

*Leave of Absence*

*Tuesday October 25, 2011*

**SENATE**

*Tuesday, October 25, 2011*

The Senate met at 11.00 a.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to Sen. The Hon. Kevin Ramnarine, who is out of the country.

**SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the President, Prof. George Maxwell Richard T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D.:

“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: MR. KEVIN BHAGALOO

WHEREAS Senator the Honourable Kevin Christian Ramnarine 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, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 40(2)(a) and section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, KEVIN BHAGALOO, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 25th October, 2011 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator the Honourable Kevin Christian Ramnarine.

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 25th day of October, 2011.”

Tuesday October 25, 2011

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Sen. Kevin Bhagaloo took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law*

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George):** Thank very much. Before I answer question No.1, may I indicate that we are prepared to answer questions Nos. 1, 8 and 14, and because the hon. Prime Minister is not in the country, we await her return in order to address question No. 2.

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds:*

**Residence at Pasea Village, Tunapuna  
(Date of Occupation)**

2. With respect to the occupation of a residence at Pasea Village, Tunapuna, would the hon. Prime Minister indicate: the precise date she commenced occupation of the residence at Pasea Village, Tunapuna and the duration of her stay there?

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)  
(Filling of Vacant Posts)**

1. **Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds** asked the hon. Attorney General:
- (a) Could the Attorney General indicate whether the positions of Director and Deputy Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) are now properly filled;
  - (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, would the Attorney General indicate which public officers now occupy those positions and their respective dates of assumption of duty to these offices; and
  - (c) if the answer to (a) is in the negative, would the Attorney General indicate whether there are persons 'acting' in those positions?

**The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George):** Mr. President, the Public Service Commission has advised that Miss Susan Francois has been appointed on secondment up to October 31, 2011 as Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit.

- (b) With respect to the Deputy Director, the matter is in the process for an appointment to be made by the Public Service Commission.
- (c) Mr. President, part (c) of this question is not applicable in the circumstances. Thank you.

**Mr. President:** Supplementary?

**Sen. Hinds:** No, Mr. President, that would be sufficient for the time being.

**BAE—British Company  
(Recovery of Moneys for OPVs)**

**8. Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds** asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

- A Would the Minister indicate whether BAE, the British company which was contracted by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to provide three (3) OPVs, has taken any action to recover money from the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in respect of any alleged breach of the said contract?
- B If the answer to (A) is affirmative, would the Minister indicate what action was taken, in which forum/jurisdiction; when was this action initiated and what is the precise nature and quantum claimed?
- C Would the Minister state what is the precise status of this action and for how long is it likely to continue?
- D Would the Minister also indicate, whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is legally represented in these proceedings, by whom and at what cost to date?

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Brig. John Sandy):** Mr. President, in response part 8(A), yes, the contract was terminated by the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on October 20, 2010 due to substantial material delays in the delivery of the OPVs and defects with the combat system. Although BAE systems had purported to effect delivery of the first OPV, this was not accepted by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago due to defects. Thereafter BAE systems commenced arbitration proceedings.

- (B) BAE systems commenced arbitration proceedings by filing a request for arbitration with the International Court of Arbitration at the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris, ICC, on October 26, 2010.

BAE systems is claiming declarations that the contract is valid and continues in force, that the purported notice of cancellation of September 17, 2010 by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is invalid of contractual force. The Government of the Republic Trinidad and Tobago maintains in its defence that the cancellation of the contract was valid and has further counter-claimed the contractual damages arising from the delays and defects with the combat system under various separate headings to the total of £145 million.

- (C) The parties are in the process of disclosure with the statements which are required by the middle of December and expert evidence in March 2012. The matter is listed for hearing in London between May 7 to 18, 2012.
- (D) The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is represented by its solicitors in London, Charles Russell LLP and Counsel Joe Smouha QC, Mr. Alan Newman QC, Mr. Ricky Diwan and Mr. Neal Bisnath. The legal cost to date is £454,337.06.

**2012 Rio+20 Conference  
(Intended Participation)**

**14. Sen. Prof. Harold Ramkissoon** asked the hon. Minister of Housing and the Environment:

- A. Could the Minister indicate if the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will be participating in the 2012 Rio+20 Conference?
- B. If the answer to (A) is in the affirmative, could the Minister identity the major issues the Government of Trinidad and Tobago intends to raise at the Conference?
- C. Could the Minister also indicate if the Government of Trinidad and Tobago participated in any preparatory meetings?

**The Minister of Planning, Economic and Social Restructuring (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie):** Mr. President, hon. Senators, the questions basically concern the issue of sustainable development and the proposed conference in Rio some time later next year, and the issue of sustainable development falls under the Ministry of Planning and the Economy now, so, I will take the opportunity to answer the question.

Mr. President, as Members are aware Cabinet determines the extent of Government's participation in international matters, and so, the Minister will seek approval of Cabinet to participate at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, commonly referred to as Rio+20 Conference scheduled to take place during June 4 to 6, 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

This conference will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Conference 1992 on Environment and Development (UNCED), referred to as the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

One of the most important results of the Earth Summit was the development of Agenda 21—a comprehensive plan to implement sustainable practices internationally. The upcoming Rio+20 Summit will revisit commitments made to Agenda 21 as well as address challenges that remain today. The Rio+20 Conference has two main themes, the Green Economy and Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development.

The Green Economy theme focuses on sustainable development in the context of poverty eradication, while the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development theme, Mr. President will address global governance issues.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago endorses the integrated approach to sustainable development which promotes the connectivity among economic development, social development and environmental protection.

In recognition of importance of balancing social and economic transformation with environmental conservation, the 2011-2014 *Medium-term Policy Framework* of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago entitled “Innovation for Lasting Prosperity” has identified a pivotal shift to green policy planning which will guarantee environmental security for future generations, addressing the issues of competitiveness, sustainable economic growth and prosperity as well.

The 10 major issues and challenges that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has identified as being important to our country in the context of sustainable development are as follows:

- Climate change and sea level rise;
- natural and anthropogenic hazards;
- the management of waste;
- coastal and marine resources and the management of same;
- fresh water resources and ensuring sustainable water security;
- land resources, land management and physical development planning;
- energy resources management for sustainability;

- tourism resources management within a sustainable development framework;
- biodiversity resources conservation and management, and
- transportation challenges and solutions.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has participated in several preparatory meetings for the conference, first of all, through the office of the permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, and secondly through technically capable officers of the Ministry of Planning and the Economy.

These members of staff have already contributed to the preparation of a draft report on the status of progress and sustainable development issues in the country and the challenges we face in Trinidad and Tobago.

As a Ministry team we are collaborating with the UNDP to engage the wider national community through a consultation scheduled for November 14, 2011. Following this consultation the draft report will be appropriately revised and recommendations for action made. Thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Prof. Ramkissoon, any supplemental?

**Prof. Ramkissoon:** Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you hon. Minister. Just for information, Mr. President, through you, UNESCO and the International Science Council organized a meeting of representatives of the scientific community of Latin America and the Caribbean, through you, Mr. President, I will be willing to make available to the hon. Minister recommendations emanating from that meeting. Thank you very much.

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE  
(FIGHT AGAINST CRIME)**

**Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Again, may I take the opportunity to wish our brothers and sisters of the Hindu community and national community, that is Trinidad and Tobago, Shubh Divali, and as you light those jam deyas today, do so in anticipation of a full celebration tomorrow.

Mr. President, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

*Be it resolved* that this honourable Senate take note of the strengths and deficiencies of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and its impact and potential in the fight against crime.

Mr. President, it is self-evident that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service—police organization—requires constant management, improvement, upgrade and reshaping so that it would remain in step with the expectations of this society and its own expectations in the service of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

It is also self-evident, Mr. President, that many of the problems that exist in relation to the police organization cannot be reasonably expected to be resolved with any quick fix. The last administration clearly recognized these positions, and recognizing that it was a very serious problem and a serious situation—the police service being the premier organization that has the responsibility for the management and the prevention of crime in our society—took the task very seriously and began to put in place systems that would yield transformation of what has clearly become an antiquated perhaps, organization, at least in relation to its meeting the needs of a modern, growing society. This was done in keeping with our Vision 2020 project.

**11.20 a.m.**

You would recall, Mr. President, there was a time it was very popular in Trinidad and Tobago and it was made popular by a now deceased commissioner, Mr. Jules Bernard, when he described himself—though holding the lofty office of Commissioner of Police—as a toothless bulldog, meaning bulldog, yes, but he did not have the teeth to deal with the situation as he would have liked. In recognition of this we, as I indicated, put in place—the last administration—the legislative arrangements, compensation arrangements, issues around leadership of the police service, promotion in the police service, a budget for the police service and these very important elements were taken care of to the best of our abilities.

All of this was done after discussions with the Government of the day, the United National Congress, and then when Government changed, and we went to Government, the last administration, continued discussions with the then Opposition UNC and all that I have just told you came as a result of collaboration, cooperation, discussions, meetings with the other side and agreement as to what had to be done about the police service. So we went ahead—the last administration of which I was a part for a while—with the transformation of the police service, recognizing that there would be no quick fix.

Insofar as the legislative arrangements are concerned, you would recall that we amended the Constitution and changed the role of the Police Service Commission, which was one of the elements that was responsible for the management of the police service. The management of the service was very

diverse. The Police Service Commission played a role, the Commissioner of Police played a role, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security played a role, the Minister of National Security played a role; it was a very diverse and diffused management arrangement, and we amended the Constitution changing the role of the Police Service Commission. Today its role is about the hiring and, where necessary, firing and the review of the work of the Commissioner of Police and the Deputy Commissioners of Police, and also, matters of discipline on appeal from the police service.

We amended the Police Service Act, we introduced new regulations to deal with these major amendments, all of this as I said, done after collaboration, cooperation and agreement of the other side. Insofar as compensation was concerned, recently, even as recent as the last budget statement, we would hear that the Government decided that it would pay an extra \$1,000, an allowance of \$1,000 to all members of the other arms of the protective services, the police service having gotten theirs some time previously.

**Hon. Senator:** Except the SRPs.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Of course, I am being reminded and properly so, except the Special Reserve Police officers on whose part, quite properly, we call for adequate equitable treatment for them in this respect. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, we must remind you, the police officers and the members of the protective services who are beneficiaries that that \$1,000 allowance does not positively or in any way affect their pension and gratuity arrangement. It does not! But at any rate, what the last administration did, because pay, police pay—they work very hard, and this is not a clichéd political response to anything. I know as a fact. I used to be a police officer myself as you might know; a police instructor trained many a police officer. Police officers work particularly hard and do very dangerous work. When we are sleeping they would probably be dressed like vagrants, some of them; just disguised doing undercover work, taking risks. I know of a case where a police officer had a shotgun put to her head, the suspect who she was tailing suspected that she might have been a police officer, and though she was armed and colleagues were not far by, she had to bear the pain of that for a good half an hour so as not to give away her cover, and that way she would have given away the cover of the person whose house she was occupying as she was doing her undercover work. Dangerous work!

We, Mr. President, in recognition of all of this, brought in a team of Canadian experts on police compensation arrangements. Prior to this, T&TEC, TSTT and other security estate officers earned more money than our regular police officers, and when the time for compensation came we would look at what they earned and



use that as a bit of a barometer, if I may say so, a benchmark. We recognized that was not the proper way to go, their job is markedly different, fundamentally different from the work of the men and women of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, including SRPs who work alongside the regular police doing everything they do on a day-to-day basis.

So, we brought in the team of experts and they looked at the question of police salaries. The formula, as I understand from the experts or at least the approach was to look at the relative worth of the police officer, an evaluation, in effect. The police were in collaboration with us on this and they agreed for a period to forego any demands for any additional pay and allowances, all by consensus and agreement. Overtime pay, which compensated them for their long hours, was a problem. When overtime was delayed for more than a month or two, I think it was, it had to go to the CPO for approval, as a result of all of that, sometimes the police would work and they would not get overtime pay until a year later, a year and a half, and as you know some economists say, late money is bad money, they want it now. At the end of that process, having observed that there were some 46 different allowances that were paid to police officers, that was all rationalized and we came up with a package that the police accepted, everyone accepted, for their payment. Government changed and you know the outcome of that. This Government disrupts everything that reminds them of the last administration.

So the police pay question is still up in the air, and as they have worked very, very hard during this quite unnecessary state of emergency, one has to wonder what the industrial relations issues will be with the police service when this madness is over and they go back to the bargaining table to hear 5 per cent just as it was before. We looked at the question of compensation as well and made major advance on that; it is on the desk of the Minister, what he would do with it is entirely a question for him.

We opened up the leadership process in the police service. Leadership is a critical issue. I was reading some literature as espoused by one Bill Bratton, an outstanding US police officer who made his name in Los Angeles county and in the New York Police Department, he is regarded as one of the grand viziers of policing across the world—well famous in Europe and the United States—and he makes the point constantly that insofar as policing, as indeed, in many other areas of our existence and endeavours, it has to do with leadership. Leadership!

**11.30 a.m.**

And we saw that, because you had a situation where someone by virtue of rising to the top on the basis of seniority, would have three or four months more service, and they would, on the retirement of the last commissioner, assume the office for four months, and off they go again. That yielded a tremendous amount of inefficiency and it affected the ambitions and the abilities even of some of the younger and more qualified persons in the police service, and in other such organizations who felt that if seniority was the only way they would probably never get a fair crack at the whip or if they did, it would be for three or four months before they retired.

So we opened up the system and made it possible for anyone in the world to be a police commissioner in Trinidad and Tobago. There were some who took strong objection to that, and I replied to them. When we were making our bid for World Cup participation in Trinidad and Tobago and we had Bertil St. Clair, who did a yeoman's job and got us to a certain level and it appeared as though he could take us no further, all of Trinidad and Tobago celebrated Leonardo Benhacker, whom we brought in from Europe, he became the national coach, international as he was, non-Trinidadian as he was, and took our national team to the World Cup. We all celebrated. And the simple logic is, if you can do that in football, expertise in this globalized world you could purchase, the same could be done. Of course, a police commissioner operating in Trinidad and Tobago will have to learn about the cultures and mores of our society in order to function more effectively, but in terms of police leadership, in principle, I do not think there is an issue.

The question of promotion: we introduced the assessment centre to get around this same issue of rising to the top, purely on the basis of seniority, disregarding capacity, will, personal drive and all of that. So we rearranged the whole promotion system and now there is an assessment centre where any police officer could apply, and once he is successful in the process he can become the commissioner of police.

So, Mr. President, all the things or the elements I have just outlined, I must remind us, were done in cooperation and by agreement with the other side. We made it possible for the police commissioner who claimed he did not have access to resources as he would have liked—today, under, I think it is Head 64, he has his own budget, Head 64. He now has full autonomy for the officers under his charge. He can hire, he can fire, he can discipline, they can appeal to the Police

Service Commission. All of these I consider to be indispensable—necessary and indispensable ingredients in modernizing and advancing the capacity of the modern organization that we expect in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

But in came this Government, I do not mean to be awkward, but many of them, new to the business; rookie status, not understanding a lot that has gone on and then you hear a lot of loose talk from many of them—glib, loose talk, about issues touching and concerning the police service, matters for which they have no knowledge whatsoever, and do not even take time to learn. I understand that since the departure of the much aligned last Minister of National Security—  
[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senators:** Maligned.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Maligned, sorry. Aligned to the PNM and maligned otherwise. [*Desk thumping*] Aligned to the PNM and maligned as well by the Opposition, viciously, a man that I have a tremendous—and this is not a small political statement and small talk, I do not have time for that—I genuinely respect and salute the work of the then Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph; he accomplished a whole lot in terms of putting in place the very indispensable ingredients as I have just described. The Minister of National Security today, he has met this platform—he has done nothing with it, but he met it when he went there. I am told by elements in the Ministry of National Security that absolutely nothing is happening since Minister Joseph’s departure. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating and we will see. We will see.

So, as I said, Mr. President, as I press on, we saw a big problem and we recognized it warranted big solutions and it could never be a quick-fix situation and we set about the task of getting these things done. And done they were. Security does not come cheap. Over the last eight years or so, and I see this Government continued in this trend, national security received the largest chunk—or one of the largest chunks of the national budget for all of our eight years signalling our understanding of the importance of this and that security does not come cheaply. It does not and the Government knows that. We saw that they budgeted in this last budget 2011/2012, an extra \$75 million to pay police overtime money for the work that they have been doing during this ill-advised, unnecessary, disruptive, economy battering state of emergency.

What then, Mr. President, is the role and function of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service? In part, the Police Service Act says, and this is the first duty of the police, and I paraphrase: to prevent crime—it is so long, when I was an instructor I used to know it word perfect—to prevent crimes and other infractions of the law. That essentially sums up the basic role.

Policing, I read recently, that at least in Canada and I do not know about England, they saw first records of formal policing around 1651, where the police began as night watchmen for the community, for the village. I always imagined it. I think I said it here before. I imagine it is men; good, strong well-meaning men in the rural communities, agricultural societies as they might have been in those years, recognizing that persons would have been—marauders would come to steal their crops, to steal their women, to cause them harm, and as a result of what I would call moral indignation, some men in the village might have decided they would take turns in looking out for all of us, to protect us and therein might have begun the element of policing. Over the years of course, it would have become more formal, men would have done it professionally, but the first professional records they identified it—at least in the context of Canada—as far back as 1651. And we expect of the police service that it would serve the citizens, protect us, protect our property and protect state property as well, as we go about our normal, everyday, routine affairs, as we enjoy all of the rights and freedoms that we are to enjoy under our Constitution.

Immediately, Mr. President, you will agree with me, that today as we speak, under a state of emergency, in a situation where this Government, the Prime Minister and her Cabinet—the inner circle in her Cabinet, led by the Minister of National Security, they have put this country on pause, they have switched it off in order for the police service to provide the protection of our lives, our bodies and our properties in the way in which it was so intended.

In other words, we did not expect as part of this social construct that you would have to shut the country down in order to provide the policing that we expect of the police service. People's freedom to leave home early—if I felt like leaving home at 3.30 to go to the market to put out my stall, to do my business and earn my dollar, this Government has stopped that. If I feel like working late as some lawyers and other professionals are obliged to do, until midnight, I can no longer do that. If I feel to lime in Woodbrook until one in the morning, today I could not do that. I could, and like Mr. Blackman in Woodbrook, get locked up at five past eleven. They have shut the country down in order to properly police it. That was not what was intended. The job of the farmer is to provide food, the nurse to assist us in recuperating from bouts of ill health, the teacher to educate, the police is about security.

There have been many, over the years, reports, enquires—commission of enquires into the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the most recent I think, is the O'Dowd report of 1991/1992 after the events of 1990. And it is common to

hear people say that there have been so many reports, and they all get cobweb and nothing is done about it. That is not entirely true. That is not entirely true. Because the police service today is a far different organization from what it was 30 years ago. A lot has changed; a lot has improved though one can see that a lot more has to be done. This thing is a moving target.

This is why you would have heard that in 2003, Ken Gordon recommended a state of emergency, and as recent as two months ago I heard some of our colleagues on the other side using a recommendation made by Ken Gordon in 2003, to justify a state of emergency in 2011. The thing that Ken Gordon would have seen in 2003, would have transformed, changed, moved on. The circumstances would have been very different and therefore, if you contemplate a state of emergency now do so, but to tell me that it is eight years overdue is a stupid argument. It has to be arrived at on the basis of current thought which of course the Minister of National Security attempted to share with us. He gave us a reason for this, but that is a matter to which I shall return shortly.

How effective is the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service now in terms of providing us with the security that we expect? Criminals—the society has changed as I was saying. Criminals have become far more enlightened, far more skilful—you now have more sophisticated criminals using more sophisticated techniques, the cellular phone has virtually transformed the business of crime fighting. Twenty-five years ago when a police patrol was going up Laventille Hill, it was only when they arrived on the block the guys would know, but today, before they leave the station everybody, all up the hill, all through Westmoorings, all through Federation Park where some of our colleagues are living in HDC premiere apartments now, they would know. Yes, Federation Villas, where they are now safely ensconced, some of them—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. President:** Senator, you are not allowed to refer to the residential status of any of the Members of the Senate. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. The whole world of cyberspace, we saw recently in the United Kingdom there were riots all over England, and the social media played a very important role in coordinating those activities. So, that the thing has changed, as I said it is a moving target, and the police organization has to keep pace. It is very, very difficult.

Let me tell you this quickly en passant, since we are talking about crime and behaviour, and police and resolving it. I watched the news last evening on CNC 3, you know you flip from TV6 to CNMG and you go back to CNC 3, so I stuck on

*Trinidad and Tobago Police Service*  
[SEN. HINDS]

*Tuesday October 25, 2011*

CNC 3, the news was finished, I was at my table and I continued to do my work paying half attention to the screen. But something caught my attention there, so I went fully into it again. And for the next 15 minutes, Mr. President, there was a cartoon on CNC 3, I do not know the name of it, because I did not see the top of it, within the ten minutes or so I watched this cartoon, I saw all manners of filth; I saw elements of buggery; I saw elements of theft I saw elements of robbery.

**11.45 a.m.**

I saw a scene in this cartoon where this poor man and his wife at the door, the landlord came to collect the rent; he is unable to pay the rent and his wife is saying, “Okay, honey, I will do it for the children”, as she dropped her clothes. I saw that on CNC 3 right after news last night. The pits of illegality and immorality! Let me say, I saw all manner of filth, and I want to know, the purveyors of this, how do you expect to deal with crime in a society when this is presented so naturally to the children? Two men lying in a bed in this cartoon; all kinds of craziness took place last night at prime time.

**Hon. Senator:** The name is *Family Guy*.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** The name is *Family Guy*? Hmm. Hear the name; very, very, if you like, comfortable name, homely name, that you may send your child to look at.

**Hon. Senator:** Misleading name.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Misleading name, absolutely. And I saw the same thing some months ago on TV6 as well, right after news—not the same cartoon, but same filth. I put it on the record of this Senate already; I spoke about it here. So this thing about crime is a strange one and probably the people who purvey this want to see the police service solve all crime, without realizing in some ways they contribute to it. But at any rate, today in our society—just to demonstrate how things have changed—antisocial behaviour, criminal behaviour, is even celebrated in some communities and in some families. When I was a boy many, many years ago—many, many years ago when I was a boy, antisocial behaviour met with social resistance in the community. Today, they celebrate it. “A fellow go to jail”, he is a hero. In my day, when a fellow went to jail, the parents would lyingly tell you that he went to Grenada or he went to St. Vincent for a holiday. He would not get a girlfriend. *[Interruption]* Yes, you were ostracized in the community. People treated you with scorn. Today, you can be a hero for the same reasons. There is very little social intervention before the intervention of the police today.

So things have changed. The police service, in the last 20 years, terribly lagged behind developments in the society, and did not meet the expectations of the society. When moneys became available, we were better able as a nation to respond to these problems; direct the large chunks of the budget to it, and that, as I said, was done.

There are a number of elements, ingredients, items, if you like, that must be addressed if the police service is to serve this country adequately. We must start with an increase in police numbers. We had the Project 1000 where we wanted to see faces; we put grey and blue uniforms on them. That did not work. The training was too short; we did not transform those civilians to proper police. That failed. That was a recommendation of the same Ken Gordon in 2003. Did not work! We have to recruit better quality people. We began publishing the names and putting pictures of all applicants for the army, coast guard, police, everything, so as to democratize, if you like, the application process, giving citizens an opportunity to comment to the authorities on persons whom they would have become, by way of those advertisements, aware of their applications to the police service.

We recruited retired officers to get the younger officers, the active officers, out on the streets while the senior and retired ones remained in the stations to man the books and to do the routine station duties. Not new. It is happening to this day. The Minister met it and, fortunately, I see he is carrying the thing on. I understand it is being done in England as well. More recruitment: when we told the police we wanted 500 police a year, a batch of 250 from January to June; a batch of 250 from July to the end of the year or thereabouts, they told us we could not do it; they did not have the capacity in the Police Training College.

Immediately, I was down there with Minister Joseph. We took a decision. Cabinet approved \$3 million and the restoration of the Police Training College started. Today, every police officer will tell you, it is like heaven to what it used to be. There are more rooms. They can now accommodate 250 recruits at a time. All the ladies' dormitories, everything, substantially improved. Not just the building, we transformed it from the Police Training College now to a Police Academy. [*Desk thumping*] They rearranged the curriculum and all of that.

We moved the requirement for joining the police service from school leaving to three O levels, now five O levels, to raise the level of the applicant so that the product would be a whole lot better. That was done. Well, do not talk for tertiary education. Many police officers went on courses, whether it was Cambridge, all over this world in universities; all across the United States, and, of course, our

local universities, acquiring new skills, new techniques, new learning, to improve their performance as police officers. If you go in any police station today you will meet every other police officer, either having completed tertiary level studies or engaged in some element of it.

Another important ingredient is improved plant and equipment. There was a time you called the police, you would hear, “We do not have vehicles”. You do not hear that anymore. [*Desk thumping*] I remember at one time we delivered, within the space of two years, 1,400 vehicles for the police. We made arrangements with VMCOTT and other arrangements for the maintenance of these. They appointed a fleet officer, all to preserve the integrity of these vehicles, because sometimes you give the police 100 vehicles in January, and by June, only 40 of them are in operation, seriously. So you have to manage these things.

We put GPS systems in the vehicles so that we would know where they are; they could respond to calls, and that kind of thing. We built police stations; we repaired police stations up and down this country. I am sure—almost certain—that the Minister has not overseen the repair of one police station since he assumed office; not one that I know of, or built any that I know of. But he will reply.

Plant and equipment, very important, because when you try to get more out of the police, it is the police leadership who will tell you, “We do not have resources”, and it was always a to-ing and fro-ing. You want a project done, “We do not have the resources”. So you provide it. So the thing went on and on and on. These are the realities.

Wireless communication, very important. It is wireless communication that permits a single police officer to perform effectively out there, knowing that the entire 7,000 police service force is behind him on the basis of one wireless call, so to speak.

Institutional strengthening—that CAPA, Crime Analysis Unit, we put that in place. The Command Centre—they now call it a different name, but we established a Command Centre where all elements of national security send the information and decide on issues as they arise in the country. It was done.

As I said earlier, an enhanced new promotion system, because if there was one thing that caused a lot of grouse and a lot of deteriorating morale in the police service, it had to do with the issue of promotion—very, very important. They are very touchy about that, and properly so, because everyone wants to get on with it.



We set up an independent Police Complaints Authority. Let me say this. Part of the reason for the burgeoning crime, part of the reason, it appears, that criminals were able to get on top of us, had to do with police and state corruption, whether it is immigration, customs, the general public service; whether it is the defence force, coast guard and regiment. You can hardly have international transshipment of drugs without some complicity on the part of some elements of the State.

And you see this state of emergency? I know it is useless, because nothing in it has been done to deal with corruption in the police service, and corruption in the police service is an important contributor to the crime problem—very important. So when you have a state of emergency, ill-advised as this is, and nothing to deal with that, then I know you are not serious, in addition to the fact that the criminals are now reporting that the real big fishes have never been even looked at during the last two months under this state of emergency.

“They try to brand two young fellas who were at the Hyatt next door here, as big fishes. The people are now saying they miss the real two big fish who passed a little while before them two fellas was found in the Hyatt.” One was banned by Fifa from international footballing activity for life and the other one ran and hid in the Cabinet of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mr. President:** Senator, you cannot refer to the conduct of a Member of this Senate, except by special motion.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** I am obliged, Mr. President. So police corruption is something that has to be addressed, and not just the police, as I say. There was corruption with the regiment. There were suspicions that some of the ammunition made available to criminals came out of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment. Fact! It is a fact that there are corrupt officers in the coast guard; it is a fact that there are corrupt officers in the customs, and throughout the public service. We all know that. That is part of the problem, and if you are not tackling that, state of emergency, a bigger waste of time.

The application of technology, we passed in 2002, amended in 2007 or 2005, DNA legislation. I am hearing the Government saying now that it requires refinement, improvement. Of course, no problem. We will see when you bring it. But we put DNA legislation in place, recognizing that you needed to apply technology to fighting crime. The days of the “I see” witness and confession statements appeared to be a thing of the past. So we did that.

We imported officers from Scotland Yard; we imported officers internationally, where we had to, in order to assist our local police in getting to where England was, for an example, 40 years ago. It is a work in progress. You could never fix the police service and have a perfect fix, a one-and-all fix. It is a constant evolution. As the thing changes, personnel change, techniques change, the society changes. It is a work in progress, and it is as simple as that.

We brought professionals from the George Mason University; the much-maligned Professor Mastrofski. But the police officers will tell you—as many of them have told me—many of the elements of the training that they received from the Mastrofski team went a long way to rearranging their approach to policing, and, therefore, the results that we have now started to see do not surprise me.

Improved social infrastructure is another important ingredient—lighting. Under Minister Penelope Beckles, as she then was, we lit the entire country—a lighting project under the NSDP. We saw that as an important ingredient, because criminals like to hide in the dark and to do things. In my constituency there was an old truck in a certain area and women reported to me that “fellas” would hide behind the truck and grab at them when they are passing in the dusk of the evening and so on, and we removed that. That is the kind of thing you have to do; improve social infrastructure.

The provision of sporting facilities, recreational spaces, NAPA, which they so enjoy; God knows how much crime that NAPA is preventing today. They go there very often, but I am not casting aspersions on anyone.

### **12.00 noon**

As I alluded to earlier, improved police morale, the SRPs could do with the little \$1,000. They work very hard. There is a little team of SRPs who work around Port of Spain, I see them very often, since I am around Port of Spain—keeping the place clean. Yes, keeping the behaviour of some of our citizens in check, working very hard, and this Government does not have any time for them.

Management and leadership, reform and rehab of prisoners, all of these are very, very important ingredients in dealing with the question of crime. As I press on. Mr. Gibbs, the new police commissioner was hired, highest paid in the Western hemisphere. I saw he was almost shedding tears before the Police Service Commission trying to protect his job. I understand they grilled him recently. I am now saying that it appears as though he has not provided the kind of leadership of the police organization. You hear this from the association, you hear this from within the police service—that is a matter for the police service to decide upon.

However, there are a few items that I would like to bring to Mr. Gibbs' attention for his investigation, as we try to make the police service a little bit better. There are some outstanding matters as we seek to deal with this question of crime. I wrote to him regarding an investigation into the conduct of a Minister of Government—the Minister of Works and Infrastructure. I listened to him, the Minister, calling the Opposition devils and demons, only a couple of days ago. I would like to know where the police have gotten with this investigation.

A couple of days ago, the police were reporting through their PR person that they had begun the investigation—we do not believe that. We have been telling him six months ago to begin that investigation, and to tell us a little bit more about whether money came in this country illegally, and whether it was declared, and who brought it, and whether any bribes were offered in this place called Hyatt. Up to now we have had no feedback from the commissioner, and we would like some feedback from that. Of course, he does not know everything; he was not here when the state of emergency was called. I understand he was opposed to it and that is why it was called in his absence by the Minister of National Security, and the Attorney General, and the Prime Minister, but that is another matter. He was opposed to it; he wrote and said he was opposed to it.

Mr. President, the low detection rate in the police service—and it includes some of the matters I have raised. Look, we have another Cabinet Minister who is on record in this country as saying all Muslims in this country should be sent to Saudi Arabia or killed. That should be investigated by Mr. Gibbs, and I am calling on him to pay attention to that today. And that citizen was rewarded with Cabinet status in this country.

Mr. President, we have had reports of the seizure of about 130 firearms over the last two months in this state of emergency. I understand that there are far more than 131 illegal firearms about this country. One day I asked the Attorney General who was on his legs, whether he had any idea and he had none, and the Minister of National Security looked on at us in that discussion nonplused—he had no idea himself. I do not even think they took time to try to find out from the police leadership whether there is any understanding of how many illegal guns there are out there. But they are now patting themselves on the back—having found 131—with blissfully ignorant satisfaction.

We have, as I indicated a while ago, to do far more. The Government is now in office and it is for them to take the thing further. CCTV and other video surveillance play a very important part. We introduced more of that around the time of CHOGM, the two international conferences held here, and those as Minister

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Joseph at the time indicated, were legacy items, those cameras did not come down. I am aware that there is a CCTV squad in the police service now; without saying too much, they function very effectively, needs to be enhanced, we need to see more of these. Just as Minister Beckles and the last administration put lights where there was darkness all over Trinidad and Tobago, we need cameras too, and security does not come cheaply. I know you are running deficits, I know you are having difficulty but that is the state of affairs, it falls now to you to get it done.

Trinidad and Tobago is faced with a bit of a crisis. In my view the Government is an important element of that crisis. We consider the work that I have described that was done to be well done—necessary work. Reorganizing, transforming the police organization to make it better able to serve the people of Trinidad and Tobago and our visitors. Failure to transform the economy, failure to transform the police service, ineffectiveness of our institutions, an antiquated police service, all of these are to be dealt with; it falls to the Government in order to so do.

**Mr. President:** Just to draw to your attention, you have ten minutes left.

**Sen. F. Hinds:** Thank you very warmly. So I have today presented the Government through this Motion with a good opportunity to pause and to have a good look at the police service. It has served this country quite well during this state of emergency. I saw energy, I saw professional responsibility, I saw the police officers coming out as they always do in support of the State, in support of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. But I am being told from the police service today, that they are now tired, they are a little washed up, they have gone very hard for the last two months, and the information that they were getting from the communities has now dried up. The people in the communities are not responding to the police in the way they probably should because they have lost a large amount of faith in the police, based on the conduct of some elements of the police service on the urgings of the Government during the state of emergency.

For my own part, I think the police have been set up. I saw Mr. Ramesar, the Police Service Welfare Association President, when the Nelson Street 21 were released, saying that the police service felt relieved, unburdened, because some of them were forced by some of their seniors on the urgings of the Government, to go ahead and arrest citizens of this country without good reason, without thought as to the need for evidence. Now there is a breakdown in morale in the police service caused by a fight between the officers and their leaders, who are saying

now, “We never told you to do that”, and the police officers are hearing the Minister of National Security and the Prime Minister, trying to blame the police service now for the debacle in which it has found itself, saying, “We never tell them what to do, we do not get involved in operational matters.”

So, Mr. President, as we come to the close of our presentation here today, I urge the police to be very resolutely professional, and in that professionalism—again I want to call on Mr. Gibbs, the Commissioner of Police to also investigate—there is a matter raging in San Fernando now where the Mayor of the City of San Fernando is in a catfight with a councillor called Murad Ali or something like that. So it is UNC fighting the COP over a PNM grant for the Mayor’s studies. I would like, Mr. Gibbs to also pay attention to that. There is another important investigation outstanding, the résumé of Mr. Omar Khan—I am calling his name—in T&TEC that has to be investigated. The Minister of Public Utilities, my friend opposite, told us that he would investigate that matter at ministerial level and come back to us; he has not come back to date. I am now calling on Mr. Gibbs to do so.

I am satisfied that based on the platform that the last administration has put in place, notwithstanding, the cluelessness of the present Government, if they would take time to review the documents, review the records at the Ministry of National Security, they would see the tremendous amount of work that has been done, and like me they too could dismiss the naysayers, dismiss those who maliciously and unthinkingly claim that the last administration did absolutely nothing about crime. When they review the documents—and now would be a good time; now that the whole country is on pause including the Cabinet—they can take a little time, look at what I have discussed here today from the Ministry’s records and they will see a solid platform has been laid. It is now for the Government of the day to advance that which it has met and to ensure that the police service enjoys the resources and the policy directions that are necessary for making it the organization that we would all respect and admire, and the organization that can better and more efficiently serve the needs of a modern, growing citizenry in Trinidad and Tobago.

I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. President:** Could we have a seconder for this Motion.

**Sen. Beckles:** Mr. President, I beg to second the Motion and I reserve the right to speak.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Brig. John. Sandy):** Thank you, Mr. President for allowing me the opportunity to participate in this debate on the strength and deficiencies of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Mr. President, before I proceed with my contribution, I wish to respond to some of the observations made by my colleague, Sen. Hinds. The Senator, and quite rightly so, indicated to us that the ability to make our police service a better one is no quick fix. I totally agree but the previous administration had eight years, eight years during which time they could have made some element, some degree of change. Unfortunately, during their tenure what we saw was an escalation of crime and an escalation of criminal activity.

**12.15 p.m.**

He spoke about promotions. That administration took the initiative away from Trinidadians and Tobagonians and gave it to Penn State—an entity that knows nothing about Trinidad and Tobago’s culture; nothing about Trinidad and Tobago’s peculiarities. What we had in essence were foreigners coming and telling us here what to do; up to this day, there are police officers who are very, very upset about that aspect. [*Desk thumping*]

The Senator spoke about the \$1,000 we gave to police officers. What did the last administration give them? Nothing! Nothing! And quite apart from that, over the three-year period when they should have done the work with them, with respect to their pay structures, it was when we came into Government, we met all the disarray that they had attempted to contribute—this disarray that we met the police service in with respect to their moneys and their pay scales. We know that they work hard and we acknowledge that; we have always acknowledged that, but I will come to that at a later stage when I refer to the utterances by the Senator in 2002.

Mr. President, one of the areas of concern—he spoke about demoralization; nothing demoralized the hard-working police officers in this country than the establishment of that SAUTT with that \$5,000. [*Desk thumping*] I am talking about police officers who spoke with me; hard-working police officers of the CID and other areas who would go out at night-time and work hard, and their friends and colleagues getting shot next to them. These officers maintained their sense of duty, and although they were hurt by that \$5,000 given to the SAUTT officers—most of them are not as professionally competent as those in the CID and other areas; and they were given that \$5,000. Nothing demoralized the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service more than that. [*Desk thumping*] And for those officers to continue going out there on a nightly basis, on a daily basis, to fight crime, I must commend them. They exercised their highest degree of professionalism and patriotism.

The Senator spoke about the platform that was there, but what did that platform do for crime in Trinidad and Tobago over the eight years that they were there?

**Sen. George:** That is the question.

**Hon. Senator:** Nothing!

**Sen. The Hon. Brig. J. Sandy:** What did that platform do? What are the results? Crime escalated on that same platform for the eight years of that same platform. Crime rose unabated because of the residents on that platform, whatever they were.

The Senator spoke of the country being switched off. The country has not switched off, as we will see a number of activities continue as they were in the past.

**Hon. Senator:** Maybe he switched off.

**Sen. The Hon. Brig. J. Sandy:** What we have done, we have switched off crime and criminal activities. [*Desk thumping*] And the same people who felt like working late sometimes, those same people were afraid to do so. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** Indeed!

**Sen. The Hon. Brig. J. Sandy:** They were afraid to leave their homes; they were afraid to have parties in their homes because the bandits and the criminals were invading their homes, those same people; and you would be the first to blame the Government—you.

He spoke about cellphones and the use of cellphones. How long have we had cellphones? Mr. President, I remember about 15 years ago, we mounted a mission in Piparo on the then Dole Chadee's residence. At that time, it was not the situation now where we had a number of cellphones—"everybody have" two or three cellphones—so we got TSTT to cut the phones in the area. We were going in there probably about 0300 hours in the morning.

While going in, we started to hear conch shells and we were wondering what kind of animal that was until we recognized that they were actually conch shells, and these were the signals that were going in; so the technology was there at that time, they used conch shells to warn, so much so, that when we got there, Dole Chadee told us had he known we were coming half an hour early, he would have prepared breakfast for all of us. So the technology emerged even at that time, so there were warning systems but the cellphones were there in the time of their administration. What did they do? Nothing! [*Desk thumping*]

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It amazes me, Mr. President, he spoke about the TV filth. Did that start on May 24 last year? It did not; it escalated to that point because nothing was done before. He talked about celebration of anti-social behaviour and celebration of criminals. Who courted them at the Hyatt? It was not anybody on this side that courted those same criminals that he spoke about. [*Interruption*] At the Crowne Plaza—the same thing. Admitting that over the past 20 years, the Trinidad and Tobago police have not lived up to international standard—and we agree. This is what amazes me, Mr. President, because he accepts that, but they have done nothing. Whatever happened to that platform? Did the platform not deal with that? With respect to the numbers, I will deal with that later, Mr. President.

When I assumed office, it amazed me that there was no developmental training, no succession planning in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. I came from an organization and I have said this before, when you see a soldier with a stripe, you know he has done a course; when you see one with two, he has done two courses; when you see one with three, he has done three courses, similarly in the officers' structure. This did not exist in the police service. They were made to do promotional exams without courses; it was a kind of *vaille-que-vaille* situation.

It reminds me—I go back to my own military career—some years ago, we did a seminar with police officers and we were broken down into different groups, syndicates; and there were six of us inclusive of three police officers. Okay, we decided who would take notes and who would speak on behalf of the group, and one police officer—a senior superintendent—said to us, “Well, you know, you soldiers always going on courses and so on, so you all could handle this, you know about these things.” And I asked him: “What are you talking about? Have you not been on courses?” This was a senior superintendent. And he said to me that he had been on his basic training at the depot and then he when back as a corporal to a refresher course.

In other words, what we had was a corporal wearing a superintendent's rank and that is what existed in the police service and they did nothing about it. [*Crosstalk*] We have put things in place; we have developmental training now. We have career path planning now; that did not exist before. [*Desk thumping*]

The Senator spoke about academies that our police officers attend; I totally agree with him. But most of them over the past two decades or so, have gone on their own accord, by their own thirst for developmental training and advancement,



not by anything that that administration did to ensure that that career path planning allows certain courses to be done professionally to enhance the ability of the individual and to enhance the ability of the unit as well.

He spoke about not building police stations. No, we have not built a police station because of the mess that we found UDeCott in when they administered, and we are now trying to tidy that up. They were there for eight years, they built five; we are here for 17 months but we will build many more than they ever built.

Corruption in the police service: what did you do? It did not start yesterday. He knows for a fact, he knows officers, so is the Senator withholding information from the police? He has said here that he knows officers in the coast guard who are corrupt. Are you withholding evidence from the police? [*Desk thumping*] He spoke about Scotland Yard officers coming here. Our same hard-working police officers will tell you that most of them were a waste of time. They had to ask our officers here how to do certain things, those same Scotland Yard people.

He spoke about the former Minister of Public Utilities lighting up the whole country, and I know, she was a hard-working Minister. But, Mr. President, very early in our tenure when I visited the Nelson Street and George Street area—that is one of the areas where pathways between the buildings were in darkness. I called on the Minister of Public Utilities, and in two days, there were lights on Duncan Street, on Nelson Street. There were lights on the basketball court on Duncan Street, the same lights that you lit up, they were in darkness. Those were some of the areas that we needed to get lights to, so you did not light up everything. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

My dear friend referred to Commissioner Gibbs as being the highest paid, but he is just as highly paid as the SAUTT officers—there were 36 of them; all of them highly paid by that administration, not just one or two; 36 Scotland Yard people. Our local officers in SAUTT had to show them the ropes. Some of them would call their colleagues abroad to get information.

**Sen. Hinds:** Same SAUTT?

**Sen. The Hon. Brig. J. Sandy:** That same SAUTT—36 officers highly paid, and when you go to Maracas on a Sunday, you see why they are highly paid, that is where they used to hang out.

I do not know how many illegal arms are there on the streets in Trinidad and Tobago and I make no excuse for that. But, he was a Minister in the Ministry of National Security, did you know then? Did you know? [*Crosstalk*] Yes, they produced a report telling me as well, but did you know? [*Crosstalk*] You had your time, keep quiet. You did not know. [*Desk thumping*]

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The CCTV cameras that he so boldly spoke about; Mr. President, I would not want to speak about that. I would not want to—let me just stay away from that, it has implications. I agree 100 per cent that our police officers worked hard and continue to work hard. I cannot overemphasize the fact that they continue to come up to the plate and they really, really need to be commended, and I so do, and at every opportunity I get, I will commend them. [*Desk thumping*]

But, Mr. President, we must take cognizance of the fact that during the reign of the last administration, crime escalated. If it is he is urging the Government—this present Government—with his ideas, I beg to decline because if he had not done it in the past eight years, I do not see how he could do it now.

Mr. President, I have already said in this honourable Senate that I, John Sandy, will not stand here to take praise for any successes in solving criminal activities. If, as the Senator says, it is because of that platform that they laid and he wants to take praise for any decrease in criminal activity, go ahead; I have absolutely no problem with that. I am happy that criminal activity continues to subside. I will not take praise for it, if he says—but my concern as a patriot, I am happy that it is going down. I am asking my good friend to continue, but the fact that the matter remains, as a Trinidadian and Tobagonian, if crime subsides in Trinidad and Tobago, as I said sometime earlier on, all of us can take the praise for it. [*Desk thumping*]

**12.30 p.m.**

I have said before and any opportunity I get, I would say it, praise is not mine. I give honour and praise to Almighty God and I know you would agree with me on that. There is where the praise goes, because without him, we can do nothing, and I give him all the praise, all the honour and all the glory. [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** Amen.

**Sen. The Hon. Brig. J. Sandy:** Amen. Mr. President, national and personal security is one of the pillars identified by the People's Partnership Government in its framework to sustainable development. Enhancing the capabilities of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to attain such security is, therefore, a critical element of my Government's agenda.

We recognize that while legislation and technology are critical components of the anti-crime plan, our human resource, the men and women who retain the responsibility for enforcing the laws and using state-of-the-art technology, they are our primary asset, and we must always let them know that we have every confidence in our police officers that they will get the job done.

As the main law enforcement agency charged with the responsibility to maintain law and order, prevent and detect crime and prosecute offenders, the role of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is always under scrutiny. Consistently, therefore, Government must assess that organization's strengths and weaknesses and devise strategies to ensure that it is equipped with the appropriate tools to effectively perform its functions in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century environment.

Mr. President, allow me to share with you and hon. Senators, the current position of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Over the years, a number of developments have taken place in the police service as it seeks to transform itself to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness. Currently the police service can boast of the following—here again I am not saying that efforts were not made, efforts were made, but they were not as successful as the administration then hoped that they would be.

- Better trained personnel: the recently upgraded Police Training Academy is equipped with the necessary physical and human resources to produce knowledgeable and competent officers. At present, new recruits are exposed to an enhanced induction training programme, which focuses on ethics and integrity.

That was not there before.

- Policing for the people: the practical-based learning with the latter involving simulation and role play as part of the training programme. That was another issue that was not there before. This is followed by an eight-week training officer programme to support the transition from the induction programme and training environment to that of frontline policing.

In other words, you do not put “green” recruits out there. You give them that on-the-job training. It is structured, so when they are on their own they know what to do. As you are very well aware and I am sure you would agree with me, the practical aspect of things sometimes is not readily available in the mind of the young officer, the recruit, or the officer who had just graduated, until he goes out there and faces the music. Police and other law enforcement officers are provided with training at external agencies, both within Trinidad and Tobago, as well as in foreign countries.

As I indicated earlier, we are speaking now of succession training, so that you do not put an officer in one specific career path and somewhere in midstream, you send him to do a course totally alien to his environment where he is supposed to be heading, and as such, he comes back into his lane, so to speak, and cannot offer any assistance in the area that he ought to offer that assistance.

- Intelligence-led policing: the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, in conjunction with local intelligence-gathering agencies, which provide information on crime, perpetrators and motives, established to guide the tactical efforts of law enforcement, which is so integral.

Gone are the days when we go out, just go on receipt of information, as has happened sometime in the Rio Claro forest when we lost one of our officers.

- Strong inter-agency collaboration: there is a more integrated approach in the fight against crime, as the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service conducts joint operations with the various arms of the defence force.

In addition to accessing additional manpower, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service can now also utilize the air and sea assets of its cohorts to supplement its performance. The Customs and Excise Department and Immigration Division also work closely with the police service in this regard.

- Evidence-based policing: through the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch, information gathered from crime reports are processed and analyzed to inform crime prevention and detection strategies. This facilitates more evidence-based policing and more efficient deployment of physical and human resources to tackle crime.

In other words, our police officers are now trained in operations, as opposed to just going out *vaille-que-vaille* and doing anything.

I remember there was a television clip that I saw a few years ago, where a police officer, apparently, was pursuing a criminal or bandit and he was sprinting with his pistol in his hand and when he looked back and he realized no one was behind him, he had to stop. We do not do things like that. We train for operations and we go into operations as we are trained.

Mr. President, there is also the strong collaboration with regional and international counterparts. With the rapid development of communications technology, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service receives support from Caricom and other international stakeholders in an attempt to combat trans-border crimes such as illicit drugs and arms trafficking. Among its key partners are the Drug Enforcement Agency (EDA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Interpol, to name a few, and several courses are being sourced abroad in this respect; not only training courses, but courses that allow our officers to serve with some of these units over a brief period, so that they can understand the modus of the operational abilities.

While these factors contribute positively to the police service and assist the organization in fulfilling its mandate, there are matters that require some attention, these include our negative public image. At present, the police service is working assiduously on that, with respect to partnering with communities and gaining the trust of our citizens. Here is where we go into it with our patrolling. In the past, you would see a police patrol coming down the street, and the windows would be wound up and they would drive past and there would be no interaction with the general public. What we are telling our police officers is when you are patrolling in your community, you meet and greet and speak with the citizens and meet with the people in the neighborhood—a simple chat such as: “How are you doing today?” and things like that, so that they develop that sense of confidence that the police are there to protect and serve with pride, as their motto says. There is a need to increase responsiveness and visibility. This is why we are improving, with respect to patrols in the respective neighborhoods and the number of citizens with claims of tardiness and non-action on the part of the police.

There was a story some years ago of someone in Diego Martin who was calling the police and saying: “I am seeing burglars entering my neighbour’s home and he is not there.” They said they had no vehicle. Five minutes after the person called back and said: “There is no need to come now, my neighbour has returned and he has shot the bandits and they are dead.” Two minutes after, the vehicle arrives. This is because there was no vehicular management in the police service. There was poor—an officer would take a vehicle and say he is going on an investigation and he would leave and come back some time later. When you call the police station there are no vehicles, they have gone on investigations. You know that.

I remember even back then I would tell my colleague at the time, Commissioner Guy—I was Chief of Defence Staff and he was Commissioner of Police—“Why do you not go the route of the military?” In the military, there is a work ticket system. Each vehicle has a work ticket. Now we have GIS and we do not need that. But, at that time, each vehicle carried a work ticket, so that any camp or installation that vehicle is leaving from, there must be an authorized signature. If there is no officer, no senior NCO, a senior private must authorize that vehicle to leave. When it goes to the sentry at the gate, that sentry takes the number, rank and name of the driver, his destination, of course, the vehicle number and signed by whom. That is recorded in the “marking in and out slip”. If that vehicle—let us say it leaves Teteron Barracks and goes to St. James, it is expected to be back in one hour or an hour and a half, because the regulations say

that you must take the direct route and only if there is an accident, you divert; you are expected back in an hour or an hour and a half and you are not there, something is wrong. At that time, I recommended to my colleague that he use that. It was not done. You would find that during the tenure of the previous administration, that is why we could not get vehicles. But, now with the GIS system we will take care of that.

- Inadequate succession planning, loss of experience through attrition.

What happened in the past and we are trying to correct that, is that police officers go on courses and return, and there is no passing on of that expertise or information, so the junior officers come in and there is no assimilation of that information, so that officer goes and retires with that expertise.

- Inadequate physical resources, vehicles, equipment and technology.

What we trying to—in all fairness to the last administration, they had started upgrading elements of technology.

- Tardiness and lack of enforcement of disciplinary measures, particularly in respect of the same alleged corrupt officers that my colleague spoke about.

They knew—he said he knows who those people are and nothing was done. He said he knows, and nothing was done.

The culture in the police service is one where disciplinary matters are not dealt with swiftly. I always have to refer to the military. There is where I spent 36 years. In the military, you commit an offence today, you are seen by your company commander sometime this afternoon and if the commanding officer is available—if it is something to go to the commanding officer and he is available—he would see you right after, probably the following morning or the day after. But, in no time, justice is well taken care of and whatever happened two days ago is dealt with, as we saw recently with the soldiers who were accused of abusing their powers. They were dealt with instantly.

I remember some years ago, I was posted to the honour guard and I had gone to do a visit one night at Trinidad House and there was a police officer asleep. This is probably two or three decades ago. He was asleep. Of course, I arrested him and put him on charge. I expected a day or two or a week after, because I know the police system is different, I would have had the opportunity to go and state against this constable that I met him asleep on duty and things like that. I heard nothing. I asked about it. I heard nothing. Three years subsequently, I am called and asked to come to the orderly room for this matter. I asked: “What matter are you talking about?” Three years ago.

**12.45 p.m.**

I told them, “Well, I am sorry I cannot come because if I were to see the police officer now I do not know him, I cannot”—you are talking three years ago and this was the kind of justice which existed, this was the kind of disciplinary procedures which existed in the police service. I am saying that we need to change that, and efforts will be made to change that.

Mr. President, ineffective management systems and even appraisal systems and, of course, erosion of trust by citizens and the need to build that as I said earlier on is critical, because without the assistance of our citizens we cannot solve crime; it cannot be done. All over the world that is said and understood.

Mr. President, the People’s Partnership Government acknowledges that like any other organization, the police service does have its limitations; however, this Government is committed to addressing those issues in the shortest possible time. We are encouraged, however, by the measure of success we have been able to achieve during our first year in office, among these are the appointment of a commissioner of police, and deputy commissioner of police; grant of tax free allowance for the police officers; augmenting of the fleet of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service with the acquisition of 181 new vehicles and an additional 618, which will be refurbished or are being refurbished; increased mobile and foot patrols by police officers in collaboration with the defence force; and we are in this effort attempting to befriend the national community of Trinidad and Tobago, and in so doing we will ensure that our police officers are more successful in pursuit of their duties.

- Increased vigilance and police raids in crime hot spots; renewed emphasis on policing for persons to improve the image of police officers through the use of customer-friendly approaches to deal with the public.

We have heard on so many occasions where particularly females go to the police stations to make a complaint and they are treated as the villain as opposed to the victim, and we need to change that. This is why when years ago they spoke about the community policing and special police officers to become community police officers, even at that time I opposed that in my own way as a civilian, I opposed that.

I said that every police officer ought to be a community police officer. The reason for that is when one officer is trained and he is not there in the police station, he deals with a complainant in a certain way, and when he is not there and that person comes back, and meets someone who is not trained, there is where the

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turn-off comes, because you find that sometimes our citizens are exposed to ridicule. As I said, particularly our females are told certain things that they ought not to be told. We are working very hard on that to get our police officers to understand that when you protect and serve with pride you do it outside as well as inside the police stations.

- Commencement of the process to employ former members of the defence force and protective services to man stations, to allow serving officers to engage in operational assignments.

That is working very well, and we are intent on encouraging that to continue.

You indicated [*Motions to Sen. Hinds*] that that happened in your time; when I went into office there were no former police officers, there were two inspectors who were kept on as SRPs because of the good work they were doing. I am telling you what I met, you were not there.

- Continued training of officers to carry out their duties professionally, placing greater emphasis on the softer side of policing.

You see, Mr. President, as I have said before, the Ministry of National Security has approached crime from different fronts, one is, of course, the suppression, you must suppress crime. But then there is the social aspect of it you must take into consideration and there is where we deal with our young people who are gravitating towards the gangs, and as I said we need to cut out that conduit and we need to do that by going into the communities and there are a number of programmes that the Ministry of National Security is pursuing in this regard.

Mr. President, the previous administration failed to adequately address the issue of manpower during their tenure. So when the Senator comes here and speaks about insufficient personnel, we totally agree. Records indicate that recruitment for the past five years were follows:

- 2006; 262 officers graduated
- 2007; 76 officers graduated
- 2008; 188 officers
- 2009; 224 officers graduated
- 2010; 343 officers graduated

Mr. President, it means, therefore, over that period there were 1,093 graduates, an average of 219 per year. Over the same period 2006—2010, there were 1,278 withdrawals from the service, representing an average of 256 per year; of these



735 were compulsory retirement, they had reached the age; 185 optional retirement, those who know there is an option when you reach a certain age; 41 relinquished, in other words, as we say in the military they went AWOL; medically unfit, 54; resigned, 171; dismissed, 17; deceased, 75.

Accordingly, Mr. President, during the period 2006—2010 there was a deficit in the ranks which totalled 185. In other words, during their tenure we lost 185 instead of gaining police officers. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** Facts are stubborn things.

**Sen. The Hon. Brig. J. Sandy:** Mr. President, that is an average deficit of 37 officers monthly over the period. The police service in respect of a sanctioned strength now requires 1,616 officers. We are attempting by next year, 2012, to double the recruitment of the 2010 effort and the retrograde record of our predecessors to provide for loss of staff through attrition and to bring the police service up to its sanctioned strength. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, August 16 we started that effort to double the intake of police officers in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. A police leadership development programme has been created to cater for the training needs of frontline and middle managers. As I indicated by experience earlier; we had a superintendent of police with corporal training. The programme was launched on April 06, 2011, and comprises workshops which are held weekly and impacts officers in management and leadership positions; it is expected to continue throughout the rest of 2011 and indeed annually thereafter.

Mr. President, the launch of the 21stCentury Policing Project was piloted in the Western Division and was officially launched to be incorporated in all police divisions later. This project emphasizes the provision of customer focused and professional policing services, through redeployment and provision of human resources in communities to partner with residents to secure the arrest of perpetrators.

Mr. President, earlier on I indicated that I would return to the aspect of our police officers and the fact that every opportunity I get, I praise them for the hard work that they do. But I would like to refer to an article, *Express* Monday December 30, 2002, the headline: Hinds blasts cops. I will say again the headline, *Express* Monday December, 30, 2002 page 3: Hinds blasts cops. And it says *inter alia*:

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“MP for Laventille East/Morvant Fitzgerald Hinds yesterday came to the defence of National Security Minister Howard Chin Lee and instead knocked the police and other arms of the protective services for not being firm enough in dealing with the problem of escalating crime.”

Same police which he came from.” [*Crosstalk*]

“Hinds said there was also ‘the need for firmer law enforcement. The Police, Army, Customs, Coast Guard and the Fire Service—those organizations they have responsibilities, and I am satisfied that while they lack some of the resources they need, they may not be exerting best efforts in the space they occupy.’”

Now, he has accepted that they lack—this is in 2002, he accepted that they lacked some of the resources, but he is still jamming them, because they are responsible, a unit which he came from.

“But the former”—and I quote again—“the former police officer maintained the problem ‘did not happen overnight’”—and we know that, and we appreciate that—“He said it was the result of slow degradation that has been taking place in our society for many years.”

We understand that and we agree with that; yet what did they—this was since 2002, Mr. President,

“He said the high crime rate was also the result of failure of citizens’ individual responsibility, ‘and many of us are not doing enough to influence positive the spaces we occupy.’”

So I invite him now, to do enough to positively influence the spaces we occupy. [*Desk thumping*] This is coming from former—

“He said that citizens should not sit back and ‘wait on Government or bandits to affect our lives, we can do a million things to ensure that we influence what happens instead.’”

Mr. President, what has he done, what is he doing? [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, soon after assuming office, notwithstanding the challenges, there was a 9.19 per cent reduction in serious crimes reported in calendar year 2010, when compared to 2009. Further, for the period January to August 2011, there was a 19.3 per cent reduction in serious crime reported when compared for the same period last year. The most notable decreases by offence were recorded in kidnapping for ransom and serious indecency which declined by 57.1 per cent and 32.2 per cent respectively.

**Mr. 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. T. Deyalsingh*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. President:** Sen. Brig. Sandy, before you start, I propose to take now the break. I was going to take the break at one o'clock, you have one minute left; rather than break twice, perhaps you could start when we come back. I propose that we suspend for one hour; we will be back here at two o'clock.

**1.00 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**2.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, before the break, this honourable Senate had just granted an extension of time for the Minister of National Security to join the debate again.

**Sen. The Hon. Brig. J. Sandy:** Mr. President, thank you most sincerely for allowing me the opportunity to speak for a further 15 minutes. I also extend those sentiments to Sen. Terrence Deyalsingh and to all my colleagues here for allowing me this opportunity.

Before we retired to sustain ourselves—and I trust that we are well sustained—I was in the process of reporting on serious crimes during the period 2009/2010 up to 2011. I was saying that larceny—(dwelling houses)—fell by 29.8 per cent; larceny—(motor vehicles)—fell by 24.8 per cent, up to the period the state of emergency was enforced; [*Desk thumping*] murder decreased by 21.5 per cent; [*Desk thumping*] sexual offences, burglaries and break-ins all decreased by 18.2 per cent. [*Desk thumping*] Of the 14 categories of serious crimes reported, I am comforted to report that 10 categories witnessed decreases. [*Desk thumping*]

While we acknowledge the decreases and are encouraged by it, the Government is constantly seeking new solutions that will achieve the sustained reduction in crime needed to restore public confidence in the rule of law and in our officers. It is our view that through the allocation of resources and collaboration between law enforcement and communities, detection and apprehension rates will as well improve.

Mr. President, quite apart from the suppression aspects of it, we have engaged in other areas of social input, including our Community Patriotism Initiative where we are seeking to have communities compete in sports and culture as opposed to guns and violence. In this respect, last year, we held our Concerts of Hope where

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we partnered the musical bands of the respective protective services and the defence force with other musical ensembles and bands of the respective communities, particularly young and budding artistes, so that they would be on the same stage with professionals and in so doing develop their expertise.

We are also looking at the Making Life Important Initiative, which was launched in the Beetham a couple of months ago by the hon. Prime Minister. The plan here is to go into our challenged communities, together with our sister Ministries, the Ministries of Education, Community Development, Public Utilities, Gender, Youth and Child Development and People and Social Development, so that, quite apart from trying to encourage our citizens in the respective communities to build those communities from a character perspective, we are attempting to build those communities infrastructurally to ensure that the environment lends itself to what we are trying to inculcate in those respective communities.

Our mentorship programme is going guns. As I indicated three Fridays ago, we completed what I referred to as the mentoring marriage where we got the mentors, the mentees and the families together, so that we can start the process of changing the life of a youngster.

I myself was fortunate that there were people in my life as a youngster, particularly my parents, who were praying people. I always attribute my elevation out of any possibility of criminal activity to their prayers because I could very well have been among our criminal statistics were I not guided. Growing up on Nelson Street, the peer pressure was always there to get involved in things other than peaceful activity. I always pay compliments to my dear parents for their prayers and guidance which prevented me from succumbing to peer pressure.

We were all youngsters and at that age you are influenced by some people that you ought not to be influenced by. So we feel that our mentorship programme and what we are trying to achieve is a step in the correct direction and I trust that colleagues on the other side will come forward as mentors, based on the kind of successes they themselves have had and guide our youngsters accordingly.

I appeal to our young people. I have a passion for young people and I feel we owe them that guidance, that nurturing, so that they can understand that there are so many other positive areas of application there just waiting for them.

I appeal as well to parents to nurture youngsters and not encourage them in illegal activity. So many times, we hear parents say certain things about their sons in particular and we wonder whether they love these sons. In the final analysis, we are trying to save those sons. They are dying. They are killing one another.

Our young brothers, and some sisters, too, are killing one another. We want to stop it. I appeal to the parents. I appeal to the community. Do we want to go back to that criminal activity where there are situations where you have to be hiding and ducking because you do not want to be termed a statistic, as collateral damage, as someone once labelled it? We do not want to return to that, so we are seeking the input of our communities by means of our community patriotism initiative to come together as communities and do things together to uplift the community and in so doing uplift Trinidad and Tobago.

The work continues and no one can do it for us. We, as citizens, must do it for ourselves. I said, on the last occasion, that we are all responsible. Let us put our shoulders to the wheel and assist in making Trinidad and Tobago a better place for us to reside.

The Government has reviewed our legislative agenda and has swiftly enacted the following key pieces of legislation to enhance the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service crime fighting capabilities:

- the Anti-Gang Act, 2011;
- the Bail (Amdt.) Act, 2010.

The Act seeks to suppress any association established for unlawful purposes and deny bail to any person deemed a gang member. Again, I appeal to our young people. The last thing we want to do is to spoil a young man's life by detaining him at that tender age of his existence for 15 or 20 years, at the prime of his life. I remember when our team was discussing this, that was the concern of Sen. Baptiste-McKnight—a youngster being held as a gang member and being put away for 15 or 20 years.

I am appealing to our youngsters to stay away from a life of crime; stay away from gangs. It will do no good to you, as a young man, trying to make something of yourself as a person, as a contributor to the development of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Firearms (Amdt.) Act, 2010, as well, seeks to increase penalties for certain offences involving a firearm or any prohibited weapon. In this instance, we speak about the three-strike rule, when you are convicted on the third occasion, the type of sentence that you are exposed to. We are appealing to the good thinking of people out there, particularly our youngsters, to desist from getting involved in criminal activity and using firearms and things like that.

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The Trafficking in Persons Act, 2011 was assented to on July 09, 2011. This Act gives effect to the United Nations Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and for connected matters.

We need to look out for our people. We need to be our brothers' and sisters' keepers, particularly our young people and our young females. While there are no statistics to say there is a proven element of trafficking in persons in Trinidad and Tobago, we have had too many instances where young females, in particular, have gone missing without a trace. We cannot determine where they have gone to and we can only assume they have gotten caught up in a situation like trafficking in persons.

These pieces of legislation will supplement the Trinidad and Tobago crime suppression initiatives by strengthening the criminal justice system. I can assure Senators that the Government is working assiduously to transform local law enforcement and improve the management of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

As crime and the criminal elements evolve, so too must law enforcement respond. In 2011 and beyond, therefore, Government remains committed to enhancing local law enforcement through the implementation of additional crime-fighting mechanisms. Some of the planned initiatives are as follows:

To increase police visibility and response through the use of surveillance bays to be installed along the Uriah Butler Highway, in the first instance. This serves two purposes:

- (1) to prevent the kind of carnage we have been having on our roads, particularly within recent times;
- (2) as a means of increasing policing from a national perspective in that, if and when criminal activity is committed and the perpetrators seek to use our highways and byways to escape, that our police officers, posted at our surveillance bays, can then react by going north, south, east or west as the case may be, in quick time to ensure that they cut off those criminals who may be trying to escape in vehicles.

Mr. President, the equipping of every police vehicle with a global positioning system (GPS) and linkage with every police station through an appropriate technology platform, we anticipate, would allow for a much greater efficiency in terms of providing ready response. To date GPS technology has been installed in 58 vehicles attached to the Western Division as part of the 21st Century policing project.

Given the demands of the police officers and taking into account the environment in which they operate, a national recognition programme will also be developed to honour and increase morale by officially recognizing officers who go beyond the call of duty. So many officers have served well and some of them have given their lives for their country and they are forgotten. We are going to bring that to life by ensuring that they are not forgotten.

Additionally, this Government has established a National Security Operation Centre to coordinate various activities. Now in its developmental stage, this centre will serve as a strategic entity for the integration of a national and, where necessary, international response to any emergency or occurring event that holds the potential to adversely affect the national interest of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The National Security Operation Centre provides a more robust and unified approach to national security and operations.

**2.15 p.m.**

Mr. President, we acknowledge the inherent challenges faced by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in the execution of its duties, and are working diligently to provide the physical and human resources required to address those challenges. The Government is encouraged by the minor reductions in reported serious crimes, and is confident that the new strategies being implemented will yield further reductions in the near future.

Mr. President, again, I wish to commend our police officers and, as I have said time and time again, no salary is sufficient for someone who gives his life for his country. You cannot pay them, but if I had the money, I would pay them, and I would pay them more than they asked for, but even then that cannot compensate for a life.

Mr. President, moreover, I am convinced that the development of the police service in tandem with other social initiatives will assist in reducing crime and the fear of crime, thereby restoring the constitutional rights of safety and security to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President, like my colleague, I wish to take this opportunity as well, as we celebrate Divali and we celebrate light over darkness, that that light extends and remains over Trinidad and Tobago as we continue to ensure that our police service is well served. I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. Rolph Balgobin:** Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to contribute on this Motion moved by Sen. Hinds. Mr. President, I would like to begin by making an observation that I think is not often enough acknowledged and that is, the police service in Trinidad and Tobago sees the very worst of our society. The elements of our society that normal law-abiding citizens do not have to treat with, the members of the police service have to deal with—apprehend, counsel, guide, warn, sometimes injure and sometimes kill. So, we are dealing with a service that has had to become more and more callous as the society has become more and more accepting of a kind of lawlessness, a kind of criminality, that sees hardened criminals rub-up against the police service almost, day by day, and the evidence of that is not anecdotal.

The Crime and Analysis Problem Unit in the police service logged somewhere between 45,000 and 50,000 serious crimes in Trinidad and Tobago in the last three years. So, I am not of the view that crime is an anomaly, and to be fair no one is saying that here. I think, however, we need to explicitly accept it is a persistent condition.

I think that the police service has been overwhelmed by crime. I also think that the judicial system, the courts have been overwhelmed by crime. It is very common for us to say that the police are not doing anything, but the courts are filled; the jails are full. And so, even with a very low rate of detection, our judicial system is already creaking at the bolts, and so it is not just in a sense the TTPS. The question is, our whole justice system from apprehension, to conviction to rehabilitation, is in dire need of review, and review from a strategic perspective. What has gone wrong with all of these disparate parts coming apart is that we have had a very significant bit of injury done to the citizen's perception of justice in this country. Can justice be had, particularly by a person of limited means?

There is case after case where people from the middle or upper classes in this society get themselves into problems and are treated differently, either by the police or by some other part of the justice system. And I suppose the most recent example of that would be the Stern John arrest, where everybody else gets to spend a night in jail. We have to seriously examine what that says about us as a society; whether fame, public image or money buys a different brand or a different type of justice. I say that because so many things I see now remind me of this Orwellian story of *Animal Farm* where you overthrow the oppressor, the overthrowers become what they despise, and you end up right in the same place again. You are just facing someone that looks a little different or is wearing different clothes. [*Desk thumping*]



**Sen. Hinds:** You see them there? [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** I was very disheartened to see what happened in Libya, for example, with Colonel Gaddafi, where this man's brutal murder was celebrated by all and sundry. I do not understand how Western nations can really celebrate those kinds of things, but it is, I suppose, symptomatic of the bloodlust that we all experience and has become a part of us now, that we want to see the criminal, not just apprehended, but drawn and quartered as they say, mutilated and killed, or even tortured as some sort of return to—is it Mosaic Law?—"An eye for an eye or a hand for a hand." The thing is, this is for me, a reversion from what civilization is supposed to be. We as a civilized society are supposed to be making steps every day, every month and every year away from that.

I was intrigued by the Motion and sought to understand well, what is happening with the police service and to what extent does that reflect what is happening in the wider society? Why is what we are looking at here a problem in itself or is it a symptom of something deeper? I found that two or three trends were of interest. If I ask the question, why have we been overrun by crime? How did we get there? The two or three things that come to mind, I would just share three with you. First, I think there has been a very significant cultural shift, particularly in Western countries like ours where law-abiding citizens are no longer considered to be the standard to which many young people should aspire. Put another way, you now have the lionized criminals and criminality.

When I was a small boy, which with the passage of the years is not so—well, a little longer ago than I would like to think about, but not so long ago— [*Interruption*] When you played "police and thief", everybody wanted to be the police. If you drew the short straw and you had to play the thief in "police and thief", you played it in a very half-hearted way, you know. [*Desk thumping*] I have never seen someone play the thief in police and thief with gusto. [*Desk thumping*] When you are playing police, you dive, you roll, you have a broomstick and you are shooting with that or whatever implement you had, but that has flipped on its head.

Now, you have music. You have popular culture that they are talking about and celebrating violence, celebrating criminals, and where law enforcement is celebrated, it is more often than not the person that goes AWOL, goes against the rules and deals out some brand of rough justice that is outside of the paradigm envisioned by the law enforcement agency he or she is involved in, but socially or morally justifiable. And so, that celebration of violence, of revenge, of reprisal of criminality and of antisocial behaviour has, of course, over the years, found its

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way into the psyche of our young people. [*Desk thumping*] I am tempted to say our young men, but I would be wrong, because every single video I can find on YouTube from Trinidad and Tobago showing one school child beating another is with a girl. It is girls beating girls and boys and then parents jump into the fray—I am cautioned not to animate myself too much lest the *Express* put me “Photo Opinion” again. So, I would put one hand resolutely in my pocket and continue, and I will stay focused on you, Mr. President.

So, you have now, violent young men, violent young women, violent parents and violent guardians. Do you know that some years ago, I was reading an estimate by someone—I think it was a parent-teacher association or something in the US—and the estimate was that the average child, by the time he or she is 18 or thereabouts, would have witnessed on television or in the media no less than 18,000 murders.

That same report estimated that the average child in the US or other developed societies spend less than four minutes a day alone with their father and less than eight minutes a day alone with their mother. But, because we are all so busy now, we have video games, and parents are quite happy to have their kids play with these video games and so on, but what research into criminality and violence appears to suggest, is that many of these video games espouse a kind of violence, which trains the player to kill and this is why you have such efficacy, when you have children going into schools killing other children. They are extremely effective at it, because they have been training all the time to do it.

What parents do not realize is that their children are in a battle simulator at home, the difference being in the military or in paramilitary organizations you shoot on instructions and there are terms of engagement. In violent video games and arcade games and so on, it is you, and you in your own infinite wisdom decide when to pull the trigger and whom to shoot. There is no consequence for shooting a friend.

So, we have thousands of our children in the care of this kind of violence. And so what is it, Mr. President? It is a diet of violence. So our members of the military and paramilitary organizations and people in the police service—how often does a police officer get to go on a range and practise shooting? Maybe once a month, and that would be extremely often by most policemen’s standards.

**2.30 p.m.**

These kids are playing these video games every day, shooting every day, practising every day. That steady diet of violence, supported of course by music—I mentioned television before—gangsta rap, the demonization of the police and authority figures generally, is something that I think has really eaten away at our respect for institutions like the TTPS.

But then you have a confluence of two other very significant trends that are developing. The first is our education system has clearly become outmoded. Our education system is focusing on the development of academic ability, the capacity for retention and recall; if you are lucky, at some higher levels, analysis and synthesis. There is very little attention paid to emotional and spiritual development in our young people. So we continue to graduate children who can pass an exam, but who are capable of killing other people.

For those who find themselves incapable of doing the former, but entirely capable of doing the latter, that is, for those dropouts from the education system, there remain too few options for us to capture them and reintegrate them, or put another way, to save them. What chance do you have if you cannot find a secondary school place? What chance do you have if your education stops at O levels? Yes, there are institutions designed to capture some of the fallout, but there is much more that could be done.

A towering challenge in all of this appears to be the general problem of the involvement of parents in education and the education system. There are many, many parents in this country that are expecting teachers, expecting schools, expecting somebody else to do their job for them. As long as this persists, as long as this continues, we are only ever going to do the job imperfectly, and the people who see this first, second and last, are not the employers, it is not the private sector, it is not us here, it will be the police.

Added to that is the third trend, where you now have a significant change in the economic system, which we have seen over the last 30 years. It accelerated particularly in the last 20 years or so, where you have the rise of the dual income household, both parents are working, no one is taking care of the kids or taking care of the kids is outsourced—it is an outsourced function. You pay a stranger to watch your children. On top of that, you have a rise in divorce rates, and our perennial problem of single parenthood, however much it is celebrated, cannot, in my view, be a preferred arrangement when juxtaposed against the option of having a mummy and a daddy.

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Within all of this, with this economic system and the changes we have witnessed over the last several decades, has come in the last 10 years, the punctured assertion that unemployment drives crime or poverty drives crime; as if we who know where our next meal is coming from are assured and accept the fact that if you are poor you are more likely to be a criminal, when poor people have as much dignity as the rest of us. They are merely searching for a way out. So these are the things that combine to produce a citizen that is then going to run right up face to face with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Then, as if that was not bad enough, what do you have? What external force is there that is reshaping and organizing our landscape where crime and criminality are concerned? You have the drug trade.

The United Nations and the Global Commission on Drug Policy estimates that between 1998 and 2008 opiate use has increased by 35 per cent, cocaine use by 27 per cent and marijuana use by 10 per cent. I was very surprised by that last one; I thought it would have been higher. The increase in drug transshipment that we talk about increasingly in the islands, is due largely to an increased demand in the developed nations. The criminalization of drug use in developed countries has made it a very lucrative business, and so small countries like ours are always going to be under pressure because of the amount of drugs that can be transshipped through our waters or across our borders. Again, this relates not just to the capacity of the police, which no longer has a Marine Branch, or a very active one as far as I am aware, but also Customs and Excise, Immigration, the coast guard and so on.

Mr. President, I was in Arima a few months, and I went to get some KFC and—*[Interruption]* *[Laughter]* “Ah stop.” I went to get some KFC. I was “liming”—I was hanging out with some friends and they said, “We hungry and we going and get some KFC.” You stop on a street corner in Arima, as I did, it was about 8.30 and voila, as if by magic, a man appeared by my window and asked me, “Wha yuh want?” So I said, “What yuh have?” He said, “I have Arizona, I have Jamaica.” Well the person sitting next to me was a police officer, the person sitting behind me was a police officer, and so on. They just sat there and said, “Okay, listen, we only want the good quality stuff.” The guy said, “Okay, I will get it for you; ah coming back now.” As he disappeared around the corner, someone else saw a market opportunity, approached us again and asked, “Wha yuh want?” This is 8.00/8.30 in the night, you could reasonably expect families to be walking around at that hour, and you have this kind of situation in the open. It was not even a source of embarrassment or anything; they just came right up and offered it to us.

I was curious as to why the police did not take action in these kinds of things. I think the answer, in part, is that you see so many of these things it just fills up your day, if you deal with every one of them. I do not know what the answer is, but that is something that ought to be examined.

What was our response over the years? Well, just sitting here thinking about it, we have gone from Anaconda to zero tolerance. Many of these kinds of plans and initiatives, in my view, were implemented almost reflexively by “vaps” and brought little in the way of lasting results. We had Mastrofski and Ross plans which were never fully implemented. We had new police units using principally and largely the same people, and then we had Scotland Yard and some of this other stuff.

I felt very sad about Scotland Yard officers, because I witnessed for myself that many of them needed our local officers to train them on certain aspects of police work. I recall quite clearly being in Cambridge University doing some research, a couple of years back, maybe two years ago, and hearing someone speak about Trinidad. I did not declare at that point I was Trinidadian, and they, like most intolerant people, assumed I was from India or Pakistan. I just did not say anything. But they were speaking about how they were posted in Trinidad, and were laughing at Trinidadians, laughing at us, calling us backward, calling us the equivalent of people who were just swinging from trees. I felt really, really, very upset about that. I eventually declared myself to be a person from Trinidad and Tobago, asking if he had gone bananas, but this was long after his salary was declared, and they were just living the good life.

I say that, not to criticize anybody, but to say that too often in societies like ours, we look for the answers from out there, and these people do not have the answers. Sometimes they just come here to take a free ride, to skate along, to get some good money, and then when they are finished with us, go home. We are left to pick up the pieces, we are left to pay the price and to contend with the very social conditions, internally and externally driven, that I outlined earlier in my talk. No foreigner can solve that for us. No foreigner can fix that, in my view.

What are the fundamental problems which the Motion is seeking to get us to consider? The first and foremost one I see is that the society itself has degenerated and that self-regulation has somehow slipped. There has been over time a reduction in collectivist thinking and a rise of individualistic behaviour, and this is why you have these kinds of road fatalities. This is why we see people abusing the traffic laws, because we are seeing too often people, citizens who are prepared to put themselves over and above everybody else who they are around.

If you have such a problem, that manifests itself in such a way, that is to say, the issue is now systemic, you are not now dealing with a few outliers. You are not dealing with people who are operating two or three standard deviations from the mean. You are now, in fact, dealing with a component of the society that looks more like the belly of the curve. How then are the police to deal with that?

Mr. President, the police in terms of its numbers can keep the peace maybe, but they cannot fight a war; they do not have enough men. If you have a war against crime, our police service is not anywhere near staffed up to deal with that, given where criminality has reached in our society. And it is not just the criminal who wants to snatch your gold chain or take your ring or your watch. It is much more sophisticated than that. We have not even begun to plumb the problem.

If you look at the CAPA statistics from the police service, you would see that fraud is one of the least reported serious crimes in Trinidad and Tobago, but fraud is a massive problem in this country. How do you explain fraud to a person in a charge room, who is talking to you like you are a criminal? Who do you call when someone robs you? How effective has our ability been to detect and resolve issues of fraud? I am of the view that the police service is understaffed by at least 2,000 or maybe even 3,000 men.

**2.45 p.m.**

When you factor in the number of people who are on suspension or who are on leave, we simply need more men, and this is one of the problems that is being addressed by the state of emergency, where you are supplementing—for all intents and purposes—the police force with the army.

Now, Commissioner Gibbs disagrees—well he disagreed at some previous point when I said this, and, what I would say about that is I think that—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** Say it, say it. Go home.

**Sen. Baptiste-McKnight:** No prompting.

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** I think that he ought not to disagree. [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Well done! That was a pregnant pause.

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** That is what I think. I think as well, Mr. President, that the skill set in the service is nowhere near where it needs to be, and what the academy is doing is plainly taking us in the right direction, plainly so. Much more however needs to be done because even with the academy curriculum as it stands now, even with the one that is proposed and is currently being implemented, higher level skill sets need to be developed; more has to be done.

Yes, we may have gotten much of it right, particularly for incoming recruits; I will speak to that but, what I want to say about that is that high level skills are almost entirely absent or not present in nearly the kinds of quantity that we need in order to make a dent in crime here.

The last results I think of all of this that we are seeing is that unfortunately corruption has crept into the ranks, and therefore, despite the best intentions by any government and certainly by this one, you are dealing now with an institution that has a rouge or a corrupt element in it.

Why do we not follow the drugs? You know with these big drug busts we get this question. If you stop a van filled with drugs or you find a container full of drugs, why do the police not just sit back and patiently follow the drugs and see who is offloading it? Well, I will tell you why. Well, if it is Laventille for starters, they see you coming a mile off because they have the high ground, so tactically you are at a disadvantage already, unless you are abseiling or para-shooting or rappelling down from the blimp which as far as I am aware does not have that capability. But that is one aspect.

The other aspect is, the longer you take to physically take control of those drugs the more people you have to involve, and the more people you have to involve from a law enforcement perspective, the greater the chance that someone is going to tip these people off. That is why very often a police unit sees the drugs, knows they are there, they take them. They get while the going is good.

**Hon. Senator:** That is why they call the media.

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** I wonder in these things, how many of our people in responsible positions in these kinds of institutions can pass a polygraph test. I am really getting to the point where I feel like I want to recommend that—not yet, but I am getting there—for people who are decision-makers, about whom to charge, about people who are in operational command of things, but also for people who are in charge of purchasing in places like Petrotrin. In big state enterprises where you spend hundreds of millions and billions of dollars, I wonder whether there is not an answer in there and whether these things do not merit a place.

But in the police service certainly there must be some kind of awareness of what is going on in the drug trade. It is very easy for me, Mr. President, I am not a military person but I do not need to be to spot a “spranger”. And I do not need to be that highly trained to follow the “spranger” to a drug house, and see it there and him buying it and see him unwrapping the foil or buying some marijuana. So why are these things still there?

Why are these brothels still there? These big brothels where we enslave people's daughter from this country and from others, and they run within a few hundred metres of the nearest police station and nothing. Nothing.

And then the answer hit me, well it hit a police officer actually, more than it hit me. A lot of moonlighting occurs in our armed services. And a lot of these people rent their guns, they rent their labour, their services to the private sector and sometimes to people who are operating outside of the law.

So, you have the benefit both of protection and also of information; you get pretty good bang for your buck I guess. So corruption has entered the ranks and we need to acknowledge that and to treat with it, and something needs to be done about moonlighting where we have very explicit rules against that or rules that govern the conditions on which private activities for personal financial benefit can be undertaken.

Another symptom of corruption is the involvement of armed or trained men from our protective services in kidnapping. Obviously, there has been in the past some involvement there, I do not know to what extent it is currently occurring, but you know I think I could recall a time when we could never dream of such a thing happening, and today, you have your average bandit with gun who is aware of military techniques for snatching a person. That cannot happen by accident, Hollywood has not caught up with some of those things yet, where are they getting that information from. So, what is the upshot, Mr. President? The upshot is that you have a criminal element in the society using guerilla tactics. They are so many and all over the place, they know that the police cannot keep up, so it is very easy to hit and run.

Ordinary citizens are of course silent and scared. There is a very, very low quality of detection in this country and what has that given rise to then? It has given rise to a collapse in public trust in the police service. Almost as if by inverse correlation, the rise and rise in popularity of what I would call the "Ian Alleyne phenomenon." Why does the public trust someone who is outside of the police service? It gives us an indication of how little the police service itself is trusted and that is most unfortunate. But I think, Mr. President, the attendant and adjunct mechanisms have failed, and in speaking to strengths and weaknesses and so on, the challenge goes even deeper. I think the Police Service Commission for many years has been applying antiquated rules, sometimes either slavishly or in search of media attention but certainly that service commission model appears not to have served the police service very well.



I am not sure that I am comfortable with some of the actions of the Police Service Association—I hope my saying this does not mean that when I call them for help that they do not come, but you cannot be encouraging “blue flu” or threatening sick-outs at key points in time or trying to influence who occupies high office in the service. I think these are things that we should take very seriously, we should pay close attention, but most importantly I think our political framework over the years has let us down. We have a foreign commissioner, we to—have a foreign head of the academy, and I think that—I call this the “Hill done phenomenon.” What is the Hill Done phenomenon? May I? [*Member holds up a water bottle*] [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** Get rid of that too.

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** This is the “Hill Done phenomena.”

**Hon. Senator:** Foreign imported bottles.

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** We need water to drink but the local water would not do. When we ask why? We say the problem is the vessel not the content.

I have not seen anything in my mind which would suggest that Commissioner Gibbs is any better than someone like Stephen Williams and I wonder if it is not time for us to take our destiny into our own hands again. I think that we are ready for something like that. I do not have an issue with his salary, you know, what I have an issue with, is when I go into a police station, there on the wall is a thing which says: “you know, if you want a job here this is what you have to do, and item one on it is, you must be a citizen of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago”.

**Hon. Senator:** Honorary.

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** You must be a citizen. Why can a young man not aspire to this office? Let us think about this a bit. I think that he has been exceptional—I think he does well at press conferences and so on, but if I am to say that I would judge—I would sort of build out what I think your strategy is by judging a pattern of actions within a stream of behaviour, I would say that, I do not know really what strategy he has brought. So, that is no offence to him, it is just that perhaps it is very secret, and we could use some clarification.

Okay, having said all of that, and I made it plain that I am not of the view that we should have a foreign Commissioner of Police in this country, how do we fix it? What do we need to do? First and foremost I agree wholeheartedly with the Minister, and I identify with much of what he has said. In fact, I cannot think of anything that I disagreed with. I fully support what he has said, “Pay them better.”

And of course that gives rise to the question, well the next thing you will do is have a teacher saying, "What about me? Pay me better." You will have a fire service person saying, "What about me? Pay me better too." But really a police officer puts on his or her uniform every day with the very real possibility that they would not take that uniform off for themselves; every day, every single day. A soldier does the same thing; someone in the coast guard.

**3.00 p.m.**

So I think that we need to recognize that. I also think that we need to hire a different type of officer. Going from three O levels to five O levels is not, in my opinion, enough. We need really well-educated, smart, fit people in the service. Of course, there is another problem there, the more educated you are, is it that you are less willing to run down a criminal? So we need to find that kind of balance, but we cannot emphasize musculature when the criminal is exercising his/her brain and beating us with that every time. We also need to use modern policing techniques. You know we talk ad nauseam about going into a police station and making a report and the police officer writing it down in a diary and still that has not changed, model station or no, that is something that should be implemented immediately, there are computers for that.

We need to improve our quality of detection: train, train and train so that we can get a better quality of detection out of the service, because, if we are unable to associate a crime with a consequence, rampant criminality will prevail, will continue. We must, of course, put enough resources into national security. Give the Minister the money he needs, give him the resource he needs. We have had this thing as a football for years, give the Minister and the Ministry the resource they need to do the job they have to do, because they have to do it for now and it is going to take a lot.

We have to work on our children, our parents and our communities, and I know some of that is being done but much, much more has to be done, and I am hopeful that the Government, with the Opposition, can galvanize the NGO sector and some sort of coordinated approach to this can be taken, so that we are intervening in communities and identifying trouble spots beforehand. And on that point I would say this, the police service right now in police stations transfer sergeants and inspectors at a blinding rate, dizzying. How do these people get to sit there long enough to get to know communities; understand where the trouble spots are, if every few months they are moved? So we need to have a more coordinated and logical approach to how we treat with this symptom, this problem right at the community level.

**Mr. 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. B. Ali*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sen. Dr. R. Balgobin:** Thank you, Mr. President. This is one of the very few fora where I could think about, where people stand up for me and encourage me to speak longer; I encourage them to move home with me immediately. [*Laughter*]

I think that the—Mr. President, just to continue—education system needs to be far more inclusive, but I want to make two other observations here by way of suggestion. One is that we consider some kind of national service or a youth stream for young people who are in need of it. We need to have something like that as opposed to having them in an employment programme. And secondly, I would like to hear at some point a consideration of the role of the army in relation to the police. [*Desk thumping*] We are using the army in that capacity now, so how do we go forward with that because, really, our army is no longer doing external defence work, surely. So we need to be thinking about that as we go forward and devise our own solutions. Train, yes, and I heard the Minister speak to that. And I was very heartened to hear the take-up of a suggestion I had made a couple of years ago when I first met the new head of the academy, which was, yes, you are training recruits and that is fine, but you need to retrain senior officers.

My view is that, even with what the academy is doing, we must do a lot more to retrain, retool, remap, so that we are in possession of someone who is at a sergeant or inspector level, not just a student of experience, but also a graduate of some meaningful, well-targeted training programmes, and those programmes have to be tailored to and geared for us. I have observed that most of the retooling and serious retraining occurs when senior people are about to retire. That is when you see them doing their masters degrees, their MBAs and so on, they are not doing it when they are in there to deliver value in there you know, they do it when they are about to leave and we need to pay far more attention to the development of middle management in the service.

I also want to suggest that we do something as simple as enforce the law. Just enforce the law. There must be consistent consequences for lawbreakers. The other day I was on the bus route—and still even with the increase in fines people take the chance. Why? Because they know sometimes they would get away. And

adherence to law should not be a gamble, you should not be rolling the dice with that, “Leh me see if I get ketch”. For years in this country that has been the idea and the argument, it is always—“Or, you stupid boy, you geh ketch”. We have to get to a place where you know if you break the law: you speed, you drive on the bus route, you do something you are not supposed to do, you are going to pay the price for it. The price ought not be just a fine, it should be points on your licence that increase your cost of insurance next year. The whole system has to work to support law and the rule of law.

I also want to suggest that we get rid of corrupt elements. The Minister said 17 people, I think, were dismissed, presumably for misdemeanour or corruption and so on. That is far too low. We know that there are more than 17 people who are corrupt inside there. This notion of being civil to citizens is very important because you keep—I think more often than not the police are not polite and courteous to citizens and I am sure many citizens are not polite and courteous to them either, but it really sends the wrong signal; just as dropping their girlfriends everywhere in police vehicles send the wrong signal, which they do and which looks bad. I think we ought to rework legislation to facilitate more modern policing techniques.

I do not think as we deal with crime and criminality that we should give up easily democratic freedoms hard won, and so the longer a state of emergency persists the more uncomfortable I would become. I quite like the sense of security that I have, but I fear the price would be higher, and higher, and higher with the passage of time and we have to be careful about that. The conditions we are supposed to deal with, the criminal elements, we should have dealt with them by now or be very well on the way to doing that.

The last unpopular thing I would like to say is that I think we need to investigate really serious crime, and I am talking here about casinos, brothels, places that launder money, all of these little hotels, groceries, restaurants or whatever they are. There are two links that I think we ought to pay particular attention to, and one is the relationship between business people and the drug trade; and the other is the nexus between ethnic groups and the drug trade, and, I think, unless we are able to have a mature examination of these things we are just going to keep arresting, killing and persecuting little black boys, and the whole society has this pervasive view that the people who are really behind all of this are not being touched at all. So, we need to be locking up people of significance. We need to find who is behind this stuff. I am sure we have some ideas. It may be there are not any, you know, it may be there are not any big fish. The

transshipment business is so big now, maybe the big fish do not live in Trinidad, maybe all they do is find a reliable criminal or two locally, give them guns, give them a slice of the action and let them tranship the thing and it carries on up the chain of islands, but we need to know, we need to know.

I do not think it is just a question of saying police are corrupt. I do not think they are. I think the vast majority of the police service is not corrupt. I think that you have corrupt elements in there, yes, but that is true of everywhere in the society. But what I think is a bigger problem, it is not the corruption of police, but the untouchability of major criminals and if you are dealing with criminals who are untouchable, then you could buy “how much” vehicles, “how much” computers, you could send them on “how much” training, it is not going to make a difference.

So, perhaps at the end of this whole dialogue that we are having with ourselves, one of the things we can say is that as far as we are concerned it is the rule of law and not the rule of the jungle to which we are committed. And if we could really believe that and act that in support of the service, in support of the Ministry of National Security, in support of the Government as they try to come to grips, and the Opposition, because the Opposition is no more accepting of criminality or criminals, then I think we would have made a significant step forward. We are seeing the problems in the police service, yes, but the problems in the police service have been generated by and are a product of the society that this service is meant to be policing.

I encourage both the Government and the Opposition to work together to find solutions, not just to the problems of the service, but to the problems of the society.

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

**Sen. Penelope Beckles:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I wish to join this Motion and to indicate that I wish, at this point in time really to just raise a particular issue that has come into the public domain, I think yesterday, otherwise I may not have started my contribution today. But I really propose to speak for a few minutes on this Motion filed by Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds, “Be it resolved that this honourable Senate take note of the strengths and deficiencies of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and its impact and potential in the fight against crime.”

Mr. President, the specific matter that I wish to raise, and I did say to my colleague, the hon. Leader of Government Business, that I know that the hon. Minister of National Security already spoke, but if he, at any time during my short discussion, does want to have the opportunity to clarify, I would give way. The matter that I wish to raise as we speak about the strengths and deficiencies of the police service

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has to do with a statement made by the communications officer of the police service yesterday in interpreting the Emergency Powers Regulations 2011 at section 4(1) which says:

“Until Orders made by the President under regulation 3 otherwise provide, the Commissioner of Police is hereby authorized to exercise the following powers:

- (c) to prohibit any person from being out of doors between such hours as may be specified except under the authority of a written permit granted by such authority of person as may be specified;”

**3.15 p.m.**

Now, Mr. President, the communications officer said yesterday that, “outdoors means outdoors” and once basically after 11.00 p.m. you cannot be in your porch or sometimes as we say, gallery, or you cannot be wetting a plant or you cannot be found anywhere at all in your yard and you must be inside your house.

**Sen. Brig. Sandy:** Mr. President—

**Sen. P. Beckles:** Let me just finish what she said. As I said, I will give way. I just want to make sure I say—I have not completed it—yes. Mr. President, this has caused some confusion. Now, I am advised today that the communications officer indicated that this information has been sent to the legal department of the police service for clarification and further interpretation, so that the public may be given further information on this matter. Now, I certainly would have thought that that clarification would have been sought before the [*Desk thumping*] officer made those comments. I have some other things to say, but I know the hon. Minister wants to respond.

**Sen. Brig. Sandy:** Thank you, hon. Senator. Mr. President, I myself heard of the report that was made public yesterday, and as a result of that I communicated with one of the Deputy Commissioners of Police, and I was advised that it was said in error and it was some time during the course of today’s media briefing with the press, that that was clarified and that in fact, if you are in your compound, on your premises you are not in any way breaching any law as far as the state of emergency laws are concerned.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** Mr. President, I would like to thank the hon. Minister for that prompt response and one can only hope that such an error is not made again because it created such confusion. I mean, I really do not know how—if someone is given the responsibility as the communications officer of the police service, clearly one has to be extremely careful to make those utterances especially when you realized that having said it everyone immediately began to question, and you further clarified

to say “outdoors means outdoors”, and I am of the view that—I know for a fact, that the hon. Minister of National Security, together with the former Minister, has made sure that the police service now has within its rank, legal officers that can guide them and assist. So I do not think it was like previous years when they did not have that assistance, so one can only hope that this sort of error would not repeat itself.

We recalled that a similar error was made when they said initially that it was a limited state of emergency; then a state of emergency; then the commissioner said the whole country was under curfew; then they indicated it was not under curfew; and then you will recall also that it was stated that you could not have a party; and then you said that you could have a party. So let us hope that this would be the last error, Mr. President. And just by way of my final comment, if you read today’s *Express* you will see actually that yesterday in San Fernando—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Hinds:** Seventeen in San Fernando and 24 in Port of Spain.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** —24 persons appeared in Port of Spain for breaching the curfew, 24.

**Sen. Hinds:** O-o-o-h good!

**Sen. P. Beckles:** And 17 persons appeared in San Fernando for breaching the curfew.

**Sen. Hinds:** Twenty-six in Arima. What about Arima?

**Sen. P. Beckles:** Now, when you listened to the contribution of Sen. Dr. Balgobin, that means 41 persons in one night breached the curfew. If we combine that in two courts—but we do not know what happened in other courts—and the question arises therefore, as to the validity and the continued relevance of the state of emergency, *[Desk thumping]* because it means that people are clearly getting fed up and frustrated—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Hinds:** It has lost its way.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** It has lost its way, and therefore, the time has clearly come for the Government to review this state of emergency.

**Sen. Hinds:** Yeah, this mini-skirt curfew. *[Desk thumping]*

**Sen. P. Beckles:** Mr. President, just yesterday again, 22 more persons were freed, again under the anti-gang legislation and several others were freed again today, so that I do not know if there are more people left. The Minister of National Security, if I could quote him, he said, the justice system is working,

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right, and that is true. I need to read into the record because today again another, probably about, I do not want to quote wrongly, but I am sure that while I was in court this morning—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Twenty-two of them.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** At least—no, that was yesterday, I am talking about today. Today at least another 10 persons were freed again—at least that is in Port of Spain—under the anti-gang legislation. And, Mr. President, when those persons are freed, the notice of discontinuance that is filed by the Director of Public Prosecutions reads: “Pursuant to the provisions of section 90 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and all powers in that behalf enabling hereby discontinue the proceedings herein relevant to the abovementioned complaints.”

So I just want to say that what is taking place in the courts in Trinidad and Tobago clearly shows that this particular Motion that has been filed by Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds is very timely and the events that are taking place in the country, in Trinidad and Tobago, clearly demonstrate that there are some serious deficiencies in the police service. I know that the Minister mentioned the strengths and so which I will deal with on another day, but I end my short contribution at this time. I will continue on another day in calling upon the Government to bring an end to this state of emergency. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George):** Mr. President, thank you very much. I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.

#### Divali Greetings

**The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George):** I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. President, on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to extend to the Hindu community and by extension the wider national community, Shubh Divali, as we observe the Divali celebration tomorrow October 26, 2011.

Divali is observed on the darkest night of the year. And it is within that darkness that the glow of the lighted deyas illuminate all. That message of the triumph of light over darkness is a universal message that resonates with all citizens. To the Hindu community we know, like the Muslim community, that this



year your celebrations were curtailed by the restrictions in place to fight crime. We note that every Hindu organization was supportive of the measures and placed the national interest above all else. For this, we thank all of you in the Hindu community.

Perhaps you appreciate the situation because it is similar to one of the legends surrounding the history of Divali, when Lord Rama's wife was kidnapped by Ravana. Lord Rama forged alliances and defeated the evil king and regained his wife. On returning home the streets were lit with small deyas as a sign of victory. We all hope that this year our lighted deyas for Divali will also represent a victory of the people as we all overcome elements of darkness that plague our society. Sita Ram and Shubh Divali.

Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]—I was going to say something else.

**Sen. Penelope Beckles:** You should have man, “doh let him panic yuh”. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I too would like to join my colleague, the Hon. Minister of Public Utilities in extending Divali greetings to the Hindu community.

The Hindu festival of Divali represents amalgamation of lights. Hindu mythology explains that the divine Goddess Mother Lakshmi appeared out of the churning of that ocean at the beginning of the creation for the benefit of all mankind. A common understanding of the celebration is the triumph, as the Minister said, of the light over darkness and the success of good over evil. Hindus traditionally welcome the Goddess to their home through intensive prays and preparations. As we know, homes, temples and public areas are beautifully lit with rows of deyas and there are ample festivities in every community.

Mr. President, you may recall that four years ago a Bill recognizing the religious and historical significance of the festival of Divali was passed in the United States, House of Representatives by a mammoth margin of 358 to zero. It was the first Bill ever to pass in the House in recognition of a Hindu festival, acknowledging the international, religious and historical significance and importance of Divali.

On this note it is important of course to recollect the decision of the then Government of Trinidad and Tobago which originally declared Divali a public holiday in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] And I dare say, Mr. President, that in doing my research I found a copy of the Proclamation, No. 16 of 1966 in the *Gazette* and that Proclamation at that time was made by Sir Solomon Hochoy. And the declaration of that holiday was made by the Rt. Hon. Dr. Eric Eustace Williams. [*Desk thumping*] And if, Mr. President—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** I did not know that. I never knew that.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** I may read the Proclamation. It says:

“WHEREAS it is provided by section 6 of the Public Holidays Ordinance, Ch. 42 No. 1, that it shall be lawful for the Governor-General from time to time, as he may see fit, by proclamation under the Public Seal of Trinidad and Tobago, to appoint a special day to be kept as a close holiday in all public offices and in all banks in Trinidad and Tobago:

And whereas it seems fit to me that Saturday the 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1966, the day on which the Hindu festival of Divali is to be celebrated should be declared a public holiday in Trinidad and Tobago:

Now, therefore, I, SOLOMON HOCHOY Governor-General as aforesaid, do hereby appoint Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1966, to be ...”—the public holiday. [*Desk thumping*]

Now, Mr. President—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** I never knew that.

**Sen. P. Beckles:** —there is much symbolism in Divali. The clay deya which is capable of containing so much, symbolizes our physical bodies also made from the elements with which we are endowed. The wick represents our hearts which must be soaked in the fuel of pure noble and selfless thoughts, [*Desk thumping*] for it can be ignited by the light of divinity. [*Crosstalk*] And the flame of the deya symbolizes the burning away of ignorance and the conquest of darkness. [*Desk thumping*]

Now, as we know, Mr. President, Divali in Trinidad and Tobago is a national festival which has universal appeal and it signifies the values of peace, love, happiness, success, prosperity and divinity. With the observance as a public holiday in our pluralistic society everyone has the opportunity of participating, not only here, but as we said, Divali is celebrated all over the world. [*Desk thumping*]

### 3.30 p.m.

I pray that in this august House, and as citizens of our beloved Trinidad and Tobago, we do our utmost to bring this country and its people to a higher plane of existence for today and the foreseeable future. May the lights and the blessings of Mother Lakshmi be with us at Divali and all year through. [*Desk thumping*]

As I close, I wish to quote Dr. Eric Williams as we celebrate 100 years of his birth:

“Whatever the origin of Divali, it has over the centuries of its celebrations, gathered onto itself a plethora of association of the greatest value and significance to Trinidad and Tobago.”

Dr. Eric Williams emphasized, and I quote:

“Let the lights of Divali burn brightly throughout Trinidad and Tobago as a symbol of peace and harmony in our multi-racial and multi-religious community; let them also be a symbol of our national determination to align ourselves with the Forces of Light against the Forces of Darkness, and may their illumination, over the length and breadth of this land of ours, be an occasion of national rejoicing and national re-dedication to the pursuit of peace, knowledge, wisdom and virtue.”

As I am on my legs, I wish to express condolences to the family of Rev. Cyril Paul and of the former Member of Parliament, Mrs. Eulalie James.

Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Subhas Ramkhelawan:** Mr. President, it is, indeed, a great honour for me to rise on behalf of the Independent Bench to extend Divali greetings to the national community and, in particular, to the Hindu community at this point in time. Divali, as you know, has become a season and not a day, [*Desk thumping*] where our Hindu brothers and sisters prepare for the occasion by fasting and giving up certain foods and drink in order to prepare the body and the mind for that communion with Mother Lakshmi.

So I want to extend Shubh Divali to the Hindu community as they move towards the celebration of this most significant day in the Hindu calendar. As you know, there are a vast number of significant days in the Hindu calendar, but it is one that the Hindus take very, very seriously; it is one where they—and I should say, we—spend that time to make that sacrifice to ensure and to recognize and to reinforce that there is, indeed, light after darkness and no matter how long, how grey, how dark, that darkness may be, there will be light. This is based on the faith, not only of Hindus, but every right-thinking human being, that we are here and we will conquer with goodness over wickedness. [*Desk thumping*]

It is a time where Hindus celebrate and pray, not only for each other, but for their leaders, and I take the opportunity standing in this Parliament, of which I am proud to be a part, to say a prayer and make a wish for all our parliamentarians, not on any particular side, but all our parliamentarians, for enlightened leadership. Because one day you might sit on this side, and the other day you might sit on the next side, but there is one consistent hope, wish and prayer that the entire nation strives towards, and that is enlightened and effective leadership.

So I make this wish for the head of our State, his Excellency the President; I make this wish for the head of our Executive, the hon. Prime Minister and the Cabinet of this nation, for enlightened leadership in a consistent way; I make this wish for the head of our Judiciary and the justices that do such yeoman service for this country, that they, as the Judiciary, would interpret our laws in the best way and in the best service to our nation. And I make this wish to the Opposition and the team, the Leader of the Opposition—not only the Leader of the Opposition, but persons such as my good friend, Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds, and all the Senators and the parliamentarians, because this is the Hindu way.

There are two popular mantras that would be repeated at this time by the Hindu community and while I do not wish to trouble the Hansard, I will do so anyway. We are accustomed to one, but we are not accustomed to the other, which says:

“Om Lakshmi Karoutu Kalyaanam  
Arogyam sukha sampadam  
Mama shatru vinaashaaya  
Deep jyotir namostute.

I will pass the paper on to Hansard, just in case. [*Laughter*] But, clearly, it is a universal prayer and it is a universal wish which says, as we pray:

“O mother, goddess of light, the dispeller of darkness, sickness and misery,  
O mother, you are the giver of happiness, wealth and prosperity.

I submit myself to you. Please destroy all my internal enemies, all my passions of anger, greed, hatred, lust and jealousy.”

This is the wish I wish for the entire nation on behalf of the entire Independent Bench, to the nation and to the Hindu community, and to you, as well, and your family, Mr. President.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I would certainly like to join with the contributions of the Senators who have gone before me with respect to Divali. In fact, I would like to commend Senators today for the very mature and sober contributions in this debate. [*Desk thumping*] It appears that the light of Divali has penetrated the minds and hearts of those who are Senators here, and therefore, it has produced a debate this afternoon that, perhaps, has excelled those in the past. [*Desk thumping*]

I will also take the opportunity to share with you some sentiments from Swami Chidanand Saraswati, and to share, by extension, of course, with the nation. The excerpt starts off saying:

*Diwali Greetings*

*Tuesday October 25, 2011*

“Diwali is a festival of the light which dispels the darkness of our ignorance;  
It is a festival of the light which shows us the way on our journey through life.  
The purpose is not to glorify the light of the candle, or the light of the firecracker.  
The purpose is to glorify the Light of God within.  
It is God who bestows the real light,  
The everlasting light upon the darkness of this mundane world.  
A candle burns out. A firework is a momentary visual experience.  
But, the candle of a still mind and the fireworks of a heart filled with bhakti are  
divine and eternal;  
These are what we should be celebrating.  
We must clean out our hearts, ridding them of darkness and bitterness; We must  
make them clean and sparkling places for God to live.  
Let us truly clean out our hearts;  
Let us rid ourselves of the grudges, pain, and anger that clutter our ability to love  
freely.  
Let us empty our every nook and cranny, so that His divine light can shine  
throughout.  
On Diwali, Hindus pray to Maha Lakshmi to bestow real prosperity upon us;  
The prosperity that brings light to our lives and sparkle to our eyes.  
Let our inner world be filled with devotion to Him,  
And let our outer performance be filled with perfect work, perfect action.”

Therefore, on this day, I wish to offer Shubh Diwali to all Senators and to the national  
community. [*Desk thumping*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 3.39 p.m.*