

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Friday, May 26, 2017*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, hon. Camille Robinson-Regis, MP, Member for Arouca/Maloney, has asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the Member seeks is granted.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Consolidated Financial Statements of the Trinidad and Tobago Unit Trust Corporation for the year ended December 31, 2016. [*The Minister of Finance (Hon. Colm Imbert)*]
To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.
2. Consolidated Audited Financial Statements of the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year ended December 31, 2016. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
3. The Audited Financial Statements of the Deposit Insurance Corporation for the year ended September 30, 2015. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
Papers 2 and 3 to be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.
[Cell phone rings]

Madam Speaker: Could the Member please—could the Member with the offending device please leave the Chamber. Minister of Health.

UNREVISED

4. Response of the South West Regional Health Authority to the Third Report of the Joint Select Committee on Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities (including the THA) on an Inquiry into the Administration and Operations of the South-West Regional Health Authority in relation to the Adequacy of Medical Staff and Equipment at the San Fernando General Hospital. [*The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh)*]

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT
(Presentation)**

Land and Physical Infrastructure

Mr. Rushton Paray (*Mayaro*): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I have the honour to present the following report:

First Report of the Joint Select Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure for the First Session (2015/2016), Eleventh Parliament, on the Inquiry into Land Tenure Issues in Trinidad and Tobago.

URGENT QUESTIONS

Institute of Marine Affairs

(Measures to Mitigate Public and Environmental Risks)

Mr. Ganga Singh (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of Planning and Development: In light of the recently published Institute of Marine Affairs Report indicating that there was significant pollution of the north and north-west coastline and beaches, could the Minister state the measures the Ministry intends to implement to mitigate the risks to the public and the environment?

The Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Colm Imbert): Thank you. Madam Speaker, as Acting Minister of Planning and Development, I am advised that the Environmental Management

Authority, through the certificate of environmental compliance process, regulates negative environmental impacts of activities. Through the water pollution rules, the Ministry of Planning and Development, through the EMA is able to identify sources of pollutants, and through the permitting process work with industries to institute measures to treat with effluence. As a consequence, I am certain that the Environmental Management Authority is doing all that is required to deal with this reported pollution.

Mr. Singh: Madam Speaker, supplemental to the hon. Acting Minister of Planning and Development. In beaches like Maracas, is there any education programme conducted either by the Ministry or the EMA in order to warn or prevent persons from going to those beaches, because there are significant medical ailments that can result because of the E. coli pollution in those beaches?

Hon. C. Imbert: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as you would be aware this is an urgent question, we get about five minutes to arrange a response, but be that as it may, I will certainly draw the concerns of the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West to the attention of the EMA; those issues are well put and should be done, and I will ensure that whatever is required to be done, in terms of informing the public, is done.

Public Medical Care for Non-Nationals

Dr. Lackram Bodoie (*Fyzabad*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of Health: In light of a recent newspaper report that a Venezuelan national died because he was denied medical care in the public health sector, could the Minister indicate the Government's policy with regard to non-nationals seeking care at public health institutions?

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I want to offer condolences to the family of Mr. Naval.

There was an article in the papers which said “Visitor dies after turned away from Mt Hope”, and this urgent question is asking whether he was denied medical care. The factual basis is anything but that, and let me put the record straight for all concerned. The gentleman was attended to at the adult A&E on May the 11th. He was triaged and treated and sent immediately to a resuscitation room.

So, he began to receive the treatment on presentation to the A&E. Other tests performed were bone marrow testing, he received a CT scan, he was resuscitated and sent to the neurology and haematology for further testing. The story becomes a bit muddled because he was not speaking English, and someone purporting to be his guardian/girlfriend/family friend then encouraged Mr. Naval to discharge himself against medical advice, which he did whilst being a patient of Eric Williams. So, he received all the treatment, primary and secondary, accorded to a non-national as per protocol.

His family/friend/guardian encouraged him to leave the country immediately for whatever reasons and took him to Piarco International Airport, where he collapsed. He was then sent back to Eric Williams where he subsequently died. I want to put on the public record and to correct the newspaper article that this patient was not denied treatment. He received treatment at the A&E, he received primary care treatment, he received secondary care treatment. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Minister, thank you for the clarification, and would you kindly indicate your answer with respect to the second part of the said question?

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: Sure. The policy of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains constant throughout past administrations. We provide primary and acute secondary care for non-nationals. That is a global practice, and we stick

to our WHO conventions. I, in preparation for this question yesterday—because I knew the question would come—you could google treatmentofcancerpatientsnon-nationalsuk; treatmentofcancerpatientsnon-nationalsusa and you will see that those countries do not provide advanced tertiary care for chronic long-stay patients in their territories, only for their nationals if they have insurance. We adhere to international best practice that non-nationals—as opposed to other countries near and far—can walk into any health institution and avail themselves, free of charge, for acute primary care and secondary care.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Minister, for that response. Minister, in view of the influx of Venezuelan nationals into the country, do you anticipate that you will have to make any additional preparations to deal with this because of course there will be an increased demand on the health services?

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: Thank you. I think that is an excellent question. I think you and I, hon. Member, when we are travelling we always research the countries to which we are going, and these countries will have on their websites what is available free of charge, and what is available for payment, and whether you should have insurance or not. I think the message should go out to everyone when they are coming to a different country, as we do when we travel to North America, that you have a responsibility to make sure you are covered, especially for emergency care for situations like this. We continue to provide emergency care for non-nationals, as I have stated, for emergency, and acute secondary care.

**National Gas Company
(Workers Sent Home)**

Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (*Couva South*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries: Could the Minister advise this House of the reason(s) which led to the decision of the National Gas Company to send home

30 workers by the end of May 2017?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The NGC initiated a process of notifying 30 surplus contract workers—and I will repeat, 30 surplus contract workers—that their contracts will not be renewed. Never a nice thing to do, I must say. These contract workers are surplus to the manpower requirements. Several relate, if not most, to the aborted Beetham Waste Water Project which was terminated, some are Administrative Assistants, and others were displaced by offshore workers who were successfully redeployed in 2016.

I may add that none of them are permanent employees. However, NGC has followed best practice with this exercise, treating them, the contract workers as permanently employed under the Industrial Relations Act, by according them severance benefits. No other company in this country has ever done that. NGC will also provide financial counselling and out-placement counselling. This move is imperative to streamlining the company in the face of the still very difficult energy environment.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is the Minister in a position to advise this House, since the 7th of September how many workers have been sent home from the National Gas Company, and how many workers have also been hired at the National Gas Company since the 7th of September, 2015?

Sen. The Hon. F. Khan: I am not in a position to answer that at this point in time, because it really does not naturally follow through from this question.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, given the Minister's position in relation to the supplemental, is he willing to provide the request that I made, in writing?

Sen. The Hon. F. Khan: Once you pose the question in the appropriate way I would so do.

Official Invitations from Stakeholders

Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (*Couva South*): To the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs: Could the Minister inform this House of the official invitations he received from stakeholders and attended which necessitated his presence in Tobago from the 19th of May to the 22nd of May, 2017?

The Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs (Hon. Darryl Smith): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I was not in Tobago from the 19th to the 22nd. I received an invitation from the THA for the Youth Sports Annual Awards. We work very closely with the THA and a number of these athletes' success was based on the assistance from the Ministry. I arrived in Tobago on Saturday the 20th at 5.00 p.m., attended the event, on Sunday had a meeting with the assemblyman for youth and sport, Mr. Jomo Pitt, and on Monday at noon I left and was back in my office at the Ministry. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Indarsingh: Could the Minister advise this House if he and any of his entourage officially visited the Dwight Yorke Stadium in Tobago?

Hon. D. Smith: Madam Speaker, I visited the Dwight Yorke Stadium on a previous trip. That was not part of my agenda; however, persons from the Ministry and the Sports Company did do a site visit, as we plan to do major renovations to that facility.

DUI Task Force (Disbanded Police Officers)

Mr. David Lee (*Pointe-a-Pierre*): Thank you, Madam Speaker, Question No. 5 to the Minister of National Security. Based on a recent media report that police officers of the Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Task Force have been disbanded, could the Minister state the reasons for this, given the critical work these officers were undertaking to ensure road safety?

UNREVISED

The Minister of National Security (Hon. Maj. Gen. Edmund Dillon): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have been informed by the Commissioner of Police that the DUI Task Force has not been disbanded.

Mr. Lee: Supplemental to the Minister. Is the Minister stating based on the media report that this is not so?

Madam Speaker: I believe the Minister answered the question.

Hosting of CPL (Details of)

Mr. Barry Padarath (Princes Town): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, through you, to the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, question No. 6. In light of the announcement made by the Minister regarding Trinidad and Tobago hosting the CPL final, would the Minister indicate whether this event and its related budget of US \$1 million have been approved by Cabinet?

Madam Speaker: Member, that is not the question that is on the Order Paper. Could you read the question on the Order Paper?

Mr. Padarath: In light of the announcement made by the Minister regarding Trinidad and Tobago hosting the CPL final, would the Minister indicate whether this event and its related budget have been approved by Cabinet?

The Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs (Hon. Darryl Smith): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like the Member for Princes Town to show where I made an announcement. I made no such announcement about us hosting any CPL.
[Desk thumping]

Mr. Padarath: Madam Speaker, the *Guardian* newspaper two days ago together with CNC3 reported and published that the Minister made the announcement of US \$1 million to be paid for the CPL final. Is he aware?

Madam Speaker: I would not allow that.

Mr. Padarath: Madam Speaker, in light of the published reports in the *Trinidad Guardian* and CNC3 of two days ago, could the hon. Minister indicate why yesterday at a post-Cabinet, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, Port of Spain North was totally unaware of any US \$1 million—

Madam Speaker: Member, I would not allow that as a question either.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you. To the very distinguished Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, given your very serious concerns of value for money, would you indicate to the House whether or not it is the intention of the Ministry and the Government to purchase in any way the semi-final and finals of the CPL?

Hon. D. Smith: Madam Speaker, it is not in front of the Cabinet as yet. We have met with the CPL, and we are in discussions on final negotiations, and when we do finalize that, it will go to the Cabinet and the Cabinet will make a decision. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Members, the time for Urgent Questions has now expired.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Minister of Health and Acting Leader of the House (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Madam Speaker, we have six questions for oral answer, and today we are in a position to answer all six.

WASA in Tobago (Water Restrictions)

120. Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh (*Oropouche West*) asked the hon. Minister of Public Utilities:

With respect to water restrictions implemented by the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) in Tobago, could the Minister provide the rationale for water restrictions in Tobago and the date the restrictions will be lifted?

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds): Thank you very

warmly, Madam Speaker. Tobago has been faced with below average rainfall during the first three months of the wet season 2016, which began in May 2016. The situation resulted in reduced water availability on the island, and as such, water restrictions were instituted in Tobago as of midnight, Friday, August 26, 2016. These restrictions remain firmly in force. The below normal rainfall in Tobago continued in the months of September and October 2016, which further depleted the available water resources. This situation had a serious impact on surface water sources, but also adversely affected the natural recharge of Tobago's groundwater aquifers which were also found to be below normal.

Madam Speaker, it is important to note that since 2015, Tobago has experienced harsh dry seasons with below average rainfall that have prolonged even into the normal wet seasons. This is due to the El Niño climatic phenomenon. Despite the above average rainfall during the period January to March 2017 when compared to the long-term average, April 2017 was very dry with rainfall being below the long-term average.

Further, the Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service has also projected that there would be below average rainfall levels in the months of May, June and July 2017. This situation will result in diminished water availability, particularly in respect of the surface water sources on the island. In order to manage the current water resources of the island, restrictions on water use will be maintained in Tobago consistent with the provisions of the Water and Sewerage Act, Chap 54:40 in the laws of Trinidad and Tobago, until further notice. The public is therefore assured that water availability is monitored continuously and amendments will be made to this Order once the situation has improved. And the public is also advised in these circumstances to use every bit of water sensibly with an eye on our long-term future. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. [*Desk*

thumping]

**Vandalism at the Temple in the Sea
(Provision of Security)**

121. Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh (*Oropouche West*) asked the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts:

In light of frequent vandalism at the Temple in the Sea, could the Minister indicate whether the Government is willing to assist with the provision of security of the site?

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts (Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly): Thank you, Madam Speaker. In keeping with Goal 4 of Government's National Development Strategy 2016 to 2030, known as Vision 2030, which states that:

“The richness of our diverse culture will serve as a powerful engine to inspire innovation and creativity.”—and the objective to—“Preserve the culture heritage of Trinidad and Tobago...”

—the Government is committed to preserving all aspects of our culture and heritage, and stands willing to assist where necessary to achieve this objective. In this context, the Government will give consideration to any reasonable request from the owners and operators of the temple in the sea for assistance. However, it should be noted that the Siewdass Sadhu Temple in the Sea is listed by the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago as a place of worship. Accordingly, any request for assistance should be directed to the National Trust in the first instance.

**Housing Development Corporation
(Property Tax Payment)**

131. Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche East*) asked the hon. Minister of Housing and Urban Development:

Given that millions of dollars in land and buildings are vested in the Housing Development Corporation (HDC), could the Minister state whether the HDC would be required to pay the new property taxes?

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Randall Mitchell):

[*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation (HDC) is a body corporate established by the Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation Act, No. 24 of 2005 of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago, to inter alia do all things necessary and convenient for or in connection with the provision of affordable shelter and associated community facilities for low and middle income persons. As such, the HDC is engaged in the management of all lands and buildings including housing units held on leased lands and buildings and other property vested in it, belonging to it, or under its control. These buildings include:

1. Office accommodation to facilitate the operations of the HDC;
2. Rental units, units subject to licence to occupy and rent-to-own agreements in each HDC development in accordance with the policy of the HDC; and
3. The Village Plaza commercial facilities in the HDC developments.

Section 16(1) subsections (e) and (f) of the Property Tax Act, No. 18 of 2009 state that, at section 16(1):

“All land in Trinidad and Tobago is liable to taxation under this Act, subject to the following exemptions.”

Subsection (e) states:

“land of a designated class that is declared by the Minister to be exempt wholly or partially from taxation under this Act;”

And subsection (f) says:

“land belonging to and in occupation of—

- (i) the State or its servants;
- (ii) a Statutory Authority; or
- (iii) state enterprise controlled by the State,
for public purposes;”

With respect to the lands used for office accommodation and/or to facilitate the operations of the HDC, these lands fall to be exempt under section 16(1) subsection (f), as it is controlled by the HDC for public purposes. With respect to the lands used for the provision of rental accommodation, units subject to licence to occupy and rent-to-own agreements as well as those lands used as village plazas, the HDC is prima facie liable to pay property tax. However, the HDC is in the process of making an application to the Minister of Finance for these lands to be land of a designated class declared to be exempt by the Minister in accordance with section 16(1)(e) of the Property Tax Act. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Moonilal: So, Minister, are you saying that those persons renting apartments and units of the HDC, it is the intention of the HDC to apply to the Minister for exemption on property tax while all other citizens and property owners and residents would pay property tax?

Hon. R. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, persons—only home owners, the owners of properties are liable to pay property tax. The renters in the HDC system are not home owners and are not liable to pay property tax. [*Desk thumping*]

Criminal Procedure Rules, 2016 (Details of)

122. Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh (*Oropouche West*) asked the hon. Attorney General:

With regard to the concerns raised by prominent criminal attorneys in

relation to the Criminal Procedure Rules, 2016, is the Attorney General willing to intervene to provide practical solutions?

The Attorney General (Hon. Faris Al-Rawi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The question lacks, unfortunately, clarity and gives no indication of what concerns, if any, have been raised in relation to the Criminal Procedure Rules. Notwithstanding, given that the rules were formulated after extensive consultations with criminal justice stakeholders, namely: judicial officers, the Office of the DPP, the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago, the Criminal Bar, the Legal Aid and Advisory Authority, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service, and that the Rules were subject to deliberations by the Criminal Justice Committee which includes ministerial representatives from the Office of the AG and Ministry of National Security, and that the Rules were subject of various sensitization programmes and campaigns which included training for key stakeholders and public awareness drives through both electronic and print media. There is no need for any further intervention by the AG as it relates to the Criminal Procedure Rules.

The Rules were signed off by the Rules Committee which included the AG on April 06, 2016, and were published by Legal Notice No. 55 on April 21, 2016. The Rules were to commence on the 2nd of January 2017, but were delayed to allow for the improved readiness by key stakeholders. The Rules were therefore in the public domain and subject to the scrutiny of criminal attorneys for almost one year before they became effective on April 18, 2017. The Law Association and Judiciary are to be commended for the very proactive steps taken prior to the commencement of the Rules to facilitate its successful implementation. On March 29, 2017, the Law Association extended an invitation to the legal profession to attend preliminary sessions and seminars on the Rules in San Fernando on April 6th

and in Port of Spain on April 7th, with Tobago already having the benefit of such training in January 2017.

2.00 p.m.

The Law Association also undertook to provide further training to practitioners on the Rules at the end of June and early July 2017. These training sessions were well attended and covered topics which included: Thinking and processes behind the creation of the Rules, the need for the Rules, whether the Rules will assist in speeding up criminal trials, the provisions of the Rules, dealings with non-compliance and sanctions, and special issues to be addressed including what practitioners need to do to be prepared for the Rules.

Further to these sessions, the Law Association provided training material to legal practitioners on April 18th, 2017 via Weblink to useful information, including decided cases and readings, which information was utilized by the Judiciary in the training of judges and magistrates on the Rules.

The Judiciary, similarly, engaged in public information campaigns to create awareness of the Rules, in addition to the hosting of training sessions for key stakeholders. A ten-minute documentary was produced which depicts the purported operation of the Rules—[*Interrupted*]

Madam Speaker: Attorney General, your speaking time is up.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh: Supplemental to the AG. Hon. AG, do you think that these Rules will really expedite matters through the court?

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Absolutely yes, and let me say why. When we see the Civil Proceedings Rules, which were due to come into 1999, they were delayed on account of cries by the profession until 2005. But when implemented, just as these Rules will be implemented, the Civil Proceedings Rules brought the backlog of

cases down from 17 years in arrears down to one or two years. The Criminal Proceedings Rules, coming in 2017 now, is very much like the Civil Proceedings Rules and they constitute a landmark decision of operational improvement by the Government together with the Judiciary and the bar bench associations and I am absolutely convinced, just as the pre-PACE reforms resulted in the improvements in the English Criminal Justice System, that we will be reaping the benefit in our system as well. [*Desk Thumping*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hon. Attorney General, thank you for the long explanation, but would you kindly answer the question which is, whether you are willing to intervene to provide solutions?

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Asked and answered, thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Beneficiaries of Protective Services Deceased Members
(Compensation paid)**

132. Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche East*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister provide the total compensation paid to the beneficiaries of deceased members of the protective services killed in the line of duty as announced on April 18, 2017?

The Minister of National Security (Hon. Maj. Gen. Edmund Dillon): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, unlike the previous Government who made a statement without putting in place a policy, this Government has in fact to date paid the sum of \$5 million to beneficiaries of members of the protective services who were killed in the line of duty. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Moonilal: Could the Minister indicate the names of these beneficiaries?

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Madam Speaker, the beneficiaries had in fact indicated and you would notice, Member for Oropouche East, that you would not

have seen any pictures of anyone in the papers. They have indicated that they do not want their names, et cetera, to be publicized for obvious reasons because of the sums that they have inherited. I think we could respect that.

Dr. Moonilal: “How we know if da is true.”

**Valuation Division
(Details of)**

133. Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche East*) asked the hon. Minister of Finance: Could the Minister inform this House whether the Valuation Division, Ministry of Finance and any other relevant department(s) have received additional personnel, financial resources, office and logistical support for the implementation of the property tax?

The Minister of Finance (Hon. Colm Imbert): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Valuation Division is currently staffed with a number of technical, professional and administrative personnel. In addition, the recruitment and selection process for an additional 248 contract officers has been completed and the hiring process is in its final stages. Given the high volume of property owners visiting the existing valuation offices, arrangements were made for additional security and administrative personnel to assist with the collection of valuation return forms.

In some areas, tents, chairs and water were provided for members of the public waiting in line. An additional collection station was set up at the Head Office of the Ministry of Finance on the ground floor of Eric Williams Finance Building in Port of Spain. Property owners were also provided with the option of utilizing a number of drop boxes rather than waiting in lines.

Currently, the Ministry of Finance is in the process of outfitting an office located in Barataria which was leased for the relocation of the Port of Spain office of the Valuation Division. This arrangement will also facilitate the necessary

accommodation required for the increased number of personnel within the Valuation Division. Additionally, alternative accommodation for five of the regional offices of the Valuation Division is being finalized.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Finance. Is he aware that the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance and the mortgagees have already been asked to cater for a property tax in their mortgages?

Madam Speaker: I will not allow that as a supplemental question. Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you very much. To the Minister of Finance. Could the Minister of Finance indicate to the House and the country whether he continues to encourage staff members at the Ministry of Finance to collect documents pursuant to the implementation of the property tax in defiance of the court order.

Hon. C. Imbert: That matter is sub judice.

**DEFINITE URGENT MATTERS
(LEAVE)**

**Preysal Government Primary School
(Recent Closure)**

Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie (*Caroni Central*): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. In accordance with Standing Order 17 of the House of Representatives, I hereby seek your leave to move the Adjournment of the House at today's sitting for the purpose of discussing a Definite Matter of Urgent Public Importance, namely: the recent closure of the Preysal Government Primary School.

The matter is definite because it relates explicitly to the closure of the Preysal Government Primary School due to persistent sewer and infrastructural problems.

The matter is urgent since it negatively impacts on the education and health of both students and teachers.

The matter is of public importance because the Government is setting a dangerous

precedent. According to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals—Goal 4: obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development. Education is a public good and steps need to be taken by the Government to ensure that the students of the Preysal Government Primary School are not deprived of quality education and that it is administered under conditions of reasonable comfort. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I am not satisfied that this matter qualifies under this Standing Order. I advise that the Member pursue this matter under Standing Orders 16. Member for Couva North.

**Sea Bridge Between Trinidad And Tobago
(Inability of the Government to Resolve)**

Miss Ramona Ramdial (*Couva North*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hereby seek leave to move the Adjournment of the House today, under Standing Order 17 for the purpose of discussing a Definite Matter of Urgent Public Importance, namely: the inability by the Government to resolve the tragic and abysmal failure of the sea bridge between Trinidad and Tobago.

The matter is definite because it relates to the continuous breakdowns encountered by both the *T & T Express* and *T & T Spirit* and the resultant disruption to Trinidad and Tobago's sea bridge which is on the verge of an unmitigated collapse.

The matter is urgent because of the Government's failure to act immediately to resolutely attend to these interruptions which has had a deleterious impact on businesses as well as the social and economic standing of the people of Tobago.

The matter is of public importance because of the emphasis placed on the sea bridge as the primary means of supply for many basic and vital commodities to Tobago, as well as the ability for persons to freely navigate our twin-island nation as a basic constitutional right.

Madam Speaker, I so move.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I am not satisfied that this matter qualifies under this Standing Order. I advise that the Member pursue this matter under Standing Order 16.

RISING CRIME EPIDEMIC

Mr. Rodney Charles (*Naparima*): Madam Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Be it resolved that this House take note and express its horror at the exponential growth in the crime rate manifested by historic murder rates, violence against the person and property and the inexplicable disappearance of citizens;

Be it further resolved that this House condemn the Prime Minister and the Government for:

- a) failure to address the rising crime epidemic; and
- b) inability to present a credible Anti-Crime Plan aimed at preventing, detecting, prosecuting and rehabilitating the criminal elements.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN *in the Chair*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I begin, I would like, on behalf of all of us on this side, to extend best wishes to the MP for Laventille East/Morvant who was a recent victim of a robbery. We wish him well and express the hope that the burglars will be speedily brought to justice. It indeed shows that no one in this country is immune from the scourge of crime. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, never before in the history of our country has our citizenry been exposed to and are concerned with and have immense fears about the safety and security of their well-being and their property. In fact, as a calypsonian, a brother of a former Minister of National Security sang, “We all living in jail”. We all spent money with burglar proofs, blink, CarSearch, coward tax businesses have

to pay, we are scared to assist persons less we become the victim of crime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we speak, the murder rate in Trinidad and Tobago at this time has reached 212. I do not know what it would be at the end of my presentation. But when you look at the names of the persons and I have my staff keeping the names of all the persons who are victims of crime. I see names like the first person, Ryan Winters, age 41 shot in Arouca on 1st January. I see Sheldon—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, excuse. You have the right that you can call the names accordingly, but do you care to do it? Are you comfortable with calling out the names and the dates and everything? All right, proceed.

Mr. R. Charles: Yes, these are in the newspapers. This is public information. In fact, I can tell you where I got it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No problem.

Mr. R. Charles: Delinjah John, 33, chopped in Piparo, in the *Express* and the *Guardian* of 6th January. We have—it is all through Trinidad and Tobago. In San Fernando, we have Ms. Anfernie “Jim” Hamilton, 16th January in the *Newsday* and 16th January in the *Express*. We have Luenda Anthony shot in Guapo. It is all over Trinidad. Each of these persons, each of the names I call is a father, a son of somebody, a brother, a sister, a neighbour, a friend, a family, a schoolmate or a citizen of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the 212 days, we have Lyndon Collins shot in Moruga on January 29th and the list goes on and on, 212 of our hard-working citizens, people who gave, in the social contract, who gave in a contract relationship with the State, expecting the State to guarantee their safety and security.

But it is not throughout Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Even in the constituency of Point Fortin, the constituency of the Minister of National Security,

you have Ricky Mohammed, shot 17th January; Luenda Anthony, shot, 17th; Richard Arjoon, Socorro Serrano, Len Fortune, 22nd May—as recently as 22nd May. If the Minister cannot provide security for Point Fortin, then how are the rest of the population, the constituency of Naparima, to feel secure and safe and of the view that he can provide security and safety?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at the facts on the number of murders in Trinidad and Tobago, there is a direct relationship between the PNM being in government and the increase in murders. [*Desk thumping*] It cannot be by accident. In 1995, there were 122 murderers. That was the last year of a PNM Government.

Mr. Hinds: “Dotishness.”

Mr. R. Charles: In 1996 when the UNC came into power, guess what? It dropped to 107. It cannot be by accident. In 2000 and 2001, when the UNC left, the annual murder rate was 151. So the last time we were in power, the murder rate was 151. But when the PNM came into power in 2002, it jumped to 172, not by accident. You can almost estimate and know and wait for the murder rate to increase once the PNM comes into governance.

When the PNM demitted office in 2008, the murder rate was 550. In 2009, the last year, was 508. We came into power in 2010 and guess what? True to form, the murder rate dropped to 473. Every time the PNM comes in power the murder rate increases. In 2015, the murder rate was 420. Guess what? Following the facts, the PNM came into power in 2015/2016 and in 2016, the murder rate was 463 murders.

Something about the PNM governance leads to increase murders in Trinidad and Tobago. And I would recommend that sociologists at the University of the West Indies do the necessary empirical studies to determine what is the cause of this

relationship. But I could proffer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could proffer a solution. They do not know what they are doing. For example, on May 15, 2016 our Prime Minister said and I quote:

“Crime has reached a highly unacceptable level in Trinidad and Tobago but Government cannot simply, ‘flick a switch and turn it off’, Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley has said.”

So he is saying that it has reached an unacceptable level, but we have our Minister of National Security and this is an article by Kevon Felmine in the *Guardian*, dated August 2016 the same year. The Minister of National Security is saying and I quote:

“While boasting the crime rate is lower than 2014, National Security Minister Edmund Dillon said yesterday he was concerned about T&T’s murder rate.”

So the Member is saying in 2016 that the murder rate would be less than in 2014 and I have just given the facts that the murder rate was in fact higher in 2016. In fact, significantly higher than it was in 2014. But we have another example. In Carnival, we have another example in Carnival where the Minister of National Security—and I am reading from the *Trinidad Express* and it says:

“Minister of National Security Major General (Ret’d) the Honourable Edmund Dillon wishes to thank members of the Defence and Protective Services for their efforts in making Carnival 2017 crime free.”

He is thanking them for making it crime free, while higher up in the report it says:

“...among the violent crimes”—during the same Carnival—“were the assault of police officers during the J’ouvert in Tobago and on Monday afternoon in La Brea.”

And in addition there was:

“A mother and daughter were also found knifed to death at their home in Siparia on Monday.”

So he is saying on the one hand, thanking officers and subsequently—thanking officers, but that was inconsistent with the reality of crime for the Carnival.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, statistics all over show that we are inundated with crime at every level of the society in every category. And I am looking for the US Embassy—this is January 2017 crime statistics. And they are giving January statistics and they reported it to the United States and they took this from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. And they were saying:

“Serious Crimes

There were 872 Serious Crimes recorded during the month of January, 2017, for which the Northern Division accounted for the highest number of Serious Crimes (173) among the Divisions.”

And they say:

“This total Serious Crimes figure represents a 19.3% increase from the serious crimes...posted in the previous month of December, 2016...”

So for serious crime, we are seeing a 19.3 per cent increase. And they said the detection rate for serious crime reported in January is 21.3 per cent. But let us look at woundings and shootings:

“There were 44 Woundings and Shootings reported in the month of January, 2017, an increase”—Mr. Deputy Speaker—“of 69.2% from the previous month of December, 2016...”

We look also at rapes, incest and other sexual offences. And this is what the United States is sending to the Department of State to the United States about my country, Trinidad and Tobago.

“Rapes, Incest and Other Sexual Offences

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“There were 46 reports recorded in this category for the year 2017 thus far. This represents a 119% increase over the 21 reports recorded”—recorded for—“the previous month of December, 2016.”

“Kidnapping

13 reports of Kidnapping in January, 2017 represent a 225.0% increase from last year January’s figure of 4.”—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: What percentage?

Mr. R. Charles: A 225 percentage increase.

“Burglaries and Breakings”—and the Member for Laventille East/Morvant just experienced something in a matter of days.

“Burglaries and Breakings

178 reports of this offence in January, 2017...23.6% more than...the previous month of December, 2016”—and it goes on and on.

A litany of increases in crimes.

“Larceny Motor Vehicles

“...a 31.1% increase.”

“Narcotic Offences

...47.6%.”

They cannot deny the incontrovertible facts that crime is expanding exponentially under this Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the crime that is so pervasive that we feel—it led one of the writers in the *Trinidad Express*, Michael Harris, I think we all know him, [*Interruption*] who clearly is not a UNC, as I am reminded. He is saying that crime has an insidious damage to our society. And he was talking about a particular situation in Golconda where some people came to a home and they said to the residents, we need water for the car, it is overheating. The residents, out of the

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goodness of their heart decided to open their house to assist the gentleman and they were robbed. And he is saying:

“The sheer routineness of this crime and the fact that no one died could lead us to ignore the dread implications of this story. The fact is that such crimes serve to render foolish and dangerous the best instincts of human society. Fear of crime is increasingly reducing us to atomistic ciphers...”

And he goes on to talk that Trinidad and Tobago is slowly becoming a failed State. So I did some research on failed states. What are the characteristics of a failed state? So I went to, and this is one of the authorities, Professor Robert Rotberg and he is from the Wilson Center in the United States. And he is talking about the characteristic of a failed state and I quote:

“Nation-states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver positive...goods to their inhabitants.”

He went on to define what he meant by public goods. And he said:

“There is a hierarchy of”—public/—“political goods. None is as critical as the supply of security, especially human security. Individuals alone, almost exclusively in special or particular circumstances, can attempt to make themselves.”

But he says at some point you need the state to intervene to provide you with a level of security.

“The delivery of a range of other desirable political goods becomes possible when a reasonable measure of security has been sustained.”

He went on to talk about weak states. And he says:

“Weak states typically harbor ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other intercommunal tensions that have not yet, or not yet thoroughly, become overtly violent.”

But this is the important point:

“Urban crime rates tend to be higher and increasing.”

And we saw that in respect of the data that we got from the US Embassy.

“In weak states, the ability to provide adequate measures of other political goods is diminished or diminishing.”

When we look at the other characteristics of weak states, he says:

“An indicator of failure, but not a cause of failure, are declining real national and per capita levels of annual GDP.”

I will provide data later on to show that *The Economist* has said and I said it before in Parliament, the economist has said that Trinidad and Tobago is among the 10 most shrinking economies out of 212 countries in the world. We are among the 10 most shrinking economies, an indictment on the performance of the Ministry of Finance and an indicator that crime is impacting on the economy and we are heading to a failed state status. [*Desk thumping*] It says:

“A nation-state also fails when it loses legitimacy—when it forfeits the ‘mandate of heaven’.”—cannot control its borders, et cetera.

Failed state, and I went to another bit of research on 10 reasons countries fall apart where the centre cannot hold and things are falling apart under the PNM. And it says:

“Most countries that fall apart, however, do not do so with a bang”—they do so—“with a whimper.”

It happens slowly, insidiously, and we wake up one day and we realize that we are living in a failed state. Whatever they may say, and they are very good at talking to us in Trinidad and lecturing us, but they cannot do so to the First World. There is an analysis, the countries with the highest crime rates, the *Gazette Review*, and it lists the top 10 countries in the world with the highest crime rate and they got their

data from:

- “1. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and”—crime statistics
2. National Crime Index Reports
3. Reports on National Corruption
4. Reports of non-government paramilitary actions.”

And this is 2017 data.

Hear the countries we are lining with, we are in company with globally. Kenya, No. 10, high crime rate country. Number nine, Brazil; eighth, high crime rate country, El Salvador. And I quote:

“If one were to take the philosophy and poverty of Mad Max and set it into Central America, El Salvador would be the result.”

El Salvador is eighth. But who is seventh? Trinidad and Tobago—high crime rate country.

2.30 p.m.

This is what the world is reading about us, and they have a picture of a police vehicle in front of a place. I gather it is somewhere in one of the projects in Laventille West. We are in company with countries like Nigeria and Venezuela and Honduras. We are in the top 10. But, you see, they could fool us here and fool the country, but the UK Government is issuing advisories to its citizenry, and I quote, 25th May—this is current as of 25 May, 2017. When was that, yesterday? Yesterday. It says:

“There are high levels of...crime in Trinidad, including murder especially in parts of the capital of Port of Spain. A British national was murdered after being robbed at gunpoint in the Mt. D’Or area of Mt. Hope in Trinidad on 10 April, 2016. Robbery and other crimes targeting tourists have also occurred elsewhere in Trinidad and Tobago.”

So we are talking about a tourist thrust and we go roaming in the Bahamas, but countries are telling their citizens do not visit Trinidad and Tobago. We just read the UK. What is Canada saying? Canada is saying, exercise a high degree of caution, telling their citizens:

“Violent robberies, assaults and rape occur frequently. Cruise ship passengers should take particular care when walking around the docks in Port of Spain. Gang and drug-related violence”—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Quote your source, please.

Mr. R. Charles: The source is the Government of Canada Advisory and it is dated 25 May, 2017. It says:

“Crimes of opportunity such as petty theft tend to increase during the annual...Carnival in February or March and during the Christmas holidays. Remain highly vigilant in”—Naparima, sorry—“Laventille and at popular tourist sites such as Fort George, La Brea (Pitch Lake) and Las Cuevas beach, where crimes targeting foreigners are reported.”

So the UK is telling their citizens, Canada is telling its citizens, and we have a US travel advisory. The whole world knows. We cannot deny it. We cannot make up statistics and make up data. The US travel advisory warns of visiting areas in and around Port of Spain. And I quote:

“Violent crime remains high on both islands and affects local and expatriate communities as well as tourists. You should exercise caution and good judgment. Be particularly cautious when traveling after dark from Trinidad’s Piarco Airport as incidents have been reported in the past involving armed robbers trailing arriving passengers from the airport and accosting them in remote areas of the airport parking lot, on the highway leading from the airport to downtown Port of Spain, and outside the gates of

residences.”

It goes on and on. “Trinidad and Tobago, 2016 Crime and Safety Report”, and it says:

“Crime is the principal threat to visitors.”

They know it, we cannot hide it. I wonder what kind of tourism thrust we could be having if the whole world and the places where we get tourists, they are telling their people in effect, do not visit Trinidad and Tobago. I am reading from this report, the 2016 Crime Report. It is saying:

“Crime is the principal threat to visitors, and most are crimes of opportunity. American citizens...”—

This is an Overseas Security Advisory Council, 2016, Trinidad and Tobago Crime and Safety Report. You read this and you almost cry, that this is my country that is being described in such a way where they are telling people—crime, banditry, burglary, watch out for everybody. But we know this. MPs are getting robbed—MPs on our side. I understand the Members for Couva North and Caroni Central, victims of crime.

We are in a failed state situation. [*Desk thumping*] And there is a direct relationship between increased crime and a shrinking economy. When my political leader was Prime Minister, we had the largest per capita in foreign direct [*Desk thumping*] investment in Trinidad and Tobago, and today it is almost zero, except those things that we negotiated and left, like Mitsubishi.

And this is *The Economist*:

“Ten most shrinking”—

I said it before: Libya. That is who we are keeping company with; Venezuela, Equatorial Guinea. Syria? We link with Syria in terms of globally shrinking economies? Timor-Leste, Burundi. Greece is higher than us. Greece, which is a

failure in terms of economic development in the EU is higher than Trinidad and Tobago in terms of shrinking economies.

I talked about the CIA where they rank us. Haiti does better than us. Grenada does better than us. And to the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, he talks about how great things are in Trinidad and Tobago. Grenada, with about one-eighth of our population, got at the Olympics a silver medal and we got bronze.

Hon. Member: He said he is performing.

Mr. R. Charles: We are celebrating bronze. That is what Trinidad and Tobago—Jamaica, they have gold going out of style. Under this PNM we are happy when we get a bronze medal. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Silence.

Mr. R. Charles: But it gets worse than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When it comes to terrorism, the whole world “washin dey mout” on Trinidad and Tobago. Let me say “mouth”. Speak with elegance—“mouth”. It was our Prime Minister, then Leader of the Opposition, who, when the then Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar moved a—co-sponsored the UN Security Council Resolution on the fight against terrorism, saying it was best for Trinidad and Tobago to have passed up—which was good for us to join with the world community in dealing with global terrorism, hear what the Member for Diego Martin West said:

Trinidad and Tobago cannot afford to declare war on terrorists at a time when you can stay away.

This is 2014.

Hon. Member: What? Repeat that.

Mr. R. Charles: He is telling us we should not get involved in the battle against global terrorism and he said it to constituents last evening at the PNM St. Ann’s East constituency’s annual conference at San Juan North Secondary School in

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Bourg Mulatress on a range of issues. So he is telling, in 2014, “Do not get involved in global terrorism”. It is ostrich-like, in the fight against global terrorism.

Our Minister of National Security—I have respect for you, but I have to give the facts. This is our Minister of National Security, was quoted yesterday as saying: “ISIS poses ‘no threat to Trinidad and Tobago’”

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Quote your source again, please. Your source.

Mr. R. Charles: This is the *Trinidad Business Guardian*, November 2016, published on November 16, 2015. And he is saying—this is the Minister of National Security:

Minister of National Security—“was quoted yesterday as saying Isis poses ‘no threat to T&T right now’.”

But you see, facts are stubborn things. I recall sending out a media release on April 03, 2016, and we could check this.

Hon. Member: The Wheel.

Mr. R. Charles: Yes, from the Wheel. We sent it out. You cannot deal with the facts of the Wheel, you deal “ad hominemly” with the person who spun the wheel. [Desk thumping] But that is a fault of the PNM. And I said:

“Newspaper reports, as yet unchallenged, indicate that”—there were—“89 TT nationals fighting alongside the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria...With a population of 1.3 million, this means the UK, with 64.1 million people, would need to have over 4,400 fighters in Syria to have the same level of involvement as us.

But a BBC report dated 24th March, identified only ‘800 people from the UK who have travelled to support jihadist organizations in Syria and Iraq’. Proportionately”—and yuh could jump high and jump low—

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“Proportionately TT has...50 times the number of active fighters on the frontline of global terror than the UK.”

Fifty times. And yet somebody saying, “Ay, let us not get involved in this battle of global terror. That is not our business.” But you cannot fool the world. You cannot. *The Atlantic*: “ISIS in the Caribbean.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, you can read from your source but you cannot display it like how you would like to.

Mr. R. Charles: Thank you, I apologize. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. R. Charles: And there is an ISIS fighter, and his name is Abu Sa'd at-Trinidad, “recalling how he had turned away from the Christian faith he was born into” and he went into Islam. And we have so much money being spent on the SSA spy network and we have people outside of Trinidad and Tobago who know more about—call names, dates, time, events, plane tickets—know more about terrorism in Trinidad.

Atlantic—“ISIS in the Caribbean.” The date is December 08, 2016—ISIS. We have *Mail Online*, Wednesday, May 24, 2017:

“Jihadis of the Caribbean: Country with the highest rate of ISIS recruits in the western hemisphere is...Trinidad.”

I said it and I sent out the release; I gave the calculation, and I will talk a little bit about the media in Trinidad and Tobago, and I will be talking that from a position that I studied, a Master's in Journalism. [*Desk thumping*] I want to talk about them. They are co-conspirators with the PNM to lull us into a state of complacency, [*Desk thumping*] so that we have to get information from the United States, Canada—

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Standing Order 48(6). PNM are

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co-conspirators? Imputing improper motives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, Member, please move on to your point and, again, when you are making your analogies, be careful. Proceed.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I request that that remark be withdrawn and expunged from the record.

Mr. R. Charles: What did I say?

Mr. Imbert: You said PNM—

Mr. R. Charles: Yes, the PNM.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Do not say PNM? [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members, hold on. What Standing Order you are quoting from?

Mr. Deyalsingh: 48(6), Mr. Deputy Speaker. We want it expunged.

Mr. R. Charles: Expunge what? [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members. Members.

Mr. R. Charles: I lost four minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member for Naparima, do not worry, the Speaker will decide. Okay? In terms of your remark with regard to the media working in tandem with the PNM, I would like you to reword or rephrase or demit from saying it.

Mr. R. Charles: Thank you very much. I will be guided.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Guided and withdraw.

Mr. R. Charles: Right. All I want to say is that you have to read the foreign media—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: And also the displaying of your documentation. Member for Naparima, have a seat. Right? Okay? The displaying of your documentations, again, you know the importance. You can read from it but you cannot display it,

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and then also with regard to your analogies, just be careful. Proceed, and I will determine your time.

Mr. R. Charles: And you will give me injury time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will.

Mr. R. Charles: I thank you very much. I am very, very grateful. But we get—to read about what is happening in Trinidad and Tobago, we have to listen to MSNBC.

Mr. Indarsingh: Al Jazeera.

Mr. R. Charles: And we have Malcolm Nance, and they are saying:

“A”—US—“counter-terrorism expert has labelled Trinidad and Tobago as having more terrorists than the seven predominantly Muslim countries...”

We have *Associated Press*. It is the whole world, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member for Diego Martin West, I am overhearing you. Member, proceed.

Mr. R. Charles: *Associated Press*:

“Trinidad & Tobago tries to halt fighters to the Islamic State.”

New York Times:

“Trying to Stanch Trinidad’s Flow of Young Recruits to ISIS.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, I would like you to quote the date also.

Mr. R. Charles: Yes. All right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The one before you did not quote a date. So source and date.

Mr. R. Charles: All right. *Associated Press*, by Ricardo Nunes, February 16, 2017. The *New York Times*, February 21, 2017, goes on and on about terrorism in Trinidad. People & Power, “Caribbean to Caliphate”, Al Jazeera, and the date is the 24th of the 5th, 2017.

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Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: May, two days ago.

Mr. R. Charles: Two days ago, talking about a caliphate in the Caribbean.
Business Insider, May 18, 2017:

“The Caribbean State of Trinidad and Tobago is traditionally most famous for its spectacular annual carnival”—but it is also getting a name for producing ISIS fighters.

And our distinguished Attorney General is saying that—he is criticizing. This is *Newsday*, Shane Superville, Wednesday, 24th May, and he is saying:

“I also provided evidence to refute the claims of Trinidad”—and Tobago—
“being the highest contributor to...Foreign Terrorist Fighters in the Western Hemisphere.”

But I provided that data and I challenge him to do the mathematics and show that we are not the highest per capita contributor. And that is why they did not cover him. It was Dr. Raymond Ramcharitar of the *Guardian*—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Date.

Mr. R. Charles: And the date of that article was published Wednesday, 24th May, and he is saying—the Attorney General I am quoting—said:

“Ruhfus interviewed him at length, but none of it appeared in the documentary.”

And he is saying:

“No surprise there, as glibness and prolixity...”

Prolixity means a proclivity for over-talking without substance:

“are poor substitutes for substance and facts when you are talking to someone smart and well-informed.”

They could talk to us in Trinidad and lecture us pejoratively with all kind of obfuscatory language—

Hon. Members: “Ohhh.” [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Charles: But they cannot do it. They cannot do it. And the reason is they have no vision, no plan. I keep saying it: no vision, no plan. [*Desk thumping*] How else do you explain cutting in the budget, the cadets by \$3 million: 1.34, 1.28 and 900,000? How you could do this? We should be working to have a cadet force in every secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Cut MiLAT by \$5 million? Civilian Conservation Corps by \$23 million to put in an SSA that we could read the foreign media and get all the data we want about terrorists in the country. I learn about Rio Claro mosque from Al Jazeera, not from Trinidad and Tobago.

They talk about development of a prison management policy. They cut it from \$1 million to \$500,000; establishment of police youth club facilities, \$1.3 million to \$800,000. It is almost hard to take. A crime plan, when you look at the crime plan: appoint a Commissioner of Police. That is a list of activity. That is not an output. What could a Commissioner of Police do if he is appointed tomorrow, to reduce the murder rate or improve the crime detection rate? What powers will he have tomorrow if he is appointed? So while that is good and admirable, it has no outputs.

You talk about Parliament Oversight Committee; establish a Standing Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Crime Suppression and Security—not done. And even the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on national security is chaired by a member of the Executive.

Hon. Member: Which they promised to remove.

Mr. R. Charles: Promised to remove—sworn to collective responsibility and unlawful eviction offence. What is the measurable improvement in crime detection for unlawful eviction? You look at their Manifesto and you see nothing.

Someone like me who is trained in outputs, what we get is only activity.

And they always talk about the—what the OPVs. I keep hearing that. I am not an expert in naval architecture and naval equipment, but when I read from the *Defence Industry Daily*, highly reputable *Defence Industry Daily*, January 21, 2013, it talks about the Port of Spain—now the Amazonas Class, because Brazil bought them and renamed them.

“...an enlarged offshoot of the River Class OPVs built for Britain's Royal Navy.

And I want to record this:

“Trinidad and Tobago's own territorial waters didn't require all of these capabilities...”

This is the people who we bought the thing from, they are telling us that the OPVs were not customized to our specific needs. So in the last moments I will talk about the way forward. I want to talk about modelling behaviour. In Trinidad and Tobago it is being said, “If the priest could play, who is me”. We have that calypso: if the priest could do it—[*Interruption*]

We have—yes, yes, yes, FCB, \$130,000, a “grap” of money; \$700,000 a month for One Alexandra Place; \$92,000 in Tobago, et cetera; \$59,000 in Bahamas. People are watching on. The young generation are looking on and they are not prepared to tolerate it. And whereas in the past we would grumble, this generation would shoot.

They keep talking about Singapore. I want to tell you about leadership. Lee Kuan Yew in his memoirs—and you know I like Singapore because I want Trinidad, my country, to have a GDP of \$80,000. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Silence.

Mr. R. Charles: Hear what he says:

High profile cases. Several Ministers were guilty of corruption and in each of the decades from 1960 to 1980, Tan Kai Gan was Minister of National Development until he was removed by Lee Kuan Yew.

Sounds like our leader. “Yuh misbehave, yuh pay de price. Ah not too sure on that side what happens.”

Wee Toon Boon was Minister of State in the Ministry of the Environment in 1975. He was charged, convicted and sentenced to four years and six months in jail. There was another person, Phey Yew Kok, and this gentleman lobbied in the party to get off and what Lee Kuan Yew did, and I quote:

I rang up the Director of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau and told him to show the gentleman, Devan Nair, in strict confidence, the evidence he has against Phey Yew Kok immediately after lunch. After he read the evidence. Devan did not contact me and he decided to jump bail and his two sureties lost their \$450,000 deposit.

And it goes on. He fired about seven Ministers for inaction and he set an example of leadership. The only answer they give us is to blame Kamla. [*Desk thumping*] Every time they get up, every fault: the car got raid, the burglar who do that, Kamla sent them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member. Member. Even though the Member is on your side, I would still like you to address properly, please.

Mr. R. Charles: All right. Thank you. And I have Mr. Subhas Panday [*Interruption*] And he was saying in Parliament—and I need to get the source, so until I get the source I will not—but he was saying, every time they come is to blame the Partnership.

My other suggestion is smart objectives. For example, they are giving 100 policemen to each municipality. Why not charge each municipality for getting

police officers to visit homes in the municipality at least twice per year? Find out the number of police they need and provide them with that, so there will be a connectivity between the police and the community. I recall as a little boy they had “Bag a Lion” was a policeman and he would walk the beat and he would talk to us so we knew we could not commit crime.

A measurable target should be set for performance areas, like crime detection, 50 per cent; murder rates under 300 per year. Give output-related instructions to the police. Why not infiltrate and complete elimination of every terrorist recruiting institution? “We born here”, we know the people who are being recruited; we know who are at risk and we should not have the Turkish authorities and foreign media telling us that.

Suggestion two: they talk about total government approach.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, you have two more minutes.

Mr. R. Charles: So time is against me. Identification of all at-risk youth, that is not hard to do, and get all the Ministries to assist. What I want to do, they keep saying “we are in this together”, and I keep saying over and over again that we are willing to help but you cannot insult us and make pejorative comments and tell us we have “cocoa in the sun”, and then turn around and tell us, “we want your support for a three-fifths for legislation”.

I think they need to know how to win friends and influence people. We are willing to help. We are citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. They cannot get away from blaming the People’s Partnership for all the ills of crime in Trinidad and Tobago. We demand their plan. I said, and I prophesied before the election, they have no plan, [*Desk thumping*] nothing at all, no vision, bankrupt of ideas, vacuous of thought, blame-game, and talk and talk and talk, and that is why Al Jazeera refused to listen. They could distinguish between old talk and real facts.

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So I plead with them, when they come to talk, let us do this thing together. Come with your points, yes.

Mr. Al-Rawi: That is what we are going to do.

Mr. R. Charles: Come with your points that make sense and we would be willing to work.

I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Lee: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to second the Motion brought by the Member for Naparima and I reserve my right to speak at a later time. [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members, silence. I am on my legs.

Question proposed.

The Minister of National Security (Hon. Maj. Gen. Edmund Dillon): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let me strongly advocate from the outset that this Government, the PNM Government, has not failed in addressing the crime epidemic in this country as has been stated by this Member for Naparima. [*Desk thumping*] Before going into my contribution, the Member for Naparima mentioned—and other Members on his side continue to mention that when the PNM is in power crime seems to go up. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can look at it differently. When the UNC is in opposition, crime seems to go up. [*Desk thumping*] One might want to know, what is the nexus between them being in opposition and crime going up?

I remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just around 2010 leading up to the 2015 election, the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Siparia, once said: if the PP Government is not voted into power the streets would be covered in blood. Mr. Deputy Speaker. The street is going to be covered in blood if they were not voted into power.

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Rising Crime Epidemic (cont'd)
Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon (cont'd)

2017.05.26

Hon. Members: Source.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Source, Member.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Name time and place.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: It was done at a meeting in San Juan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members. Members, one second. Members, you all know the rules and you all know the Standing Orders. Once you are quoting, please quote your source, quote the date as you go along.

Dr. Rowley: Say what you know.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am quoting exactly what I know what was said.

Dr. Rowley: He is quoting no document.

Mr. Imbert: When and where it was—

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: At the 2015 election, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members. [*Crosstalk*] Members!

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: So that when one starts to look at the incidence of crime, one can readily draw a nexus because we have to understand that the Government that lost the election in 2015, lost on the basis of corruption, lost on the basis of theft, [*Desk Thumping*] criminal activities that probably continues today, that have the country where it is, but we will look in the rear-view mirror in a short while. I want to touch on the issues that were raised by the Member for Naparima, and he tends to quote from all different articles, on this report, on that report. I know he is a Member—he has some international relations experience and he should know quite well, that when you write these articles you write a perspective from the country where you are writing them and not really from the

Rising Crime Epidemic (cont'd)
 Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon (cont'd)

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country concerned, because if we were to write a travel advisory right now to Britain, we will say do not travel to Britain because of what has happened.

Mr. Deyalsingh: “Not because it come from Kamla.”

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Wonderful. Okay, here it is. “Blood and Tears”. The article is *Sunshine* issue, page 10—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Members: *Sunshine*?

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: *Sunshine*, page 10.

“During the UNC General Election campaign in 2010 Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar made a prediction that blood will flow in the streets...”—
 of Port of Spain, of Trinidad and Tobago.

[*Desk thumping*] Blood will flow. Blood will flow. [*Desk thumping*] Published by the Chairman of the UNC then. [*Desk thumping*] Blood will flow. Blood will flow. [*Desk thumping*] He was also the Minister of National Security.

Mr. Deyalsingh: “They want source, gey dem source.”

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Blood will flow.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: [*Interruption*]—speaking the untruth—

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Blood will flow.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:—in 2010.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: It happened in 2010.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Not true.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: It happened in 2010, you see. Yes. So the Member for Naparima again mentions and he talks about—we are probably looking at a sociologist. I think we want a criminologist, not a sociologist. A criminologist to look and see the behaviour of the United National Congress. Again, he went on to talk about the whole question of terrorism, and so on, without an understanding that most of the 89 people he mentioned in his submission left this country during

their time in Government, 2013, 2014 and 2016. [*Desk thumping*] Most of them left this country around that time. And listen, do you want to see where they got the money from? I am quoting again from the *Trinidad Express*, dated 24th of May, 2014. This was the Minister of National Security at the time, Mr. Gary Griffith, talking about:

“Last week, the Sunday Express reported on the growing force of the Jamaat-al-Muslimeen in Carapo under Imam Hassan Ali and his son, Rajae Ali. Imam Ali acknowledged that his followers comprised criminals and former prisoners who sought refuge in Islam. The Express reported on how the Jamaat was able to set up a base in Carapo by squatting on State lands”—while—“being funded through the Ministry of Sport’s Life Sport Programme...”—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Members: Repeat that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Silence, Members.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: The headline:

“Griffith: LifeSport Fund financing criminals”

Mr. Deyalsingh: Who is Griffith?

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Former Minister of National Security under Kamla Persad-Bissessar. [*Crosstalk*] “Leh me remind you, nah. Leh me remind you, nah?”

“Griffith:”—Minister of National Security—“...LifeSport Fund financing criminals”. [*Desk thumping*]

You are talking about charisma?

“The Express reported on how the Jamaat was able to set up a base in Carapo by squatting on State lands”—while—“being funded through the Ministry of Sport’s Life Sport Programme...”

Rising Crime Epidemic (cont'd)
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Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The source?

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: The *Trinidad Express* dated the 24th of May—
 [Interruption]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members. Members! Members, I know each one will have the opportunity to join the debate when the time arise. Okay? So please let us listen to the Member, and the decorum continue to be once the Member is on the floor, again total silence. Kindly proceed. The Member quoted his source before he went into the reading.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the same quotation I continue:

“Rajae Ali, through the Ministry of Sport’s LifeSport programme is getting...\$1.5 million a month in profit”—in profit—“and has raked in about \$18 million in the last year, National Security Minister Gary Griffith has...”—stated.

Minister of National Security, Minister Griffith while in Government. So I mean—[Interruption]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Silence.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: While in Government.

“Minister Gary Griffith alleged that the younger Ali is using ghost names in the programme. There are supposed to be 60 participants in one area, and overall, the programme operates in 33 areas. A stipend of \$1,500...a month...”—is paid to these ghost gangs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I continue in the same article:

“The LifeSport Programme is one...in which the Jamaat has been funded through the government in the past two years.”

Two years of this was taking place under that administration.

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“The LifeSport Programme, which started at \$6.6 million in 2012...”

Hear this, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

“...\$6.6 million in 2012, increased to \$29 million in 2013 and by 2014, the programme increased in cost by \$84.4 million...”—in fact, to \$113 million.

And then you are asking about why we are not funding the cadet force. Did you fund the cadet force during that period? [*Desk thumping*] Did you fund the cadet force in that period? [*Desk thumping*] Did you fund the youth programme in those periods? [*Desk thumping*] Did you fund those programmes? [*Desk thumping*] Yet you spent almost \$89 million—\$89 million—where did the money go? [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member. Member! Member for Point Fortin. Members! Members! [*Crosstalk*] Member for Diego Martin West, Member for Oropouche East, I am on my legs. [*Crosstalk*] Member for Siparia.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Sorry, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member for Point Fortin, again, quote your source and, as I said, no displaying of the particular document while you are reading, and proceed. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that is the funding in terms of supporting for terrorism, people who left here in those areas and those years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, the Member for Naparima came and speak to what is happening now, but we cannot talk about what is happening now unless we take some time, look at the rear-view mirror slightly as we talk about we will look at the big picture going forward. We have to take a fleeting glance of the past for us to understand where we are at this juncture. When we came into power what we met was a dismantling—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member for Oropouche East, kindly go back to your seat, please. [*Crosstalk*] Silence! Silence! Hold on, Member for Point Fortin. Members, I know the debate is a very lively one, but each Member will get his opportunity in order to come forward. So please kindly proceed now, Member for Point Fortin.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you. What the Member for Naparima does not realize, and he is quoting all the different sources, is that that LifeSport fiasco that treated Trinidad and Tobago has us on map right now.

Hon. Member: Genesis.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: It is the genesis of where we are in terms of the kind of ratings that we receive right now. That is the genesis in terms of where we are even with respect to terrorism. But again, as I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one can recall in 2010 that the murder rate was 473. That was high at the time. We have not gotten to that since 2016. 2016 was even lower than that. It was 473 in 2010 when the UNC Government came in power. What did we meet in 2015? It was alarming. The state of the security institution in Trinidad and Tobago was in a state of—it was dismantled completely. It was dismantled. There was total destruction, there was no leadership, there were no governance in most of the institutions of national security.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a radio station, i95.5 on the 28th of March, 2017, by former Attorney General Ramesh Maharaj—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: One day.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: One day—and he said the importance of the institution in crime-fighting, the development of crime scene investigators for instance, a capacity to treat with murders and kidnapping was dealt with by the anti-crime unit. He mentioned the destruction of this very institution created a gap

in the ability to fight crime in Trinidad and Tobago, and therefore, he was saying that the dismantlement of these institutions have led to the state of affairs in Trinidad and Tobago as we are right now based on what was done. [*Desk thumping*]

When one looks at the reckless dismantlement of the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago, and when you put that together with, in fact, the destruction, the sale of the offshore patrol vessels, again I am drawing a nexus. I am drawing a nexus between the gap that has been created based on the reckless initiatives, the reckless things that were done by the UNC Government, because what they have done before is where we are today. It is based on the action and the lack of action that was done by the UNC Government. We have seen where they have left our borders in such a state that today we are still treating with arms and ammunition that came into this country between 2010 and 2015.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have also looked at the lack of governance and leadership that was done through the UNC Government at the time. We have done several initiatives; several issues that we have done. We have looked at administrative reform, we have looked at operation reform and legislative reform because this Government understands quite well in treating with issues of crime and criminality, we have to start with policy, strategy and then we deal with plan. This Opposition seem to not understand what a plan is. At one minute they say crime plan and next minute they say anti-crime plan. I do not think they know the distinction between them, but I see that they are learning. They are learning from this side of the House and they are now starting to get it right. [*Desk thumping*]

So we started by looking at administrative reform, and so we started by looking at the Commissioner of Police. This Government took the initiative to start the process to renew the selection of police commissioner and deputy police

commissioner. What has happened since then? The Opposition on the other side has stalled the process, and where we are today, where we are today is based on—and again, no support whatsoever to look at the leadership and governance of the police service, the agency that is mandate to treat with crime and criminality activities in Trinidad and Tobago. Yet they stay on the other side and tell us that—as Member for Naparima suddenly gets some good words from the PNM, “Let’s do it together”, but that is talk, talk and talk only. Let us see you do it. Let it be manifested in your actions. We are not here for old talk. This is a Government that is action oriented and I will show you some things that we have done to prove that in a short time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we looked at administrative reform, and so we dealt with the Strategic Services Agency, an agency that when we came into power was totally, totally, mismanaged. The last Government brought together three different agencies. In dismantling the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago they did not have a clue what to do, and therefore, we found an agency that was focusless, purposeless, was not quite sure what they were about and, in fact, they were placed under the Office of the Prime Minister. Absence of leadership.

Dr. Rowley: To get the helicopter.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: To get the helicopter, they moved from point A to point B, that is the only reason. But there was no leadership, there was no guidance. The agency did not know what to do because they put together three different agencies with no leadership and no governance.

This Government has taken steps to regularize that and now has a legal entity, called the Strategic Services Agency, in which we have the National Intelligence Agency, [*Desk thumping*] the National Operations Centre and the National Security Training Academy, a legislative body that can treat with issues pertinent

to our security in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have continued to use a strategic approach to national security and, that is, using our whole-of-government approach. We have looked at what other Ministries can bring to bear with national security, whether it is the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Public Utilities, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts based on, what we consider to be, the input from the various Ministries. And so, again, because we understand that national security by definition is about the threat that a nation faces, it is about the Government's policies and strategies to treat with those threats, but more importantly, it is about the people, processes, techniques, tactics and institutions that are used to treat with those threats.

So coming down from that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the strategies that we have adopted is based on five strategic pillars. Understand, it is not about getting to a plan without understanding your policy and strategies. Plan is a subset of your strategies, and this is why this Government is so. This Government is a strategic thinking Government. Strategic thinking. Not one that goes straight into the tactical level as they are proposed to see. It is policy, it is strategy, plan.

Mr. Charles: Plan?

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Policy, strategy, then plan. You know that too, Member for Naparima. You are a schooled individual, or I think you are. [Crosstalk] And therefore we have—[Interruption]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Silence!

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:—given five strategic pillars coming out of our policy, coming out of our strategy and those are prediction, deterrence, detection, prosecution and rehabilitation. And these are what will align our strategies to our

various institutions so that we can look and measure what we are doing with respect to treating with crime and criminal activities in Trinidad and Tobago.

So as we strengthen for instance—and this Government has looked at these pillars and have gone to strengthen these very same pillars that will give us a sense of relief in Trinidad and Tobago. Prediction pillar: we have taken it—this Government—to strengthen our prediction pillar, which is, in fact, our intelligence gathering pillar. So we have looked at that, and we have strengthened the National Intelligence Agency through improvement of their technology, through exposure to training; we have strengthened the Criminal Gang and Intelligence Unit; we have strengthened the Defence Force Intelligence Agency, the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment Intelligence Agency, the Special Branch, to ensure again, because we understand, we fully understand in treating with crime and criminal activities there must be a strong intelligence base, whether within the domestic environment or the international environment. Whether we are treating with criminals, whether we are treating with terrorism, we must have an important and strengthened prediction pillar, which is our intelligence gathering mechanism. And so the Government has invested, and continues to invest, both in manpower and technology with respect to our prediction pillar.

Then we look at our deterrence pillar. Our deterrence pillar speaks to, first and foremost, presence. Presence by itself is a deterrent, but it is much more than presence. We have seen that presence manifested in occupation in Soogrim Trace, Laventille, for instance, by a joint presence of army and police presence in Soogrim Trace. We have seen the effect of that. To date we have seen a reduction in criminal activities in and around the presence of the joint police and army in Soogrim Trace. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that deterrence continues in Enterprise where you have seen again the combined effort of the police and the army in the

Enterprise area. Again, a deterrence, yes, but also an operational commitment to treat with issues within those environments. So they are working. They are working where we are seeing the inter-agency support taking place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our deterrence pillar also involves presence along our roadways and our highways, the increased presence of our vehicles, the increased presence of police vehicles along our highways. We have seen the deterrence pillar in terms of the use of the breathalyser, we have seen the deterrence presence with respect to the use of our guns. So the deterrence pillar again is one in which we can measure, one in which we can use to look at the input of the agencies of national security. We continue to see an increased presence on the roadways in terms of stop and search, in terms of roadblocks. So the deterrence pillar is manifested by the very actions of the law enforcement community in Trinidad and Tobago.

In terms of our deterrence, our softer approach again is looking at how we can deter the young people in a life of crime. And so our efforts continue to support the MiLAT Programme, to support the Civilian Conservation Corps Programme, to support the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force, and let me—unless the Member for Naparima does not read the newspapers, he would have seen quite recently— In fact, last Saturday at the annual, what you call the seal parade of the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force, there were 26 new schools admitted into the cadet force during the last two years. [*Desk thumping*] Twenty-six new schools, one of them being the first ASJA. You would have noticed that the ASJA actually has a cadet force branch right now in Trinidad and Tobago. You have seen that. So you would have seen an increase in the amount of schools because we understand, we fully understand the importance of youth and, as a deterrent, get them involved. You have the police youth clubs, we now have the fire service youth clubs, the

prisons youth clubs, again, as a form of deterrent, deterring youths from a life of crime. So these are initiatives combined together to fight, in the fight against crime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we continue and we look at the detection pillar. When we look at the detection pillar, I will say detection is not where we want it to be at this juncture. It definitely is not. So we have to improve on that. We have to improve on the rate of detection, both in serious crimes and in murder in particular, and therefore, measures for detection has been looked at through the Commissioner of Police. Right now he has in fact expanded our crime scene investigators. He is in the process of recruiting additional crime scene investigators but also in terms of technology. And when we look at technology with respect to detection, I want to put on the table that this Government has in fact moved the process with respect to the whole question of the DNA legislation.

Now again, the last Government had in fact considered DNA since 2012, but 2012, 2013, 2014—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Al-Rawi: Nothing.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:—nothing happened.

Mr. Al-Rawi: 2015?

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Nothing happen. 2015 nothing happened. Again, a Government who talks but does not act—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Al-Rawi: And spend plenty money.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:—and spend plenty money. What this Government has done in the short time that we have come into power, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and permit me, because we are looking at the detection pillar, and therefore, the DNA, the procurement right now—because I am pleased to say that we have in fact hired a DNA custodian. [*Desk thumping*] He has in fact completed his review of the

software that is required and we are in the process of procuring the necessary software to treat with developing the DNA database. We are in fact reviewing offers from various companies abroad, and I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the DNA custodian and the DNA databank will be up and running before the end of this year. [*Desk thumping*] This is a promise by this Government. [*Desk thumping*] This is a promise, and that again is along the detection pillar.

So you see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a systematic Government you know. We are talking about how we are strengthening prediction, we are talking how we are strengthening deterrence, how we are strengthening detection. Never before you have heard any Government articulate the kind of strategy that we are talking about. This is not a wish-wash Government you know. You are seeing a systematic approach to treating with, and it is not a one day thing. It is a systematic approach, the deterrence pillar, the detection pillar. Strengthening those pillars is what we are going to get in the long run to the benefit. Then the next pillar, of course, is our prosecution pillar—our prosecution. When we look at prosecution it is based on the amount—the statistics will tell us the amount of arrests that we have in terms of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Just permit me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to give you a quick breakdown in the terms of the amount of arrest. I will give you a little historical thing. Let us start basically from 2014. I will give you 2014 to give you the sense. In 2014, there was a total of 10,986 persons who were arrested and charged; in 2015, there were 10,942 persons arrested and charged; 2016, 10,679 persons who were arrested and charged; to date in 2017, we have roughly about 4,000 persons who were arrested and charged. So when you look at the amount of persons arrested and charged, how do we strengthen that prosecution pillar? We do it in several ways, from a Government perspective but also from a police commissioner perspective. Mr.

Deputy Speaker, the Commissioner of Police has looked at what he has with respect to people who are legally trained and is developing a whole prosecutorial unit within the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and the Government is prepared to support whatever initiatives that the Commissioner of Police has in terms of strengthening the prosecutorial base with respect to that pillar.

The fifth strategic pillar is rehabilitation because you see there is a nexus along the chain in terms of being arrested and being prosecuted and the next stage will be, in fact, prison and, therefore, we must because again when you look at the nexus between prison and crime we are looking at the rehabilitation pillar. And so, prison reform is important to us and we continue to support agencies such like the Vision on Mission. We continue to support their prison initiatives in terms of restorative justice, rehabilitation, recovery and reform. So that rehabilitation as along the chain of behaviours is important also when we look at the nexus between that and crime. So we continue to look at those pillars and as I said before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to look at those initiatives as how do they contribute in the fight against crime and criminal actions in Trinidad and Tobago.

So again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, strategic pillars: prediction, intelligence, deterrence, presence and operations. Detection: how do we boost detection rate, important in solving crimes and so on? So we have put again, invested human and resources towards the pillar. Prosecution and rehabilitation: those are the strategic pillars that we are looking at and we are sure that once we enforce those pillars they will redound to the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, again in terms of the initiative you will see that this Government has looked at almost a two-fold approach, two-pronged approach, which is a legislative approach and an operational approach. We have seen and we have heard from the Attorney General with respect to legislative framework, and

he will talk about that in a short while. He will tell you about legislative framework. So we are moving on the same track towards the same goal, legislatively and operationally. Legislatively through the Office of the Attorney General; operationally through the Ministry of National Security and the agencies of the national security. And so, we continue to launch targeted operations throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

I have mentioned already our efforts in Soogrim Trace, Laventille, our efforts in Enterprise, but we continue to launch operations throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago and those operations are jointly. Jointly based Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, supported by Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, supported by the Strategic Services Agency, joint inter-agency efforts throughout the length and breadth. But additionally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while we deal with issues inland we also deal with issues in the maritime security environment. And so, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, through the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, continues to operate in the maritime security environment, continues to provide the kind of security fence this is required in our maritime security because we are very vulnerable in the maritime security environment.

And so, as a responsible Government, we continue to use the resources that we have to ensure that we have a presence to deter illegal entry to our shores of guns, ammunition, even the movement of illegal persons, but more importantly we have—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, your 30 minutes has expired. You have an additional 15, do you care to avail yourself?

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Proceed.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we continue to

look and to apply resources in the maritime security environment.

This Government has in fact re-established bilateral cooperation with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and this was dormant for some time. If the last Government was very conscious and understand the vulnerability in our maritime security environment, they would have done something like that. Instead, what did they do? They left everything open in the Gulf of Paria and around the waters of Trinidad and Tobago. No vessels, no relationship with Venezuela, no bilateral cooperation with Venezuela. We understand—and if the Member for Naparima who is an international relations expert will realize, if you are dealing with the maritime security environment you have to establish. You must establish some kind of relationship with your neighbour. We are the closest neighbour to Venezuela—seven miles at the nearest point.

We established as a matter of fact—because it was there before under a PNM Government some years ago. We established bilateral cooperation with Venezuela because between us and Venezuela, it is not a two mile. There is a midpoint. As I imagine there is a midpoint between us that we patrol, and we established that to ensure that there is cooperation and collaboration on both sides of maritime divide. So that the Commander of the Guardia Nacional Bolivariana, or the Guardia Costa, can talk directly to the Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard and they do so. They do so right now as we speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So that together we share security concerns because, again, movements of goods and services, illegal and otherwise, between both islands continue, and therefore, by sharing this information we have established a kind of rapport to help us treat with issues in the maritime security environment that was left, to a large extent, vacant and open by the last administration.

3.30 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our coast guard continues to play a very important part. One could remember, recently, in fact, the month of February, where we had—two major seizures were made by the coast guard, with plant-like substance—well crocus bags, as a matter of fact, weighing approximately 32 kilograms with an estimated street value of US \$440,000. Again, we had one of the biggest drug bust. One of the biggest drug bust, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through our presence of Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard in our maritime waters, the largest haul since 1999. A find of 4.2 tonnes of cocaine with an estimated street value of US \$125 million. Approximately TT \$837 million.

Mr. Al-Rawi: “Nearly ah billion dollars.”

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Nearly a billion dollars’ worth of drugs. So we continue to do so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even as recent as yesterday and it was highlighted on today’s papers, the *Daily Express* of today’s date: a drug bust. A quantity of drugs laid on the table which was seized from three men in a pirogue during a joint police/coast guard exercise on Wednesday night, valued almost \$2 million were destroyed, so they continue. We continue to treat with issues with the maritime environment and not only on sea but also on air; utilizing our air assets or aerial surveillance through the Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard. So we continue to bring a certain sense of security and safety to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will continue initiatives such as community policing. We have continued that. Again, the Commissioner of Police has included that as part of his deliverables to look at how the police will get more into the community. The whole aspect of community policing is there with us and the Commissioner of Police has taken that initiative. He has intensified the drive to remove illegal guns and ammunition within the streets of Trinidad and Tobago and we have seen that.

Last year was one of the highest in terms of removing guns and ammunition off the streets of Trinidad and Tobago. We have looked at, to date, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because, as we said, guns are the weapons of choice and therefore, there is a concerted effort by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to remove firearms and ammunition off the streets of Trinidad and Tobago. When one looks at 2016, the number of firearms removed was in the vicinity of 334; ammunition was roughly 4,698. To date in 2017, we have removed 4,935, just to date in terms of ammunition off the streets of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we continue to increase our seizure of guns and ammunition within Trinidad and Tobago. The drive continues.

Another initiative that we have looked at is in terms of strengthening our cold case unit; an initiative, again, by the Commissioner of Police. Understand that, again, alignment to the strategic pillar: strengthening the Cold Case Unit—detection pillar. So you will see how our strategic imperatives are drilled down to the various agencies. The strengthening of the Cold Case Unit continues. He has built that. We have built the capacity there to look at cases that have been historically left alone. We have updated the police database. We have established the criminal case management unit within the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. We have done the computerization of the Forensic Science Centre. Right now, we are, in fact, finalizing plans to build, to construct a new Forensic Science Centre and that, again, is an initiative that will take route this year, in 2017.

We have seen a number of initiatives taking place. The Government has invested, to a large extent, on the digital police safety communication system for the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and throughout agencies of national security. What that has done is, in fact, do away with the whole analog system and now moved across the platforms, across the national security agencies, the new digital

communication system. So that now, there is interoperability between all the agencies of national security. The police can speak to the defence force, the defence force can speak to immigration, they can speak to the Strategic Services Agency, across on one platform in terms of communication. The Government has invested tremendously in this aspect.

We have seen introduction of the body-worn cameras; again, use of technology. We have done the pilot project in Enterprise and, to date, it has given us some good recommendations going forward. We have looked at the video conferencing facilities at the nation's prisons which, again, would be a game changer. That is about 78 per cent completed. And when that changes, it will remove the whole aspect of moving people from Remand Yard to various parts of Trinidad and Tobago; changing the way in which we do business as far as our courts are concerned.

Another achievement is in terms of the electronic magnetic bracelets. That device, again, something that has been there for some time, but again, talk and more talk. This Government has taken action with respect to the electronic magnetic bracelet. And that again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will come on stream by the end of this year. We already have the manager and the deputy manager. We have a deputy manager and we are in the process of procuring those bracelets. We have engaged the UK, the US and Canada. We are now engaging our local provider and, at the same time, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service would be the response agency of putting the mechanism in place. So again, "was ah talk shop" but this Government has taken action and we will see, again, by the end of this year, the implementation of the electronic magnetic bracelet, which, again, would be a game changer in this country. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I close, let me, again, remind this country that this

Government has laid out its policy, its strategy, its strategic pillars which will show on a kind of alignment—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Please take that back, Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Dr. Khan: Me?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Khan: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Members, it was now drawn to my attention that the Member for Diego Martin North/East is out of his seat and as a result of what happened earlier. The situation that happened earlier—Member for Siparia? The situation that happened earlier is that the Member for Oropouche East was coming towards to have a seat there and he made a remark, and this is why I told him to get back to his seat.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Or, so it is okay?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes, because earlier in the sitting also, the Members for Couva North and Couva South were also sitting in a separate seat—probably you were not aware of it. —not so, Couva North and South? You all were sitting at the additional chairs. So Members can go to other seats. Right? Can go to other seats and spend some time as the case may be and I was just waiting to see the length of time. Right?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: But there was a different situation that happened with the Members for Siparia and Oropouche East—Fair enough? [*Interruption*]
Clarification on what, Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Dr. Khan: The Member is going to a seat, he must not make a remark?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The remark was not in terms of what was happening in the Chamber at the time.

Dr. Khan: If you are going to a seat, no remark must be made?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, okay, let us leave it there. Let us leave it there. All right. So kindly proceed, Member for Point Fortin.

Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I come to my close, let us—*[Interruption]* Okay. You would have seen from my contribution that this Government is strategic in thinking and purposeful in the way it does business. So you have seen the approaches. Both in terms of the administrative reform or operational reform or our legislative reform. And as I have said, the AG will talk more about the legislative reform. I have spoken to the administrative reform in the various agencies. I have spoken to the operational reform and most of our initiatives. And what you can see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you follow the discussion quite clearly, as opposed to running back and forward and all over the place like the Member for Naparima, you would realize that this was purposefully done, that you can follow the logic between in terms of where we are going and the initiatives that we are bringing to bear.

So that when we talk about a crime plan—and I will say, again, to the Member for Naparima, a plan follows policy after strategy and, therefore, when you look at the pillars, you would see the alignment between what we have put, those five strategic pillars and what the agencies are doing. How they strengthen—how the Government reinforce those pillars in terms of budgetary allocations and so on.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service *[Desk thumping]* supported by the members of Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force and all the agencies of national security for their excellent job *[Continuous desk thumping]* that they are doing in treating with crime in this country. They will continue to work assiduously and this Government is prepared to provide what is required to ensure that they do their job effectively and

efficiently. This Government is ensuring that the people of Trinidad and Tobago remain and continues to provide a safe and secure environment. We will do all that we can, continue to bring the resources of Government; resources to support the agencies of national security, to ensure the safety and security of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

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

Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche East*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for your recognition and the privilege to stand in my seat here and talk from my table. For us on this side, it is not a pleasure to rise to speak on this Motion brought by the very courageous Member for Naparima who had the political will and had the nation at heart and his constituents by tabling a Motion that deals with the most critical problem facing the people of Trinidad and Tobago. And I begin by congratulating the author of this Motion for his courage, [*Desk thumping*] for his commitment and for calling us out at this moment to reflect on the most critical matter facing the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is well known that with all the other scandals around us, sometimes we stand between the goal post and there are 25 balls coming to us from all directions. It could be the property tax, it could be roaming, it could be romping, it could be travelling—it could be anything. But if we reflect, there is no need to pay property tax if you are dead; there is no need to get proper health service if you are murdered; there is no need to get a quality education if you are wounded and permanently disabled. So the fundamental role of a Government is really to protect life and limb. [*Desk thumping*] And if any Government cannot satisfy that singular and primary objective, they ought to vacate office. [*Desk thumping*] —not to vacation, they ought to vacate office.

And today, this Government stands on trial. What have you done in 20 months

that a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, today, who tune into the radio or the television and listen to this debate can say tonight, “I can unlock my front door, I am safe?” What have you said today? And I felt sorry for the Member for Point Fortin who was asked to respond to this Motion. I felt the Member for Toco/Sangre Grande who had to correct him a few days ago on the state of police preparedness to deal with mental patients, I thought, maybe, the Member for Toco/Sangre Grande ought to have responded. But the Member for Point Fortin has been a successful failure. [*Desk thumping*] He is a parliamentary colleague but he is a successful failure because if you cannot protect citizens 20 months in office, you continue with the same approach.

You know, citizens of this country today, it would have been reasonable to look at the television, listen to the radio and say, the Minister of National Security will now speak, we will hear some new policy directives, we will hear new projects, new programmes; maybe an announcement of some capital expenditure on programmes, projects, policies. What did we hear? The pillars. I want to tell the Member for Point Fortin, thank God for the pillars. I do not know what would have happened to this country today if we did not have these pillars. He announced five pillars but we have three murders per day. We have the slaughtering of human beings in our country, robbery and kidnapping now and murder.

Mr. Indarsingh: The slitting of throat.

Dr. R. Moonilal: And thank God for these pillars. What would have happened if we did not have them? And the Member for Point Fortin spoke about the Member for Siparia. He said, in 2010, announced in San Juan, “blood will flow if the PNM is in power”. But blood flows if the PNM is in power; that is a fact. [*Desk thumping*] “Dais nothing to hide.” And announced it was in the *Sunshine*. The

Sunshine was not in operation and being published in 2010. So how could you do that? But that is a fact. The Member for Point Fortin confirmed that when the PNM is in Opposition, we have less crime. They have confirmed that. [*Desk thumping*] So I think they belong in Opposition if that is the case.

But we heard of these strategic pillars and there are several points I wanted to raise in reflection of the Minister's contribution today and I want to ask the Minister to look at the Trinidad and Tobago police statistics of reported and detected crime 2008/2014. Now, the very police that gave us this, gave you this. You have the same material.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, again, the displaying of your document. You can quote and read accordingly.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will display myself. The very Trinidad and Tobago Police Service that gave the data on serious crime to us would have given the data on serious crime to you. I have had the opportunity to serve for five years plus as a member of the National Security Council. I understand something about that sector. And in the series of data, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is clear—and I want to just make one statistic because in this crime debate, there is really a risk that you could over-statisticise and people may become numb with statistics. You know, crime is a human condition. People can become numb with numbers. And crime is a human condition. In Trinidad and Tobago, we must ask citizens today: Do you feel safer today than you felt in September 2015? “Dais all.” [*Desk thumping*] If you feel safer, the Government—“you believe they are doing a good job.” But if you are not safer today, then they are doing a poor and horrible job. [*Desk thumping*] That is all. But I will just depend on one issue, one instance of statistics.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, June 2008 to May 2009, total serious crimes reported: June

2008 to May 2009, 20,291. By June 2014 to May 2015—so we go to June 2014 to May 2015—serious crimes reported: 11,831. [*Desk thumping*] That is a drop of 48.7 per cent, almost 50 per cent. And this is during the Partnership and I will come to some of the work that we did in that sector. [*Desk thumping*] And serious crimes involve robbery, sexual offences, murder, wounding and shootings, kidnapping for ransom, kidnappings, burglaries, break-in offences and so on; those are serious crime. We got it down by 50 per cent between 2008 and 2015. [*Desk thumping*] How did we do that? By accident? It was the same police force.

Today, the Minister is praising the police when his leader is blaming the police and they continue today with this blame game—spent 80 per cent of their time on the UNC. My God, you are in power for 20 months, what have you done? [*Desk thumping*] And what is the effect of what you have done? Absolutely nothing. And we got crime with the same police service.

You know, there is also—I have heard it myself. We cannot test it with empirical evidence. The Member for Arima, who disturbs me here, the Member for Arima says he does not want to hear about corruption unless there is empirical evidence. But we could test it. There is a feeling that the police only work when the UNC is in power. [*Desk thumping*] There is that feeling because when the PNM is in power, they do not have the political will or the political drive to police officers and other public officers working and delivering. I could develop that another time but that is a feeling: that the police works that way.

And today, “they praise the police but then blame the police for crime.” We have the newspaper evidence, we can bring that. Where the Prime Minister began his term by saying we must look at the commanders. “We never hear about commander before in we life.” Summon commanders, they are responsible for region. They actually purported to fire senior police officers on the basis that they

were not dealing with crime. “And the data show crime went up by 2016.”

Mr. Imbert: Who is “they”? Who is “they”?

Dr. R. Moonilal: So that they were passing the buck. So you blame police for crime.

Mr. Imbert: Nonsense.

Dr. R. Moonilal: “Who else you blame?” You blame the UNC for health problems. You blame the Member for Caroni East for education problems. “When they rack up ah bill of \$59,000, they blame the whole of Bahamas for the roaming charges.” [*Desk thumping and laughter*] “They blame the whole of Bahamas responsible for that.” You blame Resmi—you know, I was shocked that they have not blamed Resmi Ramnarine yet. I thought she was working at Magdalena so that is how they get all these figures about \$92,000.

Hon. Member: This week.

Dr. R. Moonilal: By this week, Resmi Ramnarine “go be responsible” for the Magdalena figures. By this week. They blame everyone except not taking responsibility for their governance. [*Desk thumping*] Everyone.

And I ask the Member for Point Fortin to cut it out. Cut it out. You have your pillars, nothing has been delivered yet. You are in the process of delivering everything.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: We have three of you.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Today, there are three Ministers in the Ministry of National Security. There are two Ministers and a Parliamentary—it was the parliamentary representative who corrected you the other day on the police.

Hon. Member: Imagine that.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Right. There are two Ministers and Parliamentary Secretary [*Crosstalk*] in the Ministry of National Security.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Silence.

Dr. R. Moonilal: The Prime Minister will not reshuffle his Cabinet. He cannot because really he has the best talent available as it is. [*Laughter*] There is nothing else to find. He will never reshuffle this Cabinet. Whatever happens, he cannot because he has no other talent.

Dr. Gopeesingh: “Is ah pack ah jokers.”

Dr. R. Moonilal: “Is ah pack.” So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have failed. [*Desk thumping*]

And another critical area—and I want to deal with it quickly—concerns white-collar crime. Do you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in every part of the world that they have dealt successfully with crime, they have dealt with white-collar crime? [*Desk thumping*] There is no part of the world—you can research it—that a government has dealt with crime and left white-collar crime unpunished. And what do we see today? What is the conviction? What is the political will? What is the commitment of this Government to dealing with white-collar crime? They frighten everybody every week: “We coming after you; we bringing this suite of legislation; the architecture; the menu.” “They like the menu. Point Fortin likes menu”, so we will stick with the menu. “They bring the menu”; the architecture. Diego Martin Central as well might appreciate a menu. It was 92 in three now we understand. [*Laughter*] His figures get better. [*Interruption*] Yeah, that is better than Sunil Narine.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what have they done to deal with white-collar crime except trying to frighten everybody? Today, we learnt from the Member for San Fernando East and I must remind him that unless I ask him a question, you will never hear his voice in this Parliament. So today, we learnt from him that residents of the HDC rental area will not pay property tax but every other citizen will pay

property tax.

Mr. Imbert: No, not true.

Hon. Member: He said—when he said that?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members, Members, the debate is on crime and again, let us keep the property tax out of it, please.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Sure. Thank you very much. Dealing with white-collar crime is a critical challenge [*Desk thumping*] and they have done nothing in 20 months. They have spent \$30.5 million between PricewaterhouseCoopers and Ernst & Young. They have spent \$30.5 million trying to find something on the former Government to find corruption, to find this—\$30.5 million. “More than ah million dollars ah month”, they have found nothing. They have found nothing. [*Desk thumping*]

The point I am making is that if you are dealing with crime, you must have political will. When today, at the Education Facilities Company Limited, there are persons in the Ministry of Sport “bussing de mark”, whistle-blowers. They are trying to prosecute the messengers and not the perpetrators. [*Desk thumping*] They are firing people who they feel are reporting criminal offences and they are not going after the perpetrators because of a lack of political will.

Dr. Gopeesingh: PNM style.

Dr. R. Moonilal: And to cover up, we have white-collar crime taking place at the highest level in the public service. [*Desk thumping*] There are Ministers of Government that stand accused of wrongdoing and to cover it up, they are terrorizing public officers, firing persons, terminating their contracts, failing to extend their contract and they cannot deal with white-collar crime that way.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(1).

Mr. Imbert: Sit down!

Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hold on one second, one second. Proceed, Member.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So they blame us. The Member for Laventille East/Morvant, I am so sorry he was a victim. The Member for Laventille West—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This is about the third time that that particular aspect is being brought up. Please, in terms of tedious reputation, right, the actual reference to that particular incident, so you can move on.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Okay, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will move on. When they came in office—when they served in Government in 2009, look at 2009 and 2017. They were in Government 2009, they are in Government now. You know, it is part of the parliamentary record, there was a Motion on Spiralling Crime Rate, Friday 30 January, 2009, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will not be surprised to learn that at that time, in dealing with crime, they were playing the blame game, as former Member, Subhas Panday, had to say:

“Instead of dealing with crime, listen to how they deal with crime; blame game; blame game; blame game.

Do you know what they saying?”

In 2009.

“The UNC is the cause of crime. He is not saying what steps he will take to deal with crime, he is not asking the Opposition, ‘Come on board...instead...’—it is the—“blame game...”

This is:

“...the DNA of the PNM!”

[Desk thumping] 2009.

Jumping forward to—*[Interruption]* Fast forward to 2017, it is the same thing, we

heard it today. OPVs. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the OPVs were defective. There was a prolonged and complex arbitration process in which the Government of Trinidad and Tobago won and got back our money. [*Desk thumping*] If there was a breach of contract—[*Interruption*] And we brought the crime down. The Member for Point Fortin, today—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Without the SAUTT, without the SAUTT.

Dr. R. Moonilal: The SAUTT. I want to remind this Member for Point Fortin that at the height of the operations of the SAUTT in 2008, do you know what the murder figure was? Five hundred and fifty murders at the height of the SAUTT. They spent on the SAUTT, \$500 million was spent on that. When they spent \$500 million, they had 500 murders. It was “ah million dollars” per murder by the SAUTT and “they proud of that”.

The OPVs, the Member today boasting the biggest drug haul a few weeks ago and boasting today, I believe is \$19 million in drugs. How did the coast guard chase down those perpetrators? “With ah raff? With ah bicycle?” With the OPV? With vessels bought by the People’s Partnership. [*Desk thumping*] It is the vessels from Holland, the Damen vessels that they have been using for the last six months in shallow waters to chase down drug runners and seizing—record seizures now with drug. That is what you call fit for purpose. It cannot be any vessel bought by you because you have bought nothing. You have not bought “ah raff” to help the coast guard. The Austal vessels they bought parked up down at the Anchorage at the Pier down there. [*Interruption*] Pier 2.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Silence.

Dr. R. Moonilal: I mean, they cannot buy “ah boat to carry two truck to Tobago”. They will buy “ah boat to chase down drug runners”?

When we were in office, under the Member for Siparia, we equipped the

protective services with the vessels that today making the record seizure in shallow waters. [*Desk thumping*] They wanted the OPVs. The OPVs that move at two-mile an hour. Who they were chasing down? They wanted OPVs for the high seas when the drug running and the human trafficking, “you ketch these people close to shore when they come in”. We were there, we know. So what are you seizing with? You are not seizing with OPVs. But you have no—well, I cannot say shame. You have no moral authority to speak on the coast guard. [*Desk thumping*] When you had the Austal vessels, you wanted OPVs and we bought the vessels that are in use now and doing the work for Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they came in with a 10-point plan and I just want to remind this country of this 10-point plan. I am not going to display anything, so fear not. Appoint a Commissioner of Police. When the Member of Siparia and others told you are doing it the wrong way, it is illegal, the court will strike it down, they said, “No, we know law”; people who, themselves, never went to court, “we know law”.

4.00 p.m.

When we went to the courthouse with the matter, the court had to adjust and strike down the order. Now they blame us for that. But do you want us to support what you do unlawful? [*Desk thumping*] Do you want us to support your illegal act? [*Desk Thumping*]

So there is no Commissioner of Police now. Let us start with that. Manpower audit, what about that manpower audit? The Chairman of the Manpower Audit Committee told the country a few days ago, he said: “Yuh know, ds is a complex task.” So you did not know it was a complex task before? [*Laughs*] It is a complex task that will take time. We do not know when that is happening.

Municipal police, now this is the interesting one, municipal police. I am told that they do not have one cent in the estimates to pay municipal police [*Desk*

Thumping] the increased manpower that is required. They do not have the money. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to remind this country, when our Partnership Government brought the soldier Bill, the famous soldier Bill to put soldiers on the streets to help the police, they rejected that. They did not support it. [*Desk Thumping*] The Member for St. Augustine reminded me, Prime Minister Theresa May—the Member for Point Fortin said we do not need that. I will let you know that somebody whom I am sure is lesser qualified than you, Prime Minister Theresa May, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, has just implemented Operation Temperer to put 5,000 soldiers on the streets [*Desk thumping*] to assist the police, and that was their plan for several years. In fact, it was only made public, because of the circumstances there, and I will come to those circumstances. Municipal police, that will not happen. There is no money for that. There is no allocation for that.

They dismantled the community patrol that we put in place, that brought comfort, protected neighbourhoods in the country. The thinking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was that the community patrols would go into certain areas and they will help the police by easing the burden on the police to patrol and respond to a lot of minor problems in areas. Do you know people in Diego Martin in the constituencies that they temporarily represent, do you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2010 two maxis again and the Member for Diego Martin North East was history? [*Laughter*] Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you know—Mr. Deputy Speaker, he is cackling while I am speaking. Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you know that in Diego Martin, there is a petition signed by his constituents, calling for the reintroduction of the community comfort patrol? [*Desk thumping*] Elderly ladies are saying that when they come out, they will actually call the private security—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member for Diego Martin North/East, you will have your

turn to join the debate, kindly. Proceed, Member for Oropouche East.

Mr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Deputy Speaker, residents in his area are saying that when they call the police they know them, the private security, by first-name basis, by their private telephone, and they will call for assistance and the police do not have to bother with that. That is what we did. We built not one, we built not two, we built not three, we built nine police stations in the five years we were there. [*Desk Thumping*] Mr. Deputy Speaker, they went cutting ribbons for all these police stations that we built. All we had to do when we left power was to give you about five yards of ribbon, [*Desk thumping*] that is all we had to do, and a scissors. They had to cut the ribbon for the police stations that we built; police stations in their own constituencies.

I remember going to Maloney, massive structure there; St. Joseph, the Member for St. Joseph; La Brea. We built the police stations to give the police officers, you know, modern, state-of-the-art office, equipment and technology. We spent the money on boots on the ground, uniforms, cars, GPS systems for the cars. I think now police have the GPS system in their cars, patrolling.

When you were going down the highway, when we were in office, every time you blink you see a next police car. Not again. Do not blink, because they were spending millions on SAUTT when police could not pay their telephone bills, when they did not have cars, when they did not have uniforms, when they did not have equipment. We changed that. We changed that and that is why serious crime went down by 50 per cent. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they talk about strengthening the Police Complaints Authority. What happened to that? “Where dat gone?” What happened? Nothing. We have no legislation, no policy, nothing about that. Then they talk about Parliament oversight. This is part of their 10-point plan. I lower my paper.

Parliament oversight: establish a standing Joint Select Committee, crime suppression, et cetera. The Prime Minister, the Member for Diego Martin West, when he met the Opposition, made a commitment that that committee, he felt at that time, it was good sense that it would be chaired by someone who is not a Member of the Government. Today the Member for Laventille West continues to chair that committee; himself to himself.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, witness tampering offence, they made a big song and cry about witness tampering offence. What have you done in 20 months about witness tampering offence? “Yuh tamper with anybody? Yuh have any witness before the courts?” Nothing has happened on this. Unlawful eviction offence; that happened because I remember when we were in office there were something about people ambushing and going into people homes. What is the big word “dey does use” in America for these? Home invasion, and so on. Yes. So home invasion; an unlawful eviction offence. To this day nothing has happened with that.

Now, when you are in Government, surely a Government is not a place to lime. It is a place for hard work, dedicated work. [*Desk thumping*] They were liming when they were in Opposition, did not have a plan as the Member for Naparima tell us. They did not have a plan. They come into Government. They have no plan. They are roaming, as the Member for Fyzabad said.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you are in Opposition you must have your draft Bills. This is why we are now preparing draft Bills on several areas. So as soon as we get back in Government, within month we are in Parliament with legislation. You must have you draft Bills. You spoke so much unlawful eviction offence, anybody bring a Bill, policy, anything like that?

Mr. Al-Rawi: It is coming. It is coming.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Everything coming. The suite is coming. The menu, the

architecture, and while that is happening people are dying. [*Desk thumping*]
Urban renewal plan, now this is a part of a crime strategy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So
I am—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: That was there.

Dr. R. Moonilal: That was there. Urban renewal plan is part of their crime strategy. Number eight, incidentally, No. 8. What urban renewal strategy have you implemented? What have you done, apart from fire people, close down operations in community? In several of the companies you are closing down, firing people putting them on the breadline and running the risk of greater crime and criminal activity.

When we were in office, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember as Minister of Housing, went to the Cabinet, the Prime Minister, we approved further instalments of the Colour Me Orange programme. We did that. It was something started by the Manning Administration. [*Desk thumping*] We had no difficulty continuing that. We met and engaged with communities, so when we did work in different centres the communities were engaged. So you reduce crime. They have a different approach. It is an approach based on arrogance. We in charge now. So they do not meet and treat with communities. They do not engage with the communities. They closed down all the programmes that can bring some help, redistribute income to low wage and low-skilled sector, and that is how you also deal with crime, absolutely nothing.

Urban renewal, we outfitted—I have not heard—the Member for San Fernando East never talked about it. We outfitted the Government Campus, which is one of the biggest urban renewal projects in Trinidad, [*Desk thumping*] because of the employment it will create, because of the anti-crime strategy of linking employment with anti-crime, for crime prevention. The Government Campus.

They have not spoken about that, \$1 billion, not one element, not one iota of corruption. That is no EFCL, Member for Arima. The outfitting, the construction was Sunway and Calder Hart. That was pre-2010, but the outfitting of that at \$1 billion, spotless and you got more ribbon for that as well.

Anti-gang legislation, what have you done with that? What did you bring, any legislation or policy to strengthen anti-gang? Quarrelling about the former administration “lock-up how much people and the people are out and we could not keep them and “blah, blah, blah”. What have you done in 20 months, anti-gang legislation? Nothing.

Point 10, I do not know how this became part of their plan but it is here, Caribbean Court of Justice, acceptance of the Caribbean Court of Justice as a Court of Appeal. That was part of their plan. Now, I do not know who they were doing this with because you surely cannot do it alone. So I do not know you were going to do this with, you know, and how you were going to do this, because you cannot do this without the support of the entire Parliament and consensus.**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member for Oropouche East, your 30 minutes have expired. You have an additional 15, you care to use them?

Dr. R. Moonilal: Sir, yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Proceed.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I am now saying to the country that this 10-point plan, like the Government, has collapsed. There is no 10-point plan in effect. And what, therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did not read about the pillars here and so on, you know. I read the 10-point plan, which they went to the country with, not the pillars, the 10-point. And I am not sure even if one point of 10 has been implemented. I am not sure you got 10 per cent in your overall marking.

Minister from Point Fortin, you reminded of a colleague in university, anytime he would fail an exam he would tell us how hard he studied. Any time he would fail, he would tell you how hard he worked, but he was failing, so I think he should have worked less. Because, clearly you are not going to do it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, crying shame upon the former administration, crying shame, OPVs, and so on. To remind the gentleman, to remind the gentleman from Point Fortin that today the MP, Member of Parliament, you have no moral authority to speak on crime. [*Desk thumping*] That is the first point. You have no moral authority to speak on corruption, which is related to crime. Corruption, white-collar crime is an integral part of fighting crime. As I say, no country can deal with crime unless you deal with white-collar crime, and you continue to fire public officers and contract workers because you believe they are whistle blowers, you are wrong.

In the area of terrorism, those of us on this side rose, as soon as, I think we left office, we rose, and warned this Government, it was in the newspaper, that we have had persons leaving and going to foreign lands to be radicalized and it posed the single most critical element of a threat to this country. I want to remind this Government and the Member for Point Fortin, this is a beautiful paradise twin island where there were two attempts to remove the State to overthrow a Government and if you do not get your act together and deal seriously with these matters there may be another attempt of overthrow the State. [*Desk thumping*] We warned you about that. When I raised the number of 200, their argument was not 200, is 45. And when I say 400, they say it is not 400, is 350. The issue is not Arithmetic. It is not Arithmetic. It is what you are doing as policy, as law, as programme. [*Desk thumping*]

The Attorney General complains now every week that nobody is listening to him.

Why? Why? He said he gave an interview to Aljazeera for two hours and they did not print one word. I wonder why. Maybe you should have translated your statement.

Terrorism is the biggest single threat. I thought today the Minister of National Security would rise and tell us, because of this threat that our country face with radicalized persons, we now have the following 10 policy projects in place, 10 policies to be actioned to deal with terrorism: One, we are going to review immigration policy and immigration law to deal with the radical persons. [*Desk thumping*] Two, we are going to set up another unit.

The United Kingdom and others, they have the Cobra. Others have units set up. And as part of the architecture of the Ministry of National Security, the time has come to establish a permanent well-staffed, well-equipped anti-terrorism unit, that is operational [*Desk thumping*] and not strategic and not policy-oriented, but operational. And you have to use now the intelligence community to deal with this threat.

When we left office we could have told you that the intelligence community was helping and working with the police on major cases, major cases of capturing serious criminal elements. Even when one escaped it was the intelligence community that led the police to recapture the person. What did they do? They took an officer who was sending backhoe and truck to clean drains, and so on, and put him in charge of the intelligence agency. That is what they did. They removed all the people, and they are now returning with the same SAUTT people of 2008 and putting them in the SSA and other agencies, as if they failed before, they will succeed now. And I warned this country.

This Government says they have no money. I have argued, they have plenty dollars. They have plenty dollars. Their problem is they have no cents. They have

the dollars. How did you get \$18 million for a lobbyist? How do you rack up all these charges in hotel rooms and so on? How do you spend money on Soca on the Seas? What else? How do you spend money, \$90 million-odd on the Brian Lara Cricket Academy for the fete match? And you are saying that you do not have money; you do not have money. But you have to get the resources to put into fighting crime in a strategic way. And an anti-terrorist operational unit is now critical; that is a multi-agency. [*Desk thumping*]

Because you can—I want to say to the Member for Point Fortin, do not believe that what happened at the Manchester Arena can only happen in Manchester and cannot happen—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: You are calling it on Trinidad?

Dr. R. Moonilal: They say we calling it on Trinidad. “Now he blame me. Now he blame me.” Do not believe that what happened at the Manchester Arena, when the right-thinking people of Manchester were planning for the Europa Final, look at what happened at the Arena. Do not believe that something like that—you see they are living with their heads in the sand [*Desk thumping*] and the rest of their anatomy outside. That is where they are living.

So they are saying do not even say Manchester, but it happened. It is a fact. The reality is something like that can happen here, can happen, and you must be proactive in dealing with it. You have to be proactive. So, Minister, I thought you would have told us about the new unit you established or caused to be established to monitor returning nationals, and so on. I thought you would have—no but all of that is secret as well. In fact they keep their intelligence a secret, because today, and it is related to crime. There are many victims of crime. When we ask: Who did you pay? They say we cannot tell you. That is secret. Using taxpayers’ money to pay persons and cannot account to Parliament who got taxpayers’ money

as a victim of crime, and who did not get. When I say to name the persons I do not necessarily mean how much money they got. Who are these victims of crime who have been compensated, as opposed to who are not receiving compensation. You cannot secretly, five out of 200. You cannot secretly take taxpayers' money and pack it into certain victims and claim they are victims. How do we know that?

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we continue on this matter, I want to remind my colleague, because, you know, he spoke at length, and so on, about what the former administration did. They are fixated on that, as if the country really care about that today. People care about their safety. They cared that when they go to the mall nobody would hijack them and rob them. They care that if they go out with their children to get ice-cream they will be the victim of crime. They care that when they are coming home in the night they would not be ambushed.

Members of Parliament care that when we come out our office they will not rob us. They will not beat up our car and destroy our car. I care about that. I am not going to say who it happened to, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we care about that. The country right now is not in a mood for you to tell them about the UNC and what the UNC did and did not do. They care about what did you do in 20 months, addressing crime and what have been the results and what you plan to do to make this a safer place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we left them with a national security training academy, a national security specialized operation unit, a rapid response unit. You all remember that? The cars, I think, had a tinge of yellow and they made a big fuss out of that, and then discovered that all part of the world police cars do have a tinge of yellow. The Rapid Response Unit, the counter human trafficking unit, the establishment of the transnational organized crime unit, the launch of the E999. [*Desk thumping*] In fact, it fails for me now to sound like a Minister of National

Security.

We had a heavy increase in visible law enforcement presence. We had the inter-agency joint patrols. When last did anybody see joint patrols? “Anybody see that” recently? Joint patrols where? You do not see that anymore. And the Prime Minister herself, I remember, would go out to meet the men and women on duty to give that side the sense of support and commitment. [*Desk thumping*] We have an absentee Prime Minister from Parliament, from Government, from everywhere. He has been on vacation, I believe for, 10 times, on business for 25 times and now trying to tell us we save money because “he doh” not travel first class, on a flight that do not have a first-class service, [*Desk thumping*] as if everybody born yesterday.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had the establishment of the national security alert state.

Mr. Indarsingh: “Repeat dat. It ah have no first class?”

Dr. R. Moonilal: It has no first class on American Airlines. “He saving money”. And Copa Airlines have business. They have no first class; as if that will do something for the \$92,000 squandered in Tobago, the \$59,000 squandered. The launch of the community comfort police we spoke about that. We dealt with the cell phones when driving, established the surveillance bays, which they have never used; increased the number of CCTV cameras by 500; launched a CCTV centre in Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] And you know, we gave significant support to crime fighting in Tobago? Significant. [*Desk thumping*] Over 180 cameras were installed on the island when we were there; established the private security network commission; the training of crime scene investigators; police cars, as I told you before, equipped with GPS technology. “You want meh continue? Ah continuing, ah continuing. Yuh like dat. Ah continuing Naparima.” Vehicle expansion, more than 500 vehicles were purchased for the police service; 11,470

vehicles were refurbished.

I remember the Commissioner of Police came to some meeting, I would not say when and where, and complained about this police car and they do not have the resources. We worked with the Ministry of Finance and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service every single day for 14 days, to ensure they got the money to get the car. [*Desk thumping*] That is dealing with crime. Government is not for “limers”. It is not for jokers. It is to not sit down in One Woodbrook Place and have a beverage with friends and family. That is not for Government. Government is a place to work, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The acquisition of four coastal patrol vessels and two utility vessels. These are the same utility vessels that are doing all the seizure all around the place now. The largest number of coast guard vessels ever approved in the history of the defence force was by the People’s Partnership. We collaborated with international agencies, and so on. When we bought the vessel, I now remember, when we bought the Damien vessel, the Opposition Leader, then Member for Diego Martin West “he say you buying a vessel that a wave could throw down.” Today it had a record seizure in the waters of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] We approved and initiated purchase of five full body scanners. We dealt with the launch of a new security feed for the Chaguaramas Development Authority. Construction of video conferencing at court facilities; improvements in other areas; infrastructural work; police stations. I just want to put on record because they say we did nothing. Arima Police Station, Piarco, Maloney, Cumuto, Brasso, La Brea, Oropouche, Moruga, Golden Grove Prison, construction of a perimeter fence and infrastructural works took place. Legislative measures, that is how you bring crime down, “not by gallerying, not by bouffing up de crook”, not by boring the criminals to death and hope they surrender because of a boring speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we passed the Interception of Communications Act, the Firearms (Amdt.) Act of 2011; the Financial Intelligence Unit (Amdt.) Act, other pieces of legislation there, the bail amendments, the anti-gang, miscellaneous provisions for kidnapping, data protection. I mean I am tired now of reading the legislation that we passed. [*Desk thumping*] “I mean dey have some”, I cannot pronounce the words there; the Administration of Justice (Electronic Monitoring), and so on; the Securities Act; the anti-doping in sport; the Dog Control Bill. But that is when we had an Attorney General, you see, Mr. Deputy Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] That is when we had a real Attorney General; indictable offences; Bail (Amdt.). Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had social and education programmes, pioneered by the Member for Chaguanas East.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to summarize and tell this Government that they can continue to do what they were doing in 2009. They can continue to blame the Opposition, to blame the UNC, to blame the Member for Siparia, to blame the Member for Oropouche; to blame every Member here. That will not help them. That will not help this country, unless you can demonstrate what you are doing and you can show results. Instead of architecture menu and pillars, you should give us results. Thank you.**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Members, it is now 4.25.16 seconds. I think that we would have the break for tea now and we would resume promptly at 5.00 p.m.

4.25 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members, I know it is only just about two minutes after five, but you all were given an additional five minutes so, at least, let us try to ensure that we stick to the decorum. Five should be five. I recognize the Attorney General. [*Desk thumping*]

The Attorney General (Hon. Faris Al-Rawi): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to contribute to this Motion before us brought by the Member for Naparima. As usual in debates, I am bound to begin by responding to some of the material put onto the record. I start with the first point raised by the Member for Naparima that murders go up and crime goes up under the People National's Movement. That is an allegation brought by the Member for Naparima. It was certainly the case followed by a second point, and that was a description of what a failed state looks like.

The Member for Naparima then, specifically went on to deal with travel advisory and he went on to deal with aspects of terror. That flowed in to the contribution of the Member for Oropouche East who learnt one thing from the last debate, and that was to stop laughing at himself. He gave a contribution, which I will come to in the second part, but permit me to start with the responses as follows. We heard the Member for Naparima tell this Parliament, through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that for some reason figures go up under the PNM in Government. I would like to put onto the record that I find that a most astounding submission by the Member.

First of all, it implies that time for some reason and the phenomenon of crime exists only under one Government, at one point in time. The hon. Member does not, most respectfully, adopt any logic at all about the continuum of governance. Let me remind the population that between the period 1986, come forward to today's date, we have had successive Governments come on to the fore. We had the NAR, combined with Members, some of whom sit today in Members opposite. The Member for Caroni Central was indeed a member of the NAR. We saw then a PNM Government returned to Office. We saw a UNC Government come into office. We then saw in the period 2000, 2001 and 2002, we had the 18/18 fiasco.

We went back to the polls, the PNM came into office in 2002 to 2010. Then we had the UNC incarnate itself as a People's Partnership and now reduced as Opposition as a UNC Government, Opposition, with a PNM Government.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, most respectfully, the rationale standing behind the hon. Member's argument can be met by the following position. It may be axiomatic that crime goes up when a PNM Government comes into office because the UNC in the period 1986 to today's date, when in Government, followed by a PNM Government—when they were in Government, they spent time dismantling the architecture of national security. And, obviously, there is a gestation period to crime. Crime does not happen immediately. Criminals do not become emboldened immediately. Criminals do not just enterprise and develop their empires without having some degree of confidence. And that is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I put to this honourable House that the submission by the Member for Naparima must be rejected and, in fact, quite the converse must be accepted, because it is a fact that the gestation of criminality is certainly something which grows under the UNC.

And that is to be found—as I hear my learned friend, the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla snickering—in the very submissions made by the hon. Member for Point Fortin, the Minister of National Security. You see, it is by no mistake that the LifeSport phenomenon—the \$1.2 million per month for two years going to Rajae Ali—now he is sitting behind bars—but his empire being at the height under the UNC, that what the hon. Member for—the hon. Minister of National Security under the UNC was speaking to in very clear terms, was an immediate war then between the Minister of National Security, Gary Griffith and the Minister of Sport, Anil Roberts.

Gary Griffith as Minister for National Security, in a UNC Government, was quoted

day after day in the newspapers as saying, there is rampant criminality in the LifeSport Programme; the deaths and murders which occurred which caused people to go into hiding—you will remember the case of the lady who went into hiding and said that she was going into witness protection—that that rampant criminality which the Minister of National Security was saying that he found and observed—the Minister of National Security was met with a Government led by the Member for Siparia which said, there is nothing wrong with LifeSport.

In fact, in a Motion to condemn the LifeSport Programme, brought by the then PNM Opposition, those Members sitting in Government, now sitting in Opposition, beat the desk heartily to say, long live LifeSport. I recall that with shock and horror as if it was yesterday. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you feed hundreds of millions of dollars into a criminal empire when your Minister of National Security on the United National Congress is telling you that there are weapons in the forests in Cumuto in training fields being put into implementation, that is not something that you look at very quietly.

What was Mr. Griffith met with? Mr. Griffith was met with a summary dismissal by Mrs. Persad-Bissessar, the Member for Siparia, when a choice had to be made. As is portrayed in the newspapers, the story goes in relation to the allegations of witness tampering by Anand Ramlogan as Attorney General, that Gary Griffith lost his job when he simply said, I will not tell a lie. That is on the public record. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I listen to the Member for Naparima speak, and I hear him talking about terrorism as if it came out of nowhere, clearly the Member for Naparima must have been enjoying himself while he was in the United Nations as the representative for Trinidad and Tobago. Clearly that must have been the case. Maybe that is the reason why he invited Le Pen to come and visit him on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago. An extension of an invitation goes out, then in office, to

speak to somebody known in the world as someone who holds racist points of view.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us go to the statistics. The Member said that crime goes up under the People's National Movement. I went onto the Trinidad and Tobago Police website under their crimes statistics where they have a generation of reports. You can do the comparison, you could plug in the year and compare it with any year. I took the one full year of a PNM term, that is 2016—2015 was partial, 2017 is ongoing. I took 2016 as a baseline marker and I compared it against every category of crime for the United National Congress' position and that was, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in particular for the year 2013 and for the year 2014.

When you compare the figures UNC 2013 against PNM 2016, look at what the figures look like. Woundings and shooting: 542 UNC versus 522 PNM; robberies: 2,958 versus PNM 2,595; burglaries and break-ins: 2,968 versus 2,187; larceny motor vehicle: 1,046 versus 647; larceny dwelling house: 370 versus 238; narcotics: 475 versus 395; rapes, incest, sexual offences: 550 versus 496; general larceny: 2,603 versus 1,952. In every one of those categories, the UNC's statistics when they were in Government were significantly higher than the PNM statistics in 2016.

I looked at 2014. The figures for 2014 were almost the same. Wounding and shootings, robberies, burglaries and break-ins, larceny motor vehicles, larceny dwelling house and serious indecency. Others—rape, incest, general larceny—every single category for 2014, higher than 2016, almost by double in some instance.

I looked at the figure for 2015. In 2015, we saw a slight shift down, but the figures, again, for the first part of the UNC's tenure, up till September, almost double that of the PNM. So let me refute from the TTPS statistics that in every

single category of serious crime—and I am going to come to murder separately—we saw a phenomenon where all of the figures demonstrate that the submissions put by the Member for Naparima are entirely false. [*Desk thumping*]

Let us deal now with the one I think deserves singling out and that is the crime of murder. A society must deservedly be judged by the number of murders there, because it is all well and good to talk about larceny going down and rape going down as they have, however—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, your display. If you are not quoting from it, could you rest it?

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would be guided. I thought display meant this [*Shows paper in hand*] but holding in your hand is something else. I tend to gesticulate, so I ask you to bear with that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I would just like you to ensure that, you know, how you use it accordingly while you are speaking because, again, with the Motion it can be considered that you are displaying it.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would be guided. I am not displaying, I am speaking. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your consistency. I take the caution, but if my eyes were down and holding, I would take your caution otherwise. Thank you.

So, Madam Speaker, I am speaking about the fact of the statistics being wrong, and I have now moved on to murder. There is a fact that murders in 2013 stood at 408; in 2014, they stood at 403; in 2015, they stood at 453 and—sorry, they stood at 420 and in 2016 at 462.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to submit that the one point of merit raised by the Member of Oropouche East—halleluiah there was one point of merit—was that one must deal with white-collar crime as the mechanism to approach the

delivery of justice and to reduce the figures of murder. When we looked to white-collar crime, the submission of this Government is that driving out white-collar crime and following the money is, in fact, the mechanism to make sure you take the profit out of crime, and by taking the profit out of crime you are going to see the dip in crime.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reason for murders certainly going up must be factored against what was really done in dealing with white-collar crime under the UNC. Let me put it to you this way. The first thing the Member for Oropouche East addressed relative to this point—and I am taking the substance point away from the chronology of his contribution—the Member for Oropouche East was there banging his chest boasting that there was a crime attack, that there was a legislative direction given by the Members opposite when in Government.

He said we dealt with the Interception of Communications Act, the FIU Act, Bail (Amedt.), Anti-Gang, Data Protection and Electronic Transactions. He then said, “You want me to go on?” The Member said “yes”. Electronic Monitoring, Securities and Exchange, Anti-doping, Dog Control Act, Indictable Offences and Bail (Amdt.). That is exactly what he said from my notes. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to tell the nation the truth, because the devil is in the details. The Interception of Communications Act, no regulations; FIU legislation, partially implemented; Bail (Amdt.), now expired, UNC refused to support it; Anti-Gang legislation, now expired, UNC refused to support it; Data Protection Act, not fully proclaimed and certainly not implemented; Electronic Transactions Act, partially proclaimed, not implemented at all; Electronic Monitoring, no implementation at all; Securities Exchange, implemented; Anti-Doping, not implemented; Dog Control Act, not implemented; Indictable Offences, that is the Preliminary Enquiry legislation, number one, struck off, number two, not implemented and not assented to.

No reform of preliminary inquiries at all except, of course, we know for the implementation of section 34; and Bail amendments, challenged in court by their own members standing now. So the entire list offered by the Member for Oropouche East everything except one piece of law that is the securities law, every single one of those not implemented, but the Member for Oropouche East has the temerity to come to Parliament today to stand up and boast about these things, thinking that people will not check. You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would be embarrassed to make a submission like that, but he forgot to mention DNA. DNA, not implemented. It was for the Member for Point Fortin to actually implement the DNA legislation, and I commend him openly for that. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we get to the position of strategy and factor, we were on the point of white-collar crime. The Member for Oropouche East, as comical as he is, in dealing with white-collar crime, failed to tell the population what the UNC did under its tenure. I read. Restraint order applications—this is for money laundering aspects—in 2012, under the UNC, there was a whopping two restraint order applications. In 2014, under the UNC, there was a massive two under the UNC.

Let us go further, when we looked to the aspects of fraud, in the period that the UNC was involved, do you know how many cases there were in fraud, Mr. Deputy Speaker? A massive huge 18 fraud cases. Do you know what steps they took to deal with the biggest allegation of fraud in Trinidad and Tobago—that is the Piarco Airport scandal? They ensured that that case is now 17 years standing in the magistracy. They ensured that section—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Singh: You mean UNC ensured?

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Yes, I would explain.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, Standing Order?

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the UNC had the opportunity to implement the preliminary enquiries abolition or modification; they had the opportunity to improve the DPP's office; they had the opportunity to better the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and thereby had the opportunity to ensure that cases like Piarco Airport Enquiry would stand at 17 years in the Magistrates' Court, actually get dealt with. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me put this on record. Mr. Deputy Speaker, 18 cases of fraud dealt with. That, of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does not include the tens of millions of dollars that were spent behind the section 34 assistance which had to be repealed after implementation. That is the one bit that they did to try to get the preliminary enquiries moving.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, drug trafficking cases, another abysmal record. You know the one that jumped out at me was? In terms of follow the money, white-collar crime—I wish the Member for Oropouche East was actually here to listen, but I understand he does not have the fortitude to actually listen to somebody respond to him—cash seizures are the mechanism by which you gage how the Proceeds of Crime Act is working. Let me tell you this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Under section 39 of the Proceeds of Crime Act, 11th of September 2010, there was a cash seizure, \$23,638; 23rd of February 2011, there was a cash seizure, TT \$20,108; 13th of November 2011, cash seizure, \$94,531; 3rd April, 2012, cash seizure, \$111,864.54; 2nd July, 2015, cash seizure, \$22,000, a massive whooping white-collar crime success rate for the UNC—drum roll please—of \$272,139.34. That is what the Member for Oropouche East says is white-collar crime position. [*Crosstalk*] I would come to Al Jazeera just now for you, Member for Naparima, without having a heart attack in the process.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we hear the UNC tell us, white-collar crime is the way to go, \$122,000 is all the cash forfeiture that we could get out of them. It is no

wonder, therefore, that you will see the murder rate climbing in the gestation of the United National Congress's tenure as Government to the point where the People's National Movement comes into office has to operationalize for the first time, border control protection, watches the Minister of National Security, as humble as he is, ensured that the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force Coast Guard Division, intercept a seizure of close to \$1 billion in drugs, nearly \$20 million in drugs just yesterday.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how does the United National Congress and its Members present here stand with a serious face and tell us, we did all of this. You see, when you check the facts, the laws relied upon, not implemented; the white-collar crime position, section 34 and \$122,000 in cash forfeiture, absolutely nothing done. Cannot take them seriously.

So let us come to where we are. We hear the Member for Oropouche East, again, laughing about menu and architecture. You see, having a dedicated, principled, clearly-defined plan against statistics which are measured ensures performance. The opposite of that, put into local parlance, UNC fashion, is called "voops, vaps and vaille-que-vaille". [*Desk thumping*] That is what that is. It is no wonder that hon. Members cannot see the logic behind having published a legislative agenda; having started off with obtaining the measurable in the system; go into the prisons and assessing by way of litmus testing the state and condition of the case flow at the prisons; and making sure that you turn on grabbers and jammers for the first time ever, intercepting over one million text messages, jamming 3,000 phone calls in a three-month period alone when the equipment was just in a box on a shelf under the UNC.

So the criminal justice system has been met with the following plan. Let us string it together, because the Member for Naparima is not able to do this. Under the

criminal justice arena and reform system, we have started with stage one. The first thing we do, we said to the country, let us pronounce and implement the criminal procedure rules. We did so. You heard me answer a question today in Parliament, indicating that those rules were signed on April 06, 2016. They were to come in on January 02, 2017, we delayed it to April 18, 2017 to allow for consultation, but those criminal procedure rules stand as the mechanism to improve the sit and rise time for magistrates; to make sure that cases are ready to proceed when they are due to proceed; to make sure that attorneys-at-law are present when they are to be present; to make sure that the paperwork tracing document exchange is done and that criminal procedure rules are the bedrock to ensure that you are utilizing the court time efficiently.

The Member for Oropouche East, again, said that they went and they built video conferencing facilities. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are no video conferencing facilities that the UNC built at all. None! [*Desk thumping*] At the Remand Yard we inherited a shell and nothing was built. The video interview suites at Trinidad and Tobago Police which were purchased and meant to be in operation in their recording suites, every single one of them could not be found. Trinidad and Tobago had to go and buy—Minister Young was right there—with the United Kingdom Government, the video recording suites and implement it at the Anti-Corruption Investigation Bureau, and then all of a sudden, video recording suites started to be found in the TTPS—topped up here and there—but Member for Oropouche East has the stoned-face gall to stand up in this Parliament and tell us we build video conferencing facilities. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Silence.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: I cannot use the word “lie” in the Parliament, it would be unparliamentary, but that is an unadulterated untruth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you get pass the bedrock of the criminal procedure rules, what is the next thing we said? We said look at the analysis of cases in the courts. We said, look at the number of preliminary enquiries outstanding; look at the number of cases in backlog; and look at the case flow passing through the Magistracy, the High Court and the Court of Appeal. What we said next was, it is time to ease the burden in the courts and, therefore, we introduced decriminalization of motor vehicle offences. Why? Because we will be taking 100,000 cases out of the Magistrates' Court, 100,000 cases out of the court and improving the revenue collection significantly using the resources in a better managed system, but that to the Member for Naparima does not make any sense.

What do we say? We looked at attempt, number one, at preliminary enquiries in 2011 by the UNC; we looked at attempt, number two, at preliminary enquiry or committal proceedings in 2014, both crashed and burnt, never implemented and we said let us abolish preliminary enquiries. As you know, that debate is ongoing and will be finished in this parliamentary session.

What do we do next? We looked at plea bargaining and we said plea bargaining is a method by which you can encourage people through judicial scrutiny, through judicial process in plea discussions and plea agreements certified by the court to allow for suspects or persons charged whether on information or summary charges to actually engage in deciding what their position will be before the courts as it relates to sentencing and that, as you know, is a debate ongoing in the Parliament and will be finished in this session.

What do we do next? We said let us look at judge only trials. We introduced into Trinidad and Tobago, for the first time, as is ongoing in Parliament right now, the ability to elect for judge only trials by the defendant electing. And contrary to what hon. Members opposite say there is, in fact, a significant amount of

information which I would come to when I deal with those Bills otherwise, to demonstrate that this is a favourable move which will be something of attraction to persons looking at judge only trials because people want a faster trial process.

5.30 p.m.

What do we do next? We said, let us look at the position of the bail and access to bail. Why? We said that of the 1,200 people who are in remand, or pre-trial conviction, and have been granted bail, 831 of them stand—800 people of 1,200 people. And we say, instead of breeding criminals in jail, instead of minding them in jail, put them to conditional release, get them to access bail easier, operationalize the electronic monitoring so that they can go out and participate and be monitored, but the UNC did not do that. It takes the Minister of National Security, the hon. Edmund Dillon, the hon. Member for Point Fortin to operationalize that, despite the fact, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, absolutely nothing done by the UNC.

What do we say further? We said, reorganize your security services, and so we brought the SSA amendments, but in bringing the SSA amendments we gave an undertaking to bring the regulations for the Interception of Communications Act and the SSA, both of which were never dealt with by the last Government, and those regulations will come and so the law will be proclaimed.

What did we do further? We said, bring a method by which we appoint a Commissioner of Police. We simplified the order. We brought it to Parliament. Hon. Members opposite refused to support it. They went to court after the assent, after the proclamation. They challenged the position. The court did not agree with them in terms that they pretend the court agreed. The court simply said, remove the reference to Central Tenders Board and leave the discretion, therefore, by that removal up to the Police Complaints Authority. Nothing more, nothing less. So

innocuous was the decision that it was not appealed, and so the process is continuing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, whilst we dealt with the criminal justice system, again connected, the next point that we dealt with was the audit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. That is ongoing by the manpower audit. The Member for Oropouche East said nothing of the 10-point plan was implemented, it certainly is ongoing. The Attorney General's Office is finalizing the prosecutorial management reform for the Trinidad and Tobago police. Why? Ninety-five per cent of prosecutions in the Magistracy are dealt with by police prosecutors, but they do not have a unified case management structure so that their 95 per cent prosecutions can be coordinated.

What do we do next? We said, this issue of counsel of choice, where you are ready for a criminal trial but your lawyer is not ready. The State is ready, your lawyer is consistently not able to appear because your lawyer has a hundred other matters. We are building out at the legal aid authority right now, a public defenders system so that after you have had the opportunity to have your counsel of choice attend, if you cannot have your counsel attend the administration of justice will not be embarrassed and you will have a counsel appointed to you, for you, paid for by the State, and, therefore, cases can progress. We went further—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, your 30 minutes have expired, you have an additional 15. You care to avail yourself?

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Yes, please.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Proceed.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we went further, we said, operationalize the Office of the DPP, and so we gave the DPP, last year alone, \$88 million in legal fees. We gave the DPP the San Fernando office for outfitting, the Tobago

office for outfitting, the access to confirm the new premises in Tobago.

[Interruption]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Silence.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: We gave him 32 new officers, and all of that operated to an improvement in the processes at the DPP's Office.

Did the UNC attempt any of that? Not one shred or scintilla evidence to suggest that. We went further, we said, let us reform the Mercy Committee, the Defence Council and the Attorney General's Office, and we took all of the backlog files at the Mercy Committee, all at the Defence Council, which sat down in arrears for five years plus. Correct me if I am wrong. Not a case dealt with by the Defence Council, by hon. Members opposite. They never met in the Defence Council, but it fell to us to do that. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, criminal justice reform was just one set; there is another set, it is white-collar, and white-collar, follow the money, anti-crime, which is the second package which will hit this Parliament in September—I am warning you—is comprised of the following things, number one, reform your system of land registration; make sure that your titles are correct; make sure that owners are the lawful owners; make sure that somebody is not holding a property for you in trust, where you take money from a contractor, where you take money and then—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, one sec, the “you” you are referring to, is?

Mr. Hinds: Generally.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: How else is there to describe it, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Proceed.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: When you, someone who is a criminal, take money from a contractor, where you then take that money, you ask the contractor to buy land for you, the contractor goes to Tobago Plantations, buys an apartment for you, for

example, hypothetically, in his name, or in his company's name, and then you enjoy the premises. You see, in that circumstance, you have the apartment in your name, beneficially not legally. So the mechanism of cleaning up the land registry so that your registration of deeds compels the disclosure of equitable ownerships or trusts is one of the massive white-collar potentials in this country—massive white-collar potentials. [*Desk thumping*] And I could understand why some people would be jumpy about that.

You see, following upon that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is also the position of unveiling the beneficial ownership behind companies, and that is why an amendment to the Companies Act is going to be brought to Parliament in September to deal with the disclosure of beneficial ownership in companies. And that is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that is joined by the position in relation to the reforms that you will have in dealing with, not only companies, not only land registry, but the mechanism which we propose, and we are in consultation right now on it, of civil asset forfeiture. That is where you are brought to court and you are asked to explain how you have acquired wealth, in what you call, explain-your-wealth orders, and if you cannot explain how you have acquired your wealth then you will lose that by due process, by a court freezing or seizing the assets. It could be an apartment. It could be a car. It could be a series of gold chains. It could be money in a vault. It could be money buried at home.

What I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, persons who have engaged in bid-rigging, persons who have engaged in profiteering or taxing contractors, I could understand why they would not sleep easy at night. You see, when you have a dedicated plan on white-collar management and eradication, anti-corruption, then you are going to have it. What have we done? We had Ministers of Legal Affairs for years sit down in the Registry and do absolutely nothing. The reform of the

Legal Affairs division of this country—Legal Affairs was an underrated body, you know. Legal Affairs as a Ministry manages the registration of every single piece of information that is useful in this country to prevent fraud—births, deaths, deed polls, gifts, registration of land, registration of chattels, registration of property. Every aspect of properties in there, nothing computerized at the Registry.

I met the IDB project for the computerization of the land registration in an absolute state of disarray. None of the companies was struck off the record. So we saw juice containers being exported to the United States of America in a defunct company. A defunct company standing on the Registry, which should have been struck off, was used to transport crime, and the proceeds of crime, and cocaine, in particular. Legal Affairs should have been striking off companies, making the amendments to the Companies Act to catch the assets which fall from that, and that is why in September you will see that legislation on your desk. [*Desk thumping*] That is why a system of compulsory registration of land in this country so that there is absolute title is required. From the year 2000, straight up to 2015, the package of laws to deal with the compulsory registration of land never was dealt with, was never dealt with by the UNC. That is why it is on the Order Paper now, and will be dealt with so that land title in Tobago can be dealt with.

Permit me to deal with another area, Mr. Deputy Speaker—anti-terrorism. May I ask how much time I have left, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: You have just about eight minutes.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Good. Anti-terrorism—thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Anti-terrorism is a critical piece of architecture for us. The Anti-Terrorism Act was brought under a People's National Movement Government in 2009, implemented in 2010 in April. It came alongside, first of its kind, FIU; first of its kind, Financial Obligations Regulations; first of its kind, Anti-Terrorism Act. In

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the period 2010 to 2015—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member of Laventille West, kindly—

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: In the period 2010 to 2015, the Anti-Terrorism Act was there available for Members opposite, for the Attorney General who held the position as I do as the Minister with responsibility for the anti-terrorism law. You know how much activity there was under the Anti-Terrorism Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker—2010, '11, '12, '13, '14, '15? Not a single case was taken to the courts on anti-terrorism. Not a single person was listed as a terrorist. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I stand here today on the 26th of May, 2017, as Attorney General we have listed as a Government, 341 individuals. [*Desk thumping*]

As Attorney General, working with my colleague, the Minister of National Security, working with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, working with the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister. The Member for Oropouche East wants to know about coordination with international partners; unless he did not know, because he was not paying attention, the hon. Member, Trinidad and Tobago signed on to an agreement that the United States was begging this country to sign on to. It is called the PISCES system, that is the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System. You know when you go to the United States of America they take a picture of you, they scan your fingerprints, they swipe your passport? That system is being implemented into Trinidad and Tobago because we finally executed the agreement with the United States of America, and it will be frontline on all of our border points in Trinidad and Tobago.

Facial recognition, fingerprinting, bio-data, because you track terrorism by advanced warning, and that is exactly what it was designed for in the United States of America, but it took this Minister of National Security, this Government to sign on to the Air Marshal agreement, which the United States of America begged us

for years to sign. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have successfully re-engineered the relationships with our international partners. There are frontline mechanisms for inspection at the airport coming. My good friend actually reminded me, in relation of OPVs, a captain that pays attention to the security of Trinidad and Tobago. It was not the three OPVs alone that the Brazilian Government dealt with, the Trinidad-class vessels as BAE calls them, they ordered 12 more. The British is building 12 more Trinidad-class vessels for the Brazilian Government, but we have to listen to the Member for Naparima talk about OPVs not working—building 12 more.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we deal with the positions on anti-terrorism, you have to start with listing entities. You then have to proceed with forfeiting assets under section 22A and B of the Anti-Terrorism Act. We have 341, the United National Congress, zero. We have PISCES, the United National Congress delayed and mamaguy the US Government for five years and did nothing. We have Air Marshals agreement, the United States Government delayed for five years by the United States interaction here with the UNC Government. But what did they do at the airport? Hon. Members opposite presided over the sabotage and destruction of the facial recognition software in the airport. [*Crosstalk*] That is their legacy. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a Government sitting upon the architecture in National Security—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members, there is a procedure how it is supposed to be done.

Mr. Singh: But you “eh” catch my eye, I got up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: And what you did? Member for Chaguanas West, what you did?

Mr. Singh: I got up. I did.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker: Proceed.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I can say—
[Interruption]

Mr. Charles: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 48(6), imputing improper motive to us on this side, saying we sabotage—

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: I said presided over.

Mr. Charles: No, we did not preside over it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, proceed.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you see, a National Security Council deals with National Security, the Member for Oropouche East fed up boasting how he was a member of the National Security Council for five years. They must have known, or they were asleep, or liming in Rudy's corner—*[Desk thumping]*—that the National Security architecture was being sabotaged.

Hon. Member: Where is Rudy's corner?

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Where is Rudy's corner, I do not know. What I can tell you is that this Government is not a box drain Government. This Government does not have people in Trinidad and Tobago talking about "I hada eat ah food". This Government is not a Government where people say, well, you know, I am a contractor and I eating food more. This Government does not have champagne parties, morning, noon and night. This Government does not use the national security helicopters as a taxi service between San Fernando, Phillipine and Tobago. *[Desk thumping]*

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is serious business you know. We have also dealt with children as a priority. We have created the Family and Children Division Bill, now an Act, now proclaimed, in large part, as at the 15th of May. We have designated Child Rehabilitation Centre; YTC is now that. We have done

the Orders. We have done the protocols. We have put in place, the Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, 169 officers. What is the UNC's record on that? The Attorney General proclaimed section 54 of the child rehabilitation measures, which say you must have a Child Rehabilitation Centre, and then the Attorney General, when he is not Attorney General, goes to court and then sues the State for not having a Child Rehabilitation Centre because it did not exist. And they are talking about morality and the high ground? For heaven's sake, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the epitome of irresponsibility. The taxpayers of this country should be demanding the return of moneys paid by way of damages, cheered on by the UNC, "giffing and gaffing" like the Member for Oropouche East is wont to do. [*Desk thumping*]

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in dealing with the issue—Madam Speaker, as I welcome you back, may I ask either one of you for the time remaining.

Madam Speaker: You have just about 15 seconds.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Thank you. Madam Speaker, I could talk about human trafficking, I could talk about the mechanisms that we are dealing with to operationalize the improvements in the prison system; there is so much to do but we will take that to the public domain. Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to contribute, and I denounce this Motion as a fabrication of fantasy on the part of the Member for Naparima. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Chaguanas East. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Fazal Karim (Chaguanas East): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to join this very important debate on crime, and I want to start by not being distracted by a seagull from Tobago, who will only deal in matters like those. But, Madam Speaker, as I welcome you back, I want to congratulate my

friend, the Member for Naparima for bringing this Motion on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, I just listened to my colleague from San Fernando West, the hon. Attorney General, and while I took note that, he indicated and he spoke about the continuance of governance, I respectfully want to say that I was a little bit disappointed in that his entire contribution was about what we did as the PNM and what you did not do as the UNC. [*Desk thumping*] It was a total blame game. While he would have given us some instance of what we did not do and what we were supposed to do, I am sure at the next occasion I would spend some time in my continued contribution with dealing with some of the other matters he raised. But, Madam Speaker, let me say, that this Motion before us, I am going to start in the context of locating it within the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, which states that it is:

“the right of the individual to life, liberty and security of the person and enjoyment of property and the right not to be deprived thereof except by due process of law.”

Madam Speaker, this is the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; you have said on many occasions that you are in charge, and, therefore, it is your responsibility just like a principal, or just like a parent to ensure the safety and security of every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, before I continue with the rest of my contribution, I think it is important for us to respond to some of the comments that were made by the previous speakers, and I want to start particularly with the hon. Minister of National Security, the Member for Point Fortin. Madam Speaker, he indicated, to much applause, that we on this side did not improve the lot of the Cadet Force, and, in fact, it was his Government that really improved the lot and invested more

in the Cadet Force in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Madam Speaker, let me say that under the hon. Minister of Education, Dr. Gopeesingh, we have had tremendous strides with the Cadet Force in Trinidad and Tobago, and what is being seen now as new or additions to the Cadet Force really had its germination under the People's Partnership. [*Desk thumping*]

Let me just give the facts, because it is important for us to know from here, and for the country to know what is the truth, what are the figures that we are dealing with. Madam Speaker, I just want to indicate, with respect to the Cadet Force, under the category of salaries and cost of living, in 2016 there was an allocation of \$6,186,700, and in 2017, the allocation went down to \$4,822,270, representing a decrease in the Cadet Force under Salaries and COLA of \$1.3 million. Madam Speaker, I want to continue with the Cadet Force to correct the statement that was made by my friend from Point Fortin. With respect to Minor Equipment for the Cadet Force, in 2015 there was an allocation of \$1,112,187. Madam Speaker, in 2016, that figure went down to \$911,170, but in 2017 he spoke about the increase, and I want to state for the records that for Minor Equipment for the Cadet Force there was absolutely no allocation, zero which represented a decrease of approximately \$1 million from the \$911,000. Madam Speaker, with respect to Goods and Services for the Cadet Force, in 2016 there was an allocation for \$6,454,520, and guess what, there was no increase in 2017. In fact, there was a decrease to \$5,166,900, representing a reduction, a decrease of \$1.3 million.

He also spoke about the MiLAT Programme, and for those who do not know about the MiLAT Programme, it is really the Military-Led Academic Training Programme, as opposed to the MYPART Programme, which is the apprenticeship and re-orientation training programme. So with respect to the MiLAT Programme, in 2015 there was an allocation of \$14.5 million. In 2016, there was an allocation

of \$13 million, and guess what, in 2017 there was no increase, contrary to what the hon. Member for Point Fortin indicated. They was a decrease towards \$8 million representing a net decrease from 2016 to 2017 of \$5 million. Madam Speaker, having put that to rest, I just want to indicate that respect to crime and criminality a lot of these programmes that the Member for Point Fortin indicated, which represented investments in the young people of Trinidad and Tobago, I want to also indicate that there were disinvestments for the young people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I want to give some instances and some figures, because I plan a day when I continue on to the next occasion I would go substantially into some other matters. Madam Speaker, for the records, in the tertiary sector, with respect to development programme, in the 2017 budget there was approximately \$570 million decrease. Let me give you some of the figures and the institutions that suffered the cuts, and we are talking about investing in young people, investing in the future of our country, and preventing the potential and the propensity for crime and criminality. Madam Speaker, these are the figures—[*Interruption*] Madam Speaker, I was just indicating that even, with respect the my friend from Point Fortin, there was a decrease with the Metal Industries Company Limited, Institute of Technology, in Point Fortin to the extent of \$3.5 million. So they cut programmes in his constituency.

The Member for Pleasantville also found that they had cut that, with respect to the MIC, Institute of Technology for Pleasantville suffered a loss, a decrease of investment of \$5.8 million. Right here where we are talking about the School Improvement Project, in Laventille, the SIP, the Laventille Technology and Continuing Education Centre had a decrease of \$10.6 million. With respect to MYPART, \$4.7 million decrease; OJT, \$20 million decrease; HYPE, \$21.7 million

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decrease; the MuST programme, \$27.9 million decrease; YTEPP, \$49.5 million decrease; Servol, \$6.9 million decrease. The retraining programme for displaced workers also suffered.

Madam Speaker, as I indicated, these are some of the consequences of the action of the current Government, but when we talk about crime and the increase in crime, and we talk about moneys we also need to put on the table that since 2016 and 2017 there have been approximately \$10 billion allocated to the Ministry of National Security. A total allocation in 2016 of \$5.3 billion of a national budget of \$57.2 billion, or representing 9.3 per cent of the total budget. In 2017, you had not an increase, you had a decrease in National Security. Total allocation, \$4.6 billion of a national budget of \$59.2 billion, representing 7.9 per cent of the total budget.

Madam Speaker, all this is against the background that the present Government, when they were in Opposition, and you would see from the preface of the manifesto, they indicated that have spent the last five years preparing for Government. I quote from the hon. Dr. Keith Rowley, Prime Minister now, excerpt from the PNM manifesto, page 3 in which he says:

“As is our practice when in Opposition, we have spent the last five years developing the necessary policies and programmes to rebuild our country and our economy, restore confidence, equity and social justice, and enhance and improve every area of national life.”

Madam Speaker, my colleagues have said it over and over, and it is evident that while we might talk about pillars, while we might talk about policies, while we might talk about plans and programmes, it is very clear, we are not convinced that there is any plan for crime and dealing with crime and criminality in this country.

[Desk thumping]

With respect to the statistics that my friend quoted from, the Member for San Fernando West indicated, he tried to defuse the statement made by the Member for Naparima that whenever the People's National Movement is in Government that the crime statistics tend to increase. But one thing I could say that he did in fact admit, the hon. Attorney General, admitted to the figures, and those are the same figures that I have which showed an increase. And, again, if I may just refer, without giving a whole number of years, to the basic ones he spoke about, from 2014 he did say 403; 2015, 420; and 2016, 462 murders. Madam Speaker, as we are here, on my way to this Parliament today, unfortunately I had to receive the news that a member of my constituency was murdered in the Lange Park area. And, therefore, I just wanted to indicate that as I come towards the time for today's sitting that we are going to show that this, our programme for crime, is indeed—
[*Interruption*]

6.00 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member for Chaguanas East, it is now six o'clock. I call on the Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Wednesday, May 31st, 2017 at 1.30 p.m., to do Government Motions Nos. 1 and 2 and the committee stage of Bill No. 1, the Bail (Amdt.) Bill.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, there are two matters that qualify to be raised on the Motion for the Adjournment of the House. I now call upon the Member for

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Chaguanas West.

**Government's Acquisition of Massy Communications
(Failure to Protect Public Interest)**

Mr. Ganga Singh (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. It gives me no pleasure to raise this matter on the adjournment, because I feel it points to the lack of proper governance in our country with a new government only about 20 months in place. And I would have liked for the Prime Minister to remain to listen to this contribution. But the matter is entitled the failure of the Government to protect the public interest in the acquisition of the Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago, TSTT, of Massy Communications Limited for the sum of \$255 million.

Madam Speaker, this matter raises issues of probity in government. It deals with the violation of the public trust by this new Government. It deals with the lack of full disclosure and opaqueness in the continued approach by this Government in this matter, and it deals with the principle of procurement in a manner as to whether or not it fulfils all the requirements of proper procurement.

Madam Speaker, if a state enterprise can spend over \$255 million, or almost over a quarter billion dollars, in such a way that there is a bailout, a buyout of a haemorrhaging private sector company or part of a larger conglomerate, then we have to find out what were the checks and balances in this case. What were the checks and balances in the context of Trinidad and Tobago?

First, you have because it is a state enterprise, that we start on the basis it is a state enterprise, subsequently we will see that the Chairman of TSTT is saying it is not a state enterprise. We start with the checks and balances, you would have Cabinet. Then you would have the Minister of Finance, you have the monitoring manual

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and then you would have the board of TSTT. At the end of my presentation you will see that there has been a usurpation of those checks and balances, a subversion of that process, and what you have is a situation where there is cronyism, nepotism and Government gone wild. [*Desk thumping*] What do we have, Madam Speaker? We have the shifting positions of the Chairman of TSTT. A Chairman who in my mind is *primus inter pares*, a term really confined to the Prime Minister, but in the context of chairmen in this current administration he is *primus inter pares*.

Dr. Moonilal: More powerful than Imbert?

Mr. G. Singh: Madam Speaker, the Chairman indicated that he obtained the approval of the Cabinet. Three Ministers subsequently indicated no, unequivocally: the Minister of Finance, the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Utilities, and then in the face of the unequivocal answers by the hon. Ministers, there was the intervention by the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister through an interview indicated that there was approval, treating his Ministers like political infants as he did in the press conference earlier at tea time. [*Desk thumping*] He went on to treat my good friend and colleague, the hon. Member for Laventille West, the Minister of Public Utilities, in an answer to a question, that he did not hear properly, as if he had an answer for the auditory analysis of my good friend's anatomy.

So the first question: whether the strategic plan was approved by the Cabinet? Madam Speaker, we have been Members of Cabinet. [*Interruption*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva South, I would like to hear the presentation by the Member for Chaguanas West. Please continue.

Mr. G. Singh: Madam Speaker, when a matter comes before Cabinet, there are a series of matters that can come, and they normally do in the course of things, you

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can either note it, you can defer it, you can refer it to a Cabinet subcommittee, you can approve it or you can agree with it. You could do whatever it is, but if you amend you approve and so on with the amendment. You can do a series of things. What happened in this case? What happened in this case? Members of Cabinet said that they did not know anything about this.

So, you know, I am happy for technology because I got something in my drop box, my email drop box. I have here TSTT's strategic plan dated January 2016, and I excerpted certain elements from that strategic plan coming from an electronic device, because my eyes are not as good as they used to be. This strategic plan of 2016 pointed to a series of things, and I can read them, but in the 10 minutes I cannot do that, but no mention is made of the acquisition of Massy Technologies—none whatsoever.

I have, further in my electronic drop box or e-box, a board paper No. 16:16, dated March 16 of 2016 of TSTT. Not a word about the purchase of Massy Technologies by TSTT, so it is clear that there was no strategic plan for the approval of the purchase of Massy Technologies by the Cabinet. And then the second issue—so that therefore it is clear that the Prime Minister when he stated that, it is an unadulterated untruth, Madam Speaker. So not a word.

Then you have a situation where the Chairman indicated that TSTT is not a state enterprise. But the State Enterprise Monitoring Manual in its index, lists TSTT as a state enterprise—and I indicated that on the last occasion—and then goes on to at page 22 of the State Monitoring Performance Manual, it states that you have to get the permission of the Minister of Finance to approve loans. You have to get the permission of the Minister of Finance if you want to purchase anything. In this instance, the Chairman of TSTT got the approval from the Minister of Finance for the \$1.6 billion loan, but gave him a backhand and tell him, “I doh need to see you

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when I need to spend a quarter billion dollars”. [*Desk thumping*] Convenient, very convenient.

The third unadulterated untruth told by the Chairman of TSTT is that—
[*Interruption*]

Madam Speaker: Order! I know this is very spirited. I would like Members to comply with the Standing Order with respect to crosstalk. Continue, Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. G. Singh: The third unadulterated untruth told by the Chairman of TSTT is that because he falls under the embrace of SEC section 101, that he cannot speak. Madam Speaker, there is nothing—nothing in section 101 that precludes TSTT’s Chairman from telling us the details of the transaction. I have a legal opinion, and that legal opinion tells me that TSTT as an unlisted company, not a listed company, cannot fall under the embrace of section 101.

So what you have? One, that there is an untruth about the strategic plan being approved by Cabinet; two, that he is not covered by the monitoring manual; three, that he falls within the embrace of the SEC. So three unadulterated untruths. Three strikes, “yuh out”. The Chairman of TSTT ought to disclose all the facts surrounding this. I hope my colleague, the prudent Minister of Public Utilities, will give us the seismic valuation report, the Ernst & Young Report and the Fitzwilliam Stone Furness-Smith Morgan report. Because I have the information that these are all reports and that, therefore, then we will be acting in the public interest and tell the public as to why we are purchasing this for a company that lost \$40 million last year, that lost \$2 million at its start-up. You have a haemorrhaging company, but yet you have a deal struck by *primus inter pares*, the Chairman of TSTT, because of cronyism, because of a certain relationship you have that kind of protection taking place. That, Madam Speaker, is not in the public interest, and I

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call upon the Prime Minister to act in the public interest.

Madam Speaker: Member for Chaguanas West. Minister of Public Utilities.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The matter of the protection of the public interest is a core principle of this Government, and a main consideration of every decision that it makes. The acquisition of Massy Communications Limited by TSTT is no exception. TSTT is the country's largest provider of telecommunications solutions to the nation's residential, corporate and government customers. Without a doubt, TSTT remains one of the most advanced communications and broadcast solution providers in the region.

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 44(10).

Madam Speaker: Please continue, Member.

Hon. F. Hinds: Thank you very much. TSTT is a limited liability company incorporated under the Companies Ordinance and continued under the Companies Act. National Enterprises Limited (NEL), a state enterprise, owns 51 per cent of the shares of TSTT. The balance of these shares, 49 per cent, is owned by Cable & Wireless.

Madam Speaker, it is well known that TSTT, as the country's largest telecommunications provider, has always strived to ensure that it keeps abreast of internationally accepted standards of quality of service, and for the benefit of both its customers and its stakeholders. With this in mind, TSTT has embarked on an ambitious five-year expansion plan which includes passing 200,000 homes with fibre in Trinidad and Tobago, rolling out ubiquitous LTE high speed wireless data, a complete overhaul and upgrade of its technology network and a suite of First World business support systems. When completed, the country will be catapulted to First World status in the realm of telecommunications and broadcast services.

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As much as they have a First World Government in the country today, not a backwater bunch of—

Madam Speaker, in 2016 TSTT presented its full five-year strategic plan to the Cabinet and subsequently to the Minister of Finance. The loan financing for the plan in the sum, not of \$1.6 billion, but of \$2.7 billion, was approved by the Minister of Finance. A letter of non-objection dated October 14th, 2016 was issued by the Ministry of Finance, granting approval for TSTT to seek the appropriate financing relevant to its five-year strategic plan.

I must point out, Madam Speaker, that mergers and acquisitions as outlined in TSTT's five-year plan are very common within the telecommunications industry and, as such, have always been strategic options available to the company as a means of enhancing its operational efficiency, improving its service quality and expanding both its infrastructure and customer base. It is in this context, that TSTT's acquisition of Massy Communications Limited was pursued—business decision.

Madam Speaker, this acquisition presented TSTT with the golden opportunity to accelerate the achievement of its strategic objectives. The management of TSTT undertook a detailed due diligence of the acquisition of Massy Communications Limited. This exercise was done over a sustained period, and included technical, financial, legal, and operational reviews and reports from industry experts and consultants. Subsequently, the findings of these reports were presented to the Board of Directors of TSTT.

The reports confirmed that the acquisition of Massy Communications Limited was a sound business decision, which would redound to the benefit of the company, its shareholders, its customer base and the public at large for obvious and, perhaps, not so obvious reasons. I am advised that this was the basis upon which the Board

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of Directors approved the decision to acquire Massy Communications Limited.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform that TSTT is the subject of the regulatory oversight of the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago and, as such, TSTT, in accordance with its legal and other obligations, took the necessary steps to inform its regulator of its intention to acquire Massy Communications Limited. I might tell you as well, just for the benefit of the public, that in the course of these negotiations, an agreement was struck and there was a non-disclosure provision. Of course, TSTT must also subject itself, as a company trading on the stock exchange, to the laws that govern same.

So subsequently on Tuesday, May 02, 2017 TSTT signed the share purchase agreement to acquire 100 per cent of the shares of Massy Communications Limited, at a sum of \$255 million. I am advised that through TSTT's acquisition of Massy Communications, the country and all stakeholders have derived several benefits. Let me list them quickly. TSTT is now in possession of a new state-of-the-art 900 kilometre broadband fibre network, passing approximately 34,000 households and businesses, thereby reducing the need to spend approximately US \$20 million in foreign exchange, capital expenditure for this infrastructure.

Two, TSTT has acquired the ability to speed up the deployment of its fibre network by an additional 3,000 homes passed per month. TSTT has gained access to Massy Communications service delivery technology and processes that allows for delivery of service to customers within two days of order. TSTT has gained access to Massy Communications sales team that has successfully commercialized in excess of 6,000 residential customers. TSTT is now able to access Massy Communications' 6,000 residential customer base and upsell its portfolio of voice and security services. TSTT has gained direct access to over 100,000 Massy loyalty cardholders and provided them with incentives to purchase communication

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services from TSTT.

There has been significant reduction in the acquisition costs, economies of scale, when combined with TSTT's existing entertainment customers. TSTT has reduced the level of its planned investment in automation by approximately US \$20 million, and has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of its customer service.

Finally, Madam Speaker, TSTT has acquired Massy Communications' robust enterprise business and its entire business support systems, in which case, just at a glance of those, it must be forcefully and it can be forcefully argued, that this acquisition was indeed in the public interest, and the suggestion that it was not by my friend must quite easily be rejected.

I thank you.

**CDAP Programme
(Government's Failure to Manage)**

Dr. Tim Gopeesingh (*Caroni East*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I raise this Motion on the adjournment which is the failure of the Government to effectively manage the dispensation of quality medication via the CDAP programme. I raise this because of the statements made by the hon. Minister of Health on May 11th of this year in Parliament, when he said, and let me quote:

And let me also tell the national community through you, Madam Speaker, since becoming Minister of Health, and I am sure my predecessor and I am sure the other two doctors who are here, would have been getting complaints that CDAP drugs are not working, for diabetes, high blood pressure.

We have engaged PAHO to do an analysis, and what I will tell the national community now and give them comfort, I am satisfied that that anecdotal evidence can now be supported by fact. And we will be coming and taking off those drugs that have proven to be ineffective and from this cycle we are

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going to change the procurement pattern. Because our patients on CDAP need to be assured that the drugs they are taking to treat their chronic conditions are safe and effective.

I read that because this is the quote from the hon. Minister of Health made on May 11th. Subsequent to that, Madam Speaker, the editorials went ablaze with issues and what they thought about the statement being made by the hon. Minister of Health.

One of the editorials, Friday, May 12th on the *Express* said:

“Minister: Some C-DAP drugs ‘not good’”

Another editorial from the *Guardian* Monday, May 15th:

“Fake CDAP cause for concern”

Another editorial, *Express*:

“Alarming report on C-DAP drugs”

In fact, what has been described in these editorials is really a reflection of the national community’s concern. Particularly those who are hypertensive and diabetic and taking these medications, they have become extremely worried and very distressed about the present drugs that they are taking, whether in the fact their diseased process is becoming worse.

One of the editorials indicated, and I quote:

“While Minister Deyalsingh singled out drugs prescribed for diabetes and high blood pressure, it was clear that these were not the only ones of questionable quality being dispensed under CDAP. Until precise details are known, every patient accessing medication under the CDAP programme will have good reason for worrying about the efficacy of the drugs being given to them. The Government therefore now has a responsibility to disclose precisely which drugs are below the required standard, to what extent, with

what potential impact to patients and how it proposes to deal with the immediate fall-out. In making his statement to Parliament, the Minister should have laid the full report produced by”—WHO, they are saying the World Health Organization, but it is PAHO—“on which his comments were based.”

It goes on to say:

“This is a scandalous state of affairs with significant risk to lives and the potential to undermine public trust in the entire CDAP programme. Given the potential implications, Minister Deyalsingh needs to go beyond sounding the alarm to ensure that every patient who could be affected is directly informed and advised on how to proceed.”

More importantly, Madam Speaker:

“The first concern of every patient is likely to be about the status of their prescribed medication and whether they should come off it.”

So if he is saying that these medications are not efficacious, what is the purpose of patients getting these drugs through the CDAP programme?

“For some patients, these are urgent, life-and-death matters; for others it’s a matter of the quality of their lives.

There are other matters to be considered. Families who have lost loved ones to diabetes, hypertension and related health problems, as well as patients whose health have been compromised by medication that should not have been dispensed to them may now be in a state of worry.”

So this is to the point from the editorial the *Express* of May 13th, and it is a very sound editorial.

The CDAP programme has about 50 drugs on, 50 pharmaceuticals. There are a number of pharmaceuticals for diabetes, oral and insulin. There are a number of

medications for hypertension, cardiac disease, the nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for asthma and so on. We ask the Minister to indicate to the national population which items on the CDAP listing are inefficacious and what he intends to do at the moment, knowing fully well that these drugs are not doing what they are supposed to do and patients' diseases can be coming worse. Those patients who have died as a result of the complications of diabetes and hypertension, by you making the statement, are they in a situation where they can sue the Ministry of Health and sue the Government for providing drugs that are not efficacious.

You need to tell the country and the patients which antihypertensive drugs are on the list that are not effective. Hon. Minister, you know it, the insulin drugs, we have the Novo, the Lily. You have the regular, you have the NPH and for the diabetics you have Metformin, Glibenclamide, and for the antihypertensives you have Bendrofluazide, Enalapril, Frusemide, Lisinopril, Methyldopa and Nifedipine. So there are quite a lot of drugs here that patients are taking. As you said, there were over 750,000 prescriptions per year given throughout the health system, and a substantial amount of these 750,000 are for patients with diabetes and hypertension. As successive governments have paid a lot of interest on the non-communicable diseases, diabetes and hypertension and cancer and so on, I think it is imperative for us to know when you are going to be taking off these drugs, what are you replacing them with, and how you are going to continue to educate the patients and deal with the patient population, because patients are extremely worried and concerned. It is very unfortunate.

I remember my colleague, Dr. Petronella Manning, raising this issue when unfortunately our former Prime Minister passed away as a result of what she considered to be an inefficacious drug, and it was whether Warfarin was causing the anti-coagulation that was necessary in his case, and you would remember that

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as well. So people are frightened, they are extremely worried, and I think it is incumbent upon you as hon. Minister and the Government to tell the population what it is that you intend to do, and what comfort can you give to them, particularly when their lives are threatened. You know that diabetic patients can go in ketoacidosis, they can go into coma. The hypertensive patients can get strokes if their hypertension is not properly managed, and patients on long-term non-efficacious antihypertensive drugs can get heart disease, strokes, renal failure. And you know the complications that go with hypertension that is uncontrolled. Of course, diabetes cause the whole mammoth of everything: blindness, kidney failure, amputations, et cetera.

6.30 p.m.

So having made this statement, hon. Minister, I think you need to clarify to the population what the situation is and give some comfort to the population, and more so provide the evidence that the Pan American Health Organization has in fact told you—I sought to get the information from PAHO, I was unable to get it, because we want to see empirical data to substantiate your statement that you made that the anecdotal evidence is no longer, but it has proven to be these drugs are inefficacious. So, thank you, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Minister of Health.

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Thank you, Madam Speaker, [*Desk thumping*] as I respond to my colleague from Caroni East.

Madam Speaker, I answered an Urgent Question today which was headlined in the newspaper, words to the effect, Venezuelan dies after being denied health care at Eric Williams. And on reading that headline one would get the impression that this person presented and was refused health care. And I was able to demonstrate today that the article was completely false, that the patient did, in fact, get health

care and discharged himself against medical advice.

When I made the statement, the following day a newspaper ran a front page headline, CDAP drugs not good, and that is what caused the panic. Three doctors who saw me that night making my contribution, on reading the *Express* the following morning, called me in shock and horror and said, “Terrence, we heard what you said last night and we are reading the newspaper this morning and it is completely different”. Nowhere did I say, and I repeated it again, that CDAP drugs are not good. I did not say insulin is not good, I did not say that NSAIDS are not good, I did not say any of the other drugs are not good.

But, like the story about the Venezuelan being denied health care, this is what was published on the front page of the *Express* over which I have absolutely no control, and I am a defender of a free press and I encourage the media to be free and unfettered. But these two examples, I think, bring to the fore that we need to be, all of us, need to be a little more responsible in how we report on matters pertaining to health. What I did say was that we are looking at two particular categories, two particular drugs for diabetes and hypertension.

Let me go back a little bit. So, I dealt with what the media has portrayed this to be and I have no problems with that. At no time, again, did I say any drug was unsafe. There is a big difference. The drugs are safe. I am on Simvastatin from India for years and my cholesterol levels are perfect. So at no time did I make a blanket statement that generics from India are not good; they have very good generics, but like in anything else you have good and you have the not so good, whether it is from India, the United States, wherever and that applies to pharmaceuticals, and I was clear on that, absolutely clear.

What we are doing now which has not been done in a while, the CDAP programme is a creation of the People’s National Movement. I do not know if it was Minister

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Imbert who did it at that time—2003?

Mr. Imbert: Yes it was.

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: Good. And it is an excellent programme and needs to be supported. However, what was supposed to happen with CDAP over the years, hon. Member, and you may not know this—the Member for Barataria/San Juan will know and Minister Imbert will know—there was supposed to be a three-year cyclical review of CDAP. That has not been done in recent times and we are now doing that, because it is this Government's position that health care must be of a certain quality.

In doing all of that we are again re-looking at the national formulary and developing prescribing protocols for the major categories. This formulary exercise, the reformulation of the formulary, no pun intended, is a joint project between the Ministry of Health, PAHO and the Trinidad and Tobago Medical Association where experts in the field will come together and develop their prescribing protocols. We are tackling, in the first instance, HIV/AIDS, and then we are tackling also oncology, and the third category of drugs we are tackling are metabolic diseases, especially diabetes, also hypertension.

The specific drugs that we are looking at are the one or two of the oral drugs for diabetes and hypertension. That is all. That is all. [*Interruption*] And we are going to replace them and those instructions have gone out to NIPDEC for this year's procurement cycle. What the doctors are doing in the interim, as you know, they are titrating the doses of these two drugs according to the clinical symptoms being presented by the patients. So no patient is at danger, absolutely no patient is in danger. They may have to take a little more and that is about it just to bring it up to bio equivalency, [*Interruption*] and we are moving very fast, and I give you the assurance. And I think the Motion you have raised is a very good Motion

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because this matter needs to be explained, because I think the newspaper headline did not do what I said, justice.

And let me give you another example. In that same contribution on May 11th I actually praised the Member for Barataria/San Juan for starting up the HPV vaccine drive, and there was a headline in the *Newsday* speaking about one a case where a mother reported to the media in her own words what happened to her daughter after taking the HPV vaccine. And when you read the headline but read the article, the headline tarnished that HPV vaccine drive. And you know what is the backlash now, hon. Member, because of a misplaced newspaper headline?—people are now shying away from accessing a safe and effective vaccine that could save lives. And I commended the Member for Barataria/San Juan on that initiative, but I have to defend the programme. It is a good programme, but very often the way these stories are carried in the media we cannot deal with the backlash, because even if there is a retraction, the retraction is not on page 1 with a screaming headline; the retraction is going to be buried on page 5 or 6. Right? And I have no control.

So, I want to thank you for raising this, but I want to reassure the national community that the doctors I have spoken to have even thanked me for raising the issue. Because what I have been having the fortitude to talk about in the Parliament is something they have been asking for a while. It is limited to two drugs, just for oral. It has nothing to do with insulin, has nothing to do with the other 50 or 60 drugs on CDAP. I want to make that abundantly clear because the *Express* headline was a total misrepresentation of what I said. The *Express* headline was, CDAP drugs not good. That was a blanket statement, just like the *Newsday* had a blanket front page statement about the HPV vaccines.

And when we do that, when we do that we scare the population and now they are

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not going to seek the vaccines. So, we have to be careful in the public domain how we report on things pertaining to health, and I have the clear example today, again of the Venezuelan national where the newspaper said he was denied treatment, and I have the factual matrix to show that. So I am urging all of us—media, ourselves—to be a little more responsible in how we discuss matters of health. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

CORRECTION OF MISSTATEMENT

Madam Speaker: Minister of Public Utilities. I have given the Minister of Public Utilities a very narrow opportunity to correct a misstatement. You are limited to just that matter.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, in the course of my response to the Motion filed by the Member for Chaguanas West, I stated incorrectly that TSTT was listed. I should have said not listed, and therefore, that is the extent of it. Thank you very much.

GREETINGS (Indian Arrival Day)

Madam Speaker: I now invite greetings on the occasion of Indian Arrival Day 2017. I call upon the Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts (Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to extend greetings to the East Indian community on the occasion of Indian Arrival Day 2017, which we will celebrate as a nation on May 30th.

Leaving everything you know and love to come to a new place is no easy feat. Arrival at unknown shores where no one speaks your language or knows the name

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of your God, requires courage. This is a journey of faith. We salute those who journeyed and have left a legacy that now forms such a rich part of Trinidad and Tobago's heritage.

In November 2016, we lost the last indentured labourer, Samoondarie Doon, who was born on a ship that had left India for Trinidad. March 2017 also marked 100 years since the abolition of indentureship. We must use the Indian Arrival Day holiday to retell the stories of that past generation so that those to come will never forget the shoulders on which they stand.

The ancestors who came from southern Asia brought with them their food, their dances, their spiritual practices and all of these continue to be powerfully present today in every aspect of our cultural lives.

We pay tribute to those who endured; we pay tribute to those who worked so hard to preserve their cultural and spiritual expressions; we pay tribute to those who banded together with their African, Chinese, Middle Eastern brothers and sisters and those of European descent to forge many new, uniquely Trinbagonian expressions that fill us with love for a nation every day.

I close with the words of the late poet and cultural activist Dr. Kenneth Vidia Parmasad:

And caught in the roar of the frantic wind our voice struggling for release.
We have had to chart a different course as we bent our backs against time's
swell. Piercing our fingers into the mud, clinging to the earth for life,
waiting for our voice to sing, knowing that our song would be different now,
waiting for wings to fly now that we have claimed a different sky.

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

Mr. Barry Padarath (*Princes Town*): Madam Speaker, it was India's first female

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Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, that once said and I quote:

“I’ve never turned to anybody for advice and counsel. Even when I was a very small child, I had to stand on my”—own two—“feet because of the circumstances of those times, and somehow, the circumstances have remained more or less the same. I have to”— make—“my own decisions.”

Madam Speaker, for many immigrants who made the sacrifice of leaving their homeland to travel halfway across the world under uncertainty, fear, subhuman condition, but with hope in their hearts and minds the decisions they made were their own; such was and is their resilience.

The sacrifice of the East Indian community was mainly borne out of a desire that today continues to be a generational thirst for wanting a better quality of life for those that came after them, be it their children, grandchildren, great grandchildren or future generations.

Madam Speaker, every year around this time we hear about the chronology of events that led to the first set of East Indians arriving to our shores, but that history is well known. In honouring our history, we must modernize our benchmarks, we must be able to measure the success of the East Indian community through the timeline of achievements, perseverance, causes, pioneering efforts and struggles; that is the fundamental point. Their ideals, principles and way of life that they brought from India 172 years ago, today, manifest itself in the rich human legacy that they have left behind.

Generationally, we must also pay tribute to those whose shoulders that we stand on today that will propel us into the future and the East Indian community, no doubt, has made an indelible mark in the spheres of law, medicine, education, commerce, media, public life, engineering, arts, business and even politics, through the likes of men and women like Rudranath Capildeo, Noor Hassanali, VS Naipaul,

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Kamaluddin Mohammed and many others.

Madam Speaker, today, I am humbled to stand in the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and pay tribute to all those in the East Indian community who have come before us in this nation. The many unsung heroes whose mantra of compulsory education for their children saw indentured labourers from cutting cane to flying plane, representing that they have come full circle through a philosophy of hard work, determination through education.

Madam Speaker, the East Indian community has been known as one of the main foundation cornerstones that our society rests on. It will be remiss of me if I do not acknowledge that as a community their success is in no small way attributed to organizations like Maha Sabha, ASJA, TML, Darul Uloom, SWAHA and the Chinmaya Mission.

The monumental successes in education have seen a revolution in the progress and advancement of an entire community. Today, the focus and values placed on education remain the hallmark of that community. They have produced scholars, scientists, doctors, lawyers, teachers, media practitioners, artistes and many more and they have given to this country two of the best Prime Ministers.

Madam Speaker, today as I stand here delivering greetings on the 172nd year of arrival of the East Indian community one word comes to mind and that is sacrifice. From a seven-year-old boy walking barefooted for three miles every day in Princes Town to becoming the first Prime Minister of East Indian descent in Trinidad and Tobago, the hon. Basdeo Panday.

To the young girl at 11 who bundled bhagi and bodi in the Penal market to assist in putting food on the table and eventually becoming the first female Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Member for Siparia, the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

Madam Speaker, I feel truly inspired that the sacrifices of eating mar and rice

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together with bird pepper sometimes seven days a week, sleeping on leepayed gobar floors, wearing clothing out of flour bags, studying under pitch-oil lamps have today borne fruits in the highest offices of our land. It means certainly that the East Indian community has taken its place side by side with the other communities who have also formed the bedrock of our society.

This year, Madam Speaker, marks the 100th year of the elimination of indentureship. Tomorrow marks the first day of the holy month of Ramadan and these are significant milestones that we observe in continuing the heritage of East Indian ancestry.

Madam Speaker, as it is said so it was in the beginning and so it shall be in the end. As I close, I am reminded of the words of the first female Prime Minister in the Indian diaspora who in 2012 received the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award and she said this:

There is no mother India, there is no mother China, there is no mother Africa, there is no mother Europe, but there is grandmother India, grandmother China, grandmother Africa and grandmother Europe, and they have given us our values, our legacy, our culture, the way we look, but most importantly they have given us the unity to stand side by side as we build a better mother Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, I once more pay tribute on behalf of the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Member for Siparia and Leader of the Opposition, and the Opposition Bench to the East Indian community for their magnanimous contribution to the development of Trinidad and Tobago. And we congratulate them for standing shoulder to shoulder and embodying our national anthem, “Here every creed and race find an equal place”.

Madam Speaker, as in India when they have national observances they say Jai

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Hind, which means victory to India. Today, I stand in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Opposition saying “Jai Trinidad and Tobago”, victory to Trinidad and Tobago. I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I wish to join with the previous contributors in bringing greetings on the occasion of Indian Arrival Day 2017. May 30, 1845 marked the arrival of the *Fatel Razack* to the Port of Spain harbour in Trinidad and Tobago. The East Indian immigrants endured a perilous journey away from an oppressive caste system seeking employment and refuge with an overriding hope of creating a new world for themselves. Despite the promise of free passage home, nearly 75 per cent of the immigrants chose to settle and make their home here. They brought their rich and vibrant culture, festivals, cuisine, music and religions to Trinidad and Tobago.

Today, all of us observe May 30th as a national holiday in commemoration of those immigrants, the forefathers of so many and in recognition of their history and struggles and contribution to our diverse and rich culture.

Indian Arrival Day represents a day of commemoration and reflection. It is a symbol of our unity in diversity within Trinidad and Tobago’s melting pot of culture and history. I wish the East Indian community and all nationals a peaceful, reflective and celebratory Indian Arrival Day.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.50 p.m.