leave this House, but please control your mobile. Have it placed on silent and do not allow the mobile to disturb the proceedings of this honourable House. I recognize the Member for Tabaquite, Minister of Works and Infrastructure.

**The Minister of Works and Infrastructure (Hon. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin this afternoon by placing on record my admiration for the Member for Tobago East—[*Desk thumping*—in that the Member for Tobago East, at the first opportunity, came to this House and made a statement today apologizing for what she said. Rare is that quality in this House where Members would be able to rise to the occasion, like the Member for Tobago East has done this afternoon.

My contribution here has nothing personal to deal with Dr. Rowley, the Leader of the Opposition. It is nothing personal. This is a substantive Motion that has to deal with the character and the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition. This is what this Motion is about, the character and the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition. But not only the Leader of the Opposition, someone who is

aspiring to be a future Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, it is my belief, and strong belief at that, that the citizenry of this country, the voters of this country, as well as future voters of this country, as every right-thinking person in this country, have a right and a duty to ensure that they understand how they are going to use their vote in the future, in terms of the election of a Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I will show in my contribution today that the Leader of the Opposition has in fact brought the House into disrepute and that he is unfit, not only to be Leader of the Opposition but also unfit to aspire to the position of Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I noted something very interesting this afternoon when I saw the Members of the Opposition present here today. Last week, they were all dressed in red, ready for war. Today, it was very interesting, they were all dressed in clothes of mourning. They were mourning, M-O-U-R-N-I-N-G, something on their side; in other words we say mourning clothes.

They chose to walk out of the House last day and today and that is their right. That is their right. But, with the help of some researchers, I tried to find out in the Commonwealth whether anybody against who a substantive Motion involving conduct and character have been brought ever walked out of the House or whether they stood up to defend their good name. If you want to aspire to the position of leader of the country then you must be able to defend your good name. You must prove to the population that you are a person of positive integrity and positive character and positive conduct.

Mr. Speaker, that is in stark contrast to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago who, as the former speaker indicated, the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, sat here for 27 hours-plus and defended what was being said against her, supported by her colleagues—and not only defended but did so with grace, did not do so with anger, did not do so with arrogance but was able to stand up. This is why today she enjoys a 50 per cent approval rating in the population, compared to the Leader of the Opposition, a 50 per cent approval rating. Despite all they did to try to denigrate her she continues to be the outstanding Prime Minister, the person of preference in the county, in terms of leadership, to which I will return.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday, April 26, 2013, in a Motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, he made some interesting comments which I wish to repeat from the *Hansard*. He said here:

“...because you see when you are in public life you are not immune to allegations, in fact, you attract allegations. You cannot help that; it is par for

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the course; it is part of the vineyard in which we labour. However, how we respond to these allegations is what is going to determine who we are, what we are and whether, in fact, the allegations have been properly dealt with.”

Well, the population will not be able to determine who he is, what he is, and whether in fact he has dealt with the allegations that have been made here in this House. He continued. He said here:

“The response of...the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West, has been always one of bland dismissal, outrage, arrogance and bombast.”

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if that is not a reflection of his own behaviour when he walked out this House.

Finally, I quote again:

“So his actions and his conduct in response to allegations, even if the allegations are frivolous, once you hold office you are duty-bound to respond and to respond effectively and truthfully. Our people are not unreasonable. Our people in fact like to defend the underdog, and if allegations are made against you, they give you the opportunity to clear your name, not only in the court of law but in the court of public opinion, sometimes to a fall. But when you take the position as the actions and conduct of our colleague from Chaguanas West, that I have nothing to say to you, you cannot talk to me—as a matter of fact, “I gave you breakfast, is now lunchtime, why are you asking me about my theft?”; that is his attitude. That action, that conduct, Mr. Speaker hurt, hurt the people of Trinidad and Tobago.”

This is coming from the Leader of the Opposition. What is important is I wonder whether the Leader of the Opposition, having made this statement in 2013, April 26, his own behaviour today is not a reflection of this kind of thing, a refusal to defend yourself when he is calling upon others to clear their name and defend themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to make one point again about this, and I would like to ask the Leader of the Opposition a very straightforward question: why is it that in the bio that is on the parliamentary page he has not recognized the existence of his son? Why is it? Why is it? Why is it? Of course, those are reasons best known to him but it is interesting in that biography on the Parliament website he says he has two daughters and his wife, Mrs. Sharon Rowley. But he does not acknowledge his son.

Mr. Speaker, it is also true that only after being confronted by the Prime Minister about Mr. West being a witness for him, did he acknowledge that he knew about Mr. West being a witness and he did so after Mr. West's appointment. What does this have to say about openness? What does this have to say about truth, honesty and integrity in public life? How is it possible that a person would not know that someone has filed a witness statement or is about to file a witness statement on his or her behalf? Was the Leader of the Opposition not apprised of this by his lawyer, Mr. Faris Al-Rawi, that Mr. West was a witness? If so, did Mr. Faris Al-Rawi mislead his client, the Opposition Leader? Is this the real reason why Mr. Al-Rawi was removed as the lawyer for the Opposition Leader?

Mr. Speaker, another point that I wish to make is that they keep making the argument that this debate has no constitutional validity, that it is not important because the vote will be won on this side. Mr. Speaker, when they filed the Motion against the Prime Minister, did they not also know that the Prime Minister had more votes on this side? When they filed a Motion against the former AG, did they not know that there were more votes on this side? This is not about constitutional validity. This is about the conduct and character of the Leader of the Opposition. [*Desk thumping*] This is about political relevance. This is about relevance to citizens and the future of citizens. A leader makes or mars a country and if a person cannot act and demonstrate that they are acting with integrity, honesty and truthfulness, then that person does not deserve to be aspiring or to be voted in as a leader in the country.

Mr. Speaker, the intolerance of the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Diego Martin North/East, when he spoke recently in the news media about the poll that was done by Mr. Henry of Solution by Simulation, is very telling and very interesting.

As a Government, as a political party, we respect all the polls that are done in this country. These are professional people and they do their polls and they come before the population year before year before year and Mr. Henry has been a very respected pollster.

### **3.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, when you have the arrogance and intolerance that was displayed by the Opposition towards Mr. Henry and his professionalism, what you have is the manifestation of what I like to call "intolerance". An intolerance for the ideas and opinions of others is a characteristic of the political leader of the PNM and the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, you wonder how that intolerance is going

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to play out if he becomes Prime Minister and in Government, especially when you consider that one of the three watchwords in the country is in fact tolerance: discipline, production and tolerance. This is why so many persons have spoken about the Leader of the Opposition in terms of his intolerance, his arrogance, his dismissive nature of people, their opinions and their ideas.

Mr. Speaker, I remember, you know, when the Motion was brought against the Prime Minister, I remember the Prime Minister telling the Members of her side that the Parliament—and I want to repeat what she said in as close words that I can recall:

The Parliament is the people's court and any issue brought by an elected official must be deemed to represent something or someone, even if it is the minority view, and, as a Government for all, we must show respect for the representatives of all.

That is a philosophy that is not existing on the side of the PNM, in their hearts and minds. It is not existing, Mr. Speaker, and, therefore, this debate is about conduct and character of the Leader of the Opposition, his fitness for office, and bringing the position into disrepute.

Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to me what has been said recently about the Leader of the Opposition, what has been said and is being said all over about the Leader of the Opposition. I want to quote, in particular, from someone who has a great deal of respect in the public, and that is Mr. Michael Harris who writes in the *Express* newspaper on a weekly basis. Mr. Harris, on April 05, 2015, wrote as follows:

“...the key question to be asked is what is there in the current configuration and operation of the PNM to suggest that if it forms the government in 2015 it is going to be any different from its previous incarnations. A crucial part of that answer, given the history of the PNM and the politics and constitution of the country, would lie in the personality and leadership style of Keith Rowley.

As far as the party itself is concerned there seems to have been very little change from what has obtained before. At the executive level the party is led by individuals such as Franklin Khan and Ashton Ford, who are steeped in the habits and traditions of the old PNM. Such an assessment is supported firstly by the way the party conducted its internal elections and secondly by the current process for the screening and selection of candidates.”



What you have seen, Mr. Speaker, in the behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition, he does not tolerate any opposition, and every single Member who has been discarded for the next round of the elections had been discarded because they did not support the Leader of the Opposition and they supported the Member for San Fernando East. That is what it is.

Mr. Speaker, you therefore wonder what kind of Government he is going to lead. An authoritarian Government, Mr. Speaker? This is why in one of the issues of the Sunday *Guardian*—and I will find it in a while—one of his own colleagues referred to him as the “Mugabe”, “Mugabe” of the politics here in Trinidad. Mr. Speaker, of the 12 current Members, only eight put themselves up for nomination and five were rejected, and Michael Harris is saying, he says:

“...let us be fair and objective. Most of the current members...were supporters of Patrick Manning. Some...even supported Penelope Beckles-Robinson in her unsuccessful leadership challenge. Dr Rowley has every right to ensure that his parliamentary team is comprised of his supporters. Fine; but my question would be how does that distinguish Dr Rowley from Patrick Manning before him...”

Mr. Speaker, what he says here and how he concludes is important. He says here:

“Recently, former long-standing member of the PNM, Louis Lee Sing, had this to say, ‘To state a position different to Dr Rowley or to be critical of his position is to court disaster as some of us in the PNM have found out.’

Or perhaps one would prefer the words of the Express editorialist; ‘Given (his) cavalier and ongoing disregard even for simple facts, what will be Dr Rowley’s reaction when faced with more complex and crucial matters as a prime minister?’”

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying these things. These are the considered views of people who have studied the politics and who, every five years, and during those five years, continue to study the behaviour of the politicians. Mr. Speaker, but not only in terms of local affairs has Dr. Rowley failed, has Dr. Rowley not presented himself as a credible alternative Prime Minister— Trinidad and Tobago has been playing a very important role in international affairs, whether it was in terms of our support for Cuba many, many years ago, or the One-China Policy, or, most recently, the small arms trade treaty, Trinidad and Tobago has been playing an important role in world affairs, and a person aspiring for Prime Minister must also put aside his personal prejudices and grudges and always act with the good, that

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being country first and self and party thereafter. But within recent times, in the very near recent times, we have seen the stand taken by the Leader of the Opposition on three particular matters which have international implications for Trinidad and Tobago; one, he questioned Trinidad and Tobago's bid to host the secretariat or the headquarters of the Arms Trade Treaty.

He questioned that, and it seemed that he did not want that to happen. His views are there in the *Newsday* of March 25, 2015, he questioned Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar's statement about the country bidding to be the headquarters of the UN Arms Trade Treaty Secretariat. Mr. Speaker, it will be a credit to Trinidad and Tobago to be the headquarters of the Arms Trade Treaty Secretariat, [*Desk thumping*] because this was passed in the United Nations, and, at that time, 67 countries had already signed up on this, and another 67, I believe, had proved it, and what have you. Mr. Speaker, more than this, he opposed Trinidad and Tobago supporting measures to fight terrorism. What I am demonstrating here is the quality of decision-making of this person as a leader of the country. At a time when terrorism is one of the greatest threats to world peace and the security of nations, including small nations like Trinidad and Tobago, this man is opposing Trinidad and Tobago taking a stand on terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, you go to the newspapers and you will see it.

Mrs. "Bissessar said no country was immune from the global threat of terrorism. She reiterated Obama's call for unity to combat terrorist activities."—her statement—"We will play a role as we always have in this global threat which we now face. In the history of the world this is a red letter time, a very historic time in the fight against evil, in the fight against terror and Trinidad and Tobago must not be left out... This is not a time to sit on the sidelines and let others take the front. This is a time to be courageous because it is a fight against evil"—and—"we fight terrorists,"—[*Desk thumping*]—we fight—"the drug cartels and all those involved in terrorism."

Mr. Speaker, he opposes that, but what is interesting, he is opposing it and on March 13, 2015, Mark Bassant, Senior Multimedia Investigative journalist—there is an article:

"The threat of ISIS infiltrating the Caribbean is real.

US Marine General John Kelly made the statement on Thursday to a US Senate Committee.

He says more than 100 would-be militants have left right here in the Caribbean to join Islamic extremists fighting in Syria."

Next line of General Kelly:

“The wannabe fighters are from Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Suriname and also from neighbouring Venezuela, he said.

...these countries ‘were concerned about the militants returning home to conduct terror operations because they don’t have the ability to deal with the problem’.”

Mr. Speaker, a German author, now back from examining the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, in a Gail Alexander story published on December 24 in the *Guardian*, he said that he:

“...encountered recruits from T&T in Mosul,”—and then—“National Security Minister Gary Griffith has confirmed there are 12 T&T nationals who are with Isis, mainly persons who were involved in crime and gang-related activities in T&T.”

And you are now opposing Trinidad and Tobago, siding with the Americas, siding with the President of the United States to fight terrorism in this part of the world. What kind of decision-making is that? What kind of rational thinking is that, Mr. Speaker—that you are prepared to let your own citizens be threatened, that the security of your country be threatened? Why? Because you have a grudge against the Prime Minister and this Government, and you are sacrificing the interest of this country on the altar of your personal grudges. You cannot be fit for Leader of the Opposition, [*Desk thumping*] you cannot be fit for Prime Minister of the country.

Mr. Speaker, the third point is that he had recently opposed Trinidad and Tobago’s candidacy for the Commonwealth Secretariat, in the person of Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie. I would think that if you have a citizen who has the courage, and a Government who has the vision, to want to have your citizen serve at the highest level, you would promote your citizen and you will promote your country [*Desk thumping*] and not pull them down. The Leader of the Opposition has proven himself to be “anti-Trinidad and Tobago”, to be “anti-citizen”, to be “anti-country”, to be “anti-nation”, in this regard. Mr. Speaker, he says he is a good judge of character so he says he will support Mr. Ron Sanders. He will support Mr. Ron Sanders, whom they described as the “quinticinnial”, quintessential—whatever—big word.

Mr. Speaker, he says he will support Mr. Ronald Sanders, but in the *Trinidad Express*—very credible newspaper, they tell it as it is—there is an article written

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by Kenneth Lee-Pow of Maraval, and, Mr. Speaker, you should see what Kenneth Lee-Pow wrote, he said:

“I did my own research and what I found impressed me at first. Guyana-born Sanders, whose father-in-law is former Commonwealth secretary-general Sir Sridath Ramphal, has an impressive international relations background...However, I continued to read on further”—and—“what I found raised my level of concern about this ‘quintessential Caribbean man’. Sir Sanders, who has been a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda for the last 30 years and...served as the High Commissioner of that country to London, had some serious allegations being made about him. In March 2009, the *Guardian*, a respected UK newspaper, reported that the government of Antigua has begun criminal enquiries into large payments discovered in Isle of Man bank accounts controlled by Antiguan politicians. It mentioned”—the—“former prime minister of Antigua, Lester Bird, Asot Michael, former chief of staff to the former Antigua prime minister and Sir Sanders in its report. The paper reported that \$1.4 million in total was paid into HSBC”—bank—“accounts belonging to Sir Ronald Sanders.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, did the Member for Diego Martin West do his research at all before he said that this is the person he is supporting to be the head of the Commonwealth? Is the *Express* wrong in publishing this? I think newspapers, generally, would check the facts of a situation before they publish it, and, therefore, I am reading on the assumption here with what the *Express* has published is factual, and what the *Guardian* in the UK has published is also factual. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, by the Leader of the Opposition supporting this Sir Ronald Sanders, what it does, it casts very grave doubt on his ability to make decisions on the character of others. You know what that means, Mr. Speaker? It means that we have somebody aspiring for Prime Minister who may very well be choosing the wrong persons to put in office, and that, Mr. Speaker, cannot bode well for the future of this country.

### **3.15 p.m.**

Just like it cannot bode well for the fact that if you look at the executive that he chose in the last elections, they are all of the old type, and all they have done he has chosen people to support him. So it is not now PNM, People’s National Movement, it is “Rowley’s National Movement”, that is what it has become—“Rowley’s National Movement”. Because all he wants around him are men who will say, yes Sir and bow.

**Hon. Member:** Dash board puppies.

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Oh. That is what it is called, dash board puppies. Oh, yes!—they bend so, yes—bow and go up and down.

Mr. Speaker—his reckless conduct. You recall he was accusing the former Attorney General of being somewhere at a mission in the UN, making certain statements and had proved to be false also.

Mr. Speaker, while the People’s Partnership Government has been strengthening its relations with the international community, positing itself in the Commonwealth, developing Latin America to be the new frontier, opening new embassies as we opened today in Panama and Colombia open up in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Speaker, in five years, in five years have you heard one foreign policy statement made by the Leader of the Opposition? Mr. Speaker, understand the implications of this, you know. That is the same Leader of the Opposition, you know, who gets up and says we live in the global community. Right. Here, this People’s Partnership Government has made Trinidad and Tobago integral in terms of its place in the global world, but they do not even have a policy for Trinidad and Tobago in the future in terms of the global world.

Mr. Speaker, that begs me to ask the question, what are the policy positions of the PNM that he has articulated on agriculture, on energy, on transport? “Umm?” What are their positions on that? Mr. Speaker, the country can only make a judgment on the Leader of the Opposition if the Leader of the Opposition gives his policy positions on these things. But what do we have? We have the recycling of 2020 into 2030. No new thinking. That is why this country will never move forward under the Leader of the Opposition if he became Prime Minister in this country. We will regress. We will regress. We will not move forward.

Mr. Speaker, in that regard there is a stark comparison between the Leader of the Opposition and what is required for leadership as is demonstrated in terms of the leader of the Government, Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar. Their vision is a recycled 2020 vision. Our vision is a vision for the nation of prosperity for all. Their vision is prosperity for a selected few as had happened in the past under them. [*Desk thumping*] His vision is prosperity for a selected few, and that is the selected few that he has now drawing around him. Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Tabaquite and Minister of Works and Infrastructure has expired. Hon. Minister, would you like an extension?

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Yes. Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Member for Tabaquite and Minister of Works and Infrastructure be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

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

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Look at what happens here. The Leader of the Opposition, we all heard the statement he made and how he described young women in the country, making reference to hyenas, a most derogatory comment about young women in the country. Is that how he sees women? Is that how he sees women? I must ask the question.

On the other hand, the Prime Minister of this country at this point in time is showing that she has a heart for the children of the nation. Where is his heart for the children of the nation? What have they said that gives a perspective? What has he said to give a perspective that he has a heart for the children of the nation? He has opposed the distribution even of toys for the children. They opposed the laptop programme for children. Call them “duncey”, refused to open the Biche High School, punishing children for years. Is that the kind of person we want for Prime Minister?

Mr. Speaker, here you have a Prime Minister, who when she came into office said one of my goals will be to ensure universal childhood education as a goal, and she has achieved it, ensuring the competitive potential of our children in a global environment. Where is the vision that he is presenting? Chalk and cheese. Not a policy on these matters have they enunciated in five years.

Mr. Speaker, you want a leader who is strong. You want a leader who is decisive. Umm. Look at the Leader of the Opposition—weak, indecisive, always flip-flopping. Examine the PNM’s track record and his leadership in terms of debate on major crime fighting legislation—the hanging Bill, the Bill to allow soldiers power for arrest; the Preliminary Enquiries and Committal Bill, et cetera. Examine their track record. How decisive is he as a leader? You cannot run a country if you are indecisive.

Mr. Speaker, this country is a country that is a big coalition of interests and people—a big coalition. He cannot hold this coalition of this country together. He cannot hold it together. He cannot hold it together. But the leader of the People’s Partnership she has held this coalition together and held this country at peace, and

this country has progressed, and this country has become prosperous under her because of how she has created unity of the country. Where on the other hand, he is the most divisive leader as he has shown now by dividing up his own party. And if he divides up his own party what will he do to the country, Mr. Speaker? This country will become chaotic.

Mr. Speaker, he was a Member of the Government, the PNM. Right. What did they do with labour? What respect did they have for labour? Today, the labour unions are asking this Government to settle all the labour agreements before the elections. You know why? Because they have no faith in the PNM that the PNM is going to seek their interests. Say what you want, ride high, ride low, go east, west, north or south, the one thing this Government has done, it has been settling labour negotiations with the trade unions, 85 of them settled. [*Desk thumping*] That is fact, Mr. Speaker. Because of that track record, the labour movement has understood that this Government has respect for labour compared to them, who when they left office they had left all these agreements for years and years, not considered.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of the People and Social Development, a visionary Ministry was set up by the Prime Minister—you know that was opposed by them. That was opposed by them. Programmes by that Ministry are testimony to the compassionate nature of the Prime Minister towards the poor and dispossessed. They said that they would close that down at a time when people need clothing, book grants, school transport, when the elderly need support and so on and that Ministry is providing it. He does not have the vision for those.

Mr. Speaker, they talk about good governance. Show me a Prime Minister in this country in the history of this country who has been willing to act against her own in the interest of good governance. Not them. Not them, Mr. Speaker. Under them O'Halloran ran away and built the towers in Mississauga. Prevatt ran to Costa Rica. Hart—you cannot get him to come back to Trinidad. Rao has gone. Let us speak some truths here today. He was a part of that government. The one thing I know is that the Prime Minister must work under pressure and work calmly. The one thing we know every time the Leader of the Opposition is under pressure he becomes a raging bull.

Mr. Speaker, had I had time I would have read into the records the kinds of statements that were made by people who have interacted with this person—with this person.

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Lee Sing said, former mayor of Port of Spain:

“They believe that if they do not support Dr. Rowley you are marked for death.”

Prophetic words come true with all of those who did not support Dr. Rowley—marked for political death.

Danny Montano—remember what Danny Montano said? Mr. Speaker, what Danny Montano said when he was campaigning for Pennelope Beckles. You remember Mr. Cudjoe? Mr. Cudjoe—Prof. Cudjoe? Prof. Cudjoe, Mr. Speaker? Who had a lot to say also about Dr. Rowley. Prof. Cudjoe. March 21, 2015—sorry April 22, 2011.

“Rowley is turning out to be an inefficient and perhaps uninspiring leader for which the PNM will pay dearly. 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 every one from office.”

He said:

“A leader must be able to inspire and fortify his troops with uplifting sentiments and, more importantly, an alternate vision of the world.”

**Mr. Speaker:** Which newspaper is that?

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** This is from Trinidad and Tobago News.com. I have it here. “Rowley’s failure” by Prof. Selwyn R. Cudjoe, April 2011.

“Rowley has not outlined one policy initiative. What is the PNM’s position on public sector wage negotiations?”

This is Cudjoe speaking, not me.

“Rowley’s political mode is attack, attack, attack. All one sees within the PNM is a tendency to cannibalise its own...”

Listen to what Cudjoe is saying. The man “cannibalises his own”. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Member:** That is what he is doing now. Where the Member for La Brea gone? Where is the Member for Diego Martin Central?

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Mr. Speaker, this is no joke you know. This is a serious indictment on someone who is aspiring to be a political leader you know. When issues arose with the Member for Port of Spain South, issues of “Marlene-gate”. His reaction—no issue with Marlene.



Michelle Lubon, allegation of misconduct as a PNM deputy—no issue. Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on.

While my Prime Minister is fighting for the rights of women and girls, while she is fighting for that, while she went to the UN and on the margins of the UN held a meeting that was attended by leaders, world leaders, Michelle Bachelet and Mrs. Clinton and others—and they supported the Prime Minister in that, for more participation of women in the politics and respect for women. What is Dr. Rowley doing? When the incident took place of the wining on the 17-year-old girl in San Fernando, what was their response? Is—what is wrong for doing that? What is wrong is wrong. What is wrong is wrong. When you are in public office you need to hold the morals of the country to a new high. There are no ifs or buts about that.

Mr. Speaker, this is the man who has criticized churches and tell them that they are taking bribe. Attack the churches also? What are you attacking the churches for? Why are you attacking the religious bodies? Do the churches not have a right to the patrimony of the State in order to do their work in the country? Why are you attacking them and saying that that is a bribe? If anything at all, that is the one thing that disqualifies him from being a leader—attacking the churches like that.

What is going to be his position, Leader of the Opposition, on the grants to churches? Would they cut it off? On the highway to Mayaro; on the URP workers; on rural development? What is going to be their position on all of this?

Mr. Speaker, who is going to run the country? Look—they have chosen 41 candidates—two fall by the wayside already. Right. Two fall by the wayside. I would really like to know why Mrs. Baldeo-Chadeesingh has fallen by the wayside. It would be very interesting to find that out. But who is going to run the country?—Franklin Khan? Ashton Ford? Mrs. Joan Yuille-Williams? [*Crosstalk*] Fitzgerald Hinds? Camille Robinson-Regis? But you throw out a good man like the Member for Diego Martin Central, Dr. Amery Browne. Young man. You destroy the hopes and aspirations of young people wanting to come into the politics.

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

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**3.30 p.m.**

His judgment, therefore, is all confused. He is making poor judgments, and as a Prime Minister you expect people to make judgments that are sound. So, this

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debate is not about the Member for Tobago East. That is not what this debate is about. This debate is about the conduct and the character of the Leader of the Opposition, [*Desk thumping*] his ability to make decisions. The fact that he cannot be trusted, and that “Westgate” matter showed that he cannot be trusted. Hiding information—how can you trust a person who wants to be a national leader but is hiding information from the public to serve his own interest above the interest of the country? I pause for you to reflect on that, you know. I really pause for you to reflect on that.

Mr. Speaker, you know, in closing this afternoon—and time really does run very fast in this new dispensation that we have—I brought an article by Miss Suzanne Mills from the *Newsday* in which she really put it all well in terms of her treatment of the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition, and it is important that I just read a bit of it: “Raw sexual innuendo”, Sunday, March 22, 2015:

“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.”

Of course what this very renowned writer, Suzanne Mills—I read her every weekend as she writes—writes here is that she condemns the Leader of the Opposition for his attitude towards women and his crass language. You know, Mr. Speaker, she said:

“Rowley went down low this past week and it was repulsive...”

I would not dignify this comment by reading what she said here. I would not hurt the hearts and minds and ears of the people of this country by also stooping low to read what he said. But the country has made a judgment on him already in terms of his treatment of women and his respect for women in this society, and that to me is important. Because his respect for women might only be a reflection of his respect for the citizenry as a whole in this country, and that is what is important. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, he is unfit. This Motion is not frivolous. This is a very serious Motion that has to do with the future of this country, and the Leader of the Opposition has brought the Parliament into disrepute and brought the Leader of the Opposition position into disrepute, and, therefore, he should be roundly condemned and censured by this Parliament for the kind of behaviour he has been

engaging over the last five years in this country, without having any policy position in order to paint a vision for Trinidad and Tobago as has been done by the hon. Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

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

**The Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration (Hon. Rodger Samuel):** Mr. Speaker, to stand here and to participate in this Motion is a very good one, because I have sat here in this honourable House for almost one complete term, an experience for which I am forever grateful, grateful to be able to serve, honoured to represent the constituents of Arima, thankful to my own family who have stood with me throughout this period.

In my own experience in this House, we have had hours of lengthy debates, some were tremendously exciting, some not so exciting. We have sat through Motions of no confidence against the hon. Prime Minister in the past as well as Motions and statements against hon. Members and Ministers of this Government, even we had to experience Motions of no confidence against the person who oversees the operation of this House. So, it is from one Motion to the next, but all of these Motions, Mr. Speaker, originated from those on the other side.

This is the first Motion that comes from this side of the House, and one thing that we must observe, that when the Motions of no confidence came against the Prime Minister, we sat through it all. We sat here for some 25 hours. We endured. The Prime Minister sat in her seat and she endured all of the attacks and all of the comments, but we see when the shoes are on the other feet they disappear, they run. And it says that you have to be careful because the same measure with which you judge others, is the same measure that would come back to you, it is same judgment that you cast on others will turn back to haunt you.

And, Mr. Speaker, during the Motion of no confidence against the Prime Minister, they did not leave. They sat through. They attacked with almost full force, unfortunately, the force was neutralized by the Government. [*Desk thumping*] They attempted tremendously to embarrass the Prime Minister and other Members of Government, and to try to seize control by forcing a collapse of this Government, that, too, did not succeed and, from time to time, allegations upon allegations are brought, spearheaded by the Leader of the Opposition, from emailgate to you name what, and we sat through it all and defended ourselves, but now the shoe is on the other foot, and what do they do?

They stampede out of the Parliament, not for the first time, but for the second time, and I call that not an advancement but a hasty retreat, because in haste they

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walk out; sending a strong message to the nation; sending a strong message to our children; sending a strong message to our young citizens that the moment you are challenged you walk out; sending a strong message to our children at school that if you are challenged by your teachers, walk out; sending a strong message to people who are employed, when you do not like when they challenge your status, walk out; and yet they want to lead. The only thing I can see that they would lead in is future walk-outs on the nation. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, one thing that is alarming is that it is one thing to give, it is another thing to take. You see a man can decide—I remember there was a boxer by the name of Mike Tyson, he destroyed his opponents. Most of the knockouts were in one round. Mr. Speaker, he destroyed them, and then he came up against a guy that had an appropriate name, Buster Douglas. Mr. Speaker, Buster Douglas was considered to be the underdog, because Mike Tyson was the champ, he was the winner, and somewhere in round four or five he destroyed the future of Mike Tyson and never again was Mike Tyson able to win another fight. As a matter of fact, he was so vicious that he turned towards biting ears [*Laughter*] against Evander Holyfield. He tried to vandalize Holyfield.

Why am I saying that, Mr. Speaker? Because it is one thing to give, but the first time he started to receive, he was knocked out, and it is important for us to see that. It is important for us to know that.

Mr. Speaker, since we were last here all kinds of stuff had shifted, but we need to refocus, we need to redirect our minds, we need to return to the tenets of the Motion, and the tenets of the Motion have nothing to do with a person, it has to do with a personality, and we are going to talk about personality; personality of a person who aspires to lead this nation. I am not here to talk about a person.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to talk about personality then we would have to examine one's traits, we will have to examine one's habits, we will have to examine one's attitude, we will have to examine one's character, and then in so doing look at their disposition, look at their temperament, their temper, their mentality, their mental attitude in order to ascertain whether an individual has the kind of personality that this nation needs to be led by them.

And those mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual that define a person and can prepare us as to how we will deal with persons of that nature. As a matter of fact, when you understand the temperament and the disposition and the temper and the mentality of a person, it prepares you in advance as to how you are going to relate to that person. If they are aggressive, if they are attacking, then it

prepares you in advance as to how you are going to deal with it. As a matter of fact, in many instances it prepares you to have a good defence. So, you have to understand the character of a person, and based on that we can determine if that person is ideal, if that person is fit for leadership to lead a nation like us.

As a matter of fact, in Barbara White's writing, *Several Personalities Found in a Good Leader*. She stated:

“A good leader has an exemplary character.”

It is of utmost importance that a leader is trustworthy to lead others. A leader needs to be trusted and be known to live his/her life with honesty and integrity. That is so sound. That is rooted, honesty and integrity. And I am saying that because there have been accusations cast about Members on this side and then when it is cleared up there is no apology. But I have seen on this side when things are said, the Prime Minister herself would get up and acknowledge, this was not right, and it says there is a difference in the quality and the character of persons who lead.

Mr. Speaker, a good leader walks the talk and in doing so what he earns is the right to have the responsibility for others. And if he does not walk the talk or they do not walk the talk then it is a difficult thing to give them responsibility over others, because they will say one thing and do another, and I can tell you that, because there are examples of that.

### **3.45 p.m.**

Just over the Easter holiday—this is the newspaper, Mr. Speaker, in the *Express*. Hear what it says, story April 03, 2015:

“Opposition Leader...has implored all the leaders of Trinidad and Tobago to adopt the values which Christianity teaches as the guiding principles in mentoring people...”

But not too long before that, *Newsday*, Wednesday, March—listen to this, Mr. Speaker—sorry, September 16, 2013:

“Opposition Leader, Dr. Keith Rowley has advised...MP Rodger Samuel to leave God out of politics...”

This is a difficult thing for me to understand. In one breath, Mr. Speaker, adopt the values which Christianity teaches as guiding principles in mentoring people. In another breath, “tell Samuel leave God out of politics”. How could you in one

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breath—I am confused, because you cannot in one breath say we need to adopt the values and the values of Christianity stem from God, and in another breath leave God out. Yet, people of this nature want to lead this country and want to lead us down a Godless road, just based on this statement.

Mr. Speaker, it is something that we have to look at, because a leader who lacks character and integrity will not endure the test of time. I will say that again. A leader who lacks character, a leader who lacks integrity will not endure the test of time. And it is not a good thing for you to assume leadership based on the demise of others. I say that because in many instances we are propelled to leadership because we are responsible and we are people of integrity and we have standards. But I cannot say the same, because the first issue of leadership, the first sense of leadership coming from the other side was one that arose out of the demise of the losses of the former Prime Minister, Patrick Manning.

So there was a leadership that was assumed, and that is difficult because you have not stood the test of time, you have not gone through the test, you have not understood the quality and the character and the kind of integrity that demands to lead, and to rise because somebody fell did not mean that you have risen.

Mr. Speaker, this is serious stuff, you know. I must not rise because somebody fell, I must rise because I deserve to rise, and that is something that we must think about. It does not matter how intelligent we are; it does not matter, Mr. Speaker, how affable we are; it does not matter how persuasive we are; it does not matter how savvy we are as other persons. If they are prone to rationalizing unethical behaviour based upon current or future needs they will eventually fall prey. They will fall prey to their own undoing. And it is important for us to see that. And I want to put a little plug in here, one writer says, Mr. Speaker, optics over ethics is not a formula for success. Optics over ethics is not a formula for success. I want us to see that. So personality counts.

Mr. Speaker, when a person forgets what they say and then say something otherwise, they are not worthy. When this Motion of no confidence was brought, it was said by those on the other side and even the leader that this Motion is frivolous, it makes no sense. The Government knows that they have the majority and, that is it. But I want to read something from the *Stabroek* Editor that quotes the *Trinidad Express*, Mr. Speaker, February 16, 2012. And tell me if this is not a person that has one view and crashes on that view with another view or speaks on the two sides of the mouth. Listen to this, Mr. Speaker:

“Making the announcement yesterday at a...conference at his Charles Street, Port of Spain office, Rowley stated: ‘We have had enough. So this morning I

have filed in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago a Motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister. I have asked the Parliament through the relevant Standing Order to make provision for this matter to be debated at the earliest possible opportunity.”

Do not get excited, it is coming.

“Under the regulations this motion requires a 12-day notice period and takes priority over all other business. When the Carnival is conducted and is over, on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, the Opposition goes to the Parliament to conduct the nation’s business by moving a vote of no confidence.”

We all remember that.

“The motion which is all embracing refers to the Prime Minister’s ‘gross incompetence’, the Government failure to stimulate the economy as well as the inability to effectively manage officers under the control of the Prime Minister.”

I did not realise that she had problems managing. But this is where it gets sweet.

“The population has had enough of the experience of maladministration in governance and we need to call the Government to order,’ he said, adding that the no-confidence motion was not about the actual votes...”

Mr. Speaker, did you hear that? It was not about the actual votes. In other words, it was not about any outcome. It was not about the fact that the Government has more and they have less, it was not about that. He said, the actual no confidence motion was:

“...about what is said during the debate.”

So in other words, Mr. Speaker, what is said during a debate it is of utmost importance to the debate. So we are here today and we are in a debate, in a Motion of no confidence, but they would not sit around to hear what is being said in the debate. And he said that is what is of importance to a no confidence Motion, not the outcome, not the vote, not what adds up at the end, it is what is being said.

I want to encourage all of us that are listening to pay attention to what is being said in this debate, because what is being said is essential, because in one breath, Mr. Speaker, it is not what—it is what is said is important and in another breath this is a waste of time because the Government has more votes, when he said

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before it is not the votes that count. So again, speaks on one side of the mouth, contrast that and totally contradicts that on the other side of the mouth.

Mr. Speaker, this is serious business. This is the same gentleman who has charged this Government and said that the Prime Minister and the Cabinet are harbouring criminals. Could I quote it? *Newsday*, Mr. Speaker, let me get the exact date for you, April 20, 2013. I just want to read the portion. And the Prime Minister had to take all of that, “eh”. Listen to this.

“Noting that Warner is not a law unto himself and Persad-Bissessar appointed him to the Cabinet, Rowley said, ‘My question is to the Prime Minister, when are you going to act’.

While he could not pronounce on Warner’s innocence or guilt, Rowley said he was well within his rights as Opposition Leader to say the weight of the allegations against Warner ‘are too heavy to be borne by a Minister of Government in TT’.

He charged that Persad-Bissessar’s reluctance to take any action against Warner, in the face of serious allegations against...him, portrays the Cabinet as ‘a cabal engaging in criminal conduct and supporting criminality...’”

Did you hear that, Mr. Speaker? It is important for us to see that. But yet this criminal element that he said that we are harbouring has now become part of the family. The enemy of my enemy has now become my friend. Strange. In one breath, on one side of the mouth if he remains in Government we are harbouring criminality. On the other breath, if he is your enemy he is my friend. What a shocking thing. It says that the quality of person that we are looking for cannot be realised in such an individual. It clearly defines and sends a strong message that for a person to speak on both sides of their mouth, then it is a difficult thing, they are not fit to lead. And we have to check the state of mind. We have to see what is on the inside.

Mr. Speaker, it is said that we are a sum total of what we are on the inside, that our outward expressions are based on our innermost nature. And that what you see and hear on the outside is no different to what you hear on the loud speakers when a DJ cracks up his amplifiers. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, sometimes the speakers are loud but the DJ will tell you the speakers cannot take the power so he has to reduce the drive, because the source of the music is oftentimes far more powerful than the end product, the speakers themselves or the boxes themselves.



Mr. Speaker, I have said that to make a point, that a person's actions and reactions and attitudes, whatever is exhibited on the outside is just but a small percentage of the real problem that is taking place on the inside. As a matter of fact, we need to understand that we only say things or do things when we are filled to the brim, to the overflow. It is no different to a person having a glass that is filled with water to the brim and any little move they have to be careful because any little movement will cause a spill.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes the spill is caused and we pay attention to the spill and we try to clean it up quickly but what we have ignored is the fact that the spill says the magnitude of the thing that is taking place on the inside. And when people speak and they say things and they arrogantly express themselves, we are quick to run and clean up the spill, but we never help the person, because the spill says that that person is full to the brim of the stuff and that any little thing, a little nudge, a little shake, will cause what they have on the inside to come out.

**4.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, that is a dangerous individual; dangerous, because that person could be deemed or categorized as a walking time bomb. The periods where they look normal, we can go like what the young people say: that is pure hate but they are acting normal. Why? Because it is out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks and when you speak on two sides of your mouth, you could imagine what is on the inside. You could imagine what you are full of. And if all you can do is criticize, that tells you a lot what you are full of, and we have to be very careful that this is the situation that we have found ourselves in. What comes out says to us a lot of stuff, and I think we must pay attention, not just to the spill. What comes out in the spur of a moment, what flashes across in some reaction, not being proactive, but some reactive mechanism, what we say in aggression, we have to look beyond that and start to look at what is taking place on the inside of the person and begin to find the necessary help for them. We need to start to find help for them, because actions are saying: something is wrong on the inside.

I want to use another analogy. Mr. Speaker, it is said when somebody drowns at sea and divers dive, looking for the body, there is a technique that they use. They get just below the surface and they skim the surface looking for oxygen bubbles because the human body retains a certain amount of oxygen when it is submerged in water and when they see bubbles rising to the surface, they begin to dive deeper and in diving deeper they will know they are coming close because the deeper they dive the more intense the bubbles are. They know the closer they are getting. Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to start to dive, because all those little

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flashes of arrogance and disrespect for you the Speaker and disrespect seems to be coming across the board and sending this message of disrespect, all those are just the bubbles that are rising to the surface. We have to dig real deep. [*Desk thumping*] Because somewhere down below there is death, there is decay. Something worse is happening. It is not just—you see those explosions do not happen by chance, you know.

Mr. Speaker, it is said that we are mental greenhouses. We nurture things in our heart, what we say we do not want in our actions. We nurture stuff, and hear what happens, we have this mental greenhouse and we keep feeding this thing on the inside and what takes place is when we cannot keep it in any longer, it spills. It is no different to a person that has a nice little rose plant on the inside and they are nurturing it and feeding it and it is growing and then it reaches a point that they cannot keep it inside any longer. They must transplant it to the open. And then your neighbours pass by and see your rose plant in the garden and say: Oh, you have a nice plant. They did not know that you were nurturing that all the time. Well the same thing—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Arima and Minister of Social Integration and National Diversity has expired. Would you want to guide me?

**Hon. R. Samuel:** Thank you very much. I will, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Would you like an extension?

**Hon. R. Samuel:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Member for Arima be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. R. Samuel:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the plant is transplanted and everybody sees it in the open. As a matter of fact, many a times when we transplant these innermost things in the open, people are shocked because they would say: I did not know you were like that. And you exploded and you use obscene language or you use some kind of language that is derogatory and people feel well you just said. No, you do not just say things. If you just said it and did not mean it, you are mad. It means your mouth is saying something that your brain is not in control of and people like that are treated.

Mr. Speaker, this is serious business. It means that spirit of integrity and self-control that is needed to lead is lacking and we would find ourselves in a difficult

and dangerous position if it is allowed to continue or to get root in a nation and bear fruit. Mr. Speaker, this is a serious time we are living in and personality counts, disposition counts, temperament counts, habits count. And if that is not considered in the movement of the nation forward then we are in trouble.

Mr. Speaker, it is only within recent times I have paid close attention to the utterances in this House of the former Prime Minister, Patrick Manning. And one statement that rings out and sends a sharp message is that the more—I am paraphrasing—you go at him, he becomes like a raging bull. In other words, Mr. Speaker, he must attack but not be attacked. He must condemn but not be condemned. He must insult but not be insulted. He must correct, but not be corrected. He must stand in aggression but you must never be aggressive. Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on and on. In other words, do not feed me with the same things that I fed you with.

Mr. Speaker, if this is what we will sit by and allow, then we are in extreme trouble in this nation because, as I close, optics is not as important as ethics and I dare to say that we want leaders of high ethics and high morals and high integrity and high values and people who we can look up to because when they say yes is yes. When they say no is no. When they say wrong they quickly apologize and say what I said was not true.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a lot of accusations, accusations of people going to embassies and making statements and asking for racial this and it was wrong. But you know, there was never an apology. This seems to be the only House that few people would have the fortitude to apologize. And if you feel that apologizing belittles you, try it and you will see how much strength you get from the humility of saying I am sorry. There is tremendous strength. But a lot of us never venture into the modes of strength because we never get to the point of apologizing because we feel that I say—one person said: “I have said it and that is it.” And I said: “Well, even though you do not retract it God knows and he knows if what you said was true or false and whether you believe it or not, you would have to give an account for that and you will have to deal with that.”

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that unlike the hon. Prime Minister who is willing to bear all the attacks, and sit through all of the Motions, have to sit there and face it, I remember sitting on the other side, right there on the back Bench and I would fix my gaze upon the Prime Minister when she was being attacked. When I say attacked, attacked. It is not easy for 12/13 persons to drive it home. And I sat there watching her temperament, watching her own expressions watching, because a picture paints a thousand words. You can look into the eyes and see if

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she is getting angry. I never saw her getting real mad and want to jump up and attack and she was always just smiling and sitting there and biding her time. It is not easy to sit and hear people speak against you, especially for—I mean they spoke, they spoke and they spoke. Mr. Speaker, that is not an easy thing. But you know something? She sat there and she bore it all and up to this day she has never attacked in return, never attacked in return. What she has done is that she has learnt and she has developed and she has matured and she has become the kind of person that this nation needs to take us forward. [*Desk thumping*] That is the person I would follow, who is willing to learn, who never always believes that I have it all right and if I cannot have my way.

Mr. Speaker, when I was a young boy, big men “use tuh tap yuh up yuh know.” When you carry your ball and your bat to play cricket and you are out and you want to take your ball and go home, “big men use tuh tap yuh up and send yuh home without yuh bat and ball.” When I see what happened here over the last two sittings, if we were playing cricket in my days as a child, they would be tapped up because they come and if they cannot have their way they take their bat and their ball and they gone, on two occasions.

Mr. Speaker, that sends a strong message to our nation. It sends a strong message to our children. It sends a strong message to our teenagers. It sends a strong message and it says to our citizenry “doh stand up” if something is said about you, if you are addressed or if you are dealt with, if you are accused or whatever, because he was one of the persons, when he was dealing with Mr. Warner, that said if you have things against you, you must come clean.

I am dealing with this Motion of attitude and personalities. He is not here to come clean. He is not here for me to sit down and hear him because I really wanted to. I want to hear his version in the House, his view, his view of how he looks at life and how he relates and how he sees the House and how he sees people. That is what I want to hear. Unfortunately for me, I have been robbed of that because he has decided that he will not sit to entertain people like me.

Mr. Speaker, sad to say, that is not a person I would want to follow. God bless you. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Transport (Hon. Stephen Cadiz):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Motion speaks to the reckless conduct of the Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, and has given rise to serious concerns in the public domain about his judgment and exercise of his discretion and I think every speaker on this side here has pointed out, in no small way, that

there are very, very serious concerns about his judgment and the exercise of his discretion. Being the Leader of the Opposition, being the political leader of the “Balisier brigade” and the aspiring Prime Minister, we really and truly have to wonder who this individual is.

I remember hearing, I believe it was the Member for Diego Martin North/East that said he only became the Leader of the Opposition in 2010 or something like that and, therefore, the public has no right in going back to investigate who this person is. But I know when you are aspiring to be the leader of a country we need to know the name of the puppy you had when you were three years old. We need to know where you went to primary school, where you went to kindergarten school. We want to know who your friends were. We want to know where you worked. We want to know what kind of person you were. Are you a people’s person? Every single solitary thing about you is what we have a right, as a voter, electorate. As a citizen of this country we have a right to know who this person is. Because we do not want a person who, all of a sudden, becomes a very different person, depending on the office that the person holds.

And, therefore, we need to know from the Member for Diego Martin West who is this family man? Who is the professional from Diego Martin West? Who is the mas player? Who is the politician, the Member of Parliament, the Tobagonian that he boasts he is so proud of being? We want to know: who is this Leader of the Opposition? We want to know who is this political leader and aspiring Prime Minister. We want to know: what is this new image that is being shown to the electorate in Trinidad and Tobago? What is this new image? I think every month the Leader of the Opposition travels. We are not too sure where he heads off to, but he comes back showing Trinidad and Tobago this new person.

**Hon. Member:** The fifth rebranding.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Fifth rebranding. But when you look at the history of the individual, he have been vilified by his own leader. The first time we heard the then leader speak of this individual was when he was being referred to as a hooligan and a “wajang” and that was in 2008. That was not only by his political leader who obviously had a major falling out with the individual, but it was his own peers. So when your boss tells you something that is one thing, but when your partners that you are working with are also singing from the same hymn book to describe your attitude and the type of person that you are, I think that is when you have to really and truly start being worried because sometimes bosses

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do not like to see persons under them aspiring to be, at some stage, the boss. But when your peers start talking about you in a particular way, you need to stand up and take cognisance of that because it is probably very, very true.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you go through the life and the history of this individual as a politician, you really and truly have to sit up because when your boss—and we all know the terms. We all know the then Prime Minister, when he spoke about seeing hate and bitterness and acrimony and animosity and a man completely out of control.

But you know what is most telling, Mr. Speaker? The then Prime Minister said:

“That problem is not a new problem to me. I was aware of the tendency for the hon. Member to go out of control since 1987.”

That is 28 years ago. That is what he is speaking to. I had an old Bajan boss who used to tell me: “Boy a leopard doh ever change its spots, you know.” So, for 28 years the then Prime Minister understood who this individual was, and the older you get, as far as I know, the more stuck in your ways that you get. I am not going to ask the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre if that is so. But from what I understand, the older you get the more stuck you are in your ways. So when you are developed in a particular way, do not come and tell me at age 65—not the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, but the Member for Diego Martin West—all of a sudden you are this brand new person because your makeover artist has told you, if you want to be the Prime Minister of this country this is what you have to do. This is how you have to behave. This is how you have to dress. But every now and again we see the Member for Diego Martin West come here. As my good friend who preached to us here this afternoon, every now and again, when the attack comes, you see the true leopard coming out.

So, let us look at this individual and let us see who it is that we are dealing with here. Then, the Prime Minister, again, speaks of the Member for Diego Martin West. He says the firing, when he fired him from his position, when he started to talk about UDeCott. This is what he had to say: This firing had nothing to do with UDeCott or the Prime Minister himself. It was in fact as a result of his behavioural pattern. So the then Prime Minister recognized who this man is, who this person is. It is your particular behaviour that every single time you are asked, you are brought into question, maybe not even attacked but people question you as to how you could make that statement. How you could think like that? How

you could come up with this particular decision? That his behaviour changes into this very, very different person that I do not care who the image makers are, it would never ever change. It is a 24 hours—oh no, I would not say that.

So, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, who led this run from the Parliament the other day—Mr. Speaker, you know something? They did not run out the Parliament. “Dey gone up in the tea room.” So, whilst we are down here doing the people’s business, they are snacking upstairs, relaxing upstairs which, really and truly, when you think—a number of speakers have made mention of the time of the Motion against the Prime Minister, 27 hours. I would never forget that. Five o’clock in the evening the following day, after sitting down here from half past one the Friday, five o’clock in the evening Saturday we now all packing our bags to go home because we sat here in defence of our Prime Minister and not one single one, the ones that still wearing the balisier tie, the ones who have been fired, the ones who he has thrown out, all get up and go, instead of standing up here and defending the Member for Diego Martin West. How can they? Not one of them could sit here and defend them? I do not understand that. All of us sit down here and defend our Prime Minister. Not one single one got up to his defence. Up to now the Member for Diego Martin West has not come to his own defence.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** He is not sure what they would say. It is orchestrated.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Well, maybe that is it. Maybe since “throat buss” and whatever is going on now, he does not know what is going to happen. But maybe if he stood here to ask them to defend him that they would all do the honourable thing and sit down and say nothing, sit down in silence and say we have no reason to defend this individual because again, the leopard does not change its spots and no matter how you try to do it, it is the same individual we are dealing with.

So here it is that we have the Member for Diego Martin North/East, his newfound friend. I remember he was going up against him as leader. I remember where he, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, supported the firing of the Member for Diego Martin West. He supported him. But here is the Member for Diego Martin North/East—and this is part of the contribution made by the Member for Diego Martin North/East on the commission of enquiry dated Wednesday 21st October, 2009. He goes on and he says:

“The fact of the matter is, as I have said it before, my colleague from Diego Martin West, I gave him some advice before. I read a newspaper report—you never know what to make...”

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This is the Member for Diego Martin North/East saying this, not me.

“you never know what to make of what is written in the newspapers. Quite often it is inaccurate. But taking the newspaper report at face value, I saw a newspaper report when I had told my colleague, the Member for Diego Martin West, that he needs to do some introspection and that he is too close to some of the players in this enquiry and too close to some of the contractors in this enquiry. He said I had given him advice before and he did not take it, well, for what it is worth, I am giving it to him again.

He is just too close to some of the players in this enquiry who are feeding him false information. He has lost objectivity.”

So here it is that the Member for Diego Martin West is being accused by the Member for Diego Martin North/East of people feeding the Member for Diego Martin West false information and that is what he is bringing into the enquiry. So what is it we have heard from the Member for Diego Martin West, which we have been sitting here since 2010? Is it not the same false information coming from whoever that he comes with, making all these wild accusations? And then wants to come and talk about where is the proof when we make a statement. Where is the proof? We always walk with our proof.

Here is the Member for Diego Martin North/East again. You know, it is strange how things come home to haunt you, you know, and that is why you must be careful of what you say because somewhere along the line it is written down somewhere and somebody is going to bring it back.

The Member for Diego Martin North/East—*Hansard* Monday, 21st December, 2009.

“The Member for Diego Martin West served in the Government with me from 1991—1995 and at no time during that period, did he say the Government of which he was a part was trying to bramble anybody. He served in the Government with me from 2001—2008 and at no time during that period did he say that the Government of which we were both a part, was trying to bramble anybody. I am very, very disappointed in the line that my hon. colleague and comrade at arms—in six elections—...is taking now. I am very, very disappointed.”

So here it is that the Member for Diego Martin North/East, leading the charge, the flag-waver for the band. “He pick up de flag and he buss it. And hear him nah, he say no purpose, empty vacuous, tenuous, absurd”—making all these statements in



defence of the Member for Diego Martin West. But it really is strange that the only people remaining on those benches are the persons who are part of the screening committee. “You notice everybody who not on the screening committee gone? Dey gone!”

A man like the Member for Diego Martin Central, not one single person voted for the Member for Diego Martin Central on the screening committee “eh”. That man has stood up for hours and hours defending the other side. “Eh? He ain get one vote?” What does that say about the chairman of the screening committee who is the Member for Diego Martin West? “Eh?” What does it say about the chairman? The chairman is trying to write down all the names he want. Well two gone. Well two did not like it and “dey get tuh hell out and dey gone.” So I do not know how he is going to deal with the others.

We come back and continue on the judgment and the exercise of the discretion and the type of individual this person is. This is May 24, 2001. I believe the present Member for Toco/Sangre Grande was the hon. Speaker in the House then. And the Member for Diego Martin West was on his feet and hear the Speaker:

“Member, I think you have been going along fairly well, but when you begin to insult another Member in that language, it is unparliamentary and I am asking you to withdraw it.”

The Member for Diego Martin West:

“I have insulted no one.

**Mr. Speaker:** I ask you to withdraw it.

Member for Diego Martin West:

“I have nothing to withdraw.”

Mr. Speaker asking the question:

“You have nothing to withdraw?”

The Member for Diego Martin West:

“I have not—

**Mr. Speaker:** Well, if you have nothing to withdraw, you will discontinue your speech for the rest of the debate. Let us move on. Next.

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“Then one bacchanal break out in de House. Mr. Valley talking, Mr. Hinds talking, Dr. Rowley talking.” Hear the Speaker:

“Member for Diego Martin East, take your seat.”

Member for Diego Martin—“well yuh know how the Member for Diego Martin North/East does normally be” and he is still the same way and this is since 2001, “so he ain change at all.” So the Member for Diego Martin North/East has not changed one iota and we expect that the Member for Diego Martin West is going to change? No! “Both ah dem from Diego dey would not change.” So hear the Speaker:

“Member for Diego Martin West, that outburst is an insult to the Chair. I am warning you, you have to refrain from those insults and when I am speaking, keep silent.”

Now deceased Mr. Valley jumps up and bawl “Oui papa!” Mr. Hinds started to shout. Dr. Rowley gone again, and hear the Speaker:

“Are you threatening me? Members, under Standing Order 43(3) I am asking the Member for his behaviour, which is insulting and disrespectful to the Chair, to vacate the Chamber and do so forthwith.”

Off he goes. This is in 2001 and he is fighting the Speaker.

**Dr. Rambachan:** “And he still ain change.”

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** No, and he still has not changed so do not try and come and bamboozle this House and bamboozle the people of this country by going to some PR firm in New York or wherever you are going or Miami or wherever it is you are going, and with a little hair spray—no, he do not have hair—or a little whatever spray and a new tie and a new scarf and all of that is going to change you? No! I tell you the Bajan was right, the leopard does not change its spots. Here it is, in 2001, this man is attacking the Speaker, just like how he does it here, attacking the Speaker. That is why all they could have done is to walk out of this Parliament because they could not stand here and defend the Member for Diego Martin West. They had no defence whatsoever for the Member for Diego Martin West.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I think it is a good time for us to pause and have some tea. This sitting is now suspended until 5.00 p.m.

**4.30 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for Chaguanas East, Minister of Transport.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just before the tea break we were speaking about the man behind the mask, the man who is describing himself—the Member for Diego Martin West—in many, many different ways and selling himself to this country as a person who would, really and truly, want to be the Prime Minister of this country, and of course, we continue—not vilifying the Member in any which way but, really and truly, to expose the truth. Again, the man behind the mask. Who is this person, really and truly? And therefore Trinidad and Tobago needs to understand that. Take the party politics out of it; take all the bacchanal and radio talk shows and what have you and, really and truly, start examining this individual.

So one of the things, of course, that struck me was when they walked out, and I looked at the Member for Diego Martin West. He looked like a follower to the Member for Diego Martin North/East because the Member for Diego Martin North/East was the first one that got up and said that he was not going to sit here and listen, and the Member for Diego Martin West, sort of, was not too sure about what he was going to do. Therefore, it led me to believe that this person, really and truly, maybe is not the leader he would like to be. Therefore, it asks the question, really and truly: where is the backbone of this leader? Where is his mettle, his intestinal fortitude? To walk out on this Parliament speaks volumes as to the character of the person.

Is it that he did not have the confidence, or the grit, or guts to stand there and defend himself against this Motion? I mean, that is very, very, important. You, as a leader, you have to take it. You have to take the blows both from whether within or outside of your party circle. This is not, according to the Member for Oropouche East, a tea party by the Bishop's house. This is serious business. This is raw politics. This is what we do here. Anybody who comes to this Parliament and thinks that this is a place for something totally different is totally mistaken. This is where it happens. This is where the politics is.

So we move along now and we look at the Member as an MP—Member of Parliament. I think he was the Member of Parliament since 1991, I believe, for Diego Martin West. And let us look at his track record. What has he done? Mr. Speaker, this is my first five years as an elected Member of Parliament, and I have never worked in a constituency before, and when I look at the work that we have put into Chaguanas East; the kind of work that has gone in there being a neophyte to this grouping, and not understanding electoral politics in the raw sense, and seeing the way in which we were able to get this job done, I wonder,

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for a person like the Member for Diego Martin West who has been there since 1991, as the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West what, really and truly, has he done? How has Diego Martin West changed over the years?

For those of us who know Diego Martin West, who either live there or have friends that live there, or visit, or go down to Chaguaramas, go to Macqueripe, go down the islands, for whatever reason you have to go down to Diego Martin West, you really ask the question: has he really done anything for Diego Martin West? Because Diego Martin West, since 1991—you want to tell me that the Member for Diego Martin West did not understand that there were traffic issues in Diego Martin West? Nobody had to tell him that. All you have to do is go on that road any hour of the day, from since 1991, and you would have known that traffic is a major problem. Yet still, he came in as a Cabinet Member as Minister of Planning, as Minister of Trade, and you did not think to act at that time to be able to push to get better access in and out, for instance, of Chaguaramas?

Let us talk about Chaguaramas. The other side is constantly talking about the Chaguaramas Convention Centre as though it is the holy grail of the balisier politics; that they are the only ones who are allowed to even look at that building when “yuh” driving past, far less for going inside the building.

The Chaguaramas Development Authority kept the building empty for decades. Why? Because once a year the brigade went down there to hold their annual convention. And, of course, it has all kinds of historical meaning for them. You know, of course, Eric Williams, then Prime Minister, went down and wrestled control of Chaguaramas from the Americans and what have you, and therefore, there is some of that that goes on. Okay? And we expect that. But by no means, Mr. Speaker, does that grouping who sit on the other side have any right to Chaguaramas. [*Desk thumping*] Chaguaramas is for Trinidad and Tobago. That is who Chaguaramas is for.

Now, when you hear all the bacchanal that broke out the other day about selling Chaguaramas lands and what have you, complete falsehoods, untruths, downright lies that were being—

**Mr. Speaker:** Please.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. De Coteau:** Falsehoods.

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** When you hear them making the statements about selling Chaguaramas land, of course, we all know from statements being made in this

Parliament that Chaguaramas land cannot be sold. It can be leased. Okay? Nobody is authorized. There is no person who can sell Chaguaramas land. Chaguaramas lands are leased, so anybody saying about others coming in and taking over the lands and blocking out the public from the beaches and what have you, totally, totally wrong. That has not happened and will not happen, and especially under this Government.

But I want the Leader of the Opposition, Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West—I want to find out something, Mr. Speaker. There is a company that leases 2.896 acres of land in Chaguaramas. The name of the company is Sun Island Cruises Limited. I think we all know it. For those of us who might have gone to one function in our lives—Carnival fete—we know it as Pier 1. Mr. Speaker, Pier 1 has a lease that works out to approximately—well, not approximately; it is \$1,200 per month for 2.896 acres of Chaguaramas land, seafront property, probably one of the most useful pieces of property in Chaguaramas—TT \$1,200. It is not US. TT per month! They are paying just over \$14,000 a year—\$14,000 a year!

They were given the lease in 1994. I wonder who was the Minister of Planning in 1994? The Minister of Planning in 1994—no, not the Minister of Planning, I take that back. The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, from January 13, 1992 to October 06, 1995 was no other than the Member for Diego Martin West. So I would think that he would have had some input—if not direct input—into Chaguaramas.

The funny part about this is, you go and you sign a 30-year lease for \$14,000 a year—okay?—with an option to renew after 30 years—and guess what?—at the same price. There is no escalation clause in this lease. So these people who have this Sun Island Cruises Limited are renting for the first 30 years, \$14,000 a year—it is \$1,200 a month. That is the price of an all-inclusive ticket, Mr. Speaker. You sell one all-inclusive ticket and you pay the rent. And then they want to come here and talk about friend and family who buying all the lands.

I wonder if—based on the questions earlier on here—Cabinet approved this in 1994, I want to know where is the advertisement that went into all the newspapers at that time, advertising this property for people to bid on. Because from what we have heard in this House, all properties in Chaguaramas now—this is how this People's Partnership conducts their business—is publicly advertised. The rates are negotiated. There are escalation clauses in the leases. In fact, some people are saying that the leases are too onerous, but Chaguaramas Development Authority

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is trying their level best to get all the—anywhere they can monetize the assets of Chaguaramas—up to a point of course—is what they are trying to do, and to maximize the benefit to the taxpayer.

Hence the reason the taxpayer, the citizens of this country, do not have to go and pay to use a beach in Chaguaramas. There are national parks away—in Yellow Stone and wherever else—that every time you enter the gate, you have to pay money to be able to use the park facilities. But in order for Chaguaramas to be able to provide, whether it is the boardwalk, whether it is other recreational facilities—Macqueripe and what have you—they do not charge for you to go in. Therefore, the money has to come from somewhere, and the money comes, in many, many cases, from the leasing of properties down there. And that is fine. There is nothing wrong with that.

But you want to come here and talk about this People's Partnership selling Chaguaramas land, giving it away to their friends and family, and here it is, for the price of one all-inclusive ticket, you have given away 2.896 acres of prime Chaguaramas land belonging to the citizens of this country. But you see, they think that they own Chaguaramas. They think that they own the Convention Centre, when that Convention Centre is costing the taxpayer nearly half a million dollars a year just to maintain it. But they do not want anybody else to get it.

The other thing is, they do not want the lands in Chaguaramas to be monetized at the market value, because when their own friends now want to come and apply for land, it means that they are going to have to be paying the higher prices, the prices that this Government has allowed the CDA to establish.

So when we talk about Chaguaramas now, we go on a little further than that. In 2000—now, where was he in the year 2000? In the year 2000, the then Panday administration was in office and 2,654 yachties came to use the mariner facilities in Chaguaramas, that is, for maintenance of vessels. And the yachties come here, they spend money. It creates a whole industry, Mr. Speaker—2,654 in the year 2000. That has dropped now by more than half.

I have never heard one time when the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West even spoke to the issue of job losses and what have you, in the western peninsula. He was the Member of Parliament. He was the Minister of Trade, the Minister of Planning, the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, the Minister of Housing. So he was a Cabinet Minister and, yet still, more important, the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, and not one

statement regarding job loss, not one statement regarding how do we improve the job opportunities in Chaguaramas; how do we improve the training opportunities for young people to go and work in Chaguaramas.

And the beauty about the people that work in Chaguaramas, Mr. Speaker, they are all craftsmen and tradesmen. Many of them work for themselves. You do not hear anything. The boat-building industry in Chaguaramas has just about closed. There is no real boat-building industry going on down there. Again, the yachties, as they are called, have moved on to Grenada and moved on to St. Vincent and St. Lucia, et cetera, because they get a better deal up there than what they were getting down here.

Then we could continue. The famous Chaguaramas fishing centre in—Mr. Speaker, this is quoting, Thursday, September 18, 2014, the *Guardian*:

“The Land and Marine Resources Ministry has referred the Carenage Fishing Centre project to the Finance Ministry to probe, since almost \$19 million was spent towards construction in 2009 under the PNM Government...”

In 2009, he was the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, and he wants to come here and ask the Prime Minister—the first question the Member for Diego Martin West asked during the Prime Minister’s questions was when the Carenage fishing market “finishing”.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Chaguanas East and Minister of Transport has expired. Would you like an extension?

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Yes, Sir.

*Question put and agreed to.*

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

**Hon. S. Cadiz:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that it was unanimous. So in 2009, \$19 million was spent on the Carenage fishing facility—\$19 million! And according to the reports, all it had was walls and a roof. It had nothing else—\$19 million! But you want to come here in this House and berate the line Minister: “Where is the money? Why we not doing this; why we not doing that?” When you were the Member of Parliament, were you going down there to the fishing facility demanding that the then government finish the facility?

**5.15 p.m.**

So before we came into office—because that Carenage Fishing Centre, the work stopped in February of 2010. Why? Because the contractor was not paid. They ran out of money before this administration came into office. So let you not take them on, “eh”, because they come here with all their stories.

As we go along, we are looking at his stewardship as a Member of Parliament, and then we look at all the other areas whether it is health facility, police stations, schools, playing sporting fields, playing grounds, all of these sort of things and Diego Martin West is in a mess. So how can he expect to be an aspiring Prime Minister when he cannot even look after his own constituency?

It is very important we understand that because if you cannot do the most basic constituency level how are you going to be the Prime Minister of this country? You have no right wanting to be the Prime Minister of this country. What is his history as a Member of the Cabinet? What earth-shattering Bills? What is it that the Member for Diego Martin West and whatever capacity he was in this Cabinet that Trinidad and Tobago can remember, that the Cabinet Notes that he determined, that he determined the direction of his particular Ministry? What was it? I do not know and I do not know if anybody else here knows. And then, of course, we go down—

In 2011, I remember him talking about the—and this particular issue was very close to me, which was the Magdalena Hotel in Tobago. The Magdalena Hotel in Tobago, Mr. Speaker, saved Tobago, saved the tourism business in Tobago. Make no mistake about that. This People’s Partnership Government came into office in 2010, and by the January 01, 2012 we had guests overnighing at the Magdalena. We saved Tobago’s tourism. By that one single action we saved Tobago, and he has the nerve to come in here and talking about, what? “My recollection of the Magdalena is that it was an old stinking vessel ridden with rust and infested with bedbugs.” What an insult to Tobago and he wants to boast that he comes here week after week supporting the people of Tobago?

The one deal that went down in Tobago with the Magdalena, in the refurbishment of the Magdalena, saved Tobago’s tourism and you could ask from the Chief Secretary, you could ask the Secretary of the Tourism in Tobago, you could ask the taxi drivers, ask anybody in Tobago. And he has the nerve to come here and insult Tobagonians but, again, that is the individual we are dealing with and that is what Trinidad and Tobago has to constantly remind itself, be careful the leopard will not change it spots—and that is in a Trini slang.



So, Mr. Speaker, we go along and we look at everything else that we see in the Member for Diego Martin West and there are many, many more. The Member for Tabaquite alluded to the fact that he had files that he could have dealt with and read out about the goings on of the Member for Diego Martin West, but other speakers will have their chance. So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to say and refer to another line from Michael Harris dated Monday, April 06, 2015, in the *Daily Express*. The headline of his article is “Forecasts and forebodings” and Michael Harris makes his statement. He says:

“In the end, I, like most of the population, do not know Dr Rowley. Our judgement therefore can only be formed by the opinions of those who do know him and have interacted with him. For some of these he is an angry angel, for others he is the devil incarnate. Either way there is cause for foreboding.”

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

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for La Horquetta/Talparo, Minister of Land and Marine Resources.

**The Minister of Land and Marine Resources (Hon. Jairam Seemungal):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to contribute to this debate, a very significant debate in the Opposition Leader, the conduct of the Opposition Leader and, more so, as the Motion raised the reckless conduct of the Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West. The Motion also raises that:

“*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...15:05 to nominate a Director of the Police Complaints Authority...impartially, free from bias and in accordance with the Code of Conduct laid out in the Integrity in Public Life Act, Chap. 22:01...

*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”—Police Complaints Authority—“Act;”

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and Members of the Opposition have brought several Motions before this House, in particular no confidence Motion in the Prime Minister, no confidence Motion in the Attorney General, no confidence Motion in the Minister of Finance and the Economy, and all of those no confidence Motions they knew that they could not win those no confidence

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Motions. They knew that the Government had the majority in the debate to win and to succeed in these no confidence Motions, but yet they brought these Motions after Motions after Motions and, today, when we bring a Motion on the Opposition Leader, what did they do? They abandoned, run away and left the House. We did not do that. We stood here for some 15 to 20 hours in some cases.

**Hon. Member:** Twenty-six hours.

**Hon. J. Seemungal:** Twenty-six hours in one case and defended our Prime Minister, defended the Attorney General, and we will stand here—whenever a Motion is brought before the Minister of Finance and the Economy, we will stay in this House and defend him as well. [*Desk thumping*] This is how we operate as a team. This is what we are elected for, to stay in the Parliament, to be in the Chamber of the Parliament to discuss the people’s business, and if the people’s business is about the Opposition Leader, let them stay in the Parliament and discuss this business. Do not jump and run and get out of here as though it is a race course and the first one out the door wins the battle. Not so, Mr. Speaker.

This is not what the Parliament in this country or any part of the world is designed for. The Parliament is designed so that you can stay, you can debate, you can defend. But I ask the question: which one on the other side will want to stay and debate and defend the Opposition Leader; would it be San Fernando East, Arouca/Maloney, St. Ann’s East, Diego Martin Central, La Brea? I am not certain that anyone, even if they were here in this Parliament, they would have stood up and defend the Opposition Leader, the Member for Diego Martin West, as we have stood up on this side and defended our Prime Minister, defended the Attorney General, and we will defend the Minister of Finance and the Economy whenever that debate comes before this House.

Mr. Speaker, this is what leadership is about. Our Prime Minister has led from the front in every single occasion that called upon her to act, and she has marshalled the troops on this side that we could stand up on any occasion and defend every single Member of this honourable House with the exception of the Member for Diego Martin West. None of them would stay here. They bolt from the House. They are out of here. They “gran’ charge”, they “ramajay”, they throw their books down and they “pelt” out of the House. Are they afraid? Are they afraid to defend the Member? Are they afraid to defend their own leader?

What would happen? What would happen, God forbid, and the Member for Diego Martin West becomes Prime Minister? What would happen in a Cabinet led by the Member for Diego Martin West? What kind of Cabinet would that be?

Would you see the Member for Diego Martin West sitting there and none of his Ministers would be in the Cabinet room with him? Would they all bolt on the first act of a decision that they have to make? Would they all bolt from the Cabinet room as they have bolted from this Chamber? Is that the act of a leader? Is that the act of a Prime Minister? Is this what you are going to do to lead your country?

On the first sign of trouble or the first sign of difficulty, would you crumble, would you lead your troops away, would you abandon the country, would you abandon the people of this country? Is that the hallmark of a leader? Is that the hallmark of a Prime Minister? Is that the hallmark of a person who is aspiring and who would like to be Prime Minister of this country? Mr. Speaker, the population, the people of this country will decide, and the people of this country already have started seeing the light on the other side of the tunnel by seeing that this Government will return in 2015 to rule for another five years. [*Desk thumping*] The pollsters have started coming in. One Mr. Nigel Henry of Solution and Simulation reported on Sweet 100 FM and Talk City 91.1 FM, he said:

The Prime Minister did very well. I think she was in the 70s in humility and compassion.

I think she was in the 70s, Mr. Speaker, with humility and compassion.

I think would be two or maybe about 12 of them that we did, and so Mr. Rowley was nowhere near to those particular categories.

So out of the 12 categories, the Prime Minister was way ahead. Even the poll that came out I think over the weekend, the Prime Minister is still 50 in rating and the Leader of the Opposition is still trailing.

So, Mr. Speaker, one has to look at the conduct of the Member for Diego Martin West, and that is why we brought the Motion. We brought the Motion knowing that we have the majority, but we also brought the Motion like them, knowing that we have the majority, so that we can discuss the conduct, together with them, of the Member for Diego Martin West. And speaking about West, with respect to the Motion, it is necessary for me to also outline some of the issues that are necessary to put on *Hansard*, and for my constituents, in particular, who will one day read and refer to the *Hansard* to understand this whole “Westgate” scenario as it is being termed in the media now, because a greater part of the Motion dealt with the Opposition Leader, responsibility of the Opposition Leader not to be biased in the exercise of his power under section 6(1) of the Police Complaints Authority Act.

**5.30 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, what is this about? To simply put it, Mr. Speaker, the issue was that Mr. David West, the Director of the Police Complaints Authority, was appointed by the President following an agreement between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. Now, when laws are drafted they are drafted for a particular purpose. They are drafted so that they will protect the citizenry, they will protect the integrity of the offices, and they will protect the persons who are appointed, as well as the general public on those appointments. This particular law that recommended the PCA Director stated that the Prime Minister will recommend to the President in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

It did not say that the Prime Minister will recommend to the President in consultation with the Cabinet, or in consultation with the public, it states that the Prime Minister will report to the President on a suitable candidate after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. So what happened, Mr. Speaker—let me break it down in a simple format so that it will be recorded—a recommendation was made to the Prime Minister that David West be considered for the post of PCA Director. The Prime Minister consulted with the Leader of the Opposition who agreed on the candidacy. The Prime Minister then advised the President of the agreement of the candidate, and Mr. David West was subsequently appointed, but there was a little twist to the whole scenario.

To understand the way the principles of truth and goodness were manipulated, there are other essential facts that we must take into consideration. This is very important to understand, because schoolchildren would be reading this one day to find out what was this about. Mr. West was a witness in a personal defamation matter before the court. He was a witness to Dr. Keith Rowley, and that matter was brought against him by the Government. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knew that Mr. West was a witness in his matter, and he agreed with the Prime Minister of the proposal that Mr. West would be appointed as the PCA Director. The Leader of the Opposition failed to disclose this fact in keeping with truth and goodness anticipated by the Constitution with the prescribed collaboration for the selection of the PCA Director.

So what this is saying is that when this individual, Mr. West, was recommended, at that time it was necessary, in the interest of fairness, in the interest of goodwill, in the interest of ensuring that the Constitution is not compromised, it was necessary at that point that the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Diego Martin West, at least let the Prime Minister know, at that point in time, that he knew that David West was a witness in his matter before the court.

This was essential, Mr. Speaker, and why is this so? Why is it necessary for him to disclose that fact? Here it is that you have a person who is your witness and you have now recommended that individual to a very high office, to an office that is independent of others. And it was necessary so that persons who are appearing before that individual, or even persons recommended by him to that individual, that office, it would be unbiased and it would be one in which it would not have been compromised.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition lacked the sense of moral duty to inform the Prime Minister that in recommending Mr. West for the post of PCA Director that he was a witness in his particular matter. Mr. Speaker, in the failure of the Leader of the Opposition in this public duty, the failure to uphold the principle of goodwill and trust, the failure to disclose something that would compromise the constitutional provisions, and the failure to think about the people before thinking about himself, in itself, Mr. Speaker, have degraded the office which he holds as Opposition Leader. This is a person, Mr. Speaker, that is aspiring to be Prime Minister.

What will happen if the Member for Diego Martin West becomes Prime Minister and matters of serious nature such as these, matters that affect the soul and the heart of the Constitution, matters that affect the soul and the heart of the people who you lead?—that you bring that entire office which you hold into disrepute by holding back on essential information that would create that whole chaos in society, and this is what we are debating here today. This is why we are here. This is why they should have all stayed and debate this matter and defend the Member for Diego Martin West, but they all decided that the people's business is not their own, and if they do it now, if God forbid and they are in office, what will happen? What will happen, Mr. Speaker? They cannot stay here and debate a simple matter—and God forbid and they are in office, are they going to do the same? Leave the Opposition on the other side to debate the people's business and they will all bolt.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the details of this whole “Westgate” scenario. I say this because no matter how many sins the Opposition is guilty of, there must be at least one person willing to admit that Keith Rowley would have failed in his obligation to the people. “Doh” matter how much wrong they would have done, but this is an obligation that he holds, not to himself, but to the people under the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. This is why this material fact is so critical for us to debate, because all elected and appointed public officials have a strong and clear moral obligation that is not negotiable. Every

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single one of us has that duty and that obligation to the Constitution that is not negotiable, because public officials are expected to exercise their influence of good faith and for the national benefit, for the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

In this country, Mr. Speaker, every Member of Parliament makes an oath to uphold the Constitution and law, and to conscientiously and impartially discharge the responsibility to the people of Trinidad and Tobago without fear and favour. Without fear and favour we all held that book in our hands and took that oath before office. In addition, all persons in public life must act in accordance to the Code of Conduct laid down in the Integrity in Public Life Act, and that code demands that public officials must be fair and impartial in the exercise of their duty.

So when called upon to nominate the individual for the Police Complaints Authority head, he should have disclosed, then and there, that this individual was a witness—“is a material witness in a case which I have before the court, and he is my witness”, and do not come and deny that I know, or “eh” know. I mean, any “two by four lawyer” will know that if you have a witness, you must know about the witness. You must know about the witness. You do not go by your lawyer and say, “Find witnesses for me and defend me”. You would go to the lawyer and you would bring your witnesses. You would walk with your bundle of documents and you would walk with your witnesses, you will say, “West and East, and North and South, they are all my witnesses, interview all of them”, but do not come and deny it and say, “I doh know. I did not know he was my witness”. I mean, you are aspiring to be the Prime Minister. You are aspiring to be the Prime Minister to lead the country, Mr. Speaker, and you are going to make a fool of the people of this country and letting them believe that, “I didn know. I did not know that West was my witness”. And his attorney, Mr. Faris Al-Rawi, had to come out and say that he must have known, he knew. He must have known that West was his witness, and do not go and lie about it afterwards, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. J. Seemungal:** I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

Do not go and mislead anyone with respect to saying that an individual is not your witness when he is in fact your witness. Mr. Speaker, this Code of Conduct also demands that public officials must disclose any possible or perceived conflict of interest. That is a very powerful statement, you know, that the code demands that public officials must disclose any possible or perceived conflict of interest, even if you believe that the statement that he may be giving or using in your

particular matter is really negligible. It is not what you know, it is not what you believe, you have to guard against the perception that that witness would, in some way, be compromised by your nomination because you owe a duty to the Constitution of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

That is what this debate is about. This debate is about the conduct of the individual, and this is an individual who the people may put their trust in, to lead this country. If you cannot be truthful of a simple matter and then want to mislead the population on whether you believe or do not believe afterwards, then when you are sitting in Cabinet to make serious decisions, what would you be coming out to tell the population, or the media, or persons listening to you at the post-Cab? Now, every time you come to post-Cab you will be deceiving the country, Mr. Speaker? Is that the individual we want to lead this country? Is that the individual we want to be proud of and hold our hands and heads up high and say, “This is the person who represents us in Trinidad and Tobago as our Prime Minister”? Mr. Speaker, every little child in this country would be dreading—I am certain, would be dreading the day that God forbid that the Member for Diego Martin West becomes Prime Minister.

#### **5.45 p.m.**

Because, Mr. Speaker, he did not just stop there, you know. This is the same individual who referred to them as “duncey head”, and that is probably why he continually reacts as that. He behaves as though every single person, every child that grows up is a “duncey head”.

Mr. Speaker, a couple weeks ago the same Member for Diego Martin West went into my constituency and made some of the worst degrading remarks on women in this country. This went all over the media. Mr. Speaker, it is a constituency which in 2010 La Horquetta/Talparo constituency they did not believe that they could have lost or parted with that constituency but, Mr. Speaker, I will tell that is a constituency that I do not believe that they will ever get back in the history of this country. [*Desk thumping*]

You do not go into a constituency, especially into rural communities where everybody in these communities is like family. When they come out in the recreation ground, they are like families. We had sport day in La Horquetta Sunday gone, we had 5,000 people; inside there was like a family. The different phases for the first time in the history of the constituency you see the unity of La Horquetta. Before 2010, La Horquetta was like war zone and for the first time in the history of this country—and if I am to read some of the texts that I received,

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one of them in particular was by a woman, Rhona Jones, and she said that you have united La Horquetta as no one has done before, and I will continue to defend you. “Who vex loss.”

Mr. Speaker, this is what we do in rural communities. When you grow up in a rural community, insult women and degrade women in the manner in which the Member for Diego Martin West has done in Brazil, it tells the story as to what he will be, what he is and what he will be if he becomes Prime Minister.

I have a couple letters from women in my constituency. I am going to read them into the record. You know why? Because they despise that kind of behaviour. You do not go into these communities where you have poor people and you have people who are really striving on a few dollars and try to belittle any member of society. It does not matter who the person is, but you do not go into constituencies like these and belittle and expect that the general population will continue to support you.

I want to read a couple letters before I continue with the “Westgate” matter, but I want to read a couple letters into the record because it really tells a lot about the constituency and how people think and feel about individuals such as these.

Mr. Speaker, this is a letter from Miss Brendaline Jack. It was written on March 25, 2015.

Hon. MP, I would like to propose my view on the unappealing statement made by Dr. Keith Rowley, the Opposition Leader of the PNM, recently in Brazil. Personally as a woman these sexist statements hit home as to how particular leaders in authority regard women as sexual objects. And, as such, Dr. Keith Rowley should be removed from the Opposition. Authoritative figures such as Dr. Keith Rowley should not have—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for La Horquetta/Talparo has expired. Would you want to guide? Would you like an extension?

**Hon. J. Seemungal:** Yes. Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Member for La Horquetta/Talparo be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** You may continue.



**Hon. J. Seemungal:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you colleagues. I was reading into the record the statement by Miss Brendaline Jack, and she continued:

Authoritative figures such as Dr. Keith Rowley should not have a sexist mentality as directed to women of the People's Partnership or any other women.

Mr. Speaker, there is another statement from Miss Cheryl Holstein and it reads:

Dear MP Mr. Jairam Seemungal.

In my opinion the statement made by Dr. Keith Rowley is insensitive. Personally the remark was sexist and completely racial in nature, and this link women as it can be seen as a form of oppression against women in power. This leads to gender inequality and the women would feel insubordinate to men in society.

It was signed by Miss Holstein.

Mr. Speaker, this is the type of behaviours that you do not want in your leaders. When you have leaders behaving like this, this is why it then propels other leaders how like the Member for San Fernando West referred to him in the Parliament here some years ago, and the type of behaviour—I think he described it as a “wajang” behaviour—San Fernando East, sorry—“wajang” behaviour. That is in the record of *Hansard*. That is the person that the Member for San Fernando East was warning this country against. That is the person who is aspiring to be Prime Minister.

When you look at some of the reports of other individuals—and this one was an article taken by Miss Ria Taitt and it was on February 05, 2011, and they were referring to this whole Keith Rowley/UDeCOTT matter. In the report it was stated that the Minister of Public Utilities, Mustapha Abdul-Hamid, she was referring to an article by him—of the *Hansard* by him as he delivered blistering attacks by the Tobago born Rowley during debate on the ventilation of humility Bill. He said and I quote:

I am advised that somewhere between 2003 and 2024—

Mr. Speaker, I think the article was really that Dr. Keith Rowley had attempted to sell Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago chairman Calder Hart a plot of his family property in Tobago. On two separate

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occasions the article stated that Dr. Keith Rowley was seen with the chairman in his car. This is why he was saying in the direct words here, Mr. Speaker:

That I am advised that somewhere between 2003 and 2004 the same Calder Hart about whom comments were made as being responsible for bid rigging, that the Member for Diego Martin West on two occasions escorted Calder Hart to view properties in Tobago which was the Member for Tobago West family's business, once as the Minister of Planning and Development and once as the Minister of Housing with a view that Calder Hart would be purchasing these properties.

Mr. Speaker, and it is same person he continued in the article to say that—is the same individual who stood in the House for some 52 months and on no occasion had he any problem with any bid rigging, and all of a sudden he started having issues with it. This is since he was a Minister in the Cabinet of the Member for San Fernando East.

Mr. Speaker, and this is an individual who again is aspiring to be the Prime Minister. This is an individual who persons would have to talk about. When you compare this individual with our Prime Minister, the Member for Siparia one would clearly see why it is that the pollsters would be putting our Prime Minister way ahead in the polls as an individual to individual.

Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister is a true nationalist. She is one who has always presented Trinidad and Tobago on the international forum and has always attracted persons to Trinidad and Tobago and the policies of Trinidad and Tobago. What does the Member for Diego Martin West do? The first opportunity we have to put a Member of Trinidad and Tobago to lead an international forum, chastise the individual. He is not fit for office. He does not want him to be there. I refer to the Minister of Planning.

Our Prime Minister has empowered children of this nation in providing education facilities, homes, schools and in particular a new University of the West Indies in Debe. What is the view of the Member for San Fernando West—Diego Martin West? That you should not have a campus or university in south, in Debe. We should not have one. The people from south, the people from La Brea, the people from Point Fortin should always continue to suffer to come to St. Augustine and look for the most expensive apartments to rent while their parents are trying to make ends meet down in south.

Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister is saying that the highway is being built from San Fernando to Point Fortin. How does the Member for San Fernando West see this? He goes and he joins with Kublalsingh to protest.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** What about that fella?

**Hon. J. Seemungal:** He went and he joined with Kublalsingh to protest and fast, the Member for Diego Martin West. Mr. Speaker, [*Crosstalk*] our Prime Minister has given, for instance, grants to churches, every single church in this country, and I have enough in my constituency and all of them would come from time to time and request of me for assistance. They do want the money—it does not go into the preacher's pocket. It does not go into the pocket of the individuals—members of the church.

It goes into projects. It goes into their fund raising account and they would use that to have treats for the children. They would use that to have Easter summer class, Mr. Speaker. They would use that to hold summer class in the long vacation July/August. They will use that to feed the children. Some of them would not even have breakfast to come to the camp. They would purchase that for them and use that funds.

But what did he do? He said, do not give them it. Do not give the churches any money. You are buying votes and you are bribing them. That is how he treats the members of the clergy. All of them are accepting bribe so he chastise the entire clergy, Mr. Speaker, as though they are all doing something illegal or immoral. That is how—that is an individual who is aspiring to high office.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Prime Minister, a Government with the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development that has settled 78 negotiations with labour, over what, \$2 billion in negotiations. How do they treat with it? When he was in government they could not even settle one. They had to leave all. Now every single union wants to see us settle before election because, God forbid, and the Member for Diego Martin West becomes Prime Minister or they on the other side hold office, none of these negotiations will continue. This is why they are demanding that every single negotiation be settled now. Settle negotiations now because if they come in office, they would not get anything.

What did they do when the oil price started dipping? They did not behave like our Prime Minister, the hon. Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Member for Siparia and started looking at ways to stabilize the economy to look to see how we cut back and utilize the money that we have in order to maintain stability within the public service and within the citizenry. What they started doing? They started panicking. Every time the oil dollar dips, that is how they operate. They start panicking, and behave in a panic mode.

**6.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, that is an individual, again, who is aspiring to be Prime Minister. How did they treat with the labour unions? How did they treat with the members of the Integrity Commission, accusing them of being biased in their operation? That individual, the Member for Diego Martin West! The Member for Diego Martin West, again, has charged the Elections and Boundaries Commission of working against his party. That is how he operates.

He has also chastised persons like the Member for San Fernando East, Mr. Louis Lee Sing, Danny Montano, Penelope Beckles, and a whole host of sitting MPs. Is that the person you want to be Prime Minister of this country? Is that the individual we want our children to look up to? Is that the individual we want our First Year children to write in copy books, Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago? The same individual who chastised children? The same individual who does not want churches to receive money? The same individual who does not want the union to settle? The same individual who does not want the highway to reach to Point Fortin? The same individual who does not want to see the progress of this country?

Mr. Speaker, if at any point in time Trinidad and Tobago is called upon to make a decision, who will lead this country into the next five years, simple answer, Kamla Persad-Bissessar and not the Member for Diego Martin West.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When I studied this particular Motion in relation to the wording, it is a very important Motion in the context of where we were prior to May of 2010, where we are today as a society, in terms of our state of development and where do we want to go in the years to come, and, Mr. Speaker, the wording focuses on:

*“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, Mr. Speaker, given where our Constitution outlines the main office holders in the land, you have the Office of the President, you have the Office of the Prime Minister, you have the Office of the Chief Justice, you have the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, and the Office of the Leader of the Opposition is a very important office in the context of the continued growth and development of our society, because it is the office that lends itself to an alternative Prime Minister.

An office that the citizens of the country are looking forward, will be looking forward to, in terms of what are the alternatives and could this person have the leadership, the fortitude, the sense of judgment to have that worth, or to be given the worth and confidence to occupy the office of the Prime Minister. And this is why this Motion must be seen in the true purpose and intent, or what it was designed to look at, in terms of the conduct of the person who is currently occupying the position of the Leader of the Opposition and whether that person really can fit the bill—if I should use that phrase—as it relates to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

And, Mr. Speaker, for me, the Opposition and the Leader of the Opposition and those on the opposite side, they are very experienced Members of the Opposition in terms of their years in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, should have been prepared to contest this Motion with a sense of focus and a sense of responsibility to the democratic process and by extension the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. But the Member for Diego Martin North/East, in responding on behalf of the Opposition, indicated that the Motion, and to quote:

“This Motion is frivolous and vexatious. This Motion is childish. This Motion has no basis...no purpose...is empty...vacuous...tenuous. It is absurd!”

And he behaved in a way in the Parliament when he used those words and he slammed down his papers and so on when he made his contribution.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition also said that the entire charade that you see here in the Parliament today was the continuation of the Prime Minister’s panic and her attack on David West. The Parliament today was being used in the most frightening way to terrorize and discredit a witness who is before the court with an explosive piece of testimony.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day the witness statement of Mr. David West has been filed in the courts of Trinidad and Tobago, and that witness statement will be discredited or it will be subjected to cross examination in the courts of Trinidad and Tobago when that matter comes up for hearing. So, to say that the Parliament was being used to carry out a personal attack on the witness statement of David West and to intimidate the person’s character and so, I think was the furthest thing from the truth, and really misleading on the part of the Member for Diego Martin North/East and those on the opposite side.

Because, Mr. Speaker, this is the very said Opposition whom, when the Motion was filed in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, indicated—and the Opposition Leader, Dr. Keith Rowley, on March 24, 2015, during a PNM

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walkabout in Spring Valley, Mt. Do'r— in the Mt. Do'r area— where he was accompanied by the Member for St. Joseph, Terrence Deyalsingh—that, “Rowley, full PNM backing.” And that the Member for St. Joseph also pledged full support for the Member for Diego Martin West and that there would be a full turn out of PNM members in the House to defend the Opposition Leader and to respond to this particular Motion.

So, from that end we must see that from where we sit on this side, and the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago who have been looking on at the conduct of the PNM and the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition, whether his conduct has been befitting of his office, not only in this particular issue as it relates to:

“...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...”

The Police Complaints Authority being a very important authority, taking into consideration its role and function in the context of with the police officers of Trinidad and Tobago and also the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, and taking into consideration that this Police Complaints Authority is supposed to conduct its affairs in such a way that it would seem to be independent, free of bias and acting in the interest of all the stakeholders of Trinidad and Tobago.

And, Mr. Speaker, whilst those on the other side may tend to look at this or have looked at this particular Motion in a very shallow way and would have treated it with a sense of contempt in relation to the democracy of Trinidad and Tobago, we must never forget that the Leader of the Opposition was dealing with two of the most important office holders in the land; the Office of the Prime Minister and the Office of President of Trinidad and Tobago, and it has nothing to do with David West; absolutely nothing to do.

We want to be assured, and I am sure that when I say, we want to be assured, the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago want to be assured that when their Leader of the Opposition is conducting himself, his conduct can stand up to scrutiny at whatever level. His conduct can stand up to scrutiny, it is above board, and that the truth, the principle of truth and the whole question of good morals and values is being carried out or being perpetrated by the office holders, and in this context it is important to note that when the walk out which was led by the Opposition leader and the Member for Diego Martin West, the citizens of this country must come to their conclusion, how reckless that conduct was. Was it an affront to the democratic process of Trinidad and Tobago? Was it an affront to the whole

parliamentary process? And was it to the point where, again, that the Opposition Leader and those on the other side—when I say those on the other side, we must be specific in saying, the PNM again continued to show a sense of disrespect for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Because, Mr. Speaker, when they walked out or when those on the opposite side walked out of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago on that day, and today they repeated that reckless behaviour, they have abandoned their parliamentary duties and responsibilities to the persons who voted for them in their respective constituencies and by extension to Trinidad and Tobago. And we must recollect that when on that said day when they walked out of the Parliament of this country, and when the Leader of Government Business moved for an adjournment of the House, and at that point in time Mr. Speaker, you sought guidance in relation to the next sitting which was supposed to be, if I could recollect, Private Members' Day, a day set aside under the parliamentary proceeding for the PNM to put on the parliamentary agenda their Motion and to bring forth through their Motion, probably the perspective of how the PNM wants to be envisaged, if allowed to, to run the country for the next five years and so on, to put their programmes and policies to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, they abandoned their role under what was called Private Members' Day.

**6.15 p.m.**

And more importantly, they abandoned their parliamentary responsibility further, because on that said sitting, on the adjournment, through your office, Mr. Speaker, you invited the Prime Minister and you invited, I think, my friend sitting next to me, the Member for Arima and the Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration to bring—Prime Minister brought greetings to the Baptist Community on the occasion of Spiritual Shouter Baptist Liberation Day and also the Member for Arima brought Easter greetings to the Christian—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Sharma:** No, not greetings, it was a sermon.

**Hon. R. Indarsingh:**—Community, and again they abandoned their role and responsibility to two very important stakeholders within the context of the society of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mr. Sharma:** Very good point.

**Hon. R. Indarsingh:** Again, we must see and the citizens again will see and come to their own conclusion about the reckless conduct of the Leader of the Opposition and those on the other side.

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So the Leader of the Opposition who wants to be the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago has a duty and responsibility to stand in this House and not only counteract and defend what is being put forward from this side, the Leader of the Opposition and Members on the opposite side have a responsibility to Trinidad and Tobago in terms of how the citizenry should make a judgmental call in the context of whether they are prepared to be the alternative government of Trinidad and Tobago, and by their conduct over the last two parliamentary sittings in relation to this particular Motion, it is clear that they are not prepared to be the alternative government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, it is important too, that we continue to examine the role and conduct of the Leader of the Opposition, not only in relation to this Motion but in relation to his conduct and affairs from the point of view of being or holding that sense of responsibility as being the Member for Diego Martin West for more than 20-odd years in this parliamentary Chamber. And as a result of holding that sense of responsibility in this parliamentary Chamber, his role and conduct must be subjected to scrutiny, whether it is inside of this parliamentary Chamber or outside of this parliamentary Chamber. And there must be no excuse or no attempt to water down that sense of role and responsibility inside and outside of this parliamentary Chamber.

I want to take the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and quote from the *Newsday*, Tuesday, April 13, 2004, under the headline:

“Rowley blanks request”

And I quote, Mr. Speaker:

“MINISTER of Housing Dr Keith Rowley has refused to divulge the names and addresses of all applicants for houses, land and rental units, saying if such is disclosed, it would undermine the necessary privacy and confidentiality. The Minister also cannot give a list of names and addresses of all squatters. Rowley’s response was given to two questions from”—when you served in another place—“in the Senate last week. As a result”—you had—“called on Senate President Dr Linda Baboolal to rule on the matter, but Baboolal said she will do so at the next sitting next Tuesday, because she had not seen the answers.”

But what is important, Mr. Speaker, is that here is a person displaying a sense of—who was in a position of leadership in 2004 as a Cabinet Minister in this country and was not prepared to operate in a very transparent manner in giving that sense of accountability and building that sense of trust, as it relates to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, saying that the business of the HDC and the



business of the applicants who got houses and so on was something that he was not prepared to disclose. And under this particular administration which had been led by the hon. Member of Siparia and our distinguished Prime Minister, you have seen the way that we have conducted our affairs in a very open and a very transparent manner.

The Leader of Government Business, the Member for Oropouche East and the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, he has embarked on a policy of distributing 100 houses per week and it is being done in a very open manner, in a very transparent manner in the full glare of the media where persons have been invited on a continuous basis, persons are visiting the Housing Development Corporation in their thousands, and the names and addresses of all recipients and so on, are out in the public domain. So it shows the difference in the approach in how we do our business at the level of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and how far we are prepared to build a sense of trust with the people and how we conduct our affairs.

Mr. Speaker, to go on, I want to further—because you see the Member for Diego Martin West, the Leader of the Opposition, always calls for a sense of accountability, but I do not know where that sense of accountability was when he was called upon in relation to account for houses in 2004. But in 2015, in an article written by Sasha Wilson on March 22, 2015, Opposition Leader, Dr. Keith Rowley has called upon churches to play their role in ensuring accountability and good governance. I want to repeat that, in ensuring accountability and good governance.

So you see—well I should say contradictions in relation to the way he would have conducted himself as a Cabinet Minister not wanting to operate in a transparent manner ensuring that there was accountability and good governance in 2004, and in 2015 he is calling for churches to operate with a sense of good governance and accountability. But we must ask ourselves the question, Mr. Speaker, is the Leader of the Opposition prepared to walk the talk and actually ensure that there is accountability on the part of his actions. That is what we must be prepared to ask and again underline the very important issue in dealing with the two highest office holders in the land, the Prime Minister and the Office of the President. Did the Leader of the Opposition ensure that he was accountable and did he in his action fulfil his role and responsibility from the point of view of good governance? That is important, and we must continue to put him under the microscope and challenge him to account for his actions if he wants to aspire to the Office of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

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But it is important, Mr. Speaker, as I continue my delivery here today, to continue to examine the conduct and whether the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition as I said, whether given his long span of what we would call his parliamentary career, has been responsible inside of this House and also outside of this House. Because again I want to look at how he has approached the children of Trinidad and Tobago, how he has approached the schoolchildren of this country and how he—whether he has been concerned about the development of this country, because if you are concerned about the development of your country certainly you would put emphasis on the development of your children and the youth in the society, because that is being placed in the context when you place the development, emphasis on the development of children and the youths, you are certainly focusing on succession planning and for continued growth and development of your society.

And I want to quote from an article that was written by Ms. Anna Ramdass, September 28, 2010:

“Laptops tempting for ‘pipers’”

That is the headline, “eh”. And I am quoting directly from the article, Mr. Speaker:

“Giving laptops to school children will put them at risk for robbery, according to Opposition MP Fitzgerald Hinds and Opposition Leader Dr Keith Rowley.”

This is coming from the Opposition Leader and someone today who was a former Senator, former MP, who occupies the position of being the PNM youth officer, and probably my colleague, the Member for Moruga/Tableland can guide me on what is the definition of a youth under the convention on the United Nations Convention. [*Crosstalk*] I will be guided by my colleague, the Member for Moruga/Tableland on what is the definition for a youth and what a youth officer should be. But I am sure, again, probably it is indicative of the style of leadership that is being perpetrated by the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Diego Martin West, because I am sure that within the PNM, the thousands who claimed to be within their fold, I am sure that they could have found someone within the age bracket of 18 to 35—Member—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. De Coteau:** Age 28.

**Hon. R. Indarsingh:** Eighteen to 28 whom should have been allowed, really, to fulfil or to fill that position on the executive of the People’s National Movement. [*Crosstalk*] Well I hope, probably with myself and the Minister of

Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development we may have to check the records at the National Insurance Board to see if any youth officers indeed filed for national insurance benefits and so on. [*Laughter*]

So, Mr. Speaker, coming back to the very important and substantive issue really, is here you have an office holder who wants to be your next Prime Minister, probably with this headline, criminals and persons who may be perpetrators of crimes against children would have set their targets because it is laptops tempting for ‘pipers’. So an office holder such as the Leader of the Opposition and the PNM youth officer inciting people in this society to carry out acts against the schoolchildren of Trinidad and Tobago, and again that is the judgment call I want the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago to make in looking at the actions and the statement of the Leader of the Opposition and those on the opposite side over the years.

**6.30 p.m.**

The People’s Partnership Government, in fulfilling its campaign promise, had entered into an \$83 million contract to provide laptops for first-form pupils and so on, and in criticizing this move, Hinds said that the Government does not understand the reality on the ground, and was unaware that children today were being robbed of cell phones, sneakers and even their JanSport book bags, and he added that many pipers would target these children. And Dr. Rowley also spoke on the issue saying that laptops will be, and I quote: “just too tempting for the pipers”.

And again, whilst they are caught up in this time warp only to criticize and offer nothing alternative and something credible to the young children of this society who we have been developing over the last five years, in fact, we have delivered over 95,000 laptops to the young children of Trinidad and Tobago and we have shifted the goalpost in terms of IT technology and the whole question of tertiary level educational development in this society and so on, to the point that where this has been so successful, it has been copied by the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Prime Minister and the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines have adopted the laptop for school children within the educational system of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. And this shows you, really, the vision of the PNM as it relates to how schoolchildren should be treated in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, we must never forget—we as a society must never forget—and the citizens of Trinidad—

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Couva South has expired. Would you like an extension?

**Hon. R. Indarsingh:** Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Member for Couva South be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

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

**Hon. R. Indarsingh:** Mr. Speaker, I want to continue very quickly because we must never forget also that the Member for Diego Martin West was part of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago and was an integral part of the fabric of the PNM at the decision-making level when they decided that the Biche High School will never be opened simply because it was a UNC-built primary school. They told the citizens of this country that the children will fall ill; the school teachers will fall ill.

And any right-thinking citizen of this country must realize that that was one of the most vicious acts of discrimination that was ever perpetrated on the schoolchildren of Trinidad and Tobago, in that decision to keep the Biche High School closed, and the Member for Diego Martin West must bear the responsibility of being part of that decision, in terms of his reckless behaviour and his reckless conduct. In that context today, the Biche High School has been opened. Not one school child has fallen ill; not one teacher has fallen ill. It continues to give sustenance to the educational development of the children of Biche and environs. [*Desk thumping*] That is the difference of this People's Partnership Government, led by the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

And if I should continue in that context about children, we must also never forget that the Opposition Leader has described the behaviour of students as hyenas in the African jungle. And we would want to ask ourselves, how could a person who has the responsibility to motivate children to soar to higher heights, come to this conclusion about the young children of Trinidad and Tobago? And we must continue to ensure that such a person must not go beyond the Leader of the Opposition's office because if he is allowed to go beyond that office, well, I do not know what will be in store for the future of the young people of Trinidad and Tobago and the school population of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Again, to show you the reckless behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Diego Martin West, I want to quickly refer to three events of

which the Member for Diego Martin West was part and parcel—we must never forget—and I am referring to an article from January 21, 2012:

“Trinidad and Tobago’s Kamla Persad-Bissessar Shows Respect; Keith Rowley Bristles

Trinidad and Tobago opposition leader Dr. Keith Rowley was highly offended to hear that Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar had bowed to touch President Pratibha Patil’s foot during a State visit to India earlier this month. Although the Prime Minister was following tradition and showing her respect, Rowley called this act ‘the ultimate subservient of superiority and inferiority being demonstrated’. Various reports, including the article below, seem to be blurring the boundaries between ‘touching’ someone’s foot with ‘kissing’ it. In any case, I am sure that there are more important issues at which to take umbrage than touching a president’s foot.”

And, Mr. Speaker, the important scenario or conclusion to draw from this particular comment that was made by the Leader of the Opposition—again, his reckless comments and so on—is that we live in a very diverse society. We live in a very plural society and the person who is aspiring to be the Prime Minister to lead a nation, to motivate a nation, must be able to have a thorough understanding and appreciation of the cultural and religious values of all the people within this country. And if you cannot appreciate; if you do not have that sense of understanding, that sense of history, then, certainly, you cannot harness the society. You cannot bring the people together.

And it is in this context we must say the leadership of Kamla Persad-Bissessar and the People’s Partnership Government—because it is they who, from day one, have been saying that this Government would have collapsed in six months; they would have collapsed in a year; they would have collapsed in—today we are five years. Our Prime Minister has held the Partnership and, by extension, in holding the Partnership together, she has demonstrated that she has a true sense of understanding of all the issues, the cultures and values which have been clearly demonstrated in her formation of the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration. [*Desk thumping*]

In addition to that—as I continue to show—when you are the Leader of the Opposition, you are supposed to demonstrate a certain sense of responsibility to visiting heads of states, and in this country when we receive our guests, we have a sense of belonging, we have a sense of patriotism, we have a sense of warmth, we have a sense of openness, Mr. Speaker, and when the President of China,

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President Xi Jinping, came to Trinidad and Tobago, Rowley did not turn up. He indicated that his invitation was “last minute”. This is how the President of China was treated by the Leader of the Opposition, the person who is supposed to be presenting himself with that sense of deportment, that sense of decorum that “I could meet and treat with you”.

The President of China should have been able, on conclusion of his state visit here, to come to the conclusion that “there is a Leader of the Opposition who conducts himself with a sense of responsibility, a sense of true deportment to Trinidad and Tobago, and understands his role and responsibility in meeting and treating with me”. But he was left empty-handed. He was not able to come to a conclusion simply because the Leader of the Opposition failed to turn up because, as he interpreted it, his invitation arrived late.

Mr. Speaker, also, in the context of our responsibility to Trinidad and Tobago and outside of Trinidad and Tobago, in the continuing face of diplomatic relations and our responsibility, not only in the context of Caricom in terms of our neighbours and so on, Trinidad and Tobago has a deep relationship with Venezuela which was clearly demonstrated when President Maduro recently visited the shores of Trinidad and Tobago, again, displaying a sense of confidence in our Prime Minister, a sense of confidence in her leadership and the People’s Partnership Government.

Again, the Leader of the Opposition apparently does not understand that if he projects himself as the alternative leader of the country from a diplomatic relations point of view, he will be able to engender a sense of confidence within the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago. But this has been far from coming. And the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, Kevin Ramnarine, has said that the statements made by the Opposition Leader, Dr. Keith Rowley and MP Colm Imbert, on the Loran-Manatee Field, will hurt the diplomatic ties between this country and Venezuela. To quote:

“That reckless statement by the leader of the Opposition and Mr. Imbert will impact on international relations between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela, ...”

So, Mr. Speaker, the reckless conduct of the Member for Diego Martin West must not only be seen in the context of merely what he failed to disclose as it relates to his dealing under the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago with the Office of the President and the Office of the Prime Minister, it has been seen in the context of how he has approached the young people of Trinidad and Tobago, how he has

approached the cultural values and the religious values of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, how he has approached visiting heads of state, how he has conducted himself as it relates to international relations and diplomatic relations and, certainly, I am sure that when you are leading or you are offering yourselves to lead a society and to lead a country, you have to have a vision, and certainly, the PNM, under Dr. Keith Rowley, is stuck in its vision of 2020.

They have unfolded or unravelled the same old, same old, in the context of the rapid rail, the revenue authority, indicating that they will abolish the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Tobago Development and so on, moves that will have tremendous implications for workers and the people of Trinidad and Tobago in the context of employment, in the context of the socio-economic stability of families.

But I am sure, Mr. Speaker, as I come to the end of my contribution that the people of Trinidad and Tobago will understand that there was a vision that was unravelled prior to May of 2010 under the People's Partnership Manifesto of 2010 under the broad or overarching theme of "Prosperity for all". And that did not stop, because that vision was realized—was brought to the people of Trinidad and Tobago over the last five years through successive budget presentations. In 2010, it was: "Facing the Issues—Turning the Economy Around; in 2012 the budget statement was, "From Steady Foundation to Economic Transformation". In 2013 it was, "Stimulating Growth, Generating Prosperity".

In 2014, it was "Sustaining Growth, Securing Prosperity"; and in 2015, "Empowering our People through Sustained Economic Growth and Prosperity".

**6.45 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, the vision will continue. It has grown under the last five years. It will continue to grow for another five years as we approach the electorate with another visionary manifesto in the months to come that will ensure that Kamla Persad-Bissessar continues to be the Prime Minister of the Trinidad and Tobago. There will be a continued sense of confidence in the People's Partnership Government in ensuring that there is a further five-budget presentation for continued growth and prosperity.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

#### 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 Friday, April 17, 2015 at 1.30 p.m. May I place on record that we will continue debate on

*Adjournment*

*Wednesday, April 08, 2015*

[HON. DR. R. MOONILAL]

this Motion, debate on the Motion to censure and condemn the Leader of the Opposition and to express the lack of confidence of the House in the Leader of the Opposition.

We will debate the Motion on the Police Service (Amdt.) Regulations, 2014 and the Motion on the recommendations and findings of the 36th Annual Report of the Ombudsman. Mr. Speaker, may I indicate that these were two Motions identified before for debate today. Given the very serious nature of the Police Service (Amdt.) Regulations, given the fact that under the new Standing Orders 22(8), this is the very first time in the history of this Parliament, that the Parliament is called to debate and approve a report of the Ombudsman dealing with infrastructure, dealing with people's grievances, dealing with community and individual problems and so on.

Today, as we are aware, the Opposition is absent for a second consecutive day from the Parliament and is not here right now to participate in two critical Motions on the Police Service (Amdt.) Regulations Motion and the Ombudsman Report, for the first time an historic report laid in the Parliament for debate. The absence of the Opposition is regrettable because one would have thought that this would have been a good debate on the police service and, of course, on the Ombudsman.

The Government is prepared to give the Opposition one more opportunity to return to the Parliament, if only to be responsible enough to debate a Motion on the Police Service (Amdt.) Regulations and the historic debate on the report of the Ombudsman. We are prepared to consider these Motions next week to allow the Opposition to gather some good sense and return to the Parliament for those Motions, as opposed to the current Motion which they have taken umbrage to apparently.

Mr. Speaker, may I also place on record there are five Motions on the Adjournment filed. We have had Ministers on standby for the entire day, Ministers on standby for the night, able and willing to come to the Parliament to defend all and argue on all five Motions before the House. Yet, for another week, these Ministers have been on standby and are now unable to participate because the relevant Members of the Opposition are not in the House to raise these Motions on the Adjournment. So about five Government Ministers have been inconvenienced in this way by being available and ready and willing, but not necessary for them to be in the House at this time. So we may have to also reflect on the use of the Motions on the Adjournment in terms of their relevance at this time.



*Adjournment*

*Wednesday, April 08, 2015*

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few words I beg to move that the House do now adjourn and on the next occasion, Friday, April 17, 2015 at 1.30 p.m., we will continue debate on this Motion and the other two Motions. May I also underline not necessarily in that order.

I beg to move.

**Mr. Speaker:** Well, before putting the question, are you saying that the matter dealing with the response to the Motion that was raised by the Member for Diego Martin North/East, the Government was prepared to respond to that? As well, as you indicated there are three matters filed by the Member for Diego Martin North/East, one matter filed by the Member for Diego Martin Central—of course, he is not here. He has asked to be excused—there is another matter by the Member for Point Fortin which qualified for today's sitting. So are you saying that these matters will be addressed on another occasion?

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay. Thank you.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.50 p.m.*

**WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION**

*The following question was asked by Mr. Colm Imbert (Diego Martin North/East) earlier in the proceedings:*

**Central Bank of Trinidad & Tobago  
(Details of)**

- 66.** Could the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy provide the following Information with respect to employees of the Central Bank of Trinidad & Tobago?
- a) The names, qualifications and experience of all persons employed by the Central Bank between July 13, 2012 and December 23 2014?
  - b) The selection process and criteria utilized by the Central Bank in each case to employ the Bank, and their current position.
  - c) The positions that each such person was placed in, or appointed to, when first employed by the Bank, and their current position.

*The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:*

**The Minister of Finance and the Economy (Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai):** Mr. Speaker, the Central Bank has reviewed the matter and notes that its confidentiality obligations under the Central Bank Act Chap 79:02 are quite broad and extend not only to the affairs of any financial institutions or person registered under the Insurance Act Chap 84:01 but also to the affairs of the Central Bank itself. The Central Bank notes that it is obligated to comply with these very strict confidentiality provisions under threat of criminal sanction. In particular Section 56 of the Act provides that:

1. "Except in so far as may be necessary for the due performance of its objects, every director, officer and employee of the Bank shall preserve and aid in preserving secrecy with regard to all matters relating to the affairs of the Bank, any financial institution or person registered under the Insurance Act or any customers thereof that may come to his knowledge in the course of his duties.
2. Any such director, officer or employee who communicates any such matter to any person other than the Board or an officer of the Bank authorized in that behalf of the Governor or suffers or permits any unauthorized person to have access to any books, papers or records relating to the Bank, any financial institution, or person registered under

*Written Answer to Question*

*Wednesday, April 08, 2015*

the Insurance Act, is liable on summary conviction thereof to a fine of six thousand dollars and to imprisonment for two years.

3. No director, officer or employee of the Bank shall be required to produce in any court any book or document or to divulge or communicate to any Court any matter or thing coming under his notice in the performance of his duties under this Act except on the direction of the Court or in so far as may be necessary for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this Act, or for the purpose of any criminal proceedings.” In this context of very stringent obligations, the Central Bank has advised that it is constrained to maintain the confidentiality of the information requested in this question.

In this context of very stringent obligations, the Central Bank has advised that it is constrained to maintain the confidentiality of the information requested in this question.