

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 15, 2020

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE**(ESTABLISHMENT OF)**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, correspondence has been received from the President of the Senate dated May 13, 2020, which states as follows:

“Dear Speaker,

Re: Establishment of Joint Select Committee

Reference is made to your letter dated May 11, 2020 on the subject at caption.

I wish to advise that at a Sitting held on Tuesday May 12, 2020, the Senate concurred with the House of Representatives on the establishment of a Joint Select Committee to consider and report by August 31, 2020 on the Representation of People (Amendment) Bill, 2020, and the following six (6) Senators were appointed to serve:

1. Mr. Clarence Rambharat
2. Ms. Allyson West
3. Mr. Robert Le Hunte
4. Mr. Wade Mark
5. Mr. Paul Richards
6. Mr. Deeroop Teemal

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the House of Representatives be informed of this decision at the earliest convenience please.

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Respectfully, Sen. the Hon. Christine Kangaaloo
President of the Senate”

COPYRIGHT (AMDT.) BILL, 2019

Bill to amend the Copyright Act, Chap. 82:80, to give effect to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired or otherwise Print Disabled and to the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances, brought from the Senate [*The Attorney General*]; read the first time.

MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC (AMDT.) BILL, 2019

Bill to amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, Chap. 48:50, brought from the Senate [*The Attorney General*]; read the first time.

PAPERS LAID

1. Audited Financial Statements Trinidad Nitrogen Company Limited for the financial year ended December 31, 2019. [*The Minister of Finance (Hon. Colm Imbert)*]
 2. Audited Financial Statements of Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited for the financial year ended December 31, 2018. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
- Papers 1 and 2 to be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.*

PRIME MINISTER’S QUESTIONS

COVID-19 Discussion with Venezuelan Vice-President

(Details of)

Dr. Fuad Khan (*Barataria/San Juan*): Could the Prime Minister indicate whether any medical personnel and/or the Minister of Health were present when

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discussions were taking place on the COVID-19 pandemic, between the Venezuelan Vice-President and himself, during her recent visit to Trinidad?

The Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley): [*Desk thumping*] Madam Speaker. The context of a conversation between the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and the Vice-President of Venezuela with any connection to COVID had to do with its national security implications. And as such, Madam Speaker, the relevant officers who were required for such a conversation, the Minister of National Security and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister were present, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The discussion had nothing to do with the biological nature of the virus or its management in such a way. But, most importantly, Trinidad and Tobago being seven miles away from Venezuela, a country of 30million people at the moment, or thereabouts, who could supply us with an unending flood of refugees, many of whom might be carrying the virus, because we had no idea what was going on in Venezuela as their response, and given the fact that we in Trinidad and Tobago, from our own national security concerns, are required to keep our borders closed and to ensure that Venezuela does not pose a threat to us, the context of COVID between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela is a national security issue that did not require medical doctors.

Dr. Khan: Prime Minister, are you then saying that the discussion that was communicated to you, prior to the visit, was on refugees and not COVID-19?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: I am not hearing you, so if you would like to speak a little clearer, I would try to answer your question. What did you say?

Dr. Khan: Can you elaborate then, was it communicated to you, prior to the visit, whether the communication was on refugees rather than on COVID-19

discussions?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: I have made no statement about refugees. I talked about Venezuelans coming to Trinidad and Tobago. And, Madam Speaker, Mrs. Rodriguez was appointed head of the national COVID response in Venezuela on the 27th of February. A few days later she asked for a courtesy call on the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. That visit took place on the 26th of March. And, Madam Speaker, we have said, both myself and other officers of the Cabinet, and I am clear that we had said that there was no pre-arranged agenda. It was a courtesy call in the context of our response to the COVID emergency.

So if you want to quote what I have said, we have said that publicly on numerous occasions. So I am not here talking about it being a prior arrangement of refugees. So if you are going to quote what I have said, please quote that; courtesy call in the context of our COVID emergencies, and our concern in Trinidad and Tobago about the threat that Venezuela poses to us.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much. Prime Minister, in relation to the visit dealing with national security in the context of COVID pandemic, did the Prime Minister's Office or yourself consider having in attendance the Chief of Defence Staff and the Commissioner of Police for discussions of this nature?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: No, we did not, because two members of the national—in fact, the three members who they met with were members of the National Security Council.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Prime Minister, from media reports, the Vice-President had requested to come but she postponed because she had, or you all postponed together, whether she had flu-like symptoms. Did you think that there was any necessity for testing or anything or similar before she came here?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: I am not responsible for medical or pre-medical condition

of the President of Venezuela. A request was made in early March and the visit was made on the 26th of March. And as far as I was aware, the President, I am not the doctor for the President of Venezuela or the Vice-President.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much. Prime Minister, was the Government of Trinidad and Tobago concerned that the Government had accepted, at that time, a visit by the Vice-President of Venezuela 24 hours after colleagues, officials, including the President of Venezuela were indicted in the United States on drug trafficking, narco-trafficking and corruption charges?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: No, we had no concern like that.

Madam Speaker: Member for Barataria/San Juan, and might I just remind Members if they need to speak without the mask on both sides, there are mikes.

Small and Medium Businesses and Enterprises

(Continued Closure of)

Dr. Fuad Khan (*Barataria/San Juan*): Could the Prime Minister explain how the decision to keep small and medium businesses and enterprises closed while allowing fast food establishments and conglomerates to open until 8.00 p.m. daily, is helping to decrease the spread of the coronavirus?

The Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, the decision to open or to leave close certain businesses was the management of numbers of people and movement of people in response to the knowledge of how the virus is spread.

Food establishments and restaurants were to open in phase one, and they include all categories of small, medium and large foods establishments. Also, food establishments were chosen in phase one because food establishments and their employees therein have long been required to be licensed in keeping with the Public Health Ordinance, and therefore the Public Health Inspectorate and both the

health and local government have oversight of these establishments, and have been enforcing food safety and infectious disease guidelines for many years, and as such was the best place to continue the enforcement measures relating to food service.

Dr. Khan: Prime Minister, based on the data by the Ministry of Health, where no new COVID cases have been found and no new deaths, why is it then necessary, with the small and medium enterprises hurting with economic damage, why are you not giving them a chance at survival as you have given to the others in phase one?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Because, Madam Speaker, as we expose ourselves in a reopening, after the stay home or during the stay home, we are dealing with this matter in the context of the nature and the quantum of the risk involved, and it is a management of numbers. So we open up and allow some more people out, some more people out, as long as the results are good. And we have made it quite clear that we have looked at this thing very clearly. We have laid down a number of phases as we will bring more and more people out.

And I was at pains to point out, Madam Speaker, this approach is one in which one is measuring the risk as you go forward exposing more and more people. And based on the results of the national testing programme, we will determine how fast we go with this, or how slowly we go. That was all made very clear, Madam Speaker. It is all a question about management of numbers and exposure of the population to a risk that we are aware of.

Dr. Khan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Prime Minister, if it is a management by numbers, then why did you shorten the amount of time for the businesses to be opened, because of the volume? And it will increase the bunching of numbers, based on the decreased timeline per unit volume of patrons entering the establishment. So it cannot be a problem with numbers. Because the numbers are

increasing with a shorter time.

Madam Speaker: Member, it is a question—

Dr. Khan: Sorry.

Madam Speaker: Not a statement. Okay? I would not allow that as a supplemental question.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Prime Minister, based on international standards and a comparative analysis, are you satisfied that the amount of testing done in Trinidad will give you, the decision makers, enough information as to continue to make your decisions in terms of opening different areas? Are you satisfied with that? Or do you think there is a need for more?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Madam Speaker, I do not know what international standard the Member is referring to, because the last time he gave me international standards, it was based on treatment by hydroxychloroquine. But, I know of no international standard. All countries are learning as we go on this matter. And depending on the situation in the country, the testing programme is tailored to suit that.

Madam Speaker, we have organized our business in such a way that as we test now we are satisfied and we are confident that our testing programme is suitable for the situation in Trinidad and Tobago as we go forward in our condition as against other people's condition.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Bearing in mind your answer about you do not know about the international standards, the United States is testing 3 per cent and Trinidad 0.07 per cent. How do you feel as leader of the country with that small amount of testing?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Madam Speaker, as I have said before, Trinidad and Tobago, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, takes its guidelines from the public health experts in Trinidad and Tobago who have distinguished themselves

in giving their Government expert successful advice and we are grateful for that. [*Desk thumping*] We are not comparing ourselves with the United States, who have taken a completely different approach, and has got and is getting a completely different result. So, Madam Speaker, the US is no example for us.

COVID-19 Relief

(Details of)

Mr. David Lee (*Pointe-a-Pierre*): Given the statement by the Minister of Finance that the Office of the Prime Minister has spent \$10 million on COVID-19 relief, would the Prime Minister please specify what this \$10 million was spent on?

The Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley): Excuse me, Madam Speaker, I am just trying to find, oh yes. Sorry about that, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance in a statement to the House of Representatives on April 27, 2020, indicated that \$10 million per month for three months, May, June and July, will be given to religious bodies in proportion to the size of their congregations for them to distribute food to the poor and needy in accordance with their existing procedures and programmes.

The Office of the Prime Minister, which has the portfolio of ecclesiastical affairs, has the responsibility to make these payments within the shortest possible time, and Madam Speaker we have been doing so, and we will monitor and evaluate the progress of payments to ensure transparency and accountability by these agencies. These allocations are being made to the umbrella religious groups as far as possible. Thus far, a sum of \$9.46 million has been paid to 62 umbrella religious organizations and that is being used, Madam Speaker, to provide food support for the poor and the needy of all these communities.

Paria Fuel Trading Company

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(Details of Contract)

Mr. David Lee (*Pointe-a-Pierre*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the hon. Prime Minister: given the recent statements by the Minister of National Security that Paria Fuel Trading Company has a clause in its contract preventing its buyers from reselling its fuel to countries sanctioned by the United States, could the Prime Minister specifically state whether this clause was included in the contract concerning the sale of 150,000 barrels of gasoline involving ES Euro Shipping SA?

The Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, the contract was amended and it determined that the fuel going to Aruba, which was initially intended to go to St. Eustatius, that contract of the fuel going to Aruba as the final destination had a clause addressing trade sanctions which applied. Trade sanctions form part of the contract to the fuel that was designated to go to Aruba.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Prime Minister, based on what you just said that the contract was amended, could you also state what penalties would be in place taken by Paria Fuel Trading if the purchaser of that fuel breached that clause?

Madam Speaker: I would not allow that. That is a supposition based on how you formulated that question.

Dr. Moonilal: Supplemental.

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the Prime Minister state what would be the penalty in breaching that clause?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Madam Speaker, it is a commercial contract with contractual terms and it would indicate that there are liabilities of one kind or

another if you breach a contract between parties, the information of which is available. It is just that; a commercial contract which had liabilities if it is breached. The nature of the liabilities I could not disclose at this time.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Prime Minister, what would be those types of liabilities that you just described if you breach the contract?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: I am not hearing you.

Mr. Lee: Sorry, Madam Speaker. Based on your answer, what would be the liabilities, based on breaching the contract that you just described?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: I just said, to the best of my ability to answer you, it is a commercial contract. The term would incur a liability. The nature of the liability is not available to me. These commercial contracts are usually carrying whatever terms and conditions. Those terms are not made public. They usually have confidentiality clause and other things. So what I do know is that there was a clause with a requirement on the part of the buyer to observe international trade sanctions.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Prime Minister, could you state if any of this clause that you just described, this sanction clause, has been in place prior for any other contracts by Paria fuelling, other than this contract?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: I am not familiar with the other contracts and the day-to-day arrangements of contract, but if the Member would like to pose that question with notice, you can have an answer.

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, question No. 5.

Paria Fuel Trading Company
(Payment Received for Spot Sale)

Mr. David Lee (*Pointe-a-Pierre*): Based on recent reports that the Paria Fuel Trading Company sold 150,000 barrels of fuel to ES Euro Shipping SA via a spot

purchase request on March 28, 2020, could the Prime Minister state the total payment received by Paria Fuel Trading Company as well as the price per barrel which the fuel was sold at for this spot sale?

The Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, Paria Fuel Trading Limited sold approximately 150,000 barrels of MOE gas with final destination to Aruba. The cargo was sold on US Gulf Coast reference prices, which is the same basis on which the cargo was purchased from its supplier. The exact price cannot be disclosed due to contractual confidentiality, which is standard practice in commercial trading. Our companies are engaged in commercial trading and trade secrets are valuable to the people of Trinidad and Tobago and will not now be disclosed.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much. Prime Minister, with regard to the sale of the fuel in the context in which you described it and given the contractual arrangements for this sale, are you prepared today to instruct the Attorney General to undertake an investigation as to whether or not this contract has been breached by way of reselling to an embargoed country? [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: I will not allow that as a supplemental question, based on the question or the answer to question 5.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Prime Minister, based on your response to my question, could you state then how that payment was made, either by cash, wire transfer, or cheque to Paria Fuel Trading?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Madam Speaker, if the Member wishes that kind of detail he can file it with the appropriate notice and that information can be sourced for his benefit.

**Cancer Patients Abroad
(Security Exemptions)**

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Dr. Tim Gopeesingh (*Caroni East*): Hon. Prime Minister, could you indicate how the Government is treating with nationals abroad who sought lifesaving cancer treatment and surgical procedures and are now seeking urgent national security exemptions for their return home?

The Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, when the Government took the decision, as part of the response of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, in protecting ourselves from the virus in a pandemic, the decision to close the border was a major decision, Madam Speaker, with serious far-reaching consequences. As a result of having taken that decision, we understand, Madam Speaker, that there are people on both sides of that border. But the border needs to remain closed so as to protect the 1.3million people in Trinidad and Tobago.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, we did indicate that on a case-by-case basis we will consider applications for exemptions. And it is in that context that all exemptions are being considered, and as far as we are able to grant those exemptions without compromising our border closure, that will continue while the border is closed.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Hon. Prime Minister, would you happen to have any idea as to the number of citizens abroad who went for treatment, have applied for exemption to come back home? I know it is a difficult question, but if you have any answer?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: I do not have a number in front of me, but if you file that question to the relevant Minister, you can get an answer. Now, what I did say in talking to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, both home and abroad, that we are aware that there are 330,000 people outside of Trinidad and Tobago who carry our passports and who claim Trinidad and Tobago as home. But in managing the safety and the life of the people of Trinidad and Tobago within Trinidad and

Tobago, the closure of the border was a predicate. And, therefore, we will manage exemptions on a case-by-case basis without unnecessarily exposing the population in Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Would you consider giving special consideration to patients who need to continue their cancer management in Trinidad, without which they stand the risk of passing away? If those things come to you, would you give active consideration?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Madam Speaker, they do not come to me. This is managed by the Ministry of National Security on a case-by-case basis. And I expect that the decision would be made on a case-by-case basis. And I would have seen, Madam Speaker, the results of that. To make another offer is to offer to compromise the border closure of Trinidad and Tobago, and that, I am not prepared to do at this time.

Cloth Face Masks

(Details of Contract)

Ms. Ramona Ramdial (*Couva North*): Can the Prime Minister state who are the contractors providing the cloth face masks at a total cost of \$5 million, and the cost of each mask?

The Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, that matter is being handled by the Ministry of Finance, with NIPDEC as the agent, which is currently evaluating the tender offerings, and such answers would be available when that is complete, the tender price and of course the awardees and the total cost, or the cost per tender. Different tenderers offer different prices and we have to wait and see what NIPDEC has done with that.

Madam Speaker: Okay, Member for Couva North, may I invite you to use the

podium.

Ms. Ramdial: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Prime Minister, are you aware that your Minister of Health previously stated at a press conference that the mask to be distributed by FEEL and others were at no cost to the State?

2.00 p.m.

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: The Minister was speaking about a separate body of masks, a particular group of masks which was going to FEEL at that time, which was donated by citizens. The reference to no cost was specific to that.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental.

Ms. Ramdial: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Prime Minister, how soon before the masks are made available to the public?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: As soon as the contracts are awarded and the tenderers are able to provide them. We expect that they will be available in a few days' time.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental, Member for Couva South.

Ms. Ramdial: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Prime Minister, since we are already in the phases of reopening, is there a specific time period? Is there a move to move with haste to get these masks available to the population?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: We are moving with haste, but I mean, you are the same person who would be asking about transparency and procurement process and so on. So those things eat into the time and the tender process had taken up some time. The award process is there. So there is a balancing act, we are trying to move as fast as we could, but we are also trying to comply with the requirement for accounting for the public expenditure.

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva South.

Salary Relief/Self-Employed/Rental Grants

(Applicants in Receipt of)

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Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (*Couva South*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the Prime Minister inform this House as to the total number of applicants who have received their salary relief, self-employed and rental grants respectively as at the 14th of May, 2020?

The Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, as of today or as of the date mentioned which is the 14th of May, the Ministry of Finance advised that 12,162 persons have received salary relief grants. That was as of May 14th and the cost of those grants to the taxpayer is \$16,770,000.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental.

Mr. Indarsingh: Prime Minister, could you provide the data with respect to the self-employed and the rental grant which was part of the question?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: If the Member would file that with the appropriate notice, we will be able to get it from the relevant Ministries.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: One minute, Member—one minute please. Member for Oropouche East, you are quite seasoned, please do not disturb the proceedings. Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, could the—whilst I am not satisfied with the answer of the Prime Minister, could the Prime Minister tell us why the commitment of his Government to deliver 10,000 new grants per week, which was stated by the Minister of Finance on 27 April, 2020, has not been followed through?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: Madam Speaker, the handing out of public money to the public requires a certain amount of care and attention and that is by its very nature a slow process if one is to ensure that these grants go to the deserving and the

deserving only. It is turning out to be a slower process than we anticipated to ensure that those moneys go only to the people for whom the qualification applies.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental, Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, I am still to get from the Prime Minister the number of applicants who have received their self-employed and rental grant?

Madam Speaker: I believe that question was asked and answered. Supplemental, Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, just for absolute clarity, I did not hear the answer of the Prime Minister with relation to self-employed and rental grant. He did not give a figure. Could I ask the Prime Minister if he has the figure to give us? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I believe that we have all been in this Chamber. That question was posed twice, a third time just now by Member for Oropouche—excuse me—Member for Couva South. I believe the response I heard on the second occasion was that “I do not have that information but if the information is posed on proper notice”, I believe that is what I heard as an answer. So the question has been asked three times. I am certain it was answered once.

Dr. Moonilal: Okay, could I ask another question?

Madam Speaker: Supplemental.

Dr. Moonilal: Yes. Prime Minister, in light of recent statements by the Minister of Social Development and Family Affairs concerning challenges with payment of rental grants, has the Government overcome some, if not all of those challenges being posed by persons who may not be acting properly and so on, in terms of the process to get the rental grants?

Hon. Dr. K. Rowley: It is not a situation where you are at a particular point in time on a particular date you overcome it. It is an ongoing requirement to observe

and prevent such defalcations from occurring. So once you are engaged in delivering those kinds of services you have to be engaged on an application by application process.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the time for Prime Minister's Questions is now spent.

URGENT QUESTIONS

Advice to Citizens

(Wearing of Masks While Running)

Dr. Fuad Khan (*Barataria/San Juan*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is the Minister of Health's advice to citizens to wear masks even while doing outdoor exercise such as running?

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Yes, the general advice we have given to persons is as follows:

- Practice hygiene methods.
- Same washing of hands.
- Practice physical distancing.

On the issue of running, yes, we are advising recreational runners, recreational, to wear cloth cotton masks. Walk with two or three of them so if one gets soaked you can put on a dry one. We are not advising recreational runners to use training masks which are used by professional athletes, which as you know as a doctor creates a condition similar to hypoxia to help the professional athletes build up their lung capacity. So, we are telling recreational runners to use cloth masks but not restrictive masks like an N95 or a surgical mask, and walk with two or three, so when one gets sweaty use another one.

Also, if you have some medical condition like a respiratory condition, asthma, COPD, bronchitis, speak to your medical practitioner and hopefully

exercise at home. So these are some common-sense guidelines I think that would stand the community in good stead. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental, Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Dr. Khan: Minister, are you aware that many people walk a lot, and also they have what they call mouth-breathers rather than nasal-breathers. Such mouth-breathers cannot wear masks while walking or running large distances even if they are recreational. Would you think that the inspiration volume and the expiration volume will be such that the mask should not be worn by those people if it is at all impossible for them to wear it?

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: Thank you for the question. That was a very good question, and the answer is simply this. Everyone has to make a choice. They should seek medical advice if they are a mouth-breather versus a nasal-breather, and if they have to go outside and they cannot wear a mask, exercise at home. However, general advice for mouth-breathers is—know your body, listen to your body. If you start to feel dizzy, you start to feel lightheaded, stop, just stop.

Mr. Hinds: Lightheaded.

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: Lightheaded, just stop. A lot of common sense has to go into this. As a Government we cannot be overly prescriptive but seek medical advice before you wear a mask to go out in public to run, especially for the recreational runners. Thank you very much, Member.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental, Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Dr. Khan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister, if there is social distances of more than three feet to six feet—more than three feet, why is it necessary to wear a mask while walking up during exercises?

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: Thank you very much. That is a very good question. Madam Speaker, a recent study has shown—just about two days ago using UV

lights—that someone who coughs or breathes hard, the droplets can stay in the atmosphere for as long as eight minutes. So somebody walking or running in front of you who coughs without a mask, and you are six feet behind, 10 feet behind, within that eight-second period you are walking into a cloud of droplets. So it is for the safety of all that the appropriate cloth mask be used by recreational runners, recreational walkers for their own safety, and I thank you for the question.

Mr. Hinds: “Ah whole surgeon doh know dat”.

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva North.

**Rental Grants
(Disbursement of)**

Ms. Ramona Ramdial (*Couva North*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Minister state when the rental grants will be disbursed to the thousands of applicants?

The Minister of Social Development and Family Services (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Thank you very kindly, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, to date the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has received 946 applications for rental assistance. In reviewing some of the applications the Ministry detected several anomalies suggesting attempts to commit fraud. In light of this the Ministry implemented a more robust system to validate all requests for rental assistance and this includes site visits to the addresses of every applicant. Already more than 25 per cent of these applications were found to be invalid. Some of the reasons are: Persons were not residing at the addresses provided in their applications, some persons were not renting but rather living with family and yet claiming rent, some were even renting HDC houses.

Notwithstanding these challenges, to date the Ministry has processed 220 applications for payment and has invalidated 25 per cent, as I said before, of those

946 that we have received.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental, Member for Couva South.

Ms. Ramdial: North. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister, have you reported to the TTPS the fraudulent activities of tenants who applied for the rental assistance grants?

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: We are speaking to the TTPS, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva South.

Nationals Aboard Disney Cruise Lines

(Permission to Return)

Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (*Couva South*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that the contracts of 49 Trinidad and Tobago nationals working aboard the Disney Cruise Lines will expire on May 29, 2020, of which 40 have sought permission to return to Trinidad and Tobago, can the Minister inform this House when will the said citizens be granted permission to return to their country?

The Minister of National Security and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Stuart Young): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we have received requests for re-entry from over 300 nationals on cruise ships. Our borders are closed to protect the population of Trinidad and Tobago based on the advice of our medical public health experts. We are very carefully managing re-entry into Trinidad and Tobago. The cruise ship companies should continue to keep all passengers safe, including their own staff, as we continue to manage our COVID-19 response via measures and the management of numbers entering Trinidad and Tobago. We will address the thousands of nationals outside of Trinidad and Tobago, as we have been doing, that is, very carefully to protect the population of Trinidad and Tobago and to make sure it aligns with our health care system.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental, Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister, are you aware that the Governments of, for example, St. Vincent, Dominican Republic and St. Lucia have granted permission for their respective citizens to be repatriated taking into consideration they are working for the said cruise line?

Hon. S. Young: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as was stated a short while ago by the Prime Minister, Trinidad and Tobago has managed it is COVID-19 response as a sovereign. We are taking our own decisions, our own measurements, and managing it very carefully based on the advice that we get from our medical public health experts and others outside of Trinidad and Tobago at times. What my friend from Couva South does not mention is there are also many other Caricom countries that have taken similar position. Every country is entitled to take their own position. I have stated ours and at this stage we will continue to do all that we have to protect the population of Trinidad and Tobago from the spread of COVID-19.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental, Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Minister of National Security. Given all that you have stated and the fact that persons have been thankfully allowed to re-enter Trinidad and Tobago and granted exemptions, is there an overall stated policy in writing that informs the Ministry of National Security on these exemptions, or is it at the discretion, at the behest, at the thought of the Minister of National Security?—in the context that a businessman could get exemption—

Madam Speaker: Member, Member—

Dr. Moonilal:—but a worker on a ship cannot?

Madam Speaker: Member, the question. I will not allow this question, and the responses were in terms of the people on cruise liners. Member for Fyzabad.

Siparia District Health Facility
(Working Conditions)

Dr. Lackram Bodoë (Fyzabad): Thank you, Madam Speaker. In view of recent reports of protests by health care workers at the Siparia District Health Facility that their working conditions are uncomfortable and highly unsatisfactory, can the Minister indicate when will the air conditioning system at this facility be repaired?

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you for the question. The South West Regional Health Authority from January 2020 of this year has been working to address the procurement of a full HVAC system which is essentially a large central air-conditioning unit for the entire facility. As a result, following all tendering processes and regulatory processes, a supplier has been recently and finally earmarked, however, I am advised that due to the COVID restrictions it has affected the timely procurement, but they have advised that the HVAC system will be installed by the middle of June 2020, which is just about a month away. In the interim they have mounted wall fans, they have put in floor fans, and from next week portable air-condition units will be installed to increase the comfort level at the institution for all the workers and our clients. Thank you very much.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Minister of Social Development and Family Services (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, there are two questions for oral response, the Government will be answering question number 62, we are asking for a two-week deferral for question number 45 and there are no questions for written answer.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

UNREVISED

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Dr. Fuad Khan (Barataria/San Juan):

Government Rentals

(Details of)

- 45.** Could the hon. Minister of Public Administration indicate:
- a. the number of government rentals that did not have:
 - i. fire certificate approval; or
 - ii. OSHA approval; or
 - iii. town and country approval for the period 2005 to February 29, 2020;
 - b. the duration of those rentals in part (a) and a list of these properties?

Question, by leave, deferred.

Madam Speaker: Member for Tabaquite.

Naval Assets

(Details of)

- 62. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan (Tabaquite)** asked the hon. Minister of National Security to provide:
- (a) a breakdown of the total naval assets available to protect our maritime borders; and
 - (b) the list of naval assets in part (a) that are currently operational and in service?

The Minister of National Security and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Stuart Young): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, it is not appropriate nor is it practical to publicly disclose the details of the naval assets available to protect our borders. That would compromise sensitive national security operations and provide classified information to both local and

transnational criminals such as drug traffickers which would not be in the national interest. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Supplemental.

Dr. Rambachan: Madam Speaker, would the Minister care to advise as to whether all the naval assets are operational or what percentage are operational or non-operational?

Hon. S. Young: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as I stated a short while ago, that information will not be provided especially as the number of operations that are currently ongoing and that we know the criminal element is always trying to get that advantage by knowing our plans and our next move.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT

Gambling (Gaming and Betting) Control Bill, 2016

(Adoption)

[Second Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [February 07, 2020]:

Be it resolved that this House adopt the report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Gambling (Gaming and Betting) Control Bill, 2016.

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Minister of Finance, you have 20 minutes. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. C. Imbert: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, on the last occasion I had begun my response to points made by Members on other side. I think, because of the effluxion of time, some of these points bear repeating. Before I deal with that, I think it is necessary to give a historical context with respect to the whole question of regulating the practice of gambling, particularly

casino gambling, in Trinidad and Tobago.

There have been attempts to regulate this industry, if you want to call it that, since 1999. If you go into the parliamentary record one would see that the Gambling and Betting (Amdt.) (No. 2) Bill, or the Gambling and Betting (No. 1) Bill, 1999, was first introduced into this House on the 8th of January, 1999. That Bill was not debated and allowed to lapse in October of 1999. On the 15th of October, 1999, that same year, the Gambling and Betting (Amdt.) (No. 2) Bill was introduced, and that again was allowed to lapse when the Parliament was dissolved in preparation for the 2000 general election in October 2000.

Subsequent to that, Madam Speaker, the Gambling and Betting (Amdt.) Bill, again, was introduced into this Parliament in September 2001 just before prorogation, and again, was allowed to lapse. So under a former UNC Government there were three variations to this legislation introduced in 1999 and 2001, and all were allowed to lapse. Similarly, in 2015, the Gambling (Gaming and Betting) Control Bill, which is the subject of this Joint Select Committee report, a very similar Bill, almost identical, was introduced into this House on the 22nd of May, 2015, and upon dissolution of the Parliament in June 2015 for the 2015 general election that Bill was allowed to lapse. So that was the fourth time that a UNC Government had introduced legislation to regulate gambling and it was allowed to lapse.

We came in, Madam Speaker, as you know in September 2015 and shortly afterwards in July of 2016 the Gambling (Gaming and Betting) Control Bill, 2016, was introduced on the 1st of July, 2016, by this Government. That Bill, Madam Speaker, and this bears repeating, was identical word for word to the UNC Bill of May 2015. We did not change a semicolon. And, Madam Speaker, that 2016 Bill

was sent to a committee. Committee reported on the 15th of September and, Madam Speaker, there was then a debate in 2016 in which the Member for Tabaquite contributed and made some interesting points, and again, Madam Speaker, this Bill was sent to committee and became the subject of intense examination by a committee. In fact, Madam Speaker, this Bill has been examined by a committee now for over three years. And this Bill, as I indicated, has had various incarnations going back to 1999.

When we came to debate the committee report, I pointed out the time that we had spent so many years examining this Bill, it had to be carried over from one session to another, because Members opposite wanted all sorts of consultation with every possible stakeholder imaginable, every members' club, owners of companies that import machines for gambling, various stakeholders in every form and fashion, all of the professional organizations, the University of the West Indies, the Inland Revenue Division, all of the various agencies of the State that would have something to do with the regulation of gambling; and this went on, and on, and on, Madam Speaker. And we accommodated all the submissions from stakeholders, and all of the requests from Members of the Opposition with respect to a very careful detailed examination of this legislation.

In addition, at the request of the Opposition we hired international consultants. We did a search around the world for expert consultants to advise the Committee on the technical complexities of the legislation, the meaning of words, the best practice in other parts of the world and what we should do with respect to tightening up the clauses in the Bill and so on. That also went on for years, Madam Speaker. We reach the end. After all of that we reach the end, and that—the culmination of all of that work, years and years of work, participation by

Members opposite in the Joint Select Committee deliberations, we then got to the stage where the Gambling (Gaming and Betting) Control Bill Report was laid in the Parliament in February of this year, I believe, Madam Speaker. And in fact—let me see if I can get the exact date, Madam Speaker—it was in fact submitted by me in November 2019. It was debated in February of 2020. So we have had a number of debates on this legislation. We had a debate in 2016 when it was first brought in, we had debates subsequent, and then this report was laid November 2019, and then we had debates earlier this year in 2020.

When I was winding up on the last occasion I was dealing with misinformation put in to the system by Members who had nothing to do with the committee deliberations, in particular, the Member for Oropouche East who made a number of misleading, inaccurate, and downright wrong statements with respect to the origin of the Bill, the origin of the regulations that accompanied the Bill, and the whole history of the legislation, and I had to put into the record, and I will repeat, is that the UNC Cabinet approved the Gambling (Gaming and Betting) Control Regulations, a number of them, application for gaming licences, accounting and internal control, anti-money laundering, Casino Regulations, Gaming Devices and Equipment Regulations, Gambling Control Regulations, all of these regulations, Madam Speaker, were prepared by the UNC Government, approved by the UNC Cabinet before the 2015 election, and, six months before the general election the Cabinet approved all of these regulations to accompany the legislation that we subsequently re-laid in 2016.

So it is important to note that the Member for Oropouche East made a long song and dance about the regulations asking where did they come from? Were they the subject of consultation? What did it mean? Made a lot of the fuss about

various words in the regulations, not for one minute admitting that those Regulations were prepared by a UNC Cabinet and approved by a UNC Cabinet to accompany the Bill that they laid in the Parliament before the general election of 2015. March 26, 2015, is when the UNC Cabinet approved all these regulations.

2.30 p.m.

There was also some other mischief put into the system as to whether the regulations had been circulated and whether any stakeholders had had the benefit of seeing the regulations and commenting on them. I wish to put on the record, the electronic copy of the regulations for the Gambling (Gaming and Betting) Control Bill, 2016, which was identical to the UNC Gambling (Gaming and Betting) Control Bill, 2015—[*Crosstalk*] Yeah, it is okay—was circulated—[*Crosstalk*] That is all right. That is all right—to Members of the Joint Select Committee on March 13, 2017. So that in 2017, March 2017, Madam Speaker, three years ago, the regulations were circulated to members of the committee. Hard copies were made available to Members of the Senate on March 14, 2017, and Member of the House on Wednesday, March 15, 2017.

By letter and electronic mail on March 20, 2017, three years ago, stakeholders were advised that the regulations could be viewed on the Parliament's website. A link was created for them to access and they were advised by letter and email, and stakeholders were requested to forward written submissions on the regulations in March of 2017. And for anyone who was a member of the committee, they would be aware that there were extensive submissions from stakeholders—from the members clubs, from the persons who operate and own the machines—extensive submissions on the regulations that accompanied the legislation, Madam Speaker.

I would also like to put into the system, comments made by the Member for Tabaquite when the legislation was first addressed in this House in 2016, Madam Speaker. And if one looks at what the Member for Tabaquite said at the time, the Member for Tabaquite indicated that the other side, at that time, Madam Speaker, was in complete support of the legislation, and there is no surprise there, Madam Speaker, because the legislation was developed by the former UNC administration. And the Member for Tabaquite at the time—and this would be on the 18th of November, 2016—supported the whole question of dealing with money laundering, terrorist financing, regulating the industry, payment of taxes by persons involved in the industry, protection for the public through responsible gambling, protection for persons who get addicted to gambling, protection of the vulnerable, protection of workers and in support of proper enforcement of this industry and payment of taxes, Madam Speaker.

And, in fact, the contribution of the Member for Tabaquite, the UNC Member for Tabaquite in 2016 was in absolute support and, in fact, he gave examples and I quote:

“I came to this Parliament and I showed in reference to the same 4,000 restaurants that the Member for Diego Martin North/East was saying where there are these machines, that simply by under a liquor licence...you can get, I believe, up to eight or 10 machines. But do you know what is happening?”—this is the Member for Tabaquite speaking—“They pay \$3,000 for each one of those machines...That is a problem, because in those restaurants I have seen with my own eyes while parents are waiting for food...children are going and playing on those machines, and you do not want that for your child, Member for San Fernando West.”—he was

speaking to the Attorney General at the time—“You do not want that...for anybody’s children, because that is part of the addictive process.”—quite appropriate.

“But what happens in those restaurants...while the members’ clubs are paying \$60,000 for a roulette machine in those very restaurants you have 12 seats around a machine in which something is spinning in the middle, a roulette machine, and they are paying \$3,000 for that because they have found a way to beat the law.”

And these are his other words: I have made a very strong case for regulations. Those were his words, UNC Member for Tabaquite. He said there was a Prime Minister in this country who was against casinos at the time.

“But, at the end of the day, it is a matter of personal choice...”

And we must regulate them. People in casinos could be exploited.

“They could be used as front men and front women...”

And so on and so on, Madam Speaker. And the point the Attorney General has made about the Bill being passed in the House under the UNC is very, very relevant, Madam Speaker.

So that where are we? We come here today. The persons who spoke on this committee report on the last occasion, raised a number of spurious objections, all sorts of trivialization of a very, very serious matter, Madam Speaker. We are dealing with a situation where it is well known that there are a number of persons operating in the local casino industry who are not fit and proper persons. We know very well, all of us, especially Members opposite, that there are persons in the local casino industry who are associated, Madam Speaker, with illegal activities. We all know this. We cannot close our eyes and pretend it is not so.

We know that the local casino industry generates \$16 billion in sales, but only pays the Treasury a fraction of that. The kind of profits that they make is exported. Many of the owners of these casinos are foreigners. They are not locals, and they export precious US dollars out of this country through the black market, Madam Speaker. All of the Members opposite know that. They know that casino workers are exploited, that they do not have freedom of association, they do not have freedom to join a trade union and so on and have collective bargaining and so on, Madam Speaker. All of them know that. They know this is a serious leakage of revenue for the country. They all know that, Madam Speaker. They all know that Trinidad and Tobago is the only country in the world with an unregulated casino industry, a billion-dollar unregulated casino industry and, therefore, when you look at the questions they were asking: where are the regulations? They produced the regulations but they are asking us, where are the regulations. They know, the Member for Tabaquite, everything he said was accurate—children are being exposed to gambling, leakage of revenue, money laundering, everything the Member for Tabaquite said in 2016 about the problems with this industry was truthful and accurate.

The Members of the committee on the other side who sat in the Joint Select Committee, when we went through all the clauses over those period of years, they did not raise a single objection to any of the issues in the Bill. How could they? It was their Bill after all, Madam Speaker. And, therefore, I need to ask this House, what is really going on? The UNC brought a Bill to control gambling. Everybody in Trinidad and Tobago knows that gambling needs to be controlled. Everybody in Trinidad and Tobago knows that there is serious tax evasion with respect to gambling. Everybody in Trinidad and Tobago knows that the banks are refusing to

deal with casinos and refusing to open bank accounts for them because they cannot meet the test for anti-money laundering and know your customer and anti-terrorist financing. Everybody knows that.

But, for some reason, every time we try to pass this legislation, spurious and trivial objections are made by hon. Members opposite. [*Desk thumping*] Why? Why? Could it be that they are being lobbied, Madam Speaker? Could it be that promises are being made by these people to the Members opposite? What is it? What is the reason? Why it is you do not want to end the exploitation of these workers in casino? A lot of them are single mothers coming from depressed communities and they are being exploited, and you know that hon. Members. Why do you not want to regulate this industry? What do you not want to deal with anti-money laundering?

The FATF organization has highlighted the casino industry in Trinidad and Tobago as a clear source of potential money laundering. What is really going on? Why would the Member for Tabaquite come in such support of this legislation and then they refused to put him on the committee. He came, he supported everything in the Bill. He spoke eloquently, and then they put others on the committee who spent all their time obstructing and trivializing everything, Madam Speaker. One has to ask: what is going on with the Opposition? Why are you afraid of regulation of the casino industry? What is wrong with you? And, therefore, Madam Speaker, with those words, I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

Question put: That the Bill be now read a third time.

Madam Speaker: This Bill requires a three-fifths majority. Hon. Members who are accommodated throughout the Parliamentary Complex will be allowed a

maximum of three minutes to return to the Chamber to vote. So we will await the three minutes.

[Members enter Chamber]

Hon. Members, the division will now commence. Members are reminded that even if the Clerk has already passed the Member in the usual voting sequence, once a Member is present in the Chamber before the division is announced, he or she will be called upon to vote.

The House divided: Ayes 20

AYES

Robinson-Regis, Hon. C.

Rowley, Hon. Dr. K.

Al-Rawi, Hon. F.

Imbert, Hon. C.

Young, Hon. S.

Deyalsingh, Hon. T.

Mitchell, Hon. R.

Forde, E.

Cudjoe, Hon. S.

Garcia, Hon. A.

Gadsby-Dolly, Hon. Dr. N.

Dillon, Hon. Maj. Gen. E.

Crichlow-Cockburn, Hon. C.

Webster-Roy, Hon. A.

Francis, Hon. Dr. L.

Olivierre, Ms. N.

Leonce, A.

Antoine, Brig. Gen. A.

Cuffie, M.

Hinds, Hon. F.

The following Members abstained: Mr. D. Lee, Mr. R. Charles, Dr. S. Rambachan, Mr. F. Karim, Dr. B. Tewarie, Dr. R. Moonilal, Dr. T. Gopeesingh, Dr. F. Khan, Mr. G. Singh, Dr. L Bodoie, Mr. R. Indarsingh, Ms. R. Ramdial, Ms. G. Gopeesingh, Mr. R. Paray—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deyalsingh: Madam Speaker, just a point of clarification, please? The Member for St. Augustine has not been called on to vote

The following Member abstained: Mr. P. Ramadhar

Question negatived.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Social Development and Family Services (Hon. Camille Robinson Regis): Madam Speaker, on the last occasion, I had indicated that we would proceed with this gaming and gambling committee report. I am now asking that the House proceed now to the bail Bill which was already before the House and had reached the winding up, I think it had reached, and we want to proceed with that to committee.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, just to add to the Leader of Government Business, on the last occasion, the only notice that we got to do a Bill was to complete the gambling Bill. I got a message from the Leader that at 10.40 this morning, and I only saw it at 11.15 where she had indicated that she would like to do several other pieces of legislation today. We are objecting because some of those pieces of legislation, we are not prepared even though it has

been on the Order Paper. And, again, this is about the third time the Leader of Government Business is doing the Opposition this injustice by not giving us proper notice in debating pieces of legislation. [*Desk thumping*] So, we strongly object to this way of conducting business in the Parliament.

Madam Speaker: Okay? Member, the first thing I would like to say is this that Members were invited in for the purposes of us having the vote done. If at all we intend to embark on anything else, I am going to ask that we reconstitute ourselves at the balance of eight/six. Okay? So that I have not determined what is happening, but I would still ask us to resume to eight/six.

[*Some Members leave Chamber*]

Hon. Members, I have not determined anything. Apparently, we are all having problems in hearing with the masks. I said I have not determined anything and, therefore, because of what we are doing right, engaging in something else, I have asked us to revert to the eight/six.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Thank you very kindly, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to say a few things: one, Madam Speaker, once a matter is on the Order Paper, Madam Speaker, that is notice, not only to the Members of the House, but it is notice to the world. So I have a real difficulty in my friend indicating that they would not be prepared, because, Madam Speaker, it is only by courtesy that we even indicate what is on for the next sitting.

Let me also say, Madam Speaker, that with regard to the bail Bill, we had completed the debate and we were proceeding to committee stage. So I do not know what my friend's objection is, and I indicated that to him in my correspondence to him. So, Madam Speaker, I am very disturbed that the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre would even be giving these protestations at a time when it is clear that the gaming and gambling has ended, and we can proceed with the other

business of the House.

And, Madam Speaker, I wish to repeat, that once a matter is on the Order Paper, it is notice not only to the Members, but notice to the world and this matter has been on the Order Paper, has already been debated and we are now in committee stage. Additionally, Madam Speaker, we indicated that we would like to do the Private Security Joint Select Committee Report. That is also the other matter that we will be moving to and that debate has already started, and I indicated that to the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So as far as the bail Bill, my recollection is as has been stated by the Leader of the House in terms of, I believe it is just for the Attorney General to beg to move and then we go into committee. So, at this stage, I am just determining the bail Bill. If there is other business, we will take each and consider each on its terms. Okay? So that I allow you to go on with just the bail Bill. Attorney General.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I had already begged to move the second reading, and we are now properly just simply at referring the Bill to committee stage. So if I may, pick it up from that point having begged to move already. Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order—

Madam Speaker: Attorney General, just now. I think for the purposes for us having the procedure proper, I think you have to beg to move now. Yes.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: I did it already on the last occasion. Do I do it again? Again, read a second time? Because I have already done that.

Madam Speaker: For the purposes, we have to regularize it here because we will be betwixt and between.

BAIL (AMDT.) (NO. 2) BILL, 2019

[Second Day]

UNREVISED

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [November 27, 2019]:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question again proposed.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. May I just enquire how much speaking time I have then?

Madam Speaker: You have no speaking time, Attorney General. All you do now is beg to move.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker, I will very happily beg to move, yet again.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

3.30p.m.

Dr. Tewarie: Madam Chair, could I have copies of the documents that we are going to be looking at?

Madam Chairman: Attorney General—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Much obliged, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Attorney General, are you—

Mr. Al-Rawi: Fine right here, if it should please you.

Madam Chairman: All right. One minute, please. Can we do the—

Mr. Lee: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: All right. Clerk.

Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Preamble approved.

Question put and agreed to: That the Bill be reported to the House.

House resumed.

Madam Speaker: Attorney General.

Hon. Al-Rawi: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I wish to report that the Bail (Amdt.) (No. 2) Bill, 2019, was considered in a committee of the whole and approved without amendments. I now beg to move that the House agree with the report of the committee.

Question put and agreed to.

Question put: That the Bill be read a third time.

Madam Speaker: This Bill requires a special majority. Hon. Members who are accommodated throughout the parliamentary complex will be allowed a maximum of three minutes to return to the Chamber to vote.

[Members enter Chamber]

Hon. Members, the division will now commence. Members are again reminded that even if the Clerk has already passed the Member in the usual voting sequence, once a Member is present in the Chamber before the division is announced, he or she will be called upon to vote.

The House divided: Ayes 19

AYES

Robinson-Regis, Hon. C.

Rowley, Hon. Dr. K.

Al-Rawi, Hon. F.

Young, Hon. S.

Deyalsingh, Hon. T.

Hinds, Hon. F.

Mitchell, Hon. R.

Forde, E.

Bail (Amdt.) (No.2) Bill, 2019
Hon. F. Al-Rawi

Cudjoe, Hon. S.

Garcia, Hon. A.

Gadsby-Dolly, Hon. Dr. N.

Dillon, Hon. Maj. Gen. E.

Crichlow-Cockburn, Hon. C.

Webster-Roy, Hon. A.

Francis, Hon. Dr. L.

Olivierre, Ms. N.

Leonce, A.

Antoine, Brig. Gen. A.

Cuffie, M.

The following Members abstained: Mr. D. Lee, Mr. R. Charles, Mr. F. Karim, Dr. B. Tewarie, Dr. R. Moonilal, Dr. T. Gopeesingh, Dr. F. Khan, Mr. G. Singh, Dr. L Bodoë, Ms. R. Ramdial, Mr. R. Indarsingh—[*Crosstalk*]

Madam Speaker: Members, if we can all take the vote in silence, everybody is entitled to vote how they wish. Let us just respect that.

Division continued.

—Mrs. V. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh, Mr. P. Ramadhar, Mr. R. Paray.

Question negatived.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Minister of Social Development and Family Services (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Madam Speaker, we will move now to the Private Security Industry Bill, 2019.

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, again the Opposition objects having to do this Private Security Industry Bill, 2019. The Private Security Industry Bill, 2019, was in progress, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] When it ended with MP Antoine, none

of our Members were given proper notice to prepare for this debate today, and we object strenuously. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Madam Speaker, as I have said before and I will repeat, proper notice is once the Bill is on the Order Paper, and this has been on the Order Paper for quite some time, and both sides have fielded speakers on this. It is nothing new and it is something that we have been proceeding with. So, Madam Speaker, I am saying again, we are proceeding with the Private Security Industry Bill, 2019.

Mr. Lee: Just can I ask through you, Madam Speaker, if the decorum of the House has just been eroded and the Opposition would not be given any notice in the future on Bills? [*Desk thumping*] I just want to ask that question to the Leader of Government Business.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Madam Speaker, once there is an Order Paper the Opposition has notice. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Okay, so we shall proceed. I will again ask that we maintain the eight/six balance.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT

Private Security Industry Bill, 2019

(Adoption)

[Second Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [March 06, 2020]:

Be it resolved that this House adopt the Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Private Security Industry Bill, 2019 in the Fifth Session, Eleventh Parliament.

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Al-Rawi: Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Attorney General, I am very sorry, I did not see you behind my back.

The Attorney General (Hon. Faris Al-Rawi): I am sorry, Madam Speaker. I thank you. Sorry, I thought that the rule was you just come to the podium uninvited. Much obliged, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join in this debate and I would like of course to remind that what we are doing here today is debating a Motion to adopt the report of a joint select committee which was established, convened, populated in the precincts of this Parliament and investigated by way of submissions from several stakeholders, a wide array of concern about the private security industry. It is quite shocking to hear the Chief Whip, the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre complain about doing the Parliament's work because this particular matter—

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, 48(1).

Madam Speaker: Overruled.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi:—because this particular matter is one where we have had the benefit of a joint select committee. It was the Member himself, that hon. Member from Pointe-a-Pierre who joined in the chorus of call for this matter to go to a joint select committee.

The Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, charged with the responsibility for guiding the bench opposite was part and parcel of a deep exercise of interrogation. So all of the Members of the Joint Select Committee sitting in this House are ready and ought to be ready, willing and able to speak on this Bill. That is parliamentary practice. That is parliamentary route, and we make no apology, Madam Speaker, in carrying out the people's business because that is what we are paid to do and that is why we were elected to come here.

So, Madam Speaker, let us get to the Bill. The Bill before us, the Private Security Industry Bill, 2019, is of course 85 clauses long, four schedules in length. In this particular report coming from this committee the Member of the Opposition engaged together with the Government in a fulsome exercise of interrogating stakeholders' submissions. This concept of private security was again a creature which first came to the fore in a more solid form under the UNC Government. It was the Government which was managed under the Member for Siparia that brought the conversation of regulating the private security industry to the fore. Picking up, as we must upon the work of Parliaments, the hon. Member for Laventille West took the initiative to formalize the work which was sitting in the Ministry of National Security, under no less than seven UNC Ministers in the past Government, brought the work together in a jelled format, knowing that the work required stakeholder consultation, took it into a joint select committee, because this Bill requires not only a three-fifths majority support, but this Bill also requires ventilation in the best interest of Trinidad and Tobago. And it is so because we are all aware that the private security industry has the ability, if properly regulated, to add force and structure and accountability to the policing of Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago has the benefit of what we call "eyes everywhere, hands everywhere and policing everywhere", and we have for decades in this country witnessed an unregulated industry in large part where the basic requirements of private security industries are merely cursory in nature. This Bill proposes in its several parts that we establish, first of all a regime of private security authority, a Statutory Authority in Part II. We require it to be financed in the regular mechanism ways that we do that in Part III of the Bill in clauses 14 to 21; that we staff the authority in Part VI of the Bill in clauses 22 to 26, and then we

create a regime of inspectors. Under Part V of the Bill, Part V of the Bill allowing for us to have the inspectors go into the body and arrangement of all persons who apply to be participants in the private security industry by way of licence, these inspectors are now clothed in law to ensure that quality and consistency of standards are maintained across the industry.

We then looked, Madam Speaker, to the fact that this Bill in this Joint Select Committee produced a whole regime of security service operators. We divided them generally into the fact that everyone must be licensed. We enquired and we bring forward recommendations that there should be different types of employment, in particular propriety, security employers, security officers of a general type, and those who engage in special security office provision, as well as in managing that industry by implementing as well in law the Private Security Services Review Council which we find under Part X of the Bill. Madam Speaker, what is quite interesting is that this Bill as constructed was brought here with a three-fifths majority because we were touching and concerning a few constitutional rights quite properly. Those constitutional rights involved, of course, the right of the individual to liberty, the right of the individual to enjoyment of property, the right of the individual to respect for private and family life, which we find all in section 4 of the Constitution.

In fact, it is clauses 28, 36, 37 and 41 of the legislation, including 42, 49 and 59 that require us to have a special majority at all. Clause 28 of the Bill treats with the ability of inspection of security services operators where an inspector can conduct random inspections entering into premises, et cetera. The inspector may seize articles found and take it to a magistrate. There are warranted circumstances as well. Clause 36 treats with duties and conditions; and clause (36)(7), which

allows for a drug test to be conducted annually in a prescribed manner or randomly in respect of no less than 10 per cent of security officers, for that drug test to be conducted the security officer can be called upon to give the sample and therefore the right of respect for privacy comes into equation.

In clause 37 where we look at the operator to employ persons to perform support security services, again in this special arrangement clause 37(3) allows, yet again, for random drug testing and therefore the intrusion upon the person happens. In clause 41 we look at the duties of a propriety security officer, and as it relates to the employer specifically, and here in clause 41(3) is where we look at the propriety security officer again having the employer able to carry out random drug testing. Clause 42: again, 42(3) we are looking at the regime of propriety security employer to employ persons to perform support security services. We introduce yet again the drug testing requirement. Clause 49 has the powers of a security officer and these powers resemble powers to detain, powers to seize weapons, powers to seize articles. We look at clause 59, powers of peace enforcement officers, and again we note that we touch and concern some of the section 4 rights.

Madam Speaker, it is wide open to this Parliament to in fact remove the formula by which we have these three-fifths majority rights touch and concern. It is open to us to apply a method of due process, to apply a method of going to court to obtain a warrant for inspection, thereby ensuring that judicial autonomy applies to the intrusion of a right; in this case here the right to privacy or private family and family life. It is open to us to include the drug testing as a conditionality of license and therefore the mandatory nature of drug testing falls to be one tied into the issuance of the licence, and if you choose not to have a drug test your licence can be suspended.

It is also open to us to have the inspection of premises brought about by way of a licensing regime and by use of due process or warranting. So I am putting quite simply here now, Madam Speaker, we can change this Bill into a simple majority Bill quite easily at committee stage. And I say that, Madam Speaker, confident that once the law is amended, the Bill is amended to allow the powers that touch and concern fundamental rights in section 4 of the Constitution to be managed by way of a due process treatment and by way of the court issuing warrants and by way of conditionality of licences, we can pass this law. You see, I say this, Madam Speaker, because we have just seen two critical pieces of legislation shut down by the Opposition.

3.30p.m.

In this particular Parliament we are given a constant exhortation from the Opposition that every Bill must go to joint select committee. We take it, as we did in this Bill, to joint select committee. We have no objections in the Joint Select Committee—this Joint Select Committee. We have no objections in the Joint Select Committee for gaming, for example, now that that has passed us; in fact, we have support from the UNC. But when it is time to come to the Parliament floor to pass laws, be they bail amendment laws to make sure that grenades and machine guns are not allowed for persons who want bail; be they bona fide law that you take six years to consider in joint select committee, like the gaming law where you have the Opposition when in government saying yes to the same law, it seems that the purpose and intent of the Opposition on all legislation to better this country, this Bill in particular, it is met with by a simple obstruction and by a simple frustration of the advancement of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, there has to come a point in time when we must decide

what this country's future is going to look like, and in this Bill—

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, 48(1).

Madam Speaker: Overruled.

Hon. F. Al-Rawi: In this Bill, in the several clauses that we look at, we look at, in particular, clause 5 of the Bill, where we are looking at the prohibited class of persons, persons who cannot be private security officers under licence. When we look at Part VI of the, when we look to security service operators, in particular clause 32, who can provide security service operations, when we look at clause 36, where we look at an agreement, an affidavit of commitment where the security service provider must agree by way of affidavit of commitment to agree to be bound not only by the Act, but by a code of conduct, by guidelines and by standards where that code of conduct, guidelines and standards include giving dignity to the employees, the thousands of employees who are hired by security service firms in Trinidad and Tobago, some of whom are under minimum wage, some of who do not have the dignity of proper uniforms, some of whom have no form of representation.

For the first time in this country's history, this Government brings legislation to better the lives of tens of thousands of people, and the only standing in the way of that is the United National Congress. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, on three-fifths majority law an abstention is a “no”. Let me explain that, because I notice that there is a recent attempt to mask the killing of legislation to better this country by abstaining. An abstention in a three-fifths majority Bill means you do not want to give the support to pass the law. Therefore I can ask: What is offensive in ensuring that thousands of private security officers have the dignity of having their employers regulated? What is offensive, as we

note in Parts VII and VIII and IX of Bill, in ensuring that offices that provide property protection, officers that provide personal security protection and close protection—what could be offensive to the United National Congress, to the Member for Siparia who leads that Opposition, what could be offensive in allowing people the basic dignity of a fair salary?

Madam Speaker, in this time of COVID, essential service providers are inclusive of private security officers. They are on the frontline of this country. This Government wishes to manage the integrity, the dignity, the terms and conditions of salary, the functionality of their uniforms and structures in a way such that we can actually have some form of dignity for them. Madam Speaker, I must ask: What is offensive in that?

You see, Madam Speaker, crime is a significant issue in this country, and in managing time properly, in managing the issue of what we can do as a country to put down the laws, as this Parliament has the power to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of our country, what is it that is so stuck in the psyche of the Opposition that they will not support Trinidad and Tobago becoming compliant with the rest of the world? How can we watch an unregulated private security industry? How can we walk away today from this Parliament to be the only country in the world, according to the IMF, to have an unregulated gaming industry? How can we be the only country in the world that allows grenades and weapons of war to be in the hands of criminals, and have an Opposition refuse to give the support to legislation that is required to protect the citizens of this country?

You see, Madam Speaker, this law is definitely the kind of law to carry Trinidad and Tobago into the new vision of country. This law allows for the

creation of jobs in a circumstance of dignity. I hear the Leader of the Opposition talking about 50,000 jobs. I do not know where they are coming from. This Bill in its 85 clauses creates certainty for thousands of jobs in this country in better terms and conditions, and the only person leading a Bench saying no to this legislation is the Member for Siparia. Most respectfully that is intellectual hypocrisy that ought not to be tolerated by the right-thinking people of this country. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, it is time for a new Trinidad and Tobago. It is time for a vision. In the conversation of a Trinidad and Tobago, post COVID pandemic, this law is germane and relevant and necessary. I call upon the citizens of this country to stand up against the Opposition, to tell the Opposition the time for tomfoolery and for nonsensical articulation of issues to oppose for opposition sake is over. You have had your way. You have had a joint select committee. You say “yes” in the committee. You say “yes” when you are in government, but you say no to the people of Trinidad and Tobago every time a law is brought for their benefit.

Under these rules I believe I am now out of time, and I thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Minister in the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. When I presented this Bill to the House way back in—I think it was October 2019, I did so as a citizen, I did so as a Member of Parliament, I did so as a Minister of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago with a tremendous amount of pride. I did so with a sense of history. I did so understanding that this legislation was birthed, the idea of it at any rate, way back in 1989 in our country and it went through several jurisdictions, several governments.

The Member for St. Augustine told us in the course of that debate that he did

a tremendous amount of work whilst a Minister of Government of the so-called PP, or PP Government, and we all understood that. When I put this Bill before this House in October of 2019 I suggested that we go to a joint select committee. That was the way of the UNC. We considered as well that it required some contemplation, some refinement, and we sat there—the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, as the Attorney General just reminded us, was a prominent member of that Joint Select Committee, and Trinidad and Tobago paying us as parliamentarians, invested their money in us. We spent hours. We spent all of three months. We had an extension for about another month, using up the salaries that the taxpayers of this country pay us. We refined those measures, and we brought them to this House. Lo and behold, though not surprisingly, the UNC is now, in their antics and childishness, taking a stand against this very important piece of legislation which, as the Attorney General mentioned, and which we agreed when we debated this a few weeks ago in this House, was critical in our fight against crime and hypocritical on the part of the UNC which complains every day about crime in this country.

They were made to understand in the Joint Select Committee and otherwise that the 50,000 private security officers operating unregulated, under-resourced, under-trained as they now are, can, through this legislation, up their game, improve their quality, their standard, their delivery of service, work in collaboration with the state security apparatus to make Trinidad and Tobago the safer place that it can be. But as the Attorney General poignantly indicated earlier today, the UNC now stands in the way of the development and the progress, and the protection and the safety of Trinidad and Tobago in this regard.

What is their objection? That they did not have time to prepare for the

debate today. As the Leader of Government Business, Madam Robinson-Regis, the Member for Arouca/Maloney, pointed out, this has been on the Order Paper since then, October of last year. We began the debate. The Member for Oropouche East spoke. The Member for St. Augustine spoke. The Member for Pointe-a-Pierre spoke. They were all, along with others on the Joint Select Committee of which I just referred, very familiar with this, but they take a frivolous objection today that they were not prepared.

I heard the Member for Oropouche East saying sarcastically “he have to leave Port of Spain and go” in Oropouche where he lives, I presume, for his papers to come back. Childishness with serious business. I am ashamed of them on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. But when the Member for Oropouche East spoke on the last occasion he signalled even then, when they were all here and they had their papers and there was no issue on that score, he signalled their intention not to support this. He misled this House.

We had kept copious notes of the development in the Joint Select Committee, yet he got here on that last occasion and said when we invited persons to attend before us, because we had all the stakeholders from the private security industry appear before us and give evidence which we benefited from, which we interwove into the fabric of this legislation which is before us, they said that they thought that was just the first round. That is not the truth.

I sought the *Hansard* record in support, and see where the Member left the meeting on August the 14th, and was not present during the discussion where stakeholders were invited to appear. But Members Lee and Hosein were very present, and they were present at the eighth meeting of that Joint Select Committee. The question of the desire to invite additional stakeholders never

arose. There is no such thing in there, and they raised a number of other frivolous objections.

Madam Speaker, he raised as well that we were not providing in this Bill for the qualification of the inspectors. What we have done in this Bill, just by way of reminder to the listeners and the people of Trinidad and Tobago on whose behalf we work, we established an entity which would have the responsibility for supervising, for monitoring, for setting standards for the security industry. And of course in order to do that effectively, we established the position of inspectors. As the AG reminded us a while ago these inspectors would be looking out for Trinidad and Tobago for the State. They will go to the business places of, the workstations of the security operators to make sure that the law is being carried out, to make sure that the employers, the operators, are staffing and equipping and all of that, complying with all the laws of Trinidad and Tobago as they are supposed to. When the discussion on that came on, the Member left during the discussion on that clause 27 which is one of the issues that requires a majority here today, because the inspector has to go on to private property.

So these measures, though they touch and concern the constitutional rights as are enshrined in sections 4 and 5 of our Constitution, are not to give the Prime Minister or the PNM or the Government any power. It is to enable the private security industry to be properly supervised and managed using the offices of inspectors. This simply allows the inspectors to go on to property, to look at documents, to look at equipment. If they are licensed to have 16 firearms they are not supposed to have 17, and such like. These are the kinds of things these majorities permit.

Of course, no one wants to know that you have military or paramilitary

personnel or security personnel under arms guarding important people and places and institutions in any country, under the influence of alcohol or any other drug, and as such all modern security operations today require that its stakeholders, its participants, the officers really, be able to be drug tested to ensure that they are clean and healthy and fit and able to make the right decisions, especially under extreme circumstances as can subsist in respect of security work. That is one of the things that is required. In other words, some of these drug tests could be intrusive of the person and it requires the ability to demand it and to have a look of the records to protect the public and to protect the institutions that they are there to secure.

So it is nothing ominous. But the UNC does not want to support these measures as they demonstrated in other measures before us today. Fortunately for Trinidad and Tobago we have encountered them for the last five years in this round, and we know of their antics and their wicked ways. So we have the capacity to rearrange these measures before you today, as the Attorney General properly explained, putting in due process provisions where they do not now exist, because some do.

We could involve the question of licensing as a condition for becoming a security officer, the question of drug testing and so on. We could append that to their contractual arrangements, as is done in some other entities and circumstances. For example going on to property, because if an inspector goes on to the property of a security service operator, or a security firm as we would call it, and finds illegal or unauthorized firearms, he should be able to seize them. We could also say here, in dealing with this problem that the UNC is presenting to us today, that they can go onto this property in the company of the established Trinidad and

Tobago Police Service, and we could deal with that problem. Of course we could use the courts to the extent that we have not already used it, because we have used it in this Bill, to deal with the issue of warrants to permit the searches and seizure of illegal equipment if we had to. When I say “we”, the State.

So, Madam Speaker, it is our intention because of our desire, on the basis of a long record since 1989, to protect the people of Trinidad and Tobago and to allow them the benefit of an organized, well-oiled, well-trained, well-resourced security platform regulated through the measures in this Bill, the Private Security Industry Bill, 2019, as it is so called.

Madam Speaker, with those bits said, I want to announce truthfully to my friends on the other side, obtrusive and obstructionist as they always are, that we are going to proceed with these measure here today. And if we are not, as we do not expect to get their support in the way decent and right-minded parliamentarians in the context in which this Bill was presented to this House, if they are not prepared to act in those ways we will be obliged to make the necessary adjustments as best as we could along the lines as suggested by the Attorney General, in order to give the benefit and the protection of these measures to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

In those circumstances, I would like to say that I call on my friends on the other side, even at this last moment—I think I have another seven minutes or so, Madam Speaker. Am I correct, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Yes, yes.

Hon. F. Hinds: I thank you warmly. I would like to call on my friends, particularly the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre who sat and led the Opposition’s team in that Joint Select Committee, along with other Independents. I call upon the

Member for Pointe-a-Pierre. I call upon the Member for St. Augustine. I call—well, let me leave Oropouche East out. He is beyond repair in my—in that regard, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I would like you to just retract that.

Hon. F. Hinds: I am obliged, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker—*[Interruption]*
[Minister Robinson-Regis speaks with Minister Hinds at podium]

I call upon my friend on the other side, not for my sake, not for my benefit alone, but for all of the 1.4 or so million people of Trinidad and Tobago who need our engagement as legislators, so that those who operate in the security industry can be armed with the right legislative and other tools and equipment to get their job done, and to get it done efficiently and effectively. I call upon my friends on the other side, for the people of Trinidad and Tobago's sake, to soften their hearts and to do what is right, if they could find it within them.

As such, Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Motion be amended by adding the following words at the end of the resolution:

Subject to the recommittal of this Bill and, in particular, clauses 28, 36, 37, 41, 42, 49, 59 of this Bill to a committee of the whole House.

I beg to move, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: This amendment will need a seconder.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: Madam Speaker, I beg to second.

Hon. F. Hinds: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I shall now propose the amendment moved by the Member for Laventille West and seconded by the Member for Arouca/Maloney.

Question, on amendment, proposed.

Hon. F. Hinds: I beg to move.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I will first put the question on the proposed amendment. The question is that the Motion be amended by adding the following words immediately at the end of the resolution.

Subject to the recommittal of the Bill and, in particular, clauses 28, 36, 37, 41, 42, 49 and 59 of the Bill to a committee of the whole House.

Question, on amendment, put and agreed to. [Interruption]

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I shall now put the question on the original Motion, as amended:

Be it resolved that this House adopt the report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Private Security Industry Bill, 2019 in the Fifth Session, Eleventh Parliament subject to the recommittal of the Bill, clauses 28, 36, 37, 41, 42, 49 and 59 of the Bill to a committee of the whole House.

Question, on amended Motion, put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House will now go into a committee of the whole to consider the clauses 28, 36, 37, 41—[*Interruption*] Leader of the House.

Mrs. Robinson-Regis: The mover of the Motion did say the entire Bill, in particular, so it is the Bill, but those in particular. Thank you, Ma'am.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, and I will propose the both questions just to ensure that I have it correct.

Hon. Members, I will first put the question on the proposed amendment. The question is that the Motion be amended by adding the following words immediately at the end of the resolution:

Subject to the recommittal of the Bill and, in particular, clauses 28, 36, 37,

41, 42, 49 and 59 of the Bill to a committee of the whole House.

Question, on amendment, again put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I shall now put the question on the original Motion as amended:

Be it resolved that this House adopt the Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Private Security Industry Bill, 2019 in the Fifth Session, Eleventh Parliament, subject to the recommittal of the Bill and, in particular, clauses 28, 36, 37, 41, 42, 49 and 59 of the Bill to a committee of the whole House.

Question, on amended Motion, again put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: This House will now go into the committee of the whole to consider the Bill and, in particular, clauses 28, 36, 37, 41, 42, 49 and 59 of the Bill. *House in Committee.*

Madam Chairman: Okay, so might I enquire, Member for Laventille West, there are going to be amendments to the Bill. Can you indicate how soon those amendments can be presented to the Members who are present and to assist us in proceeding in an expeditious manner? [*Interruption*]

Mr. Al-Rawi: May I just assist? Only because I got the communication while my colleague was wrapping up. Madam Chair, the CPC's Department has had a small difficulty in their printing, and it seems as if we will not be able to get the circulated amendments in time. We would want to make sure our colleagues have sight of the circulated amendments to make better use and to comply with the Standing Orders, to make better use of time. In those circumstances I think the Leader of the House might intervene at this point. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Indarsingh: We are adjourning?

4.00p.m.

Mr. Hinds: Yes, Madam Chairman, as we concurred a while ago, the CPC's difficulty has put paid to what we were about to do here today. As a result, I would like to move, Madam Chairman, that in accordance with Standing Order 70(4), I beg to move that progress be reported to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chairman: This committee meeting is adjourned. The House will now resume.

House resumed.

Hon. F. Hinds: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 70(14), I wish to report progress of this Bill of the work of the committee of a whole.

And given that next week Friday is Private Members' Day, I seek leave for the House to sit again on this matter on the 29th of May, 2020, for the resumption of the proceedings in this Bill.

Madam Speaker: Is the House prepared to grant leave?

[Assent indicated]

Hon. Members, leave having been granted, the committee stage of the Private Security Industry Bill, 2019, will resume on Friday the 29th of May, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Social Development and Family Services (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Friday, the 22nd day of May, 2020, at 1.30p.m. Madam Speaker, that Friday is Private Members' Day and I will give way to my colleague to tell us what we will be doing on that day.

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, I am surprised that my colleague is asking me what we

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will be doing. But, Madam Speaker, I have to discuss with my caucus and we will give ample notice of what we will be doing on Friday the 22nd of May.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 4.05p.m.