

SENATE

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MADAM PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

Madam President: Leader of Government Business.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (Sen. The Hon. Clarence Rambharat): Madam President, I wish to indicate that in accordance with Standing Order 117, there is an agreement among the benches that in view of the passing of our colleague, Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan, the business for today will be confined to tributes only. Thank you.

TRIBUTES

(SEN. THE HON. FRANKLIN KHAN)

Madam President: Hon. Senators, as you are aware, Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan, Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and Leader of Government Business passed away on Saturday, April the 17th, 2021. I now invite Members to offer tributes. Minister of Trade and Industry. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Trade and Industry (Sen. The Hon. Paula Gopee-Scoon): Thank you, Madam President, and I rise on this very sad and unexpected occasion to mourn our revered colleague Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan.

It is my signal honour and privilege to stand in this Senate to pay tribute to one of the most humble politicians to grace this Parliament and serve the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Madam President, Frankie, as he is dearly known to all of us, was a remarkable politician and a Leader of Government Business in the Senate. The role of government business is multifaceted, and despite the numerous

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responsibilities the buck stopped with him and he embraced the role in his normal affable style and made easy of it. He always did it right. He was exemplary in the execution of his duties, flawlessly fulfilling his obligation to the Legislature, stoutly defending the Government with political precision, all while serving with respect, integrity and great honour. He was an outstanding debater whose delivery set him apart. He was a master presenter, and many would admit to making themselves present just to listen to him. His knowledge of the history of Trinidad and Tobago was showcased in almost every debate, and we all listened as he regaled us in the stories and historical recounts, reciting on almost every subject matter in his indomitable style of eloquence, knowledgeable but related to all and bringing balance to every conversation, always speaking to the people.

Madam President, I will say this as well, that it is extremely difficult to know that you are right and yet tolerate the otherwise opined strident in their view and still keep a still tongue. Cleverly he would be sure to get his point across, always staunch and stealthily eking out the appropriate response to any attack. As Leader he understood the need for strong working relationships with both the Independent and Opposition Benches, and this was evident by the mutual respect shown among all.

Madam President, it could be said that the success of any politician is defined by the understanding of the lay of the land. And by this I mean the understanding of the people you are called to serve, and an understanding of your executive responsibility in the Ministry you are called to manage. Minister Khan excelled scholastically and was of high intellect. He was an energy czar, and his passion and devotion to the industry could be heard in conversations filled with logic and science and data-backed, but simple execution. He had a deep and savvy understanding of the industry from oil and gas to the petrochemical sector and to

the burgeoning spaces. He understood almost every facet of the business, the upstream, the midstream and the downstream, our shallow and deep reserves, and retail and marketing. And I could tell you that we in the Cabinet would marvel in his explanations and recounts of energy production reports. Frankie could tell you of every rig, every platform and well by name, location, and every discovery. He lived and breathed for the energy sector. He championed the energy cause, working closely with colleagues and under the astute guidance of our Prime Minister, planning, doing the bull work, and laying the groundwork to prepare for the future returns.

And, Madam President, the energy business is international, and Minister Khan would have represented our Government with great aplomb in the boardrooms of the world, confident yet relaxed, listening, learning and always promoting product Trinidad and Tobago. He would have also effectively represented at Caricom meetings, OLADE meetings, and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum which Twentieth Ministerial Meeting was proudly hosted in Trinidad and Tobago, and Senate colleagues this was international Khan.

In his dedication to the future of the industry he focused on the development of his staff, in particular the young energy professionals. And as Minister he was the self-acclaimed mentor in chief at the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, and in 2019, in alignment with our Prime Minister's vision to create a cadre of the next generation of energy leaders, Minister Khan initiated a mentorship programme at the Ministry to ensure that our country is equipped with the highest quality of energy professionals who are capable of advancing and leading the sector for generations to come. His belief and unwavering support for these young professionals was topmost, and in fact one of his very last meetings on Friday 16th was with the younger folks of the Ministry.

But his mentorship was not confined to the Ministry. It extended to the Chamber and to the politics, and many here can attest to this. Frankie would share his experience, giving the very best advice with sincerity, even when it was something you necessarily did not want to hear. Avuncular in manner, our younger Senators have found in him an outstanding role model, a trusted leader and coach, refreshing in approach. Frankie had a genuine love and wish for success for country, party and people. Even in one of his last contributions in the Senate on the UK EPA CARIFORUM Bill, he referred to the dynamics of our non-energy sector, and in addressing strategic initiatives he proudly recalled the presence of Angostura Bitters in any bar he may have enjoyed a beverage globally. He spoke to the power of building a brand and the importance of international outreach, and I quote from him:

“Whether we export chocolates, whether we export wines...condiments...mas”—or—“culture...‘one one cocoa fills the bucket’...”.

And his last words in that debate:

“...let us build Trinidad and Tobago.”

A mission for all of us.

Frankie believed wholeheartedly in our political institution the People’s National Movement and its core founding principles, and most of all, leading Trinidad and Tobago to a brighter future for all of our children. He was an outstanding chairman and fully supported our political leader. He was a quintessential team player and gentleman through and through, even in the cut and thrust of politics. It was this loyalty to party that, when unjustly accused, and without prompting he offered his resignation vowing to return only when he cleared his name, and that he did. Steadfast throughout what was no doubt the

darkest period in his political career, his smile faltered at times but he held his head high and remained committed to executing his duties, never missing a sitting of Parliament, and religiously serving his constituents. Frankie loved the people of Trinidad and Tobago and he was approachable. He listened. He always showed great respect regardless of who you are, and it must have been his humble and unassuming way that really caused him to be loved by so many.

Frankie was known for standing in line for doubles or at a roti shop and talking and engaging with others. He was a shining light, and always with a smile on his face. That smile was always bigger and brighter when anyone mentioned his family. His lovely wife Laura, his children and grandkids meant the world to him. He loved them to the core of his being. He and I would banter fondly and exchange stories of grandchildren. We were both enamoured by them, two over-indulgent grandparents. Frankie, may your children's children be forever blessed. We in this Chamber wish to thank you, Laura and family, for your unwavering support for him in public life, and we all know the demands that this job places on family life. Our thoughts and love are with you during these very difficult times, and we ask God to cover you with his healing love.

Madam President, Sen. Khan's legacy will forever remain one of hard work, dedication, humility, sincerity, patience and love for our dear country and our people, and we are forever better for knowing him. From Rio Claro and all of the towns, villages and beaches of southeast Trinidad, to Sangre Grande, to the oil fields of Point Fortin, the warm waters of Tobago, and the northwest of the country where he last resided, and from the hallowed halls of the Senate Chamber, we bid you farewell dear colleague, dear friend, dear brother.

And finally, one of my colleagues asked me to share this prayer, which I am sure Frankie would appreciate:

“Death is nothing at all.
It does not count.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
Everything remains...as it was.
...the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged.
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.
Call me by”—my—“old familiar name.
Speak of me...the easy way which you always used.
Put no”—sorrow to—“your tone.
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.
Let it be spoken without effort...
Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was.
There is...unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?
I am...waiting for you, for an interval,
somewhere very near,
just round the corner.
All is well.
Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was before.
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!”
Madam President, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Sen. Mark.

Sen. Wade Mark: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, as Leader of Opposition Business in the Senate, and on behalf of the Opposition Bench in this honourable House, allow me to register on their behalf our collective condolences to the family, friends and associates of former Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, former Leader of Government Business, the late hon. Franklin Khan. Madam President, his passing was sudden, literally untimely. It shocked all of us.

Madam President, as a former elected Member of Parliament and more so as a sitting Senator, we have been engaged over the past few years in many healthy exchanges on important matters pertinent, relevant, to the management and business of this honourable Chamber. These exchanges contributed in assisting and propelling the Senate forward in the organization of its affairs during his stewardship. Madam President, quite apart from serving as a Senator for almost six years, Sen. Franklin Khan, the honourable, and I served on several Sessional Committees as well as one, I recall, Joint Select Committee, and also an ad hoc Joint Select Committee. We both served, Madam President, on the Joint Select Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure, which investigated the collapse of the sea bridge, and which witnessed for the first time the appearances of the Prime Minister and other Government Ministers. Franklin and I also served on an ad hoc Joint Select Committee on the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority which was established sometime in 2018.

Madam President, according to the data provided by this honourable Parliament, the late Franklin Khan, Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan, participated in the debate on several important pieces of legislation. My brief count of the number of occasions that he would have participated numbered approximately 30 Bills during the past five and a half years. Madam President, former Sen. Khan was a quiet and unassuming individual who firmly promoted and championed his

Government's agenda, even in the face of stiff opposition from the United National Congress. Franklin, as he was fondly called, honed his own unique style, particularly, Madam President, when it came to his debating skills, extremely measured but nevertheless forceful in articulating and advancing his beliefs and ideas.

Madam President, Franklin Khan was also extremely loyal and uncompromising in his promotion of his government's agenda or the Government agenda, which clashed at times with the national interest and the people's ultimate welfare and well-being. In sanctifying his memory, we will always value his cordial approach to matters raised and discussed. His frankness of thoughts and views, and his trademark smile, and at times infectious sense of humour.

Madam President, the late Franklin Khan remained loyal and dedicated to his political views, and of course loyal to the party that he served to the very end. In celebrating his short mere 63 years of age, Madam President, yet colourful life on Earth, we would like to extend, on the bench that I represent, our collective condolences to his wife, his family, his relatives, friends and associates. Let us, Madam President, wish his family hope in the midst of sorrow, comfort in the midst of pain, and, Madam President, may the lord of the universe grant our friend, Franklin Khan, the late Franklin Khan, eternal peace and perpetual rest. Madam President, may his soul rest in eternal peace. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Sen. Richards.

Sen. Paul Richards: Thank you, Madam President. Good afternoon colleagues. This has been a particularly difficult weekend for me. I lost a very dear friend, a great public servant, her name is Renee Pilgrim, and then Franklin Khan we all lost on Saturday morning, so condolences to her family. Life is so fragile, Franklin Khan, June 18, 1957, to April 17, 2021.

Inertia, a property of matter by which it continues in its existing state of rest or uniformed motion in a straight line, unless that state is changed by an external force. When I think of Franklin Khan, that definition readily comes to mind because he used it so many times in this honourable House in so many debates. But in a strange and wonderful way it speaks to many of his own unique, admirable qualities when one thinks of his life of service, sacrifice and many, many successes. A country boy at heart—my iPad just went blank. A country boy at heart, he was always proud of his country upbringing and the values he had as a result. A proud son who rose to heights of service in Trinidad and Tobago, former Sen. Khan held a Bachelor of Science Degree in Geology and Geography in 1980 from UWI's Mona Campus in Jamaica, and an MBA in 2007 from the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, UWI, in Trinidad. Professionally, Sen. Khan served as President of the Geological Society of Trinidad and Tobago on two occasions. He also served as a director of the Water and Sewerage Authority from 1986 to 1990, and as chairman of the National Petroleum Marketing Company Limited from 2001 to 2002.

He was first elected as a Member of Parliament for then Ortoire/Mayaro in 2002, and then appointed Minister of Works and Transport, a position which he held until May in 2005. Following the 2015 general election, Franklin Khan was appointed to the Senate as a member of the Eleventh Parliament and was appointed as Minister of Rural Development and Local Government on September 11, 2015. He was a petroleum geologist by profession, having spent 20-plus years in the energy sector both locally and globally in a wide range of positions at the technical and managerial levels. In Government under the then Patrick Manning administration he served as Minister of Works and Transport, and as Member of Parliament for Ortoire/Mayaro in 2015, appointed Minister of Rural Development

and Local Government, and in 2016 appointed Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, the position he most recently held at the time of his passing.

His contributions were filled with clear evidence of his expertise training and global experience in the energy sector. Many times lay persons in the energy sector like myself received a front-row class in the hydrocarbon sector and industry, inclusive of the international machinations which positioned Trinidad and Tobago at many times at the pinnacle of the global energy sector. He was a patriot who represented his country proudly around the world. He had that unique gift of that smile, that constant facial configuration that positioned a fixed smile on his face in happiness, times of stress, annoyance, anger, and I guess even in times of sadness.

On many occasions, even though we may have disagreed on many an issue, one had no idea initially if he was in agreement, annoyed, angry or indifferent, because his facial expression never changed. I think that was a gift. In addition, he was a gentleman who always showed respect and kept his dignity, even in the most trying of political challenges. I often worried about him when he returned from his recent health challenges, but being a patriot, he soldiered on, serving his country to the very end. I remember telling him—I remember him telling me two years ago when I called early one morning for an interview on some developing story in the energy sector that he promised his wife and family that mornings were for family unless there was a crisis. He said his family sacrificed a lot on his behalf and he wanted to give them that time. I am very saddened at his passing. It took me a while on Saturday morning to catch myself, as we say in T&T, when I indeed was able to confirm that he had passed on. I will miss Franklin Khan. He was above all else a good person, a kind person. Franklin Khan was a good man.

My deepest condolences and prayers go out to his wife Laura and their two

children and grandchildren and on behalf of a grateful country, I thank them for their sacrifices of having had him at our beck and call and service, while serving his country. My condolences also go out to his colleagues in the People's National Movement and in the field of academia.

Thank you Franklin Khan for your service to country. May he rest in eternal peace. Thank you, Madam President. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Minister of Works and Transport.

The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan): Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, the sudden passing of the former Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan, has reminded us of the fragility of life and the need for each of us to value our interaction with the persons we love and support. I am sure that many of us were pleasantly surprised with the tremendous outpouring of condolences that have been received from persons of all walks of life.

Franklin Khan, or Frankie, as he was so fondly known, was a simple and humble person, with bright and visionary mind. He was objective in his approach to matters of national importance, because he understood the need to put the welfare of our country above political affiliations. During his political career he remained focused on service although there was a time when he faced personal trauma and torture, as he referred to it. Frankie was a friend to all, and willingly engaged in conversation with his colleagues from the other side of the bench.

2.00 p.m.

From an early age Frankie wanted to make a positive contribution to the development of our country and the evidence speaks volumes for the leadership role that he played in several organizations before and after he attained his professional qualifications. Frankie understood the political landscape and he used

his knowledge to make our party better and stronger. On a personal note I treasure my friendship with Frankie as we had daily discussions on various matters all in the interest of making our beloved country and our party the best that they could be. I will miss Frankie, I will miss him especially for his support, guidance, advice and his valued friendship.

On behalf of my family and I, I would like to take this opportunity to extend sincere condolences to his wife Laura, children and grandchildren. May Frankie's contribution and vision be his legacy. I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Hazel Thompson-Ahye: Thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to say a few words on the occasion of the passing of former Minister Franklin Khan. I have written an acrostic using his name, Franklin Khan:

F - face always wearing his signature smile

R - real it was without pretense or guile

A - always prepared to contribute to a debate

N - never daunted by Opposition or Independent slate

K - knowledge and mastery of his portfolios scope

L - liquidated the recent no confidence vote [*Desk thumping*]

I - invited to serve, he did so with distinction

N - notwithstanding a challenging heart situation

K - key to his humble childhood he shared with me

H - how his mother struggled to mind his family

A - always mindful of his strong Mayaro root

N - never fail to serve, and never did loot

In the Senate and dining room there is an empty chair.

In my sadness I am comforted and say without fear,

That he is in the bosom of our Lord Jesus,

Asking God's mercy to fall on all of us.

Rest in peace, former Energy Minister, Franklin Khan.

Thank you for your service to the people of this land.

And Alloy Lee Ha, with whom he used to come down and spend time, when he came from Mayaro to watch cricket, joins me in this tribute. Rest in peace my colleague. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Foreign and Caricom Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Amery Browne): A gentleman of unusual intelligence, soft spoken, peaceful by nature and Oh, what a smile. But at the same time a master strategist, a mentor and a visionary servant of the public in this land. This Senate today has paused in respectful tribute to a sitting Member, and rightfully so. Minister Khan's passing has left a significant void in the politics of Trinidad and Tobago. He was at all times a gentleman and his demeanor has always been of a standard that made him pleasant, approachable, understanding and most of all fair. Frankie was a fair person. A more balanced and rational individual you could never find. Not possessed by empty vanities or self-promotion and never one to utter insults or crude words across the aisle or across the isles.

Frankie was a voice of moderation, of calm, of sober reflection, a voice of reason, of stability and of respect. Minister Khan was a leader in this Chamber in every sense of the word and his ethos was conveyed by his signature smile, by his measured tones, and his technical strength. He signed everything that he did with excellence.

On a more personal level, Frankie was always an accessible and most trustworthy source of advice, not just to me but especially to the younger members of the team. Even at the level of the Cabinet he was unique, remarkable, he always found time to insert comments or thoughts about empowering our young people.

Indeed he was a great believer in entrusting the young professionals in the energy sector to get the job done, as well reflected earlier by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. And he was grooming some of the best and brightest young technocrats in this country who God willing can help us fill the void.

Apart from all the accolades, what I remember most about Frankie was his resolute enduring, unshakable love for humanity and for his family. He never, ever, ever stop talking about his dear wife Laura, his son Kheron, his daughter Khara, and the apple of his eye, the young granddaughter Amelia. His dear wife Laura Sewlal-Khan has expressed to me how comforted she has felt by the outpouring of affection towards Frankie. She told me, Amery, when you speak in the Senate please convey his special love for the people of Tobago. Frankie loved Tobago and spent as much time there as he could. The people of Tobago loved him in return.

In Tobago Frankie developed that same connection to farmers and fishermen and vendors that he developed in Mayaro and everywhere else that he went. His dear wife also asked me to tell you the public and you his colleagues how disturbed he was by the venom that seems to be growing in the hearts of some, by the nasty personal attacks and displays of viciousness and malice. Frankie Khan was different in many ways. He harked back to a different era, an era of intellect, of gentlemen and ladies, an era of wit and intelligence and dignity, of soundness above loudness. He lived and bled for the energy sector and for the development of this country. I miss him dearly. We miss him dearly and it is my prayer that we remain inspired by him in how we approach our duties here and in how we approach the future. I end this humble tribute with words from the poet, Henry Van Dyke, at the turn of the last century:

“Time is too slow for those who wait,
Too swift for those who fear,

Tributes (Sen. The Hon. F. Khan)
Sen. The Hon. Dr. A. Browne (cont'd)

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Too long for those who grieve,
Too short for those who rejoice,
But for those who love,
Time is eternity.”

For those who love, time is eternity. Sincere condolences to his beautiful family. Goodbye, my friend. Thank you and rest well. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Anthony Vieira: We live in troubling and uncertain times, but the one thing we can be sure about, the one thing about which there can be no doubt is that each of us will die one day. And that certainty was realized for our senatorial brother, Franklin Khan, on Saturday. How does one assess the value of a life? How does one measure the legacy of a son of the soil who was born in the village of Guayaguayare, 63 years ago? Is it by the number of years lived? Is it fame, fortune or service to humanity? By today’s standards 63 years is not old. Age by itself however, is no indicator of a life well lived. Similarly the illusions of money, power and fame are overrated. Having money and being rich are not the same thing. Fame is a fickle mistress and ironically some of the most famous people are the most lonely.

That is not to say that Sen. Khan was not famous and successful. Besides being Chairman of the PNM, and as has been reported in the media, his professional life story is one of achievement, one achievement after another in the public service: Director of WASA, Chairman of NP, Minister of Rural Development and Local Government, Minister of Works and Transport, Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and Leader of the Government Bench in the Senate. Not many of us can lay claim to such a record of enduring achievement.

There is no doubt in the eyes of the world that Sen. Khan had achieved fame and political power. But for me that is not what defines or make our departed

colleague great. Undoubtedly he made, as we pray at the start of each Senate sitting, a positive contribution to the peace and the prosperity of our nation. But for me the greatness of Sen. Franklin Khan was his devotion to duty, his modest personal taste, his humility, and compassion. I enjoyed his contributions, he was bright, articulate and on energy matters an impressive expert. But what resonated with me most was the way he treated his Senatorial colleagues, with respect and sensitivity.

Sen. Khan's political, personal, ministerial and parliamentary responsibilities were massive, but he always kept his head above water in the fulfilment of his duties. Invariably he was prepared, willing to go the distance, never complained. I wish to express heartfelt sympathy and condolences to Sen. Khan's family. There are places within our hearts that can only be filled with memories and there are places in our souls that can only be healed by the gentle hands of time. May you find comfort knowing that the country's thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

In taking Sen. Khan's measure the balance sheet ends in credit. The country is better off today because of his service for the public good; he was a patriot. Significantly, Sen. Khan suffered no delusions of grandeur and he did not revel in power. It was impossible not to warm to that infectious and disarming smile. He was gracious and gentle. Franklin Khan will be missed in the Senate, but his warmth, kindness and gentle spirit will be remembered forever. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Social Development and Family Services (Sen. The Hon. Donna Cox): Thank you very much, Madam President. I thank you for the opportunity to say but a few words on behalf of my friend, my mentor, my guide and my political history book, Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan. Madam President, the

announcement of Sen. Khan's death was one of those pieces of news for which one could never be prepared. Having spoken with him myself on Friday evening, listened once again to his counsel and marveled at his wit, I remain enamoured by his own humility and his sense of being in the right place at the right time. Listening to "Frankie", as we call him, expound on the intricacies of the energy sector, was a lesson in communication even for those of us who are schooled in communication, as he was able to break down complex matters into pieces that those of us less versed in the industry could very well easily understand.

He was committed, hard-working and for me what was so important and what I admired was he was fair. Watching him interact with members of the wider public was a lesson for us. Such was his ease and affability. There was no pretense, there were no airs, for everyone it was simply Frankie who felt equally at home in Moka as he felt in Mayaro, often reminding us that he was a simple country boy.

Madam President, as I reflect on my interactions with Frankie since my appointment in 2007, he held tight to the dream of a developed and modern Trinidad and Tobago. And so his smile often masked the pain he felt when others, blinded by political parochialism could see no further than the ballot box. When he spoke, Frankie shared a dream that was bigger than ourselves, greater than our finite terms of office and much grander than our temporary careers as politicians. For him Trinidad and Tobago was the greater good. For us in this Government, Frankie was a blessing and it will be a long while before we will truly be able to measure what we have lost in his passing.

Even now, Madam President, it is difficult to speak of Frankie in the past tense for admittedly the enormity of his passing is yet to properly reside in me. He was a political institution and an authority whose advice and judgment meant something to me. And as I read and listened to many tributes that have flowed

since his passing, I am convinced that many citizens on all sides of the political divides were impressed by his personal humility as well as his sense of duty to country.

Madam President, the measure of the man who we mourn today is found in his ability to keep smiling even in the face of public shame and unfounded calumny, as well as his willingness to exchange physical pain and discomfort for the greater good of the national population. Madam President, the death of someone we love forces us to stop, take a step back and see our lives from a wider perspective. Eventually that wider perspective can afford us a clearer, fuller view of ourselves and allow us to disentangle from some of the myriad useful concerns that we so often let overtake and overcome our lives. It forces a reckoning. Death simplifies, death does not tolerate endless shading and nuances. Death lays bare what really matters and in this way becomes your judge. And therefore, even in death Frankie has forced us to come to terms with our own mortality and the futility of our fight for anything more than the six feet of real estate which almost laughably we will not even own.

And as I look back on his life I see someone who was the embodiment of the scriptural reference to everything having its time and season. Frankie taught me that in every arrival there is a leave-taking; in every reunion there is a separation; in each one's growing up, there is a growing old; in every smile there is a tear and in every success there is a loss. All living is dying and all celebration is mortification too. So today as we reflect upon our own memories of this country boy, we reflect too on our own mortality, on what is important to us and how important it is to surrender both to the reality of death and to the ultimate mystery of life itself.

Today, Madam President, I bow before his memory, Sen. Khan is no longer

with us and he has graduated to a higher life. Frankie, I salute you as a soldier who has moved on, but the mark you have left will cause you to live forever in our hearts. And may the Lord comfort his family at this time and may he comfort all of us who mourn. I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Charrise Seepersad: Madam President, thank you for the opportunity to say a few words in tribute to our dear colleague, Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan. I met Sen. Khan when I was appointed to the Senate in November 2018. In thinking back on all my interactions with him, what stands out most is his willingness to share his vast knowledge and experience. I would describe him as a dedicated teacher and gentleman. Humility was his trade mark. His knowledge of the energy sector was astounding.

I have learnt much from him about the energy industry both in Trinidad and globally. Every time I spoke in the Senate and Sen. Khan was present he actively listened to my contributions. I will always be grateful to him for his astute feedback and the respect he showed me. Sen. Khan, thank you for your unstinting service to Trinidad and Tobago. This quotation is from an unknown person is most appropriate:

“In life, you will realize there is a role for everyone you meet. Some will test you, some will use you, some will love you and some will teach you. But the ones who are truly important are the ones who bring out the best in you. They are the rare and amazing people who remind you why it’s worth it.”

I will miss Sen. Khan dearly. I extend my deepest condolences to his family. May Sen. Khan rest in peace and eternal light shine upon him. Thank you, Madam President. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Nigel de Freitas: Thank you, Madam President. I rise today to join all of my senatorial colleagues in paying tribute to Sen. Franklin Khan, Leader of

Government Business in this Senate. He was a leader, a man whom by any measure has lived a full life, but yet we cannot escape the feeling that he has gone to soon. There is not a person in here, and I have to believe out there as well, that could say he was not approachable or that he was not willing once capable to part with his wisdom. What was it like to talk to Sen. Franklin Khan?

It is like knowing that you are talking to someone full of knowledge, but yet he always made you feel as though your input was valued. His wisdom was gained through the trials and tribulations of life, through the ups and downs that we all know we must traverse as it relates to our lives. As we age in life we come to understand that any life gives you blessings and it gives you lessons and sometimes those blessings are lessons and sometimes the lessons are blessings. But to have lived the life for all of its winding roads and come out on the other side smiling, to come out on the other side being known for your smile is a testament to the measure of the man, the ideology and the principles that guided him. We can all learn from a man who teaches us to smile through it all.

Most importantly, Sen. Franklin Khan was not just honourable because he held the title of Minister or Leader in the Senate, but that he was honourable because that is just who he was. A man through whom his humility in service, his unwavering love of country gave all that he had to give to the very end. He will be missed. To his wife, his children and his grandchildren, we mourn with you. Take solace in the fact that he was well loved and that the halls of Heaven have one extra smile. Thank you for sharing him with us. May his soul rest in internal peace.

2.30 p.m.

The Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (Sen. The Hon. Avinash Singh): Thank you, Madam President. It is with a great sadness and a heavy heart I rise to pay tribute to Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan, a dear friend

and colleague. Madam President, eight years ago when I got the opportunity to serve this august Chamber, it was Frankie I relied on heavily as he was then Chairman of the People's National Movement, and he was always there to give genuine advice, not just advice, but genuine advice and he always gave righteous advice. Frankie never said no when approached for support. He was always there for us, the young ones. Frankie was not just a colleague. He was a gentleman, humble, a mentor, a teacher, a true leader and a dear friend. There is an old saying that goes, "Never regret anything that made you smile". Frankie's life was a smile to many of us and most Senators here today, in paying tribute, reflected on Frankie's permanent smile.

In Hinduism, there are certain times when our loved ones leave us. We can consider those times as being bad or good. Fortunately, Frankie left us during the holy period of Navratri and, equally important, the Holy Month of Ramadan, a very spiritual time when many of us are in fasting, we are praying and making that connection with the Almighty. So, Madam President, it is my observation that certainly the Almighty may have been satisfied that our friend and colleague did his part for humanity and is onto something better. That something better, in my faith, we call moksha or liberation which is simply the personal and direct realization of one's true self or one's true potential. So let us all believe that Frankie, the soul and life he lived, will always be remembered and will live on.

Madam President, little did I know that the last conversation I would get to have with Frankie was mere hours, in fact, the night before his passing, and I cherished every moment and every conversation I had with Frankie. I will really miss Frankie's voice on the next side of the phone. In the wee hours of the morning before my alarm clock goes, I would be greeted by and I quote: "Avinash, I hope you up already as farmers move early", when he expressed what he called me for. I

wish to thank Frankie's family for allowing him to serve his country and humanity. Rest well, my friend, until we meet again. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Sen. Dillon-Remy.

Sen. Dr. Maria Dillon-Remy: Madam President, thank you for allowing me the privilege to contribute to these tributes to our dear colleague, Sen. Franklin Khan, on his passing. My condolence goes out to his family and dear friends. Before coming to this Chamber, the picture I have of Sen. Khan was one of a smiling man. I always wondered, how could a man smile through everything like this? But you know what it reminds me of, Madam President? It is the scripture that says:

“...all things work together for good...”—for—“those who love...”— the Lord and—“...are called according to His purpose”

So, in that light, I can see Sen. Khan smiling through everything, knowing that all would work for good. I am not sure if that is what was on his mind, but this is what comes to my mind as I remember his smile.

On occasions, when leaving this Chamber in the evening, I will be going on the plane and he will be going over to Tobago, and then is when I heard about his love for Tobago. As the Minister of Foreign and Caricom Affairs said, he really loved Tobago and he talked about how peaceful it was, and in my mind I was saying, as peaceful as you are.

The last conversation I had with him was near the Dining Room. One day we were coming out and I was there fretting about something about needing to get back values in our society and I engaged him, and I heard about his childhood in Mayaro, I heard about the values that he learned from his mother, I heard about the influence of persons within his community. He talked particularly about the leaders in his community; leaders like, he said, the area representative who was representing the area at that time. He said that person—whose name I do not

remember—that person had so much value for people, that they would give what they did not have just to make sure that other people had, and he wished that more leaders would be like that, in this day, valuing people. I heard about his secondary school sojourn at North Eastern College. He talked about his love for his job, his love for his party and contribution that he could make, and most of all, his love for Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam President, what I remember of him is his humility, his calm, evidence of integrity, levelheadedness, and there are many times in this Chamber when his levelheadedness is needed and it was evident. I will always remember him for the man who put country first. So to his family, again, condolences. The nation has lost a true patriot and may his soul rest in peace. Thank you, Madam President. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Minister in the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs.

The Minister in the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Renuka Sagramsingh-Sooklal): Thank you, Madam President. It is with great sadness I stand here today to pay tribute to a dear colleague, mentor, servant of the people, and might I say, a political uncle, Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan. On the very first sitting of Parliament, while having lunch at his side in the Parliament's Dining Room, I will never forget the words and encouragement he offered to me, a newly minted Minister and Senator. I will also never forget that while my plate was absolutely chaotic, for friends would know I fall short of dining etiquette, I admired the way Sen. Khan had his soup, salad and main course with poise and grace, all of which I lack. Thereafter, Sen. Khan continued to encourage me.

Many times, Madam President, right after my Senate contribution, I will

immediately receive a WhatsApp message from him saying, “Well done”, or “Congratulations”, or even “Excellent work Ranuka”, spelt R-A-N-U-K-A, as he would sometimes spell my name. I will miss these messages. As simple as this may seem to some, I will say, as a new politician, still trying to find my way, uncertain of myself, not having the luxury of a political handbook from which I could learn, the words and encouragement and reassurance given to me by Sen. Khan provided a sense of comfort and guidance. I knew at that time I was on the right track. Leader of Government Business, as I pay tribute to you today, I would say that you were a true senior. As young lawyers, we always look up and turn to a senior. Sen. Khan, you were the equivalent to a true senior. As a Hindu, we look to a guru to teach us, to mentor us. You were indeed a true guru to myself and to many.

I will sincerely miss you, Leader of Government Business in the Senate. May the Lord accept you in his kingdom and that you continue to look down on us all. I wish to offer my sincere condolences to your family and ask that God will give them the strength at this time. Thank you for being a true senior, one who was willing to advise and to encourage the younger and new politicians like myself. Rest in eternal peace, Uncle Frankie. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Sen. Lezama-Lee Sing.

Sen. Laurel Lezama-Lee Sing: Madam President, thank you. Life has an interesting way, sometimes beautiful, sometimes funny, sometimes cruel, but always an interesting way of putting things into sharp perspective. Life, however, is about lessons, it is about learning from experiences and from people. Today, after the oddest of curveballs was pitched at us on Saturday morning, what have we learnt from our dearly departed Franklin Khan? His was an indomitable, unshakeable spirit. He was a patriot, a professional. He was polite and a paragon of

virtue. He was an intellect and a great soul of matchless courage. As excellent as he was in this Chamber, he was equally brilliant as a party chairman. I had the pleasure of being the PNM's National Youth League Chairman when he joined the party in 1999, and we, the then young people, experienced the joys of campaigning with him in his foray into electoral politics. He opened and held open doors for young people of the party and the country, and as Chairman of the People's National Movement, he led the charge to reshape the PNM and prepare it for victory at the polls in 2015.

Despite ill-conceived notions and motions, he always asked the players on the Parliament's stage to work together, to dispel the negativity which he believed only hurt our nation. A humble, simple boy from Guayaguayare who left an indelible mark on his beloved home town and his beloved country. May we honour his legacy by always putting Trinidad and Tobago first. May we, therefore, live every day reminded by words of Sen. Khan and knowing that we are our society's future and hope. May his lessons resonate deeply within each and every one of us. I extend my deepest condolences to Mrs. Laura Khan and the entire Khan family. May the angels welcome our dear Franklin Khan into paradise, good and faithful servant that he was. Thank you, Franklin Khan, father, friend, figurehead. You will be forever missed. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Sen. Welch.

Sen. Evans Welch: Madam President, thank you for the opportunity to pay tribute to the late Sen. Franklin Khan. Madam President, I have only been in this Senate—a Member of this Senate for approximately eight months, and I have to confess that my contact with the late Senator has been more or less limited to sharing the Chamber with him as well as passing him and greeting him in the corridors. However, because I am, so to speak, a new kid upon the block in this atmosphere, I

paid very close attention and was very attentive to everything that takes place here, and I have to say Sen. Khan has impressed me during the course of his contributions. I am impressed with the qualities he demonstrated and I have to say, and I have often reflected, that I wish that I had some of those qualities myself.

I always found that he spoke from his heart and soul. There was a level of genuineness in his contributions which I greatly admired. I admired his humility, I admired his calm delivery and his unruffled style in saying whatever he had to say. I never perceived any bitterness or acrimony in his tone, despite the fact that the nature of these proceedings that we are engaged in and bearing in mind that there is political divide inherent in this process, despite the fact that that is an atmosphere which can often attract acrimony and bitterness in one's tone and in directions to each other across the floor, I have never perceived that in him.

I have also observed his contribution, albeit on the television, when there was a Motion of no confidence against him in the House of Representatives—and bearing in mind he was the one who, during those particular proceedings, was the focus and subject of a lot of attacks on his competence, his abilities, his leadership of the industry for which he was charged with responsibility. Nevertheless, when he rose and had to make his contribution in response, one would never have imagined that he was the subject of such criticism because his response continued to be measured, unruffled and lacked that level of bitterness or antagonism that most of us, other human beings, bearing in mind our frailties and weaknesses, might have been inclined to demonstrate or find ourselves unable to resist the temptation to hit back, not so of that late Senator from what I have observed.

So, Madam President, I also say, I must confess that matters of energy and the energy industry do not make for the most exciting reading, and therefore, even on those occasions when I have tried to follow the on goings in that industry in the

newspaper or sometimes even listening to media reports on it, I find I have found it difficult sometimes to keep my attention level up. However, in these Chambers I have found—I have learned a lot from his contributions in that regard, both in this House and when I have listened to him in the other House. And it is quite clear to me, he was very resourceful in the field, had a detailed knowledge of its operations, and from my observations, he seemed to be very au courant with his responsibilities in what became a very difficult industry in light of the economic situation which has affected it. So I admired him greatly for that, his ability to impart and to edify persons, like myself, who may have found some difficulty in learning the intricacies of the industry otherwise. So, in his unruffled style, he was a great teacher as well in that regard.

During my short tenure here, I have also observed his attentiveness throughout the contributions of everyone while he sat in this House, and let us face it, sometimes it is not all that easy to remain attentive and to listen carefully to every contribution. We are all human beings and sometimes our interests tends to wane a bit, but I have observed, in the case of the hon. Sen. Khan, that he never seemed to have that weakness. He always seemed to be interested in what everyone is saying, even if it is something or an opinion which was contrary to one he might have expressed, or contrary to his own philosophy or policy on any particular issue. And I would say, in that regard personally, I am particularly appreciative of him because sometimes when you stand at this podium, you are discouraged if you feel that you do not have the attention of Members of this House. And quite often I would say that I have found myself encouraged by the fact that sometimes when I looked up and I saw the hon. Senator, he would be focused and listening to my contribution and that was a matter which give me great encouragement to continue and to soldier on, and I appreciated that immensely

from him.

So, Madam President, I wish to express condolences to his immediate family, his political colleagues as well as his close friends, and I also wish for his soul to rest in peace. I believe sincerely that he has left a legacy which it would be to our advantaged to try to emulate in terms of his contributions, his calmness, his willingness to listen, his willingness to engage, and his overall personality and approach. I have passed him on the corridors on a couple of occasions and I always felt that when I greeted him, even though we hardly knew each other, and he looked up, maybe if he was on his phone or something of that nature, and he looked up and he returned the greeting, I never felt that it was just like a fleeting moment or any such thing. It is like if he put a personal effort into every greeting that he made in response, and he made one feel as though he really appreciated that interaction no matter how brief it was.

So, again, I express my condolences to all who are close to him, and I personally would miss seeing him, hearing him, and passing and exchanging greetings with him in the precincts of this honourable House. Thank you, Madam President. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Minister of Rural Development and Local Government.

The Minister of Rural Development and Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Kazim Hosein): Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I wish to extend sincerest condolences for the family and friends as well as the community of Ortoire/Mayaro, my fellow colleagues, and the members of the People's National Movement on the passing of Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan, or Frankie, as we fondly called him. Madam President, service to mankind is service to God, and my friend peacefully passed away serving this country. A few weeks ago, I recalled Minister Khan rising in this honourable House to make a

contribution, during which he reminded us that it does not matter which side of the Bench we sit on, on our side, the Opposition side, or the Independent side, we have all been given an opportunity and there is a fundamental reason for us being here. As appointed Senators and as servants, we are given the opportunity to serve and every day we strive to do our best, to show that we deserve this portfolio.

On hearing the news of Minister Khan's passing on Saturday morning, I, like many of my colleagues, was in deep shock because I have just spoken to him a few hours before. I called him round 10 o'clock on Friday night. He did not answer the phone, and he returned my call 15 minutes after and we spoke for a very long while. He was his usual jolly self. I always called him for advice, something I did frequently, and we conversed for almost half an hour or so, and this was the type of individual Minister Khan was. Down to his last moments, he remained dedicated to service. Frankie was the embodiment of kindness, compassion, and hard work. He was my friend, a brother in service. Minister Khan was the first ever appointed Minister of Rural Development and Local Government in this country and in the history of Trinidad and Tobago.

In his Senate presentation in 2015, he referred to his assignment as the transformational Minister and this—without a doubt, he transformed the landscape of local government. Having traversed the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago, hosting 16 consultations with citizens in efforts to push local government reform forward, his knowledge and expertise in local government was an exemplary level to me. On my appointment as Minister of Rural Development and Local Government in November 2016, I was grateful that I had a friend and mentor like Frankie who had laid such a strong foundation in local government. I was even more proud to be given the opportunity to follow in his footsteps and continue the stellar work he had begun.

Madam President, as many of you all might know—and I always listen to his contributions very carefully because he had a passion in making his contributions. I always listened to how he used this word “fundamentally” and I want to share it with you all now. Having followed his contributions, as I said, and I recalled his fundamental—especially in his advocacy for the development of rural communities and why it was important to improve systems, governance and service delivery across the country, Minister Khan was a visionary, a true son of the soil, an individual whose contributions to local government, and by extension, Trinidad and Tobago, will always be remembered.

3.00 p.m.

We remain eternally grateful for his longstanding service. May his life be an example to all. May his legacy live in the hearts and minds. Just the way he lived peacefully and humbly, that is the way he passed away. Rest in peace my friend. From God we come and to Him is our eventual return. Thank you, Madam President. [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Amrita Deonarine: Thank you, Madam President. It is with deep sadness that I stand here today to speak of the loss of a leader. Madam President, having known Minister Khan for just a short two and a half years, it would be remiss of me to not join and offer a tribute to this leader whose presence would create a huge gap in the Senate.

The news of his passing left me too in shock and disbelief: How could this happen so suddenly? Just before Easter week we were chatting about some home remedies that could help his cough. You see, Madam President, he reminded me a lot about my dad, who also has a similar cough. My dad kept telling me: “Carry some of the medicine for the Minister nah.” So I asked him, I said: “Minister Khan, would you like to try it?” He said: “Sure, bring it.” Unfortunately, Madam

President, I did not get a chance to do that.

Madam President, the earliest memory I have of Minister Khan was when I was a child attending the Rio Claro High School. That is when he held the post of Minister of Works and Transport. As a child, I admired him as someone from the area having reached the pinnacle of public office in service to our country. I always wanted to and wondered if I would ever meet him one day. Many, many years later, when I finally met him in November 2018, he was so kind and gracious. The first thing I said to him, Madam President, was: “I am from Rio Claro.” Minister Khan always treated me with respect and never for one moment looked at me as a young and inexperienced Senator. He never thought my initial nervousness in this political environment was a weakness, but as a process of adaptation and growth. He always listened to each and every one of the Independent Senators carefully, ensured that responses to concerns raised were provided. When he responded, he did so with poise, scientifically-grounded facts and always gave a historical perspective. The perspective which he brought in this Senate was truly unique and I would honestly miss them. If he did not respond to any particular concern, he assured that there will be a response from another Member of the House.

Madam President, this is the mark of a true leader we have lost, someone who never lost sight of his purpose in service to our country, someone who encouraged and nurtured potential when he saw it. You see, Madam President, I really wished I had told him all of this; I never did. Little did any of us know that his time to leave this realm of life was near. It reminds us that, in the midst of all this political banter, it would not hurt us to be kind to one another when the political curtains are opened.

Indeed, Minister Khan no longer being here is a significant loss to the Senate and the country. To his family, I extend condolences and pray that God gives them

the strength to deal with this insurmountable heartbreak that has befallen them so suddenly.

Madam President, I would like to thank Minister Khan for his service to Trinidad and Tobago. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (Sen. The Hon. Clarence Rambharat): Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, on the occasion when we have the opportunity to present tributes to former Senators or former MPs in the other place, I often wondered what it was like to have to pay tribute to one of our own, somebody who actually sat here amongst us and served; not that I wished death on anybody. I wondered if we felt that bond to those who served, in some cases decades ago, what it was like for one of us to fall ill.

And it is very unusual, Madam President, Saturday morning when I started to work, as you know, with the parliamentary staff, to prepare for today, there was little precedent. The last known was Morris Marshall in the other place. So these are very unusual circumstances. But it is not surprising that there has been such an outpouring of support for Minister Khan. He really deserved it.

And our affinity to each other had to do with the fact that in reality, when you look at it, both of us are country boys come to town. And Sen. Khan understood that. It is not easy to leave the east coast or to leave Icacos, to leave Matelot, Toco, Tobago maybe, and come to this City of Port of Spain to do business. And that is what in many cases caused us to bind together. In this current group, Sen. Hosein has his roots in Rio Claro, Sen. Sinanan in Grande. In the other place, Maxie Cuffie was born in the constituency of Mayaro, Sen. Le Hunte, but we always stuck together, recognizing that what we brought to a Cabinet and to a Parliament was a perspective best understood by us.

When I campaigned in Mayaro in 2015, a lot of people were surprised when

I said over and over, the biggest obstacle to education in Mayaro was transportation. Sen. Deonarine knows that. In Port of Spain and San Fernando, you could step onto the pavement and flag down a maxi, a taxi, a PH, a bus. But all of us who grew up in the rural communities know that we have to “ketch” the last bus. And no matter what our potential, and there is tremendous potential in the rural communities, ultimately, the most successful ones are the ones who had both potential and bus fare. And I think that, when we look at Sen. Khan, we see not only an oil and gas and energy man who travelled the world, and really had a light that shone bright, we also see a country boy that was truly a success story.

And we had many things in common: Mayaro, our families were 10 to 15 minutes apart; energy, he had an entire career in energy, I had a small part of my career in BP; politics and PNM politics, I following him as a candidate, he twice successful, I am twice unsuccessful, so far; family that was blood and not blood across the country; friends and most importantly with Frankie Khan, the ability to laugh. And he normally headlined a phone call or headlined a conversation by telling you: “This is a serious matter”, or “This is something I want to talk to you about”. And I cannot use the language when he had something to make you laugh, what he said. But we all know what he said.

Franklin Khan was about youth, people, politics, family, friends, and relatives. But it always struck me in the Cabinet, he had a unique ability when he delivered a Note, or delivered a report to say to the Prime Minister, in particular: “Prime Minister, you know, is a young engineer in the Ministry, you work on that.” And above all of us, Franklin Khan championed the case for his young professionals in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, to the point that he brought Notes and he defended them and he fought for them, and eventually succeeded in creating contract positions that will attract and keep young persons in

that Ministry.

And it was not just in the Ministry, in politics. And Sen. Sagrainsingh-Sooklal, you are right, one of the challenges I had in my conversations with Frankie, in conducting the business of the Senate and elsewhere, is his ability to give people whatever name came to his head. So sometimes it was a struggle trying to figure out who he was talking about. It was “de lady dat we talked to dat day”, “de girl from over so”, “remember dat fella from down there?” and a variety of things that he used, as I searched my memory to see who Frankie was talking about.

For the life of Frankie, if I would say I could sum up in maybe 20 words: Mapepire Bar in Mayaro, that was one of his spots. But Chin Hong bar was the main spot. If Frankie Khan came to Mayaro, he was to be found there amongst the people. Michet Avenue, where he had a house, and you could find him there; Mafeking, where he grew up in very close proximity to the most illustrious Mayaro politician we have, Victor Campbell. All of us grew up at the footsteps of Victor Campbell; Vernon Gilbert, who he worked with in the energy sector. It was Vernon Gilbert's discovery of terminal illness that led him to withdraw from the nomination process in the PNM, and gave way to Frankie Khan; Moruga, because he was the last of the MPs from that area to have both Moruga and Mayaro. When I contested, I contested the Mayaro part of the constituency. But Frankie had connections in Moruga, as I did. Four of my siblings were born there. And in the face of the Prime Minister's declaration, political leader at that time, of the future Ministry of Rural Development, it is in the Moruga constituency that a lot of the groundwork was laid.

Cricket, it is difficult to go to cricket with Frankie Khan, because he actually watched every ball and every stroke and everything. He sat there with a glass of

red wine in front of him, if he was in one of the boxes, and he was not distracted from the game at all. “If yuh looking tuh lime in cricket” do not go with Frankie Khan. And he would normally be, in recent years, sitting next to another former Senator, Emmanuel George, also known as Hurricane George. I have never seen two individuals who could sit in the midst of drinking and partying Trinidadians and focus on a cricket match so closely.

And some of the names: Gypsy, of course; Fitzroy Mitchell; the famous Hodge, the PNM man in Moruga; Matthew Pierre; Belita Besson; Mansoor Quamina; Paul Montique; Butch Bahadur, a young candidate he recruited in the local government election in 2013, and Butch passed away just after we came into Government in 2015; Clifford Campbell; and a gentleman by the name of Louis Castillo who occupied a lot of our time in discussion, Louis being a very, very energetic activist in the Mayaro constituency. When Minister Khan was named Chairman of the PNM, I felt very proud, Madam President. When he was named the Minister of Works before that, likewise, and I served alongside him with a lot of pride in his achievements and what he saw in the potential for all of us. Mayaro has a history of producing good people. We produced two Attorneys General for the PNM. And Victor Campbell himself a former Minister of Works and Transport.

In his final days, and there is no way of knowing when your final days would be, his last contribution here was on March 24th in the Senate. As my colleague, Paula Gopee-Scoon has said, he ended with the words: “Let us build Trinidad and Tobago.” But it was not his last contribution in the Parliament. On Friday the 26th, we were both in the House. I think my colleague, Minister Sinanan was there that day too when we made contributions in defense of the Minister of Finance.

Ultimately, our last conversation, of course, last week Friday, were in three parts. The first two centred around the Senate sitting, which was to be this sitting. And the third one, he headlined: “This is a very unusual conversation, Clarence.” And I do not know what was in Minister Khan's mind, but so many of my colleagues have said they spoke to him last Friday and the conversations were long. And his conversation started about the Fish Fry, which is under construction in Carenage, and went straight back to Ortoire, down to Moruga, back through central Trinidad and covered a lot of things very, very rapidly in the way Franklin Khan spoke. And he was full of energy and full of life and laughed a lot during the conversation.

I am very happy, Madam President, that that was our final conversation and the way in which I would remember our fallen colleague, Sen. Franklin Khan. I thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam President: Hon. Senators, Franklin Khan was one of the most outstanding parliamentarians in modern politics. He embodied the best in all of us. He was one of the most experienced of our Members. He was outstanding in parliamentary debate, including and especially on those occasions when he would rise to say that he had not intended to contribute to a debate and then would share with us a story that illuminated the discussion in a manner which no speaker had achieved before.

He observed and respected the procedures of this Chamber and he scrupulously upheld its conventions and traditions. He was exceptionally knowledgeable about matters within his ministerial portfolio. He believed passionately in what he was doing in the way of public life, so much so that he chose to continue to serve in this Chamber, and as a Minister of Government, for long after his body began to rebel against the impossible demands he was placing on it, and in carrying on that brave rebellion, he fought literally to the end for what

he believed in.

And what, or rather, who did Franklin Khan believe in? He believed in the people of Trinidad and Tobago. He believed in our capacity to be better and bigger than we perceive ourselves to be; to be better and bigger than the world perceives us. He believed in our people's capacity for greatness.

Perhaps this is because he himself was a great man. One supposes that it is easier for those possessed of greatness first to understand it and then to desire it for others. Such, I believe, was Sen. Khan's motivation for his public service. Having himself been inspired to achieve greatness, he spent his entire public life calling upon others to achieve it as well.

By section 84 of the Constitution, a Minister shall not enter the duties of his office unless he has taken and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance, an oath for the due execution of his office. Sen. Khan embodied the oath of office comprehensively and effortlessly. One might be even forgiven for thinking that in drafting the oath for ministerial office, the framers of our Constitution met and spoke with and observed Sen. Khan for every day of his public life. For with every fibre of his being, with every step that he took, Sen. Khan bore true faith and allegiance to Trinidad and Tobago and upheld the Constitution and the law. With every ounce of his strength, he sought to conscientiously, impartially, and to the best of his ability, discharge his duties as Minister. And with every sinew in his body, he strove to do right to all manner of people, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.

In Sen. Khan's passing we have therefore lost a formidable senior Member of this Chamber and a human being of very rare ability. What a tremendous loss it is; a loss to the country's public life, a loss of a remarkable political talent and a loss of a man who, in all his actions in public life, retained a human touch.

Perhaps, saddest of all, it is a loss of the tranquility and happiness to which his time toiling in the vineyards of public service unquestionably entitled him in the years that should have come, but which will now never come.

We have heard a lot about Sen. Khan's smile. But it must not be felt that the smile was always an easy thing for him to show. Sen. Khan faced tremendous challenges while in politics, challenges that would have broken lesser men. Yet he emerged from them all without bitterness or rancour. It will forever be to his credit that although that warm smile may have dimmed at the time of those challenges, it never did go away. He returned to politics, when it would have been easier to walk away, and Trinidad and Tobago has been the better for it.

And so, hon. Senators, I too wish to join with all the previous speakers in paying tribute to the late Sen. Franklin Khan. I know that the whole Chamber would wish me to express our very deepest sympathy to Sen. Khan's wife and his family. And on behalf of the Senate, on behalf of the Clerk of the Senate, who is grateful for the cordial, respectful and professional manner of his interactions with Sen. Khan as Leader of Government Business, and on behalf of all the other members of staff, I do so. This Senate says thank you to his wife Laura, to his children Kheron and Khara and to his entire family, all of whom sacrificed their time with him on this Earth so that our nation could benefit for all eternity.

I think it is right that we in this Chamber should have met this afternoon to pay tribute to a distinguished parliamentarian and then adjourn. I do not believe that there would have been an appetite for any other business in this Chamber today. Hon. Senators, I ask you now to please stand, so that we can observe a minute's silence.

[The Senate stood]

Madam President: Please be seated. Thank you, hon. Senators. The Clerk will

convey to the family of our departed colleague all the sentiments that have been expressed here today.

Hon. Senators, I just wish to remind you that a condolence book has been opened in the Rotunda and you are invited to pay your tributes.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries (Sen. The Hon. Clarence Rambharat): Madam President, before I move, I crave your indulgence to express our gratitude to you for your contribution and for your assistance in making sure that we came here today and also for making sure that we did not get into any fights afterwards in a debate.

I want to express my gratitude to my colleagues, Sen. Mark and Sen. Richards for being supportive; to their respectful Benches, to Mr. Caesar and to his staff, which I said they are very unusual circumstances and they were available and ready and working since Saturday; to my colleague Sen. Paula Gopee-Scoon, my senior colleague on our Bench; and Laurel Lezama-Lee Sing, our party's PRO; and all my colleagues on our Bench, for keeping it short and sweet and for speaking their heart out and ensuring that we gave our fallen colleague our thoughts, and more importantly for his family and for the country to know how we feel. And finally to colleague in the other place, Minister Camille Robinson-Regis, whose experience we had to lean on and, of course, our hon. Prime Minister for his support.

Madam President, as I indicated in the opening, I wish to indicate that in accordance with Standing Order 117, there is an agreement among the Benches that in view of the passing of our colleague, the business for today will be confined to the tributes, which have already been offered. In this regard, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.

Madam President: Hon. Senators, before I put the question, may I inform Members that I have directed the Clerk that all items listed on the Order Paper for today's sitting are to be restored on the Order Paper for the next sitting of the Senate.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 3.27 p.m.