

Leave of Absence

Tuesday May 22, 2012

SENATE

Tuesday, May 22, 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. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, Sen. The Hon. Embau Moheni, Sen. Subhas Ramkhelawan and Sen. Dr. James Armstrong who are all of the country, and Sen. Elton Prescott SC who is ill.

SENATORS' 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 EMBAU MOHENI 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 40 (2) (a) and section 44 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 22nd May, 2012 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Sen. Embau Moheni.

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 21st day of May, 2012.”

Senators' Appointment

Tuesday May 22, 2012

“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: MR. ALBERT WILLIAM BENEDICT SYDNEY

WHEREAS Senator Subhas Ramkhelawan 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) (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, ALBERT WILLIAM BENEDICT SYDNEY, to be temporarily a member of the Senate with effect from 22nd May, 2012 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Subhas Ramkhelawan.

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 21st day of May, 2012.

Madam Vice-President: Hon. Senators, we do have one more swearing in, but Mr. Kevin Bhagaloo is not yet here, I understand that he is just close by, so he would be sworn in at the appropriate time.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Senators Archbishop Barbara Burke and Albert William Benedict Sydney took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

WORLD DAY FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT

Madam Vice-President: Hon. Members, yesterday May 21, 2012, was the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. This marked the 10th anniversary of the recognition of this theme of the United Nations, and allowed us the opportunity to deepen our appreciation for the strength of cultural diversity in a global context.

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue & Dev. Tuesday May 22, 2012

The 2012 campaign sought to reinforce world awareness about the importance of intercultural diversity and inclusion, to establish a world committed to support diversity with real and everyday gestures, and to combat polarization, especially racial, religious, and ethnic stereotyping, and discrimination.

In a society as culturally diverse as that of Trinidad and Tobago, I believe this is, indeed, a significant theme which reminds us all to foster sustained harmonious relations, instead of engaging in counterproductive, racial or religious divisiveness.

I therefore take this opportunity to urge everyone, as we build our nation, day by day, to continue to have healthy discourse, and to promote consensus as the only viable option for successful development.

NIHERST SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EXHIBITION

Madam Vice-President: In addition, the National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, (NIHERST), under the auspices of the Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, Sen. The Hon. Fazal Karim, in collaboration with the National Council of Science Museums of India is hosting a Science and Technology Exhibition from May 22 to July 20, at the Divali Nagar site.

I would personally like to take the opportunity to encourage parents, teachers and students of all institutions, as well as all interested persons, to visit and participate in what is indeed an ingenious, scientific fair, one of the first in this part of the world—one of the first in the Caribbean—with approximately 150 exhibits, depicting a vast array of science, technology and innovation.

JUSTICE OF APPEAL WENDELL KANGALOO

Madam Vice-President: Following on the news as well of the accident that occurred last Sunday morning, I wish on behalf of this Senate to offer best wishes and prayers to Justice of Appeal Wendell Kangaloo and to his family during this time, which is undoubtedly a stressful occasion.

I also want to extend best wishes for a speedy and full recovery to the hon. Prime Minister who was recently hospitalized, but whom I am told has made it safely home to rest. Thank you.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George): Madam Vice-President, thank you very much. I seek leave of this House to defer for two weeks the answer to questions Nos. 78, 92 and 93, and also the written answers to questions Nos. 66 and 69, but we are prepared to answer questions Nos. 80 and 81. Thank you.

Sen. F. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, I am not so sure whether you granted leave for the deferrals sought by Government since they always boast of answering all questions. Did you grant leave to defer, as begged for by the Leader of Government Business here?

Madam Vice-President: Sen. Hinds proceed with your question. Yes. Leave was granted.

Sen. F. Hinds: Leave was granted, thank you very much, Madam Vice-President. In those circumstances let me seek an answer to question No. 80 which was directed to the hon. Prime Minister.

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

**Colour Me Orange Programme
(Details of)**

78. With respect to the colour Me Orange Programme, would, the hon. Minister please indicate:

- (a) whether the programme has come to an end;
- (b) whether there is any plan or intention to extend the programme;
- (c) precisely how much was expended on this programme;
- (d) the number of jobs created by the programme;
- (e) what was the Government's rationale for its activation; and
- (f) did the programme achieve its objective?

**Piarco and ANR Robinson International Airports
(Details of Upgrade)**

92. With respect to the contracts for the upgrade and improvement of the runway lighting system at the Piarco and ANR Robinson International Airports, could the Minister indicate:

- (a) whether the final awarded contract prices were the same as originally started by the Minister in the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, hon. Stacy Roopnarine on May 10, 2011; and
- (b) if the answer to (a) is in the negative, could the Minister indicate the revised prices of the final awarded contracts and provide an explanation for the difference in prices?

**Prison/Correctional Facility at Santa Rosa
(Details of)**

93. Would the Minister kindly advise as to the name of the contractor(s) who was/were contracted to carry out the preparatory and refurbishment works at the site of the new prison/correctional facility at Santa Rosa upon its acquisition by the Government?

Questions, by leave, deferred.

**Prime Minister's Statement on her "Personal Assistant"
(Details of)**

80. Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds asked the hon. Prime Minister:

In light of the hon. Prime Minister's recent statement on the issue of her "Personal Assistant" would the hon. Prime Minister kindly indicate:

- (a) when did she offer to pay the expenses for her sister Vidwatie Newton to travel with her in this capacity;
- (b) to whom did she make this offer;
- (c) why was/were this/these offer(s) made;
- (d) was this offer, or any other offer, related to the recent trip/delegation to India; and
- (e) what "expertise" did Vidwatie Newton bring/add to the delegation, as contemplated by the authorization to issue a per diem in accordance with Cabinet Minute No. 780 of April, 2006?

The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George): Thank you, Madam Vice-President. Sen. Hinds is as usual at his most disingenuous best because he should be the last person, representing the Opposition to speak to answering questions. That Government was—
[*Interruption*]

Sen. Hinds: Answer the question.

Sen. Al-Rawi: The Opposition does not have to answer questions my friend.

Sen. The Hon. E. George:—when he was then in Government. You know exactly what I mean. [*Crosstalk*] Anyway, the answer to question No. 80—he has a very short memory when it comes to answering questions.

The answer to question No. 80 is that, since the issue of matters involving the Prime Minister's sister, Miss Vidwatie Newton, has been placed before the Integrity Commission, it would be inappropriate and not in the public interest to answer this question.

Sen. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, I have filed the question, and I want your ruling on this. What the Minister is doing is—I do not know what was sent to the Integrity Commission, I am not party to that, and I did not send that to the Integrity Commission. I have asked the Government to answer question No. 80 which reads—[*Crosstalk*] I am on my legs—[*Interruption*]

Madam Vice-President: Hon. Members, as is your right Sen. Hinds, you are free to ask questions, and it was so lodged. It is also the right of the Government to reply. Deferring questions is not unusual, and so the Leader of Government Business has indicated that the answer has been deferred. Do you have any other question?

Sen. The Hon. E. George: I answered question No. 80.

Madam Vice-President: That it has been referred?

Sen. The Hon. E. George: I said—[*Interruption*]

Madam Vice-President: Okay.

Sen. The Hon. E. George: Yes.

Madam Vice-President: My apologies. That the answer is that the matter is before the Integrity Commission, and we will wait. That matter is a matter that refers to section 71, in terms of the content of questions, and answers, so being referred to external agencies.

1.45 p.m.

Sen. Hinds: But, Madam Vice-President, this Senate does not know what is before the Integrity Commission, and therefore, the Minister can very well be simply obfuscating and avoiding answering for the public and this Senate, the question. We do not know what is there, and I suspect the Minister is hiding as usual; he does not want to answer the question here.

Sen. Ramlogan SC: “Ent yuh all report it to the Integrity Commission, what foolishness is that?”

Sen. The Hon. E. George: Madam Vice-President, I object to the Senator saying that I am obfuscating because I can refer to two—here is a *Trinidad Guardian* report—

Madam Vice-President: Senator, are you answering the question again or are you responding to it, because I have directed that Sen. Hinds continue. We have a next question, question 92. Kindly go on to question 92, please!

Sen. Al-Rawi: Madam Vice-President, on a question of privilege, for your guidance please, to the honourable Senate—you have referred to Standing Order 17, which this Senate is bound by and you have said that the Leader of Government Business falls within the ambit insofar as he has given a response of

that Standing Order. Could you please, for the guidance of Senators, inform us what aspect of the Standing Order specifically precludes the answer to a question when something is before an Integrity Commission body as opposed to, as Standing Order puts it, to a Commission of Enquiry or something that is sub judice? I am much obliged.

Sen. Ramlogan SC: Madam Vice-President—

Sen. Hinds: Let the Vice-President answer!

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

Sen. Al-Rawi: What is your point of order?

Sen. The Hon. E. George: You did not have a point of order, you had a point of privilege.

Sen. Hinds: Let the Vice-President answer the—

Sen. Ramlogan SC: Madam Vice-President, on a point of order, the hon. Senator sought some clarification, which I think is really an attempt to obfuscate the issue.

Sen. Al-Rawi: Madam Vice-President—[*Continuous crosstalk*]—I object under the Standing Orders, Madam Vice-President.

Madam Vice-President: Sen. Al-Rawi, could you take your seat!

Sen. Al-Rawi: Madam Vice-President, I object—a complaint was made.

Madam Vice-President: Senator, could you take your seat, please!

Sen. Al-Rawi: Madam Vice-President, on a point of privilege—

Madam Vice-President: Senator! Attorney General, please continue.

Sen. The Hon. E. George: There is no point of privilege. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Al-Rawi: I object to this, Attorney General.

Sen. The Hon. E. George: There is no point of privilege.

Sen. Ramlogan SC: I am obliged, Madam Vice-President.

Sen. Al-Rawi: I object on a point of privilege, Madam Vice-President. I ask for your ruling on it when you are ready to hear me. [*Interruption*]

Sen. Hinds: Wait your turn, AG. He asked a question of the Vice-President.

Sen. Ramlogan SC: “Tha fella feel he could monopolize this Senate”—

Sen. Hinds: No! No! [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Senator: Welcome back to the foolish land.

Sen. Hinds: Let the Vice-President answer the question and give the guidance here and not the Attorney General.

Madam Vice-President: Thank you for your authority for me to preside and I have asked that you move on to question 92. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Al-Rawi: Madam Vice-President, under May's *Parliamentary Practice*, there are well-established points of privilege which every Senator is subscribed to. The Standing Orders is but one of those. [*Interruption*] I have asked a question, which I have directed to you, Madam Vice-President, with the greatest of respect and it has not been ruled upon. I do not wish, for the sake of clarity, to rely upon an implied ruling. [*Interruption*] Most respectfully, I ask that you address the question. Thank you.

Sen. Ramlogan SC: The matter was referred to the Integrity Commission, it has judicial proceedings "man", you should know that. [*Interruption*]

Madam Vice-President: Sen. Hinds, please! Please!

Sen. Al-Rawi: I want the Vice-President to rule.

Sen. The Hon. E. George: I hope she would reserve her ruling.

Sen. Al-Rawi: How could she—

Sen. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, I am very embarrassed. I feel, unwittingly, by continuing here I may be breaching the Standing Orders of this Senate. I crave your indulgence.

Sen. Al-Rawi has raised an issue with Madam Vice-President, and he has asked for a ruling, and for me to get up and ignore the hon. Senator who has equal say, right and purpose for being here troubles me. So, Madam Vice-President—and I have a direct interest because I had raised the question with the Government, and the Leader of Government Business here has indicated that the Government is not prepared to answer simple and straightforward questions on the conduct of the Prime Minister as it relates to the hiring of Vidwatie Newton, and I have an interest in the question as raised by Sen. Al-Rawi, and therefore, it would assist me, even if we can adjourn for a moment or two to allow this Senate to contemplate and the leaders to calm things down, because we have to proceed with some decorum, as we must.

So, Madam Vice-President, I would like to know for my own sake what is the response. Other than that I may have to raise the same point Sen. Al-Rawi raised. So, before I have to repeat him I would like “meh lady”, Madam Vice-President, to treat with the matter?

Madam Vice-President: I will take that matter into consideration and I will ask and direct the Clerk to have the appropriate response in terms of section 17 of the Standing Orders because I did indicate, section 17, referring to the content of answers and questions, is very comprehensive. It does refer—and so we now come to a question, as the Attorney General says, of an interpretation of a commission.

As far as the Integrity Commission is concerned, it is a commission of sorts, but I will seek direction from the Clerk as to whether or not the Integrity Commission thus falls under, as a court of justice or any other judicial matter, and the Clerk will give me, but can you proceed to question 92, please.

Sen. Hinds: I am much obliged. [*Desk thumping*] Madam Vice-President, might I say that I am particularly grateful to the way in which you have handled this matter and we shall await your finding on it. But to have been browbeaten by the Attorney General and his friends on the other side into submission—[*Interruption*—we will have none of that. [*Interruption*]

So, might I, with your guidance now, Madam Vice-President, proceed and direct—which one is it, Madam Vice-President? Which one you are prepared to answer today?

Hon. Senator: Question—

Sen. Cudjoe: They are not prepared for question 92 or 81.

Sen. Hinds: Are you all prepared to answer question 81?

Sen. George: Yes.

Sen. Hinds: Good, I am relieved.

Vidwatie Newton Employment (Details of)

81. Sen. F. Hinds asked the hon. Prime Minister:

A Would the Prime Minister indicate whether Vidwatie Newton is employed as her “live-in” personal assistant at the Official Residence and/or Diplomatic Centre at St. Ann’s?

- B. Would the Prime Minister also indicate whether Newton was employed as a “live-in” personal assistant at the Gopaul’s residence, when the Prime Minister occupied that residence in Pasea, Tunapuna?

The Attorney General (Sen. The Hon. Anand Ramlogan SC): Madam Vice-President, the issue concerning the Prime Minister’s sister, Miss Vidwatie Newton, as the hon. Senator well knows, is a matter that has been referred on a complaint made by the Opposition to the Integrity Commission. The Integrity Commission is a commission and a body established by the Constitution. There is also the Integrity in Public Life Act.

The procedure that governs the submission of a complaint to the Integrity Commission is such that there will be an investigation by the Integrity Commission, and when that investigation is completed, the Integrity Commission, may or may not, depending on the findings, either vindicate the person who is the subject of the complaint by proclaiming there is no breach of the Integrity in Public Life Act or the Code of Conduct. It may, secondly, refer the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions, in which case, criminal proceedings may or may not follow.

Having regard to that process in law and having regard to the clear possibility that the legal machinery of the State and the judicial arm is obviously within the contemplation of the Integrity in Public Life Act, it is well established and quite trite that it will be wholly improper for the Government to give an answer to a question posed by the Opposition, which, they themselves chose to refer to the Integrity Commission for investigation.

These matters, no doubt, will engage the attention and jurisdiction of the Integrity Commission, which will enquire and investigate upon that matter, but it will be improper and prejudicial for us to sit here and engage upon the same subject matter, and it is in those circumstances that the Government—in keeping with the well-established parliamentary traditions, practice and procedure—says that this matter is before the Integrity Commission, and therefore, we decline respectfully to answer it at this time. Those answers, will, however, be comprehensively provided to the proper body to which you referred it, that is to say, the Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago. Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, we were patient; we listened to the Attorney General’s dissertation on trite matters.

Sen. Ramlogan SC: I hope you learn and—[*Inaudible*]

Sen. Hinds: However, Madam Vice-President, I simply—and the question, I do not know. The question simply was, was Vidwatie Newton a “live-in” personal assistant, and secondly, whether she lived-in at the Gopaul’s residence in Tunapuna when the Prime Minister occupied it as well? That is the simple question.

Madam Vice-President: Okay, Senator. Sen. Hinds, seeing that my indication to you and the assurance given to you for the prior question is of a similar nature to question 81, that will also be covered under the answer given to you at a subsequent time.

Sen. Hinds: I thank you.

Sen. Al-Rawi: Madam Vice-President, on that note and just for further clarification insofar as this is a separate question which may impact upon your consideration to the previous question.

If I could ask for your guidance in your response, if you would also indicate to us, what precedent the hon. Attorney General seeks to persuade us exists, in the context of the Government having answered questions in relation to the NP contract and the Ralph Gopaul issue, which was equally before the Integrity Commission—[*Desk thumping*]*—and yet the Government chose to answer then. If you could, for elucidation, provide us with the responses in respect of the authority that the Attorney General has alluded exists to guide this Parliament. [Interruption] I am much obliged, “ma'am”. [Desk thumping]*

Sen. Hinds: Okay, Madam Vice-President, finally—I hear you, Madam Vice-President—at the end of today the Government answered no question put by the Opposition in this Parliament today. None! [*Desk thumping*]

SENATOR’S APPOINTMENT

“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: MR. KEVIN BHAGALOO

WHEREAS Senator Dr. The Honourable Bhoendradatt Tewarie is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

Senator's Appointment

Tuesday May 22, 2012

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, KEVIN BHAGALOO, to be temporarily a member of the Senate with effect from 22nd May, 2012 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Dr. the Honourable Bhoendradatt Tewarie.

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 21st day of May, 2012.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

[Second Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [Tuesday, April 24, 2012]:

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. [*Sen. C. Baptiste-Mc Knight*]

Question again proposed.

Madam Vice-President: Those who spoke on April 24, 2012: Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight, the mover of the Motion; Sen. The Hon. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, Minister of Planning and the Economy; Sen. Terrence Deyalsingh; Sen. Helen Drayton and Sen. David Abdulah. Any Senator wishing to join the debate may do so at this time.

2.00 p.m.

Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds: Thank you very warmly, Madam Vice-President, for an opportunity to contribute, I suspect briefly, on this very well-thought-out, very well-presented and very timely Motion before this honourable Senate. I do not

think it is necessary for me—you having only a moment ago done so—to rehearse the terms of the Motion before us. In essence, it is to recognize the contributions made by the former Presidents of this country and of course to recognize as well the work and the contribution of all former Presidents.

It is said of us, I suspect inaccurately, that we are a people of short memory and that we are a people who can be described as being ingrates—we forget the work of those who have gone before. But I do not think that it is altogether correct, Madam Vice-President. The fact that this Motion is before us is testimony to the fact that we, this Senate, through the thoughts and the computer of Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight, demonstrate that we are not of short memory, neither are we ingrates.

Madam Vice-President, I would like to begin by making reference to some of the contribution of Sen. Abdulah. This too is quite timely. Sen. Abdulah is at the moment at the centre of national attention. [*Desk thumping*] Sen. Abdulah has emerged as a—not that we always agree with all of his thoughts, but he has emerged at this time as a thinking man, a sober man. [*Desk thumping*] Since I use the word sober, might I continue the metaphor and say, in a world of apparent madness and drunkenness!

Sen. Abdulah made a very interesting contribution. At some points I became a little exasperated, agitated and irascible even, when he went into very great details about some of the history as it related to the trade union movement. He spent, really, about two-thirds of his contribution dealing with that, and that is the reason why I became a little concerned. Because Sen. Abdulah spoke of many persons—CLR James, Butler, Archbishop Pantin, even Bishop Clive Abdulah, who we all know very well, and others—as he developed his theme.

At one point I was becoming very concerned that he was reluctant to mention the name Dr. Eric Eustace Williams. And I said, there we go again, because it is a fact that there are those in this country who are opposed to the PNM and have historically been so, and in order to attempt to rewrite the history of Trinidad and Tobago, they seek to deny the contribution of that first and founding father of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Eric Eustace Williams. But to Sen. Abdulah's credit, towards the end of his contribution, he did make mention of Dr. Williams. I wondered how could he be speaking on a Motion such as this and not deal with the work, the contribution and the life of Dr. Eric Williams, but he eventually stumbled around to it.

Sen. Abdulah mentioned in passing, and I think I raised the matter with him, about Charlie King. Charlie King as you know was the police officer, a corporal at the time, who during the heyday of Butler's activity in the oil belt—in Fyzabad there was some meeting and Charlie King was one of the police officers on duty.

Madam Vice-President, as you know I am a former police officer and I am very proud of that fact. [*Desk thumping*] I spent the early—in fact, my early working years in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and I was an instructor in the police service towards the end of my short police career and trained thousands of police officers. Many of them are now senior ranks in the police service and in the management of the service generally. The police service is for those reasons and more, very close to me. Many of my friends are police officers and will continue to be so.

I know the police service is an organization that has been maligned, sometimes with justification and many times not. But I have a feel for the organization and that should not change. I contemplated the issue and it was prompted because a retired police officer, very senior rank, raised the matter with me in a conversation we were having about police officers killed in the execution of their duty. He raised with me the question of Charlie King and asked, “What did Charlie King do wrong?”

Now, I had heard a lot about Charlie King as it is related to the trade union activity, and there is the famous Charlie King Junction, and I must admit that you just, almost automatically, held a bad feeling about Charlie King as though he was this bad fellow who did something so wrong. But Charlie King probably has relatives still alive in Trinidad and Tobago today, and every time they hear about Charlie King and Charlie King Junction, they would probably be wondering my grandfather, “my great grandfather must have been some kind of monster”, but the truth is, it does not appear so from the history.

Charlie King was on duty on that day, and it appears as though there were plans to arrest Butler by law enforcement, and Charlie King, a corporal of police—along with others—was present. I understand from Sen. Abdulah who is close to the centre of the thing—and as I say centre, let me say in passing, it appears as though the centre of the PP is not holding, but that is a matter to which I should return.

Sen. Abdulah is at the centre of the thing. He told me, from the stories and from the reports that he has had, there was an understanding in the crowd on that day that they were about to arrest Butler and the crowd was agitated and Charlie King, for whatever reason, they say, attempted to arrest Butler. The crowd chased him and he fell over some cliff, small one, and could not move, he hurt his leg or some such thing and the crowd set upon him; they set him on fire, and so the history goes.

But the real question I raise today, what—he may have been accused of some insensitivity in light of the volatility of the crowd and so on, but really, a sober look at the thing will have us ask, what did he do wrong? He was a police officer and he was killed in the execution of his duty. As we celebrate the life and work of former Presidents and Prime Ministers, I do not think—based on my understanding of this—it is too far-fetched to ask that we give consideration to revisiting this piece of sordid history and to consider whether the man was not vilified in his death for many years later and this society take some corrective action if it could, in whatever way it could. So much on that matter.

Madam Vice-President, if Dr. Williams were alive today, he would have celebrated 100 years—this is the 100th year of his birth. And Sen. Abdulah did tell us in his contribution that nationhood is about identity. He went a little further; he said the whole thing is really about governance. I submit that any threat to our nationhood is a threat to our identity. Globalization, in a sense, is a threat to national identity, since it is about leveling the playing field, removing things that were considered barriers in economic terms, in political terms, in social terms; in intellectual terms. Because information is so freely available now, that question of cultures, small groups, small ethnic units having distinct cultural identities, that is under threat by virtue of the so-called concept and the practice of globalization.

Similarly, inside Trinidad and Tobago there are people whose life has been dedicated to threats to our nationhood—people who had sectarian philosophies and ideologies and want—to see differences accentuated rather than to create the harmonious one that we must seek as a nation, coming out of independence in this 50th year of our having attained independence, as a State in this world. So there are some threats to our nationhood that we have to take cognizance of if we have to preserve it.

I heard last week in Jamaica, the Governor General of that country—it not yet becoming a Republic like Trinidad and Tobago. He, in addressing the opening of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference that we attended, he pointed out that democracy must not and cannot be taken for granted. Do not think that it is perfected and it is not at risk and it stands for all time. He made the point, to the applause of the entire audience, that democracy is a work in progress; it has to be nurtured, it has to be guarded, it has to be protected, if it is to be retained. It must not be taken for granted. I, like so many of us, agreed entirely with him.

When we consider men like—and may his soul rest in peace—Sir Ellis Emmanuel Innocent Clarke, he made too as the first President of this country a really remarkable and outstanding contribution. He was involved in the discussion shaping the Constitution. We talk about constitutional amendments today, 50

Past Presidents & Prime Ministers
[SEN. HINDS]

Tuesday May 22, 2012

years later. We have been talking about it for a while, but the bottom line is, imperfect as that document and the ideas that it—how it seeks to regulate the relationship between the three arms of the State and all the other things that the Constitution, the supreme law does—imperfect as some may think it is and was, it has brought us 50 years down the road and now we talk about Constitution reform. Sir Ellis Clarke was at the heart of that. He was engaged in the drafting of it. Hence the reason, even in his very later years, many people would yield to him for advice and opinions on the question of the Constitution of the republic.

Noor Hassanali, former President as well, a very humble, sober and dignified man who served this country as a judge, served us no doubt as a lawyer in the courts of Trinidad and Tobago before that, served us for a time as a Member of Parliament, I am told, yes or at least he contested a seat. I do not know if he won the seat, but he contested—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Senator: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. F. Hinds: I am sorry. Thank you very much for the guidance—and who as President represented a kind of dignity that I would never easily forget. He was a very humble man and I remember once speaking with him at a graduation of law students and he said to me—and this is advice that I have tried to live with and all the young people, professional and otherwise, in this nation should seek to follow keenly. In very banal terms, he said to us as law students, graduating at the time, that you must not pay too much attention to what other people have because you do not know how they get it. You must work honestly, you must work hard and you must work diligently. He said, in very banal terms, “if you earn a dollar, you must spend less.” I thought it was so wonderful to hear that coming from the President. A very simple philosophy which he told me that he practised throughout his life and I remember him in particular for that.

2.15 p.m.

I want to take the opportunity going forward with this Motion in front of us, because the Motion recites in its second paragraph—in the third, actually:

“*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 takes place in 2011;”

I want to congratulate—she is not in public life—his daughter, Erica Williams, who I know worked long and hard [*Desk thumping*] in order to establish this memorial collection. She had the benefit of being fathered by that great man. It is obvious from the records that he was particularly close to her, and

upon his passing she made whatever material she had available for the benefit, and in the service of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and I am grateful to the Senators for recognizing that and celebrating her, as this Motion is before us.

There is another gentleman, a Mr. Vidale. Some people say “Vidalé”. Since Dr. Williams passed, he has been hosting a wreath-laying ceremony for Dr. Williams in recognition of his work every year. Many years I have been invited. I myself only went on one or two occasions; have not been able to keep all. But Mr. Vidale—what Vidale, is his name? I cannot remember his first name now, unfortunately, but he is a very dignified citizen of the Republic and he has kept this memorial going. I, too, would like you, ladies and gentlemen, Members of the Senate, to recognize him for his work, contribution and commitment to Trinidad and Tobago in that way. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Cudjoe: Reginald Vidale.

Sen. F. Hinds: Reginald Vidale is his name. I thank you very much, Shamfa Cudjoe—yes, Reginald.

Madam Vice-President, Dr. Williams was a humble man himself and he had made it very clear that he did not crave—he did not want any honours by this society upon his passing, and that, perhaps, explains why it was so long after his passing, a number of institutions were named after him, because he had made it very clear during his life that he did not crave that kind of accolade. So I think that we are beginning to forget that intonation from Dr. Williams and more and more you hear people coming forward with ideas. People are proposing that the airport be named after him, and there are many suggestions as to honouring him, particularly in this 50th year.

I remember when sometime last year the Leader of the Opposition, in anticipation of Dr. Williams’ centennial year, had asked the Government by way of a Motion to take note of its impending—it was impending at the time. And he had asked the Government to take note of Dr. Williams’ contribution and to find some way of honouring the contribution of Dr. Williams. I remember the Leader of Government Business in the other place getting up and telling us—now it is evident, rather deceptively, and I say so without apology—that in 2012 as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of independence, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will take the action that was proposed by the Leader of the Opposition then.

Lo and behold, this 50th anniversary year is upon us and so far the Government has done precious little, and when it rolled out a programme recently as part of the recognition of this 50th year of independence, I am told—I did not see it myself—that it was devoid of anything to do with Dr. Williams. Nothing to do with Dr. Williams!

This is why I want to go back to the point that I made when I began speaking here today. Many people in this country, quite wrongly and dishonestly and deceptively, in an attempt—because of shortsighted political concerns, partisan political concerns—to undo the work and the contribution of the People’s National Movement, tried to rewrite the history and obliterate from the nation’s consciousness, the work of Dr. Williams.

This is the 50th year. Last year they told the country, much as they tell us many things, all proving, and most proving to be untrue—as a matter of fact, Sen. Abdulah told us that this debate really comes down to governance, recognizing the way the country and its institutions were managed and governed. This Government has earned—in far less than the two years that they are now about to celebrate without the contribution of the MSJ and Sen. Abdulah—the reputation of being out and out dishonest.

Hon. Senator: That is not true.

Sen. F. Hinds: Yes!

Hon. Senator: That is not true!

Sen. F. Hinds: I listen to the talk shows; I read the articles in the newspaper; I follow the bloggers. Madam Vice-President, I know you do too.

Hon. Senator: Who is that?

Sen. F. Hinds: Well, “leh me doh even talk” about the citizen; let me talk about me. I do not trust you. I regard you as very inconsistent, economical with the truth, [*Desk thumping*] and if I were permitted the use of a more banal term in this Senate I would have used it. But the people of the country have lost respect for this Government, [*Desk thumping*] and now I see you are beginning to lose respect for yourselves. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Karim: That tassa side from St. James.

Sen. F. Hinds: You see, my friend, “he hearing a serious applause of agreement coming from the Senate, but he call it a tassa side.” This is the same Minister who, unashamedly, told this country that he is moving the Ministry that he heads, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, out of Port of Spain to central Trinidad—to Chaguanas. He also told us that they are moving Minister Vasant’s Ministry of Food Production, Land and Marine Resources, or whatever else they call it, and sending it now to Chaguanas as well. He also told us that the head office for YTEPP will be taken to Penal, the Prime Minister’s constituency. He also told us that COSTAATT will be taken to Penal, the Prime Minister’s constituency.

Sen. Danny Maharaj: Madam Vice-President, a point of order; 35(1), please.

Madam Vice-President: Thank you very much, Senator Maharaj. I really was starting to question what this Motion is about and, really, what it is you are referring to. [*Desk thumping*] Kindly come back around. Thank you. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. F. Hinds: We were talking about governance, and in addition to talking about governance we were talking about the contribution made by men like Dr. Williams and President Hassanali, as he then was, and Sir Ellis Clarke, and these former Presidents. These persons, Madam Vice-President, would have contributed to the platform on which we now stand. [*Desk thumping*] So when I speak about the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, intermingled in any mention of any Ministry is the work of Dr. Williams and the work of former President Noor Hassanali, and so on.

Madam Vice-President, are you with me? Good. [*Laughter*] Madam Vice-President, so that, you know, we are talking about Trinidad and Tobago, its governance, its history, and we do not want to be the laughing stock of the world. I was just concluding on the point of the transfer of these institutions, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a Cabinet Minister, also unashamedly told us that by virtue of moving all of these institutions and putting a law school in Penal as well, it would bring jobs and opportunities to the people of those communities. And nothing is wrong with that. I only wanted to ask him, and them, what happens to the jobs that would be lost, that you would be removing from the people of Port of Spain and environs?

You see, Madam Vice-President, when the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education sits where it now sits—on Agra Street in St. James—there are people who cater to the staff by providing meals; the taxi drivers take people to the offices; there is a whole host of economic activity and things that take place around a Ministry or an institution. Therefore, opportunities will be lost, and I am seeing a government—and we are talking about governance—proceeding in a very haphazard and fanciful way, and I wonder, while it appears haphazard to me, whether it is not driven by some philosophy that they have not explained to the public. What is driving this Government to do the things that it is doing? A lot of people may just think it is bad decisions, and in fact they are, but what is driving the Government to behave in that way? We read in today's newspaper that the Security Intelligence Agency, the SIA, which is an important national institution—

Sen. Devant Maharaj: Madam Vice-President, 35(1).

Sen. F. Hinds:—which is an important national institution, because as we speak about the nation in its 50th year of independence, its security—

Madam Vice-President: A point of order was asked to be ruled. Sen. Hinds, I did indicate that you need to step back to the Motion at hand. Do you want me to read the substantive issue of the Motion again?

Sen. F. Hinds: No.

Madam Vice-President: Okay. Because I do not believe that this Motion is either about trade unions, or SSA, or SIA, or anything like that. Kindly contribute to this Motion, please. You have spoken for 26 minutes already.

Sen. F. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, let me tell you what I was about. Let me explain to you why I was coming to that. Let me explain. We are in our 50th year—50 years of independence we are celebrating—the nationhood of which I spoke earlier, with no objection from the other side, comes under threat and is at risk if we do not have a proper security platform for the benefit of the nation. [*Desk thumping*] That is so easy. Are you stumbling on that, Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs? That is easy. And I am saying that over the last few days under the watch of this Government, intruders went into a warehouse in Arima and removed—under the nose of the Minister of National Security, and the acting Prime Minister, Jack Warner, who was here while the Prime Minister was in Barbados—equipment belonging to the SIA, which puts the nation—

Madam Vice-President: Sen. Hinds, Sen. Hinds, Sen. Hinds. Kindly have a seat. Sen. Hinds, I have asked you on two occasions, formerly, that you contribute to the Motion brought before by the hon. Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight, as it refers to honouring those members, former Presidents and heads of state. I am going to allow you to continue but, please proceed cautiously, and I will invoke the Standing Orders appropriately if you do not contribute to this Motion. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, I am not a timorous soul, but I feel a little threatened; I feel a little nervous.

Hon. Senator: You do not feel threatened at all.

Sen. F. Hinds: I have just been threatened by Madam Vice-President. She will invoke Standing Order 43. She just said that.

Madam Vice-President, I know you will not enter the fray. My friends on the other side may not like what I am saying, but I have the right to say it. [*Interruption*] Yes, yes, yes, and I am very relevant as far as I am concerned. I am dealing with this nation, recognizing the contribution of those who have gone before, and Sen.

Abdulah spoke about trade unions for one hour, almost, and Sen. Tewarie spoke on all manners of things. Now it is my time to speak they want to—you see why democracy must not be taken for granted? This Government is dangerous! [*Desk thumping*] All I want to do is speak, Madam Vice-President!

Hon. Senator: What about the Soviet newspaper?

Madam Vice-President: Have a seat. Hon. Senators, this Senate is called honourable for a reason and decorum is always of tantamount importance. I will not allow any Senator or all Senators, collectively or individually, to have this Senate simply dissolve into this sort of chaos and confusion. Sen. Hinds is on his legs. Senator, you have spoken for 29 minutes, now 30 minutes, and I have asked you on two occasions to continue and contribute to the Motion here raised by Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight. You have 15 minutes remaining of your original time. Please continue. And other Senators, would you kindly allow him to continue in silence.

2.30 p.m.

Sen. Deyalsingh: Madam Vice-President, just on a point of clarification, is Sen. Hinds allowed to rebut or to respond to any comments made in the contributions by Government Senators? Because, Sen. Abdulah when he made his contribution on this same Motion spoke about the unions for one hour and the selling of the Soviet newspaper in Woodford Square, so I am just seeking some clarification.

Madam Vice-President: Sure. Sen. Hinds, please continue with your contribution. I did not preside. I was not there for the—[*Crosstalk*]—just a minute, one second. When Sen. Abdulah was on his legs at that point in time relevance or irrelevance was not my decision. So at this point in time, I am asking Sen. Hinds to continue on this Motion before us. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Deyalsingh: So we cannot respond to the Government. [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. F. Hinds: I will continue to be relevant. Madam Vice-President, as you mentioned in your direction to me, Sen. Abdulah, let me quote Sen. Abdulah. In today's *Express* Tuesday, May 22, 2012, under the heading, "MSJ Quitting State Boards," I am sure they cannot object on this basis because State boards are a part of the governance of the republic.

Sen. Abdulah is quoted in the newspaper, and I am going to show you how I will link it to the Motion. But, let me quote him:

"He said the party—that is the MSJ—was concerned about reports that State ... governance culture did not change after 2010 elections."

He went on to say and he is being quoted:

“All that happened is that faces have changed; nepotism, discrimination, patronage and corruption are still the order of the day in too many enterprises.”

That is Sen. Abdullah. He said further as I conclude quoting him:

“Abdullah said now was not the time for silence or ‘hiding of the proverbial heads in the sand.’”

Sen. Abdullah, as he did in this very Motion, was treating with the question of our governance.

Madam Vice-President, I have a letter before me which was shared with me by Sen. Beckles. Under the Constitution people are entitled— there are several rights, one of which is freedom of worship. Sen. Beckles shared with me a letter that she received from the United Voice of Spiritual Shouter Baptist faith, a letter dated March 23, 2012. Would you believe in the 50th year of our independence, a Baptist group, a church, is complaining to Sen. Beckles, asking for her help because their church was demolished a year ago under the watch of this Government in Trinidad and Tobago? You understand Madam Vice-President? If we are aiming at another 50 we have to preserve what we have—freedom of worship. [*Desk thumping*] Simple, nothing to mathematical about that.

I want to say that in the run-up to 1962, when we were aiming at independence, I think Sen. Tewarie was the one who raised the question of the Marlborough House Conference, where Dr. Williams and a number of other persons—[*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Deyalsingh: Sir Ellis Clarke.

Sen. F. Hinds:—including, Sir Ellis Clarke—yes, Sen. Deyalsingh—went off to London to negotiate with the British Government the independence for Trinidad and Tobago. There was already political divide in Trinidad and Tobago on party lines. The DLP was in power at the time, led by a very brilliant son of this soil, Dr. Rudranath Capildeo, a man who we must also celebrate as having made a wonderful contribution and who was recognized by the mover of the Motion.

Dr. Capildeo accompanied the—in fact, he was part of the delegation. If you read the history of this country, you would see that Dr. Capildeo carried in his bosom, carried in his mind and put on the table at Marlborough House the concerns that were had, as he understood them, on behalf of the East Indian community in Trinidad and

Tobago. They were—and I would say from my understanding of the history not without some justification—concerned about the future of the East Indian and the Democratic Labour Party supporters as we moved into independence. So, Dr. Capildeo outlined these concerns and these fears. Part of that led to the establishment of the service commissions because they feared that the PNM Government under Dr. Williams, replacing the colonial master, may have been oppressive to the East Indians in Trinidad and Tobago. That was part of the fear. As such, with governmental power East Indians may not have had a fair crack of the whip and equal opportunity in terms of State employment and other goodies from the State, and so the service commissions came into being as an insulator, an independent body, as a buffer between the Government and the people. That was one of the fears. I think I am in a position to say to this Senate today with the benefit of 50 years hindsight—and my name is Fitzgerald Hinds, so I am “entitled.” That was my own unique pronunciation, do not trouble your heart.

Sen. George: Titillated.

Sen. F. Hinds: My friend is saying titillated. No, that is quite out of whack. I said, “entitled.” That is too far off course, Sen. George.

Sen. George: You pronounce it wrong.

Sen. F. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, I think I am in a position to say here without fear of contradiction that the fears that were articulated by Dr. Capildeo in 1962, and the days or months running up to independence, have not been realized for those who so feared. I think the history of this country for the last 50 years would show beyond a shadow, beyond a scintilla of doubt, that the fears that were carried in the bosoms of the East Indian community did not come real.

The history would now show us, the reports would now show us, the results would now show us that our East Indian brothers in Trinidad and Tobago had a very fair crack of the whip and have excelled, whether it is in land ownership; whether it is in business ownership, small medium and large; whether it is in the professions. In all the major disciplines the East Indians in this country—whether in terms of the economic prosperity and advancement—our brothers and sisters of the East Indian community have done particularly well over the last 50 years!
[*Desk thumping*]

Notwithstanding what a few wicked dividers in this country have tried to say so far, there is not a single case decided by the courts of Trinidad and Tobago—not one—that has been decided in terms of race as a discriminatory factor against anybody in this country. Not one! There are cases that have been called

discrimination and one may say, as Dana Seetahal wrote some time ago, it may be about nepotism and other things, but on the grounds of racial discrimination, not a single case! Although, there are cases that some enemies of the PNM have tried to construe and interpret as though it were a racial issue, when in fact it was not.

So, Madam Vice-President, as I contemplate the Motion before us, I am very happy and proud to be a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago in 2012. I am very grateful to those who built the foundations on which we proudly stand today. There are many countries in the world—we come to this place every Tuesday and sometimes on other days when dragged here by the Government, callously, to meet its agenda—that cannot boast of a democratic tradition like we did, many countries. There were other people who had fears as we approached independence, you know, because some countries, like Cuba—when they took over from the colonial masters—went for out and out expropriation of all the assets of those multinationals operating in their countries.

The leaders of Trinidad and Tobago led by Dr. Eric Williams, the Right Honourable, decided that we would not do that. We would not do that. We waited it out until Trinidad and Tobago was able to earn sufficient revenues and we purchased majority shareholdings in these enterprises. So, for example, what was British Overseas Airways Corporation, (BOAC) became our BWIA because we bought out the majority and the entire shareholding later. What was Tate and Lyle, in sugar, became our Caroni (1975) Limited, not 1962, because between 1962 and 1975 we just did not have the resources in order to purchase them. Dr. Williams was a very moderate, democratic-conscious man.

Sen. Karim: “Allyuh close it down after they gone.”

Sen. F. Hinds: You all are now closing down the country. [*Desk thumping*] Because, you see, the Minister is shouting at me, we close down Caroni.”

Sen. Karim: “I am shouting at you?” I would never do that.

Sen. F. Hinds: So, I just pointed out to him they have shut down the country.

Sen. Karim: I sip my porridge, like you, cool.

Sen. F. Hinds: I sip it cool too. Madam Vice-President, there is a calypsonian—and by the way, the Senator in drafting this Motion did not mention calypsonians. But, all along the way from independence through republicanism, the calypsonians of this country have written some of the history. Sen. Prof. Ramkissoon made it clear I think, it was, Sen. Prof. Ramkissoon—you cannot survey the history of Trinidad and Tobago over the last 50 years without contemplating the contribution of the calypsonians of this land. [*Desk thumping*] Mighty Sparrow wrote about independence,

“Trinidad and Tobago will always live on, colonialism gone, our nation is born;”

And so it goes. So inherent in the terms of this Motion, you must agree with me is recognition of the contribution of the calypsonians of this country, who are now suffering at the hands of this current Government.

Madam Vice-President, permit me. This is something that Sen. Deyalsingh had brought to my attention some time ago. I was just pointing out that the leadership of this country, the People’s National Movement—and this is not a debate for political sectarian affairs but—Dr. Williams, leading the country, let me put it that way, did a number of fantastic developmental things. We bought out the shares from Tate and Lyle and so on and it became Caroni (1975) Limited.

This is the Attorney General speaking on the Caroni (1975) Limited question. Hear what he says on the Caroni question:

Although I am about new politics and not personalities, I know that I cannot avoid this question. Mr. Panday shall forever be a hero to many but this does not mean that I must be blind to his obvious avoidable mistakes. The UNC had a chance and blew it. The destruction of Caroni is painful but the truth is Panday assisted in the destruction of Caroni by failing to strengthen and restructure it when he was in power. He killed Caroni and Manning lowered its coffin, with the UNC performing the last rights, aarti and all!

That is a loud voice, the voice of the Attorney General, the advisor to the Cabinet speaking on the question. So, I want Sen. Fazal Karim to put that in his political pipe and smoke it. [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*] He has the temerity to tell me it is not true. So the AG was lying.

Sen. Karim: I will tell you who to ask first now.

Sen. F. Hinds: Alright, good. Chalkdust, as I was saying before I was distracted by my friend, Sen. Karim, and caused me to go off course a bit.

Sen. Karim: You always off. That is nothing new.

Sen. F. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, Chalkdust, one of the calypsonians, has a song, “*Eric Williams Dead.*” It is a very witty composition, where he identifies certain things happening in Trinidad and Tobago as evidence of the fact that Dr. Williams is dead, because he is saying in his way as a calypsonian, if Williams was alive, “dem kind ah ting wudda never happen.” Madam Vice-President, I agree with Chalkdust.

2.45 p.m.

If Dr. Williams fell ill in Barbados while being hosted by the Barbadian people, put up in their best facility, he would not have discharged himself and walked out of the hospital. He would not have—

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. T. Deyalsingh*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. F. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, when I made the last statement I heard “ooooh” from the Government side, you would swear that all of them want to go to the hospital. The point I was making is a simple point. Dr. Williams and the leaders of this country recognized the importance of regional integration, recognized the sensitivities that had to guide them in terms of creating, establishing and maintaining relationships in the Caribbean.

Dr. Williams would have been mindful that the Barbadian people acted a certain way, and protocol and so on would have required certain things. Suffice it to say, he would not have done that in my opinion because it would make the authorities there feel like you do not—they will ask questions about the service they provided, but at any rate we will hear more about that a little later. I know for a fact—let me hear if they will go “ooh” on this one—that he would not have had—he would not have appointed to his Cabinet—let me put it like this—any Minister or any person who came under a cloud of questions, local, regional and international—[*Interruption*]

Sen. George: You are trying to make the news?

Sen. F. Hinds:—as this Government has done. [*Interruption*]

Sen. George: You are trying to make the news.

Sen. F. Hinds: “I doh have to try to make no news.”

Sen. George: Once you stand up there that is what you are playing for; “to gallery yourself.”

Sen. F. Hinds: I see you made a front page in the *Guardian* two weeks ago.

Sen. George: “Eh heh!”

Sen. F. Hinds: Yes, I saw it. A front page after two years.

Sen. George: No problem.

Sen. F. Hinds: I am sorry that I do not have it here. Sen. Al-Rawi, do you have it? I will show you it soon.

Sen. George: “I doh want to make no front page.”

Sen. F. Hinds: I am being distracted. Madam Vice-President, I am saying that Trinidad and Tobago, in its 50th year of independence, is now the laughing stock of the region and, to a large extent, the world. I just came from an international conference and—I am not exaggerating—almost every one of the representatives there was wondering what is happening to us in Trinidad and Tobago. What is happening; where are we going? *[Interruption]* Yes!

Sen. Baynes: I know you have a mission so that is why I am asking.

Sen. F. Hinds: They cannot believe that someone with a cloud of questions, and for some even suspicion over a Minister’s head, that that Minister would continue to be safely ensconced in the bosom, in the Cabinet and in the Government of the United National Congress. No wonder Sen. Abdulah was obliged to take the position that he has taken. I am not commending him because I anticipated it. Truth is the highest principle. *[Desk thumping]* There is an old African saying, “You cyar block de sun with your fist”. So I knew that it would come. Notwithstanding the smile on the face of the Brother Makandal Daaga, shortly it would become—*[Interruption]*

Sen. Maharaj: Madam Vice-President, on a point of order. Standing Order 35(1), please.

Sen. F. Hinds: Look, stop wasting the Parliament’s time. *[Laughter]*

Madam Vice-President: Cautiously and quickly to the point.

Sen. F. Hinds: I am obliged. I am getting to the point.

Sen. Bharath: Do you think Makandal Daaga is Standing Order 35(1)? That is what he is saying. Makandal Daaga is irrelevant, is what he is saying.

Sen. F. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, Trinidad and Tobago, today, as we approach this milestone on the 30th—Independence Day is the 31st. On the 30th we would have achieved the milestone of 50 years and there will be celebrations all around. The Government is short on celebrations and as I indicated twice in this contribution, they are determined to obliterate the record of Dr. Williams and the PNM. As a result, although they promised last year that they would do it in 2012, they have done precious little. This Government is not committed to anything that is good for this nation. *[Interruption]*

Sen. George: You had about 43 years to do it for him.

Sen. F. Hinds: This Government is not committed and the people of this country are of the view—[*Interruption*] Madam Vice-President, can I get your protection—that this Government is in office for itself, its friends, its family and they are not interested in the national well-being.

Sen. George: “Since ’81 he dead, all yuh ain’t do nothing for him.”

Sen. F. Hinds: They are not!

Sen. George: “All yuh want to blame the Government now for not doing anything for Eric Williams.” [*Interruption*]

Sen. F. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, I crave your protection. I am hearing a rumbling from the other side. [*Interruption*]

Sen. George: Yes, of course, it is a rumbling.

Madam Vice-President: Member, please, kindly allow Sen. Hinds to finish his contribution in silence.

Sen. George: Sorry!

Sen. F. Hinds: And I have another half an hour. [*Laughter*] Madam Vice-President, they are doing precious little. I spoke of regional integration a while ago and we are party to a number of international conventions/treaties. Last year the United Nations of which we are a proud part—the nation that is Trinidad and Tobago and no doubt they will commemorate us, they will commend us for 50 years of democracy.

In fact, in 1970—Brig. Sandy was a soldier in the army in 1970—democracy came under threat and very shortly after it was restored. In 1990, on July 27, insurgents walked into this Parliament, caused mayhem and murder, destruction all across the city, and shortly thereafter the nation recovered from that. The next meeting of the Parliament I was told—I was not here. I was in London at the time—met at the Central Bank Towers, and citizens of the country came out with pails and buckets to clean the Parliament in an attempt to restore the democracy that we had. This country upheld it so that the United Nations will no doubt commend Trinidad and Tobago for its contribution to democratic governance and well-being over the past 50 years.

Last year, the United Nations declared it to be the year in celebration of persons of African origin, and this Government at the top of that year, as well, promised a whole host of things. I have filed a question and if they do not dance, duck and run from it, they will tell this country that last year they did precious little in celebration of that, in breach of our international obligation and observation.

So this Government is giving a very bad impression of itself. I could see on the faces of men like Sen. Bharath, some discomfort, discomfiture—
[*Interruption*]

Sen. Bharath: “Yuh talking too long, that is what happen.” [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Hinds:—discombobulation. I know, and he can say what he wants. I saw him on the television this morning responding to Sharaz Khan, a man speaking for agriculturists in this country and farmers, and one of their good friends, a lawyer by the name of Vasheist Maharaj. Both men yesterday—I did not see it, but a woman stopped me in the bank to tell me—declared that the PNM was accused of all manner of things, but the worst they have ever seen from a Government comes from the United National Congress today in this country.

Both Vasheist Maharaj—one of your friends—and Sharaz Khan declared publicly yesterday that this Government is the worst that they have seen.
[*Interruption*]

Sen. George: What does that have to do with the Motion?

Sen. F. Hinds: It has to do with this Motion because as we aim for another 50 years, [*Laughter and desk thumping*] we have to ensure that what we are doing now—because, Madam Vice-President, I told you with great pride and aplomb a moment ago that it was the work of Sir Ellis Clarke, the work of Dr. Williams and the work of Dr. Capildeo that causes us to be here in this Senate debating the Motion that we are debating today.

2.55 p.m.

Therefore, if we want to leave a legacy—another calypsonian sang about the Prime Minister’s legacy this year too, but I do not know the words of that one too well but I commend it to you. He said the Prime Minister—[*Crosstalk*] Well, of course, I do not want—the hon. Prime Minister, but as the calypsonian, he said “Kamla’s leg-ah-see”. He sang about it; I do not know the whole song but I just heard the chorus and so on, and I like it. What is the name of the calypsonian? Brother Composer.

So, if we want to leave a proud legacy for the children in the future, it behoves of me, Madam Vice-President, to take stock of where we are today, to pay close attention to what a partner in this so-called coalition has said, through the mouth of Sen. Abdullah. I want to tell you this as I mention coalition. Coalition

Governments have been known to be inherently unstable, but, having said so, some coalition governments in some parts of the world have worked to a great extent; sometimes, to a lesser extent. But, when we were offered a so-called coalition in the last election campaign in this democracy—50 years old which we now celebrate and which this Motion urges us to take note of—we were offered, the citizens of this country, a coalition between five so-called political parties.

What we find happening now is that because of the internal nocturnal meanderings of that coalition—their problems, fighting for spoils, fighting for who should act as mayor here and who there, and who should get which State board and who should not—while all that was happening against the background of what Sen. Abdulah told us, which none of them could challenge—about nepotism, greed and corruption like he has never seen before.

What is happening is that this so-called coalition, which the people of Trinidad and Tobago, to some extent, voted for and wanted to see provide good governance for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the internal bacchanal and combustion of the coalition is affecting the governance of Trinidad and Tobago because they are spending all their time, all their energy and all the intellect, where they have it, on dealing with the problems of their coalition, and sacrificing the governance of Trinidad and Tobago. That is a real threat to the democracy that we celebrate here today. It is a real threat to the well-being of Trinidad and Tobago.

We have, in the Government, a Minister who made a name for himself—Minister of Transport. He made a name for himself in this nation as being concerned—well, as having been possessed of a sectarian concern, not a national concern. He is now a Member of the Cabinet governing this country. We have a Minister in this country—Minister of Works and Infrastructure—under a shroud, a cloud, home, regional and aboard, in the Cabinet and now a member of the National Security Council. I do not know, some people are making a link in the national community. As soon as he was acting Prime Minister, “they break into” the—I mean, he is now to account for intruders getting into the SIA’s warehouse and stealing security equipment.

Sen. D. Maharaj: Standing Order 35(5).

Madam Vice-President: Senator, I am going to ask that you retract the link between the appointment of the Minister to the National Security Council, and the inference of any relationship to the missing documents as reported in the news. I am going to strongly urge that you withdraw those statements and have Hansard withdraw those from the thing.

Sen. F. Hinds: Before I do, I am—*[Interruption]*

Madam Vice-President: Please. Kindly, do not argue with me, please, on this, and you just have a minute again, so just continue.

Sen. F. Hinds: Madam Vice-President, just to conclude, I did not make the link. I was representing here, as I spoke, I said and I am very clear, that there are persons in the national community who are making that link, not me. That is what I said because I heard it. I cannot come here and say something different to what I heard; I am not like the Members of the Government, I speak the truth.

Madam Vice-President: Sen. Hinds, unless you have your official source and you are willing to claim or you are willing to lay in front of this Parliament, the source who said that, then you will kindly withdraw those statements, and I am going to direct the Hansard to withdraw those statements from the record. Thank you. Please, end your contribution; you are out of time.

Sen. F. Hinds: But, Madam Vice-President, I am the one who spoke here—*[Interruption]* Just a moment. I am the one who spoke here and my words stand with me. I am saying to you, I heard—in fact, a citizen came up to me before I came to the Parliament and told me that, and a member of the security forces. That is what I am saying. I am just reporting the truth. But, as I conclude—*[Interruption]*

Sen. D. Maharaj: Madam Vice-President, a point of order. The Member is imputing improper motives by what he is saying here. He needs to withdraw that statement.

Sen. F. Hinds: I am concluding.

Madam Vice-President: I have already directed the clerk of the Hansard to withdraw that statement. Senator, you are on extra time; you have a minute of extra time.

Sen. F. Hinds: In conclusion, I want to congratulate Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight. I want to congratulate all the Members of this Senate who saw the wisdom in making a contribution to this very well-drafted, well-thought-out Motion. I want to join all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago in celebrating us all for our achievements. Trinidad and Tobago may never be a great country the likes of the United States and the Germanys and so on, but we have the potential to be a far better one.

I conclude on a sour note, though, to say that it is very, very doubtful that the possibility of being a better country can possibly be realized under the Government as we now have. I look forward shortly to an opportunity on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago to rearrange the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, to get them out as it were, because the citizens have recognized, Madam Vice-President, that they have made a serious mistake on the basis of the blandishments and promises that that Government made, and Trinidad and Tobago is not better off for it. So, I congratulate Trinidad and Tobago and conclude, and thank you for the opportunity to have made my contribution. I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Basharat Ali: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. I rise to support the mover of the Motion. Of course, I also seconded her Motion, and as I said then, it was a very able presentation. I think Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight has left very little for us to say, but I am taking a little different track.

I want to go back a little bit to when we were colonials. I believe that I must be the senior colonial in both Houses here—[*Desk thumping*—]in this House and the other House; I have little doubt of that. A colonial, according to the Oxford dictionary, is a native of a colony. That is the definition of a colonial. So, there was no country of Trinidad, we were a colony; it was so until August 31, 1962, that is what we were. We were a part of Britain, a British subject, and as our passport would say, “Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies.” So that was where we were; we had really no identity.

I could see that how, in my time—because as I said, I was a very long-standing colonial, and at the time of Independence, I was 29 years old, so I have had a long period as a citizen. I tried to do a little reckoning in our honourable Senate here as to who were colonials at the time, in terms of their length of time before they were really citizens. I have come to the conclusion, looking at it generally, that 70 per cent of us—all taken as a group—were colonials at birth as against the 30 per cent of the younger ones among us. So very often, the younger people do not realize where we have come from.

This is one of the items that I wanted to mention as I went along, and that is the history—a little bit of the history of the process of independence among colonial countries. But, before I do that, I would say that as a colonial, we all celebrated something called Empire Day. Empire Day happens to be May 24, which is a significant day for all the Members on that side in two days’ time. So, May 24 was when we had a holiday in respect of being a part of the British Empire, and in the parade, there were songs, et cetera. One of the principal songs, I am sure my friend—[*Crosstalk*] “Land of Hope and Glory”. There it is; my good

friend knows about “Land of Hope and Glory”. What were the words of “Land of Hope and Glory”? Madam Vice-President, I will just read it through; I cannot sing—I would not dare sing. It is a hymn in fact and it goes:

“Land of Hope and Glory, Mother of the Free.

How shall we extol thee, who are born of thee?

Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set;

God, who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet...”

That does not refer to us, colonies; that refers to the British country in fact, and that is what we sang. We do it differently now on August 31st.

But, we were only part of this process. I mean, the English people, in fact, did not recognize us. I remember as a student—the English people are very polite, so you are on a bus for example, and they look at you and they say, “Well, where are you from, Sir?” I say, “from Trinidad”. And they say, “Oh yes, well, I served in the army in Bombay or Punjab” because my face is brown and my hair is straight. So, they had no idea where Trinidad was. Now, the person with the curly hair and the same complexion like me would have been told, “Yes, I served in Kenya”, or one of the countries like that. So the people who were our masters did not know who we were. That is why I said we had no identity, and we only got that with the coming of independence.

I would like to give a brief history—I am not very good at history but we are part of the whole process of independence of the colonies, and it affects us because where our forefathers came were from colonies also. So, I did a very quick run-through of it and I think, first of all, of India which received its independence on August 15, 1947. That was the first of the lot there that received independence. It was not an easy fight because, in India, first of all, as we knew it, it was one subcontinent, and with independence, it was being divided into two countries—India and Pakistan. So there was the internal strife and the fight with the British, and those were real fights because, at that time, the subcontinent was full of resources which were there.

3.10 p.m.

We saw the birth of Pakistan on August 14, the partition of that whole subcontinent of India into two parts, into Pakistan and into India. That was a really troublesome one because that division was challenged many times. We still have remnants of that today. Since 1947 to now we still have it. Kashmir still

remains an unsettled area in the Indian subcontinent with claims on three sides. Kashmir wants to be independent too. There are the people who fought for the independence of that subcontinent. One would think of Jawaharlal Nehru, who fought the political battle on behalf of India, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah who was the first Governor General—Quaid-i-Azam, as he was called—of Pakistan in that division. That set the stage, from 1947, for independence within other colonies.

The next one that comes online in fact is Ghana. As we all know, Ghana was a rich country. It was called the Gold Coast. Once again, they had to fight a bit for their independence and their independence came on March 06, 1957. Almost 10 years after the partition of India and the setting up of two independent states, Pakistan and India, came Ghana.

Then we come to the other African countries, Nigeria, for example, which gained independence in 1960, and Kenya which is a very interesting one because they fought for their independence. Kenya fought for its independence. The first Prime Minister of Kenya was Jomo Kenyatta, who was described as a terrorist. In the days when they were fighting for independence, Jomo Kenyatta was a terrorist. As they say, a terrorist before is a master at a later date. I remember, as a student in England going to see a fictional film in which they showed you the white people being slaughtered by the black people and that was related to Kenya. This is why Jomo Kenyatta had that name of being a terrorist. As I have said, the first election in Kenya, he won and he became the first Prime Minister of that country.

There we have it, a very turbulent relationship for these countries to exist and the fact they have existed is because of the will of the people and the commitment of their leaders to gaining independence and to being recognized.

I would like to pay tribute to those who set the ball a-rolling and these are the countries I am thinking of as I go about it. Kenya in fact got independence shortly after Trinidad and Tobago, December 12, 1963. By then, we had seen most of the former colonies becoming independent states and setting their own principles and their own objectives and setting themselves up.

In our case, we had a bloodless attainment of independence. I think a lot of it is due to the people who negotiated on our behalf. We had Dr. Eric Williams and I think Dr. Rudranath Capildeo; that team that went to London to negotiate Trinidad and Tobago's independence needs to be recognized also. Although, Madam Senator, there is no recognition in the Motion for non-Presidents and non-Prime Ministers.

Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight: That will come.

Sen. B. Ali: I think it will have to come. So, I look forward to this because I think

we are a much happier people. Those of us who came from other ethnic groups did not know where we were. I happen to be a Muslim. I grew up as a Muslim and there is nothing wrong with it, but then there was no other place. Britain was your mother country and that was not so.

The Hindus followed a lot of their tradition and that has been a very good thing, in fact, for our country, that the religions that came with them, particularly from the Indian subcontinent were set up and became strong and were able to live with each other, which is an important thing; that Trinidad and Tobago has a society which can live with each other. We have the little fights, et cetera, but when it comes to push and shove we are one people, and that I feel happy about. I think any one of us, whatever our faith, our colour, or creed, we should be happy about.

I do not intend to be much longer on my say. As I said, I would like to see some recognition of, as Sen. Hinds talked about, calypsonians and the other people who have been in the process of independence other than the pure or recognized politicians. I think it would be a worthwhile thing.

Looking about it, I have told the mover of the Motion I do not want to see any statues around the place. We have enough statues. I told her pigeons find statues very suitable places to land, so no statues and no streets named after people and no change of street names. Who is Lady Hailes? Do we remember? Who is Lady Young? Do we remember? That is what happens.

I think, for example, St. James, with all those Indian names, is a good example of looking at where we were. I asked somebody: "Do you know where Kandahar is?" because there is a Kandahar Street in St. James. He said: "No, we do not know." Kandahar is in Afghanistan, of all places. Our history is there as part of our culture. I think my friend might come closer from Calcutta Settlement. I do not know the history of Calcutta Settlement but all those are part of our history and we must be happy that we are here as independent people and we have all the ingredients to continue to live in harmony and to enjoy a life of dignity and independence. Thank you, Madam Vice-President. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Jamal Mohammed: Thank you very much, Madam Vice-President and Senators of this honourable Chamber. It is indeed a distinguished pleasure and honour for me to be here this afternoon and to get this opportunity to address the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago.

Let me first of all say how happy I am to be here, on a personal note, following in the footsteps of several members of my family who, at one time occupied various positions in this Chamber and in the other place, the Lower House, the House of Representatives. [*Desk thumping*]

My uncle served in the House of Representatives for 30 consecutive years. [*Desk thumping*] My late father was a Member of Parliament for 22 years. In fact yesterday, May 21, was his 18th death anniversary. [*Desk thumping*] I come here following in the footsteps of my uncle Wahid who, at one time, was the President of the Senate for 16 years. [*Desk thumping*] And, of course, I come here following my dear sister Nafeesa, who at one time was an Opposition Senator on that side of the aisle. [*Desk thumping*] I am grateful for this opportunity to be here and to participate in a debate. [*Interruption*]

Sen. Karim: And you are on this side.

Sen. J. Mohammed: And I am on this side. [*Desk thumping and laughter*] I am grateful to my political leader, the hon. Prakash Ramadhar, for affording me the opportunity to be here and I am grateful to the Prime Minister and other Members of this Government for providing me with the opportunity to be here. [*Desk thumping*]

Permit me as well Madam Vice-President, to say thanks to the Office of the Parliament and the Office of the Clerk of the Senate for all of the hospitality that they have extended so far and I apologize for any mistakes I may have made so far in this Senate.

Looking at this Motion before this honourable Senate, I ask myself what was going through the mind of Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight when she came up with this Motion. What was the motivation? I mean, we have no major problem that would be solved with the passing of this Motion; nothing really outstanding. But then you get to the understanding that because of her commitment and her love and her passion for Trinidad and Tobago, having served this country with such distinction in the diplomatic service for so many years, that a person like her, at this time, on the 50th anniversary of our independence, can come up with a Motion like this and I congratulate her—[*Desk thumping*] with respect. It is something that is done out of passion and love for Trinidad and Tobago.

I want to refer the quality of this Motion to my friends in the Opposition because sometimes—I am not always here all the time but I follow the questions that are asked by Members of the Opposition and I have to say that you all need to get some lessons from Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight in drafting your questions that you put forward

to the Government. It is really a matter of shame to say, to some extent, some of the questions we hear coming from the Opposition that need to be answered in this Parliament. It is a virtual waste of parliamentary time. [*Desk thumping*] Today was just a classic example, wasting valuable parliamentary time. For what? We do not know. Only they would understand. [*Desk thumping*]

It is difficult to accept—I know it is hard for Senators of the Opposition to remind you again and again that you lost the election in 2010. Get over it and move on like the rest of the country has moved on. [*Desk thumping*] When I read the premise of this Motion, I must say it touched me in more ways than one because, as a young person growing up in this country, I had the pleasure—being from the family that I come from, a very political family—many of the people who are involved in this Motion, we have had contact or acquaintances, or we know about them.

For example, as a young man growing up in this country, I distinctly remember our first Governor General, Sir Solomon Hochoy. What a great man he was. What a true son of the soil. He was not born in Trinidad but he grew up, I think, in Blanchisseuse and he was made a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago. He was such a distinguished servant of the people when he became Governor General. I have distinct memories of him sitting on a horse on Independence Day. He was a great man.

I remember all these great men who are mentioned in this Motion from Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight. I treat them with respect and awe because they have all served this country. They have all done well, on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. This Motion is asking us to stand up and take note and pay tribute to these men who have served as Heads of Government and Heads of State of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

3.25 p.m.

I remember, Madam Vice-President, Sir Solomon Hochoy, as I was saying, when he was Governor General of Trinidad and Tobago. He was the Governor General when we achieved independence in 1962. Before that he was the Governor, but when we became independent in 1962, he became the Governor General. From 1962 to 1972; he acted with such distinction and fulfilled that role with great honour and dignity.

As a young boy, I remember in 1972, I got up one day and heard he was no longer Governor General and I actually became sad and cried because he was such a great man to me. I wanted to know why they removed him as Governor

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General, only to find out you can only serve a 10-year term. In 1972 he was, in fact, replaced by Sir Ellis Clarke as Governor General. I could not understand, I could not appreciate why they had to move this nice man on the horse, Sir Solomon Hochoy. May Almighty God bless his soul wherever he might be.

Then I remember Sir Ellis Clarke, when he became Governor General in 1972, and he continued to serve with distinction. In 1976 when we became a republic, he became the first President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and for me at that time he took over from the Queen. That was how we felt at that time, that Sir Ellis Clarke became our Head of State, replacing the Queen.

In all of this we had the man Dr. Eric Williams, and Sen. Hinds was speaking about how everybody hates Dr. Eric Williams because “we not PNM.” Well, dear Sir, I respectfully disagree with you, and to let you know—[*Desk thumping*] that Dr. Eric Williams, in our family and in my mind—[*Sen. Mohammed speaks to Sen. Hinds who is leaving the Chamber*]—“where you walking off and going?” [Laughter and desk thumping] Dr. Eric Williams, where we come from, occupies a very distinguished position in our community. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Senator: Come back! Come back!

Hon. Senator: “Doh run away!”

Sen. J. Mohammed: There was something about Dr. Eric Williams, there was an aura of brilliance, a sense of charisma about him that you had to experience it. I never met the man, but I was fortunate to be in a room where he was three of four times, and when you were in his company you felt a difference. Not only was he our Prime Minister, but you recognized a sense of brilliance—an academic brilliance, a knowledge, a know-how that you could not find with anybody else in the room at that time.

This was brought to the fore in 1977, when there was a convention of Muslims from all around the world, sponsored by the Saudi Arabian Government. They came to Trinidad and Tobago and had this convention at the Chaguaramas Convention Centre, and they invited Dr. Eric Williams to make the main speech. For a non-Muslim that man was so impressive; he was able to distinguish himself as a non-Muslim and speak about Islam with such definitive ability that it was hard to appreciate for some people. He has always stood out to me as a brilliant man, a very charismatic man and we respect him, contrary to what Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds wants to leave this impression in the Senate. [*Desk thumping*]

Then Dr. Williams died in 1981. When he died we saw some things which to me up to today I feel very confused. Because here we were in 1981 our first Prime Minister had died—may Almighty God bless his soul—and we had President Ellis Clarke with

the responsibility of appointing a new Prime Minister to succeed Dr. Eric Williams. At that time I was a bit confused because there it was my uncle, who had served with Dr. Eric Williams from the very beginning in 1956, the only surviving member then of the Cabinet with Dr. Eric Williams in 1981.

When Dr. Williams died and there was time to appoint a new Prime Minister, Sir Ellis Clarke in his wisdom appointed somebody else. I have no problem with that, but it left me with a sense of bewilderment and confusion, that up to today no one can properly explain that to me. Not because it was my uncle, but because his sense of—how shall we say, successorship—what is right and what was supposed to have been done at that time was not done, but that is another issue.

Then we appointed our second Prime Minister, Sir Ellis Clarke appointed the hon. George Michael Chambers, and he too, hon. Senators, and Madam Vice-President, is a man who we hardly hear about in our history books, but he too was a distinguished and honourable gentleman. I remember him because I worked with him between the period of 1981 and 1986. He was the man who told us: “fete over, back to work.” He was the man who told us:

“What is right, must be kept right and what is wrong, must be set right.”

He was an honourable man and a good Prime Minister, who served his country well.

Then in 1986, the People’s National Movement lost the election, one of the biggest landslides ever recorded in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, when they lost 33 to 3, where the NAR swept to power in a wave of popularity, the likes of which we had never seen before. Then at that time, Mr. Chambers was replaced by Mr. ANR Robinson, another distinguished man who came from Tobago; and he is still with us.

Now all of these people I am mentioning, Madam Vice-President, are within the confines of the Motion that has been submitted by Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight, just to give you an example of what has happened in my lifetime, and how these people have impacted me and the people around.

Prime Minister Robinson tried his best as Prime Minister, under very difficult economic circumstances, to see what he could do to improve the quality of the lives of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Then in 1987, Sir Ellis Clarke had his 10-year period come to an end, and Mr. Noor Hassanali was made President of Trinidad and Tobago. I must say that President Noor Hassanali for me occupies a very unique position in the history of our country, and we must never forget a man like him. Not only was he a Muslim, and I am a Muslim too,

but he was such a humble man, a man with such dignity, a man with such honour, and he was not afraid to stand by his principles. That is why as President, when he went into President's House, he asked that no alcohol be served while he was there, and that is such an honourable position for anybody to occupy. [*Desk thumping*] And that is a lesson for all of the people of Trinidad and Tobago to appreciate and understand; that is something for us to teach the young people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Sen. Deyalsingh: "Allyuh clapping fuh dat, eh?"

Sen. J. Mohammed: Brothers and sisters, Senators, we went on to 1990 when we had that very frightening period in our history, July 27, 1990. At that time we had Prime Minister ANR Robinson and we had President Noor Hassanali. When the coup occurred in July 1990, President Hassanali was out of the country. Prime Minister Robinson taught us some lessons in patriotism and putting country first, when he told them to: "Attack with full force," and that is a lesson we will never forget. [*Desk thumping*] And there were others involved in that coup who taught us about patriotism and love for country, as leaders at that time, and we must never forget July 27, 1990.

Madam Vice-President, in 1991 the government changed and we got for the first time, Prime Minister Patrick Manning and a PNM Government, and we welcomed Prime Minister Patrick Manning, and we respected him. Some people are born great, some people have greatness thrust upon them, and I believe that in 1991 Mr. Manning had greatness thrust upon him, because I do not believe he was and still is not prepared to be the leader of Trinidad and Tobago, with all due respect to him. I loved him as a gentleman. He may not be too well right now. I respect him as a former Prime Minister and as a Member of Parliament, but he has never impressed me as a leader of a people; but we had him in 1991.

He continued until he called a snap election in 1995 and for whatever the reasons and the circumstances, we had a new government in 1995 led by the hon. Basdeo Panday. There we have another leader of our country who is a very charismatic leader. One of the things that stood out for me with Mr. Panday, in all his years in politics, he is the one true politician who has always tried to bring the people of Trinidad and Tobago together in unity and in love. That has been one of his missions, to recognize that the greatest resource this country has is the human resource, and he did whatever he could do to bring people together.

Forget about race, forget about religion, forget about class, he always wanted the people to live in unity and in harmony, and that would be how I would remember Mr. Panday as a leader in Trinidad and Tobago. He formed the Government of national unity in 1995.

Then in 1997, President Noor Hassanali had his 10-year term ended and he had to give way to a new President, and at that time the President came to be Mr. ANR Robinson. So he has a distinction in our country of being one time a Prime Minister and then a President of the country, and that is a great honour, the likes of which we may never see from any other individual in this country. That is a great achievement for Mr. ANR Robinson.

Then again you know what happened between 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001, there was another change of government, and we had again Mr. Manning coming back as Prime Minister. Whatever you want to say about it, he came back as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago for a second time.

Then in 2003, President Robinson was no longer President, and then we got our present President, Prof. George Maxwell Richards. Then you know what happened after that? We had elections in 2007, and then in 2010, Mr. Manning again called another snap election and this is where we are today, when the people of Trinidad and Tobago came together with the People's Partnership to form the new Government on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. On May 24, two days from today, we shall be celebrating the second anniversary of the People's Partnership Government. [*Desk thumping*]

I am sure Sen. Abdulah can speak for himself, but I thought Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds was a bit unfair to Sen. Abdulah. This is something you all have to get accustomed to—in a coalition, it is not like it was in days gone by, where “not ah dog bark”; we are free to speak, it is a democracy, and we all have our opinions, and just as Sen. Abdulah has expressed his right, I too have my right and everyone here, we have our right to express our opinions. We must respect that. This is part of the new politics. We must not keep people quiet in corners and “not ah dog bark” and they cannot say anything or they cannot talk out of turn. Everyone must be given the opportunity to speak.

So when we celebrate our second anniversary on Thursday, I too will like to see a proper celebration. Not only must it be a grand affair, but we must seize the opportunity to recognize and to give thanks to Almighty God for where we are. It should be a national day of prayer and thanksgiving. [*Desk thumping*] Thank Almighty God we do not have a PNM Government again! [*Desk thumping*] Give thanks to Almighty God that we have a Prime Minister who treats us like a mother, who understands the need of the people. [*Desk thumping*] Thank Almighty God we have a Government that is functioning. Thank Almighty God that we have done things [*Desk thumping*] that no other government in this country has ever done before on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] So it is a time of thanksgiving.

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I do not know if the programme has already been formalized or whatever it might be, but we should have some serious consideration where we call some of our religious leaders and have as a major part of the programme on Thursday, giving thanks to Almighty God for what we have. Praise God! Praise God!

Sen. Abp. Burke: Praise Him! Praise Him! [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. J. Mohammed: If this country has to progress, it will only progress with the permission of Almighty God. There is a saying that:

God causes the night to traverse the day, and causes the day to follow the night. He brings the dead out of the living, and brings the living out of the dead. He gives power to whom he wishes and he takes away power from whom he wishes, such is the might of Almighty God.

And we have to thank Him. Thank the Holy Creator for all that we have, for where we are now in Government, and beg him to grant us strength and the ability to move forward for the remainder of this term and subsequent terms thereafter. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Senator: Hear! Hear! Hear!

Sen. J. Mohammed: So when Sen. Abdulah spoke yesterday, and you all will make fun of it, the man spoke his mind. He is entitled to his opinion and we respect him for that as a colleague, as a Senator on this side of the aisle. We respect him and we wish him well, and we are glad to have him here as a member of the People's Partnership. We all cherish this People's Partnership, and we are going to fight to keep it alive—[*Desk thumping*] and Sen. Abdulah, notwithstanding what he has said, has spoken well about keeping the partnership alive. He understands that.

He warned us, in case you did not remember Sen. Hinds, that we are not going back to the days of the PNM in power again. [*Desk thumping*]

3.40 p.m.

So, Madam Vice-President, I have given a brief rundown of some of the great leaders of our country. I have mentioned Governor General Solomon Hochoy, Sir Ellis Clarke, President Robinson, Noor Hassanali and, on the Prime Minister's side, where we are today.

There is one thing I want to say that runs through all of these Heads of State and Heads of Government who have led us in years gone by. Just as I mentioned about the mover of the Motion, Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight, all of these leaders have a

passion and a love for Trinidad and Tobago. You can say what you want. [*Desk thumping*] You can support them if you want, but when you look at their lives and what they have done, they have a love for this country that cannot be matched. If we are going to pay any tribute to them, we must try to have that kind of passion for Trinidad and Tobago instilled in all of us.

I know that all of us here, as Senators, we love our country, otherwise we would not be here. We want to serve the people of Trinidad and Tobago, otherwise we would not be here. Whether you are PNM, People's Partnership or an Independent Senator, you are all here because you love Trinidad and Tobago.

This is the greatest tribute we can pay to all these Heads of State and Heads of Government—if we can instil this love of country in the younger generation of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] It has to be done. We must always be willing to put country first, and all of these Prime Ministers and all of these Presidents we have called out here, they always put country first. Forget about party! They always put country first and they did what was in the best interest of all of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

We have a problem with our young people growing up in Trinidad and Tobago these days and sometimes it saddens me. They learn and go to school in Trinidad and Tobago and the first opportunity they get, they want to go away and study abroad. Nothing is wrong with studying abroad, but they want to live abroad and they do not have that love for this country to come back and serve this country. That is a sad thing and we have to do what we can to change that. That is the greatest tribute we can pay to Dr. Williams, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Panday, Mr. Manning, Sister Kamla, Mr. Robinson; all of them—to get that love for country inculcated into the hearts and minds of all of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

We can make a start somewhere. I suggest, Madam Vice-President, through you, that somewhere along the line all of the schools that were attended by these famous men should be historical sites. For example, Dr. Williams went to QRC. Mr. Chambers went to Nelson Street Boys' RC School—[*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Senator: Good school! Good school!

Sen. J. Mohammed:—Burke's College and Osmond High. Mr. Robinson went to Castara Methodist School and Bishop's High School in Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Manning went to Presentation College and UWI. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Panday went to New Grant and St. Julien Presbyterian and Presentation College. [*Desk thumping*] Sister Kamla went to Iere High School and UWI. Sir Solomon Hochoy went to some school in Blanchisseuse, I cannot remember

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which one. [*Laughter*] Sir Ellis Clarke went to St. Mary's College. [*Desk thumping*] President Noor Hassanali went to Canaan, Corinth Presbyterian and Naparima College. [*Desk thumping*] And President George Maxwell Richards is an old boy from QRC.

Hon. Senator: And none of them had any “boom-boom” room, “eh”. [*Laughter*]

Sen. J. Mohammed: I am suggesting that these schools attended by our leaders—Heads of State and Heads of Government—should become national heritage sites and made tourist destinations, so that other young people can go. Look at the school where Dr. Williams went to! Look at the school where Sister Kamla went to! Look at the school where Mr. Manning went to! So they will understand and appreciate.

In these schools—these little areas—even the towns and villages where they were born, set up some little site. This is where Mr. Panday was born. In India, anywhere you go, anywhere Mahatma Gandhi walked, there is a little statue; there is a building there. This is where he went. We should have that in Trinidad so that successive generations would understand where these people were; where they were motivated; what were the things that made them tick; what caused them to operate like that; how they understood and they built that love for Trinidad and Tobago.

So, Madam Vice-President, I am suggesting, in the first instance, that all of the schools of these Heads of State, as mentioned by the mover of the Motion, and then the places where they were born, they can make them into tourist sites, historical heritage sites for successive generations of Trinidad and Tobago.

I also want to suggest that at our schools more emphasis be given to teaching the history of these great men and women of our country. As a former teacher at a primary school in San Juan for over 20 years, I must say, part of the syllabus in Social Studies—they would make a little mention here and there, every term, about Prime Ministers and Presidents and so on, but it is not done enough.

When you compare with other countries, for example, the United States of America, children who are eight, nine and 10 years old know by heart the names of the 42 or 43 Presidents of America. In some instances, in our schools, our children do not know the order of appearance of our Prime Ministers, our Governors General and our Presidents. We need to have, at the primary school level, greater emphasis, a focused and direct attempt to teach them about civics and the history of Trinidad and Tobago. That needs to be done. [*Desk thumping*]

The problem, Madam Vice-President, one of the big stumbling blocks as a teacher, I can tell you, is that Independence Day occurs when there is no school and it is difficult for a teacher to teach about independence in June when they are gearing up for

exams or when school reopens in September because it has gone—that is one—and the focus then becomes Republic Day, which does not hold the same kind of importance as Independence Day. That is a great disadvantage we have in imparting this kind of information at the school level. I still think it ought to be done.

As an immediate first step, I would like to throw this out to someone who is in authority for our 50th anniversary. The least we can do is to publish some material about all of these great people. It is said that a photograph is worth a thousand words. If we can just get some photographs of Sir Solomon Hochoy during his time as Governor General, of Dr. Eric Williams, of Mr. Chambers, of Mr. Robinson, of Mr. Manning, of Mr. Panday and Sister Kamla; all in their capacity as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago; and then we do the same thing for our Governors General and Presidents, as something to keep for all the schoolchildren of Trinidad and Tobago—a booklet of photographs of our Heads of State and Heads of Government.

At least we can do that for every single schoolchild in Trinidad and Tobago, in the first instance, as a gift from this Government for their own benefit in years to come, please God. That is something we can do.

We have the Parliament Channel here. I am sure we have sufficiently capable people here who can produce some DVDs and documentaries outlining the contributions of all of our Prime Ministers, Presidents, Heads of State and Heads of Government and present these to the schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

Use the social media. We can hire Sister Shamfa Cudjoe to go on Facebook and open up a page with a Pavilion.

Hon. Senator: I like that. [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

Sen. J. Mohammed: Use the social media. It is one way of getting this information about our former Prime Ministers using today's technology to get that information over to them. It can be done and it should be done.

Sen. Hinds spoke about the calypsonians. Use the calypsonians and our local artistes to compose songs which reflect the lives, times and efforts of all these great Prime Ministers and Presidents who have served our country. Use our local talent; use our culture; use the things that make our people click so that they will understand. If they find the history is too boring, then use things that they like to get across the message of the great men who once ruled and governed Trinidad and Tobago. Use our local actors; not just to go to watch Tommy Joseph and Learie Joseph and so on. Use our local actors in some serious dramatic presentations that recap the lives and the times of these Prime Ministers and Heads of States.

Madam Vice-President, you know, we have a great comedian in Trinidad and Tobago; a man named John Agitation. I will never ever forget—Mr. Ramdeen Ramjattan—one of the greatest sons of Trinidad and Tobago. He used to do an exemplary and perfect imitation of Dr. Eric Williams. When you hear him imitate Dr. Eric Williams, you would swear that Dr. Eric Williams was right there.

I will never forget this joke he gave once—I mean no disrespect to anybody; no disrespect to the Motion of the hon. Senator, but just to show you how people should appreciate and use these things to get across the message of these great men.

John Agitation gave this joke about a time in Cabinet with Dr. Eric Williams—the country was going through a very bad time. The infrastructure in the country was really, really bad and some bright person in the Cabinet—I would not call the person’s name now—suggested to Dr. Williams: “Why don’t we go to war with the United States of America?” Now, this is in the 1960s. They will come, blow up our country and so on, but after they are finished, they will build back everything and we will have a brand new Trinidad and Tobago. That was an idea at that time to develop and recreate a new Trinidad and Tobago. Dr. Williams, as great as he was, sat down and said, “Suppose we win the war.” [*Laughter*]

That remained with me—the mentality of the leaders at that time—not in a disrespectful way, but how much they believed in Trinidad and Tobago; how much they believed in this country. [*Desk thumping*]

I want you to know, Madam Vice-President, that we on this side we love this country. [*Desk thumping*] The Ministers of this Government are working day in and day out—all of us are working—to make Trinidad and Tobago a better place. Following in the trail of these great Prime Ministers and Presidents, we have an example.

I want to ask anybody here in this Chamber, if by chance—taking on that same joke I just mentioned—we happen to go to war, would you fight for Trinidad and Tobago? Would you give your life for this country? There are many people here who would not be willing to do so and that is sad. We see it in the news where, in countries like America, you have to go in the army and every day you hear about soldiers fighting and dying, but would you give your life for Trinidad and Tobago?

In supporting this Motion—it is an excellent Motion; it is something that is long overdue—this Government should seize every opportunity as we approach our 50th anniversary of independence, to do what we can do to honour our former Prime Ministers, Governors General and Presidents.

Let me leave you, Members of this Senate, with a poem which was written in 1985 by my cousin, a teacher who passed away in 1986. The poem is “Sweet Trinidad” by Sheriff Mohammed. He says:

“Oh I am glad, I’m very glad
 To be a citizen of”—Tobago and—“Trinidad.
 I’ll do my work sincerely
 To serve my country loyally.
 Early to school I’ll always be
 Doing my subjects obediently
 Playing and laughing,
 Learning and singing
 To serve my country untiring.
 My parents will I always obey.
 This message to my friends convey
 I’ll love my countrymen indeed
 Regardless of colour, race or creed,
 When I grow up tomorrow oh!
 I’ll study work and study oh!
 I’ll try to be a professor.
 To help my country grow much stronger
 And if to war my country go.
 I’ll fight for her for I love her so
 I’ll keep my body strong always
 To serve my country till my dying days.
 Sweet Trinidad, dear Trinidad.
 I’ll leave you not though things may be hard
 Though things may be hard and that may be sad.
 I’ll always love you sweet Trinidad.”
 I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

3.55 p.m.

Madam Vice-President: Hon. Senators, I believe this is a singular honour that I have. I believe in my short time here, starting as an Opposition Senator and now as Vice-President and presiding, that is possibly one of the most passionate and patriotic maiden speeches I have heard in this entire Senate. Congratulations. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Faris Al-Rawi: Thank you, Madam Vice-President. I will speak to this Motion, but I too wish to join you in congratulating the hon. Sen. Jamal Mohammed. Assalaamu Alaikum to my brother.

In a fantastic and stirring contribution to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, spoken in a bipartisan non-political manner, speaking really therefore to the heart of this Motion which is one about reflection and celebration of works of excellence as attributed to our leaders in the persons of Heads of State and Heads of Government.

Madam Vice-President, perhaps I may say that the hon. Senator is also a very good example of the ability of Trinidad and Tobago to rise to the challenge of celebrating democracy because, for those who do not know, his sister is also an excellent and passionate speaker who has graced the halls of this very Senate and the House of Representatives. [*Desk thumping*] In her contributions to the Senate, and I am speaking of—to use his terminology—Sister Nafeeza Mohammed. The Mohammed family is one of excellence; it is a living example as many of brothers and sisters, or brothers have sat here on opposite sides of the table at times, demonstrating to us the kind of democracy which we enjoy. The reflections of the Montano brothers, the reflections now of the Mohammed family sitting on opposite sides, the Gillette family—are all true reflections of Trinidad and Tobago being able to coexist. I think that is one of the purposes of the Motion brought before us today.

The Motion is couched in a very interesting context. Sen. Corinne Baptiste-Mc Knight—who looks very elegant in her shades, post-surgery this afternoon; very Matrix-like, as someone just said—told us that the purpose of her Motion was—and I wish to quote her, that the purpose of her Motion spoke to:

...helping to promote national pride in people. A culture of knowing and understanding, appreciation of achievements, recognition of people who promoted achievements, of facilitating ready access to history, of celebrating enlightened leadership.

She did reflect upon challenges. And the issue of challenges before us as a nation has been spoken to by many speakers. Sen. Abdulah dealt with it in his contribution. Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds also dealt with it in his own contribution.

Sen. Mohammed reflected upon it by asking those in authority to pay attention. I want to remind him that he sits on the Government side right now, and that he needs to look no further than those good people around him to encourage them to listen to the cry which he has put before us, which is one of celebrating trueness, wholesomeness and elevating the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I join him in a lot of his content this afternoon. Madam Vice-President, we are here to talk about celebrating history. I am a fan of etymology. I have always found it very interesting the word “history”—his story. Obviously, it would have originated from the tradition of telling your tale to those younger than you, and of having the tradition of carrying the story and the message go forward. Now a very interesting word which has always tickled my mind is the word “understand”. In most languages the word is “comprehend”, to take within yourself; “entendre”, to understand in your mind, to take it into your mind. It is always a process of absorption of something, and therefore an epiphany or realization of what the truth of it is.

The word “understand” is very much different. How do you stand under something to get a better idea often baffles me. I understand it comes from a German origin, and in Germany you stand under things, and therefore understand it better. In understanding where we are in Trinidad and Tobago and in reflecting upon the kind of history which we wish to put into monument, as the hon. Senator tells us, in a tangible form. I want to hold on to that word “tangible form”.

It is important for us to understand that we are reflecting upon a part of history. That part of history is the reflections of our leaders, our Heads of State and our Heads of Government. I genuinely wish, Madam Vice-President, in that context, to make a sterling cry to the Members who sit in the House of Representatives and this Senate to pay attention to the fact that you are making history right now.

The most important position of history is the history of your example. The example which the hon. Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight has asked us to embody, she calls it a tangible example and reflected upon collections of works by our eminent Heads of State and Government leaders. The example which she has called upon reflected upon the collection of the Dr. Eric Williams writings and of the Castara Project she spoke about.

I wish to ask her to consider, in this Motion, the use of the intangible as well, and I am using that word as it relates to technology, in particular. Sen. Mohammed reflected upon it and that is, the fact that we have in Trinidad and Tobago—thanks to the chairmanship of Dr. Keith Rowley, in particular—a Parliament Channel and a station dedicated on the radio waves to carrying the works, thoughts and actions of our representatives in the Parliament, be they appointed as we are in Senate or elected as we are in the Lower House.

Madam Vice-President, the Parliament Channel is a wealth and resource to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. It, in fact, embodies the live speeches, recorded contributions as reduced into writing by *Hansard* of all of our leaders in society. At this point I would like to say that I express my sincere congratulations to the members that sit in the management of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. To the Clerk of the House and to the Clerk of the Senate and for the very, very excellent work and dedication which we as parliamentarians are privileged to receive and witness every day from the members that serve here to manage the contributions which we make to the national development.

The development of laws in this country is the highest distinction which any lawyer could hope to ascribe to. I am sure that the hon. Attorney General agrees with me that when we sit here and we debate the laws for the benefit of our country, as attorneys, we are very privileged in that, Madam Vice-President. But it is thanks to the efficiency and professionalism of the members of the Parliament staff that we enjoy these benefits.

Madam Vice-President, if you were to have a reflection upon the online access to any Parliament in the Commonwealth Caribbean, you will notice that Trinidad and Tobago stands head and shoulders above all the rest. [*Desk thumping*] Our material is uploaded instantaneously. Contributions are recorded with immediacy. The only thing that is lacking, and this is from Member's difficulties now, is the confirmation of the *Hansard* record from unrevised to revised. But we have the unrevised contributions of Members available.

And I wish—and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to expand this point to express my very sincere gratitude to the Members of Parliament for the records which they have faithfully kept. [*Desk thumping*]

I am very, very, very, fortunate person, not only to be born in Trinidad and Tobago but on entering the Red House when we sat in the Parliament there. The first time I stepped on the mat to the door of the Parliament, I thought to myself, how lucky could one individual be to have his grandfather and mother also step on that mat. [*Desk thumping*] A sense of history dawned upon me. I was able to reflect upon—again, because of the Parliament—my grandfather's contributions and my mother's contributions in the Parliament. In particular, in the historical contributions when, for instance, Dr. Capildeo and in fact, my grandfather, attended at Marlborough to have the constitutional discussions, and I said to myself we as a people have come from a tradition of excellence. We must always take time to celebrate that tradition of excellence.

It is in that regard that I wish to pay sterling tribute to Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight for stopping to ask us to consider the Motion before us but more particularly I am sure for allowing the Leader of Government Business to ensure that if this is our last sitting on Private Members' Day—because it may be so—for this particular session before Parliament prorogues, that he would allow this resolution to come about. Unfortunately, in the last Parliament a very important Motion was laid before us by the hon. Sen. Subhas Ramkhelawan which spoke to a constitutional issue and, regrettably, Parliament prorogued without us having the benefit of the resolution being determined.

I hope that the Leader of Government Business this evening allows us to complete this Motion on Private Members Day so that we may have a resolution standing with the force of an agreement of all Members present that we do something tangible to celebrate the works of all or our Heads of State and our Heads of Government, Madam Vice-President.

In making history, I wish to make a genuine appeal to Members of Parliament that whilst we are being recorded, and our contributions may stand for good measure to those who succeed us, that we must remember the decorum which we ought to observe in this Parliament, and the level of research and intelligence that we must demonstrate, as well.

I ask you to take careful note that we saw interruptions during Sen. Hinds' contribution, as to relevance at times, by Members opposite and we did not visit the same feature to Members who spoke after. It is important for us to recognize that when debates are enlarged that we have to ability to speak to it, we have the privilege of free speech. I call upon Members and particularly in the other place at times to remember when we reflect upon the Parliament Channel that our young people are looking at our contributions.

Madam Vice-President, let me express to you how real a concern that is. We have a very interesting and troubling story in the news, and that is, that young persons ably employed in the very distinguished profession of the media, may be in trouble for issues including robbery. Now, without going into the subject matter of that, the point is that the example that our youth see from our leaders has to be very carefully considered. I ask those who sit in positions of responsibility and who are permitted access to privileges to pay careful heed that we must hold a higher standard, that we must carry a torch of truth and reflection at all points in time, and that we must be conscious that our every word and action are recorded and reflected upon.

4.10 p.m.

Even in the precincts of Parliament, we see that a Government Member is being brought before the court in respect of positions. Now, Madam Vice-President, it is important to remember the glass bowl and fish bowl effect—you are in the public scrutiny at all points in time, from all angles, and sometimes innocent statements may be blown out of proportion.

If we return to the conscious reflection of excellence, and we ensure that we come here prepared every time we make contributions—that we have done our research every time we make contributions—those very records in Parliament will stand the test that the hon. Senator has recommended to us of being included into works of a tangible effect, which we shall record for all measure of time.

We have heard a lot of discussion this afternoon by the hon. Sen. Mohammed about contributions made by Sen. Abdulah. Sen. Mohammed reflected upon the pride, which he says he feels in Sen. Abdulah standing to speak his mind, as he put it, in what he called “participation of democracy”. I, too, wish to say that I felt a great sense of pride in Sen. Abdulah’s observations, and his ability to stand forward in the national community and say his point of view. I think he is to be complimented for that.

I am reminded of the fact that one of the very excellent persons that has served this country is Rev. Abdulah. He is a man who—and as Sen. Mohammed reflected upon it—was there when the statement was made by ANR Robinson, “Attack with full force”. He was the voice of reason, and he is a gentleman to be celebrated by this country. In reflecting upon Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight’s Motion of expanding the example which we hope to give to our communities, by resolving as a Parliament that we do something tangible with respect to works, I wish to include in that, persons like Rev. Abdulah, a true hero of this country, in terms of a second tier of recording of works of excellence.

Now, Madam Vice-President, there is another factor. Historically, persons such as His Excellency ANR Robinson, Dr. Eric Williams and Dr. Rudranath Capildeo—insofar as he served as the leader of the DLP—we must remember that there are persons who have provided excellent contributions who may not have stood in the position of a Head of State, or as a Head of Government, but I would ask the hon. Senator to consider, perhaps, moving an amendment to her Motion to include Leaders of the Opposition as well, because in that way we would be able to encapsulate works of persons like Dr. Rudranath Capildeo, [*Desk thumping*] persons who, because of the particular demographics of politics, may not have had the opportunity to sit as Prime Minister or as Head of State, but whose works in the official capacity as Leader of the Opposition would contribute to the scholarly reflection of our citizens.

On the point of scholarly contribution, Dr. Eric Williams, Dr. Rudranath Capildeo and others stand as persons that spent a lot of dedication and time to write works of excellence and to put forward consistent papers.

The reality of today's world, Madam Vice-President, is that current leaders—I do not think that it is through lack of will—have an immediate effect upon them of not having the time to dedicate to works of excellence or scholarly work. Therefore, the legitimate question arises: will a leader sitting in the shoes—as His Excellency the President does or the current Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago does—have the time in the currency of their tenure to genuinely dedicate to works of excellence?—and I mean of the scholarly type. My submission is that they probably would not have that time.

Perhaps it is in later reflections that they may have that time, but insofar as that may be a reality in today's world, I wish Sen. Baptiste-Mc Knight to also reflect upon the fact that it may be necessary in collating the tangible effect of works—and here I tie back to the point of intangibility—to contemplate as well video archiving of works. I join Sen. Mohammed's contribution that the Parliament Channel can do a lot in terms of that reflection.

I again stop and pause and thank the chairman of the committee that presided in 2004, Dr. Rowley, my leader, in respect of ensuring that Parliament became a televised institution; live television and live audio [*Desk thumping*] because that has provided the bridge for us to allow the transformation of excellence from the written scholarly type, when time was better on our sides as persons, to the type of interaction which we have today, which is genuinely an audiovisual interaction.

Now, Madam Vice-President, in the audiovisual interaction, I come back again to asking for a higher standard of contribution and, in particular, from the Government. [*Desk thumping*] There is a very interesting piece of work written by Robert Fisk of *The Independent* newspaper. He addressed the Arab Lawyers' League while I was doing my master's in England on something which he called, "Threats, Lies and Videotape".

Sen. Ramlogan SC: What kinds of threats?

Sen. F. Al-Rawi: He was talking about the Middle East and the Iraqi invasion and the type of institutions. What he really spoke to there—this is not something that is sinister and there is no finger pointing—is the ability of the media, in the editing of media, to give the wrong impression; and that is the fact that sound bites; and 30 seconds of attention time frame, limit us in the type of messaging that we can give.

So, I wish to join with Sen. Mohammed in saying that the Parliament Channel's editing versions—and we have all seen excellent works of the type of parliamentary personalities as produced by the Parliament Channel provide a very real glimpse into the type of work and dedication that our parliamentarians offered and, in fact, dedicate themselves to.

Madam Vice-President, I plan on keeping my contribution short this afternoon. We are approaching the 4.30 p.m. marker. I am not sure what time the hon. Leader of Government Business proposes to cut off, but insofar as we may be cutting early, and I see a signal, we may have the opportunity to allow the hon. Senator who has presented this Motion to, perhaps, wrap it up so at least we may be guaranteed—I see not—so at least we may be given the privilege of a resolution.

I hearken to endorse the words of my colleague, Sen. Deyalsingh, with respect to the call for civics to be returned to the forefront of our institutions, [*Desk thumping*] something which Sen. Mohammed has also endorsed this afternoon. I wish, Madam Vice-President, insofar as I am encouraged to continue my contribution this afternoon that we also reflect upon how we as a people will see ourselves in the future, [*Crosstalk*] which message we ought to follow, as Sen. Bharath puts it. Is it the message, for instance, of the MSJ? [*Laughter*] Is it the message of the COP? Is it the message of NJAC and the chief servant?

Sen. Maharaj, perhaps unwittingly, in moving an irrelevancy with respect to reflections on Makandal Daaga's contribution, insofar as Sen. Hinds was speaking about him, opened the door to the fact that NJAC has a legitimate role to play. I personally do not ascribe to the fact that his contributions may be considered to be irrelevant in this Senate.

Sen. Maharaj: Would you give way?

Sen. F. Al-Rawi: Sure.

Sen. Maharaj: Sen. Al-Rawi, I would like to make it absolutely clear, that was not the point of irrelevance I made. I have the highest regard for his excellency, Makandal Daaga. He is a noble man, he is a great man and he is a great leader.

Sen. F. Al-Rawi: I thank the hon. Senator for his clarification. [*Laughter*] What I am pointing to is the fact that we must be careful what we consider when we move a Standing Order 35 statement as to what is irrelevant, because [*Desk thumping*] one may get the impression that reflections of the chief servant could have been viewed to be irrelevant, and I am grateful that the hon. Senator has clarified that.

Madam Vice-President, I noticed that we had sterling contributions from the back bench this afternoon as I speak to contributions. We have, of course, people who are dedicated in service in terms of their vocations to the Almighty and to the flock. Sen. Baynes is one of them, Sen. Mohammed sounded very much like one of them this afternoon and Sen. Rev. Barbara Burke definitely stands as one of them. [*Crosstalk*]

I noticed as well that, perhaps, Sen. Mohammed was imbibing the vocations that sit to his left and right in calling upon the Almighty to lend assistance to this Government. I think he is correct. I think that the Almighty needs to have genuine concerns for us as Trinidadians. After all, we repute that “God is a Trini”, and if he stands as a Trini, he must be very much concerned about the quality of contributions which we are now writing onto our historical books. So, I join you, Sen. Mohammed, in encouraging reflection and call to prayer, mugham, for our citizens to be guided because we are reflecting upon the message that is being sent.

Sen. Abdulah was very, very, correct and very, very, brave in his stance in saying that we must have the courage to stand as Trinidadians and Tobagonians to say, this is what we agreed; this is the message that we must hold on to; and this is the standard that we must ascribe to and to say it without fear or favour.

Madam Vice-President, I am sure the hon. Leader of Government Business, as charming as he is and as capable as he is, would ascribe to ensuring that we put down our swords at times—you know in Parliament we say that we sit two swords’ lengths from each other, and there is a reason for that—as we have done, for instance, in recent legislation, the Children Bill being one of them, and allow the opportunity to put the nation first at all points in time.

In putting nation first, I wish to reflect upon the fact that Sen. Abdulah made certain observations about the People’s National Movement, which I found rather curious, but which I understood because he said it from the perspective of an outsider, looking at the People’s National Movement. I must, however, accept his contributions as an insider of the Government. If he sits on the inside of a Government, in looking at the message which we set for all time, then I am forced and I must respectfully accept the message which he has sent, which is that we are in difficult times; that the Government has not held to the standard that it ought to.

I hope that Sen. Mohammed would stand on the minaret and make the mugham, call people to prayer, to come to pray for this Government, [*Desk thumping*] to bring them back to a reality of service, and of genuinely reflecting upon how difficult that service is under the prescription of collective responsibility. [*Desk thumping*] Collective

responsibility—set down as a measure for all time in our annals, in our historical records, which this Motion seeks to put down for future generations—is critical. So we have got, as a Government in charge of the vehicle which carries us, to make sure we are sending the right message, that we carry the message, Madam Vice-President. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

4.25 p.m.

Sen. Bharath has made a very good point, and that is about reading what you have said, tomorrow. I have often said, as a student and disciple of reading the *Hansard*, that I have found Sen. Bharath's contributions in particular to be of excellence. When I have read his contributions, he has been singular in his ability to stand in the Parliament of representatives, and now of persons appointed, giving his opinion. What I found interesting about being careful in what you say, is that he unfortunately, sitting in Government now, has often had to eat his own words on policy, [*Desk thumping*] and that takes us back to the position of hearkening to the responsibility of dedicated study and preparation when you come to Parliament—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Hinds: That is worse than eating bad rice!

Sen. F. Al-Rawi:—of looking at where we go to and what message we put on the record.

A very interesting example of messaging was provided in relation to the reflections on Caroni which happened across the floor this afternoon. Sen. Karim, as the records would show, and again we are looking at records for posterity, said “The PNM killed Caroni,” but yet we saw Sen. Hinds show us in the most skillful fashion this afternoon that the hon. Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago is on record as saying that it was the United National Congress which stood at the burial ceremony of Caroni performing aarti and all, as he put it. That is the most spectacular thing, because in the position of collective responsibility, which I have just referred you to, surely my good brother, Sen. Karim, a graduate of an excellent school like Presentation College, a brother I am proud to say has gone to the same alma mater as mine, would know in collective responsibility the views of the hon. Attorney General. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

Hon. Senator: You have three more minutes. [*Laughter*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi: Madam Vice-President, how glorious it is to be provided the opportunity to speak in this Parliament, without fear or favour, [*Desk thumping*] unbridled in the privilege which we are offered under our Constitution.

By the way, there is something very important which ought not to fetter the right to put things down on the record for posterity. That is the fact that there is, contrary to the Government's statements, a right of privilege. The Standing Orders which guide us as a Parliament are only a subset of that privilege, recorded from time to time.

Sen. Hinds: Well put! [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi: Our laws clearly tell us that where our Standing Orders are silent, we must look to the Standing Orders and practice of the Parliament in the United Kingdom. The practice in the United Kingdom, as set out in Erskine May's, is very, very clear, pellucidly clear, that you have a right of privilege.

Sen. Hinds: How does that relate to the Motion? [*Laughter*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi: Madam Vice-President, in linking that to the Motion, [*Desk thumping*] in putting our positions down on record, when you record the Parliament in the *Hansard*, the contributions, we are going to be putting down for the edification of the generations to follow, in the records which the hon. Senator's Motion speaks to, we are going to be putting down the right of privilege which we enjoy as a Senate. [*Interruption*]

Sen. Karim: One and a half minutes.

Sen. F. Al-Rawi: Madam Vice-President, I do not know what pleasure my learned brother, Sen. Karim, takes in counting down the minutes left before the tea break. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Senator: He must be hungry.

Sen. F. Al-Rawi: We are on the 50th anniversary of the celebration of the independence of our nation, of moving to republicanism, and we are celebrating—[*Interruption*] Do you wish to say something?

Sen. George: To adjourn.

Sen. F. Al-Rawi: Well let me wrap up then. Before I am curtailed in my contribution, I wish to end by saying that on this 50th anniversary, I wholeheartedly endorse the hon. Senator's Motion before us. [*Desk thumping*] I pray that the hon. Leader of Government Business will allow us to have a resolution recorded in this Parliament. I pray that the hon. Senator will consider the intangible aspects and the broadening of the Motion by including video and audio collation of works.

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I hope that our leaders would understand the responsibility of creating scholarly works, so that when titles and accolades are given to them, sometimes by themselves, that they would understand that they must stand with a torch as bearers of excellence and step up to the titles which they have given themselves, by recording works of excellence which we may put for the benefit of future generations in the context of the type of Motion we have before us.

With those few words, Madam Vice-President, I thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Utilities (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George): Madam Vice-President, this debate will be continued on another day. I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to Wednesday, May 23, which is tomorrow, at 1.30 p.m., when we will resume debate on the Children Bill and we will attempt to conclude the RHA Bill.

I also take the opportunity to indicate that once we complete those two Bills, we will move on to the Electronic Monitoring Bill and then the Economic Partnership Bill on days to be announced.

I thank you very much, Madam Vice-President.

Standing Order (18) **(Clarification of)**

Madam Vice-President: Hon. Senators, before I put the question, I would like to provide the answer as provided by the Clerk in response to matters that were raised during the contribution of Sen. Hinds.

I am guided by the Clerk of the Senate that Standing Order 18 deals with the manner of answering, and subparagraph (4) states that a Minister may decline to answer a question where in his opinion the answer is contrary to the public interest. As well, it is accepted practice, both in the House of Commons as well as here, that a Minister may choose to answer a question as he determines best, and an answer to a question cannot be insisted upon nor debated.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 4.32 p.m.