

*Leave of Absence**Tuesday, April 24, 2012***SENATE***Tuesday, April 24, 2012*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

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

Madam Vice-President: Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to Sen. The Hon. Brig. John Sandy who is out of the country.

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

Madam Vice-President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the Acting President, Timothy Hamel-Smith:

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency TIMOTHY HAMEL-SMITH,
Acting President and Commander-in-Chief
of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ T. Hamel-Smith
Acting President.

TO: ARCHBISHOP BARBARA BURKE

WHEREAS Senator the Honourable Brigadier John Chrisostom Edmund Sandy is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TIMOTHY HAMEL-SMITH, Acting President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44(1)(a) and section 44(4)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, ARCHBISHOP BARBARA BURKE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 24th April, 2012 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator the Honourable Brigadier John Chrisostom Edmund Sandy.

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 19th day of April, 2012.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Sen. Archbishop Barbara Burke took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

Madam Vice-President: Hon. Senators, as we start off today, I would like to, first of all, welcome back Sen. Basharat Ali, and wish you all the best and good health to you. [*Desk Thumping*]

In addition, I would like to inform you that Parliament has joined the Ministry of Health to take part in the wellness month activity with a One Lap World Health Walk around Queen's Park Savannah, to promote healthy ageing on Saturday, April 28, 2012 starting at 7.00 a.m., and I urge you at this time to join the Parliament team, specially put together, with the Ministry of Health in its One Lap World Health Walk around the Queen's Park Savannah on Saturday, April 28, 2012. I understand that registration sheets are available at the gym, as well as you can make enquiries from the Clerk. Thank you.

PAPERS LAID

1. Petroleum (Amdt.) Regulations, 2012. [*The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George)*]
2. Petroleum (Compressed Natural Gas) (Amdt.) Regulations, 2012. [*Sen. The Hon. E. George*]

**PAST PRESIDENTS AND PRIME MINISTERS
(STATE-FUNDED RECOGNITION FOR)**

Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight: Madam Vice-President, I thank you for the opportunity to be able to present this Motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

Whereas the year 2012 will mark the 50th Anniversary of this nation's Independence;

And Whereas since 1962, several Heads of State and Heads of Government have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of this republic;

And Whereas there exists a Memorial Collection of the contributions of the late Dr. Eric Eustace Williams, first Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago whose centennial took place in 2011;

And Whereas Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson who served this country both as President and Prime Minister has initiated the Castara Project of his pursuits and achievements;

And Whereas one method of bestowing honour on these office holders is through the establishment and maintenance of memorials in recognition of their contributions to the development of the nation during the course of their tenure;

And Whereas the Honourable Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago in tribute to the first President of Trinidad and Tobago announced the endowment of the Sir Ellis Clarke Chair in Commonwealth Parliamentary and Constitutional Studies at the University of the West Indies;

Be it Resolved that there be established formal tangible memorials of the work and contributions of all the former Heads of State and Heads of Government of this country;

And be it further Resolved that there be instituted a State-funded arrangement whereby the contributions of all who served in the offices of President and Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will be recognized.

Madam Vice-President, on August 30 of this year we will have completed 50 years as an independent country. It is my belief that we did not have to struggle to achieve this status largely because our colonial masters, never recognizing the potential that we had, were actually anxious to be delivered of the burden. However, our leaders have not only understood the treasures which the universe endowed us with, but they believed in our capacity to fulfil our appointed destiny. What is this destiny to which I refer? Our colonial past created on these twin islands a rainbow community of peoples who, in spite of the vagaries of our political State, have lived and coexisted more harmoniously together than on any spot on earth in which people of various races, colours, creeds, religions and ethnicities co coexist.

Hon. Senator: Yes, yes. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. C. Baptiste-Mc Knight: We are blessed with the kindest of climates, physical, geographical conditions, picturesque mountains, sheltered ports, rainforests and beaches. In addition we are gifted with natural resources and a talented population.

I think that we were placed here and appropriately apportioned to prove that peoples of different ethnicities can live together, and progress together, successfully. Are we there yet? Certainly not, but as we journey forward towards achieving maximum development, I propose this Motion as a means of helping to

promote national pride in our people and our accomplishments, by bringing a culture of knowing and understanding, an appreciation of the achievements of our country, and recognition of the people who promoted these achievements.

This echoes the Prime Minister's call to remember our former Heads of State and Government, since these have been among the most significant agents of change in Trinidad and Tobago in the past 50 years, each of them contributing something unique to the development of the country. To quote the hon. Prime Minister, she says:

"...each did what he felt was right for his time to ensure" the progress of the nation."

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Independence Logo Launch Ceremony, the hon. Prime Minister told us, and I quote:

"A nation guided by its history is committed to a future with direction and purpose. A people guided by their pride in where they came from, shall always find their way in the places they arrive."

1.45 p.m.

I think that we will all agree that it is right for us to have and provide ready access to this history, lest for lack of it, we are doomed to remain less than we were meant to be. Let us acknowledge and celebrate what we have achieved over the past 50 years. We have had 50 years of uninterrupted democracy, and that in the face of two serious challenges. We inherited a system of education which produced two internationally renowned scholars, and here I refer to Dr. Eric Williams and Dr. Rudranath Capildeo.

We have produced internationally acclaimed authors, one Nobel laureate in Literature and, this legacy, we have developed into what we today enjoy, which is a system of education that provides for all, from early childhood to tertiary. This is a system that continues to produce world-class professionals, artistes, authors and captains of industry who are sought after the world over. In addition to this we have, I think, an envied and enviable social security net, which—if and when it is conscientiously and properly executed—would be a model for the entire world.

The International Criminal Court was the brainchild of one of our Heads of State and Government. This is something of which we need to be proud. This is something that our population should have immediate access to, to be able to understand exactly what our contribution is to the international society. We have a

national insurance system which works. We have industrial and technological development, and if you are in doubt, look at the flagship at Point Lisas. All of this was accomplished through enlightened leadership, and that leadership came from our Heads of State and Heads of Government. [*Desk thumping*]

But have there been challenges? Have there been lapses? Yes, and these challenges have come and the lapses have existed in every Government that we have had. [*Interruption*] Why? Because we are human, and I do not think that it is an original statement of mine to say that to err is human. Of course, we can always say that we do not have to be that human but, leave it as it is.

Madam Vice-President, it is my contention that by encouraging the creation of repositories of the libraries and documents of these icons, we would be providing a source of the authentic history behind the policies that have created the country that we are today. We would be able to discover why we have some of the laws, some of the policies that exist, and I hope, be able to learn lessons from the failures. Because every failure is an opportunity in working clothes, it is whether we do the work or not.

I think that Dr. Theodore Ferguson expresses it best when he says “history helps us to recognize change; knowing the past and analyzing the present could guide us to create the future that we want.” This is at the heart of this Motion, to give the country in the years to come the opportunity to create the future that we want and deserve.

Madam Vice-President, we here today, all of us alive in Trinidad and Tobago today, many of us, rather, have lived the transformation from colonial to Independence to republican status. We are the ones who have received the benefits. Let us recognize our obligation, indeed, our duty to those who come after to prepare a legacy for the country and leave an example of creating and maintaining an accurate and authentic record of the country’s evolution. If we shirk this responsibility we will be judged harshly and rightly so.

In search of authenticity it is important for us to establish the foundation of our journey. A large part of the archives of our early days has been destroyed through the mindless dumping of archives from Ministries out of the tray of a flat-bed truck on to the floor of a porous, dilapidated warehouse in Chaguaramas.

My Motion, I think and I hope, would give us an opportunity to recapture some of that information which would lie in documentation and memorabilia that would have been kept by Heads of Government and Heads of State. It may be our last opportunity to provide this kind of complete authentic record. Why is this

important? Do we need authentic history? If we do not do it now, would we be able to do it later on? I think the earlier we start to compile our history, the better the chance that we get a complete history. How can we trace the development of 50 years correctly after the protagonists and those who either benefited or suffered at their hands have disappeared?

We are at a stage in our history now where political figures, activists and people with historical bent are already producing their own memoirs, their own biographies, and each of these is done against the backdrop of personal interpretations and personal perspectives. They all have a place in an archive such as this, but this must be dealt with in conjunction with the authentic records, so that students, teachers, historians, would be able to profit from these collections.

Having collections of Heads of State and Government might just influence communities to produce like records for their representatives for what happens in their community. I recall a few years ago, the Royal Bank Young Leaders programme, Success Laventille School did a record of Laventille. This is the sort of national pride that I would like Government to inject, by starting it with the Heads and letting it trickle right down, so that each community can identify the movers and shakers in their communities and collect their records, have it in their libraries, in their constituency offices, wherever.

I look at the one well-known collection that we have, the Eric Williams collection, and I note that it is a magnet for historians, teachers and researchers. Political personalities from abroad come and visit the collection. It is something that is recognized. Now, I need to add that this collection is incomplete, and yet it is already part of the UNESCO Memory of the World collection.

I would like, as a part of this Motion, that Government would enter into discussion with the university where it is lodged and Mrs. Erica Williams-Connell—to whom it belongs—to see whether it would be possible to have the complete collection in Trinidad and Tobago. The problem with that is that the university library does not have the accommodation for it, so it would mean identifying some place where the entire collection could be kept and the public have access.

2.00 p.m.

I can think immediately of the old West Indian library, which itself has a history with Dr. Eric Williams. That was where the famous debate with Dom Basil Matthews took place. Moreover, it is next door to the University of Woodford Square which is closely associated with him. It is on a thoroughfare

where people can drop in and make use of it. People from all parts of this country, children, come on excursions. They can come and visit. The Sir Solomon Hochoy collection also resides at the university, but it is not a complete collection, and here again if it is given the status of a Government-recognized thing, then researchers would undertake to add to the collection, to complete it in some way.

Now what happens to other Heads of State and Heads of Government? A group of Tobagonians, with the blessing of his Excellency Mr. Robinson, are involved in getting the Castara Project off the ground. As a matter of fact, I think the THA has identified and given some land to help it to happen. [*Desk thumping*]

Now, Mr. Robinson was not only—he was the Chief Secretary of the THA, Prime Minister of the country and President of the country. I do not think that there will ever be one other person who would be able to hold those three titles in his life time. Do we not need to recognize this? Having held all of these positions I am sure that his documentation would easily, properly handled, qualify for the UNESCO Memory of the World. Why can we not ensure that this happens?

In addition, I understand that the design is to include a conference centre. This would bring a different type of tourist to Tobago, because you are looking at academic tourism. Is this something that we would not want? I mean, I am not a Tobagonian, but as a Trinbagonian I would like to see this happen.

Sen. Hinds: They may do it, but in Penal.

Sen. C. Baptiste-Mc Knight: There is room for that. Now Government can enter into discussion with the heirs of our other deceased Head of Government, Mr. Chambers, our Head of State, Sir Ellis Clarke, to see whether they would be amenable to having their documentation form part of this kind of memorial. And these can be housed—they are not likely to be as voluminous as either the Eric Williams collection or the ANR Robinson collection, so they could probably be housed in one area of NALIS.

And then what happens to those who are still alive? We have got Mr. Panday, whose life and experience leads me to believe, that his is a memorial that would be of great benefit and interest to the country. [*Desk thumping*]

Now, I am not saying this from any particularly selfish point of view, because I suspect that he will outlive me. But there is our immediate past Prime Minister who has had a long enough period in office and whose achievements in office have been substantial. [*Desk thumping*] We got our present Prime Minister who has just started and has time to achieve enough that we would need to keep a record of.

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Now what I would like to see is that discussions are held with these people who are still alive, and they be given the opportunity to identify a preferred location for their documentation because the tourism value of this must not be lost. There is no need for all of these to be in Port of Spain. [*Desk thumping*] There is going to be a university campus in the south; there is the Rienzi Complex in central which are already associated with some of these personalities. So we can think of decentralizing these memorials, but the important thing is they must be accessible to the public. The purpose is to allow the people to be able to go and find out about anything that happened within the past 50 years of our existence.

Madam Vice-President, I wish to conclude by exhorting our Government, through you, to seize this opportunity, seize this moment of the commemoration of our 50th Anniversary of Independence to promote the principle of establishing these collections. It is a unique opportunity and I think the nation is crying out for this.

I heard only this morning that as a part of the 50th Anniversary celebration there is going to be a move to recognize the elders in different cultural forms. I applaud this. But let us also think of the heads of State and Government. [*Desk thumping*] I think we need as a people to absorb as part of our culture, acknowledgement and recognition of those who strive on our behalf in whatever field of endeavour. This is my hope, this is my prayer. I plead with the Government not to miss this opportunity. I beg to move.

Sen. Basharat Ali: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. I have pleasure in seconding the Motion so ably presented by my colleague, Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight, and I reserve the right to speak at a later time. Thank you.

Question proposed.

The Minister of Planning and the Economy (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie): I thought my hon. colleagues across the floor might have wanted—[*Interruption*] Madam Vice-President, I am going to plead with my colleague across there to give me an opportunity to speak here this afternoon. I want to commend the hon. Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight for her Motion and for the thoughtful—I thought—unifying and also charitable manner in which she made her presentation here today. [*Desk thumping*]

I have often said in this Senate that we need to learn how to move on and move forward and bring the nation together purposefully and more than that to focus on the next achievement rather than the last problem. I believe that the 50th Anniversary of our Independence or Golden Jubilee, as they say, is indeed a

momentous achievement for all of our people and we could not have done it without able leaders at various points in our history who would have made significant contributions—[*Interruption*]

Madam Vice-President: Sen. Al-Rawi, are you standing or are you seated? Kindly take a seat, please.

2.15 p.m.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie: We could not have done it, Madam Vice-President, without the significant and able contributions of all our leaders. I would not begin to say—and I am sure other speakers will speak about this—that our history began 50 years ago. When we think of our own development as a nation, at this moment in history when we are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of our Independence, we need to acknowledge that there was a long history of struggle in the pre-colonial period that created the opportunity for a nationalist sensibility, a nationalist movement and a nationalist feeling later, and I simply want to mention that.

In the period of the last 50 years we really have had giants, as the hon. Prime Minister mentioned when she spoke at the launch of the unveiling of the Independence logo in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary. What she said then in her presentation as the sixth Prime Minister of the country was that she wanted to acknowledge that if she had a vision for the future of the country, it was only because she was standing on the shoulders of giants who preceded her and, therefore, was able to see ahead. I want to make mention of that and to acknowledge the contributions of all the leaders whom Sen. Corrine Baptiste-Mc Knight mentioned here today.

The country can never go too far, I think, in acknowledging the contribution of Eric Eustace Williams. [*Desk thumping*] He founded the first serious political party in this country—[*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Hinds: The only.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:—the party to which Members of the Opposition now belong. At the time that he came to Trinidad and Tobago from his sojourn abroad and began his investment, so to speak, of intellectual capital in the people, by basically establishing the basis for, first of all, thought and ideas about our country and its future—and also about building a political organization that could take into account those ideas of which he gave many. At that time when he came here and he made that initial contribution—beginning in 1955 when he

first became, I would say, actively involved in politics—that contribution that he made beginning then of founding a political party of that kind, and founding a political party that could last for more than 50 years, is indeed a significant contribution to Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

In addition to that, he gave us continuous government at the hands of that party that he founded, from 1956 to 1980, when he passed away.

Hon. Senators: 1981.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie: 1981, sorry, when he passed away. And during the period that he governed, I want to say that as every other leader in the country he would have had his high points and he would have had his low points. But I do want to mention one thing which I think is very, very significant about Eric Williams. That is, in the period between 1971 and 1976, during which the Republican Constitution was, in fact, debated and established—that was a period following the revolt of 1970 and a no-vote campaign of 1971—there was a single party in the House of Representatives and in the Parliament. There was no Opposition.

The reason I raise this issue is that, even though during that period of our history we had what was essentially a government in power without opposition—although opposition was to emerge during the period—during that period, in spite of everything, we continued to follow the principles of a democratic tradition in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] It is no mean achievement, and I think that that achievement needs to be acknowledged.

As I said, as a leader who served for so many years, there are very, very good things that we can say about that leader. There might be negative things we might want to say, but I think that was a significant contribution between 1971 and 1976 in which there was a single party only in Parliament in charge of the Government. I think that under the stewardship of Eric Williams as our first Prime Minister, he really did well to maintain, support and facilitate the process of reengagement of opposition so that we ended up in a situation, as you described, Senator, of uninterrupted democracy, despite the challenges that we had in 1970 and 1990, et cetera.

So I want to acknowledge that. I want to acknowledge the contribution of the others. I had the opportunity to serve in a government with our former Prime Minister and former President Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson. I learnt a lot from him, sitting in the Cabinet, engaging him as the leader of our party and our

government at the time, and as Prime Minister of the country; and I had a very, very—what can I say—constructive and mutually respectful relationship with Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson.

I remember on many occasions the value I placed on the experience that I received from having engaged him as Prime Minister and also the experience of being in situations in which decisions were made with him as Prime Minister. I really thank God for the opportunity to have had those experiences in my lifetime. He contributed well. He was a brave man and he was a brave Prime Minister.

He had the audacity to leave, what was essentially at the time, a monolithic party in Trinidad and Tobago and break out on his own, and to face the challenges and difficulties of the political system at the time, and to battle in his home base of Tobago, to battle in Trinidad, to be able to pull forces together and eventually to become Prime Minister of the country. He was a man of great mettle, as we saw in 1990, when he made that famous statement, “Attack with full force”, when the Parliament was under siege, so to speak. And, really, it was, and is, a tremendous experience to have served with someone of that ilk.

I did not know Mr. George Chambers very well. I think I interacted with him on two occasions. Both of them were very cordial and they were out in the community. But what I do know was that he made a very significant contribution, economically, to this country because at the time when he came into office in 1981, the Demas Report, which I think was published in 1983—I may be wrong about the date—was basically taken on board by George Chambers, in an attempt to make a major shift from traditional policy over the last several years which preceded him. Mr. Chambers was brave enough to make that kind of shift, and it did begin the process of moving the country in a certain direction.

When the NAR came into office it benefited from the beginning of some of that, and it radically altered policy and made the policy shifts, some of which are still with us today. Under ANR Robinson we had a situation in which we can say that not only are we responsible for our own democracy here through our own leaders, but we have a situation in which, economically, at appropriate times, there were major decisions that allowed the country to hold together and allowed the country to benefit both politically and economically. This is why these leaders need to be recognized and to be honoured.

I had the opportunity to engage Mr. Basdeo Panday on many, many occasions: when he was Prime Minister; when he was out of office, that is to say when he was in opposition, and even after he was out of politics; out of politics in the

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sense of officially elected; perhaps never out of politics in his life, given the kind of involvement he has had in politics. Again, there are strengths and weaknesses in everyone, but he has made his contribution. He has made a significant contribution. That contribution needs to be acknowledged, and I do agree that all of our leaders need to have that acknowledgment.

The former Prime Minister of this country, Mr. Patrick Manning, I have had the opportunity to engage him on various occasions. On some occasions those instances of engagement were very, very pleasant and constructive, and other occasions they were not as good, I would say. Having said that, again, this is a man who has served the Parliament of this country since 1971, if I remember correctly, and who has made his contribution as Prime Minister on different occasions. He also had his challenges and he made his contribution. And therefore, my own feeling is that, again, these contributions need to be acknowledged.

2.30 p.m.

I will not go into the realm of the Governor General and the Presidents. I feel that the time will come when the acknowledgments of our own Prime Minister will be taken into account. And, I feel that the whole business—the spirit of honouring the leaders of the country, so that the leaders rise above partisan politics and are seen to have made their national contribution in their time, in the context of the will of the people—I think that is a sensible way to proceed.

I do not for a minute fault the idea of having recognition of these contributors to our history and our development in the form of library collections, with the precedent having already been set by the Eric Williams Collection at the University of the West Indies. That, of course, is something that can in fact be done in Trinidad and Tobago. All of these things have to be funded, of course, and the suggestion here is for State funding. In many countries of the world the leaders are acknowledged but the people are also part of it—and the private sector is also part of it. The foundations that exist in those societies are also part of it.

I think that it is important for our society to get to the point where we acknowledge that because something is good and reasonable and right and protective of our history and our culture, and also protective of the potential legacy of the country, I think it is important for us to understand that there needs to be a wider kind of involvement and participation in these things.

I do take the point of decentralization. There is no sense in having one centralized place in which you have all your leaders acknowledged. I think it is good to link the leaders to the communities and institutions where they have served. I think those are good things. I want to commend the hon. Senator for her ideas and her thoughts on this matter.

As I indicated, we have a situation in which we have leaders over the last 50 years and leaders who will come over the next 50 years and acknowledge that there were leaders who emerged before, who were critical in the evolution of our consciousness against colonial rule and eventually the emergence of nationalism and ultimately independence and everything that went with that.

I think it is also important to understand that the reason the 50th Anniversary needs to be capitalized upon is not only from the point of view of acknowledging individual leaders—and I concede that we need to. We need to concede that and we need to acknowledge it. I do take the point that you need to seize the day of something like the 50th Anniversary.

But, the other idea which is important is to acknowledge that all of our history has also been part of the people's journey and that leaders emerge, so to speak—out of their time and out of their people. I think it is important in this 50th anniversary year for the people to celebrate themselves and their own achievements. I think it is very, very important. And, many of the things that are being done to commemorate the 50th Anniversary are driven by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago this year—and Cabinet established a committee to do this, and many of the Ministries also have their own programmes as part of that overall programme for the country.

The manner in which we are proceeding is basically to get the communities wherever they are in the country, and there are a number of communities in this country. In Trinidad alone there are about 524. In Tobago there are about 61. The idea is to get the communities to connect with the idea of independence and to connect with the history of our independence and our journey up to this point, but also to connect with themselves, and to acknowledge how they in fact have evolved and emerged in their own communities. Families who came out of destitution have sons, daughters, granddaughters and grandsons who are doctors, lawyers, engineers, senior public servants and people who have achieved, people who are scientists abroad, et cetera. I think it is important for the community itself to understand the significance of their own growth and evolution in the community.

I think you hinted at that, Senator, by mentioning that the example of celebration of our leaders could also lead—you did not say this, but I think you were suggesting community histories and community stories, and that this was also an important part of the development.

So, I want to acknowledge that and I want to say that part of our thrust is, in fact, to create the conditions in which not Government tells the people what their history is and who they should be, but the people themselves—seeing what has happened and acknowledging over the last 50 years what has happened in their own communities, to their own families—by doing that they acknowledge also their self-worth and their own contributions to the development of the country. I feel that it is important to have what you might call a bottom-up approach, in terms of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of our Independence.

The other thing that I want to say too is that we have had a historical sensibility in this part of the world—and I speak here now of the West Indies, the Caribbean and in Trinidad and Tobago—in which at first our history was really of the history about the Europeans in the West Indies and in the context of Trinidad and Tobago, the history of what you might call European conquest of the New World, in this particular place, Trinidad and Tobago. From that, we evolved to a situation in which we addressed the issue of the history of enslavement and enslaved peoples in this part of the world. And we followed that by looking at the history of indenture.

What we have had following that is that you find what has been happening is that communities have been looking at history from their own perspective. So, you would have had history written from the point of view of smaller communities in the society: you recently had one by Jerry Besson in which he looks at the French Creole contribution. We have had from the Chinese, looking at the evolution of the Chinese community, et cetera. You have had people looking at various elements of our history, like the Jahaji Massacre for instance; looking to see how that fits in the colonial period and what it said, not only about our national history but ethnic responses to our national history.

So what we have seen as the history has evolved—looking at it, first of all, from Europe, looking at it in the context of enslavement; then from a sub community within the society, in terms of East Indian indenture. You now have this flow of streams in which people are looking at their communities histories.

I had the opportunity today to engage someone who has just written a book, 400 pages, in which they looked at the literature of Trinidad and Tobago and how the landscape of Trinidad and Tobago has been portrayed by the literary output of

writers coming from Trinidad and Tobago. So that within that 400-page volume you have places, you have people and you have venues, et cetera; all of them linked to communities, of course, which have their own history.

So that what the 50th Anniversary is allowing us to do is really creating the conditions for us to bring these currents together. I have no doubt, Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight, that the whole purpose of your thrust in this particular Motion is to see a nation cohere, to see a nation move towards greater and greater unity, to have the kind of bigness of mind and compassion, to acknowledge the worth and the value of all the contributions, so that we might move forward in greater and greater peace. And, I want to tell you that with that spirit, I am entirely in harmony with you, and, I want to acknowledge the value of that. [*Desk thumping*]

What I am saying is that we now have the opportunity on the 50th Anniversary, not just to acknowledge our leaders—which I think we should—but also to acknowledge the people in their various streams. That is where the cultural element of it is so important, because—from the history, and out of the history, and from all of these currents and streams that are now manifesting themselves, looking at themselves, trying somehow to place themselves in the context of an evolving society—out of all of that is the rich diversity of culture, the country, the people that ordinary people over a period of history have created.

I know you have been to some of these things. I know you have been there for the Lydians. I know you were there for Ray Holman. And, we are beginning to see, and we know already, but to see it visibly and to have it reinforced that what we have created is absolutely world-class, absolutely, without doubt, incontrovertibly world-class.

Not that everything is world-class: there are things that are done shoddily, there are things which are not done well, and there are things which we do not take the time to do properly. But, where we have excelled, where we have done well, where we have put in the time, the effort, the energy, where we have taken advantage of the natural talent and honed it, and disciplined it, and done the work that was required, we can see what we have created. It is all beautiful, it is significant.

On the next occasion in NAPA the Indian classical singers are going to go into NAPA for the first time—people like Lily Ramcharan. There are four or five singers that are going to be there and they are going to sing in NAPA for the first time and again, we expect the topmost quality.

You mentioned the elders who are going to go to City Hall. They are going to talk and we are going to have a whole range of them of every strand of contribution in the society. The idea behind that is not just to show what we have achieved but to let them talk about what they have achieved and how they have achieved it—what

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the times were like, so we get a sense of history from the point of view of the individual, point of view of the individual's talent, point of view of the individual's community at the time. Somebody might have been from south or somebody from north or somebody from the east, how it is they evolved, how their talent connected, how it is they were able to survive and sustain themselves—but, more than that, as a source of inspiration for young people. These things are going to be engaged. The idea behind that is you bring the talent to the fore, and you bring the best to the fore and you bring experience to the fore, and you allow the society to engage itself.

2.45 p.m.

The whole idea behind this is that you celebrate not just individuals; you celebrate not just achievements; you celebrate not just one part of it, which might be political or economic or whatever—but you bring the streams together so that people begin to see, understand and appreciate that, really, at the end of it all, we have all contributed to make Trinidad and Tobago what it is—the good, the bad, the ugly. Whatever we have created, we have created together out of the evolution of our history, and this is the importance of that.

I want to acknowledge the significance of your Motion. I want to acknowledge the value of your Motion and I simply want to add to it—and you yourself suggested it by talking about the connection between leaders and the communities and the connection between the stories of the leaders and the stories of the communities.

I think that what we need to do is to create the conditions in which we find that psychological space, in which—just as we try to deal with the issue of economic inclusion and we try to deal with the issue of political inclusion and participation—we also create the conditions in which there can be a point of, what you might call, psychological inclusion, in which the country begins to understand that whatever point I am coming from to where I am now, I connect with a larger consciousness that we have created in this society because we have lived together, we have worked together, we have played together, we have engaged each other together.

The independence that we have created over the last 50 years is really about, first of all, how we accept responsibility for ourselves, how we engage each other respectfully and responsibly, and how we collectively take responsibility for the future of the country. That is what I would like to focus on in terms of what we are trying to do in terms of this Independence celebration and commemoration of our 50th Anniversary.

We are very, very lucky as a country and we have, as you said, many assets and we have done well in the 50 years. We have had our trials; we have had our tribulations; we have gone up and down sometimes; we have had difficult situations in politics sometimes; in economics, we have had tensions over issues in relation to culture and so on; but I think we have gotten to a point where there is a desire for harmony, a desire for unity of purpose and a desire for high achievement.

Pretty soon we are going to be sending a team to the Olympics, for instance. We have had our glory in terms of international participation in sports and one of the things that we did when we had the launch of the logo—when the hon. Prime Minister did the feature address there and launched the logo—was to present at that particular event, not just a cultural programme and the logo, but some of the people who had made significant contributions internationally, who had won a space for themselves, a place for themselves in the world on our behalf.

We mentioned some of the people that the Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight mentioned, but many of the people were sports personalities who had achieved international stature and recognition and who had broken records in the world. That again is a significant part of our contribution. It is not just the culture, but also the sport, regardless of the kind of sport, and we will have an opportunity again in the Olympic Games. We want to connect some of the cultural activities that we are capable of—and have produced—to that particular event, but more in time as we develop that.

I also think the 50th Anniversary of Independence is a tremendous opportunity for us to use the cultural products that we have created to build on the legacy that we have created in Trinidad and Tobago to begin really to capitalize on world opportunities. I mentioned the Olympics which might be one, the promotion of music and culture might be another, but I think that we also have a great opportunity of the 50th Anniversary to cause a number of things to converge.

For instance, the issue of investment, the issue of trade and commerce, the issue of the expansion of exports, the issue of the expansion of markets and the deepening of markets in tourism, the development of tourism products that are valuable to the community as a whole—as heritage elements of value to the local community—but also a value to tourists when they come here to Trinidad and Tobago and valuable in the context of expanding the product mix in Trinidad and

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Tobago. That is one of the things that is also being developed during this year of the 50th Anniversary. A number of particular areas as tourist centres, as tourist products, et cetera, are being developed by the Ministry of Tourism.

In a few days, the hon. Prime Minister will be in Chaguaramas to open the boardwalk that we established there. That boardwalk—I do not remember right now, I think it is 1,100 feet now—again, that is going to be expanded to about twice that length further. Together with that we are going to put some jetties out and that is going to change the ambience of the place. Together with that, there is a whole master plan that they are developing in terms of Chaguaramas.

I mentioned Chaguaramas, in particular, because this was the place which became very valuable in a march in the rain to make a point about colonialism and independence. Chaguaramas was at that time, of course, occupied by the American Naval Forces in Trinidad and Tobago. To the extent that we could take a place like Chaguaramas, which had such value in terms of our history, in terms of our sensibility, and make it a beautiful place for ourselves as well as a beautiful place for others to enjoy, I think that also has value.

So we see the 50th Anniversary as an opportunity to make ourselves—first of all, discover ourselves—to make ourselves aware of what we have achieved across a certain number of years during this period; to make us aware of what is possible because of what we have created, the best of what we have created. It shows us what is possible and we hope that this will also give us the impetus to see that the petty things that we squabble about are really very petty things, and that there is a big, big world out there and a big possibility for achievement for which we must strive as a people and as a nation.

As we develop this country, we must develop it with the notion that there must always be space and opportunity for all and that even though we might have a small space, we have a big heart and we have big possibilities in the world which we can achieve because we have demonstrated already that we have achieved in 1,000 areas. That is the spirit, I think, that we would like to bring to this 50th Anniversary celebration.

So, we acknowledge the value of your Motion, we certainly align ourselves with it and the spirit of it and certainly the intent of it. More than that, I take this opportunity to explain that we would like to broaden the celebration of our 50th Anniversary to a focus—more than our leaders—to the communities, to the people who have contributed to the talents that we have produced and to the celebration of the people themselves as people who have moved out of a colonial period to create a new nation.

2.55 p.m.

Nations are very, very hard things to build. Ortega y Gasset wrote in the 19th Century that people do not come together “just like that”; that only happens in a family. People who come together, come together in order to do something tomorrow. I think that is what we need to leave the 50th Anniversary, as we move into the 51st year. That is the spirit, that is the frame of mind, that is the sensibility that we need to take into the future: that people of our country must come together in order to do something tomorrow for ourselves. That is to say, taking responsibility for ourselves, we agree to do something for mutual benefit, to the mutual benefit of all. This is a very important thing.

When the Constitution of 1976—not of 1962—was written, Solomon Lutchman, who was a member of that Constitution Commission, wrote a minority report. He wrote something, I think, which is quite memorable. He said, “Only a great people can write a great Constitution.” That was a sentence in his minority report. A sentence like that is very strange because you can take it that we are not a great people so we cannot write a great Constitution, or you can take it as this: which is, that to write a great Constitution that has the capacity to give the nation a sense of possibility, you have to rise as a nation to the stature of greatness inside. I think it is a point; it is a sentence that we need to ponder on as we go forward beyond our 50th Anniversary.

V.S. Naipaul, one of our Nobel laureates and sons of our soil, wrote a book called *A Bend in the River* and it is narrated by a character in it called Salim who is living in a country in Africa that seems to be—

Madam Vice-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. E. George*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie: I will be less than five minutes. Salim says it is a country in Africa that seems to be a fictional country based on Zaire at the time, and the character says the world is as it is: those who are nothing, who allow themselves to be nothing, have no place in it. Again, that is a string of sentences that is open to a number of interpretations. You can say that the world is as it is, those who are nothing, who allow themselves nothing have—so it is very cruel. You cannot change the world and you can be grounded down.

There is another way of looking at it. The world is as it is and those who are nothing, who allow—that is to say those who surrender their will, to be nothing, have no place in it. Therefore, what this string of sentences really says is that assertion of the human will is the critical factor in dealing with the world as it is and in triumphing in the world even to the point of changing the world as it is.

I would like to also recommend that to the thinking, sensibility and disposition of the people of Trinidad and Tobago because if we are to triumph over the things that hinder our progress and if we are to achieve our highest potential, then the summoning of the human will, collectively, not individually, is also critical for Trinidad and Tobago. With that, Madam Vice-President, I end my contribution.
[*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Terrence Deyalsingh: Thank you, Madam Vice-President, for the opportunity to join in this debate. I want to congratulate Sen. Corinne Avril Baptiste-Mc Knight for bringing this Motion in this year, when we celebrate 50 years of Independence. It speaks to how we, as a country, should honour those who have served in the offices of President and Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

But, the debate happily has taken a turn; a turn which has broadened the debate and which I think is necessary. In speaking to the holders of the offices of President and Prime Minister, we need to look at all our heroes in all spheres of endeavor. I state my bias loudly and clearly right now for all to hear and my bias, obviously, is cricket because if we do not pay attention and do not understand the legacies of our heroes, whether they are political heroes, religious heroes, cultural heroes, we will descend to the depths that West Indies cricket has descended to. I just use cricket as an analogy as to how we as a maturing society should treat with our heroes.

I mention names like Sir Gary Sobers, who is considered a living legend in Barbados, the three W's from Barbados, Vivian Richards from Antigua, Curtly Ambrose and Lawrence Rowe. If a country, if a society as small as the Caribbean could have produced such world-beaters—and I will come to this later—what have we learnt that has eroded the very foundation of West Indies cricket today? I say that, Madam Vice-President, because if we do not learn from our political heroes, we run the same risk of eroding that base that would have been built by people like Dr. Williams, Mr. Panday and Mr. Robinson.

Madam Vice-President, the Caribbean has been endowed with many great men and women. From Jamaica, we have the Bustamantes, the Manleys; from Cuba, Fidel Castro—regardless of whether you like or do not like his politics one has to agree that he is a Caribbean hero. He is a hero in many senses of the word. When he partnered with Brother Guevara—Che Guevara—from Argentina, and many people think that Che is his first name; Che just means “brother”. So, Che Guevara is really Brother Guevara. Fidel Castro partnered with Che Guevara to bring what they thought was the brand of politics that Cuba needed; history will prove whether they were right or wrong. It is not for me to say that here. I am just trying to put this Motion in a wider Caribbean context.

Madam Vice-President, before I go very much further, I want to go back to a point which I raised in this Senate some time ago. When we talk about political heroes, Sen. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie spoke about his time with the NAR Government and when Mr. Robinson uttered those famous words: “Attack with full force”. Let us never forget, Madam Vice-President, and the country at large should never forget, that a parliamentarian that day lost his life—Mr. Leo Des Vignes. I have called for his picture to be put back up on the western wall of this Parliament—[*Desk thumping*]*—*and up to today, that picture is not adorning the western wall. That is the point that I am making: when we forget what our heroes stand for, when we forget that—the very base of what we are trying to build is eroded. So, I make the call, again: “I would like to see the picture of Mr. Leo DeVignes adorn the western wall of this Parliament Chamber.” Whoever is responsible for that, whether it is the Marshal, the Leader of Government Business, Presiding Officer—I do not know but, collectively, could we find that portrait?

Madam Vice-President, Dr. Eric Williams is mentioned specifically in this Motion. I would like to put the legacy of Dr. Eric Williams in some sort of context. I think at the 50th year of Independence, the time has maybe come to depoliticize Dr. Eric Eustace Williams; to depoliticize him. What do I mean by that? Many societies have ideals that we could learn from, that we could look and see what they are doing well—let us learn from it, and maybe implement it here.

One of the things that I admire about the society that is called the United States of America is this: you ask any child in the United States of America who their Presidents are and they would call Washington, they would call the whole list—Adams. But, you know, if you ask them which political party those Presidents belonged to, they do not know. They just know them as Presidents, as people who came, as men who came, did their best and left. All the former Presidents in the United States are held in high regard, in high esteem.

For some reason, in Trinidad and Tobago, we are not as magnanimous as that. We see Dr. Eric Williams as PNM and if you hate PNM, you automatically hate Dr. Eric Williams. I would like to see that stopped. Similarly, I would like to see Mr. Basdeo Panday who came from the bowels of the labour movement revered as the first person from the labour movement to attain the office of Prime Minister.

It is time, at the 50th year of our Anniversary of Independence, if we want to call ourselves a maturing society that we start to think of our leaders in that context, as former leaders who came, did their best and have moved on. We should not hate and ascribe only political motives to these great men; and I put Mr. Panday in that context. There are those in society who are now calling—I say there are those, this is not official PNM doctrine—for the Piarco International Airport to be named after Dr. Eric Williams, and that is something for the Government of the day to deal with. If the calls are there, so be it.

But, who are some of our other heroes from that era. I think Sen. Corrine Baptiste-Mc Knight mentioned Dr. Rudranath Capildeo. How have we sought to honour Dr. Capildeo? By naming the Learning Resource Centre in Mc Bean after him. But, my point goes deeper. How many Trinidadians, how many children, know that Dr. Rudranath Capildeo was a world renowned mathematician in his day? Brilliant man! Brilliant mathematician! How many people know that Dr. Rudranath Capildeo was part of the delegation that went to Malborough House between 1961 and 1962, together with Dr. Eric Williams and Lionel Frank Seukeran, the grandfather of Sen. Faris Al-Rawi, for the independence talks?

3.10 p.m.

This is not to be political, but there are the facts and Trinidadians need to know the facts. The facts of those independence talks were that the biggest battle for independence was not with the British but with Dr. Rudranath Capildeo and that part of the contingent who did not want independence. That is a fact. This is not to politicize the event, but merely to tell Trinidadians and Tobagonians what are the true facts of independence—I think you mentioned it; you called it the good, bad and the ugly—and those facts are borne out in two books: *Yes, Mr. Speaker* by Mr. Lionel Frank Seukeran, where he gave it chapter and verse—*[Interruption]*

Sen. Ramnarine: *Mr. Speaker, Sir.*

Sen. T. Deyalsingh: *Mr. Speaker, Sir*—and in the musings of Mr. Reginald Maulding, the then Colonial Secretary, who spoke at length about the battles that went on between Dr. Williams and Dr. Capildeo.

On that trip, Dr. Capildeo was overtaken by serious back pains. He was incapacitated and many wondered whether those pains at the time had a bearing on the stance that he took. But those are historical facts.

Madam Vice-President, I saw you smile when I mentioned the issue of whether those pains that he suffered would have impacted on the way he conducted those negotiations. There is a book, which I try to hawk and promote—I have no shares in the company that publishes this book—that is instructive to anyone who is aspiring to office. The name of that book, if I could remember, and I am sure Sen. Ramnarine would rush out tomorrow on amazon.com and get it, is called—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Al-Rawi: He might have it already.

Sen. T. Deyalsingh: It is called *In Illness and in Politics* [*sic*] by Dr. David Owen—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Ramnarine: Lord Owen.

Sen. T. Deyalsingh: Yes, former Member of Parliament in England—in which he chronicles how leaders make decisions and he chronicles the illnesses of leaders over the years. I just raised that in the context of what happened with Dr. Rudranath Capildeo at that time.

Then also, how do we honour Mr. Lionel Frank Seukeran, the grandfather of Sen. Faris Al-Rawi, whose debates with Dr. Williams in the Red House are legendary? You had two equally-matched people, brilliant men, at the height of their game going “mano a mano”.

Madam Vice-President, Sen. The Hon. Dr. Tewarie spoke about Mr. George Chambers, and I want to dwell a little bit on Mr. George Chambers as a hero. Mr. George Chambers, I always say, whenever I get the opportunity, is one of the most under-appreciated Prime Ministers this country has ever seen. [*Desk thumping*] The fact that he was ridiculed by jokes, to me, holds no water. The fact that he was called all sorts of nasty names, to me, holds no water.

This country, in 2012, is today still benefiting from the macro-economic and financial policies laid down in those days by Mr. George Chambers and his Minister of Finance, Mr. Wendell Mottley, and I speak purposefully about the flotation of the Trinidad and Tobago dollar which, at the time, Members of the then opposition said would lead us into financial ruin. They said the exchange rate would go to a hundred to one. But that is the type of vision that the administrations had then. So, when we say we stand on the shoulders of these men, I count Mr. George Chambers in that company.

Madam Vice-President, the question is, as I go on in my debate: how do we honour these people? Is it good enough to name highways, roads and buildings after them? I think not, because the point I made earlier, how many of us know that Dr. Rudranath Capildeo was a brilliant mathematician? We see his name on the building, but do we teach these things in school, that children will know what these men did? Coming from a small island, they were able to match wits with the greatest in the world.

As we said, the arguments today were opened up broadly and widely and for good reason. Culturally, in Trinidad and Tobago, we have had giants and, again, many societies revere their giants. Look at Bob Marley in Jamaica. Bob Marley is considered a hero. To tell you the impact that Bob Marley has had, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) saw it fit, just last week, to run a special on the 30th anniversary of the death of Bob Marley, Robert Nesta Marley.

Sen. Hinds: Jah.

Sen. T. Deyalsingh: Jah Rastafari. “Yuh like dat eh?”

Sen. Hinds: Yes.

Sen. T. Deyalsingh: Very good. But, locally what about our local cultural heroes? Do we revere them in the same way? If you go down Debe, one of my favourite places, right after the line of shops selling “sahena and ting” there is a little bar, and at the triangle at the corner there is a statue of Sundar Popo. “Yuh know it?” Good. “So, yuh have ah statue” of Sundar Popo there, but is that good enough? Is that good enough? Does the average child know the impact on local chutney music and local music that Sundar Popo had? By the way, Sundar Popo and Black Stalin were like “ring & finger”. [*Desk thumping*]

If we turn to the religious sphere, you have Pundit Krishna from Caroni where I grew up. Pundit Krishna and my father were very close friends, shining light in the Hindu community. You have the Pantins of the Roman Catholic faith, Haji Rahaman from San Fernando; all great men. But, how do we, as a multiracial, multi-religious society get together and find a way to honour our religious heroes? It is difficult. I know it is difficult. But, as Sen. The Hon. Dr. Tewartie always says: “We need to engage that discussion and how do we take it forward?”

One of the biggest religious heroes in Trinidad and Tobago is old Mr. Siewdass. I do not know how many people know the name Mr. Siewdass and what he did. Back in the day, when the colonial masters forbade Mr. Siewdass from practising his religion and building a temple on land, “he say: ‘eh heh? Ah go build it in de sea.’” That is what Mr. Siewdass did and that is a hero.

How do we transmit that rich, religious heritage so people can know today that this freedom of expression and freedom of religion that you have in 2012, the year of our 50th Anniversary of Independence, was fought for and people paid a heavy price? We celebrated Shouter Baptist Liberation Day; the repeal of the Act. Just because somebody's religion might have been offensive to somebody else does not mean you cannot practise it and that is what Mr. Siewdass had to endure.

As I spoke about cricket and learning about the heritage of cricket, how many of these 11 people we have on the field right now in Dominica, who are underperforming and underperforming badly—the last score, three wickets were down for 70-something runs; that tells you it is germane to this debate—how many people playing on that team understand what cricket means to the Caribbean? The same way, what do our cultural, religious and political heroes mean to us, as we seek to build our institutions? Madam Vice-President, I have dealt with cricketing heroes, political heroes and religious heroes.

I will deal with some of our sporting heroes in general, and I want to throw my comments out to all sports administrators—the Minister of Sport, past, present and future—all sports administrators. Trinidad and Tobago has very often scaled the heights in world sport. We have heroes such as Leslie Stewart, World Light Heavyweight Champion, and Claude Noel. But after those two people scaled those heights, what has become of boxing in Trinidad and Tobago? We have not taken those successes. We have not taken the actions of these heroes and built a boxing fraternity/boxing industry.

After Jean Pierre led the netball team to joint world championships with the Australians and the New Zealanders, I believe; I think we shared that world championship in those days. Prior to those world championships being held in Trinidad, Trinidad would dominate Caribbean netball together with Jamaica. We would always be one/two with Jamaica in world netball. Then we won the championship. We shared the championship with New Zealand and Australia, if my memory is correct. We scaled those heights and then what happened to netball? Where is netball today?

I make the same reference with Hasely Crawford; you mentioned Hasely Crawford, 1976, Montreal Olympics. The sight of Hasely Crawford winning the gold with those socks that he had on then—“yuh” remember those striped socks, horizontal bars of black and white? I think it was the first time the world saw those socks. We just saw those socks running down the track in 10.06 seconds or 10.6 seconds?

Sen. Abdulah: Ten point zero six.

Sen. T. Deyalsingh: Ten point zero six seconds. Trinidad has yet to win another Olympic gold medal. We have come close with Mr. Thompson at the last Olympics in Beijing and Bovell winning bronze. The point is, how do we take these heroes, our sport heroes, and learn from them and inculcate a culture of “winningness” in the next generation? I have pointed out boxing, netball and athletics and the same thing is happening with football.

We have scaled the heights of world football. We almost made it to a World Cup final when we were, I would use the word, “beaten” by Haiti. We were not “beaten”, we were denied victory. Then we made it in Germany in 2006. Prior to that, we would vie with Jamaica for Caribbean football honours but today, football is in the doldrums. I use these items of sport, where we have heroes and heroines in sport, to ask the country, to ask administrations, to ask the Government, to ask the Opposition and the Independents: how do we use these successes to get the next generation going to surpass, to even meet, far less to surpass?

There are other names as heroes and heroines that we could talk about and I would mention some briefly. What about the La Bordes? Yes, they got the Trinity Cross in those days, but does anybody understand the scope of what the La Bordes did—when you look at that little boat that they had the nerve or gumption to sail around the world in? Again, how do we honour people like them?

3.25 p.m.

Madam Vice-President, as we look at Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight’s Motion, which speaks about the offices of President and Prime Minister, I want to appeal to Trinidadians and Tobagonians, when we speak about our office holders, people who have done their bit—like Dr. Eric Williams, Mr. Basdeo Panday—the time has come as a mature society to honour them for what they have done, to as I say depoliticize them, to embrace them as our own. Tell the school children what these people have done. Tell the school children that where they are today, and where their parents are today, is as a result of the work that has been going on in this country from 1962, and before, to now.

The offices of President and the forerunner to that, Governor General, who I do not know how many people know—even though Sir Solomon Hochoy, who was our first Governor General and would have represented the Queen in Trinidad and Tobago in those days, would have died, I believe, in 19—I cannot remember the exact date. When news of the death of his wife came to me, because she died recently, how many people knew that Lady Hochoy only recently passed in her 90s and that to me, Madam Vice-President, represented the last link between modern Trinidad and Tobago and our colonial past.

She passed away just recently. And then, the successor to that office, Sir Ellis Clarke, on his death—I think the hon. Prime Minister raised the fact, that a Chair in honour of his name would be established at the University of the West Indies. To date, we have heard nothing further on that Chair. I would like to ask the Government to roll out the details as to that Chair to be established at the University of the West Indies for our former President, Sir Ellis Clarke.

As I come to a close, I just briefly want to recap by saying, if as a society we do not build on and learn from the exploits of those who have gone before, we would be eroding the base that we would like to build. In that regard I again appeal and call for the portrait of Mr. Leo Des Vignes to be reinstalled in this Parliament.

Madam Vice-President, with those very few words, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Helen Drayton: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. Let me open by commending Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight for bringing this Motion now. It is not only because this year we celebrate the 50th year of Independence; to my mind it is very important. It is timely given where we are as an independent nation, and where we are is, in fact, what I will address in a short while because that speaks to the contributions of our past Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Let me just interject here that as we speak of Independence, some of us might find it difficult to use that word when we are still hanging on to the shirt tails of our colonial masters to set policy for us and, of course, I am referring to the Privy Council as the final appellate court in adjudication of important affairs of citizens. So how do we cohere as Sen. Dr. Tewarie urged, if we yet cannot accept who we are, and our ability to shape our destiny?

Now, this Motion calls for state-funded arrangements whereby contributions of all who served in the offices of President and Prime Minister will be recognized. I endorse the Motion because such recognition will create an opportunity to give history a more important space in education, in social development and, of course, in recreational calendars on a sustained basis.

I see such recognition as a step that will focus our children and future generations on achievement, how the nation was built and what are the prospects for the future. So meaningful and tangible recognition of our leaders and other speakers, as others have mentioned, represents a link between the past and the future; and it is, therefore, a continuum of substantial contributions to national life and not simply an action pertaining to past activities.

Let me say, that thought was driven home very well to me during the recent parliamentary visit to India, of which I had the privilege to be a member and, of course, visits to other countries. What struck me about India was the sense of self, the deep sense of history of past achievers and that sense of civilization. Extraordinarily, remembrance of achievers is what gives prominence to her quest today to be a future leader in science and technology and take her rightful place in the world.

The achievements of the past are what give and inform authority for the future. Wherever we went, her heroes and leaders were represented and celebrated in some way, and most important, I think, is that in the Parliament building there was a museum honouring all those who served, which speaks to what Sen. Deyalsingh was just referring.

But it is not only India, because every visitor to major cities of the world becomes conscious—at some time or the other—of the past leaders and heroes who shaped that country's destiny. Indeed, their memorials are often central aspects of tourist events and consequently contribute to the economy. Far more important is that secondary school children are aware of who their leaders were, what contributions they made to society, and from an early age they can carry on intelligent conversations about their country.

Current times are very different in many respects from the past, and it is significant that aspirants to public office in many countries study the philosophy of their past leaders, good and bad, for one purpose, and that is to aid in shaping a future agenda where the focus is on the successes and, of course, how to avoid the pitfalls of governance. In times of strife and warfare, they study global strategies of their past leaders to determine a context for decision-making. Then, of course, we know that students in universities everywhere study their styles, discuss and debate their strengths and weaknesses whether they are studying political science, history, management or leadership.

Of course, political history and current political affairs are important contributors to shaping culture and the future. It is the leaders of nations who more than anyone else sponsor the future, and this is why, in my view, the recognition this Motion calls for is very important. There are times more than others when a society must shed its insularity, its bias and politics and lift itself to a higher level of leadership and citizenship.

In giving recognition to our past Prime Ministers, it is of no significance what political party they belonged to. It is not significant. [*Desk thumping*] It is of no significance that they had weaknesses and flaws because that too is history, and it

would have been highly unusual if they did not have any. All too often there is much criticism of personality, what they did and did not do, trivializing performance—and that is all the more reason their achievements must be held up and sustained.

As the Prime Minister observed at the launch of the logo for the 50th Anniversary celebrations, it is on their shoulders the current leader stands. I will try not to repeat any of the excellent achievements that were mentioned by speakers before me, but there are a few that are worth emphasizing. They gave us democracy, colonialism was not democracy, in their minds, it was their minds that gave us a democratic Constitution which has served us well, and indeed a democratic way of life is our tradition.

The past leaders maintained a relatively stable political climate. They put in systems of incentives which in the 80s and 90s enabled the manufacturing sector to grow and spread its products and services throughout the region and internationally. We have produced a fair share of business luminaries who have competed well in regional and international markets, and I want to come back to that in light of what Sen. Dr. Tewarie said and in light of a comment that was recently made by a Minister. Very important, the middle class expanded from a position where wealth was held among a very privileged few after colonialism to a broad stable sector. [*Desk thumping*] They built an energy sector that was stable and well respected. [*Desk thumping*]

This country last year was given a grade of developed country recognition status. That, like all other accomplishments, did not happen overnight. This small island has always had international respect; we have always enjoyed the respect of the international community—and make no bones about that, the leaders of this country and the people who served us overseas as ambassadors, through positions on international bodies such as the United Nations, IMF and others, were respected for their discipline, professionalism, knowledge and intellectual insights.

Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight has mentioned the International Criminal Court and the contributions of ANR Robinson; it was during his tenure that a fairly strong banking and financial sector developed. And it is true that while we have always had a history of divisive politics based on race, it is equally true that the past stewards managed to steer the ship from bloody racial strife experienced by so many other countries, and that is worth repeating. [*Desk thumping*] They managed to maintain a degree of social cohesion when compared with the history of other multiracial societies.

Independence of the Judiciary remained intact and by and large they did not trample on our freedoms. For a tiny island we have shone a few lights on the international stage in sports, law, literature and art, among others. We have maintained a stable economic climate. They built a gas economy; over most of those 50 years, excepting the period of recession and depression in the late 70s to about the mid-80, the economy grew virtually every year.

In the UNDP's Human Development Report, there are four classifications for human development: very high, high, medium and low. We are rated high with constant growth trend over the past 11 years. We enjoy a fairly good standard of living, when our gross national income per capita is measured against many other countries including most of our neighbours south. Importantly, the freedom of the media, although challenged at times, was maintained. We made no enemies and did not alienate our traditional partners in the quest for foreign investment.

3.40 p.m.

Madam Vice-President, a celebration of 50 years of Independence is a celebration of the achievements of those who have led us through the path. It is a celebration of the achievements of all of the citizens and it is a celebration of the nation.

As we debate this Motion, to give recognition to the contribution of our Prime Ministers and Presidents, it will be useful if those who now hold the reins know that one of the greatest tributes we can pay to their memory is not to repeat the errors of the past and, in fact, to build on their successes, which are the successes of the nation. To give tangible recognition to our former leaders is to learn the lesson of history.

We are aware of the adage about history repeating itself. Madam Vice-President, I want to mention a situation, solely in the context of performance that should be left in the past, so that, as Sen. The Hon. Dr. Tewarie said, we can focus on the future; we can be more positive about the future and the future of our children.

We witness today certain behaviours that confirm the corrosive nature of power. I want to cite the remarks of a Minister. This is not any attack on the Minister, but simply to demonstrate the caustic nature of the country's politics which, as I said, should stay in the history books while we build on the achievements of our past leaders and all of our achievers.

In justifying the Government's appointee for a chairman, the Minister made reference to titans of industry, whom he described as "a seller of Sunshine snacks"—one who ran a newspaper and one who was an attorney. In that statement, the contributions of business leaders, luminaries, were subordinated

and placed in a very negative light. As I said, I am just mentioning this because we cannot be—and it is your Government which is preaching cohesion and charity, and it goes against the very values that we are seeking to nurture.

What he failed to realize is that these three distinguished gentlemen have proven themselves, over many years, as strong, respected, regional leaders who have sat across the table with politicians and international entrepreneurs throughout this world, [*Desk thumping*] and those are qualities that we look for in the chairman of an international corporation. Arthur Lok Jack built an empire, not on selling, but on entrepreneurship, on manufacturing and selling products across the continents of this world. He is one of the greatest entrepreneurs of our time—of the past 50 years.

Ken Gordon built a media empire. He was chairman of many boards. He was a Minister of Government and he has distinguished himself across the region and many countries. Regionally and internationally, Karl Hudson-Phillips QC is respected for his wisdom and for his probity. He adjudicated at the International Criminal Court in a very sensitive matter, which had to do with the dispute between the Israelis and activists on the sea.

What we are saying is that as we seek to recognize—[*Interruption*] I am nearly finished—contributions of our citizens, we must not devalue the contributions of our citizens, particularly for political gain. We want to rise above that. We want to leave that behind us. [*Desk thumping*] We want to keep that in the history book, and that is why this Motion is so important and that such recognition as others have advocated must extend to other citizens who have made exceptional contributions to the development of this nation.

In so doing, when we pay tribute and when we give recognition, we can redefine past errors and setbacks, not as something that has happened to us, but as something we did ourselves. If we accept the responsibility for where we are, then we can find the courage to correct the wrongs and move forward, rather than mimic those wrongs of the past as standards of performance for now and the future.

We are at a juncture where we have had solid achievements, and in giving tangible recognition to our former leaders, the greatest respect we can pay to the sense of nationhood that they had and demonstrated is for the new leaders to begin to harness the native talents of citizens.

If my memory serves me right, they were all for the Caribbean Court of Justice. [*Desk thumping*] If that becomes a reality, it will be a significant tribute to their efforts, as a regional initiative, which was started right here in Trinidad and Tobago, in Chaguaramas, by the giant, Dr. Eric Williams. [*Desk thumping*] What more tribute can we pay to his memory and a tribute to all of us, but to take this opportunity to rise to a higher level of leadership and demonstrate that we can control our destiny? [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Vice-President, our leaders had strengths and weaknesses, so too does every leader in the history of this world. What their successors chose to do is to honour the good that they did; to hold up the good to a light that shines forever.

I fully support the Motion that there be instituted a state-funded arrangement whereby the contributions of all who served in the offices of President and Prime Minister will be recognized.

I thank you, Madam Vice-President. [*Desk thumping*]

[*Sen. The Hon. Devant Maharaj rises*]

Madam Vice-President: You want to clarify something that was raised?

Sen. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, if I may? [*Interruption*] Rule what?

Madam Vice-President: Sen. Hinds, will you tell me why you are standing?

Sen. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, on a point of order.

Madam Vice-President: Sen. Hinds, have a seat. I think Sen. Abdulah would like to make his contribution, please.

Sen. David Abdulah: Thank you very much, Madam Vice-President. I, too, would like to congratulate the hon. Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight on this particular Motion, which she has brought to the Senate. This Motion will enable us, over the next few hours, until we conclude, today or on another occasion, to reflect, not only on the contributions of key leaders of our nation—those who have had the responsibility of being Prime Minister or President as the case may be—but also, as the mover of the Motion herself and other Senators who have spoken before have reflected upon, it gives us the opportunity to think about the meaning of Independence and the process by which we have come to this the 50th Anniversary of Independence.

This is not only one jubilee year, in that we celebrate this 50th Anniversary of our Independence as a nation; it is a double jubilee because we also, this year, commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the modern trade union movement in Trinidad and Tobago and the events that gave birth to the modern trade union

movement of June 19, 1937. I am going to reflect, in my contribution, on the process by which we arrived at 1962 and some of the things that have challenged us in the post-Independence period this last 50 years.

I just want—as I made reference a moment ago to those events of 1937—to state that it was on July 15, 1937, just three weeks after that, that the first meeting of the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union was held. One Mr. Williams Quarters, Coons Town, Forest Reserve, in Fyzabad, and the writer of those first minutes, Mr. Elbert Redvers Blades, is still very much alive and on April 07 he celebrated his 110th birthday. [*Clapping*] As we reflect on heroes, certainly for Elbert Redvers Blades, 110 is not easy to get to. I do not know that we could, Sen. Deyalsingh, have many of our young cricketers in the West Indies get to 110 runs, far more 110 years old.

I had the good fortune on Saturday last, with a number of members of his family and comrades to celebrate—a couple of weeks after his actual birthday—with him in Cumuto, in Wallerfield, when his family gathered. He is still quite cogent and lively, singing calypsos and wanting to take a little jig, I think, at one point in time. I salute him on celebrating that particular anniversary and for what he and many others have done.

Over the last 50 years of our Independence and 75 years of the modern trade union movement, this double jubilee year, we have much to celebrate and to commemorate. I agree with those who have spoken before about the importance of using this moment to ensure that the history of this country and the history of our people is well-known and internalized, so that we can have young people familiar with our past. We are in grave danger of our young generation being unaware of their past and how we arrived at where we are today.

I am reminded of a comment that Prof. Gordon Rohlehr gave to me some years ago in reflecting on his own concern about the lack of knowledge of our young people of our history. He was reflecting on the fact that, in a particular class of his, teaching at the University of the West Indies, in a tutorial session, he asked the young people in the class, who were about to graduate from university to speak in some detail about the life and contribution of the first Prime Minister of this country, Dr. Eric Williams.

Prof. Rohlehr told me that he was flabbergasted when the young people stumbled and fumbled to give a proper account of the work of the first Prime Minister. If that was the situation with respect to Dr. Williams, you can imagine their difficulty with being able to speak about Tubal Uriah “Buzz” Butler, Captain

Arthur Andrew Cipriani, Elma Francois, or any of the other pioneers of this country's nationalist movement. So, it is very important that we find ways and means to ensure that our collective memory is preserved and passed on from generation to generation.

We are aware, and it was referred to by Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight, of the Eric Williams collection. What is not perhaps as well known is that the University of the West Indies has a number of other important heritage collections.

3.55 p.m.

The CLR James collection or part of it resides there, and Oilfields Workers' Trade Union is very happy about that. On James' death, of course, we were asked by CLR to be responsible for his funeral which we did with a great amount of humbleness in 1989 when he passed away at the end of May.

We were trying to get the entire James collection to reside at the University of the West Indies, and that proved to be a very difficult task indeed. So what resides at St. Augustine is part of the collection. There are other parts of the collection in the United States of America and in England. We have a very small collection ourselves in the union, but the James collection is also part of the UNESCO heritage collection.

There is also the collection of Sam Selvon residing at the University of the West Indies. Sam Selvon, of course, is one of our outstanding literary giants. We talk about Naipaul and we often forget Selvon who is, certainly, one of our outstanding literary giants.

The Oilfields Workers' Trade Union, of which I am the general secretary, is very proud to be one of those organizations that has sought over the years in small ways, but important ways, to keep alive our history—certainly speaking specifically of labour history—but, more generally, also of the contributions made by outstanding leaders of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean through an annual primary schools competition, which we have every year and have run for more than 30 years for the children in St. Patrick and Victoria.

This year being our 75th Anniversary, we have expanded it and we have had the kind permission and support of the Minister of Education for this. We have expanded it to include all primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, and we are also doing a separate competition for secondary schools and a debating competition for all tertiary institutions, whose student guilds and associations are part and parcel of organizing.

In this way, we have tried—not on a national basis, perhaps, but in our own way—to preserve history. We also have committed and helped to organize major conferences to celebrate key national leaders of this country. So that in the year 2001 on the centennial of the birth of CLR James, we collaborated with the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, as well as with the Centre for Caribbean Thought of the University of the West Indies, Mona, and tertiary institutions from the United States to organize the CLR James Centennial Conference.

Two or three years after that, we also organized with the University of the West Indies History Department, the George Padmore Conference, the first major conference on George Padmore, another seminal and very important figure, not only in Trinidad and Tobago but, certainly, in the context of Pan-Africanism and independence, because the independence movement, not only here in Trinidad and Tobago, but throughout the world, was catalyzed in a very significant way by the Fifth Pan-African Conference which was held in Manchester in the United Kingdom in 1945, and that conference was organized by George Padmore.

Many people referred to that Fifth Pan-African Conference as the most important Pan-African Conference, because it brought together people like Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta and like persons, and leading people from India in the independence movement in India, persons from South Africa and from the Caribbean. So labour leaders like John FF Rojas, who was the second vice-president of the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union and other labour leaders also attended that Fifth Pan-African Conference. That Fifth Pan-African Conference set out in a very real way, an agenda for the decolonization of the British Colonies in particular.

Padmore later went on to be a very close advisor to Nkrumah in Ghana—Ghana, of course, being the first country in Africa to get its independence in 1957; and India having attained independence in 1947. So the process of decolonization—beginning with India in 1947, Ghana in 1957, Jamaica on August 06, 1962 and Trinidad and Tobago, August 31, 1962 and onwards—can have a nexus to the work of George Padmore and CLR James. James was partly organizing the conference but he was not in the UK. He was in the United States and so on, but contributed to the organizing of that Fifth Pan-African Conference in Manchester in 1945, which set out an agenda for decolonization and independence, and all of these processes are very important.

So the OWTU was very happy to have collaborated with the University of the West Indies. As a trade union—and some people may want to know why a trade union was partnering with academia and so on, but we are of the strong belief, and Prof. Bridget Brereton has made the point that the OWTU has been a leader, not simply

in terms of organizing and agitating—which we do very successfully for better wages and conditions of work for our members—but also as a leader intellectually in terms of ideas. Our contribution in terms of ideas, Prof. Bridget Brereton said, is as powerful and important as our contribution at the shop floor. So, those conferences on James and Padmore were in the context as well of understanding the process of independence.

The independence of 1962, Madam Vice-President, would not itself have been possible had not others been the forerunners. I want to refer to a number of people and a number of activities and actions through many, many decades and so on. I want to look at the issue of the psyche of independence, or put another way, the psyche of dependence and the psyche of being colonized and of being controlled by someone else.

There was a very important piece of theoretical work done by JJ Thomas—John Jacob Thomas—who was born, I believe, in Grenada, but came to Trinidad and worked in Trinidad around the turn of the 1900s. John Jacob Thomas wrote an important essay which was published subsequently as “Froudacity”, challenging the British racist superiority position that people of colour somehow are inferior genetically and otherwise to the European.

He was challenging a major professor from one of the Oxbridge campuses in the UK, Prof. Anthony Froude, I think it was, who wrote this thesis to justify why colonialism was necessary, namely that British and Europeans somehow are genetically able to manage their affairs and we, the people of colour, are unable to do so because we are less than able intellectually and physically in terms of our capacity, and JJ Thomas challenged that in a major piece of work.

We have to refer to that in the process of independence because if we did not have to rely on works such as that of John Jacob Thomas in challenging intellectually the notion that we are not able, or we were not able, to run or be in charge of our own affairs, and that we were not able or fit to rule, as the British said: “At the appropriate time, when you are fit to rule, we would give you Independence.” We had to prove the point constantly that we were as fit to rule as anybody else, and we were not prepared to be ruled by anyone else either. So we must remember in the context of our Independence celebrations and so on, the contribution of people like John Jacob Thomas.

We must remember the literary work and the cultural work, in the 1920s and 1930s, of the Beacon Group and those that published the journal, *The Beacon*, and published another journal, *Trinidad*, before it. CLR James, Alfred Mendes, Ralph

de Boissiere and Albert Gomes, these men were, in the 1920s and 1930s, writing fiction, publishing poetry and essays about the condition of people in Trinidad and Tobago, and the need for us to assert ourselves and take charge of our own destiny.

I certainly think, therefore, in the whole context of what we are debating and our history and understanding where we have come from, Madam Vice-President, it is necessary to recognize—just as the hon. Prime Minister in her speech referred to the fact that she was able to stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before—that those who have gone before us as Prime Ministers and so on, themselves stood on the shoulders of others. We have to take that long sweep of history and recognize and appreciate all who contributed to the notion and sense of identity of our people, and the notion and sense that we can run, and be in charge of, our own affairs and that we needed to make a break with colonialism.

Famous debating groups: I am really benefiting, in this regard, in terms of my knowledge, from some of my mentors, John La Rose and Lennox Pierre, both deceased, who were critical, literary, cultural and political activists in this country from the 1940s through to the 1960s. Lennox, of course, continued much after and John La Rose later on in England, but they shared a lot of their knowledge and information about those times.

Of course, they were speaking largely about the culture and the environment which they were part of, which would have been what one would, perhaps have called “creole northern Trinidad society”. Therefore, if I am not speaking to other persons who were perhaps contributing significantly to the process, it is simply because I may not be as familiar with everyone as those whose information was shared with me.

There were important literary, debating and political groups. The Why Not Group—how many of us here have heard of the Why Not Group and the Braithwaite brothers? We know of Lloyd Braithwaite as a Professor at the University of the West Indies in sociology and doing very important work on social stratification in Trinidad and Tobago and so on, and we know him as the Principal of the University of the West Indies. That is how I came to know Prof. Braithwaite as Principal of the University of the West Indies.

I led many a strike as a student leader on campus against Prof. Braithwaite—put him in a room. Sen. The Hon. Karim remembers those incidents when I was a student leader, but Prof. Braithwaite had a certain openness about him because he used to do the same when he was a young man—as a radical political activist selling *Soviet Weekly* in Woodford Square, so he understood where I was coming from. I do not think he was comfortable being an administrator. I think he was

much more comfortable being an academic, and being involved in research and radical sociology and so on. The Braithwaite brothers with the Why Not Group and others were involved in that.

There was Mr. Sealy who had a bookstore—his first name is escaping me now, who was also involved in that ferment [*Crosstalk*]—Clifford Sealy. Thank you very much, Sen. Prescott. That is right. He was part of that period of the 1940s and the 1950s. In Arima there was Neville Guiseppi. We do not know much about Neville perhaps; we know about his wife, Undine Guiseppi, because she used to write in the newspaper and, no doubt, she would have corrected me a million times on my incorrect grammar and so on—but Neville Guiseppi in Arima with others like Arnold Thomasos, John La Rose and the Hoseins. I met Dr. Ramcharan recently—a group, a cultural, debating and literary group in Arima in the 1940s did a tremendous amount of interesting work.

I think of all of this now, Madam Vice-President—and so much more that I am not recounting and unable to recount—needs to be mentioned in terms of the process by which we came to Independence, because all of this work was blocks being put down that others later on were able to benefit from.

Then in the 1940s, the first Trinidad Youth Council, Jack Kelshall, a young lawyer solicitor from San Fernando, Lennox Pierre, a young solicitor from Port of Spain and the Trinidad Youth Council—the work that they did in the youth council, many do not know it, but they were the ones who organized the first TASPO, Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra. They practised at the Cocorite Youth Centre which is now Paragon, and so on, but the Cocorite Youth Centre is where Lennox Pierre and his wife were the wardens of the youth centre. That is how TASPO got going, under the musical tutelage of Captain Griffith, I think it was, who was the tutor.

4.10 p.m.

They did work with Beryl McBurnie, bringing out our folk culture with people like Edric Connor and others, and lecture recitals that took place at the old Princes Building site where NAPA now stands. All that is part of the whole process that led to the ferment of nationalism in our country and the Little Carib movement with Beryl McBurnie, and so on.

In short, Madam Vice-President, the 20s, 30s, 40s and into the 50s, that entire period, that 30-year period or so—from the late 20s into the early 50s—was a period of tremendous ferment; it was a renaissance period in our country, a period of ideas and, of course, of struggle on the ground. It produced a huge amount of the cultural creativity. We know, of course, that was the period in which the steel pan was formed and created, but it was a period, generally, of tremendous cultural

creativity, where our imagination was being fired by the deep desire burning in the hearts and minds of ordinary people of the society for Independence, because that is what gave birth to that sense of ideas, and so on. It was a deep desire for Independence.

I want to recall *Lennox Pierre's* comment about our whole process of arriving at Independence and continuing, when he said that, really, the history of this country has been a history of struggle out of slavery through the horrors of indenture and up to freedom. I believe that is a process that is still ongoing as we seek to deepen our democracy and change our governance, and improve our governance up to today, so it is a continuing process.

In that regard, therefore, my own view and one that I have stated in this honourable Senate before is that, really, the history of our country is also the history of labour. It is the history of labour because we are here as a people because of a demand for labour, because there was the genocide of the indigenous people. There was then a shortage of labour and in terms, specifically, of Trinidad, of course, a shortage of economic activity in terms of the very weak, poorly developed or underdeveloped plantation system as it then was, which then led to the Cedula of Population in 1783, and therefore our European descendants largely came into the country post-1783.

Of course, our African population in large numbers also came in post 1783 and then, of course, at the end of slavery in 1838, after Emancipation, we had the wave of Indian indentured labour in the beginning in the 1840s. Not only indentured labour from India, we also had, of course, indentured labour from China and also from Madeira, which is why we have persons with Portuguese names, and so on, in our country.

Subsequent to that, we had migration inward from many islands in the Caribbean and from elsewhere, not only in the region but from other parts of the world. So, it has always really been in the context of Trinidad and Tobago a demand for labour that has given rise to migration inwards into Trinidad and Tobago, and this, therefore, created the multi-ethnic, multicultural, multi-religious society which Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight referred to when she said this is a unique place in the world, and she celebrated that and so on.

I think we need to understand it in the context of how we arrived here, that we arrived by different routes. Although we have arrived by different routes we have all sought through struggle and sacrifice—ordinary people, poor people—to create a new civilization, to fashion our society and to humanize the space in

which they had to live and in which they had to bring up succeeding generations, always with the intention of having a better society for the future generations and of having more and more freedom, and more and more ability to control their own affairs and be responsible and take charge, hence the notion of Independence formalized on August 31, 1962.

This struggle and sacrifice, tremendous struggle and sacrifice by ordinary people, working people, to create this new civilization and humanize the space, key to that has been the spirit of freedom—the spirit of freedom out of slavery through indentureship and as I say, up to freedom. The winning of that freedom and the creating of a nation, that notion of us being in charge and taking control of our destiny was firstly carried—that burden of creating a nation, in my respectful view—by the working people, the working class, by those who labour, as distinct from Britain.

In Britain it was the new industrial class that fought against the aristocracy and the landed wealthy and so on, the monarchy system. It was the industrial class that fought for democracy and to create a parliamentary system of democracy and all those things, and against the court of kings, and therefore to create a court of citizens and trial by their peers and so on. It was the industrial capitalist class that did that.

Here in the Caribbean, it was not the owners and managers of capital that fought for democracy and fought for freedom; it was those who labored; it was ordinary people who did that. Therefore, as we come to this point of the 50th Anniversary of Independence, we need to celebrate these ordinary people even while we recognize and appreciate the key role that leaders play, but we have to celebrate the unsung and the unknown.

Madam Vice-President, if I may, with your permission, I want to quote from something that CLR James wrote in the late 1920s. It was published as “The Case for West Indian Self-Government” and it is in this particular pamphlet—“The Case for West Indian Self-Government” is in a compilation, *The CLR James Reader*, which was edited by Anna Grimshaw and published by Blackwell publishers. Madam Vice-President, with your permission I will read this particular quote because it is important in terms of the case for West Indian self-government because self-government did not arise in 1962; the case was being made out way before that—and CLR James said:

“For a community such as ours, where, although there is race prejudice, there is no race antagonism, where the people have reached their present level in wealth, education, and general culture, the Crown Colony system of government has

no place. It was useful in its day, but that day is now over. It is a fraud, because it is based on assumptions of superiority which have no foundation in fact. Admirable as are their gifts in this direction, yet administrative capacity is not the monopoly of the English; and even if it were, charity begins at home, especially in these difficult times. The system is wicked, because to an extent far more than is immediately obvious it permits a privileged few to work their will on hundreds of thousands of defenceless people. But most of all is the system criminal because it uses England's overflow as a cork to choke down the natural expansion of the people."

CLR James had a way with words that many of us would wish to have that facility. I continue.

"Always the West Indian of any ambition or sensibility has to see positions of honour and power in his own country filled by itinerant demigods who sit at their desks, ears cocked for the happy news of a retirement in Nigeria or a death in Hong Kong; when they go and others of the same kind take their places, while men often better than they stand outside rejected and despised."

Madam Vice-President, I know that Dr. Williams himself referred to the fact that his father could not rise in the colonial civil service as my grandfather could not rise in the colonial civil service, as my father has told me many times simply because there was someone—I am quoting CLR James—that some "itinerant demigods who sit at their desks...while men often better than they..."—like my grandfather was I am sure, but could not rise beyond a certain point in the colonial public service—"stand outside rejected and despised" as Dr. Williams himself talked about his father, and many others could speak about their foreparents and so on, and James goes on.

"And even were the Colonial Office officials ideally suited to their posts the situation would not be better, but worse than it is. For the more efficient they are, the more do they act as a blight upon those vigorous and able men whose home is their island, and who, in the natural course of events, would rise to power and influence. Governors and governed stand on either side of a gulf which no tinkering will bridge, and political energy is diverted into other channels or simply runs to waste. Britain will hold us down as long as she wishes. Her cruisers and aeroplanes ensure it. But a people like ours should be free to make its own failures and successes, free to gain that political wisdom and political experience which come only from the practice of political affairs."

I think Sen. Drayton was referring to us learning from our mistakes of the past. It is only when we control our own affairs would we know whether we are succeeding or failing and we have to learn from it. CLR James is writing this, Madam Vice-President, in the 1920s.

“Otherwise, led as we are by a string, we remain without credit abroad and with no self-respect at home, a bastard, feckless conglomeration of individuals, inspired by no common purpose, moving to no common end.

Self-government when fit for it.”—He is referring to the British there.

“That has always been the promise. Britain can well afford to keep it in this case, where evidence in favour is so overwhelming and she loses so little by keeping her word.”

Madam Vice-President, that notion of self-government was around long before we obtained Independence in 1962, and in fact in 1926 at the very first Conference of British West Indian Labour Leaders was in British Guiana, organized by Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, the outstanding British Guianese, then a labour leader. Again in 1932 in Dominica—where we are now playing cricket—labour leaders gathered in Dominica and again in Jamaica in 1944 and set out an agenda based upon a vision for this region and they had a slogan, “No adult franchise without self-government; no self-government without federation”.

They recognized that adult franchise, the right to vote, freedom, right to vote, democracy and so on would be meaningless unless it was in the context of self-government or independence—because what is the sense of voting and then having somebody else in any case being in charge of your affairs—and that self-government would not have been realizable and sustainable unless it was in the context of federation.

So they said no self-government without federation, and perhaps it is an issue that we have to revisit, not only with respect to the Caribbean Court of Justice, but with the fact that the Caribbean Single Market and Economy seems to be floundering and not going as rapidly as it ought to have gone, given the fact that the report of the West Indian Commission published in 1991 or 1992—headed by Sir Shridath Ramphal—which recommended the Caribbean Single Market and Economy was entitled “Time for Action”. That was 20 years ago and we are very slow to act in the Caribbean.

So the early labour leaders had this vision of self-government and democracy, and they talked about economic matters; the ownership and control of the sugar industry and the oil industry were on the agenda, and so on. Far-reaching reforms in education and health care and in the right of citizens to aspire to any position, whether it be in industry or in public service, and so on—and that was the vision.

You know, Madam Vice-President, we talk about Dr. Williams being the father of the nation and, of course, certainly, he was in terms of the Independence—taking us into Independence, but we cannot deny the fact that without June 1937—and this is one point of disagreement I have with Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight when she said we did not have to fight for our Independence. I believe we did have to fight for it, because if people had not shed their blood and so on in 1937, Independence would not have come as it did because it was very clear reading all of the colonial reports—from the Foster report and then the Moynes report—that the British recognized that after 1937, and the other revolts in Jamaica in 1938, and in Barbados and elsewhere and so on, St. Kitts in 1934, British Guiana in 1935. I think that after all of those strikes and revolts, it was very clear that they had to concede Independence, but it was simply a matter of when.

4.25 p.m.

Madam Vice-President, part of it was to ensure that they had in place persons who in their view would have been fit to rule. In fact, the University of the West Indies started off as a university college of the West Indies, at the same time that many university colleges throughout the British Empire were established in West Africa and East Africa.

There was a colonial report—I do not now recall the name of it—that looked at higher education in the colonies, and throughout they recommended the establishment of university colleges to ensure that there was an educated cadre of people who could run the affairs of these colonies. Part of that, regrettably, was that some of the education given was to imbibe some of the colonial thinking, but that is another story for another debate perhaps. The point I am making is that without 1937 and without what Butler and others did on June 19, we would not have had independence as we did.

The British were deathly afraid that the vast majority of the people having access to the right to vote and universal franchise throughout the Caribbean would have established governments that were inimical to the economic and political interests of the empire and of the colonial office. So, for example, in the paper entitled, “Smiles and Blood: The Ruling Class Response to the Workers’ Rebellion of 1937 in Trinidad and Tobago”, written by Susan Craig-James and published in this case, in this publication the *Trinidad Labour Riots of 1937*, which was published 50 years afterwards and edited by Dr. Roy Thomas.

Craig said, in quoting Colonel Hitling, a manager of Apex Oil Fields, that:

Butler was mentally deranged and commanded no following.

The demonizing of Butler was intense. Also in this publication of the *Trinidad Labour Riots of 1937*, in the paper written by Richard Jacobs about the sedition trial against Tubal Uriah “Buzz” Butler, there is a quote by the Acting Governor. This was in May 1939 when Butler was released from prison. The Acting Governor, John Huggins, described Butler as:

a religious fanatic and as such is a potential danger to peace and good order in the colony.

So there was a very conscious effort to demonize Butler and his political movement, which of course contested the elections in 1946 and again in 1950. In the case of 1950, they won the single largest number of seats of any party in that election, but did not have a majority in the then Legislative Council, and he was frustrated in becoming Chief Minister by the nominated elements of the Governor, who together with other elected people, including persons like Albert Gomes, denied Butler the opportunity to serve as Government at the time.

In the early 1950s, the British were deathly afraid of independent nations being controlled by radical and left-of-centre political parties and governments. Well known in 1953, the Constitution of British Guiana, then a colony, was suspended by Britain, and the elected Government led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan—his deputy was Forbes Burnham, and included Sydney King, now Eusi Kwayana, and Martin Carter, one of the foremost Caribbean poets—was suspended, because the British did not want independence of a certain kind or governments of a certain kind in terms of an independent nation.

In Jamaica there was the attack on the four Hs within the People’s National Party: Richard Hart, the Hill brothers, and in Trinidad there was the break-up of the West Indian Independence Party led by John La Rose, Lennox Pierre, Quintin O’Connor, one of the outstanding labour leaders, leader of the Federated Workers Trade Union, as well as John Rojas of the Oilfield Workers Trade Union. That break-up of the WIP, in a sense, led to the possibility of Dr. Williams entering the political fray in Trinidad and Tobago.

The foundation work of Dr. Williams was also in part due to the Teachers’ Education and Cultural Association—Sen. Hinds, perhaps you would learn some of the history of the PNM if you listen carefully.

Sen. Hinds: I want two placards marked 35/1.

Sen. D. Abdulah: John Donaldson, De Wilton Rogers and the Teachers’ Education and Cultural Association—and if we are talking about independence and the heroes, we also—[*Interruption*]

Madam Vice-President: Hon. Senators, it is 4.30. We will take the tea break and resume at 5.00. The sitting is now suspended.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Madam Vice-President: Hon. Senators, Sen. Abdulah was on his legs. By my calculation, you have 10 minutes of your original time, Sen. Abdulah.

Sen. D. Abdulah: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. I was just about to speak a little about the early formative process that eventually led to the establishment of the PNM and Dr. Williams' entry into the politics of this country. Sen. Hinds seemed to be a little disturbed about all the history, but this is precisely why this Motion is so important, because unless we know our history, we are in trouble. If hon. Members of this Senate themselves do not want to know the history, then how can we teach others as leaders of the nation, sitting in this Senate and in this Parliament. So Sen. Hinds, you have 25 more minutes of the history lesson. I hope at the end of it, when you go home and you are asked to say what did you learn, that you would be able to pass the exam at the end of the session. [*Laughter*]

I am going to quote from a *History of the Communication Workers Union*, entitled *Dare to Struggle* written by one of my colleagues, Ian "Teddy" Belgrave. This is what he had to say about that early period of the PNM, and I am quoting:

Since 1939, two school teachers, De Wilton Rogers and John Donaldson (Senior),—that is the elder Donaldson—had formed the Teachers' Economic and Cultural Association Limited (TECA), registering their organisation in 1942. After 11 years of painstaking organisational work amongst its constituency of teachers, in 1950 TECA broadened its focus by creating the People's Education Movement (PEM) with an appeal to and programme for the masses. Its motto was: Whosoever will may come.

Rogers was quite clear in his recognition of the historical role of the PEM as the provider of structure and leadership to this movement. As he explained:

There is no doubt that the movement (PEM) grew out of the needs of the people wanting good government, yearning for it, longing for it and guided towards it. Thus the sacred element and the movement were there, long before the physical structure with all its advantages or limitations was built around the spiritual vastness of the movement...

In June 1950 the PEM invited Dr. Eric Williams, who Rogers referred to as the Apostle of West Indian Nationalism, to be the consultant to the PEM. Williams seized the moment. The PEM immediately organised a series of lectures by Williams at the Teachers' Training College in Port of Spain, at the Arima Town Hall, and at other venues across the country. General elections were due sometime in 1956; this called for a change of strategy by the PEM. So on the 21st of June 1955, in Woodford Square, Port of Spain, Rogers and Donaldson mounted the platform with Dr. Williams for the first in a series of mass lectures. Ten thousand citizens attended this historic event and stood for five hours in rapt attention. Another four lectures attracted even larger audiences to the now re-named University of Woodford Square. Throughout the country, until January 20th 1956, 52 lectures all told were organized by the PEM.

Therefore it can be said of Dr. Williams that he himself benefited from that foundational work done by De Wilton Rogers and John Donaldson senior—the work that they did for many years, starting in the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, of public education and raising awareness of the importance of independence and nationalism in our country.

Madam Vice-President, 1962 was the culmination of a process which had contributions from very many people, from very many sources, from very different movements in this country. It was in this context that Dr. Williams entered the political arena in Trinidad and Tobago.

We cannot be wrong about our history, or Stalinist about our history, and deny the contributions of others. We may not agree with all that they have done; we may disagree, but we cannot deny their contributions. I certainly think that this particular Motion that has been brought to the Senate by Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight enables us as a Senate, and through us the country, to recognize the contributions of all who have been part of the process leading to independence.

Let me also make the point that the leaders of that nationalist movement that took us into independence—whether it be Williams in Trinidad and Tobago or Norman Manley in Jamaica or Grantley Adams in Barbados, as did the early labour movement of the 1930s and 1940s—had a sense of vision, had a philosophical underpinning about the nation that they were seeking to create and about the need to address the well-being and welfare of all the citizens, and redress in that regard the injustice that had been established and created through the long years of colonialism.

That process which sucked out the wealth from some and transferred it to the wealthy, what George Beckford described in his famous book on plantation economy as “persistent poverty”. That whole process, that generation of nationalist leaders of the 1950s, recognized the need to reverse that and to seek to establish a society based on some principles of social justice and equity.

They may not have achieved that. Perhaps in hindsight we could be highly critical of them, but we have to appreciate the times and circumstances and resources with which they had to operate and in which they lived.

It is very significant as we move past 1962, Madam Vice-President, that we had a second renaissance in a sense. There was an earlier one of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s; we then had a second renaissance of the post-independence period, as another generation, fired by the hope of independence and what that meant, of being in charge of our own affairs, engaged in another huge foment of intellectual and creative capacity.

That was in the social sciences. You had the new world group operating right throughout the region. In Guyana, in Trinidad and Tobago, in Jamaica and so on the new world group was engaged in seminal research in the social sciences and in history, seeking to write and explain about our own experience and to describe our own history. That was a very important part of our process of post-independence nation building.

In culture—Sen. Deyalsingh referred to Bob Marley in the 1970s. Certainly you had, not only Marley, but a little earlier and contemporary with him, our own Kitchener and Sparrow and our writers like Naipaul, Selvon, Walcott, Lamming, Jamaica Kincaid. Many of whose names I cannot necessarily recall at this moment, but any number of persons contributed to our understanding of ourselves.

Nationhood is not an abstraction. It is not simply a flag or an anthem and a Constitution and formal institutions. Nationhood has to be about identity, about who we are and what we represent and what we believe in. The post-independence generation certainly sought to establish that through serious intellectual and academic work and also through culture and literary work.

It was expressed as well, and Sen. Deyalsingh is right, in terms of our cricket. We went up a while ago and we saw a horrendous score, 120-something for eight, absolutely horrendous. That generation of the 1960s, beginning in the late 1950s and going into the 1960s, the team of Frank Worrel established our coming of age in terms of being independent, the artistry of a Kanhai or a Sobers. Of course CLR

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James himself wrote in *Beyond the Boundary* that cricket and sport is not simply a game, but is really another expression of who we are, of an artistry. So when James wrote in *Beyond the Boundary* of the batsman, Mathew Bondsman, who he said was—[*Interruption*]

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

Motion made: That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. E. George*]

Question put and agreed to.

5.10 p.m.

Sen. D. Abdulah: Thank you very much, Madam Vice President, and thank you to my colleagues for extending my time.

So, the artistry of Matthew Bondsman—square cutting was an expression of who he was; it elevated him above a simple worker or a poor person into a human being with ideas, capacity and a will to impress on others his own capacity and expression of humanness. So sport was very important to us.

I agree with Sen. Deyalsingh that not only do our young cricketers perhaps not appreciate the tradition of West Indies cricket, but do not understand that when they play the game, they are expressing the collective will of West Indian people, and when they do badly, like 120-something for eight, they are saying that we all have lost our way.

That takes me to the point, Madam Vice-President, that the last two decades have not, in my view, been good decades because of the impact of globalization, and all that that has portended, in terms of the process of hegemony expressed through globalization as an attempt to frustrate and redefine sovereignty and independence.

So, in the realm of diplomacy and statehood, we now have new Motions of sovereignty, in terms of shared sovereignty, relinquished sovereignty, and other things that we ourselves have had to grapple with in this Senate, with respect to legislation that is necessary because of international arrangements and treaties dealing with terrorism or international crime and money laundering.

This era of globalization has challenged our very notion and understanding of independence and, in many respects, I think our societies are in difficulty because we have not been able to assess where we are in this context of globalization, and

reassert a sense of independence and sovereignty. In terms of the economy, for many years, economists, governments, policymakers and academics as well, all said, well the Washington consensus is the only way to go.

According to Margaret Thatcher, it is TINA—there is no alternative—to structural adjustment, to newer liberal policies, to the consensus of Washington and so on; and we failed to do the rigorous work to examine our own condition, and identify the way forward out of our own predicament, in the way that the New World Group and others did in the 60s and the early 70s.

In terms of ideas, people started writing about the end of ideology, as if the existing ideology or the existing practice and the existing set of ideas are in themselves not ideology—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Ramnarine: The end of history.

Sen. D. Abdulah:—at the end of history, thanks Minister. So that they started writing as if, somehow or the other, all that is past ought to be forgotten, and the world must be now fashioned by some kind of homogenous set of rules. That is a part of what globalization is. Globalization has also meant cultural consumerism, so that we must all eat the same product, whether it is KFC or some other product. We must all wear the same brand of clothing, listen to the same music, with the same technological devices.

In that sense we must all look at CNN—what I call, the gospel according to CNN—so we all have the same understanding of world events, or do not shape our own ideas about those world events, and understand the world, from our standpoint. Lloyd Best made a very important point—that we are not anybody's third world, we are our own first world, but the globalization process has tried to reverse that thinking, and to suggest that we must understand the world from the standpoint of others.

So that, in so many ways—culturally, politically, in terms of even consumption and ideas—we have had some major challenges to the whole independence project over the last 20 years. This Motion and the 50th Anniversary of Independence jubilee year will enable us, I believe, to reflect on all of these things, to consider afresh where we are and to begin to go forward.

Therefore, I want to thank the hon. Senator for bringing this Motion and allowing us to reflect on these matters, because it is not only memorials to particular Prime Ministers, that, to me, is a manifestation of how we must mark their contributions and independence but it is also to reflect on where we are today in this independence project.

I want to say that one of the decisions of the People's Partnership Government, an initiative of the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, Mr. Errol McLeod—it was an idea that I knew he had when he was the President General of the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union—was the creation of an appropriate space in Fyzabad to honour labour heroes. Cabinet did decide, and there is an established a working committee to recommend, plan and implement a national heroes park and labour museum in Fyzabad, and that is a very tangible way in which we can move the process forward. The first consultation was held last week Wednesday, I think it was.

Certainly the trade union movement supports the hon. Minister in this particular initiative because we do think that when people come to Fyzabad, not just for June 19, but that school children could come down to Fyzabad, learn about labour heroes, see where Charlie King was burnt to death, see where La Brea Charles was shot, mistakenly for Butler, see where Butler was buried, and see what a pumping jack looks like.

I am sure that there may be Members of this honourable Senate who themselves are not familiar with what a pumping jack looks like, or what a Christmas tree looks like. I am not referring to that thing that you look for gifts under on December 25 at Christmas time. These are parts of the oil industry, which produces the wealth of this country, and so if we have an oil information centre located in Fyzabad, together with a museum, it helps us to understand how the economy works, and who has contributed to the building of this economy, in terms of ordinary working people, and the contribution of key labour leaders. That is an important decision of this People's Partnership Government and we look forward to its coming into fruition.

Madam Vice-President—*[Interruption]* I would be charitable to you Sen. Hinds, I hope that you would reciprocate?

Sen. Hinds: Thank you, forget the talk, let me make a point to you. You mentioned the deceased Charlie King. Some time ago, a member of the society came to me and suggested that we must say, since we talk about Charlie King, what was his crime? What did he do wrong? Was he not simply a police officer executing his duty, and he was killed as a consequence of that? That intrigued me, and I know you are intimately familiar with the history, and if not today at some stage in the future, I would like to hear from you, what was Charlie King's crime, and was he, as the citizen put to me, not killed in the execution of his duty by people who had, well of course, their own labour agenda and so on? I was intrigued by that, and I would like to hear what your response would be to that at some point.

Sen. D. Abdulah: Yes, certainly. Madam Vice-President, I think that I only have about six minutes left, so I am not going to go into a long treatise on that. Suffice it to say that Charlie King had a reputation as a policeman not well liked amongst people in the community, for his aggressive behaviour and other things, so he came there with a particular reputation.

On that particular day, according to eyewitness reports, without the instruction of the senior officers about arresting Butler, he decided that he himself was going to undertake to arrest Butler. The crowd obviously did not take kindly to that, and set upon him. Perhaps if he was a little wiser and more restrained as a police officer, he would not have died such a horrible death, and simply the police may have acted differently in regard to when and how they sought to arrest Butler, but I will leave that as it is and you therefore—*[Interruption]*

Sen. Al-Rawi: Blades told the story on the Parliament Channel.

Sen. D. Abdulah: Thank you very much. Perhaps Sen. Hinds should look at the Parliament Channel more often for the history. Thank you, Sen. Al-Rawi for that. *[Laughter]* Thank you, very much—*[Interruption]* No, no, I have five minutes *[Crosstalk]* Madam Vice President, I am not giving way, I have five minutes left.

Madam Vice-President: Senator, please take you seat.

Sen. D. Abdulah: I gave way once, and I have five minutes, I need to make a few more points. *[Laughter]*

Sen. George: You can thank Sen. Al-Rawi for that one.

Sen. D. Abdulah: As I was saying a moment ago, this Motion is important because it enables us in the jubilee year—and I want to congratulate Sen. The Hon. Bhoendradatt Tewarie for his statement in this Senate earlier this afternoon because he laid out a framework in which this jubilee year can be recognized, not just as an event, but as a moment along a historical journey, enabling us to reflect on where we have come from, what are the successes, what are the failures, what have been the strengths and weaknesses in order to make this independence project successful going forward for future generations.

There is no doubt that we have to review our post-independence institutions. We have had many challenges with our post-independence institutions, which is why the People's Partnership in its manifesto committed to the process of constitutional and local Government reform, and a new approach to governance, because we cannot simply say, this worked well for us 50 years ago, or when we became a republic in 1976, and therefore, we leave everything as is. So, it is a moment to reflect in order for us to move forward.

It is very clear, Madam Vice-President, from what I have said, that earlier generations fought, gave their lives and made huge sacrifices for independence. Some gave our independence project an ideological substance, a foundation of ideas upon which to build, a sense of vision about who we can be as a people, and as a new civilization.

It is no doubt that some people benefited the accidents of history, and arrived at the right time: whether it was letting down the bucket, whether it was the unfortunate and untimely death of Dr. Williams, and Mr. Chambers becoming Prime Minister. Those are accidents of history, but they seized their time—or Mr. Manning becoming Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, after a devastating electoral defeat. [*Interruption*]

Sen. Hinds: Or you joining the PP.

Sen. D. Abdulah: Whatever it is, all of those are moments in time. We [*Laughter*] [*Crosstalk*] not now debating or discussing the issues of what happened when, but whatever and however they came to positions of responsibility, they took up that responsibility, and history will determine at some point in time how well they did. It is not for us in this debate to determine that, history will determine that at some point in time, looking back at the past. But there is no doubt that however they came into office, by accident of history, by a particular moment, that they made a contribution, they gave independence an effect to it, and they implemented the process of independence.

The question for us in this generation, including those just gone and those of us now and those soon to come, is what will we do with the foundation that has been laid? What will we do with respect to the process of being independent, of being responsible for our own affairs, of taking up our bed and walking with it? How do we craft and create a new and better Trinidad and Tobago, a better republic? That is the challenge which this generation will have to face up to, and the answer to that, of course, will not be given by us, but by historians in the future, as I have sought to give some idea of the contributions of those in the past who have laid the foundation for us to get to this point. With that, Madam Vice-President, I thank you, and my colleagues, very much.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George): Madam Vice-President, I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to next Tuesday, May 01, 2012 at 1.30 p.m. as agreed with my erstwhile colleague opposite—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Hinds: Not erstwhile, I am still here.

Sen. E. George: —when the debate will continue on the Regional Health Authorities (Amdt.) Bill, and if we complete the debate on that item, we will proceed to deal with the two land Bills. Thank you, Madam Vice-President.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.27 p.m.