

*Leave of Absence*

*Tuesday, April 30, 2013*

**SENATE**

*Tuesday, April 30, 2013*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to Sen. The Hon. Ganga Singh, who is out of the country, and Sen. Dr. Lennox Bernard, who is ill.

**SENATORS' APPOINTMENT**

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from His Excellency the President, Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona SC:

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency ANTHONY THOMAS  
AQUINAS CARMONA, S.C., President and  
Commander-in-Chief of the Armed  
Forces of the Republic of Trinidad and  
Tobago.

/s/ Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona SC  
President.

TO: ARCHBISHOP BARBARA BURKE

WHEREAS Senator the Honourable Ganga Singh is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ANTHONY THOMAS AQUINAS CARMONA, President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, ARCHBISHOP BARBARA BURKE, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator the Honourable Ganga Singh.

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 30<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2013.”

*Senators' Appointment*

*Tuesday, April 30, 2013*

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency ANTHONY THOMAS  
AQUINAS CARMONA, S.C., President and  
Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of  
Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona SC  
President.

TO: MR. HUGH RUSSELL IAN ROACH

WHEREAS Senator DR. LENNOX BERNARD is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of illness:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ANTHONY THOMAS AQUINAS CARMONA, President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44(1)(b) and section 44(4)(c) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, HUGH RUSSELL IAN ROACH, to be temporarily a member of the Senate, with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 and continuing during the absence by reason of illness of the said Senator Dr. Lennox Bernard.

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 30<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2013.”

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Senators Abp. Barbara Burke and Hugh Russell Ian Roach took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.*

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME  
(STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PARLIAMENT)**

**Mr. President:** Senators will be aware that there is a programme under which Parliament has co-opted the United Nations Development Programme to assist the Parliament with strengthening the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. In connection with this exercise, we have now reached the point where we are finalizing the Strategic Development Plan for the Parliament. In connection with that, a consultant from the UNDP is here in Trinidad and will be here during the period May 06 to May 14, and he is asking that he would like to have an opportunity to meet with each one of the Members. So you will be circulated with a letter informing you of these particulars and asking if you would schedule a time convenient to you to meet with the consultant so that we can prepare the best possible strategic plan for the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Annual report of the Trinidad and Tobago Securities and Exchange Commission for the year ended September 30, 2012. [*The Minister of Finance and the Economy (Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai)*]
2. Ministerial response to the Second Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into and report to Parliament on Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions (with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission) on an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Arima Borough Corporation. [*The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George)*]

**SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee  
Caribbean Airlines Limited  
(Presentation)**

**Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds:** Thank you very kindly, Mr. President. Mr. President, I have the honour to present the following report as listed in the Order Paper standing in my name:

The Second Report of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee on Caribbean Airlines Limited on the examination of the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2008.

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**Mr. President:** Leader of Government Business, can you let us know the status, please?

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George):** Thank you, Mr. President. Yes, Mr. President, we are prepared on this side to answer the question No. 43. However, in respect of question No. 44, I just got a text from my colleague who, although he has—and I have in my possession—the answer to the question here—he sent me a text that says, “Need to defer my question pending further information.” So, apparently, he has further information that he will want to include so as to give the House a fuller explanation and a fuller answer.

**Sen. Hinds:** Or take out!

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** In respect of the questions for written answer, we would like leave of this House to defer the answers to those questions, please.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Oh God, again?

**Sen. The Hon. E. George:** Thank you, Mr. President.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Thank you, Mr. President. Just by way of clarification, the Order Paper for today's sitting, April 30, 1.30, seems to be a bit wanting. Question 43 is not listed on the Order Paper, though I was aware that some—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. President:** You have a different Order Paper from me.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Perhaps so, Mr. President. The Order Paper in my possession has “Questions for Written Answer” annexed to the appendix.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** You got the wrong one, Faris.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Well, just for clarification, if it could come. And, secondly, Mr. President, on the last occasion when questions were presented before the Senate, I had enquired of the Leader of Government Business whether the questions then for answer—that is last week—would have been answered this week, and the undertaking was given then that they would. [*Desk thumping*] Perhaps the hon. Leader could lend some clarification on that exercise.

**Sen. Hinds:** Tell us something!

**Mr. President:** As I understood it, the Leader of Government gave clarification on the question of why only one of the two questions could be answered orally today, and I do have on my Order Paper, both an appendix including all the written questions and listed on page 2 are the questions that are on the Order Paper for today.

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Sen. Penelope Beckles:*

#### **Food Import Bill (Details of)**

**44.** Could the hon. Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment indicate to the Senate:

- (i) what was the country's total food import bill per year for the years 2008—2012 inclusive; and
- (ii) the first ten items of highest expenditure on the food import bill for the above mentioned years together with the monetary values?

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

**Mr. President:** Sen. Beckles, the first question.

**Gender Policy  
(Status of)**

**43. Sen. Penelope Beckles** asked the hon. Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development:

- A. Could the Minister indicate whether Cabinet has approved a Gender Policy?
- B. If the answer to (A) is yes, could the Minister indicate the date of the Cabinet approval and the date the said policy will be laid in Parliament?

**The Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development (Sen. The Hon. Marlene Coudray):** Thank you, Mr. President. The answer to the question is, no. And for the benefit of the Senator: Could the Minister indicate whether Cabinet has approved a gender policy, the answer is, no, and as to the second part of the question, it does not apply, it is not applicable based on the answer at A.

**Mr. President:** Supplemental, Sen. Beckles.

**Sen. Beckles:** Can I enquire of the hon. Minister whether there is actually a draft policy that has been completed by her Ministry?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, a draft national policy on gender and development was submitted to the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago and that draft national policy was referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Cabinet.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Further supplemental, Mr. President. Could the hon. Minister please indicate whether there is an expectation in terms of time as to when that policy may be presented?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, unfortunately, I am not in a position to respond to that question.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Further supplemental, Mr. President. Could the hon. Minister please indicate what then, in the absence of an estimation for time and in the absence of a policy, guides her Ministry, it being the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, that seems to be a new question.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah, file a new question there.

**Sen. Hinds:** Supplemental, Mr. President. Madam Minister, would you, for the benefit of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, indicate the process in the F&GP and when are we likely to see it emerge from the Finance and General Purposes Committee?

**Mr. President:** I do not think that is a question you could put to the Minister today.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** What policy did you all have?

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** A further supplemental—oh, sorry.

**Mr. President:** I am not entering into a debate on the question.

**Sen. Hinds:** No, no, no. Neither am I.

**Mr. President:** Well, you have not asked whether you have a supplemental.

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes, supplemental. Is the Minister able to say when this policy would emerge or come out of the Finance and General Purposes Committee?

**Mr. President:** The question has already been answered. Sen. Deyalsingh.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Further supplemental, Mr. President. Could the hon. Minister state whether this gender policy bears any resemblance to that which was being done by your predecessor, Sen. Verna St. Rose Greaves?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, that seems to be another new question.

**Sen. Hinds:** No!

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** A further supplemental, Mr. President. Could the hon. Minister please indicate when this policy was presented to the F&GP for consideration?

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes! Could you answer the question?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** You are assuming the role of President now?

**Mr. President:** Minister?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Thank you, Mr. President—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** She is called upon. Learn parliamentary procedure!

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, as I recall, it was sometime September/October last year. I just do not remember exactly the date.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Further supplemental. Could the hon. Minister indicate whether she is, in fact, a member of the F&GP?

**Mr. President:** Minister?

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I am a member of the F&GP.

**Sen. Hinds:** And you were not able to tell us.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** A further supplemental, Mr. President. Could the hon. Minister, then, in those circumstances, indicate whether this matter has, in fact, been considered by the F&GP?

**Mr. President:** I do not think the question arises out of the questions that have been laid before the House. You could, of course, lay another question for the Minister if you like.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Mr. President, if I may, just by way of clarification. I am permitted under the Standing Orders to ask questions which arise as a result of the Minister's answer, [*Desk thumping*] and I was just posing the question insofar as the bald statement is that it is before the F&GP with no particulars, Mr. President. I am trying to gain some form of elucidation. It is nothing other than understanding how the Ministry is to be guided because this is an important issue on the national platform.

**Sen. Hinds:** In the public interest.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** I do not know if your ruling still stands with that clarification, Mr. President.

**Sen. Hinds:** That is a legitimate posture. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. President:** I will allow the question, Minister—[*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Thank you very much. Answer!

**Mr. President:**—having regard to the answer you previously gave.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, could I have the question repeated, please?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** With your leave, Mr. President, I was simply asking, Mr. President, whether the hon. Minister is able to assist us as to whether that matter of the gender policy has, in fact, been considered by the F&GP, sitting as a member of the F&GP. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, as indicated before, the draft national gender policy is before the Finance and General Purposes Committee receiving active consideration.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Sorry, Mr. President. The question was whether the hon. Minister—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. President:** Sorry, Senator, you will have to accept the answer that has been given by the Minister. I cannot allow you to further prolong that particular—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Just by way of clarification, for your guidance on future questions, Mr. President—

**Sen. Ramlogan:** “You cyar guide he!” “For your guidance?” “Bu’ you is de President of de country or what?”

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Mr. President, the acoustics do not seem to travel well to my learned colleague, the Attorney General, who hears something else. I am asking for your guidance, Mr. President. [*Crosstalk*] Is it that the—even if the answer bears no resemblance to the question, that it then stands?

**Mr. President:** I am afraid that is the Standing Orders. You have to accept the answers being presented by the Minister.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** Sen. Deyalsingh.

**1.50 p.m.**

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Further supplemental, Mr. President. Could the hon. Minister state whether the gender policy has a component for LGBT rights?

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Wha’ is dat?”

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Lesbians, bisexuals, gays and transsexuals.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Say that nah, man, like yuh fraid!” [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Hinds:** “You eh fraid?”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “No, dai why ah ask him to say it.”

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, the Member is asking about a national policy, there is no national policy at this time. However, I am not at liberty to disclose the contents of the draft national gender policy at this time. [*Desk thumping*]



**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Further supplemental, Mr. President. Could the hon. Minister indicate whether the gender policy which is before the F&GP is one in respect of which there has been consultation by members of the public?

**Sen. Hinds:** Good question!

**Mr. President:** I take it you meant consultation with members of the public.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Yes, Mr. President, thank you.

**Mr. President:** Yes, Minister.

**Sen. Hinds:** Come on, answer, and “doh hide it”.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, the draft national gender policy, there have been consultations on that draft to reach before the Cabinet.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Perhaps my final question by way of supplemental question, Mr. President. Is the hon. Minister at liberty, in view of the importance of gender policy as it relates to the Children Bill which was passed by this honourable Senate and the House—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. President:** Sorry, Senator, I cannot allow you to embark upon a debate on the issue. You can ask the question, no preamble.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Sure, Mr. President, that is why I started with the word “whether” starting my question. So, I am permitted in asking a question to start that way. I would truncate it.

**Mr. President:** Senator, I would like you to ask the question.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Well, Mr. President, there is only one way to ask the question with the greatest of respect to you, Mr. President. So, I am asking whether in view of the importance of the Children Bill and the gender policy issues which arose there, whether the issues which arose in that debate form part of the gender policy which is currently before the F&GP.

**Sen. Hinds:** Well putted! Well putted!

**Mr. President:** I do not think that the Minister should be called upon to answer that particular question.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That was a chapter, not a question!

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Further supplemental, Mr. President. Could the hon. Minister state whether any more consultations are supposed to be held before the policy goes forward with any further groups?

**Mr. President:** Minister.

**Sen. The Hon. M. Coudray:** Mr. President, again, the matter is before the F&GP and I cannot predict or—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** What will happen thereafter.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Maybe I did not ask the question properly, Mr. President, I will repeat it. Could the hon. Minister state whether any further consultations with any groups are to be held before this policy goes forward?

**Mr. President:** Senator, I believe the Minister has adequately answered the question; you will have to accept her answer.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “By de time all yuh finish, it ha no time for debate, yuh know.”

**Sen. Hinds:** “Da is alright”; we want answers.

#### GOVERNMENT’S COMMITMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

[Fourth Day]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question* [November 20, 2012]:

*Be it resolved* that the government re-affirm its commitment to these principles and the practice of democracy in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Sen. F. Hinds*]

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr. President:** Those who spoke on the last occasions: On Tuesday, November 20, 2012: Sen. Fitzgerald Hinds, mover of the Motion; Sen. The Hon. Christlyn Moore, Minister of Justice; Sen. Subhas Ramkhelawan.

On Tuesday, February 26, 2013: Sen. Shamfa Cudjoe; Sen. Helen Drayton; Sen. The Hon. Kevin Ramnarine, Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs; Sen. Penelope Beckles.

On Tuesday, March 26, 2013: Sen. The Hon. Embau Moheni, Minister in the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration; Sen. Terrence Deyalsingh; Sen. Elton Prescott SC and Sen. Dr. Lennox Bernard who is not with us today and therefore his contribution would have ended. We will now invite members wishing to participate in the debate to do so now. Sen. Ramkissoon.

**Sen. Prof. Harold Ramkissoon:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, through you, I would first like to extend congratulations and best wishes to Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George on his ascension to the “hot seat”. [*Desk thumping*]

With challenges, Mr. Minister, come opportunities. Your opportunity or your challenge is to make a dent on the number one problem facing the country today, crime, and you leave yourself a proud legacy.

Mr. President, the Motion that we are debating today is about democracy, the principles of democracy and the Government's commitment to these principles and practice of democracy. In brief, it is about good governance. Let me start by stating that democracy is alive in Trinidad and Tobago.

As we witnessed recently with the Tobago House of Assembly election, it went without any major glitch and 70 per cent of the people participated in the election, so democracy is alive in Trinidad and Tobago. The question, though, is democracy well in Trinidad and Tobago? And that is the question which I would address in my contribution. If it is not well, what is the Government and society at large doing about the state of democracy?

Mr. President, democracy is the gift given to us by the Greeks, although they have problems, in fact, looking after their democracy, it is now under threat.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Not a good example right now, Senator. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** But it is a gift given to Western civilization by the Greeks. It comes, in fact, from the Greek word *dēmokratia*; *dēmos* people, *kratia* power or rule. Hence, democracy is the rule or form of Government in which people have power, real power; the power is in the hands of the people. Too often, Mr. President, the people get dropped from the equation and we have democracy or rule by an individual, in which case we have dictatorship or rule by a few people, a couple of people, in which case, we have oligarchy, the rule by a cabal.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Well said!

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** In many countries, what obtains is oligarchy, Mr. President, masquerading as democracy. Many crimes and injustices have been perpetrated in all but the name of democracy. One of the better definitions of democracy that I have encountered is the following and I quote:

In democracy, the State does not command the people, the people command the State.

One of the better definitions of democracy, I do not think it could be better said. Mr. President, who happened to be the author of those fine words? Adolf Hitler.

**Hon. Senator:** Ooh good!

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Mr. President, this is the classic of the path to hell is paved with good intentions. [*Crosstalk*]

The question we have to ask ourselves is: do the people of Trinidad and Tobago have real power? In my view, there are two types of democracy: participatory and representative democracy. In the representative form of government or representative democracy, the representatives make the decisions for the people. There are no bridges, no links, between those who govern and the governed. On the other hand, in participatory democracy, we have those links and bridges between those who govern and the governed.

In California, and also Switzerland, we have an example of a mixed mode, both participatory and representative. In my respectful view, Mr. President, what we have in Trinidad and Tobago is representative democracy. What do we do? We trek to the polls, approximately once every five years, we cast our vote, we go back to our homes and we wait for the next election in another five years to say yea or nay. This is democracy at its lowest level; this is minimal democracy. Mr. President, democracy is more than what we do at the polls.

In our system, people can hardly influence the decisions that are important to them. What happens between elections, Mr. President, does not really matter much to them, in the sense that they do not have a say, an input, into what should matter to the people. This leads to frustration and alienation. When a party gets into power, it is literally given a blank cheque to almost do anything it pleases and we see that with respect to borrowing. Governments can borrow almost without any limit, thereby creating problems for future generations. This open cheque system, Mr. President, is not a particularly good system. We do have checks and balances, but for some reason the checks and balances do not seem to work. Ethics is thrown out of the window, corruption flourishes and the people in the end pay a price, and in some cases, a very high price.

In 2000, the corruption index for Trinidad and Tobago stood at, I think it was 5.3 out of 10. The higher the score is the least corrupt you are. In 2010, the score went down to 3.6; 2012, I think it went to 3.9; compare that to Barbados, 7.5. To summarize, Mr. President, the image of this country in the international arena is that it is a highly corrupt country.

Money that should go to education, health and infrastructure fills the pocket of no longer the few, but now the many. Corruption is widespread. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Under this Government.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Ours, Mr. President, has been a history of corruption.

As a consequence, Mr. President, our health system is in shambles and it has been in shambles for years. Are we listening to the cries of the people? Let me go to a newspaper clipping, the *Daily Express*, 11/04/2013, and this is the experience of a citizen who took her mother to Mount Hope for treatment—a senior citizen, age 62, diabetic, to Mount Hope—and let me quote from what the citizen had to say:

“Our citizens are dying without dignity in our hospital corridors and rooms. What is the purpose of our leaders, those in the health authority, our Government, our democracy, our rule of law and justice? Where is the accountability in our country?”

The cry of one of our citizens and we need to listen to the cries of our people.

Our education system, Mr. President, continues to fail so many. Our roads, particularly our roads in the rural areas, are in a state of disrepair. Water for all is still an elusive dream and maybe the hon. Minister of water resources—is it?—and the environment, who is now having a so-called second bite at the cherry, will try to convert that dream into a reality.

You will want to believe, Mr. President, with all the problems that we are having in the country, we might be classified as a least developed country. But far from it, according to an OECD report, Mr. President, we are not a least developed country, we are not a low income country, we are not even a medium country. We are a high income country, so we have money and yet the people experience so much misery and such a poor quality of life. Yes, Mr. President, we have democracy, representative democracy, but that is certainly failing us; that is not working.

Mr. President, let me make it abundantly clear, I am not advocating we abandon democracy. According to Sir Winston Churchill:

“...democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.”

What I am advocating is a mix of representative democracy and participatory democracy, that we set up mechanisms to deal with greater consultation and dialogue. I want here to commend the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Legal Affairs, for their effort to engage the public in consultation with respect to constitutional reform. However, citizens are waiting to see if this is just old talk or if it will result in meaningful changes and make a positive difference to our lives.

Mr. President, one mechanism that can give the people a greater say in the affairs of the country is that of a referendum. Here, people are asked to accept or reject a proposal in a direct vote. For example, there are some who believe we should have an executive president; that can be decided by a referendum, and it is my hope that we would see it as a tool, a link between those who govern and the governed, in the new revised Constitution.

Mr. President, I now want to turn to some specific principles of democracy. I want to continue talking about consultation and dialogue. These are in my view almost non-existent, and as I said, we need to put mechanisms in place to deal with it, and one such mechanism, as I said, is the tool of referendum. If we had proper consultation and dialogue, the fiasco that was the Point Fortin highway could have been avoided, maybe just avoided.

What should have been done in the case of the Point Fortin highway? First and foremost, there should have been an environmental impact assessment and I think that was done, but then that should have been made public. It should have been made public. The second thing that should have been done was an independent assessment taking into account the socio-economic and physical dimensions of the project. In the team of experts, you should have included a social scientist and someone from the planners association. You need experts. So you have this independent assessment done, and again, you make it public. Then, you have consultation with the stakeholders, town hall-type meetings, and then you proceed to have a public debate on television. In this way, you would have an enlightened mass, people would then know the facts, and be in a position to make an informed decision on whether we should go ahead with the project or we should not go ahead with the project. That, to me, is the enlightened democratic approach to dealing with that problem.

### **2.10 p.m.**

Let me talk a bit about transparency and accountability. They are also principles of democracy. Permit me to quote from an Inter-Parliamentary Union 1998 report, titled *Democracy: Its Principles and Achievement*. I want to quote from it. I quote:

“Democracy thus goes hand in hand with an effective, honest and transparent government, freely chosen and accountable for its management of public affairs.”

Mr. President, transparency and accountability apply not only to politicians, it should apply to all those public authority bodies. In my view, transparency and accountability have been our Achilles heel. Intimate link, a relationship between lack of transparency and accountability and corruption. Lack of transparency and accountability, with respect to our procurement procedures lead to corruption. Mr.

President, it is a Herculean task to deal with corruption in this country in general, but someone has to clean the Augean stables. The problem of corruption in this country is too widespread and has to be dealt with. There must be some government in this country, some day that would say: "Look, enough is enough and we need to deal with corruption; the scourge of our society." We wait with bated breath for the introduction of the Procurement Bill promised by this Government in our Parliament. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Sen. Tewarie.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Mr. President, let me move on now to integrity and credibility. They can also undermine our democracy. Let me illustrate, by the way of an example, with respect to our health service, an issue that I brought up here in this Parliament some time ago, the over-radiating of about 200 patients at the Brian Lara Cancer Treatment Centre. A proper, thorough investigation was promised by the Minister of Health but to date we do not have a report. Not a single person has been held responsible and there has been strong evidence that I brought to the Senate, with respect to negligence bordering on criminal negligence but to date, again, no one has been brought to justice.

Another situation is the question of infant mortality rate in the country, infants dying during childbirth or mothers not living to see their children grow. When you look at the infant mortality rate, what it says again, in Trinidad and Tobago 28 infants die for every 100,000 births. In Singapore, it is three. In Barbados, it is about 10 and the standard response you get from the Minister and from the Ministry of Health when you ask questions about these deaths—and we had one recently.

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** We had one very recently, Sarah Lutchman in April 2013; that is this month—and when you ask the Minister to account for these deaths, or the officials in the Ministry of Health, what response do you get? "We are investigating." And even if they do investigate and you get a report, no one is brought, again, to justice. No one, as far as I know, has been held responsible and there is evidence of incompetence and negligence in the Ministry of Health.

The hon. Minister of Health seems to excel in sweeping things under the carpet.

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh yes. [*Desk thumping*] This whole Government.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** And given the fact that the medical fraternity is a close-knit family, I have no problem; a close-knit family. They try to protect their own but, in that case, we should not have a Minister of Health who is a medical doctor. The hon. Minister of Health is a case, is an example of a Minister who, in my view, has lost his credibility. [*Desk thumping*] When the people lose hope, dark clouds hover over our democracy.

**Sen. Hinds:** Um-hmm.

**Sen. Prof. H. Ramkissoon:** Now, I want to turn to crime and fear. I do not want to discourage my good friend on his recent appointment but I need to talk about crime and fear. Democracy cannot thrive in an environment of fear. Democracy cannot thrive if limb, life and property are threatened. Democracy cannot thrive if we cannot go about our daily life in peace. All law-abiding citizens are deeply concerned about the crime situation in the country and justifiably so. It is one of the great threats to our fledgling democracy. With all the planning in the world, if you do not make a dent on the crime problem, we are not going to make solid progress in this country. It is as simple as that. We need to bring crime down to an acceptable level.

In an article on Threats to Democracy by one Joshi in *The Statesman* of March 22, 2001, the author mentions a number of things that find resonance in Trinidad and Tobago today. Among these, and I quote:

“...the failure of the...justice system to control crime in a fair, just and effective manner...”

The author goes on:

“...an increasing feeling that the democratic system has failed to provide a feeling of security to the common man.”

May I ask the question: How can people have faith and confidence in the justice system, where only about 25 per cent of the people who commit the crime get caught? Justice, in that case, is denied the majority of the victims and when you do catch them, they are hauled before the courts and their cases sometimes go on for five, 10 years, for long periods. So our justice system is creaking and needs to be overhauled.

Let me quote again, the *UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice*, 1995:

“To feel safe from crime is as important to a person as access to food, shelter, education and health.”



Mr. President, the time has come for us to stop the politicking, cross the divide and come up with a long-term plan for dealing with the crime problem in the country. [*Desk thumping*] And if we cannot get this approach, a bipartisan approach, then we may have to think about setting up a national committee or a national commission to produce a plan to solve this problem. Crime is a complex problem in this society. It is a complex problem and that is why governments are having trouble dealing with crime in the country. It is a complex problem but it needs to be studied and we need to come up with a long term plan to deal with it in a holistic manner. There is no shortcut. There is no easy fix.

Failure to act and to act collectively will lead to a further breakdown of law and order and let me warn the citizens, when there is a breakdown of law and order, you really have problems. I know what I am talking about. I was there and maybe someday in the Senate I would talk about my experience in one of the countries where there was a total breakdown of law and order but we do not want to get there. It is an ugly scene.

I want to commend the Government for the Ryan Report. I think it is a good beginning but we need to act on the Ryan Report. It cannot be a dust collector on our shelves.

I want to look at another aspect of democracy. Democracy cannot exist in a vacuum. It is a seed that is to be planted and matured in an enabling environment. What type of environment are you talking about? It must be embedded in a socio-economic environment. Now, if it is embedded in a capitalist system as in the US, then you have democratic capitalism, or it can be planted into a socialist system and then you have democratic socialism, as you have in the Scandinavian countries, Sweden, for example.

What is the difference? Democratic capitalism, as in the US, is driven mainly by profit, which in turn, admittedly, drives motivation. The bottom line here is the dollar. That is the bottom line in the capitalist system. But there are problems here. It leads to a culture of greed. It leads to a widening gap between the rich and the poor. There is great inequality. In the USA, 1 per cent of the population owns 25 per cent of the wealth. In the USA, millions cannot afford quality health care. Great inequality is a threat to democracy. Trinidad and Tobago, in my view, is also a democratic capitalist country.

On the other hand, in a democratic socialist country, profit is also a motive but it is not the bottom line. There is also concern for the public good, providing service for the public in general. As I see it, in a democratic socialist country the business sector/the private sector make a profit of \$2, of which \$1

goes to the tax man to provide good services for the people. That is the difference between the two systems. Meeting the needs of the public, that is the major difference. And all have access to good services, be it health services or otherwise.

The Trinidad and Tobago Government has good intentions, laudable intentions. They want to provide, looking at their document here, *Annual Report of Performance, 2012*, they want to provide quality service, health service for all the people; laudable goals. But I ask the question: Tell us how you are going to do this. Give us the details. Where are you going to get the funds? What is your time frame? You know, the gap between what exists in the health sector today and what they want to achieve, quality health service for all, there is a wide, wide gap. They are light years apart. So we need to have details. How are you going to achieve this goal? They have been able to achieve this to some extent in the socialist countries like Sweden. They have not been able to achieve this in the USA. Mr. President, democracy planted in this socialist environment thrives, leads to greater equality and good governance and to a stable society. In my view, that is the way we should go in the future.

After 50 years of independence and several governments, and several elections, we are yet to establish good governance in Trinidad and Tobago. We are yet to fully embrace the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability, integrity. These still elude us and our people are becoming frustrated. We must break out from what I call the clutches of mal-governance. This calls for a new thinking, a paradigm shift. We cannot continue with the same old ways. People are getting tired.

To sum up, our democracy is alive, but our democracy is not well. This Government has signalled its intention to act but how deep is this commitment, is left to be seen and time is not on their side. My own view is that major constitutional reforms, coupled on to a will to create a more just and equitable society will aid the ailing patient and assure our children of a better tomorrow. Thank you very much, Mr. President. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. James Armstrong:** Thank you Mr. President. I have very few comments or observations to make today on this Bill.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Motion.

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong:** On this Motion. Sorry, thank you. What I did was to, as I usually would do, try to ascertain why Sen. Hinds felt it necessary to bring this Motion for our consideration and I ask the question: What is our

responsibility? I ask the question of: How do we deal with our citizens? I ask the question pertaining to freedom of the press, the privileges that we have within this Parliament. I ask myself the question about the current exercise for constitutional reform, for local government reform, and I would like to just briefly touch on those things because I think most of the other things that I wanted to comment on have already been addressed.

The first thing I want to touch on or elaborate on is the business of constitutional reform and I am aware of the fact that we are actually now in the process of looking at the Constitution and that we are having consultations, public participation consultations, with a number of groups, some with the public in general. This is expected, really, to enhance democracy and to enhance the participation of our citizens in the process of democracy. But as my colleague just said, democracy is not simply having elections, it is also the process of governance and equity within that process.

I am a little concerned as to whether we are actually achieving that objective. I agree fully, as my colleague just said, that democracy is fairly well practised in Trinidad and Tobago. What I am concerned about, as I have said on a number of occasions, pertain really to the business of equity and fair treatment. In particular, I would like to raise the issue of recent elections in Tobago, as was also mentioned by my colleague and to ask: what has really happened with the Bills that we were supposed to be contemplating? And I am concerned, not so much about the content of those documents, but more so about the process.

### **2.30 p.m.**

During the election campaign, we were actually treated to a number of pronouncements and promises: internal self-government; increases in allocations. I also heard the Attorney General actually saying that there would be some devolution or some responsibility for legal issues in Tobago—law-making in Tobago and so on—and this was moving at a fairly rapid pace; and I am quite surprised that all of this seems to have died down and that we are hardly hearing anything about it.

I am wondering whether, in terms of the process of democracy—not the content of those Bills—that will be sorted out in due course, but the process in arriving at a democratic outcome for people who, one, have spoken in terms of how they would like to see governance within that subnational jurisdiction, has not, in my view, progressed in the way that we anticipated. So I am requesting and urging that this matter should be brought to the Table again and that it should be given adequate consideration.

This arrangement reminds me, Mr. President—I believe I mentioned a story that I was told by a Jamaican friend of mine in which he said that he allows, in his house, his wife to make all important decisions but that he determines what is important. I believe I might have mentioned this some time ago and I think this is exactly what seems to be in vogue here—that the current arrangement does not allow for the expression and realization of the will of a group of our citizens within the context of promises and discussions that were taking place. So I really urge that we try to deal with that.

The second thing that I want to comment on with respect to the strengthening of our democracy has to do with the local government exercise, and I know that we have been trying to do this for a very long time. I myself wrote a paper on this—I think it was in 2008 or 2006, somewhere around there and we are at it again.

I read through a document, the Government's Policy on Local Government Transformation and Modernization and I would like to congratulate the Minister in that Ministry, and the Government, for the compilation of this document, and I trust that one of his colleagues would convey to him the fact that I was very impressed by a lot of the information in it because I think that information is extremely important if we are going to improve on the process of democracy; and I think that the document clearly sets out where the Government wants to go with respect to local government.

What I am not very clear on, however, is the form of governance that we want to really adopt at the local level. The document speaks in general terms about decentralization and within decentralization there are really different forms of devolution, if you will, or how you transfer responsibilities from the national level to the local level. The document seems to talk about a model of devolution, which really means that you are transferring certain responsibilities to local government entities, subnational entity, either in a two-tier or a three-tier system; but very often without the resources to really implement the policies, the programmes, the projects and so on that are determined at the local government level. And that is of some concern to me.

If even we look at another model, which is the delegation model, which is really the transformer of decision making and management for specific functions to bodies which are not necessarily a part of the central Government, that issue still has not been addressed.

There is another model of deconcentration, which is really the redistribution of selected responsibilities usually to non-governmental organizations; or debureaucratization, which is another model. So that, within the context of the ongoing local government exercise, Mr. President, I think we need to seriously

consider, if we are going to go ahead with this exercise, how we are going to deal with the question of the transfer of resources, of funds, to do what we want at the local level. That, I think, is very important and while it has been mentioned in two parts of the document—I do not remember—I think on page 17 and another section—that this is being given consideration, one gets the distinct impression that there would be a devolution of some authority, some responsibilities, but without the means and that, to me, is a prescription to maintain the status quo.

In other words, it is a prescription whereby, although we are hoping, through this process as articulated by the Minister in the document, to bring democracy to the people, that it is still a situation in which what is going to be happening is that because you have to depend on central Government for your resources, that the central Government would continuously, or continue to determine how you do development at the local level and how you participate in a bottom-up process as opposed to the top-down process.

This morning, I heard, for instance, the Mayor of Port of Spain on the TV and he was adamant that his hands are tied; that there is misrepresentation of a number of things that have been said and I think these things were articulated by the Minister only a few days earlier; and that, to me, is clear evidence, very clear evidence, that under an improved local government system, unless we have a situation whereby resources are at the disposal, or adequate resources are at the disposal of the local authority, we are going to continue having this kind of problem. Of course, on the other hand—and I do not want to get into debate on it—the Minister is saying, “Well, yeah, resources are available, but they are not drawing down on them.” So that this is a concern that I think we need to address, Mr. President.

Another thing I want to touch briefly on has to do with something that my colleague, Sen. Balgobin, spoke about recently, and that had to do with a meeting with Senators and with respect to information on defence and crime and so on.

I felt compelled to comment on this because, as my colleague said, given the opportunity, I personally would do it again because I think in a democracy we need access to information and I felt that that was the occasion in which there was an opportunity for us to get additional information. However, I must also say that I would agree with some of the public sentiments and certainly some of the sentiments expressed in here, that perhaps in the future such information should also be made available, not simply to the Independent Senators, but to everyone who would have an interest in such information.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Exactly! [*Desk thumping*] That is the point!

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong:** I also would like to mention that I was a little surprised that it was described as some sort of clandestine meeting because before I was actually advised officially of the meeting, two members of the press called me and asked me if I was going to the meeting. So that I certainly would not have left my house to go to any meeting that was supposed to be clandestine, but two members of the press called me to ask me if I am going. So that I was not of the impression that it was a clandestine meeting. I really thought it was a meeting that was well known to the public and in which information was going to be shared.

I take the point really that—and I think I have the responsibility to mention that, one, the information should be shared more widely. As my colleague said, I do not think that such information in any way would significantly change the thinking simply because it is clandestine. I think if the information is of some significance, then one takes it into consideration and moves on from there.

The other thing that I want to mention briefly, Mr. President, has to do with the conduct of parliamentarians. In the Motion under consideration—this morning I actually went back to sort of “refreshen” my thoughts on what Sen. Hinds said when he actually introduced the Motion and, interestingly, he started off with, in the first few pages of his presentation, indicating that there was some concern about the conduct of parliamentarians with respect to how we treat with members of the public who are citizens and the kinds of statements that we make under protection, certain privileges, and I am a little concerned about that as a parliamentarian.

And interestingly enough, only this morning, we had another citizen on the TV making claims that parliamentarians, all right, are actually making accusations, all right, that are not factual and that they feel, in some way, disadvantaged in that there is no avenue in which to respond. I think it is something that, if we are serious about democracy and we are serious about equity, and we are serious about fair play, we have to take into consideration. [*Desk thumping*]

We are aware of the fact that—in fact, this morning I heard the person complaining that they are going to write to the Speaker to complain. I do not know the facts of the case. All I am saying is that increasingly we have a number of our citizens that are very concerned about how we conduct our business in here and the kind of pronouncements that are made.

One other quick thing that I wanted to mention, Mr. President, has to do with the press. Quite recently, we have been hearing about concerns about press freedom. One of the things that I really admire about Trinidad and Tobago is that

so far I think we still have a very free press and I quite enjoy it. [Laughs] I quite enjoy it because I know for a fact that some of the countries in which I have lived there is no way, no way you would even think some of the things that we write and speak about.

**Hon. Senator:** You cannot even think it.

**Sen. Dr. J. Armstrong:** You cannot even think it.

So that, I think we have a very free press and I appreciate the concerns that we have about maintaining that situation. Again, maybe it has not changed significantly, but simply as a precaution, I think that it is something that, if we are having a number of persons indicating that they feel—and I have been listening to some of the comments—and again I think there is need for restraint, particularly when those statements, again, are made within the confines of the Parliament where people may feel intimidated and not be able to respond.

One final thing, Mr. President, has to do with the whole business of campaign financing and our democracy. Now I know that there is a Motion that is pending for discussion, I believe, sometime in the future. I do not know if it is going to be in this session, but I became a little concerned in recent weeks about the way in which we really finance our elections and the way in which individuals come to power. It seems very clear to me that “the more corn you have is the more fowl you are gonna feed”. If that is the situation, I urge that as we proceed with constitutional reform, that we bring this forward on the burner. Bring it forward on the burner!

**2.50 p.m.**

I was reading some information where it was suggested that, with respect to an individual, I think it was \$25,000 expenditure, if I saw correctly. But I also read an article by former Senator Dana Seetahal SC in which she pointed out a number of loopholes where, in fact, you could be spending millions and millions of dollars, and not really have to account for it. I feel that this is a blot really on the process and the outcome of the democratic process that we tout that we feel so proud of, and it is something that has to be addressed as soon as possible. I think the evidence is quite current, and it is something really that disturbs me significantly.

In general, Mr. President, I think that the Motion was timely. As I said, it was not really my intention to speak, but between the time from November to now, since we have been debating this Motion, so much has happened that I really felt obliged to say these few words.

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

**The Minister of Food Production (Sen. The Hon. Devant Maharaj):** Thank you very much, Mr. President, for this privilege to join the debate on the Motion here before us, which really seeks to have the Government reaffirm its commitment to democratic principles and the practice of democracy in Trinidad and Tobago.

To the layperson, the common person, when they hear the term “democracy” they kind of zero in really on those aspects of democracy in Part I, Chapter 1, section 4 of the Constitution which really spells out the rights enshrined which includes: the right of the individual to life, liberty, security; the right of the individual to equality before the law and the protection of the law; the right of the individual to respect for his private and family life; the right of the individual to equality of treatment; the right to join political parties and express political views; the right of freedom of movement; conscience; freedom of thought expression; freedom of association; and freedom of the press, which has been hotly discussed during the entire course of this debate.

Mr. President, I find myself in a very invidious position of having to congratulate the mover of this Motion—commend him—for bringing such a Motion that asks the Government to reaffirm its commitment to the principles of democracy. However, this Motion before us is approximately two and a half years too late. This Motion should have been brought, really, on May 25, 2010 on the incoming Government. What we met: the erosion of democracy that has transpired in a decade before [*Desk thumping*] where, if not all of these rights, the majority, were battered, bruised and brutalized in some form or fashion.

The period 2002—2010 those rights suffered tremendously, breached repeatedly with immunity—impunity. The violation of the rights of individuals, organizations, institutions trampled upon would be cited during my contribution. When I first saw this Motion, Mr. President, the maxim Satan correcting sin came to my mind. They did not have the moral authority to lay such a Motion.

Mr. President, the People’s Partnership Government reaffirms unhesitatingly our commitment to all democratic principles, all democratic institutions of the State. When we took our oath of office, we affirmed that commitment, and almost on a daily basis each and every Member in some form or fashion, we have made that affirmation regularly. [*Desk thumping*]

The partners, the coalition of the willing, that formed the People’s Partnership Government comprises of two major partners: the United National Congress and the Congress of the People. There are other partners in the partnership, but those two major parties have as their core democratic principle, one man, one vote; that each and every single Member has the right to elect their leadership.



**Sen. Deyalsingh:** NJAC, he did not call “yuh.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** In fact, today, April 30, the United National Congress celebrates its anniversary. On April 30, 1989, the party was formally launched at the national stadium. [*Crosstalk*] But how do we compare, Mr. President, to those who have brought this Motion and what they represent? The PNM is undemocratic.

**Sen. Lambert:** “Hinds, listen nah man, listen nah man. The man speaking and yuh mouth going.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** They are undemocratic.

**Sen. Lambert:** “Listen nah man!”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** They have used a delegate system, so the individual member within the party does not have the right to choose its membership for over 50 years. They have now seen the error of their ways and it has been changed, and we welcome them to the fold of democracy. [*Desk thumping*] But this change is a cosmetic change. [*Crosstalk*] It is a cosmetic change, Mr. President, as they try to rebrand and reimage themselves. And this cosmetic change has been highlighted recently with a letter to the Leader of the Opposition by the Mayor of Port of Spain, Mayor Louis Lee Sing, and if you permit me to quote from that letter, Mr. President—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Ah ha!

**Sen. Hinds:** Quote your erstwhile colleague, Jack Warner. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—when he wrote to the Leader of the Opposition regarding the no confidence Motion against the hon. Prime Minister, and he says:

“...suggest to me the leadership of our party has elected to pursue an archaic and less than democratic approach to party governance.’...I use the word ‘governance’ very deliberately to underscore that what you do within”—your—“party, it is very likely what you are to do if the future favours...and one day the party forms government.”

**Sen. George:** Ah ha.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Lee Sing is saying here, that the party is undemocratic and he is afraid—[*Crosstalk*]—that if they form Government, they would continue this undemocratic practice.

**Sen. George:** Ah, ah.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Mr. Lee Sing was debarred from having his say in that general council meeting. [*Desk thumping*] He further added—he went on to say:

“At the end of that debate and that vote you”—he meaning Franklin Khan, the general secretary of the party—“have now distinguished yourself, NOT...as an independent professional democratic chairman, but you are perceived to be part of a cabal concerned primarily”—in the—“casting out ‘Manning demons’....”

**Sen. George:** “Wha?”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** So, within the fold of the PNM, a stalwart of the PNM, a man who has championed a radio station that was almost exclusively dedicated to promoting the PNM—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Is that Jack Warner?

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—is claiming that it is undemocratic in nature—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** “Neil [*Inaudible*] lick him up!”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—and there exists in the PNM a strong cabal [*Desk thumping*] that has denied members from articulating their democratic right to have a dissenting point of view shared with the wider membership. What was the fear?

Now, if you examine all democratic treaties—and one particular comes to mind—John Stuart Mill “On Liberty”—he points to the right of the dissenting opinion. You may not want to agree with it, Mr. President, you could disagree with it, but you have a right to have it heard. But within this general council meeting, they denied the Mayor of Port of Spain his right to speak. Now, he is speaking on television. [*Crosstalk*] Now, following shortly after that, what I find very ironic—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** “He didn't lick up though.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—he indicated that he wanted to resign almost “Williamesque” in nature, when the first Prime Minister declared he intended to resign, and thereafter Karl Hudson-Phillips announcing that he intends to run for the election—[*Crosstalk*] Here in this contribution—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Lambert:** Hinds, you are disturbing—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. President:** Sen. Hinds, you are disturbing the debate.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** The truth hurts, Mr. President, the truth hurts. Following that letter, infamous letter now albeit, it is ironic that Mr. Lee Sing decided he is going to resign from the Port of Spain City Corporation as Mayor, and thereupon an avalanche of councillors moved a Motion against him, and expressed their concern about his leadership style and there was a furore in Balisier House. And that speaks to the democracy that exists in those opposite who want to form government.

If we allow them to become the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, these undemocratic principles which have taken root in the PNM will find its way once more into the hall of power.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Yeah, yeah, yeah!” [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** And the tradition of autocracy continues. In the *Guardian* of April 12, 2013, we are told of a violent altercation regarding the screening of local government councillors. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Tha why yuh doh support the soldiers and dem. Yuh protecting yuh own.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** And I was very concerned. I understand my erstwhile colleague, Sen. Faris Al-Rawi, was part of the melee.

**Sen. George:** The referee; the referee.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** He was part of the referee. He was the referee. I was deeply concerned that, perhaps, he might have gotten a blow by accident.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** 35(5), Mr. President.

**Mr. President:** I did not think that he was imputing anything to you, Senator. [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Mr. President, this speaks to the issue of democracy, the selection of candidates and the process in which one engages. I was concerned about my friend on the other side, scrambling in-between, but this penchant for violence during the democratic process is not new to the PNM, Mr. President.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** No, no.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** I recall very distinctly the assault on the then Mayor of Chaguanas, Mr. Orlando Nagessar, on September 11, 2002—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** “Talk about the assault on John Bharath, nah.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—where the Mayor of Chaguanas, going to the Elections and Boundaries Commission’s Office in Tunapuna Magistrates’ Court—that complex there—to conduct the duties associated with an election, was confronted by the Member of Parliament for Tunapuna, the then Eddie Hart, a PNM official.

**Hon. Senator:** Talk about that!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—and a former Government Minister. In that particular melee, again, you had Orlando Nagessar being assaulted, being roughed up. In fact, he was saved by attorney Haroon Maharaj who shoved him in an office and locked the door to prevent—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That is democracy PNM style!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** That is democracy PNM style. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Yeah, yeah, yeah!” [*Desk thumping*] “You stay quiet before ah send Donna Cox for you.” [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Magistrate Indra Ramoo-Haynes reprimanded Hart for the assault. Mr. President, it seems not only to—it continues. It almost appears to be genetic in the PNM, because a former Minister, Rennie Dumas, was just charged in Tobago for assault and his attorney by the way was a former attorney general, John Jeremie. [*Crosstalk*]

What did the PNM do after the assault—this egregious assault on Orlando Nagessar in the height of election? Given the platitudes articulated by Sen. Deyalsingh and others, [*Crosstalk*] one would have thought that they would have mounted a platform and taken the moral high ground. What did they do? They bought out a 20-foot billboard in Tunapuna and say. “This is Hart land, PNM land!” They rewarded Eddie Hart for the violence visited upon Orlando Nagessar. [*Desk thumping*] They reaffirmed, in fact, the PNM commitment to violence during a democratic process.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Has Rennie Dumas resigned from the PNM Tobago council?

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Well, I want to know. Has Rennie Dumas resigned or been called upon to resign from the Tobago PNM council? [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Tried and convicted, yuh protect him.”

**Sen. Lambert:** Sen. Faris will tell you.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** The tradition of protection of those who perpetrate violence in a democratic framework continues, and the violence continues as part of the democratic tradition of those on the other side. That is why we have to reaffirm our commitment to democracy, and what it stands for in its purest form, not the polluted form that we had for the last decade.

**Sen. Ramlogan:** “Yeah, yeah, yeah.” [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Lambert:** Well said.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Mr. President, I remember with horror the events of December 18, 2009 when in a very peaceful demonstration around the Red House—the seat of Government, Parliament—FITUN President, David Abdulah, our former—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Oh, yes! Oh yes! Oh yes!”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—colleague here, some 20 police officers grabbed him by the back of his pants—I do not know if they pull up his jockey shorts behind—and they threw him into a waiting SUV, and former Sen. Abdulah was screaming at the top of his voice.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Begging for help!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Now, this speaks to the right enshrined here: freedom of association and assembly. Every Friday, Tuesday, we have groups, various groups, outside the Parliament articulating some disagreement they may have with or some area of lobby. You have never yet seen under this Government—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** No, no.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—police coming outside here to grab anybody. [*Desk thumping*] But, Mr. President, if that was the first and last time, “We could ah say that was an aberration”, but it was not. Prior to that, we had on October 06, 2003, Manohar Ramsaran, Hamza Rafeeq and Dr. Kirk Meighoo—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Oh, yes, politically involved!”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—being carted away in the Black Maria, being carted away. I remember that day distinctly as if it was yesterday with Dr. Kirk Meighoo in the back of the Black Maria, shouting: “What is the charge? What is the charge? And spit flying out “ah he” mouth begging.” He was held up, dragged in, “like ah sack of aloo” in the Black Maria.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Oppressive! [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** And while the then Prime Minister, the hon. Patrick Manning, was delivering the budget of 2003/2004 in the Parliament, our colleagues, our friends, Manohar Ramsaran, Hamza Rafeeq, Kirk Meighoo were in the Magistrates' Court attending to the charges brought forward. The defence attorneys were Anand Ramlogan, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, [*Desk thumping*] to name some of the few. [*Crosstalk*]

So while democracy is under threat, we have those who are prepared to stand up for it. It does not stop there, and the price of democracy is eternal vigilance, and the issue of expression and one's right to freedom of expression has been articulated by Sen. Dr. Armstrong, Sen. Prof. Ramkisson and others. And it brings me to the other instance that comes to mind, the case of Inshan Ishmael.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Oh, yes."

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** You remember Inshan Ishmael, Mr. President?

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** The, terrorist! The terrorist!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Under the Anti-Terrorism Act—that was the pretext used—whereby police officers, for handing out flyers—now, Mr. President, in almost every nook and cranny of Trinidad and Tobago, people print flyers for their businesses, for little party and so on. They give it out; they photocopy it and so on.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Carnival time it is very popular.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Carnival time it is all over the place. There is no attachment on it saying, "This is printed here and who is the publisher and so on." I have never heard before this instance any pamphleteer being picked up in Trinidad and Tobago under the Anti-Terrorism Act, or any form or version of it before and, since then, I have not heard of any pamphleteer picked up after. But what was Mr. Inshan Ishmael's charge? He held an anti-crime rally a week before—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—giving it out and, Mr. Inshan Ishmael, for that, paid the price of humiliation. He was strip-searched; he was made to squat—he was given—according to his attorneys—a full cavity search. Is this how we treat with freedom of expression in a democratic state?

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** And he was detained without being charged.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Detained without being charged. [*Crosstalk*] Detained! Democracy is not about protecting your friends, it is about protecting all. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Yeah, yeah.” [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Inshan does not need to be our friend in order to protect his democratic right, but those on the other side seem to only want to protect friends and family using the law as their instrument of attack.

**Sen. Hinds:** In your democracy all Muslims should be dead.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Also, I recall, Mr. President, Ralph Maraj— [*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** He said so.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—you remember Ralph Maraj, after he left the Government of the day, was very vocal, as he is now, and an offer was made by the then Prime Minister that he assume the position of chairman or CEO of the film festival—Entertainment Company of Trinidad and Tobago—but there was a caveat, he could no longer speak in public. That is how they treat with freedom of expression under our democratic State. You would get the job, but you have to keep quiet for the next 10 years. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Yeah, yeah, yeah!” [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

**3.10 p.m.**

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** “Doh talk against de PNM.” That is what their version of democracy is: silence those who oppose them.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Poor David!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** This trampling on the media is not new to the PNM. They pontificate now about the rights of the media and cite some spurious instances, but what is their track record? My erstwhile colleague is saying, “We know where they live”; but under the PNM they went to where they lived. [*Desk thumping*] We had an instance of the Prime Minister cutting his hair in a barber saloon in San Fernando. “Halfway through de fade, [*Laughter*] he realize dey bad talking him on Boom Champions—halfway through de fade. Jump in de car, fly up de road to Abercromby Street, Power 102, Boom Champions. Dey cordon off de road; police at de front, police at de bottom; nobody cyar get in. He went in to talk with de announcers and de management. De poor deejays lost their jobs, dey were suspended.”

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** “Like Fazeer.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** So while we may say, “We know where yuh live,” they went to where these people “live”. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Lambert:** “Allow de Senator to speak. Hinds is your Motion, let de gentleman speak on.” You are disturbing the speaker.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Freedom of the press, Mr. President, is included in our Constitution. We are one of the very few countries in the world and in this region that enshrined freedom of the press. How did the PNM Prime Minister deal with it? “Fly up de road, block off de road, storm de radio station.” And what did he tell the nation afterwards? “I’ll take the media to court.” “You run the media, I’ll run the country”, that was the screaming headline of the *Trinidad Guardian*. “You run the media, I’ll run the country”; freedom of the press attacked viciously; vicious attack on the media.

**Sen. Lambert:** The Minister of Foreign Affairs was fired by fax! [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** The Prime Minister of the day went on to say:

“Rights are not absolutes. They exist to the extent they don’t encroach upon the rights of others,…”

“So de deejays in Boom Champions was infringing on his rights, and he fly up de road.”

**Hon. Senator:** “And stopped dem.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** I am amazed at the self-righteous hypocrisy of those on the other side. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Lambert:** Well said, Minister; well said!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** To attack the media, to undermine the media, they are willing to go at all lengths to subvert the rule of law, and no more was that shown under the very famous case of the Maha Sabha radio licence.

**Hon. Senators:** “Or hoor!” Yes, yes!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** You had a religious body—because they do not like the organization, because it is rooted in the opposition to the PNM, they went to all lengths to prevent that religious body from having a radio station to preach religion.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** It went to the Privy Council.



**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Again, that violates an enshrined right, the right of the individual to equality before the law and protection of the law. They talk about democracy, they are strangers to democracy.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Yeahh!” [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** In fact, the board, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, concluded unhesitatingly:

“the right of the freedom of communication had been denied without justification.”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Unquote, man, unquote!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Mr. President, in paragraph 36 of the same judgment it went on:

“The Board would pay tribute to the care and skill with which this case has been handled in the courts below. It is through no fault of the Court of Appeal and highly regrettable that the Court of Appeal was allowed to proceed on false premises.”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Oooh good, papa!”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Understand, for the attorneys among us, they would have a greater appreciation for that than the layman.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “De Government was pursuing de court.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** The Privy Council paid a compliment to our courts below. They said the judges in the High Court and the Appellate Court did a good job, but the Government lied to the court.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Dey misled dem, man.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** I mean, the Privy Council used fancy words, “allowed to proceed on false premises”, but in the common man’s term the Government, the State of Trinidad and Tobago—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “PNM does do dat!”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—the democratic State of Trinidad and Tobago went to the court, also enshrined in our Constitution, and lied, subverted the rule of law in order to protect themselves. That is the democracy that we have to reaffirm from.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yes.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Justice Carlton Best in his 2004 judgment said—they could have fixed this in 2004, you know:

“There was here in the Board’s opinion a similar infringement of CBSL’s right to freedom...there was a conspicuous failure to deal with the application for over three years. There was unexplained and unjustified discrimination in favour of another applicant...”

Discrimination, trampling upon the rights and freedoms enshrined in our Constitution. Equality of treatment is something strange to those on the other side.

The undermining of our independent institutions continues. The right of the individual to equality before the law—if you look at some of the cases pioneered in the courts by my colleague, Sen. Ramlogan SC, and some of the litigants are here, myself and Sen. Marlene Coudray—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Hinds:** “Doh argue yuh own case, boy.”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Dem case done argue and win already against the PNM. Wha happen to you?”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** The State used its position to deny public officers equality before the law.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Dey wanted to transfer out Marlene, destroy she career.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Feroza Ramjohn is another individual. In my particular case, the Prime Minister exercised a veto which did not exist. “So you did not have de power to veto somebody, but yuh exercising it and stopping and preventing.”

**Sen. Hinds:** “I would veto you in de morning.”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “But Manning veto you.” *[Laughter and crosstalk]*

**Sen. Lambert:** “You speaking in favour of Manning? Yuh cyar be speaking in favour of Manning; come man.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Feroza Ramjohn, a public officer for 33 years, being denied an opportunity, similarly, Justice Sat Sharma. This State spent \$25 million to prosecute former Chief Justice Sat Sharma. We join the ranks of countries such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka who have prosecuted their Chief Justices.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Hounded de man out of office.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** They terrorized him, they gave him a letter: “Make this decision or else we will deal with you.” But this disregard for the laws of the land, Mr. President, does not stop here.

In 2000 the UNC Government passed what was known as the Equal Opportunity Act. I remember that Act clearly, the contribution of Sen. Hinds who moved the Motion that we should reaffirm our commitment to democracy, but he was arguing against the Equal Opportunity Act at the time. The Act was passed, Government changed. From 2001—2007, even though it was proclaimed by the President, it followed all its natural courses, it failed to see the light of day.

**Sen. Hinds:** “Like clause 34.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** The PNM had no interest in creating an Equal Opportunity Commission. They did not want citizens to seek redress using the Equal Opportunity Commission when their rights may have been infringed. Had it not been for a Privy Council judgment, which forced the PNM to implement and give light to the Equal Opportunity Commission, so that citizens aggrieved by the State for infringement of any of their rights, could go to the commission for its help.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That is right. [*Desk thumping*] Very good point. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Mr. President, the other area I want to go to is freedom of information, which Sen. Dr. Armstrong indicated was very necessary for the growth of a healthy democracy. Democracy is not a static thing. As Lord Slakely said, the law is a living tree. Democracy is a manifestation of that tree and it is not static. Therefore, access to information, as Sen. Dr. Armstrong indicated before, is critical.

The Government of the day had passed the Freedom of Information Act, so that citizens, having questions on government’s activity would be able to access that information. That is a concept which started off in Sweden in the 1700s, later taken up by the United States as their democracy grew. We in the Caribbean followed suit to other countries with a healthy democracy. When the FOIA came into life in Trinidad and Tobago, the administration changed. Luckily we had passed the Judicial Review Act which marries perfectly with the FOIA.

The FOIA, as Sen. Ramlogan SC is wont to say, acts as the torchlight of the citizen into the deep recesses of government activity. My experience using the FOIA is that under the last administration, that boasts about freedom of thought

and expression and freedom of the press, is that they refused to give any form of quarter for any request made. We had to go to the courts for any information we wanted, using the freedom of information request, because they were unwilling, unable and belligerent in refusing information.

I remember in this very Parliament, a question was asked by the then Opposition Chief Whip as to the nature of some scholarships being given out by the Community Development Ministry. I think the then Minister was Miss Marlene McDonald. She got up in the Parliament and said, "Under the Freedom of Information Act, we are not going to give this information." You know what? We used the Freedom of Information Act and won it in court, to pry and wrest that information away from the Government, that it so tightly held on to. The Freedom of Information Act allowed us to find out what was the true cost of CHOGM, prior to that we were getting little bits and pieces of what CHOGM had cost this country.

The right of privacy is one of the other rights. It is the right of the individual to respect for his private and family life. Most individuals hold that very near and dear. Upon coming into office, this Government exposed a wiretapping scandal in Trinidad and Tobago—[*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "Yeah, yeah, yeah." That is a fact. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—where the State was illegally tapping telephones of many individuals. I would be like some of those skeptics, "Because you say so, is not necessarily so."

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Where is the proof?

**Sen. Lambert:** "Murray was a PRO and mix up all de information. He on television every morning—"

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** But there are those of us who do not live in glass houses. I remember I got a call at my home some time—before coming into office, this was in mid-2000—from a friend of mine. He said, "Listen, I want to talk to you." I said, "Sure, go ahead." He said, "No, no, I will come to your home." He came to my home. I knew him to be a police officer. He said he had just been transferred to SAUTT, "Your phone is being tapped." That was long before we came into office and it was later verified. I have first-hand information about tapping. I do not know what benefit they had, because every case we took them to court with they lost. [*Desk thumping*] So what did they listen for?

Mr. President, the PNM's track record has to be a dismal one in the courts. They have been the government that has been taken to the court more than any government in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** More than this Government?

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** And they have lost most, if not all of their cases on constitutional matters.

**Hon. Senator:** AG, you agree with that?

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That is right.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Illegal wiretapping violates our democratic right to privacy. [*Crosstalk*]

At the introduction of today's session, the lamentations on the other side of questions unanswered. We have about two questions unanswered in this Parliament, or three for the most.

**Hon. Senators:** Not at all! [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Semantics—in their stewardship the Government was taken to the Committee of Privileges by their very own, because they failed to answer questions.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** By their own! They get fed up of themselves.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Over 100 questions unanswered. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** The truth and exposure!

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “A hundred unanswered questions.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** And Sen. Hinds has the temerity to say that the Government does not like Parliament because it is a forum to account. We account; we answer every single question. They do not have that track record. They do not have that track record.

**Sen. Lambert:** “He did not use to listen to Manning's government?” [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** We all have the right to freedom of association to join political parties. Our democracy is built upon the principle that there is a democratic process, there is an election intermittently.

**Sen. Lambert:** “Dem fellas loss their way.” [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** People are free to choose the party of their choice; free to support their party, attend their meetings and so on. But we recall in the 2000 election the PNM had started a propaganda that there was massive voter padding taking place throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago. The

rumour was that people were flying from Canada and the United States and going into marginal constituencies. [*Crosstalk*] People were moving from Caroni to go into marginal constituencies, Chaguanas and so on. There was a hysteria being whipped up in the minds of the population that this election was not free and was not fair. That is the malevolence of the PNM in an approach to democracy. But what has happened?

“There was a commission of enquiry, where a member of the PNM say he know a person who had died and voted. During that commission of enquiry, de dead person walk in de room. You remember dat?” [*Desk thumping and laughter*] Persons were charged and were before the courts for the last decade, because of the malevolence of the PNM.

**Sen. Hinds:** You hide a piano under a sheet; a whole piano.

**Sen. Lambert:** I know you had enough, Faris. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** On April 25, last week, poetic justice, almost before this Motion came before the House, in an *Express* editorial, permit me to quote from the editorial. It says here:

“The People’s National Movement (PNM) made voter padding a cornerstone of it political campaign, with its spokespersons claiming with absolute certitude that the...(UNC) administration was plotting to undermine the democratic process and steal the...election...So it appears the proof which PNM leaders like Diego Martin North/East MP Colm Imbert claimed to have never presented to the investigators, which means the voter-padding claims were, at best, a figment of someone’s imagination”—*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah, yeah, yeah! [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—“or, at worst, a political strategy created by the PNM out of whole cloth to undermine the UNC.”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Dats right, and dey use de police to terrorize people too.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** The only two persons to be charged in 2007 were two PNM supporters for voter-padding.

**Sen. Lambert:** And convicted; and convicted!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** That is the history of voter-padding. It is in the *Express* editorial. Tried and convicted.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Allyuh forget allyuh past.” [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** They forget, but they want to tell us to reaffirm our commitment to democracy.

**Sen. Hinds:** “Allyuh shameless yuh know.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Mr. President, we have never voter-padded, and the courts have proved that. We have never hauled off anybody in front of the Red House. Our Prime Minister has never stormed a radio station yet, never.

**Sen. Lambert:** “Yuh fire a Minister by fax.”

**Sen. Hinds:** She only speaks the truth.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** I will not bore you too much with the hung Parliament of 18/18, where the PNM Government spent \$16.5 billion without accounting to the people; \$16.5 billion was spent.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Dey did not want to call elections.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** “Dey did not want to call election, because they were setting up programmes to ensure that they steal the election.” Recall that this is how the post-Cabinet press conference began. Because there was no Parliament to account to the people, which was what they were supposed to have done, they organized the post-Cabinet press conference. So once a week, after the Cabinet meeting, they “talk” what they decide, as if post-Cabinet replaces Parliament; but this Government, we do not replace Parliament with post-Cabinet. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President, Sen. Dr. Armstrong spoke glowingly about the report that was prepared by the Minister of Local Government on the activities of local government. We will indeed relay your commendations to the Minister, but we are here in local government and we almost take it for granted that we called a local government election four years ago in 2010, and one is due now and it will be called. The hon. Prime Minister has indicated it will be called this year. But where were we before that? [*Crosstalk*] Election was due in and around 2006 and it was deferred four times.

**Sen. Lambert:** “Dats true, correct.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Local government election—election is the cornerstone of democracy. It was put off four times.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Four times!

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Where were the voices of Sen. Faris Al-Rawi as an attorney-at-law, Sen. Terrence Deyalsingh—

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Right here.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—as a concerned citizen who holds dear to his bosom the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago? [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Yeah, yeah!” [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Where were these voices? The great defender of democracy, Sen. Hinds, I did not hear his voice then. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Abp. Burke:** “Dog tie he tongue.”

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** I remember following the 2007 election at a PNM Convention. The then Prime Minister said, “Trinidad and Tobago cannot handle two elections in one year. Allyuh rest allyuh self with one election.” Understand what the leader, the Prime Minister of the State of Trinidad and Tobago, told the citizenry, that: “You are incapable of handling two elections. Democracy is too sophisticated for you unsophisticated lot.” That is what he said in a sense, you know.

### 3.30 p.m.

Compare that to what happened under the People's Partnership Government. We concluded a general election in May—an internal election first, actually, in January 2010, followed by a general election in May 2010. We did not think the people too stupid that they could not handle a third election, we went back to the polls [*Desk thumping*] because it was our promise that we are deeply committed to the democratic principle so we held the local government election. We could not anticipate if we would win, lose or draw; we held it because it was supposed to be held. [*Interruption*]

Mr. President, they speak—[*Crosstalk*]—a lot in their contributions about state of emergency and what—but the state of emergency, that provision is in the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. It is a legitimate tool that the Government can avail of itself. We used it to address the issue of crime. How did they use the state of emergency? Let us examine their track record. If we give them the chance to rule this country, what would they do with it? When they used it last was to surround the home of Occah Seapaul, prevent her because, according to them, things were not going their way. The late Ken Valley said, “she could run but she cyar hide”.



**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Mr. President, you better watch out, yes. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Mr. President, the poor lady had to get coconut water to sustain herself. This is what awaits us if the PNM ever gets back into office.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** You will get more CDAP, more GATE.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Sen. Prof. Ramkissoon and Sen. Dr. Armstrong spoke about the constitutional consultations we are having now, and that is our approach to constitutional reform—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Yeah, yeah, yeah”. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—engaging the citizenry throughout the length and breadth of the country to find out what are their views on constitutional reform before we draft the constitutional reform.

We want to hear what their likes are, what their expectations are, what their hopes and dreams and aspirations for Trinidad and Tobago are. How did they do it, Mr. President? How did they do it? What we have here is a working document on the constitutional reform for public consultation. So, they drafted a document first, where they had an Executive President and then attempted to shove it down the throat of the citizenry. Luckily, the citizenry erupted and rejected this piece of document before them. That is the difference in the democratic approach.

**Sen. Lambert:** Sen. Hinds did not support that.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Mr. President, the discussion on democracy always has to touch on election. Always. I have mentioned it a few times.

During the election of 2002, there were rumours—and in fact, those of us who participated in the election realized that the then ruling party, the PNM, had partnered with Abu Bakr or at least strike—the Jamaat Al Muslimeen, they “had strike” an allegiance. I remember campaigning in the Tunapuna constituency, visiting constituents saying that they were being intimidated by this group driving all over the constituency. We attempted, a group of us tried to track them down but they had already passed through certain areas.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** You really hate Muslims, you know boy.

**Sen. Hinds:** Sick fella, you know.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** In 2002, after concluding the election, the then Prime Minister talked about release of lands for them, almost as if it was payback

time. Payback time. This is how they win election, by aligning themselves with forces unsavoury to the country.

Had it not been for another delegation within the PNM that appealed to them, that this is the worst thing out, that we would have been in a different situation today.

Mr. President, the other side keep on mentioning Chaguanas West and so on, but if you look at the history—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Hinds:** The AG would declare a by-election.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—I mean, there were certain allegations made and the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West resigned as a Minister, Chairman of the Party and a Member of Parliament. *[Interruption]*

Mr. President, what is their track record? They had two Members of Parliament, Franklin Khan and Eric Williams, resigned from ministerial portfolio, but they held on tightly to their seats as Members of Parliament. They refused to relinquish that even though there were these charges about them. Later, of course, some of these charges were thrown out. You had the now Leader of the Opposition being the subject of a commission of enquiry. Again, he did not do the honourable thing and resign. They held on to their seats. But, Mr. Warner, say what you want, as the Leader of Government Business in the Lower House, adhered to the highest parliamentary practice of resigning.

**Sen. Hinds:** James Lambert sending him a signal with that tie.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** That means, Mr. President, there will soon be a vacancy in the constituency of Chaguanas West. Mr. President, I read the contribution of the hon. Sen. Terrence Deyalsingh—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Oh Lord.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—and I read it and re-read it, and he—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** You may be the only man who read his contribution. You read that? *[Laughter]*

**Sen. Lambert:** You read that?

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:**—professed his love for the Lower House, and in fact he chastised Minister Ramadhar for suggesting that the Senate is a superior House. He said he had great admiration for the 41 MPs in the Lower House. He had great admiration for those of us on this side and on his side who contested elections. He had a tremendous amount of regard for electoral politics.

I lay the challenge out to Sen. Deyalsingh, Sen. Faris Al-Rawi, Sen. Hinds; you come here week after week and say the population is ready to vote and vote us out. *[Interruption]* Put up or shut up! Put your names up for Chaguanas West.

**Sen. Abp. Burke:** Yes, yes, yes. *[Desk thumping]*

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Put up or shut up. It is time. The time is now, walk the walk. *[Crosstalk]* Walk the walk! Put up or shut up. *[Interruption]* There is a vacancy in Chaguanas West, put up your names. Put up your names! *[Laughter and desk thumping]*

**Sen. Hinds:** Chaguanas West is dripping with blood; blood of Jack Warner.

**Sen. The Hon. D. Maharaj:** Mr. President, the challenge is there for them, otherwise the next time they raise their voice about wanting to fight election, it will ring hollow.

Thank you very much. *[Desk thumping]*

**Sen. Dr. Lester Henry:** Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to contribute on this Private Member's Motion brought by my friend and colleague, Sen. Hinds. I would prefer to continue more in the vein of the respectable and solid contribution made by Sen. James—*[Interruption]*

**Hon. Senator:** "Aah, aah".

**Sen. Hinds:** Skip over that. "Doh" even mention it. *[Desk thumping]*

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** But suffice to say that—I mean, I will just remind Sen. Maharaj that people took the PNM to court when they were in power; today, we have the Government taking people to court.

**Sen. Hinds:** Oooh. *[Desk thumping]*

**Hon. Senator:** That is right.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I have never seen so many pre-action protocols. *[Desk thumping]* I think in one evening one man sent out about 15?

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes. Yes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Everybody and their dog and cousins.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** To whom? To whom? Say to whom, "nah". *[Crosstalk]*

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** It will come, do not get excited. *[Interruption]*

So, Mr. President, in terms of my contribution to this debate, just like Sen. Armstrong, I also wondered at first when my colleague brought this Motion, why would we want to discuss this Motion? What might have been the motivation and so on? Since that time in September or so, whenever we started this, the situation in the country has become much more incongruent in terms of the governance of the country, we have seen and witnessed a complete or almost complete, I would say, degeneration in the political environment which we saw culminating in the resignation of a particular Minister a few days ago.

Now, in terms of trampling on people's rights and so on, I think in one month or whatever the state of emergency started, it lasted three months, this Government trampled on the rights of over 8,000 people.

**Hon. Senator:** Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Tell them. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** In "grup".

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, you outdid the PNM by thousands.

**Sen. Hinds:** In one month.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** By thousands.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Well said, man. Well said.

**Sen. Hinds:** Very nice! Very nice! [*Desk thumping*] Well said, Senator.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Not a single—[*Inaudible*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Now, in the run-up to the 2010 election, in my discussions with politically astute people who were worried about what was happening in the country—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** "You cyar let them know we does talk, ent I tell you that?"

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—they told me they had observed that every 20 years, this country undergoes a threat to democracy. They quoted 1970, 1990 and 2010; 2010 is the arrival of the People's Partnership in Government. And, at the time we may not have appreciated it, that we know something happens every 20 years in the country, 1990, of course, being the coup and the uprising of 1970.

So, at the time we were looking for some kind of uprising, some kind of unrest, social unrest or something happening because there was a tense political environment. None of that happened; instead we got the Partnership—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Praise God.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—and what have they proceeded to do? What have they proceeded to do? Contrary to all that was said before, the Partnership people have decided to declare war on the population.

**Sen. Hinds:** And the Treasury.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I would get to the Treasury in other contributions. *[Interruption]* So, democracy is about us protecting ourselves as people and as Members of Parliament from the potential abuses of power, and standing up for your rights. And in the situation in many of the instances pointed out before, it is the same democratic institutions that were set up by the PNM in which many of the people on the Government side won all their cases. It is the same PNM Government that established and maintained those institutions. *[Interruption]* We were the Government, we had it. Okay.

Now, at the beginning of our independence, Mr. President, the founding Prime Minister of the country said after the official ceremony, I would use a quote from the great Eric Williams, the man who implanted the democratic tradition in this country, more than any other person.

**Sen. Lambert:** That was the only good he is, the “onliest” good PNM. *[Laughter]*

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Of course, of course. Well, I will take that as a compliment because you understand the greatness of—*[Laughter]* So, after the independence ceremony the late Eric Williams said and this is quoting from *Inward Hunger*.

“After the ceremony”—I—“broadcast to the nation from the Parliament Chamber.” I say—

“What use will you make of our independence? What will you transmit to your children five years from today? Other countries have ceased to exist in that period. Some, in much less time, have become totally disorganized, a prey to anarchy and civil war.

The first responsibility that devolves upon you is the protection and promotion of your democracy. Democracy means more, much more, than the right to vote and one vote for every man and every woman of the prescribed age.”

Now, that comes from a deep commitment the founding father of the PNM had towards our democratic country and proceeded to operate in an environment that fostered things such as a free press and independent institutions that were set up to protect individual rights. And many of the institutions that we take for granted that are

being trampled upon now by this current Government were set up precisely because of this need and the commitment of Dr. Eric Williams, in terms of preserving all the protections that Sen. Maharaj talked about. If it was not for that commitment, many of us would be living a very different life. Because you have to remember you came into power—meaning you, the Government—by winning a democratic election.

No one said that you did not deserve to be the Government. You won fair and square, and the people on the PNM side, just as we have always done in the past, accepted the results, demitted office and you took over. But for some reason, you still try to pretend as though you are the Opposition. *[Interruption]* Because every time something happens, you protest. *[Interruption]* So, even after three years you act as though every problem in the country is still the fault of the PNM, as though you have not made any decision. Well, I could assure you—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Cudjoe:** They have not; they have not.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** No, they have made decisions; they have made very bad decisions.

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh, yes, and then saying—*[Inaudible]*—because people think she is “ah” woman. *[Desk thumping]*

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—and, primarily very non-productive decisions.

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh yes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Because, just to get back to my home base a bit, I mean, all of your spending, all of your crazy policies that we have warned you about that would not work, that you have tried to do, have resulted in no expansion in the economy. That is the bottom line. *[Desk thumping]* You are still—as far as the economy is concerned—struggling to get out of your own half. You have not crossed half line yet. *[Desk thumping]*

**Sen. Hinds:** Two Ministers and \$10 million later.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** In fact, the referee blowing the whistle at the centre point—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Aye, carry your own referee, it eh have no Donna Cox and no fight and thing here, you know”.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** No, the referee is appropriate.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “All yuh stuck in referee mode, boy.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The football man was in your camp.

**Hon. Senator:** You have referees in FIFA, “doh worry”.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, you are still struggling to get out of your half, I mean, and to continue with the football, you are still at sixes and sevens; you have no plan, you have no policy, and all of this—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Three years later, you know.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—even the Prime Minister herself referred to all of this as a distraction and she had to get rid of the distraction.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Oh yes, she was stunned.

**Sen. Hinds:** But is 11 of them she got rid of in three years.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** True that.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Might be more than that. Fourteen, 14 of them. [*Crosstalk*] So, how can you govern the country when you have crisis after crisis that you have to—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** This Government is a crisis.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—one after the other; and when is their time to actually sit down and plan anything properly? As my friend used to say, “vhoops and vaps” and what, *vaille que vaille*.

It is similar, Mr. President, I mean, we had to read the indignity and the embarrassment and the weekend of WASA having to pay \$100 million to a company for cancelling a contract. [*Interruption*] One hundred million in taxpayers' money. The hon. Minister of Finance has to go and find \$100 million now to pay these people.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Get on to democracy now.

**Sen. Hinds:** He is very democratic.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, very. Extremely. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** It sounds like a budget presentation, you know.

**Sen. Hinds:** Very democratic.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I will get to the—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** “All yuh doh like to talk about money.”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** The man now say he will get to them, just relax “nah” man.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, what you have is the most blatant and unabashed abuse of political power in terms of attempting to intimidate the press.

Even today we had—I know the hon. Attorney General met with the International Press lady that was here and she voiced her concern about sending police officers to raid two media houses.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** But how you know the lady said that, like “you was there”?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I heard it on the radio. *[Laughter]* And she gave an interview to the radio press too; she did not have to ask your permission. She talked about the invasion of two media houses, of attempts by politicians, Ministers and so on, to intimidate the press.

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes, I heard it.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, she talked about it. *[Interruption]* This is under your Government.

**Hon. Senator:** *[Inaudible]*—stormed the station.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Police stormed the station, yes. *[Crosstalk]* So, does it occur to you how you look in the eyes of the public in the international community? That does not bother you?

**Sen. Hinds:** They are blinded by dollars. “They doh see that.” Right?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, you have this situation where we have seen unrelenting—*[Crosstalk]* No, and the audacity of this Government to talk about rogue elements in the media is unbelievable, when they turned the notion of a free press upside down.

**Sen. Hinds:** And the AG.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The press is no longer free because they bought it. In 2010 you had rogues—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Yeah, is Chin Lee whey de buy the press. Whey yuh talking bout”?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Would you consider these people rogues? Andy Johnson?



**Hon. Senator:** “Yeah”.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Sasha Mohammed?

**Hon. Senator:** “Yeah”.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Mary King? David Abdulah?

**Sen. Hinds:** Go ahead, go ahead. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** In fact, the sacked Minister talked about topping up the salary of Sunil Ramjitsingh, is he not in the media too?

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Was he not a rogue? So, what nonsense is this? I mean, you basically—when I mean you, the Government—had about 25 paid agents in the press.

**Sen. Hinds:** That is right.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** That all became part of your Government.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “What bout Maxi Cuffie and all the rest of dem all yuh de hire?”

**Sen. Hinds:** He fired Cleavon Raphael in two weeks. One bad speech and he fire Raphael. Vicious.

**3.50 p.m.**

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Everybody got jobs after May 24.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** So what was Irene Medina and Maxi Cuffie and “dem doin’ in PNM Government”?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Liming with Sasha.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “Yeah.”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “It have tuh be.” [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So you could say whatever. No, but they ended up as Ministers. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Irene or Maxi? When?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Anil Roberts on the radio every evening with “Sprangalang”.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** You see, we recognize the worth of the media.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** That is a hint. Anyhow—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “We eh appoint none ah dem a Minister.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So what are you talking, rogue elements and threatening the press and so on? I mean, even today, Sen. Armstrong mentioned the individual complaining about being abused in Parliament by a particular Member. The gentleman in question was Phillip Alexander. He was on the morning programme after seven this morning—

**Sen. Hinds:** Three lawyers right here, after the AG came here and lied on “dem”.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—calling for protection because he felt his rights as a citizen were violated and he had no redress. So that is what—he was maligned by Members of Parliament in the House—so he claimed—on the Government side—[*Interruption*]—a Minister. And that reminds me of the situation concerning one Mr. Vernon De Lima—same thing. The man’s name was called in the Parliament as being part of a plot to undermine the democracy of the country, to destabilize the country.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** High treason! High treason! [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I mean, people “doh—you doh” understand the implications of that coming from a certain Minister of National Security?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** The hanging Bill is for him, apparently.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So if we had the soldier Bill now, you could just send the soldiers to take Mr. De Lima.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** And put the hanging Bill—

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** That is the implication of that kind of foolish talk, [*Desk thumping*] without consulting the Commissioner of Police.

**Sen. Hinds:** “And yuh could see de AG fingerprints all over it.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “Yeah.” And then you could send two soldiers to lime by the corner and say, “We was there”—sorry, two police.

So, of course, Mr. De Lima went on to say that he was no part of such meeting and he would like to be heard, and then he was denied the right to be heard—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—which is extremely—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Is that democratic?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—distressing to the population of this country, that a man's simple basic right to be heard was denied, after being—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. George:** Would you give way a second, please?

**Sen. Hinds:** No!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** No.

**Sen. George:** Mr. President?

**Sen. Hinds:** No! No! Mr. President, the man is on his legs. The man said no. The man is on his legs!

**Mr. President:** Is there a Standing Order to which you refer?

**Sen. Cudjoe:** No, no Standing Order!

**Sen. Hinds:** No. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** No, so what are you talking about not giving way.

**Sen. Hinds:** Go ahead, Senator! Go ahead, Senator!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** If you have a Standing Order—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Cudjoe:** He has no Standing Order. Proceed.

**Sen. Hinds:** “Geh up and talk after! Geh up and talk after!”

**Sen. George:**—the Lower House, 35.

**Sen. Hinds:** “Geh up and talk after!”

**Sen. Beckles:** Disrepute? He talking de truth. Dah is a fact.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Disrepute? Somebody who is in the Lower House?

**Hon. Senator:** Yes, you cannot—

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I said what the man said.

**Hon. Senator:** That is right. “Doh worry about dat.”

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “Doh waste yuh precious time on seagulls.” Proceed!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, Mr. De Lima was—*[Interruption]*

**Hon. Senator:** “Doh beat him, nah man.” *[Laughter]*

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—refused his right.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “Ah ha tuh beat him. Ah wouldn murder him. Ah ha tuh beat him.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I mean—and this is a very—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “Ah ha tuh beat him. Ah wouldn murder him”—

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And this is a very prominent—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Cudjoe:**—“and den carry de casket.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—senior attorney,—

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Like Donna rub off on yuh, gyul.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—a man who was part of the Government set-up that we called the People’s Partnership, a prominent member of the COP and so on, and this man was denied his right. So what do you think the ordinary people will think that will happen to them? Somebody with such—*[Crosstalk]* So this is what the population is watching and seeing, and you could twist yourself into a pretzel, you cannot escape the fact—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Cudjoe:** That is right.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—that this is your track record of the last—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Tell them!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—six, eight months alone, since when Sen. Hinds raised this Motion.

I mean, you have the now former Minister going on a platform and actually boasting of corrupting a public servant—front page in the newspaper.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** For days.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “I paid all private expenses for a PS.”

**Hon. Senator:** “Yeah, boy!”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I mean, how many people in the Government knew this was going on? How many other people are doing this?

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “Tuh go tuh Jamaica.”

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Is it in the Integrity Commission report? [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Senator:** What is wrong with that?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I mean, you undermine the—of course, it is the public institutions.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** He would not know about that.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Well, I could see you would have done the same thing. Are you admitting to doing the same thing? [*Crosstalk*]

So, I mean, openly, so when you see this kind of thing, what do you expect the ordinary people to think? And the same Minister—well, sorry, former Minister—talks about openly admitting to paying somebody employed in the public service out of his own pocket—to top up the salary of somebody who is employed in the service. Mr. President, that is the exact definition of a bribe. If you top up a public servant's salary, what is that? What is that?

**Sen. Hinds:** A matter for the Integrity Commission.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** If a policeman or a civil servant in an office who is attending to you and you say, “Well, fix meh up quick and I will top up—I will give you ah extra piece of grains”, what is that? That is a bribe. So under any circumstances, we have to get worried. If this is what passes for governance, we are in deep, deep trouble.

**Sen. Hinds:** “And we doh know if ah brown envelope pass.” [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So, basically, once you have the money—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Senator:** Ask Franklin Khan.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—you could just go into the public service and buy whatever you want, including furniture and people.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** And people!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And this is what passed this year, and the population is aware of this.

**Sen. Hinds:** Everything downside, in corners.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And, again, to make matters worse, we have a police commissioner praising a Minister.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Wha wrong wit dat boy?”

**Sen. Hinds:** What?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I find something very wrong with that.

**Sen. Hinds:** What? And you did not investigate him?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** But a man who the Prime Minister has fired under questionable circumstances, who has to go and clear his name—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Nobody was not fired, eh. De man resigned.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Well, resigned, whatever.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Resigned the way Gibbs resigned.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—has to go clear his name and a sitting police commissioner praising the man.

**Sen. Hinds:** “People of Tabaquite fired you too.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I mean, this is outrageous.

**Sen. Hinds:** For Ramesh!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And any kind of semblance of separation of powers and so on, was some of the necessary elements that makes a democracy work.

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh yes! Well put, man! Well put, man! [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** “Putted. Putted.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “All yuh just throw it under the bus.”

**Sen. Hinds:** “Yuh hear? Yuh hear intellect?”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I mean, you cannot have a proper functioning democracy without the separation of powers, and once you corrupt that, everything else goes with it. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Orrrrrr! Big point, big point, Senator! Repeat it. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** No, but seriously, how could you have this going on and business going on as normal? When I think about the practices of this Government—not what they preach because, you know, even Sen. Maharaj sounded very good in terms of what he preached, but look at the practice. There is a wide gulf.

**Sen. Hinds:** You just have to watch their slimy hands.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Wailing sirens that lure you into your death.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “Yeah.”

**Sen. Hinds:** You just have to watch them from their wrist down.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** You could profess all your love for democracy and so on, and look at your behaviour—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Hinds:** “Look at Bhoewar’s hands.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—and look at what you tolerate; look at what you actually engage in.

**Hon. Senator:** “Yeah.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** But, as I was saying, we were involved in a lot of challenges to our democracy over the past 50-plus years now and we were able to somehow—

**Sen. Hinds:** Pious Bhoewar! Watch him!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—survive and come out and we are still standing.

**Sen. Hinds:** Minister of Planning. No planning on “de” corridor.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** As I said before, in the quote from Eric Williams—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Hinds:** No planning on “de” corridor.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—many countries, including a lot of those countries in the Caribbean, degenerated very quickly after independence and fell into—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Hinds:** Scorch and burn!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Right now—right next door—we had the situation in Guyana. I mean, most of us are adults, we know what happened in Guyana and Guyana became a basket case from very early in the 1970s—a very promising country, a country blessed with a lot of natural resources, and what happened to them? Because of internal strife and no application of proper democracy, look at what has happened to Guyana in the late '50s into the early '60s. One of the countries that was reluctant to join the federation was Guyana because they thought all these poor Trinidadians might want to come to Guyana. You could imagine that?

Jamaica—same thing. Jamaica—in fact, they ended up pulling out, as we all know the famous “one from ten leave naught” statement by Dr. Eric Williams. Look at what has happened: changes in government, relative electoral democracy functioning, but in terms of economic development and so on, a relative basket case. Right next door in our small neighbour, Grenada, we had a coup, and four years later an American invasion.

We have survived. And if we go around the Commonwealth, it gets even worse. Many of the countries that gained independence around the same time with Trinidad and Tobago fell into complete disarray, just as Eric Williams was talking about. You have Nigeria, you have Tanzania, Kenya. You could go on and on, Pakistan—first east and west Pakistan, then you had the great civil war.

So we, in terms, have had a very different and positive experience, so do not come and sit here and act like if—you know—you experienced some terrible—some reign of terror under the PNM, and try to give—well, not most people, maybe some segment of the population.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** We made it better and “yuh” reigning more. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** What segment? Everybody.

**Hon. Senator:** “Nah”, never happen.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So how did the prosperity and the development of Trinidad and Tobago come about, by magic? It just “fall” from the sky?

**Hon. Senator:** Despite the PNM.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes. “I accustom hearing that argument. Doh worry, but it is not true. Yuh could say it as much as you want.” When the PNM engaged in constructive economic development plans, like the development of Point Lisas, buying Caroni from Tate and Lyle, who were packed up and were about to leave, who were the people who benefitted from that? Not Laventille. When Angostura was in trouble—one of our national treasures—the PNM bought it. Many of you may not know that.

**Sen. Lambert:** That was Eric Williams PNM, not this group.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, but it is the same PNM.

**Sen. Lambert:** Not this group of PNM.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The same PNM, Comrade Lambert—Senator—  
[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Lambert:** “Yeah, yeah, we benefit.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I hope you will follow me and exhort the virtues of hon. Eric Williams.

**Sen. Lambert:** “Yeah. Dat time! Dat time!” [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** “Doh say dat too loud. Yuh go get sack dey yuh know.”



**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So when we were developing all these plans that led to the prosperity, the same person you vilified a few minutes ago—Prime Minister Manning, who was instrumental, the key driving force behind developing the natural gas industry—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “And all yuh ditch him!”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—in this country that led to the biggest economic boom ever in the history of this country between the same 2002 and 2008. *[Desk thumping]* Largest economic boom ever! Our per capita income doubled between 2002 and 2008. Go, check how many countries could record that.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “Ask them what did they do.” What did they do? What did they do?

**Sen. George:** Mr. President, 35(1). This is not a discussion on economics but a discussion on governance. *[Crosstalk]*

**Mr. President:** To the extent that the discussion, so far as it touches on economics, has its impact on democracy, I will allow it—

**Hon. Senator:** Ahhh! *[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. President:**—but there are—Senator, before you proceed, there are limitations, of course, if we go off on a whole different tangent and depart from democracy altogether. What I would ask you to do is to keep within the confines and keep it relevant to the debate at hand.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** As long as economic democracy is promoted.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Thank you, Mr. President. I will be guided accordingly. *[Desk thumping]*

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** That is our Patrick Solomon and Johnny O’Halloran.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** You see, what the Government Members are admitting—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Hinds:** Ish and Steve, clause 34.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—is that they do not see the connection between economics and democracy, and we certainly see it.

**Sen. Hinds:** Ahhhh! Ahhhh! *[Desk thumping]* All they know is money.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** You know, what you are basically admitting is that you know nothing about either one.

**Sen. Hinds:** Improperly obtained!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So when you talk about the development of the country, under democratic conditions. Now, what the economic expansion afforded the country to have, during that same time-period, was for people to grow. The whole idea of running a democratic society is for the average person to benefit, for income to rise, to take care of people's basic needs. So under that same period, between 2000 and 2010, we developed over 100 social programmes. *[Interruption]* Many of them that are the pride of the Minister of the People and Social Development, handing out food cards, handing out—who started all that?

**Hon. Senator:** PNM.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Thank you very much.

**Hon. Senator:** Dependency.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So what we will not accept is this whole revisionist kind of nonsense where the whole country developed, all the institutions of the country developed, including the civil service, the legal and service commissions, the Teaching Service, the Elections and Boundaries; everything in the country developed but somehow it had nothing to do with the PNM? What madness is that?

I mean, I cannot understand. So these things just popped up? You know, what peeves me, Mr. President, when I hear Members of the Government, and others, say, "Well, is only because we had oil and natural gas". So the PNM people did not do anything; it is just we happened to have oil and natural gas. Nothing could be further from the truth. Absolute nonsense! *[Desk thumping]*

Venezuela has oil and gas, Nigeria has oil and gas, Mozambique has oil and gas. In fact, Mongolia has discovered oil and gas as well.

**Hon. Senator:** The vision to use it as well.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** But without the proper democratic institutions and the will and the—*[Interruption]*

**Hon. Senator:** "Tell dem, man!" *[Desk thumping]*

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—and the expertise to put these things into fruitful use so that all of us could benefit from it—and all of you certainly has benefited from this over the past 30 years, and especially in the past eight to 10 years. In fact, since this Government has come in, what revenue generation have you done to provide anything?

**Sen. Cudjoe:** Ahhh! Not one. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “You claiming that you so into democracy and whatever,” what are you providing? All you are doing is spending large volumes of money.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “That yuh never earned.”

**Hon. Senator:** Hope.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** You cannot take “hope” to the supermarket. [*Desk thumping*]

So when we, in the PNM on this side, and when we get up and speak, we put things into action. The development of the country bears the stamp and the hallmark of the PNM in every aspect—every major institution—and I could go on and on about what has—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Save we, nuh. Save we!”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** No, no, no, I am not going to save you. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “Take yuh time, doh worry.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I am not going to save you. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Educate him. Educate him.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** It is my job not to save you.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Whoooo! “De same ting Donna tell dat fella, yuh know.” [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “And what Dhanraj tell de fella?”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Ou, papa!”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So what the PNM legacy is in this country is not only a vibrant democracy which this Government benefited tremendously from, winning by a landslide, without any violence, without any kind of major strife on any count, and everybody—look at them, and they are very happy and nice in Government and we have to take our blows in the Opposition.

**Sen. George:** “And yuh want tuh come here! Yuh want tuh come back on dis side!”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** We have to take our blows in the Opposition. No problem. And we take it in stride. We know, we have been in and out; in again. We are out this time. You know, hopefully, you could handle it when you are out.

**Sen. Hinds:** Fifty years. They would not be broke.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** That is one thing for sure, they would not be broke.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** There are more ex-Ministers than Ministers, “eh”. And as I said in this House before, come next month or June, about five “ah all yuh” might be gone again—[*Desk thumping*—because, you know, one of the Prime Minister’s favourite dance is the shuffle. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Political shuffle.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So every year about this time, Members on the Government side get very nervous. June is coming.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Is true.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Axe might be falling. And look at the stability on this side. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** Tell them! Tell them!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Look at the stability on this side.

**Sen. George:** “Sing fer yuh supper!”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Sing fer yuh supper!”

**Sen. George:** “Sing fer yuh supper!”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I told you before. They refused my letter of resignation.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Yuh eh fraid dey put yuh out fer Ramesh and Abdulah?”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So the stability here—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Stability?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—every time we adjourn in June and we come back, we have to learn new names: Marlene Coudray, Larry Howai. Sorry, I “doh” mean to be disrespectful.

**Hon. Senator:** “Hon. Senators.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Hon. Christlyn Moore. We have to learn new names.

**4.10 p.m.**

**Sen. Cudjoe:** We might be learning Sturge.

**Hon. Senators:** Oh goooo! [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Sturge, Sturge, yeah!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Sen. Sturge.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Sturge and common sense! [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Look, you, stability, the same six of us and that is the hallmark of the PNM.

**Sen. Hinds:** And those who are left have to block their nose, like Vasant Bharath. [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “How yuh go attack poor Vasant?”

**Sen. Hinds:** “Me eh attacking him. I say, yeah, he living in hell right now, he ha tuh block he nose.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And that is where they must come to understand that what the PNM represents, not only in this Senate with the stability of us here, but to the country. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Under a strong leadership Government, Dr. Keith Christopher Rowley, strong, positive, fearful—fearless.

**Hon. Senator:** Fearful is right.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Leh Amery dem hear yuh saying dat.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I want to remind the public—the listening public, not necessarily the Members opposite.

**Sen. Hinds:** Fearless! They are afraid of him! He strikes fear in their hearts!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Because, you know, maybe they do not listen, let me find a quote before I read this. [*Crosstalk*] Let me remind the Opposition before they get completely discombobulated.

**Hon. Senator:** The Government.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “Yeah”, the Government, sorry, my mistake.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Opposition in waiting!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “Yeah, yeah”—no, but they behave so much like the Opposition, it is an understandable Freudian slip.

**Sen. Hinds:** The next Prime Minister is “ah” fella called Keith Rowley.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The founder of American political science, one Walter Lippmann, said:

“The opposition is indispensable.”—in a democratic society.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** That is right.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**

“A good statesman, like any other sensible human being, always learns more from his opponents than from his fervent supporters.”

Remember that. [*Crosstalk*] “Nah, dais all right.”

So, Mr. President, my chain of thought was on the stability of the PNM and what it means to the country is unparalleled by any political party. [*Continuous crosstalk*] The PNM is the oldest party in TnT. [*Desk thumping*] Let me rattle them off for you.

**Sen. Hinds:** Democracy!

**Hon. Senator:** Give them the history again.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** It still remains the only national party. [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “Teach dem something!”

**Sen. Hinds:** Go ahead, teach!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** It is the only party with an established political headquarters. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh yes, oh yes!

**Sen. Cudjoe:** Rienzi Complex.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** “We eh squatting.” [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** It is the only party that has contested every election—national, local—in Trinidad.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** And Tobago!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And contested every election in the THA elections. All, every one, local—. [*Desk thumping*] [*Interruption*] It is the only party that still continuously holds its annual convention [*Desk thumping*] and democratically elects its officials [*Desk thumping*]—party group, national executives. You could come and tell me about democracy!

**Sen. Hinds:** Great is the PNM. Go ahead, come down the list now, continue! Go ahead.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The symbol of the balisier. [*Crosstalk*] “We fix that. Doh worry about that.” [*Continuous crosstalk*]

**Mr. President:** Senators, shall we listen to Sen. Henry.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** As I was saying before, it is the only party that has been in power, out of power, back in, out, and we will be back in again. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Strong in Government, strong in Opposition!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And if you count the 1971 no-vote campaign, we have won every seat at some point or the other in this country. [*Desk thumping*] Every single seat! The most disciplined party.

In fact, I have some interesting results.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “You come to talk about ah no vote campaign says a lot about the commitment of democracy, then.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “Yeah.”

**Sen. Lambert:** Sen. Hinds and myself [*Inaudible*] so we won 3/33/3, remind people of that.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “Yuh know, I like it when you all get so animated during my contribution.” [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Da man come wit ah no-vote campaign, yuh know, ah no-vote campaign.”

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** “Dey listening, tell them.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yeah, yeah, I realize that. [*Interruption*]

**Sen. George:** “Yuh mean, in his discussion?” [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Dis is the best presentation you ever made, boy, talk.” [*Continuous crosstalk and laughter*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Even the 12-0 in Tobago!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** 12-nil, 12-nil!

**Sen. Hinds:** “Tell him, all seats!”

**Mr. President:** Could you allow Sen. Henry to speak in silence?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** 12-nil!

**Sen. Hinds:** 12/nil in Tobago!

**Sen. Karim:** “Sen. Hinds, give the man ah chance to talk nah.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** We know “all yuh” still wobbling from that lash, but 12-nil! [*Desk thumping*]

Now, Mr. President, I was speaking about elections and I was looking through the Elections and Boundaries data, the historic data, and there is a certain talk about—Sen. Maharaj talked about a seat in Chaguanas being vacant.

**Hon. Senator:** Chaguanas West.

**Sen. Maharaj:** “Yuh interested? Yuh fighting it?”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Well, I might. [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

**Sen. Maharaj:** All right.

**Sen. Karim:** “All yuh goin by de same height.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And I may have good reason when you hear my statistics. [*Desk thumping and laughter*] So those who feel—[*Continuous crosstalk*] So, those who think that it is an automatic win in Chaguanas, whether you call it Chaguanas West or whatever—it is split into west and two—go back to when it was just Chaguanas.

In 1986—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Karim:** Dr. Rudranath Capildeo was there.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** 1986—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Karim:** No, no, before that.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Hold on, I will go back further if you want, “doh worry, ah have it there too”.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** “Tell dem, man, tell dem!”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Winston Dookeran won the seat, 6,077 votes—[*Interruption*] 16,000 votes. Right? Batchasingh, I think, was the PNM candidate, got 2,800, so wide margin, you know, no problem, the normal and so on. In 1991, Winston Dookeran, 3,200 votes, Hulsie Bhaggan, 9,270, he got wiped out.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** Yeah, but what about the PNM?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The PNM got almost the same as the NAR, about 3,000 votes.



**Sen. Coudray:** “Well, call it nah.”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “What kind ah statistician yuh is?”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** But the point is your candidates—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Karim:** Who was the PNM candidate?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “Come on, I cyah call everything, I have limited time.”  
[*Laughter*]

**Sen. Cudjoe:** Proceed!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “Yuh wah meh go back to 1942.” [*Crosstalk*] Hulsie Bhaggan—in fact, I was really looking at the Chaguanas data and I stumbled on, because right above it is the Caroni East data, and in 1986, one Senator, Bhoewarrie, 13,819 votes.

**Sen. Hinds:** “Goebbels, boy!” [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And he beat out Manohar Ramsaran who came second with 3,470 votes.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** “Dat is whitewash!”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** But, look at what happened five years later; 1991, the Sen. the Hon. Bhoewarrie, 2,537 votes; Sham Mohammed, 8,117. For those who do not know, that is the father of Sen. Mohammed over there.

**Sen. Hinds:** Yes.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** So if you know you have “ah little animosity, ah little tension”—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** “The small Hitler, the small Goebbels; CMNG Goebbels.”

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:**—take it easy on him. “Yeah”, he got wiped out. So those who feel that it is a foregone conclusion that if you win in one term in that area, that you are going to win—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Karim:** We will see as you coming; when you come in.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** That is why I might come, I might have a good chance.  
[*Laughter*]

**Sen. Hinds:** So yuh mean, Bhoewarrie has been taking licks so long, boy.  
[*Laughter*]

**Hon. Senator:** Hinds, “ah” small Goebbels is a goblet.

**Sen. Hinds:** “Yeah.” Bhoé taking blows so long, boy.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And if you go back further—in fact, yuh know, Sen. Tewarie must still be smirking from that beating, “eh”, because even the PNM candidate got more votes than him, [*Desk thumping*] in that area.

**Sen. Hinds:** “Yeah”, that is why he angry with the PNM so. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. Senator:** Who was the candidate?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Mr. President, if you go back—[*Crosstalk*] No, but, I mean, come on, I am not—this is the record, I am quoting from the Elections and Boundaries Commission.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** That is the facts.

**Sen. Hinds:** And he took his anger with him into the university.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I will never slander the hon. Minister of Planning and Development, that would not be—[*Crosstalk*] but I am quoting the results, I am not implying any misbehaviour on the part of the Minister.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “Yuh time running down.”

**Sen. Hinds:** There is no need, when things are obvious, words are not necessary.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** But, Sen. Karim was talking about further back, if you go back to 1966—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** You mean as far back as his muff? [*Laughter*]

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—the legendary Basdeo Panday lost his deposit.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** Serious?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** What?

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes, in 1966 under the Workers and Farmers Party. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Senator:** No way!

**Sen. Cudjoe:** “Teach dem! Enlighten dem!”

**Sen. Hinds:** Anand was supposed to be under that, he grew up in that.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** The great founder of the Maha Sabha, Badase Sagan Maraj, lost his deposit in St. Augustine. Guess who the winner was?

**Hon. Senator:** John Bharath!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Father of Sen.—[*Laughter*] So I am giving you some lessons so you have some food for thought.

**Sen. Hinds:** The dentist from Valsayn, boy.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Unfortunately, for the good Dr. Bharath, in 1971, he ran in Chaguanas and he also lost his deposit.

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** So Chaguanas have blithe from the UNC.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Yes. That is the theme of my contribution. [*Laughter and crosstalk*] In other words—[*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Maharaj:** “Wey yuh say? Chaguanas is ah blithe?”

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Bright.

**Sen. Maharaj:** Blithe?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** Bright! Chaguanas is bright.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I never said that.

**Sen. Maharaj:** “Yuh eh say Chaguanas blithe?”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Me? No, I do not use that kind of language.

So, what I am saying is that in many of these instances, these people who were held up as the great hope in a sequent term can find themselves getting some serious stick, losing their deposit in the next rounds because these are—[*Interruption*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Including Bhoë Tewartie.

**Sen. George:** Mr. President, 35 (1), please.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “What yuh talking about?”

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** What more could be more democratic than elections, my friend?

**Mr. President:** Please continue, Senator.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Come, Les, wrap up, wrap up.”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I still have time.

**Sen. Cudjoe:** And you have 15 minutes extra too, you could use that.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** “Yeah, yeah, do not drink yuh porridge too hot, as my friend”—okay. [*Crosstalk*] No, but seriously, on a broader note, I have— [*Interruption*]

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, the speaking time of the hon. Sen. Henry has expired.

*Motion made:* That the hon. Senator’s speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. S. Cudjoe*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. President: Sen. Henry.**

**Sen. Karim:** The candidate for Chaguanas West.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** No problem! [*Crosstalk*] I could be— [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. Karim:** Four feet six.

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** I want to end on a more serious note in the sense of something that Prof. Ramkissoon picked up on in terms of the growth of inequality [*Crosstalk*] as a threat to democracy. [*Laughter*] I think—this is “ah kind of ah pet peeve of mine” so I picked up on it immediately.

**Sen. Ramlogan SC:** “Wha is da now?”

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** Prof. Ramkissoon, of course, is very correct in terms of voicing his concern about inequality in the society, and not just here, on a world scale that is proving to be a threat to our democratic countries around the world. Because if you have a maldistribution of wealth, as we have seen over the past 20 to 30 years on a global scale, one of the bi-products of rampant neoliberal policies that have been foisted on populations, not just in developing countries, but in the developed countries as well, has been a significant redistribution upwards, a trickle up of income, and we have to guard against such things happening in our country. Because, when you carry out policies such as privatization and all the structural adjustment, one of the things that inevitably results is a redistribution upward. You get economic growth but you do not get an even distribution of income.

What we have seen over the past 20 to 30 years is that the income distribution in the world has gone berserk, it has gone haywire; the rich is getting richer and the poor is getting poorer.

**Sen. Hinds:** The UNC is getting richer!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** That is not a cliché, Mr. President, that is an established fact. Income distribution in America, in Britain, in all of the countries, has gotten worse over the past 30 years and it has continued to get worse the more these types of policies that favour tax holidays and tax breaks for the wealthy and so on. So we have to keep that in mind and we are not immune to that. In our system, we have made some of those mistakes as well and we have to find a way to not fall into that trap.

Mr. President, the rampant march of wealth upwards to the 1 or 2 per cent of the population is something that comes about through legitimate means in terms of people getting larger and larger portions of the pie, but also through corruption and other type of such activities.

When you look at the world, as I often tell my classes at UWI, back around the 1988 election in the US, people were blown away that Ross Perot, who was running, I think, against Bush senior, people were mind-boggled that one man could have \$4 billion. It was an astounding accumulation of wealth. He was supposed to be the richest man in America, \$4 billion. Fast forward to 2000, Bill Gates, at that time, reportedly had a fortune of over \$100 billion. So, the richest man in the world went from \$4 billion to \$100 billion in just over 10 years. I use that as the symbolism to show what has happened in the world and all over, not just in the developing world, but also here. To the point that Europe and America now are in deep economic trouble and they cannot seem to find any way out of it, and people are already referring to many of the European countries as formerly developed countries.

I was watching a programme this morning where people are leaving the European countries and going into the Philippines, into Brazil, into all over to find employment. Entrepreneurs, small businessmen, restaurant owners, web designers and so on, have to pack up and leave, so the brain drain now starting to go the other way. I see hon. Fazal, talking, shaking his head in agreement and we have to make sure that these things do not happen here, at least, we minimize the effects of what is happening.

But, as I was saying, the overall experience in our country has been much better than the average in terms of the development of our democratic systems and institutions. [*Desk thumping*] It is to the credit of the Government that was in power for many of the years, that laid the foundation. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh yes! Well said! Doubt that!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:** And things could have been different as I have pointed out in so many countries where things have gone totally awry—ethnic conflict, violence—*[Interruption]*

**Sen. Hinds:** Racial issues!

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—military coups, all kinds of craziness, we have avoided all these things, and a lot of it must be given to many people. Of course, we often credit Eric Williams with being the main driver, but, of course, we know that is not *[Crosstalk]* fully true, there were many people involved.

I just want to end, Mr. President, to quote, to go back to the origin of our independence and quote again Eric Williams. This is “*Inward Hunger*” on page 284 when they were in England—he was referring to when they were in England at the Marlborough conference and he said:

“On the last day of the conference, I decided to settle the matter face to face with Dr. Capildeo, Leader of the Opposition. I drew him aside during the tea interval, told him my original intention, indicated that I had abandoned it...”

Whatever that was, he said he abandoned it.

“and explained that I would make a statement to the conference on the resumption.

I made the statement, to the effect that I intended on my return to Trinidad to raise with the opposition the general question of national integration and national unity with specific reference to...Nehru's Integration Committee in India...the promotion of the national culture...the working out of a campaign code—of conduct for—...elections,...fair employment practices without discrimination on grounds of race, political affiliation, etc.”

And he says:

Dr—“Capildeo thanked me and withdrew all opposition to the date of independence.”

I could go on but that is the main point. In the sense that there you see the establishment of a spirit to cooperate—*[Interruption]*

**Hon. Senator:** Well said! *[Desk thumping]*

**Sen. Dr. L. Henry:**—and leadership on the part of Dr. Eric Williams. *[Desk thumping]* If I had more time, Mr. President, I would go into what was actually done upon his arrival but I will save that for another time. Thank you very much. *[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, it is now 4.30 and therefore I think—Leader of Government Business.

*Adjournment*

*Tuesday, April 30, 2013*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George):** Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to next Tuesday, May 07, at 1.30 p.m., and we propose to bring to the debate here, in this honourable Senate, the Anti-doping Bill.

**Sen. Beckles:** What about the defence Bill, boy?

**Sen. Hinds:** What happen to the defence Bill?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** You set the defence Bill on that day.

**Sen. Deyalsingh:** What happened to the defence Bill?

**Sen. Al-Rawi:** It is not on the Order Paper.

*[Discussion between the Clerk of the Senate and Sen. The Hon. E. George]*

**Sen. The Hon. E George:** Well, yes, this is what she is telling me. It is not on the Order Paper, I am sorry.

**Sen. Beckles:** “So you ha to adjourn to ah date to be fixed.” *[Continuous crosstalk]*

**Sen. The Hon. E George:** Well, we will have to adjourn to a date to be fixed, Mr. President.

**Sen. Hinds:** Oh, they have nothing on the agenda. *[Desk thumping]* The Government has nothing on the agenda.

**Mr. President:** Hon. Senators, the question is that this Senate do now adjourn to a date to fixed.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Senate adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 4.31 p.m.*