

**SENATE***Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

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

**Madam President:** Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence from today's sitting of the Senate to Sen. The Hon. Danny Montano who is out of the country; Sen. The Hon. Christine Kangaloo and Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie.

**SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT**

**Madam President:** Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the President, Prof. George Maxwell Richards:

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency Professor GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D., President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ G. Richards  
President.

TO: MS. ROSE JANNEIRE

WHEREAS Senator Danny Montano is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, ROSE JANNEIRE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 24th May, 2005 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Danny Montano.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 17th day of May, 2005.”

*Oath of Allegiance*

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Ms. Rose Janneire took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Police Complaints Authority for the year ended September 30, 2002. [*The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Police Complaints Authority for the year ended September 30, 2003. [*Sen. The Hon. C. Enill*]
3. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Tobago House of Assembly for the year ended September 30, 2001. [*Sen. The Hon. C. Enill*]
4. Third Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Regional Health Authorities Pension Fund Plan for the period September 22, 1999 to December 31, 2000. [*Sen. The Hon. C. Enill*]

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

*The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Sadiq Baksh:*

**National Housing Authority Housing Project  
(Green Street, Tunapuna)**

- 69.** (a) With respect to the National Housing Authority (NHA) Housing Project located at Green Street, Tunapuna, could the Minister of Planning and Development provide this Senate with:
- (i) a detailed status report on the project;
  - (ii) a list of the firms that tendered for the project and the details of their tender price;
  - (iii) the name of the contractor to whom the contract was awarded and the tender price; and

- (iv) a detailed breakdown of expenditure incurred as at March 23, 2005?
- (b) Could the Minister also inform the Senate of:
  - (i) the number of houses and/or apartments to be constructed; and
  - (ii) the number of houses and/or apartments that have been completed as at March 23, 2005?

**The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams):** Madam President, I want to apologize. The hon. Minister is not here this afternoon because she is out of the country. Could I ask, for an extension of one week, please? Senator, I am sorry about that.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**National Housing Authority Housing Project  
(Ramgoolie Trace, Curepe)**

**70. Sen. Sadiq Baksh** asked the hon. Minister of Housing:

With respect to the National Housing Authority (NHA) Housing Project located at Ramgoolie Trace, Curepe, could the Minister provide the Senate with:

- (i) the names of all the firms that submitted bids and their bid prices for the original project; and
- (ii) the projected completion date of the original project?

**The Minister of Housing (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley):** Madam President, advertisements were placed on April 24, 2002 for pre-qualification of contractors. The contractor for Ramgoolie Trace was selected from a list of pre-qualified contractors as follows: Mootilal Ramhit and Sons Contracting Limited; Bhagwansingh's Hardware and Steel Industry Limited; Ashana Civil and Mechanical Contracting Limited; Thermal Impact Affordable Homes Company Limited; PR Contracting Limited; Agis Incorporate Tech Company Limited; Crown Jay's Limited; Super Industrial Services Limited; Universal Projects Limited; Trinity Housing; H. Lewis Construction Limited; B. K. Hardware Limited; Winchester Industries International Limited; Uniform Building Contractors Limited; Basco's Hardware and General Building Contractor; ICP Pascal; Rainbow Construction Limited; NH International Caribbean Limited Home Construction Limited; BSI Inspectorate America Corporation; Rujel Batima International; Bolder Limited; Gamcor International Incorporated; Atlas

Engineering Limited; Harricrete Limited; Sarca Construcciones; Trinity Prefab Homes; Docks Homes Limited; Matzac; Gasco Limited; Central Project Management Limited and Building Concepts Limited.

After the application of criteria for the selection of joint venture partners, Winchester Industries International Limited, Bynoe Roe Wiltshire Partnership and Management Construction Consultant Limited were chosen to design, finance and construct 368 housing units.

A recommendation was then made to the board of the NHA and a joint venture contract entered into between Winchester Industries International Limited and the National Housing Authority in May 2003.

It is to be noted that the procedure and criteria for the selection of joint venture partners was the subject of a reply by the Minister of Housing to the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to question No. 24 of the notice of question paper 2003—2004 session.

The projected completion date of the original project was November 30, 2004.

**Sen. Mark:** Madam President, as I understand it the Minister was requested to provide us with not merely the names of the firms but the various prices that they bid. We only got the names of the 33 firms. The Minister did not provide us with the respective prices as was requested. I do not know if the hon. Minister would want to provide us with the list of prices that the respective firms bid.

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** Madam President, the process of selection was not one of competitive bidding. It was one of pre-qualification for the selection of a joint venture. Against quantities and prices established by the NHA negotiations were done with the selected joint venture partner. That is done on each site. When a joint venture partner is selected against the established quantities, negotiations take place and you establish the price for the contract. That is how the joint venture arrangement works.

#### **Townhouses at Ramgoolie Trace, Curepe (Construction and Completion)**

**74. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Housing:

With respect to the construction/completion of six blocks of townhouses each containing seven units at Ramgoolie Trace, Curepe, could the Minister provide this Senate with:

- (i) the scope of works for this package;

- (ii) the names and tender price of each contractor that applied;
- (iii) the name and tender price of the contractor to whom the contract was awarded; and
- (iv) the expected commencement and completion dates of this phase of the project?

**The Minister of Housing (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley):** Madam President, the scope of works for the construction/completion of this project is the construction of four new buildings; construction of two partially constructed first floor slabs; completion of all block work and rendering; completion of roof framing and roof sheeting to all units; complete plumbing and electrical installations to all units; supply and install doors, windows and cupboards to all units; supply and install floor and wall tiling and suspended acoustic ceiling and painting of all five buildings.

The names and tender prices of each contractor that applied are as follows:-

<b>Tenderers</b>	<b>Tender Sums</b>	<b>Construction Periods</b>
Hammer Construction Ltd.	\$11,991,814.33 Vat inclusive	10 months
Basco's Hardware and General Building Contractor	\$12,017,417.43 Vat inclusive	12 months
Tripple Bique Company	\$12,324,473.16 Vat inclusive	12 months
R2K Engineering Company Limited	\$13,285,889.86 Vat inclusive	Not stated
Nardel Company Limited	\$14,314,763.00 Vat inclusive	8 months
Cardil Construction Company	\$15,875,639.14 Vat inclusive	16 months
CG Construction Services Limited	\$17,442,067.25 Vat inclusive	16 months
Quantity Surveyor's Estimate	\$11,581,316.50 Vat inclusive	10 months

The name and tender price of the contractor to whom the contract was awarded is Hammer Construction Limited and the tender price is \$11,991,814.33 VAT inclusive.

The expected commencement and completion dates of the project are April 1, 2005 and January 31, 2006.

**Sen. Mark:** Madam President, I did not have the opportunity to get the response in writing, but I would like the hon. Minister to indicate to this Senate whether it is usual for the contract that was eventually awarded to this particular company—when you look at the quantity surveyor's price it reads \$11,581,316.50. We realize that the bid of the successful contractor or builder was about \$11,000,999.

**Madam President:** Sen. Mark, you are asking a supplemental. Ask the question and let the Minister answer.

**Sen. Mark:** Could the Minister explain to this Senate the kind of closeness in price between that of the quantity surveyor and the company that finally won the contract?

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** Madam President, I do not know that there is anything to explain. There is an open bidding process and contractors bid. NHA evaluates the bid and awards the contract. The quantity surveyor will make an assessment of the work and have an estimate. There is nothing to explain.

**Sen. Mark:** The Minister did indicate that this project is supposed to be completed by November 2004. We are now in May 2005. Is the Minister in a position to tell the Senate when this project is expected to be completed?

**Madam President:** Mr. Minister, do you want to reiterate what you said?

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** This particular project was the subject of an earlier question and I gave all the details available on it. At this point in time I am not prepared to enter into that again. It is on the public record. If there are changes and new questions are filed on new issues I can answer those. I did respond to that here before.

**Ramgoolie Trace, Curepe  
(Three Bedroom Apartments)**

**75. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the Hon. Minister of Housing:

With respect to the construction of the 180 three bedroom apartments at Ramgoolie Trace, Curepe, could the Minister provide this Senate with:

- (i) the names and tender price of all firms that applied;
- (ii) the original tender price submitted by Winchester Industries International Ltd;
- (iii) the name and tender price of the new firm to which the contract was awarded; and
- (iv) the expected commencement and completion dates of this project?

**The Minister of Housing (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley):** Madam President, for the benefit of Senators, I need to explain because the answer says that this project has not as yet gone out to tender. Lest it be construed that I am saying that the project has not gone out to tender, the question applies to a part of the original project. If that is understood, I can say that this project which is a part of the wider project has not gone out to tender. That is the three bedroom units.

Winchester Industries International Limited had submitted an original price of \$34,480,404 in respect of 252 two bedroom apartment units and not for the construction of 180 three bedroom apartments.

No tender has as yet been awarded for the construction of the 180 three bedroom apartments.

**Ramgoolie Trace, Curepe  
(Plumbing and Infrastructural Works)**

**76. Sen. Wade Mark** asked the hon. Minister of Housing:

With respect to the Housing Project at Ramgoolie Trace, Curepe, could the Minister inform this Senate of:

- (i) the original estimated cost of the plumbing and infrastructural works;
- (ii) the revised scope of works;
- (iii) the amount of money that has been paid as at March 23, 2005 for plumbing and infrastructural works; and
- (iv) the names and tender price of the firms/licensed plumbers that have now tendered/resubmitted tenders for the revised plumbing and infrastructural works?

**The Minister of Housing (Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley):** Madam President, the original estimated cost of the plumbing and infrastructural works, inclusive of drains and roads, is \$8,557,988.00.

The revisions to the plumbing and infrastructural works are not yet complete and therefore there is no revised scope of works.

The sum of \$1,259,285 was certified for infrastructural works as at March 31, 2005. However it is impossible to state exactly the sum paid for plumbing and infrastructural works since sums which were originally paid as an advance payment now have to be allocated against work done on site.

No tenders have as yet been invited for the revised scope of works for plumbing and infrastructural works

**Sen. Mark:** Could the hon. Minister indicate to us when he would expect the revised scope of works to be completed?

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** Madam President, the management and issuing of contracts are not handled at the Ministry of Housing in the Minister's office. That is handled at the appropriate office at the NHA. Such a question I will not have an answer for on my feet here. If the Member wants to file a new question, I can get the information and bring it back to the Senate.

**Sen. Mark:** Could the hon. Minister share with us what in his assessment has gone wrong with this project at Ramgoolie Trace having regard to the cost overruns that are now surrounding this project?

**Hon. Dr. K. Rowley:** On this particular project, I had the opportunity to come to the Senate before and give all the available information resulting in the termination of the contract where a contractor was not performing. I gave all the reasons known to us and what we had done about it. There is no new information and I have no opinion to cast other than what I told the Senate.

*The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Sadiq Baksh:*

**Caroni (1975) Limited**  
**(Training of Former Employees)**

- 80.** Could the Minister responsible for Caroni inform this honourable Senate:
- (a) How many former Caroni (1975) Limited employees applied for training;
  - (b) How many were approved for accessing training;
  - (c) How many former employees completed their training and the name of the institution providing the training;
  - (d) The cost of the training provided to former employees?



**The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Christine Sahadeo):** Madam President, it would be ready at the next sitting.

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE REPAYMENT**

[Fourth Day]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [January 25, 2005]:*

*Be it hereby resolved* that this House condemns the use of State funds for party political purposes by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago;

*And be it further resolved* that this House recommends to the Government that steps be taken to have all those persons responsible for ordering and/or allowing the use of State funds for the said advertisements repay same to the Treasury forthwith failing which this debt shall attach to their persons and property jointly and severally and be enforceable in the same way as if it were a judgment enforceable by the High Court of Justice. [*Sen. R. Montano*]

*Question again proposed.*

**Sen. R. Montano:** Madam President, could you enlighten me a little? I know that Sen. Prof. Deosaran moved an amendment which I seconded. I am trying to find out the procedure. As far as my side and I are concerned we want the Motion to be as amended by Sen. Prof. Deosaran. I am asking you for guidance in this matter.

**Madam President:** At the end of the debate the amendment will be put. If it is accepted by the Senate, then the amended Motion will be put to the Senate.

**Sen. R. Montano:** That is why you read out the Motion.

**Madam President:** Yes.

Let me remind you of all those who have already spoken on the Motion so that they will not speak again. They are Sen. Robin Montano, Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith, Sen. Dr. Eastlyn Mc Kenzie, Sen. Roy Augustus, Sen. Prof. Kenneth Ramchand, Sen. The Hon. Rennie Dumas, Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan, Sen. Wade Mark, Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran and Sen. The Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid.

Sen. The Hon. Abdul-Hamid was speaking. I do not have any information here. Sen. Abdul-Hamid spoke for 27 minutes. I will tell you when your time is up.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Madam President, I would like the opportunity to take a few minutes so I can follow on from where I was one month ago. I was attempting to make a few important points. I was trying to establish that democracies grow and evolve and we have a responsibility to nurture our democracy and to expand and develop it. As we learn more about democracy; various systems of democracy and democratic practices that are available around the world and as our knowledge base expands, we interpret the information and use it in a way to develop the relationship between government and people, the Parliament and the people of our country. We also use technology to develop that relationship. Democracies grow and evolve and we must respect that as a feature of any democracy and, more particularly, of ours and embrace that process. We have been working in government to try to develop that process even further.

There were a number of mechanisms that we used, and we continue to use, in an attempt to expand, enhance and strengthen our democracy and to improve the quality of communication and interaction between the Government and the people. I did mention that we have been using the process of consultation at various levels. I also mentioned the public broadcasting of the parliamentary debates that we have embraced. We have done so in furtherance of the cause of the development of our democracy.

**2.00 p.m.**

I am asking that the advertisements which are the subjects of this Motion, be understood or considered in that context. It is an opportunity to engage the minds of our citizens; and it is an opportunity to contribute to the development of our democracy to improve the communication between Government and the people, and between the Members of Parliament and the people.

Madam President, I also made the point that Members do not own their seats. In a sense, Members have to respond to the concerns of citizens in their constituencies on an ongoing basis. Members ought not to hold the view that having been appointed or elected to a seat in this Parliament that that seat is for them to do as they please, but rather Members ought to adopt a position that allows for continuous communication between each Member and the citizens that the Member represents. So it is quite in order for citizens to make representation on an ongoing basis to their constituency representatives, or to a bourgeoisie political approach where a Member sees that seat as belonging to him, and he can make use of it to suit himself, or whatever narrow interest he may have.

I also made the point about the role of the Opposition. I did identify that in the United Kingdom, the opposition is known as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, because the system of democracy that we practise contemplates reasonable behaviour. In fact, it contemplates behaviour better than reasonable; it contemplates that Senators and Members of the House of Representatives are to behave in a way that is consistent with the best interest of the country, and that any narrow political interest they may have would have to be set aside whenever issues of national importance come up for debate and to the fore.

Madam President, I did say that in Trinidad and Tobago, we have been having some difficulties in getting our Opposition to behave as responsibly as we would like them to behave, but out of bad challenges you sometimes find that you have to be your best creative self. As difficult as the Opposition may try to make this country for us to govern—that is something that some Members of the Opposition have established as their *modus operandi*. In fact, Members have been known to say that they would make this country ungovernable. That kind of opposition causes a government to be creative and to find ways to communicate with the people to expand and develop that communication.

I suppose that if there is one good thing that is coming out of this departure on the part of the Opposition—from the standards of ethics associated with the practice of opposition politics in the Westminster system—is actually serving to improve the relations of the Government with the people, because the Government is finding itself reaching out more; it is finding itself nurturing and cultivating a stronger tie with the people. The people have been responding very well, because we have been in direct contact with them on this issue and a number of other issues.

I think the advertisements have served a positive purpose in that much of the population understands a number of issues now, not only the specific issues that are associated with this Bill, but the Bills that we talked about. They understand how Parliament works; they understand the role a number of persons would have to play; they understand the role of the Opposition; and they understand the limitations of the Government. We are here expressing a need and a desire to take action in the interest of the public, and the public has been able to see that the Parliament has real power and the Parliament is a place where our democracy lives. It lives in the sense that Members of Parliament can use power constructively and destructively. Hopefully, once the citizens understand that, then they are going to understand that it is very important whenever we have an election in whose hands they put that particular power of a seat in Parliament.

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. THE HON. M. ABDUL-HAMID]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

Madam President, any political system can be undermined, whether it is the presidential system, as practised in the United States of America; whether it is the proportional representation system that is practised in Guyana and other countries; whether it is a system of consociational democracy; or whether it is the Westminster system. Any system can be undermined. It can be undermined because systems make assumptions about the nature and quality of human beings. Systems expect people to behave in a particular way; systems expect people to behave in a reasonable way. Having made those assumptions—the system on the basis of those assumptions—people expect that it would succeed.

Madam President, failing to attract reasonable persons to participate in a system of government, one can find that the system can be undermined. For example, even in the United States of America system, if members of the Congress were steadfastly unwilling to make decisions in the national interest—there was a time when there was talk about gridlock, and what breaks gridlock is reason. That is when people are willing to cross paths and hard lines and make decisions in the national interest—you get republicans voting in favour of a budget that might be presented by a democratic president, and the inverse is that you get the democrats voting in favour of a budget that might be presented by a republican president. Without the exercise of that kind of reason, which the system assumes, it is very easy to undermine that system and shut it down. They could also have problems with the appointment of judges in the US system, if people were not willing to exercise reason and not willing to act in the national interest.

The point I am making is that we find ourselves here in a situation where there seems to be an effort to freeze the system. It has been stated that the country would be ungovernable; there is a call for constitutional reform and, in the interim, there is an attempt to shut the system down and to make it impossible to work. That is what we are seeing. I am saying that even with the call for constitutional reform, if that were to come to pass and the system is replaced, and even the system with which the Westminster is replaced, that too can be undermined and it can be undermined once persons are prepared—

[*Sen. R. Montano stands.*]

**Hon. Senator:** What is your point of order?

**Sen. R. Montano:** It is not a point of order. I do not wish—

**Madam President:** Are you giving way?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Madam President—

**Madam President:** Senators, if the Minister says that he is not giving way, you know that you would have to—it is up to the Senator to say that he is giving way.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Madam President, through you, I am respectfully asking that he give way.

**Hon. Senators:** No.

**Sen. R. Montano:** It would help. It is not to criticize him.

**Madam President:** Can you do it during your reply?

**Sen. R. Montano:** Madam President, basically—

**Madam President:** Senators?

**Sen. R. Montano:** Well, all right, Madam President, go ahead. Never mind. Go ahead; go ahead.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** They do not ever give way for anything.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Madam President, I know the gentleman. *[Laughter]*

**Sen. Dumas:** There is a history. *[Laughter]*

**Madam President:** Go ahead, Senator.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Madam President, thank you very much for allowing me to continue. Madam President, any system can be undermined in the absence of reason, on the part of the persons who participate in the system.

**Sen. Joseph:** This is a good example right now.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** In any system, there are rules and the rules must be respected. Madam President, as I say that, people have said that our Constitution does not contemplate an 18/18 situation, but that is not entirely true, because it did, in fact, contemplate such a situation. The way that it is framed in the Constitution is that in the opinion of the President, it is the person who is likely to command the majority. So that reflects that an 18/18 was, in fact, contemplated, otherwise it would have stated the person who actually commands a majority. The point I am making is that any system can be undermined in circumstances where people are determined to undermine the system. What evidence did we see of that?

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. THE HON. M. ABDUL-HAMID]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

Madam President, there is no reason; there is no logic; and there is no basic common sense, but there is a political objective in any political party nominating somebody and proceeding not to vote for that person. I am citing that as an example of a deliberate attempt to undermine a system or to cause a system to collapse. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** That is true.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** We have been working hard to keep our system together. We believe that as we move forward with this constitutional reform exercise that it has to be structured; it has to be informed by good sense; it has to be informed by research; it has to be informed by healthy discussions; and it ought not to be a situation where we simply mash up everything that exists now, and try to haphazardly put something together.

Madam President, some of the proposals that were put forward at that time were attempts to undermine the system. I am putting all this in the context of deliberate attempts to undermine the system, which is a characteristic, I think, we have to deal with. When you say one minister for you; one minister for me; which was proposed at that time, Madam President, if you are really trying to set up a system where you govern this side of the country, and I govern that side of the country, that would be inconsistent with our system; it is inconsistent with what would have been contemplated at the start. So we do expect a level of responsibility as we move forward—a level of responsibility on the part of our Members of Parliament to behave in the national interest.

The peculiar circumstances that surrounded these Bills, again, demonstrated a lack of reason; a lack of goodwill; and a lack of dedication to the national interest. How else do you explain where Members of the Opposition would have accepted that concept; and would have managed the entire process? The outcome would have been produced under their management and now they have turned and said that they would have no part of it. The only variable that had changed was that they were no longer in government. Madam President, that communicates to me that this is an issue that only concerns a particular narrow interest.

I cannot see any sense, any reason, or any dedication to the national interest, when a process that they have managed and were responsible for—they turned around and dismissed the process really as a result of their dissatisfaction with one factor, which was that they no longer hold power, and they no longer have the authority to manage the police authority, as the case was in this particular instance.

Madam President, that together with the issue of the speaker that I talked about, together with the call for civil disobedience, and together with the question of their political morality, et cetera; all those things cause us to look at things in a different light. That statement, “politics has a morality of its own” is the context in which I now have to understand all of their behaviour. What it does is destroy the credibility of the Opposition. I do not know which morality they are acting with on any particular day.

**Madam President:** Hon. Senators, the speaking time of the hon. Senator has expired.

*Motion made,* That the hon. Senator’s speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. R. Montano*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. R. Montano:** I am enjoying this contribution.

**Madam President:** Senator, thank you very much. You will have your opportunity.

**Sen. R. Montano:** I intend to.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Madam President, may I extend my sincere thanks to Sen. R. Montano for his good wishes; deep and sincere as they are and cloaked in political morality, I am sure. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. R. Montano:** I want you to talk. The more you talk the better.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Madam President, Sen. Seepersad-Bachan talked about principles. I was a little confused because I was not sure which morality to apply to her set of principles.

**Sen. Dumas:** A confusing set of principles.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** I asked myself whether these principles were new-found principles; whether they had some resolution the night before; and whether they were going to start to adopt those principles to guide the conduct of the Opposition party. Madam President, I say so because there were a number of issues that took place before that did not reflect in their action, any evidence of a commitment to principles.

Madam President, how can you set up a distance learning centre, which is a sole department in a ministry and call it Distance Learning Secretariat, and then proceed to set up so-called distance learning centres and establish them in Couva

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. THE HON. M. ABDUL-HAMID]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

South, on the first floor of a building that accommodates the Member of Parliament for Couva South; in Couva North, in a building next door to the building that houses the Member of Parliament for Couva North; in Arouca, in a building owned by one of their advisors; and in Barrackpore, in a building owned and associated with the Member of Parliament for that constituency?

Madam President, I am not seeing any principles there. I am looking it through guardedly, because I understand that they have a set of political principles, as well. I am asking the question: Was the concept of principles the subject or a resolution, perhaps recently, in that party? Are they now saying that they are committed to this thing called “principles”? Have they invented and defined a new system? I asked that question in response to principles, and in the context of these advertisements to which they have objected. I remember that there were school exercise books for children, and the face of their political leader was all over these exercise books.

**Sen. Dumas:** Advertisements? Brainwashing?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** They seemed like advertisements to me being distributed to schoolchildren all over the place—a yellow and orange copybook; yellow and orange pencils. I am asking myself if there is a principle in behaviour like that.

I remember reading a document where I identified the cost of a door for \$96,000 at one of their projects. That was the cost for one door. Is that consistent with UNC’s principles?

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Tell us what you are talking about. We do not know what you are talking about.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** I want to ask the question: Is it a principle to build with gypsum and not concrete? I am looking for what they mean by principles. I would also like them to respond to a particular issue.

I remember some years ago, Mr. James Cavelle came to Trinidad to advise the Opposition. I want to ask the question, since they are talking about spending the State’s money for political purposes: Who funded that? Who paid for James Cavelle? Was he paid from the State’s funds or did the UNC political party pay for that?

**Sen. Joseph:** Sadiq could answer that question. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Tell me!



**Sen. Dumas:** They do them first advice.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** I thank him for coming because he gave them the best advice to leave the government. I am sure that he had something to do with their departure.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Madam President, on a point of order.

**Madam President:** What is your point of order?

**Sen. R. Montano:** Imputing improper motives. I have been very busy trying to take notes. Did I hear the Minister right when he says that Cavelle was paid with State's funds?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** No.

**Madam President:** No, no, excuse me—

**Sen. R. Montano:** Because if that is what he said, I am going to object.

**Madam President:** He was asking—I do not think that he was saying—the probability that it must have been so.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Oh! That is acceptable. I agree.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** That is principle.

**Sen. R. Montano:** No problem.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** That is why he asked the question. He knows that it is not true.

**Sen. Dumas:** Are you saying that he was not?

**Sen. R. Montano:** Yes, I am saying that.

**Madam President:** Please, Minister, would you continue? [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Madam President, I am sure that we can—

**Sen. Dumas:** On UNC politics.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:**—compile a thick dossier of issues where they would have had questionable standards of principles. Madam President, I have been a Minister of this Government for the last three years—not a chairman of a state enterprise—and I did not come anywhere close to spending \$500,000 on travel. I do not travel, and I am a Member of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, and I have a need to travel from time to time. We exercise discretion and we exercise reason. [*Interruption*]

**Madam President:** Senator?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Madam President, it would be very difficult for us to support this Motion. We do not trust that this Motion was done in the national interest; we do not trust the standards of morality of the Opposition; and we do not trust that they care about anybody other than themselves. We trust that they are obstructionists. I am confident, in my mind, that their intention is to undermine the system of government that we operate. This is a part of that exercise, just as the entire exercise in civil disobedience and all the others that they have done.

There is a long list of examples and lack of commitment to this country and, as a result of that, given their state of mind—in terms of what they understand to be morality—I have to say that I have great objection to this Motion being put. I find it to be mischievous, troublesome and narrow in its political agenda. As a result of that, I would like to take the position that this particular Motion, and the way that it has been put forward, in my view, is a waste of good parliamentary time.

Madam President, thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Basharat Ali:** Madam President, I am thankful for this opportunity to talk on this very important Motion. I have been waiting for quite a while, because this debate started on January 25, 2005. First of all, let me say, I do agree with a number of statements of the proposer of the Motion, and with a number of the other Senators. The Motion, as proposed, is one I cannot really vote for.

**Madam President:** Senator, there is an amendment, so you could talk about it as you go along.

**Sen. B. Ali:** I note that there is an amendment from Sen. Prof, Ramesh Deosaran, and I am quite happy with that amendment. I am willing to vote, when the time comes, on the basis of that motion.

Madam President, as I said, this debate started on January 25, 2005, and just two days before in the *Sunday Express*, there was a column by a former distinguished Senator, Martin Daly SC headed: “Artful dodging”. In fact, this is a very interesting and incisive statement. Let me just read a little of it. He says in this article dated January 23, 2005:

“The Artful Dodger is a character in the novel *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. The Dodger was so named because of his ability to avoid being caught by the police although he ran a notorious gang of child thieves. The

designation Artful Dodger has now passed into common language to refer to someone who is good at avoiding responsibility or the consequences of his actions.

In the Caribbean, we recognize the Dodger by his use of robber talk. The Dodger also employs so-called communication specialists. Their mission is to spin the truth when the Government or its Ministers have no real answers to our problems and need to dissemble. Many times the words spun are gaudy or are \$40 words, all the better to bamboozle the citizen. In this land of the ready-at-hand political excuse we easily recognize the method of operation. Who will deliver us from the evil of artful dodging?"

I am a great opponent of "spin" as it is called. This is a relatively new phenomenon worldwide but, I think, in a way, it is deception. Under the guise of public education, we get many persons, in all systems, where individuals and organizations do many advertisements which are intended to be for the education of the public and which are meant to make them look good.

Madam President, this is not the first time that I am talking on this matter. Even when I was a temporary Senator, I had cause to refer to this kind of advertisement. When I talked on October 22, 2003, I was a temporary Senator, and I had the opportunity to talk in the budget debate. I chided the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) for what I called "disingenuous advertisement" on the benefits of lead removal that ran in the *Express* newspaper for a number of days.

Madam President, the phasing down of lead was almost there already, but it was announced in the budget, and they took that step to bring it before us. I am trying to find the page that refers to that. [Pause] Madam President, sorry for the delay. That advertisement that I was talking about reads:

"Trinidad and Tobago is phasing out LEAD from gasoline. Lead used in gasoline can cause serious damage to human health. It can adversely affect the brain, blood, nervous system and vital body organs such as the kidneys and lungs. Lead can also hinder proper mental development in children.

With the removal of lead from gasoline, we can enjoy:

- An environment that supports proper mental (IQ) development among our children
- Improved academic performance from students."

Madam President, at that time, I asked the Minister of Education to please note: "Improved academic performance from students".

Madam President, I was struck by the report of the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA). I wish the hon. Minister would look at the *Report of the SEA 2001 to 2004* dated November, 2004 which gave the performance of students over that period. In fact, I acknowledge that the period is within basically a phase-down of lead, but it is not really representative of whether we are in a “no lead” state. Nevertheless, it is interesting because this report says that the best performances were from Victoria and St. George East, where I believe there would be a greater concentration of lead in the air due to urban San Fernando which is Victoria and the East-West Corridor in St. George East. I also noted in this report that the girls outperformed the boys. Maybe the girls are less susceptible to lead. I do not know. I eagerly await the next report which would be during the “no lead” period.

Madam President, let me get to the substance of this Motion which we have before us. It was in June 2004 when the advertising campaign started for the three Bills which were called the Police Reform Bills. My note says that the TV advertisements started in June 11, 2004. I talked about this in this Senate on June 15, 2004, during the debate on the Finance Bill. What struck me then, even at the beginning of this campaign, was this advertisement that says: “Let the Bills pass” The slogan was: “Let the Bills pass”. When Minister Enill made his presentation on the Finance Appropriation Bill on June 15, I said that I expected him to say: “Let the Bills pass”, but he did not take me on. I was a little more than upset that a child was, in fact, one of the persons saying: “Let the Bills pass”. That child did not know what the “Bills” were. In fact, my comment at the time was the only bill that the child knows was a dollar bill. I even said that I hoped that she had received an ample supply of dollar bills. For the benefit of the verbatim reporter, I said “ample”, a lower case adjective and not a higher case acronym, to make myself clear.

I am convinced that the campaign which started then was to try to influence all of us. I think we were all exposed on this Bench to queries from the media, print and TV. I know I was called at home and asked about it. Many of my colleagues on this Bench spoke out on the Bills, and the Bills which were supposed to come here on June 29, 2004 did not come here after all. I think the Government sensed that it would not have passed muster to get the two-thirds majority which was required for the Constitution amendment, and it moved from here to the Lower House for that same day, June 29, 2004.

I followed most of that debate, because most of it was live. I thought it was a good debate. I dare say that if I had to vote at the end of it I would not have voted for the Bill as the Opposition did when they had an opportunity to do so.

Madam President, this business of “spin” has become endemic. I have raised this matter before. I know hon. Minister Joan Yuille-Williams would remember that I raised this matter in the context of the Prime Minister’s breakfast meetings which are party sponsored meetings. I take exception to the party sponsoring—whatever you choose to call it—a breakfast. When the party is doing something, he is not the Prime Minister; he is a political leader. Of course, all the persons get invited. I do not think anybody refuses to pay the \$250 or whatever it is that they have to pay.

Many things came out of that including misinformation. I am prepared to say that. I know for a fact that the Prime Minister misspoke about duty-free concessions which we enjoyed. I said it in this House that we had duty-free concessions on methanol and urea. In fact, from day one of the production of these products we had concessions. I asked someone who attended and he said, yes, that is what the Prime Minister said. I said to him: “Why did you not speak about it?” He said: “Do you think that I want to commit suicide.” That was his statement to me. He was a person who knew all about duty-free concessions for these products. These have continued and I note that the third one was held about two weeks ago.

The *Business Express* dated May, 18, 2005 reported on it and they referred to it as a “so-called breakfast for the Prime Minister.” They said that he talked about fundamental objectives and strategies for the country to move forward to developed country status on or before 2020; fast-tracking measure to encourage increased exploration aimed at increasing crude oil production. I think what the Prime Minister was saying was that he wants to have a greater concentration of efforts to produce oil, because in the previous regime, we were dependent on oil. So he wants to get back to that. Nothing is wrong with that.

He talked about renegotiation of duty-free relations with the United States of America, and these are for goods packaged in Trinidad and Tobago. I do not know what that means. We are promised now—I believe Sen. Enill is party to that—a brand new energy and non-energy tax regime in the next budget. So those were the things that came out in the breakfast meeting with the Prime Minister. We never get a chance to debate these matters in Parliament until they come at budget time.

I believe I heard correctly that the Prime Minister said no more methanol, except for downstream; no more ammonia, except for downstream; and no more iron and steel except for downstream, I presume. Within the last year, we have

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. ALI]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

given two concessions for iron and steel. The International Steel Group (ISG), where one person was killed last week—I am sorry that the new hon. Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development is not here, because I would have asked him to follow up on the death that occurred as a result of an incident at ISG.

I often wonder whether our people negotiating with ISG knew at the same time, ISG was in negotiation with Mittal Steel, so now that it is a done deal—they have gotten the concession that they required, we have found out that ISG is a subsidiary of Mittal Steel, and Mittal Steel is the new name for Ispat. So, there are two brothers or sisters or whatever it is—two siblings—who are subsidiaries of the same group there. I hope that the persons who were negotiating at the time knew about this, but it seems that they need to do something about safety habits.

I was appalled last week when that accident took place. I really was. The local communication officer could not make a statement because the communications officer for ISG is based overseas. He was not here. He made a release by e-mail on this incident or whatever they choose to call it. I say it is an incident, because when a person dies it is not an accident. Something has happened which caused that. Accidents do not happen; they are caused. I do not know how ISG is operating here. I hope sooner, rather than later, I will learn a little more of what is happening there.

Madam President, when I was talking here in June 2004, I said that I would have liked to be able to find in a one-line statement, how much money was spent, or how much was proposed to be spent in advertising publicity, et cetera; and whether it was money well spent at that time. I could not get an answer to that, so I took a very tedious, painstaking way of going about it from the budget documents: *Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Statutory Bodies and Similar Bodies of the Tobago House of Assembly* for the financial year 2005 and *Draft Estimates Details of Recurrent Expenditure* for financial year 2005. I went through almost every page in these documents to find Item 62 which is: “Promotions, publicity and printing”. I excluded the year 2004, because the numbers there are not as good as one would have expected in this document. What I chose to put together were the actual expenditures for 2003 and the budget estimate for 2005, and those numbers were staggering to me.

The expenditure for statutory bodies and the Tobago House of Assembly et cetera, the actual figure for 2003 was \$39,399,000; and for 2005, the estimate for that same group is \$42,992,300; for the expenditure for Ministries, including the

Judiciary and commissions, et cetera; the figure for 2003 was \$8,233,850; and that figure for 2005 is a colossal \$90,646,200. So the grand total of expenditure on this line item alone for 2003 was \$47,632,950, and the estimate for 2005 is \$133,638,600. Note that this figure does not include the other line item which is hosting of conferences, seminars and other functions; it does not include the contract employment of communication specialists and support staff; it does not include publication expenditure or budget of state enterprises, for example, Petrotrin, NGC, eTeck, TSTT, et cetera.

Madam President, some of the Senators may be interested in the big spenders in this lot. Let me just highlight a few. For the Tobago House of Assembly, the figure I have here is \$20,682,000 for 2003 of which \$20,138,400 is listed as transportation and enterprise development, whatever that may be; and the budget for 2005 is \$8,695,100.

**2.45 p.m.**

Organization	Actual	Budget
	2003	2005
	\$	\$
NLCB	8,301,000	12,000,000

Madam President, that does not include the spendings on behalf of NLCB by G-TECH which were in a list, which we all received here two sittings ago.

Other big spenders:

NALIS	1,784,000
NHA	800,000

which has surprised me.

WASA	2,787,500	
	2,926,200	
AATT	1,824,700	5,500,000
PATT		2,955,000
COSTATT	620,600	1,800,000

Those are what I call the big spenders. Of the ministries:

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. ALI]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

Judiciary		1,079,000
Service Commissions		1,200,000
Office of the Prime Minister		4,500,000
Finance – General Administration	501,500	1,000,000
Planning and Development - General Administration	26,500	1,840,000
National Security		4,000,000
Attorney General’s Office	340,500	1,100,000
Consumer Affairs Community Outreach Programme	664,400	1,000,000
Education – General Administration		3,095,000
Health:	1,214,400	4,000,000
Supplies and Service		3,000,000

Those are some of the bigger numbers. I should mention this one:

Information Division		4,000,000
Tourism	6,500	48,590,500

It seems to be almost an epidemic of spending within this category of promotions, publicity and printing. I am unable to disaggregate those numbers, so perhaps someone on the other side might choose to enlighten me and put me right as to where we are going in that. But we seem to have a lot of money to put into there.

Madam President, I do not wish to go for much longer. I said in my notes that I had some difficulty with the “whereas” of the Motion. I have said it at the beginning and I repeat it, that I have taken note of the proposed amendment by Sen. Prof. Deosaran, with which I agree.

Madam President, I remain steadfast in my view that spin money can better be directed to social development and social delivery, so that more of our less



fortunate citizens could reap some benefit of the windfall which God has given to our nation.

Thank you.

**Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan:** Thank you, Madam President. I would like to thank my colleague, Sen. Montano, for bringing this Motion to this honourable Senate, because I believe that this Motion exposes a thin thread at present, but it is going to get more evident as we go along, in the politics of this country that needs to be exposed, and through this Motion we have a chance to expose it. I believe we have to hold this thread very firmly and follow this thread wherever it may lead us. I believe, it is what is called a tripwire, which is going to threaten the democracy of this country. You know, there is a saying that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance, and it is our duty as Senators on this side of the Senate to be eternally vigilant and to expose all pitfalls along the way to the population of Trinidad and Tobago. We have pledged and we would continue to pledge to the people of Trinidad and Tobago that we would not be gagged, we will talk inside and outside of Parliament. We will talk until we are hoarse and when we can talk no more we will write; when our hands are tired, we will make signs, but we will get our message out.

I assure the Hon. Abdul-Hamid that—he is concerned about defending democracy and so on—we will continue to expand and defend our democracy in this country, regardless of the legislation that continues to come before this Parliament that seeks to roll back all the democratic institutions that the UNC has sought to put in place in this country. I am happy to hear that he is a defender of democracy, because we will wait to see how he votes on certain legislation that is on the Order Paper of this Senate.

He made a point of talking about people who want to undermine the rule of law in this country. I think that the Government is doing a pretty good job of undermining the rule of law in this country all on its own, I do not think they need the Opposition to help them. [*Desk thumping*]

This Motion speaks to the use of political funds for party purposes and the immorality of this. Sen. Robin Montano eloquently expressed in his presentation the issues involved here. This Motion has another dimension that was touched on by my colleague, Sen. Seepersad-Bachan, and I would like to follow this trend of thought, this thread. This is the tripwire that I am talking about, the use of advertisements in print or electronic media in language couched in a most ominous and aggressive, belligerent manner, calling on Members of Parliament (MPs) to do or perform certain duties.

If you look at the implications of these ads, that were brought to the public domain in the form of commands—very belligerent. There are implications, because the advertisements had a word like "demand". There are even implications that are not stated in the ads, but that are ominous and dangerous and set dangerous precedents in this country.

Madam President, let us be logical, if you demand something of somebody, then surely non-compliance is going to bring certain consequences. You are not going to demand something and then when the person does not comply, you do nothing about it; then you are "grand charging". We all know in Trinidad that everybody has stopped "grand charging", people are serious now. So the ad implies a certain follow-through that something is going to happen if you do not comply, because I am demanding that you do certain things.

The question is—we on this side want to know—who is going to enforce these demands? What would be the consequences of non-compliance with these demands? In what manner, how and where are these demands going to be eventually enforced? Is it that the answers to these questions will surface in later ads when perhaps the whole issue of compliance will be raised in later advertisements and so on, because, obviously, we have not complied? We have to follow this thread very carefully because we are in dire times and in great peril. We have to follow it backward to see how we came to this position and we have to follow it forward to see how other countries, which are way ahead of us, have travelled that road and what condition they are in today—countries like Guyana, right here in the Caribbean; we do not have to go far. We only have to look at Haiti and Grenada and, more recently, further afield, Rwanda. We have to follow these threads as they unravel here and abroad. What is the politics?

The question I propose to answer in my contribution at the end of this debate is: What is the politics of this thread that we are holding onto today; this tripwire that has set a certain precedent in the politics of Trinidad and Tobago, where you have these print and electronic advertisements demanding that politicians or anybody do certain things?

Madam President, so to go back and to understand the context in which this whole drama is being played out in this country, I really want to make the point that this Motion speaks about the use and abuse of power in this society. Power in a neo colonial, developing society is given to a few to be used in the national interest and, given the very young state of democracy, our underdevelopment and government policies which foster this underdevelopment and cultural ignorance,

this power that is given to the political directorate is often abused and we saw events over the last three years that showed ample evidence of rank abuse of power. Events over the last few days have shown evidence of naked abuse of power. We have to understand the naked abuse of power in our environment in this country, in the context of the global environment, because what we are seeing globally is the naked power of the northern countries being used to institutionalize and legitimize the most brutal oppression on the underdeveloped countries of the South. It is a straight case of might is right, take it or leave it.

These advanced countries of the North are able to brutally rape and exploit our resources with the connivance of the local politicians, people whom they would probably have in their back pockets. With the connivance of corrupt “un-nationalist” government regimes which want power themselves over the local populace, they seek to introduce the draconian legislation that we have seen coming to this Parliament and in other Parliaments all over the world in order to pre-empt the rebellion that is inevitable in our society. We understand that this PNM regime is only too happy to oblige the “Northern Empire” from which they derive their power and authority and under whose shadow they abuse the power and authority they have in this country.

Madam President, the question is really: Why would a Government need to spend between \$2 million and \$5 million in print and electronic media, clearly aimed at harassing and intimidating Opposition MPs? I would like to answer that by saying they have to do that; they are reduced to that point, because they have betrayed the people's trust; they have betrayed the power which they have been given. After 45 years, given the power to look after the national interest, they have looked after the interest of a small clique of financiers, supporters, friends and so on. Therefore, that power has never been used to advance the national interest; to advance the intellectual capacity of our people; to advance us politically, culturally and socially; and the evidence is there. If we look around us today in Trinidad and Tobago, this Government had access to \$60 billion in the first oil boom, and, so far, over the last three years they have spent another \$90 billion. So we are talking about a Government that had access to over \$150 billion over the last 45 years. They have had the political support, which is most important, of the national community for a number of years. So what has this Government achieved with all this money and with all this political support?

As we look around us, do we see a culturally advanced society? Do we see a centre for the performing arts? Do we see artists growing in stature and recognition and so on? Do we see dancers, playwrights and musicians coming out

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. DR. KERNAHAN]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

of our institutions of art and culture and so on? Where are these institutions? Where are our artistes, dancers, playwrights and poets? They are still begging for a space in the national arena. When we look around us, after 45 years and \$150 billion, where is the infrastructure to show for this? Where are the well-developed communities, their flagship communities; communities that have always supported this Government? What is happening in those communities? Are their children motivated? Are their children well educated? Are their children among the top levels in universities? Are businesses booming in these communities? Are entrepreneurs coming out of these communities? Is employment productive in these communities? What have we achieved? Is our population able to access health and social services? Everywhere we look, all these institutions have fallen apart. Children now have resorted to burning down the schools, that is how desperate, that is how powerless they are, because they feel that they do not have any future in this country; they have lost hope.

After all the political goodwill in the world; after \$150 billion, our people are isolated from the politics. We have just debated in this Senate a Motion to bring Parliament, delayed broadcast or whatever, to the people. You look around and important bills are being debated here in Parliament and there is no interest, there is nobody in the public gallery. Our important national issues which are debated here are left to be interpreted by the talk show hosts on the radio and they have their own agenda; they have their own spin; they have their own issues and they project them in a manner that they feel will promote their particular agenda and contributions made here are sidelined, sidestepped; nobody knows what is happening inside here. We are practically talking to ourselves inside here, after 45 years.

What have we done with all this challenge of a neo colonial society, this challenge of the post independence period and so on? How have we been able to grab our young people, get them involved in the politics, get them interested in governance and issues of governance, and train them to follow in the footsteps of the present crop of leaders in this country? I do not know if I am going too fast for them. I do not know if this is too much 2020 for Members on the opposite side, but I am asking these questions. These are questions I expect they would ask themselves at this point in time. What have they achieved? What have they accomplished? So this regime, after having not achieved any of those things that we would have expected them to achieve in the national interest, after all this time, after all these billions of dollars spent, they now have to resort to playing strong man. They have to resort to the Ton Ton Macoute brand of politics and the Mongoose Gang brand of politics in dealing with the question of bringing issues to the people.

I think one of the greatest exposés of the deficiency of our democracy—in fact, we are debating this very important Motion here today in Parliament and we are going to talk and talk and talk, and everybody is going to talk and everybody is going to say how immoral and how illegal and all those things, and at the end of the day the Government has no obligation to do anything. In fact, what the Government usually does is to just use the majority to shut down independent voices in this country. So, clearly, the representatives of the people have no input in what happens in this country and therefore our democracy really is a sham, with all due respect to my colleague, Sen. Abdul-Hamid. This democracy that we cherish because it is all we know, it is very deficient and that is why we have been calling consistently for constitutional reform because we believe that the voices of the people must be heard in a more meaningful way. There must be mechanisms put in place to get issues to the people and to get issues from the people; there must be a two-way street, and we have not managed after 45 years and \$150 billion to establish those mechanisms in this country. So, therefore we have to resort to the talk down; to the advertisements; to spend millions of dollars, jobs for the boys and so on, to talk-down to people and to impose certain ideas from above.

The sad truth is that there are young people in this country who are leaving school at 15 and 16 years old and would not be able to read those ads—that is the sad and bitter truth in this country. I come from a family of teachers, my brother is a teacher, my sister-in-law is a teacher, I have nieces who are teachers and so on, and I have a young daughter who is training to be a teacher. Therefore the issues that face young people in the schools are regular fares at our dinner table, at our discussions when families get together. So I know the problems in the schools. My brother was recently asked to tutor a young boy, 12 years old, who would not recognize his name if he sees it marked big on this piece of paper. He has gone through the whole primary school system, he is into the secondary school system, and he cannot read. There are thousands like him because these children are allowed to just fall through the cracks and there is no mechanism to pick them up and bring them back into the system. I have spoken ad nauseam about this in the Senate. Children drop out of school and nobody follows them through and they end up violent; they end up angry; they end up inarticulate.

The psychologists have illustrated that a baby goes through a certain stage of violence and so on, because the baby is inarticulate. He cannot express himself and when that child reaches a certain stage where he can express himself better, he becomes less violent, because he can communicate and interact. This is what is happening to our adolescents who have been failed so miserably by this regime

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. DR. KERNAHAN]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

and by the education system they perpetrated over the 45 years they were there. They have not been able to produce an articulate, cultured and intelligent product out of the system and these young people cannot explain themselves, therefore they resort to violence. I am sure you have seen on television many times young people being interviewed after incidents in different arenas and a reporter would be trying to get from them what happened, what was the problem, and you are amazed to see young boys, 14 and 15 years, they speak in the series of slangs, expletives and when they run out of slangs and expletives they are dumb. They virtually cannot express any coherent idea. This is our problem. We are going to resort to printing all these fancy million-dollar ads in the newspaper and these children are not going to be able to read them.

I was looking at the whole question of literacy in our country and I was looking at this document, *Adult Literacy in Trinidad and Tobago*, by Godfrey St. Bernard and Carol Salim, Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University of the West Indies. I was looking at some of the figures; they are interesting. This was 1995. The situation has deteriorated since then, I am sure, given what is happening in our schools. At that time the figures showed that:

“Illiterate	12.6%
Functionally literate	86.6
Level 1 - Low	8.7 %
Level 2 - Intermediate	32.7 %
Level 3 - High	45%”

When you look at the figures, between those, in our society at that time, who were illiterate and those who were basically functionally literate—almost 54 per cent. Over half the population was either illiterate or functionally illiterate. How are you going to deal with getting the issues to this population and getting the issues from this population? Madam President, although people may be illiterate, they have ideas. They have issues; they have things that they want to see develop in this society and in their lives. They have personal aspirations and goals. They have goals for the national community, and so on. If you could get them to a stage where they can express these ideas, you would get good ideas that are necessary and useful to our development.

One of the major problems we face in this country—and I have said that over and over again—is that people have absolutely no idea of how governance works in this country. There was this young girl who came to my home and she was

asking me if I could get a job for her. "Yuh could hook meh up or what?" That is the way they speak in all these slangs and so on. So I said, "What can you do?" She is a young, pretty girl, 16 years old, about to leave school. I thought she was looking at some secretarial work, so I was trying to find out. "What skills do you have, what can you do?" She said: "Yuh could hook meh up where you does be nah, where yuh does be." I said, "What do you mean, 'where yuh does be'?" She said, "where yuh does sit down. I does see yuh on TV with the jury and the judge". Madam President, she was talking about Parliament. She is 16 years old, about to leave school, young, pretty girl and she was telling me if I could hook her up to get a job where I "does sit down with the jury and the judge and thing".

I was aghast! I mean, what are they teaching these children in school? They do not do social studies. There is a very good reason for that—there is this whole action and reaction syndrome that is going on in the secondary schools, where these children come from very violent neighbourhoods, because the culture of the community leader has been imposed on these neighbourhoods and these children are much influenced by the violence that is being imposed on their community. So they come to the schools with these very rebellious and violent tendencies. Then the teachers do not go to the classes. A lot of them take the opportunity not to try to impose any sort of discipline. A lot of young people tell me that they spend a lot of days with free periods, no teachers. No teachers come to the classrooms; they sit in the staff room and talk whole day and the children do what they want.

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

Madam President, I really was not surprised that this girl would be talking in that manner, that she wants to "hook up with the judge and the jury where I sit". She is not an isolated case you know; she is an example of what is happening in this country, the ignorance and the lack of understanding. We are going to take \$5 million to spend in advertising, job for the boys, job for our friends, for people to demand certain things of our MPs and we would not take a cent of that money for remedial work to bring our children up to the standard of education, literacy, culture and understanding of the system in which we live. It is really sad.

What we have developed over the years, is a society where people are completely removed from the politics; the majority is removed from the political process. For the majority of the people, the only time they get to participate is to dip their finger, to wave the flag and to wear the jersey and to wine; the rum and roti politic. This is what we have confined the participation of the majority of the people to in this politics.

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. DR. KERNAHAN]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

There is no statutory forum where people engage in the decision-making processes, either in local government or national government at any point in time. There is no place that somebody could go and say, well, what is coming up in Parliament—this Bill, the MP—what is happening I would like to make an input. I would like to say this, about this. We do not encourage that sort of involvement, there is no mechanism, there is no forum for that sort of involvement.

Madam President, after the people have voted, everything is done by the ruling classes; people who have access to the Ministers, who have the ear of Ministers, who have Ministers in their back pockets and so on, they are the people who make policy, they are the people who make the decisions, they are the people who run this country, and the masses are only called upon to vote when the five years have come and gone. Even Parliament, as has been the complaint here, session after session is a rubber stamp. There is nothing we can do here or say here to make any dent in any policy unless it is something really serious that they feel people are going to rise up and so on and they make a few concessions.

We are following the thread of the total lack of involvement of the people in politics: their participation in politics and their knowledge of the politics. I do not know how Sen. Abdul-Hamid could talk about governance and democracy and all these lovely words, when there is so much more to be done. There is so much work to be done and we should recognize our shortcomings and deficiencies and get down to the work and not try to mamaguy people, because we know you are mamaguying people and we are tired of it.

Madam President, we are following this thread and let us not forget that we are holding on to this thread where people are being called upon and demanded to do certain things now. The situation gets even murkier, muckier and dangerous, because we have seen, as I said before that even the institutions that were originally setup by the Eric Williams PNM, are totally sidelining the communities now, the village councils and the community centres. All of them have gone by the wayside and everything is given over to the bad boys and the community leaders and so on. That has serious implications for family life and for the economics in the village, nothing like economic life goes on in some of those marginal communities anymore.

Madam President, there are so many guns and there is so much violence, these supply trucks that go up into these villages to supply parlours and little food shops and so on, they are not going there anymore. They are not going there because they will get robbed. What is the point! So, if you have a little parlour, if you have



a little burger stand and so on, you have to leave your business, shut it up for the day and go out and get supplies and bring them in and hope that nobody molests you.

Madam President, a friend told me, that he was coming down one day from dropping somebody higher up in the Gonzales area where he plies a taxi, and going over to Laventille he was confronted by a couple of youths who were in the process of robbing a soft drink truck; an unusually, a brave person who actually ventured into that area that day. So they have their guns and they are robbing the truck; he was petrified; he did not know what to do, if to go back, if to go forward or if to go sideways. He did not know what to do. He knew the youth who was doing it. The youth came up to him and said "Go ahead nah. Go ahead. You go ahead, it's okay." He drove off breathing a sigh of relief that he was not instantly executed.

This young man knows that he is not going to say anything because the youth knows him. If he goes to the police or tries to report this, he knows that there will be serious repercussions, so he could afford to tell him "Go ahead nah, its all right" And that is the sort of environment that we have in these communities, these flagship communities, the stalwart supporters of the PNM. Total chaos, Madam President!

Young girls 16—17 years, instead of looking for jobs, looking for productive employment and looking to advance themselves intellectually and so on—easy money. They hook up with a drug man who has access to 14 and 15 URP cheques and they get a couple—I mean, they tell me, I talk to them. "He give meh \$5,000 this week you know, but he say next week he will give me a lil' extra because so, so, so..."

Madam President, that is how they are, that is what is going on in the communities, they are not looking for jobs, work ethics cut. Nobody is looking to go to university; nobody is looking to go to John D and nobody is looking to go to UTT. Everybody is looking to "hook up" with a URP foreman who has the cheques and who is running the gangs. All the talk we are talking about the AIDS pandemic in this country, can you imagine what this sort of culture that is being imposed on these communities is doing with respect to the AIDS pandemic, and all those young girls who these URP ghost gang leaders interact with and so on? They all have baby boys and when they get killed, these young single mothers are going to be left alone with these baby boys to fend for themselves in a very hostile environment and the vicious circle is going to continue. It is a system that is going to perpetuate itself in these communities. And the mothers are going to die too,

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. DR. KERNAHAN]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

because they are going to have AIDS and these young children are going to grow up and then the Muslimeen is going to take them, put a gun in their hand and tell them to go out and rob this one, kidnap this one and so on.

Madam President, we have failed them; the education system has failed them; the PNM has failed them and therefore, there are vultures out there who are just picking them up and training them to go out and rob, kill, murder, torture and kidnap. This is what is going on in all our communities and it is spreading like a virus right through the country. It is no longer confined to Morvant and Laventille. I saw a newspaper headline the other day "What is wrong with Morvant/Laventille?" Nothing is wrong with Morvant/Laventille. I grew up in Gonzales. Laventille is my neighbouring community; Morvant is a neighbouring community. Laventille, Gonzales and Belmont produced some of the finest minds in this country before this incarnation of the PNM—[*Desk thumping*] and the guns, the cocaine and the drugs and so on.

Lancelot Layne came from Gonzales; Joey Lewis came from Gonzales; Brother Resistance came from Laventille; some of the finest pan men came from Laventille, Belmont, Gonzales and these areas. Nothing is wrong with these areas! All my brothers and sisters went to university, all my neighbours' children are well-to-do people who went to university; who were able to advance themselves, until this incarnation of the PNM imposed the violence, culture of guns, drugs and community leaders on our communities. That is what is wrong with our communities. The PNM is wrong with our communities! Nothing is wrong with our communities; Gonzales and Morvant and so on. The problem is, we have to get rid of the PNM and everything will be okay.

So, Madam President, we are following the thread, in this milieu of all these guns, all this violence, the drugs, the anger, the neglect of all these children and the fact that we are manufacturing cold, heartless criminals who, when they walked in and shot a man in La Horqueta last week, you know what they walked in and told the man and the people who were in the house? We come to rob you and when we finish rob you, we will kill you. They told the man that—16 and 17 years old; young boys, heartless. They are scorpions—because we have bred them in the society and we continue to breed them. Then they robbed him and shot him dead. They not mamaguying you; they are not making joke; they are not *gran' charging* again; they are serious. When they tell you they are going to kill you; they are going to kill you. That is the type of person that we have, we are breeding by the thousand in this society—the PNM regime, under Patrick Manning.

Madam President, when we look at the context in which these demands are taking place, some of them who can read might read it; somebody might read it for them; somebody might tell them about it, but then again, they may not read because they have these advertisements on the electronic media also. When we look at the context in which these advertisements are emerging, we have to understand what the politics are. The politics of these advertisements that are emerging on the print and electronic media is Hutu politics and that is the most dangerous form of politics you could ever think about in this country. Hutu politics! I hope you understand what I mean by Hutu politics.

In Rwanda, Hutu politics caused the death of nearly 900,000 people in 10 days. Hutu politics: “Kill the cockroaches”—a subliminal message. Call on them to do this, that and the other. A high ranking member of this society was being importuned and harangued every day on the radio stations to pursue a certain course of action under the guise of whatever; for whatever reason they were calling on the high ranking official. That is Hutu politics and it is dangerous because we are following the thread here. We are talking about the emergence of Hutu politics in the context of a society that is filled with young, illiterate people who have no social conscience and who have more guns than food. That is the context in which we are talking about Hutu politics!

Madam President, it is not only going to affect people who they call on because these fellas, after a while they will go after whoever they feel to go after. They are not going to wait on anybody to give them instructions. Let us look at the scenario under the Hutu politics which is being introduced in this country, under this Patrick Manning regime. I want you to imagine that one night after 11 o'clock Wade Mark, Jennifer Kernahan or Sadiq Baksh might be driving up the bus route and he turns on the radio to get a little music to relax himself; while going up the road he probably hears a radio broadcast that goes something like this—

**Sen. Enill:** What station?

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** Beg pardon? Madam President, you could probably hear a broadcast that goes something like this, because we have heard broadcasts similar to this already, we just have to understand what we are hearing: “Sen. Wade Mark in the Senate today made certain unmentionable and contemptible allegations against our imperial prince and Prime Minister who is ordained by God to rule forever and ever. We therefore call on all children of God to action. Wade Mark has just left the Senate and is on his way home. If you are a true child of God it is your duty to come out and stop him and demand that he apologize

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. DR. KERNAHAN]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

immediately.” Madam President, Hutu politics! This is what we could very well hear one night going home from the Senate at 11 o’clock.

Madam President, the broadcaster could probably go on to say: “Wade Mark must be made to apologize for the contemptible remarks that he made about our imperial prince and Prime Minister ordained by God to rule Trinidad and Tobago forever and ever.” This is the politics of “kill the cockroaches”. This is what the people of Rwanda had to undergo because they lost their vigilance and because of this type of radio broadcast—I am certain it did not come one day, all at once. It came over a period of time and people allowed it to go; nobody looked and everybody turned their heads the other way; the apologists apologized and the people rationalized what was happening and so on. There are a lot of apologists and people who rationalize what is happening in this society right now, and they refuse to look reality in the face. They are refusing to look at the type of Hutu politics that is being perpetrated in this country.

Madam President, the ads that are going on in this country, right now, calling on a certain high ranking member of this society to resign and so on, that is obscene. I mean, nobody says anything. We are taking it for granted, everybody sitting, listening to this; people should be in the streets. What is that! Madam President, this could happen to you; this could happen to me; this could happen to the trade unions and this could happen to members of the press. There is a connection, we have to connect the dots, all of a sudden we see under the Hutu politics in this country a new broadcasting code coming into being. Do you think that these people want to have a press that would report the entire exposés that are being made here in the Senate, session after session; day after day? Do you think they want a free press which is able to report all those things? They want to shut the press up and they want to impose Hutu politics in this country so nobody would be able to talk; nobody would be able to breathe.

We have one of the most draconian pieces of legislation that is coming to this Senate. It is on the Order Paper the “Anti-terrorist Bill,” Hutu politics. People of Trinidad and Tobago have to get up and stop apologizing for the PNM; stop rationalizing what the PNM is doing and stop praying and moaning and groaning and realize that they have to get the PNM out of power. Vote them out of power when it is 2007! [*Desk thumping*] Otherwise we will find ourselves in a situation where our children would be slaves in their own country and that is reality.

Madam President, the use of public funds to advertise in the print and electronic media in this belligerent form; in this aggressive form; in a context

where everybody has guns; where all these young people are illiterate; where these young people could be called upon to do anything for \$5 or \$10; where they are high on coke, they are high on drugs, this is a dangerous development. Why did the PNM not—and I dare them to tell me that any of them went to their communities with the Bills in their hands, called meetings, sat down and explained the Bills to the people. They could have done it differently. They could have run ads saying “Call on your MP to bring the Bill to a meeting and to explain the Bill to you. Ask your MP, why he does not want to support the Bill.” But he must explain it to you, you must understand the Bill. You do not just call for something that you do not know; you cannot even read the Bill; you do not understand the implications of the Bill. [*Desk thumping*] What is that!

Madam President, in our community, in Cumuto, we went to the people. I went to the people with the Police Reform Bills. I called a meeting in my community; we went around with a loud speaker; we got a lawyer to come in; we got other people who might have an interest in the Bill and we sat. We do not have a community centre in Cumuto, we sat under a grandstand in the open and we brought the Bills to the people. Young people are very intelligent; a lot of young people came to that meeting, it is a good thing I had the Bills. The lawyer came to explain the Bills but he did not bring the Bills and he got roughed up. How could you come to explain Bills to me? Where are the Bills? It is a good thing—I had to save the day—I had the Bills. They wanted to see the Bills; they want you to talk and read from the Bills and explain clause by clause what is happening. They did not want to hear politics; they did not want to hear any UNC politics, you know. They wanted to hear what was the context of the Bills, and they were very insistent on that. And they went away very happy and satisfied; they understood what were the implications of the Bills. How many of them did that on that side, Madam President?

**Madam President:** Hon. Senators, the speaking time of the Senator has expired.

*Motion made,* That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. W. Mark*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** Thank you, Madam President. What we really have here is a Government that has absolutely no respect for people. No respect for the people they purport to represent; they purport to love; they purport to care about and all the slogans and jargons. They talk to the people from the top down; they

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. DR. KERNAHAN]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

do not explain anything to them; they leave them in ignorance; they leave them to wallow in all those animal-type conditions.

Madam President, you understand the dynamics of development. In Gonzales, Cocorite and Laventille, in all those areas infrastructural development is fundamental to social and economic development. If you do not have a proper water supply; you do not have a proper supply of electricity or if you do not have proper drainage—just the basic things, you want to open a little business; you want to do something, your hands are tied. You cannot do anything because of the area in which you live. Because of the inconvenience no customer will come by you; you cannot get things in and you cannot get things out. Somebody's cesspit is in front of your yard and you cannot get that solved. Water is always running and overflowing, drains are always collapsing. We live in a perpetual state of just having to hang on and survive. There is nothing you can do to progress in life, to raise your economic status, to help your children to raise their economic status.

Madam President, basic infrastructure has so much to do with how our people progress; how our people grow and how people learn to become self-sufficient and self-reliant. This dependency syndrome, just giving them some money to stand by the side of the road—hundreds of women in this country are standing by the side of the road all day now; the so-called women's programme, and they are happy for that, because they have created a mentality in these women, that it is a good thing to get paid and not have to do anything.

Madam President, my youngest daughter was doing her internship in a pre-school in La Horquetta and they have a women's programme in that school. The teachers in that school, including my daughter—women are sitting outside the school from 8 o'clock in morning to 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock in the afternoon, doing absolutely nothing! And yet you cannot get them to do anything to help the teachers in the schools: they are not washing any wares; they are not sweeping or mopping up the floors. They are "cussing" you when you ask them to do anything. The principal says I am not able with that, we will continue to do what we have to do here and leave them there, because I am not able with the set of "cussing" and the attitude of these women.

They have nothing to do! They are assigned to these schools and they say that is not their work, they are not doing that; that is not what they are there for. They know what they are there for. They are there for when the bell calls to go out and campaign and they know that. That is why they are being paid; that is the ideology; that is the culture that is being engendered from generation to

generation in this country and that is what the PNM hopes will get them through the next millennium; thriving parasitic oligarchy which is going to thrive on ignorance and lack of culture of people in this country who support them.

Madam President, we are following the thread. You do not educate people; you do not explain to them what the issues are. Why did you not print an ad saying what the issues are? Why did you not print an ad saying that this particular clause in the Bill is important, because it will do “A”, “B”, “C” “D” and “E”? Why do you not educate your people? What are you afraid of? Are you afraid that when they are educated, when they know what the issues are, when their eyes are opened and when the scales have dropped from their eyes, they will ditch you and they will never look back? Is that what you are afraid of? This is what you are afraid of. Educate people; let them know what the issues are and let them learn to make democratic choices. This is what democracy is about: the widest dissemination of information to the widest number of people who can then take the information and make rational choices about their lives. Do not keep people in ignorance and give them ghost gang money and hope that they will follow this culture of supporting you because they want free money.

Madam President, it is not free, because they are dying. It is not free! I do not understand why people believe this money is free. The average lifespan now in these constituencies is 21 years. Nobody lives beyond 21 years anymore. Mothers are burying young children every day. This country is drenched in blood. I was looking at the news on TV the other night and I realized that the news in this country is X-rated. I cannot have my grandchildren sitting next to me looking at news anymore. It is blood, guns, bodies, undertakers; it was chilling when I realized that this is news. This is news in Trinidad and Tobago now and tears—

**Sen. Mark:** Under the PNM.

**Sen. Dr. J. Kernahan:** —under this PNM regime. You have situations when men shooting you and then they are coming back to make sure you are dead. Shoot you in your head. Madam President, what is that? What have we created? What is this monster that the PNM regime has created and imposed on the backs of the people of this country? The culture of guns, violence, drugs, ignorance and then on top of that, they want to say, demand that your MP do this, and demand that your MP do that. Hutu politics! They do not even know what they are demanding. All they know is that when they get the code on the broadcast, they will go out and look for Wade Mark and heaven knows what will happen then. Because we are not going out like “no” punks’ either, you understand.

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. DR. KERNAHAN]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

We in this country are going to fight back. We are going to fight this administration with every ounce of our blood, our sinews. [*Desk thumping*] We are going to fight them with brains; we are going to fight them with ideas; we are going to fight them with policies; we are going to fight them with performance and we are going to win, because the truth always wins in the end.

I thank you, Madam President.

**The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill):** Madam President, coming after my sister Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan, I must say that Sen. Wade Mark is certainly a good teacher. [*Laughter*] Madam President, you know I had not intended to join this debate at all, but I think it is important that I make a short contribution and deal with a number of issues. The first issue that I want to deal with before I get into discussing the Motion, is a question that was raised by the goodly Senator in which she asked the question: How does Government work? And I will quote her because she said “people have no idea of how Government works.”

Madam President, we have to be careful when we speak, because if those who are speaking wish to represent us at some point in time, then from where we sit we must be able to understand that what they are saying makes sense and is relevant to the problems that we face today. Let me tell you something, we have a situation in which the party that can form the Government is installed and they become part of the Executive. But the party or the group that stays to implement, is the permanent 60,000 employees of the State, who are referred to as “public servants”. That is the group that is responsible for translating policy into action on the basis of the particular policy.

One of the things that Trinidad and Tobago has been very good at and one of the things that if you talk to the IMF and the World Bank they are very much supportive of or they do not understand for want of a better word, is how is it possible that we have been able as a country, over time, to continue to be so successful; to grow and to build, when you have had different administrations. And the reason really is, Madam President, that we do not fundamentally disagree on a lot of things. We disagree in some instances on priorities; on how things should be done and the way we communicate the results.

I have heard discussions about “spin doctoring” and you know you can determine what words you want to use. How do you communicate to people? Well, you do it one or two ways. You do it very deliberately or you do it very mischievously. There are those who take little bits of information, ask very



specific questions, totally ignore the truth and then come with a conclusion that is flawed and represent that as the truth, and some people say that is politics.

**3.45 p.m.**

Madam President, I am of the view that the future of this country and our children is not a game; it is a serious issue. I am in Government because I believe that I have a responsibility to those I have brought into this world; for it to be a better place. I am very careful with what I do, because I believe that it is important that we send a particular kind of message.

When the Government, some time ago, determined that its most difficult issue, its most critical problem was crime, it looked at the avenues that were available to it in trying to create some relief to citizens. In doing that, it had to understand how its implementation of solutions was being delivered.

I run a ministry and we had a heads of division discussion last week. We have a situation where a lot of our people are demotivated for two reasons; one, they have been acting in positions and cannot get paid, because the authority that is required to deliberate on those matters, for some strange reason, is about four years behind. The other issue is, of course, the fact that some time ago the Government, finding itself in a particular difficulty, the same kind of issue, brought in a group of 69 individuals and placed them in that institution. Those individuals are, more or less, at the same age now, so they are all leaving. In a real sense, the next individual who is going to head this particular institution—which is very sensitive and deals with securities and all those issues—in the structure of the organization, is going to come from the ground, because as you go through level one, level two, level three and level four in the hierarchy of skill sets, the rest of them just disappear, your next individual comes from the bottom. In all of that, while things are happening around you, the world is changing, the system is inflexible; it will not support you.

When you recognize that to be so, your real issue then is to change the system. How do you change the system? The system is changed on the basis of looking at what you need to do and telling the population, by some method, that if we are to change the results today we need to look at the system, because it is not relevant to the problems that we have. Everybody understands that. Everybody also understands, in the political sense, that whoever inherits it will be able to control delivery to an extent that would make it very difficult for somebody else to surpass that; and that is really part of the problem.

Whoever is able to deal with this particular problem, will be able to deliver to the extent where whoever comes after or whoever is in Opposition, will find it

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. THE HON. C. ENILL]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

difficult to remove that particular entity and, therefore, there is some self-interest in not supporting that particular course of action, if the objective is that you would want to, at some point in time, be in the government.

**Sen. R. Montano:** What is that?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** The issue is, therefore, that once you understand that the system does not work and you cannot get anybody to support it for whatever reasons, then the problems will continue. We see it today; we see that despite the best efforts, the problem continues. It continues, not because of the Government, but because of the system we have agreed on; we agreed on it, nobody else.

Some time ago we sat and crafted a bit of legislation which said that was how we would govern the country, because at that point in time the circumstances of the day were such that it was felt we did not have experience, we could not be trusted, we should not be controllers of our destiny, somebody else needed to do it; somebody independent. Of course, today, we find ourselves in a situation where the system currently available to us does not do what we expect it to do.

Some are saying that there is a requirement for constitutional reform and, quite frankly, any time you interfere with your Constitution there are ramifications for some segment of the society and, by itself, that is a process that requires time and effort, because you need to ensure that no one is marginalized and that all are taken care of. But while that is happening and while that is noble, you have the particular issue that a segment of your delivery service has the potential to derail all the good you have done and, therefore, there is a requirement for support. We will deal with that at another time.

Madam President, let me deal with this issue of advertising, public relations and so on. What is the nature of our communication industry today? When Sen. Dr. Kernahan was reading her radio announcement, I was really interested in finding out what station to tune into—[*Laughter*]—because unless I know which station there is no way I will hear the message, or unless there is some station that the Hutu or the Tutu—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. R. Montano:** 195.5

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** I do not listen to that.

**Sen. R. Montano:** All right. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** Unless I know where to tune in—[*Interruption*] well, the message may go out, but it needs to reach me, because I know not to travel

behind Wade Mark if he is going up that road, because you know we look the same way. *[Laughter]*

**Sen. R. Montano:** He has more hair!

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** Part of the real difficulty in all of this is that, notwithstanding how you may read it, there is a body of citizens who would like to understand how they can participate in a process that the Government considers important. The way you try to get that message across is by determining what messages you send that will get action. It is a government's responsibility, in dealing with a problem that affects everyone, to make its best efforts to get its message to those individuals who need to get the message, so that they may make a decision, if not now, at some point in the future, because they are individuals who understand what one is attempting to do.

One of the benefits of sending people to school—those that are not from some of the areas that Sen. Dr. Kernahan talked about, because they do not represent only Trinidad and Tobago, there is a whole other group of individuals—is that people need to get information today so they can come to independent judgments about the issues. Advertising, public relations, communications and consultations are ways in which we do that.

A lot of the problems we talked about today are real, but they are real because the system that we are using cannot respond quickly enough to the demands being placed. If Government was a corporation, for example, you would know that you have to retool the corporation for it to survive in the world as we know it today. The way we retool Government is by bringing highly skilled people into the system, but also by changing the system so that it can respond.

There are those who have argued that the Police Service Reform Bills did not do that. The fact of the matter is that when the Police Service Reform Bills were contemplated, explained and discussed, we sought to move to the stage in which the delivery mechanism in one institution would have changed; that was not to be. I believe that the discussion that emanated, created for all of us some view about Government and about our systems. I believe if we understand that, then we would understand that it really does not matter what side of the political divide we are on. We have a bigger issue to deal with, and it is all our responsibilities: How do we motivate your future group of public servants, if you say you are going to be back in government, to do the job in circumstances where resources is not the issue?

The resource really required is intellectual resource; it is the ability of the managers we have selected to grapple with complex issues, to apply that to

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. THE HON. C. ENILL]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

circumstances of organization, to do design and to make decisions. Unfortunately, the current relationships we have do not support that. I can give you an example. In the last 24 months, we have changed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of one of our most sensitive security type institutions five times. The current one will go in four months.

**Sen. R. Montano:** Is that Rao?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** No, no.

**Sen. R. Montano:** You know that Rao should go.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** We are not going there yet. The question that arises is: How in circumstances like that can you even have a decent discussion with an individual who is not going to do anything at all to interfere with his retirement? Those are some of the actual issues.

Those of us who have not been involved in government, that is to say, who have not had to deal with this particular issue especially in these circumstances, have a different view of the world and, quite frankly, have a different view of the problem and sometimes very innocently ask the question: Why can that not be done? Well, I go back to the system. The system is one that is based on your own loyalty to country. We have a system that would work if the individual believes that he wants to be loyal to the country and if he believes that this is something he must do. But we have people who believe that they should not do it, because it is in their interest to make the Government look bad and they simply do as little as possible for as long as possible. The implication and impact of that is on the delivery.

There is another thing that we talk about all the time: disconnect. A government comes in and a government says, "We will do this." The Government passes that to its implementers; the implementers look at it and say, "Nah, we doh agree with this; we ent doing that," and the people suffer. The people say, "But we put you in government and you are supposed to provide us with service," and we say, "Okay, the way we will do this is that we will deal with it through a different institution, because this one does not do that." So we create inefficiencies within the system; the system is the problem. The system needs to be able to respond; the system needs to be able to promote; the system needs to be incentivised; the system needs to be able to do all these things. It is the system that does it; the Government simply provides the room in which it needs to happen.

Therefore, part of our difficulty, our challenge, is how you get the system to work. Fortunately, in a lot of instances where issues are concerned, as it relates to

delivery, that responsibility lies with your independent commissions that, basically, do not really report to anybody except the President.

There has been a lot of discussion as well on the millions of dollars, I guess, that this Government has spent, for which there is absolutely no return. Put another way, what I hear is, “You all have spent billions of dollars and nothing is happening.” Well, okay; I wonder if I should even respond to that, because the roads that you drive on, for example, the places that you go, those did not just drop out of the sky. Those were constructed over time on the basis of a plan; those were constructed on the basis of some clearly thought-out objectives to do a particular set of things; the fact that when you look at the economy and everything that is happening, we have successes, time and time again; when you look at what we have done recently in the context of our own programmes.

On that side they started discussions about education. Their view was that if you had a dollar, we would give you a “next” dollar. Our view is that if you do not have the first dollar, we will give you all. We have looked at the situation where those of our citizens who are disadvantaged, we are taking care of them. We are constantly looking to see what we can do to make the poor and the old aged better off, but every single time we look at it, we come up with the same issue: the system, the system, the system. No matter what you do, the system, the system, the system. If we do not understand the system—Sen. Baksh will tell you, because he understands it—it matters not which government is in power, the problems will be the same.

I wonder sometimes, in recognition of the fact that at some future date you said you would be here, why do we not now fix the problem, if you are so sure that you are coming back in, so that when you get there you do not have to deal with those problems again. I do not understand the strategy.

**Sen. Mark:** We are willing to help you; constitutional reform.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** If you are willing to help, the way you do that—  
[*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. R. Montano:** Tell us how to do it; I am interested in this one.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:**—is by deciding what you will and will not support and not that you are not supporting anything.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** We have done that; we supported you on OSHA.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** I want your support on this one.

**Sen. R. Montano:** You will get it, but you do not talk to us.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** We have a concession that all I need to do is to talk.

I will make this point again; a colleague of mine said it some time ago. I cannot talk to you when you are busy shouting at me; I have a difficulty with that. If you would sit and talk with me and we can exchange ideas, then if I disagree with you I will tell you; but when you shout at me and tell me all these things about “I this, I that and the other”, what do you want me to do? You have to create the environment for us to want to listen to you.

We all went to school in the same places, university of somewhere, of somewhere; we all know what the words mean. We all are global scholars. I am here; you are there; you were here before; we have experiences; you may be here again.

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** We are going to be there again.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** We have to get away from going down the road that we have been going down and start to do the people's business. When we took the oath of office it was for every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago. *[Interruption]*

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** That is why you have the Balisier tie?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** No, no; in a lot of instances, when we do things, we do it for all our people.

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** Why the Balisier tie then?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** Ask my leader. *[Laughter]* *[Interruption]*

**Sen. Prof. Ramchand:** I wonder if the hon. Minister can tell us, “as man”, whether he is filibustering. *[Laughter]*

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** Yes, Madam President; what is the question?

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** If you have to go until half past?

**Sen. King:** Your time is up.

**Sen. Abdul-Hamid:** Make your contribution; it is a good contribution. *[Crosstalk]*

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** Do not filibuster.

**Hon. Senator:** What is filibustering?

**Sen. Prof. Ramchand:** “Doh tell me yuh bus”.

**Hon. Senator:** You are a good man.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** I was attempting to bring the discussion to a level [*Laughter*] where we could get some benefit, because after Sen. Dr. Kernahan was finished, we were into Hutu territory and I really do not have that sense that Trinidad and Tobago is like that.

**Sen. Joseph:** Exactly so. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** All that I have heard so far speaks about the Government doing something for political purposes. The Motion says:

*“Whereas the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has recently spent in excess of one point nine million dollars on an advertising campaign to persuade the general public...to support the bills...*

*And whereas the objective of the advertising campaign was to get constituents to support the Bill;*

*And whereas it has never been contemplated that public funds...”*

To me, if the Government is seeking to persuade the general public to support something that is in their own good, because it is going to advance the security agenda of the country, I do not understand how one could argue that it was never intended or contemplated that public funds could be used in that way. Is that not what we do all the time? The question of:

*“...to secure by intimidation, pressure or otherwise...”*

It was interesting listening to Sen. Dr. Kernahan, because what she said was, “We have no problem with what you have done; we have a problem with the way you have done it.” In other words, instead of saying, “Go and talk to your MP,” you should have said, “Go and discuss the Bill.” So if you are saying that the problem you have is the way the message was communicated, that is a matter of choice, but the principle of communication, I have not heard her disagree with it.

Therefore, Madam President, the issue of the Government spending to persuade the population or to advise the population on an area in which it believes the population has an interest and that the population should be aware of what the issues are, I consider it to be absolutely, totally, in order. This is an issue that interferes with the economic life, the gains and hopes and aspirations of all of us. Therefore, in those circumstances the Government must, as a right, get the population to understand its messages.

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. THE HON. C. ENILL]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

The question of communication specialists within ministries is based on the objective that the Government has of taking this country to developed country status. In the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we are required to ensure that the communication of our plans, to achieve that objective, is understood by all. In order to do that, there is a requirement for putting in place documents, new ideas, new individuals, new technologies and that of itself requires us to communicate our message so that people can participate.

We have an issue right now where, notwithstanding all our efforts in the social programmes, we are finding that many of our citizens do not really understand the benefits available to them. The one sure way of doing that is by communication. In fact, if you were to look on the website of those opposite, you would see most of the programmes that the Government has being communicated. We are, in fact, doing the same thing at the level of Government. We are simply ensuring that the message of our activities and programmes go out.

It is a fact that we have, at this point in time, a budget that is significantly larger than in previous years. Therefore, the population must understand how public funds are being spent; part of that communication is to make that information available so that individuals can be part of the process; so that individuals can understand; so that individuals can be engaged; so that the disconnection that seems to be present can, in fact, be addressed in the circumstances where, at this point in time, the mechanism has not been addressed and we will do that in due course.

Madam President, every single year, we come to this Parliament and look at two things. At the level of the budget debate, we look at the estimates and then at the level of the Auditor General's report, we look at the report of the Auditor General on the finances of Trinidad and Tobago. Every single year that is a requirement. Every single year we do that; every single year we talk about that. In those circumstances, I find it difficult to understand two things: one, the notion that billions of dollars are being spent and there is no accountability? The only way the Government can spend funds is through the parliamentary process; it is not correct to say that the Parliament is a rubber stamp.

In most of the legislation in the other place and here, whenever discussions make sense, whenever they are in the public interest, whenever they are going to add value to the process, we take those into account and change our legislation on the basis of that. We were elected on the basis of promises that were made and the system by which we operate is that we need to carry out that mandate. Both



organizations went to the public with their plans; on the basis of the ones that were, in fact, elected, there is an expectation that these plans will be implemented; that is what we do. The Motion, therefore—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Dr. Kernahan:** You have 15 minutes.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** No, I am not talking for 15 minutes. The Motion, therefore, as is—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. R. Montano:** What about the amendment?

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** I do not have them. I will speak to the amendments when I get them. [*Laughter*]

Madam President, the Senators who spoke on this Bill have all expressed a concern that I do not share. The concern that they have expressed is that the Government needs, in some way, to have spin doctors to carry its message out. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Seetahal:** Madam President, there is a Standing Order which says that a Member shall not engage in constant repetition. I remember distinctly that this speaker said exactly the same thing for some 20 minutes when he was referring and responding to previous Senators. This is the third occasion he is repeating himself; I hate to do it, because I like the hon. speaker.

**Madam President:** Minister if you are repeating yourself, please do not. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** The view was expressed that the communication specialist of the Government is being used in some way to do something that seems to be nefarious; far be it. The communication specialist within the ministries—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. R. Montano:** Conrad, sing a song.

**Sen. Yuille-Williams:** Do not let them turn you off.

**Sen. R. Montano:** You could waste just as much time. Mr. Panday's birthday is tomorrow; tell him happy birthday.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** Madam President, through you, happy birthday to Sen. R. Montano; let me get back to this particular issue.

It cannot be said that the Government should not be involved—and I have not said that before—in promoting what it considers to be a very serious issue.

**Sen. Seepersad-Bachan:** You said that too.

**Sen. The Hon. C. Enill:** It cannot be said that advertising constitutes a contempt of Parliament. It is in this place that we, in fact, advise the population about the issues that we have to deal with.

Madam President, I just thought that I would make that small intervention, so that there would be some clarity to some of the issues that were expressed and I, therefore, do not support the Motion as it is. I believe that any government has a right to put on its agenda matters that are important and to advise the population in such a way that education and action can in fact, be received.

With those few words, I thank you. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Dana Seetahal:** Madam President, I hope I can finish in 10 minutes.

**Madam President:** Nine minutes.

**Sen. D. Seetahal:** I am not dealing with the final “whereas” because I think the resolution might be subject to amendment, but the Motion before us, essentially, as I see it, has three areas: Should the Government spend money to garner support for any bills; should it spend State funds? Should the Government spend State funds for advertising to gain support for laws? Should State funds ever be used to promote a position so that a group could be pressured to support a bill?

In June last year there was a series of advertisements and two of them I have here, [*Sen. Seetahal shows documents.*] which is the subject of this Motion; one headed, “Checks and balances” and another headed “New hope”; this is in the *Guardian* of June 29, 2004 and June 28. Prominent in these advertisements are the words “Anti-crime legislation” and the whole tenor of these advertisements and everything that was promoted in the whole process of trying to get people to vote for this Bill, was a view that these Bills were important to fight crime and one of the ways of doing so, of course, was to reorganize the police, to change the Police Complaints Authority, at some level, and, of course, you amend the Constitution to facilitate that.

This view that this legislation is the panacea for crime has been repeated this year, and others, of course the business community, have joined in telling the Opposition to pass the legislation. You have heard the masses, as it were, on the talk shows saying, “Pass the legislation.” I find that so objectionable that anybody could, without even knowing what this whole thing is about, call this anti-crime legislation, [*Desk thumping*] and that this view could be promoted so

that members of the public and so-called educated members of the public could think that this would really solve crime.

If we want to solve crime, we should look at reports like this:

“Jamaat in heroin trade”; “Jamaat smuggling heroin into T&T”; “ATF traced guns for TT Government”

This was in 1990.

“Jamaat in gun trafficking” and “Jamaat with terrorist cell in the US.”

It is my view, if we are looking for the source of a lot of crime in this country, it is that organization: terrorism, gun trafficking and drug trafficking. Just in case Senators want to know, it is of interest that this member of the Jamaat Lance Small was today convicted for gun running in the US. I have to say that the Attorney General was one of the persons clearly behind this to ensure that this person was extradited. It is a good thing for our country that this thing has happened. [*Desk thumping*]

This kind of thing is a red herring—I like that word—used to say that these Bills are going to do anything. What is going to do something is if we could get the Government to deal with gangs and stop their interaction, their involvement throughout the country and get the youths—what is happening is that the youths in many communities are getting into gangs and gangs are being held up as the thing to be if you want clout in any neighbourhood. That is the way to deal with crime; not any kind of legislation that is going to change the police service, according to these advertisements so that you will have a management authority, which will be an independent constitutional body constitutionally entrenched.

Well, the Police Service Commission (PSC) is the same thing, so what is the difference? My position has always been that those Bills are not going to have any major impact on this country. It might be a slightly more efficient way, if we have the legislation, to manage the police service, but it is the people who would really make a difference and not those Bills. Therefore, if one has to use any statements to promote any legislation, one has to be careful how one does it.

In the first place, the only way, as I see it, you can use statements to push legislation, as it were, is if you are informing the public—and another speaker said it—about what the legislation is about. If you have some kind of forum, you give out copies of the Bill; you have a discussion; you invite people from both sides and maybe if you have a Green Paper before—that is the proper way and former Attorney General, Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj, if I may say so to his

*Advertising Campaign Repayment*  
[SEN. SEETAHAL]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

credit, did a lot of these things when he was trying, without success in some areas, to garner support for his Bills.

There is nothing wrong in trying to garner support for legislation, but it is how you go about it. Advertisements are not the right way. There is no discussion; there is no analysis; there is no proper information imparted. I think that in this particular case to promote these Bills without any education of the public in any real way as to what they were about was doing a disservice to the country and it should not have been done with State funds. At the time it was done, it had become a partisan issue, because one side was in support of it and the other side was not.

The advertisements, not only the reports I have shown you here, but also the electronic media were saying, “Go to your MPs and get them to support it.” There was that implicit suggestion to go to the Opposition MPs and somehow blackmail them into supporting it. That is untenable. It had become a partisan issue and State funds ought not to have been used. I feel very strongly about that. If I do not sound so, I want to emphasize that I do. That is the essence of my contribution, that a government is entitled to spend money to garner support for any bills, when it is in the interest of the country. It must, however, do so properly by facilitating discussion, providing information and having analysis comparison legislation; for instance, the terrorism bill, if you want. That was done in the Offences Against the Person (Amdt.) Bill in 1998 by the then Attorney General.

The Government should not spend State funds for advertisements to gain support—In any case, I do not believe in pure advertisement—and secondly, for an advertisement to gain support when you are dealing with a partisan situation is untenable. That is all I want to say.

Thank you.

**Madam President:** Hon. Senators, we shall now suspend for the tea break. We shall return at 5.00 p.m.

**4.29 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

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

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams):** Madam President, I move that the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, May 31, 2005 at 1.30 p.m. [*Interruption*] Sorry, Tuesday,

June 07, 2005 at 1.30 p.m.; at which time we will begin with the Pilotage (Amdt.) Bill, Chap. 51:02, and continue with Bill No. 3 on the Order Paper, an Act to criminalize terrorism to provide for the detection, prevention, et cetera, of terrorists' assets. [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Senator:** What about that Home Mortgage Bank (Amdt.) Bill?

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Thanks for that. We will have to continue the Home Mortgage Bank (Amdt.) Bill, we will then do the Pilotage (Amdt.) Bill and then we will begin the terrorism Bill.

**Sen. Mark:** Madam President, before you move the adjournment, we collectively have developed a practice to adjourn at around this time, if there are no motions, but what we are discovering is that if we have four or five Private Members' motions in one session, we are only able to get through with one, because we begin at 1.30 p.m. and by 4.30 p.m. we adjourn the Parliament.

I serve notice on the Government that we are not going to continue that practice. As Members who are entitled to Private Members' Day, we would want to go the full gamut, in terms of time allotment. For example, today, we would like Sen. R Montano, if it is possible, to complete his Motion. I ask the Acting Leader of Government Business to consider this possibility, because we have only Sadiq to speak for about 10 minutes.

**Madam President:** Sen. Baksh.

**Sen. Mark:** Sen. Baksh rather, sorry, Madam President. I suspect that on the Independent Bench there may be one or two more to speak and maybe on the Government Benches, just for a little time and then Sen. R. Montano could begin the winding up of his contribution. So rather than come back in June and we have to deal with this Motion, knowing full well that there is a strong possibility—I am not saying that it would happen—we may go into recess in the months of July or August, as the case may be, I do not know.

I ask the hon. Acting Leader of Government Business to reconsider this arrangement where we adjourn religiously at 4.30, 5 o'clock, 5.30, when we can go up to about 6.30 p.m. as a minimum and, if possible, we can even go beyond, if need be. I would like the hon. Minister to consider that and we have one or two speakers who we would like to put in and we would like to get her blessings.

**Sen. The Hon. J. Yuille-Williams:** Madam President, I am a little surprised at the request from Sen. Mark, because I spoke with him twice this afternoon concerning this same arrangement. Therefore, I had hoped that he would have

*Adjournment*

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

[SEN. THE HON. J. YUILLE-WILLIAMS]

been following the kinds of suggestions that we made. I even spoke to two Independent Senators who were going to speak today. I agree with what you have said. In fact, I was saying to Sen. Prof. Ramchand even before that we may have to make some adjustments later on to accommodate what you have just said. It is not that we are unmindful of the fact that this has happened, but having regard to the fact that I got your consent and agreement to move this way, let it go on for this day and we could always make arrangements at some time to facilitate the end of this Private Members' Motion, even if we have to give up some time to do so.

I hope that you will go along with the arrangement that we made before, when you agreed, and I guarantee that we would facilitate your request.

**Sen. Mark:** Madam President, maybe at the next Private Members' sitting in June or if the hon. Acting Leader is willing to give us another day in-between, a few hours, it would help. I urge her to reconsider this arrangement of adjourning at 4.30 p.m. from here on. We would like to have more flexibility in terms of speaking time.

**Madam President:** I think the best thing to be done there is for you to talk to each other and reach some agreement where that is concerned.

Hon. Senators, we have a matter on the adjournment. [*Interruption*] It is a Motion by Sen. Mark to the Minister of National Security.

### **Spate of Kidnappings (Government's Inability to Address)**

**Sen. Wade Mark:** Madam President, the Motion deals with the Government's inability to put an end to the spate of kidnappings which has been on the increase since March 2005.

As you are well aware, I did, in fact, move a Motion some time ago to address this issue of the increase in kidnappings in this country. I must report that since that Motion, the rate of kidnappings has increased. We have moved from about 25 and today, from what I understand, it is close to 33 and it continues to mount. It is clear that the Government seems unable to address this particular scourge that is virtually plaguing this nation and striking a lot of fear in the hearts and minds of so many citizens today.

Since the PNM came to office in December of 2001 to the present time, we have had almost 800 murders under the watch of the PNM. In fact, kidnappings are

about 136 during that said period. What you get from the Government, with respect, is that the job of fighting crime, as said by the Minister of National Security, is not his business, that is for the cops. The hon. Minister of National Security is reported to have said in the newspapers that crime is not that bad after all in this country. Of course, the hon. Prime Minister has now added to this particular scenario by indicating to the country that the phenomenon of crime we are now experiencing is purely temporary in nature.

The truth is that the Government must take full responsibility for the spate of criminal activity in this society, whether it is murders or kidnappings. I refer this honourable Senate to an article in the *Express* of Thursday, April 07, 2005, headed:

“AKS head quits”

I want to just read some extracts of this article to demonstrate the state of affairs of this particular unit that is responsible for dealing with persons who are kidnapped in this country. Page 3 says:

“...recent purchase of high tech surveillance equipment by Government...were allocated to the Special Anti Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (SUATT) and none given to the AKS...the unit lacks any of the equipment that can enable officers to deal effectively with the spate of kidnappings in the country.

The unit has been unable to make any breakthroughs within the last year in any of the kidnappings for ransom.

Arrests have been made but in none of the kidnappings for ransom in the last 14 months have charges been laid against suspects.

The AKS is aware...”

Madam President, listen carefully:

“The AKS is aware of who the kidnappers are and in fact has in its possession a list of potential victims, but because of a lack of resources are powerless to make arrests...’We have no way of gathering evidence and building a case against these kidnappers because we don’t have the resources,’”

It goes on to say:

“...in the nature of kidnappings to do surveillance work to make the necessary breakthroughs.”

*Spate of Kidnappings*  
[SEN. MARK]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

is vital:

“...the AKS had to go ‘cap in hand’ to SUATT to borrow equipment to do their job.

Recently the father of a kidnapped victim who was murdered said the AKS came to his home with a TSTT caller ID unit and that was the only piece of equipment they had.

There has been a significant increase in kidnappings this year over last year with 16 reported kidnappings for ransom...”

That was in the month of April. The article goes on to say:

“The unit also has limited mobility as the squad does not have a helicopter at its disposal. ‘Imagine the other day we were chasing a car...’”

That is a source:

“with kidnapers and lost it because we have no aerial support,”

Madam President, here it is that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, with the price of oil hovering around \$57, sometimes it dips, raking in enormous revenues and something as basic as surveillance equipment for the Anti-kidnapping Squad as well as other logistical support resources have not been made available.

Then you have the Commissioner of Police in March of this year indicating in an *Express* story that the spiralling crime rate should not be blamed on the police and/or the Government. Then in an article in the *Express* of Monday, April 04, the opinion said:

“...it is nonsense to seek to absolve any government of its responsibility to at least hold down crime to tolerable levels...”

And they criticized the commissioner for making the statement that he made at the time. There are close to nine kidnapped victims who are not accounted for. Views are now being expressed that these kidnapped victims may be dead; we do not know. There is a cloud of uncertainty hanging over this country; people live in fear, because they do not know who is next. Only this morning I was made to understand that a young boy was kidnapped somewhere in the east of this country, in Tacarigua. The Government seems to be helpless in the face of this aggression by the criminal forces.



**5.15 p.m.**

I want to draw to your attention—I think Sen. Seetahal made the link in her contribution earlier that the criminal elements in this country are able to run amok and do whatever they wish because of the kind of association and linkage that has been established between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and those forces of criminality. I am not saying that. In today's *Newsday* look at what the headline says. You have a picture of the Prime Minister side by side with an insurrectionist, as coup maker, a terrorist. Do you know what is being asked? Listen to the question: “Defence counsel to undercover agent: ‘Do you know that Bakr has a relationship with Prime Minister Manning?’” This is what has gone all over the world.

We ask the question: Is the PNM able to ever solve crime in this country? Could this country ever get the undertaking that, for instance, kidnapping will come to an end? I am saying to you that people are leaving this country, particularly people of Indo-Trinidadian and Tobagonian descent. Even people of European and Caucasian descent are beginning to leave this country because of the spate of criminal activity and the inability of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to guarantee safety, peace and security to people's property and their person, generally.

It is a sad state of affairs and all we get from the Minister of National Security, with respect, is a lot of promises; all we get from the Prime Minister are promises and there is no delivery. There is no end in sight in terms of the crime wave in the country. Therefore, I call on the Minister of National Security this afternoon to tell this Parliament precisely what kind of action, what kind of activities the Government intends to take or has taken, to resolve that issue. If the Minister of National Security cannot provide this country and this Parliament with reasonable answers, I want to believe that the Minister is tired and he should pack up his bags and go home and take a rest, because if he is unable to deal with crime, kidnappings and murders; if he cannot deal with the crime wave in the country, we can no longer wait on the Minister of National Security to utter promises that are never delivered by the PNM or never materialize. That is why it is said that PNM really stands for “Promises Never Materialized.” They promise and they do not deliver.

So I call on the Minister of National Security to make some categorical statement here this afternoon that would provide some comfort to the parents and families of those kidnapped victims who are still in the hands of their kidnappers and those who are potential victims of the kidnappers. It is becoming clearer and

*Spate of Kidnappings*  
[SEN. MARK]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

clearer every day that there is a link between kidnapping and the drug lords in this country. The drug lords seem to be behind this spate of kidnappings and, therefore, the Ministry of National Security and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago have to take charge of this matter. If they cannot, pack up, go home and let the UNC take charge of the country once again.

Thank you very much, Madam President. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph):** Madam President, I am responding to the Motion on Government's inability to put an end to the spate of kidnappings which has been on the increase since March 22, 2005. In his presentation, my colleague made reference to a front page article in the *Newsday*, but what he did not state was that while the two pictures are placed together, the defence attorney is asking a question. I think it is so unfortunate. It is that kind of sensationalism that we breed on, that continues to make the issue of crime and criminal activity worse than it is. That is the first one.

He quoted extensively from an article in the *Express* that gave the impression that with the change of leadership of the anti-kidnapping unit, the unit is starved of resources and that the unit has indicated—he did not give us all the details; it should be interesting to see who is the author of that particular article. Let me give the assurance to this honourable Senate that the anti-kidnapping unit is not starved of its resources. The anti-kidnapping unit cannot deal with kidnapping by itself and as a result, has to coordinate with other intelligence agencies to make certain that all of the intelligence agencies now work collaboratively to treat with the increased incidence of kidnappings that take place.

We have been saying over and over that if you do the job the same way, you are going to get the same results. We have found ourselves in a situation where the environment that now exists requires a different approach to policing, and that is what we are striving to achieve. Not only that. It is not the specialized units by themselves that will solve our problems. Every single officer on the beat must also recognize that there is a role to play, and in those circumstances what we are attempting to do is to get the policing organizations at all levels to operate differently.

Let me just give you a case in point. Recently we had an increase in criminal activities—especially kidnappings—in Chaguanas. What we did was, in responding to concerns raised by the business people in Chaguanas, we increased the police presence there, and so far there has been a reduction in the number of kidnappings in Chaguanas because of the specific activities that have been put in place.

Let me treat specifically with my colleague's Motion. For the interest of this honourable Chamber—because I am not going to play politics with the situation—to date there were 69 reported cases of kidnappings in Trinidad and Tobago. Of that 69, 25 were for ransom. Let me go back to the 69. Of that 69, 27 have been solved; of the 25 for ransom, only four so far have been solved. Let me just continue with 2005 and then compare it with 2004. We said that in 2005, to date there were 69 reports of kidnappings; 27 have been solved. Of the 69, 25 were for ransom; four so far have been solved. Of the 25, five are so far unaccounted for and, unfortunately, one was killed. Of the 19, eight escaped; 11 were released and, as I said, five unaccounted for.

How does that compare with 2004? For the similar period in 2004, there were 51 reported cases of kidnappings; of that 51, 19 were solved. Of that 51, 10 were for ransom. So, yes, there has been an increase from 10 to 25—15 more. In terms of those solved in 2004, of the ransom, only three were solved. Let me just provide some additional information because I think we need to know this. In 2004, of the 10 kidnappings for ransom, \$18,100,000 was demanded. Of that, \$226,000 was paid. Interestingly, also in 2004, 100 kilos of marijuana and 10 kilos of cocaine were part of the payment. In 2005, ransom demanded was TT \$37,150,000 and US \$1,500,000. Of that, TT \$1,080,000 was paid, plus jewelry.

Those are the startling statistics. But what is unfortunate is for my colleague to link crime, especially kidnapping, with the present administration. When we continue to do that, all we do is continue to play politics with respect to crime and criminal activity.

My colleague has asked for an assurance from the Minister and the Government as it relates to its resolve to treat with crime and criminal activity. With respect to kidnappings, we have increased the capability of the anti-kidnapping unit; we have also increased the capability of the Special Anti-crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago; we have engaged the services of external agencies to assist us. That is the best that I can go without saying a whole lot more. Because let me tell you what has happened—and I think I need to say this. In another place a Member, unfortunately, provided to this country the entire map of our intelligence agencies, identified every single one of them; identified the heads of every single one of them; talked about how we were using surveillance equipment to deal with certain types of activities and as a result of that, criminals knew exactly how we were treating with them with respect to phone calls, et cetera, and their whole approach to dealing with kidnappings has changed as a result of that. So we now have to rethink our strategy and decide how to deal with it.

*Spate of Kidnappings*  
[SEN. THE HON. M. JOSEPH]

*Tuesday, May 24, 2005*

Let me just say something. This is the number one concern that grips this entire nation and I think it is unfair that our citizens cannot live in peace. Yes, it is a fear that runs in the heart of everybody because nobody knows who is going to be next. But we had started to put in place mechanisms to make sure that those kidnappers, at least the identified ones, were being monitored and traced, et cetera.

We also have a situation—and it is not passing any buck, you know—where we, by ourselves, cannot resolve it. A veterinarian was kidnapped—I cannot remember the vet’s name—and the kidnappers were apprehended. The “kidnapped” moneys were found on them; they got bail. So that there are some other mechanisms that continue to exist that make the life of law enforcement a challenge. But notwithstanding that, we are going to do all that is necessary to make sure that the incidence of kidnappings is reduced. [*Desk thumping*] We are using resources; we are using technology; we are using all that is necessary, and I can give you the assurance—my colleague says all I am doing is giving promises. Let me just say something here. He mentioned something that was not part of the Motion. He talked also of homicides. We have had gang-related homicides. We have been able to identify the communities in which the leading gang activities were and we put a presence in those areas, and since we have put a presence there, the number of gang-related murders in those areas has been reduced considerably. We are putting in place a homicide prevention working group. We are doing things but we cannot come and publicly say what things we are doing, because we might as well tell the criminals.

Let me just say something else, and I have to say this. I do not like to make politics of the whole question of crime. When we met with the business community in Chaguanas; we called them in; we sat down; we discussed with them exactly what was supposed to happen, et cetera, and do you know what happened? Those business people were castigated by the Opposition—you hear what I am telling you; I am not making this up—for talking with us as it relates to treating with criminal activity in Chaguanas. And it raises something with me. Is it in the Opposition's best interest to make sure that we do not get a handle on crime and criminal activity? And I will end on that note. [*Desk thumping*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5.31 p.m.*