

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Monday, May 13, 2024*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. Shamfa Cudjoe-Lewis, MP, Member for Tobago West, who has requested leave of absence for the period May 12—19, 2024. Mr. Davendranath Tancoo, MP, Member for Oropouche West, and from Ms. Michelle Benjamin, MP, Member for Moruga/ Tableland, who have requested leave of absence from today's Sitting of the House. The leave which the Members seek is granted.

ICC MEN'S T20 CRICKET WORLD CUP 2024 BILL, 2024

Bill to make provision for the efficient and effective staging of the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024 and for related purposes, brought from the Senate [*The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

Motion made: That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings. [*Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC*]

Question put and agreed to.

PAPERS LAID

1. Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority (Extension of Period) (No. 3) Order, 2024. [*The Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (Hon. Colm Imbert)*]

2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee for the year ended September 30, 2004. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Hon. C. Imbert: As I said, we have two court jesters here today.

Mr. Young: The rumour is Tancoo gone by you now, you know. That is why he asked for leave.

3. Annual Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Securities and Exchange Commission for the year ended September 30, 2023. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
4. Ministerial Response of the Ministry of National Security to the Second Report of the Joint Select Committee on National Security on an examination into the Factors that Contribute to the prevalence of illegal firearms and gun violence in Trinidad and Tobago. [*The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis)*]
5. Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Labour to the Sixth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity on a follow-up inquiry into the Implementation of the Recommendations of the 18th Report, 11th Parliament, on an Inquiry into the Treatment of Migrants with specific focus on the Rights to Education, Employment and Protection from Sexual Exploitation. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
6. Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Education to the Sixth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity on a follow-up inquiry into the Implementation of the Recommendations of the 18th Report, 11th Parliament, on an Inquiry into the Treatment of Migrants with specific focus on the Rights to

Education, Employment and Protection from Sexual Exploitation.

[*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]

7. Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Windscreen and Window Tint) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
8. Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment to the Ninth Schedule) Order, 2024. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORTS

(Presentation)

The Minister in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Adrian Leonce): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to lay the following reports in the name of the Member for Oropouche West:

Examination of the Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of Trinidad and Tobago

Fourteenth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on an examination of the Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of Trinidad and Tobago for financial year 2022, Fourth Session (2023/2024), Twelfth Parliament.

Examination of the Reports of the Auditor General on the Police Complaints Authority

Fifteenth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on an examination of the Reports of the Auditor General on the Police Complaints Authority for the financial years 2015 to 2021, Fourth Session (2023/2024), Twelfth Parliament.

Examination of the Reports of the Auditor General on the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

Sixteenth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on an examination of the Reports of the Auditor General on the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (AATT) for the financial years 2013 to 2019 and follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Eighteenth Report of the Public Accounts Committee from the Eleventh Parliament, Fourth Session (2023/2024), Twelfth Parliament.

URGENT QUESTIONS

Commissioner of Police

(Further Extension of Erla Harewood Christopher)

Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (*Couva South*): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. To the Attorney General: Given that the initial one-year extension granted to the Commissioner of Police Erla Harewood Christopher by the Cabinet is due to expire very shortly, could the Attorney General inform this House if the Cabinet has advised the President to invoke Section 75 of the Police Service Act as it relates to a further extension of her continuing in the said office?

Madam Speaker: The Attorney General.

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Reginald Armour SC): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC: Madam Speaker, a decision would be taken on this matter not later than tomorrow. Thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, given the alarming response we got

from the Attorney General, could the Attorney General inform this House if the Cabinet intends to advise the President that the employment of Mrs. Erla Harewood Christopher, as of midnight of the 14th of May, continue in the employ of the Police Service of Trinidad and Tobago in keeping with section 75 of the Police Service Act.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member, I rule your question out of order. Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, given that the Commissioner of Police has the responsibility of being the accounting officer in the police service, could the Attorney General advise this House what measures are being put in place to avoid a crisis in the police service where the Minister of Finance may be called upon to appoint a public servant as the accounting officer in the Police Service of Trinidad and Tobago?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member, again, I rule that question out of order. Member for Oropouche East.

CCTV Cameras Utilized by Gang Members

(Measures Taken to Address)

Dr. Roodal Moonilal (*Oropouche East*): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of National Security: Based on the unprecedented and recent revelations that gang members have utilised CCTV cameras to monitor police officers, will the Minister state what urgent action has been taken to address this concerning matter?

Madam Speaker: Minister of National Security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of National Security (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Just to assist the Member for Oropouche East and to recall a sordid element in our history's past, I can tell the Member that this development is not altogether unprecedented. We have seen that before in Trinidad and Tobago. We have seen it around the world. It is an unfortunate development but it occurred and, Madam Speaker, the intention of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service regarding the 23 cameras found, they assembled a team to investigate the matter, to gather all the facts, who, when, where, on what authority, if any—it appears none because T&TEC, the agency they are collaborating with, has indicated that it authorized, as is required under law, no one to install cameras on its poles, but the police service has gathered a very powerful team and is conducting investigations into the matter.

The Cyber and the Social Media Unit, and the research and analytical unit of the police service have been injected into this to provide the technical assistance. In addition to that, the police are speaking to people, canvassing the views of people in the neighbourhoods in order to determine these facts.

Madam Speaker, as I indicated, all of the—it is 23 cameras they have been seized and I want to take the opportunity to congratulate the police in that division. It is the police officers who observed these objects where they ought not to have been, collaborated with T&TEC, clarified that they were unauthorized, and the police in an operation removed every one of 23 of them. And as I indicated, the investigations are seeking to find out if there are others and the other facts pertaining to this. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Supplemental: Minister, in light of the theft of police uniforms at the official residence of the Prime Minister, can the Minister confirm whether his Ministry, that has the responsibility for the installation of CCTV cameras, has undertaken an inventory of the CCTV cameras at key government locations, including the residence of the Prime Minister, the residence of the President, and indeed the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad—

Madam Speaker: Member, you have 15 seconds to ask the question.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Hinds: The question is as convoluted as the mind that delivered it. Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Member.

Mr. Indarsingh: He should withdraw that.

Madam Speaker: Member, you could refer to the question. I would ask you to withdraw that other comment. All right? Please.

Hon. F. Hinds: Madam Speaker, in response to the Member, I would remind him that it was his government—

Hon. Members: Withdraw.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Member, I said the latter part of the question, which is a personal reflection, I will ask you to withdraw it.

Hon. F. Hinds: I withdraw. Madam Speaker, I want to remind the Member that it was his government, led by the Member for Siparia who, as soon as they came to government in 2010, dismantled all of the security cameras that we had at the airport that carried the capacity for—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Young: And at the residence of the Dip Centre.

Hon. F. Hinds:—and as well at the Prime Minister's residence—

Mr. Young: Residence.

Hon. F. Hinds:—at the Diplomatic Centre in St. Ann's. And, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Young: They have plenty. They have plenty.

Dr. Moonilal: Cancel—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. F. Hinds:—on the question of monitoring—

Mr. Young: Yeah. “I cancel yuh friend contract”.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So I think I would like to hear the response of the Minister of National Security to the question posed by the Member for Oropouche East.

Hon. F. Hinds: Criminals have always wanted to monitor the activity of the police. In fact, the Parliament record will show, Madam Speaker, very quickly, that a Member of Parliament sitting in here today, the Member for Oropouche East, was being monitored by the police with undercover cars—

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Hon. F. Hinds:—and got a tip-off.

Mr. Indarsingh: Point of order, 48(6).

Hon. F. Hinds: The Commissioner reported that he got a tip-off and aborted the—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Madam Speaker: Just now—

Dr. Moonilal: Madam Speaker, 48(6). Madam Speaker, this mad Minister is talking rubbish in the—[*Inaudible*]

Madam Speaker: No, no.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Moonilal: I have a—[*Inaudible*—]stating that is rubbish. You know it.

Hon. F. Hinds: I have the *Hansard*.

Madam Speaker: Members.

Dr. Moonilal: You cannot allow it.

Madam Speaker: Members, Members. You are certainly right that I cannot allow what is happening here. So that, Minister of National Security, could you please respond to the question asked?

Hon. F. Hinds: Thank you rather warmly, Madam Speaker. So as I was indicating, the police rather admirably identified the problem, they retrieved 23 illegal cameras, and all of the small talk and brouhaha about 61 and 62, and the police seized monitoring equipment in offices or homes, and all of that, all of that is completely untrue and the police investigation continues.

Madam Speaker: Your time is suspended. Member for Oropouche East.

Dr. Moonilal: Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, in light of the pathetic and lethargic response of the Minister on these questions, could I ask the Minister whether or not an independent investigation will take place on this matter, bearing in mind it is National Security that has responsibility, not the police, for the installation of CCTV cameras across this country?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. F. Hinds: Madam Speaker, I have some difficulty in understanding what does the Member means by “independent”. It is the police that investigates crime in Trinidad and Tobago. In terms of monitoring the national security affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, we also have the SSA, and both the SSA and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service are continuing investigations into this matter.

Illegally Installed CCTV Cameras and Equipment**(Investigation into)**

Mr. Saddam Hosein (*Barataria/San Juan*): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of Public Utilities: In light of recent revelations that CCTV cameras and associated equipment were illegally erected on T&TEC poles, will the Minister state whether an investigation has been launched into this matter?

Madam Speaker: Minister of Public Utilities.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Marvin Gonzales): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission has advised me that it is collaborating with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service on this illegal installation of cameras on its light pole.

Madam Speaker: Member for Naparima.

Bloodshed in Tobago**(Steps Taken to Prevent)**

Mr. Rodney Charles (*Naparima*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of National Security: With Tobago's 8th murder and relatives of the victim threatening retaliation for her murder, will the Minister state what steps can be taken to prevent any further bloodshed?

Madam Speaker: Minister of National Security.

The Minister of National Security (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds): Again, I thank you warmly, Madam Speaker. Based on information received from the Commissioner of Police, the current murders in the Tobago division have so far been found to be the result of conflict amongst the extension of criminal gangs and criminal gang activity in Trinidad overflowing into Tobago.

The question suggests where accurately we have seen eight murders so far. The police assessment suggests that four are gang-related, one as a result of a domestic circumstance, two drug-related, and one unknown. One of the matters have been solved so far, and two are waiting for the scientific reports in respect of the DNA samples that would have been gathered from the respective crime scenes.

The response of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service has been to initiate more and more active direct patrols focused on Golden Lane, a hotspot area apparently in Tobago, which is geared towards the seizure of illegal firearms and ammunition, and to arrest priority offenders. Focused deterrence is the objective, and the intervention of the Victim and Witness Support Unit to communicate with the bereaved and other families to mitigate against further violence flowing from the murder made reference to in the question. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

1.50 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Minister of National Security, given that when you assumed office on the 19th of April, 2021, the murder rate for that year was five. In 2022, it increased to 10. In 2023, it increased further to 14. Already for the year we have reached eight. How would you respond to a wide cross-section of citizens, who believed that you are a failure, and that you are unable to deal with the crime in Tobago?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Naparima, I rule that question out of order. Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Could the Minister give the assurance that the measures outlined will result in a reduction of the murder rate in Tobago, which is headed for 20 murders in this year?

Madam Speaker: Minister of National Security.

Hon. F. Hinds: If there is any failure here, it must be the Member for Naparima. He is on his way out, without a serious success to his credit. He failed to remove his leader. She, in fact, succeeded in removing him. He is now deceased, politically deceased, on his way out of this place.

But, Madam Speaker, insofar as the murder statistics are concerned in Tobago—as we have said about Trinidad and Tobago, the presence, the prevalence of automatic weapons, military grade weapons, military grade ammunition, that has contributed substantially, as it marries itself to the increasing displays of violence on the part of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. In years past, such violence would have been resolved with fisticuffs, and a little bottle and stone. Now, they run for a gun, an automatic weapon and spray the place, putting many more people, including innocent bystanders at risk.

So the situation is that, and therefore, as I alluded to earlier, and said it is a firm aspect of this Government's policy to retrieve illegal arms and ammunitions, from illegal and abusive hands in Trinidad and Tobago. That continues along with improving our border security capacity, and that, alongside making more and more opportunities available to the young people of this country, so that they would not have to descend into the abyss of crime and criminality, when opportunities for growth, development, and happiness abound. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: These are Urgent Questions too, were asked.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Thank you very much Madam Speaker. There are seven questions for oral response. We will be answering six, and we are asking for a two-week-deferral—no, we will be answering all seven, Madam. All seven. And there are two questions for written response, and we have the answers to both.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Vide end of sitting for written answers.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Oil Spill off the Coast of Tobago

(Update on)

- 54.** Further to the Prime Minister's Question raised on March 06, 2024, will the Minister provide an update to the House on who is responsible for the oil spill off the coast of Tobago?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Hon. Stuart Young): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The oil spill impacts to the Atlantic shoreline of the island of Tobago and to the marine environment, was caused by a non-propelled tank barge, strongly suspected to be the Gulfstream. The barge Gulfstream was classed with the American Bureau of Shipping, ABS, until the 31st of December, 2018. But after that date, no further registration details were available. It was also noted that it appeared that the vessel has not been re-classed, or registered for a number of years.

The tug involved in the incident has been identified as the Solo Creed. The Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard has been working in close

collaboration with the Guyana Coast Guard, and the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, CARICOM IMPACS, to assist in identifying the owner of the Solo Creed. Additionally, the Director of the Maritime Services Division, has been using that division's resources, and relationships, including but not limited to reaching out to various similar divisions in CARICOM, Panama and Africa, as well as I.R. Consilium, to identify the vessels, and any owners of the vessels involved in, and/or responsible for the oil spill in Tobago.

In this regard, official correspondence was dispatched to Panama and Tanzania, seeking any relevant information, regarding these two vessels. The Maritime Service's Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport was also contacted by a Nigerian lawyer, purportedly representing someone he claimed to be the owner of the tug and barge.

They are currently, that is the Maritime Shipping Division, scrutinizing the validity of the claims, and have initiated enquiries with the Nigerian Government.

However, Madam Speaker, at this time, there is reasonable suspicion related to this particular claim and correspondence. Despite great efforts, to date, all of these searches have failed to locate the tug Solo Creed, which has not re-activated its automatic identification system, AIS, since the date of the incident. Seemingly having fled the scene, nor led to the discovery of any definitive information, regarding the ownership of the barge Gulfstream, at the time of the incident. The Maritime Shipping Division has also written to the International Marine Organization, for the provision of a consultant to assist with this investigation. They indicated that they are actively engaged in the process of identifying one. It is the intention of the Trinidad and

Tobago Government to take legal action against the owner of the barge Gulfstream, and/or the owner of the Solo Creed, under the applicable Trinidad and Tobago legislation.

At a recent meeting before the International Oil and Pollution Compensation Funds in London, when Trinidad and Tobago made submissions to this body, and its members, it became apparent, that unfortunately, there is a global network of rogue vessels, attempting to operate under the law, and international obligations, similar to how the Solo Creed and Gulfstream and its owner or owners operated, where it is very difficult to ascertain those legally responsible for the vessels.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, the Government continues to use its relationships, and resources including an independent satellite provider, to attempt to ascertain the owner or owners of these vessels.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Could the Minister state, after all the information he has presented, is it the taxpayer dollars that will pay for the clean of this major oil spill?

Madam Speaker: Minister.

Hon. S. Young: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. As was announced at a press conference last week, I led a delegation of very competent public servants to the IOPC fund, where submissions were made, and this fund, has accepted the responsibility to pay all of the reasonable claims that will be made. They have also been working with us from day one of the spill, where the central government has taken at every step of the way, all of the advice.

So what was indicated to us, the decisions are, one, we will have access to the fund, and two, they immediately instructed the director to start paying us for the claims that we are making. So, ultimately, the taxpayers will not pay any of the reasonable costs incurred by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. There are other claims that may be made, in addition to those.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister as a follow-up, are there any plans in place for the removal of the said barge where it is lodged any time soon?

Madam Speaker: Minister.

Hon. S. Young: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The answer is, yes. Right now what they are doing is, they draining the remaining hydrocarbons from the barge. After that the next phase will be, for the salvage, and removal of this vessel from the reef.

Madam Speaker: Member for Naparima.

Mr. Charles: Can the Minister, state what steps will be taken to prevent any reoccurrences of such a disastrous event.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, I now rule that out of order, I would have allowed you some latitude with your questions. Member of Naparima, do you have another question?

Mr. Charles: Could the Minister state, what costs have been incurred so far, and what moneys may have received from those who are tasked with refunding us for the costs involved.

Madam Speaker: Minister.

Hon. S. Young: Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, this would be an opportune moment to say that there are two sets of costs that are currently being incurred, or have been incurred. One, those costs under the umbrella of the central government, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, and utilizing of service providers that Heritage may have procured, as well as TT Salvage and QT, who are the ones doing the work on the vessel and then, two, there are also the costs incurred by the THA.

The THA, we expect to put forward their costs to central government, which will then be looked at, by the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries. So those costs, I cannot give any estimate on, at this stage. But we did indicate to the IOPC Fund that, that will be forthcoming and hence the raising of our estimates. Currently as at the end of April, the costs incurred by the Government, we were estimating to come up to about US \$12 million, but we expect that to continue, as the salvage operations continue, and there is still some clean up to be done.

Rehabilitation Works Piparo Road, Princes Town

(Details of)

58. Mr. David Lee (*Pointe-a-Pierre*) on behalf of Mr. Barry Padarath (*Princes Town*) asked the hon Minister of Works and Transport:

In light of the deteriorated road conditions along Piparo Road, Princes Town, will the Minister indicate:

- a) when will rehabilitation works begin;
- b) who are the contractors selected for these projects; and
- c) what was the process used in awarding these contracts?

The Minister in the Ministry of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Richie Sookhai): Madam Speaker, thank you and thanks to the hon.

Member for the question posed today. Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Works and Transport has scheduled an in-house patching programme, as interim repair works for the Piparo Road. The project for major road rehabilitation, will be included within the draft estimates for the expenditure for fiscal 2025. Thank you.

Princes Town Presbyterian No.1 School

(Updates on)

59. Mr. David Lee (*Pointe-a-Pierre*) on behalf of Mr. Barry Padarath (*Princes Town*) asked the hon Minister of Education:

Further to the question raised in this House on June 05, 2023 regarding the reconstruction of the Princes Town Presbyterian No. 1 School, will the Minister indicate:

- a) whether any contracts have been awarded;
- b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, the names of the successful contractors; and
- c) when can reconstruction be expected to begin and be completed?

The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly): Thank you Madam Speaker. A contract has not yet been awarded for the reconstruction of the Princes Town No. 1 School. As the hon. Member will know, the costs of construction of new schools, and/or replacement schools, it totals several billion dollars. Accordingly, reconstruction of this school will commence, once funds becomes available and cash flow permits.

The project is expected to take approximately six months to complete, from the date of commencement, and all of the requisite documentation is available, and will be used for approvals.

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As a follow-up to the Minister. Minister, could you at least give us a time line, when you feel funds will be available for the construction or the repairs of this school?

Madam Speaker: Minister of Education.

Hon. N. Gadsby-Dolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will consult with the Ministry of Finance on this matter, as it is all finance matters, and if we are able to get a timeline, then that could be advanced in discussion with the Member of Parliament for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Calypso Gas Project

(Details of)

65. Mr. David Lee (*Pointe-a-Pierre*) asked the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries:

Given the recent statement by the CEO of Woodside Energy, that the company is seeking “improved fiscal terms” to develop the Calypso Gas project, will the Minister advise if the Government is considering revisiting the project with Woodside Energy?

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Stuart Young): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The Calypso project, seeks to develop resources discovered within the northern deep-water area, off the eastern coast of Trinidad and Tobago, and more particularly, Tobago. These resources were discovered through exploration drilling in Blocks 23A and TTDA 14. Current estimates put the project volume at about 3.5 Tcf of gas. The Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, has been actively engaging with Woodside, formerly BHP, during the exploration assessment and the current

market development phases of the production sharing contracts for these blocks. It should be noted that at no time, did these PSCs become inactive.

The Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, and by extension the Government, has been working continuously, and assiduously with Woodside, as we aim to secure Trinidad and Tobago's first deep-water development. The Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, and the Government recognizes the importance of this project, to the local energy sector and by extension the country as a whole.

In this regard, we will continue to work with Woodside, and by extension all other operators in the energy sector. As Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, I have always sought to ensure that interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago are protected. The Government strives to find the balance in ensuring continued exploration and production of our resources, and obtaining the best returns for our citizens.

We are actively discussing fiscal and commercial terms to develop the Calypso gas project with Woodside, which Madam Speaker, includes that I will be meeting with the executives from Woodside, in charge of their international operations tomorrow, to continue these discussions.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

2.05 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Niquan Energy Trinidad Limited Moneys Owed to TTUDEOCL

66.Mr. David Lee (*Pointe-a-Pierre*) asked the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries:

Given reports of possible wind-up petitions against Niquan Energy Trinidad Limited, will the Minister advise on the Government's efforts to

recover the monies owed by Niquan Energy to state company Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream Energy Operations Company Limited (TTUDEOCL)?

Madam Speaker: Minister of Energy and Energy Industries.

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Stuart Young): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream Energy Operations Company Limited, Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream for short, in accordance with provisions under its gas supply contract with Niquan Energy Trinidad Limited, terminated the said contract in August 2023 due to non-payment of invoices. Over US\$ 21 million was owed by Niquan at that time.

In addition, Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream is currently not actively involved in any wind-up petitions against Niquan Energy Trinidad Limited. Proceedings against Niquan remain sub judice. They have a number of proceedings against Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream, some of which they have discontinued.

Finally, the Government is currently seeking legal advice to pursue the recovery of all moneys owed by Niquan Energy to Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream and or the Government.

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As a follow-up to the Minister based on your response, could you state if Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream Operations Company Limited owes NGC for the gas that was supplied to Niquan Energy?

Madam Speaker: Minister.

Hon. S. Young: The answer is, yes. In accordance with the contractual arrangements, Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream purchased gas from NGC which Niquan failed to pay Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream for, and in those circumstances, there is money owing to the NGC gas with respect to this debt that is owed to Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream by Niquan.

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: It is a follow-up. Minister, based on your response, when the Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Company was set up, the gas that it was supposed to supply to Niquan was supposed to come from the Minister's share of gas, not from NGC. Could you explain how come Trinidad Upstream is now owed money to NGC for that gas?

Madam Speaker: Minister.

Hon. S. Young: Thank you very much. It gives me an opportunity to explain to the population through you, Madam Speaker, "Minister's share of gas." This concept has been used and in fact is being relied on by Niquan. When you say the Minister's share of gas that is something that is negotiated in a production sharing agreement that there would be some amount of molecules of gas that would be dedicated to the Minister. It still has to go through pipelines, it still has to be produced et cetera and there are costs associated with that.

Also, traditionally, and it was only changed by this Government in renegotiating all of its contracts, every single Government before had dedicated and contracted the Minister's share of gas to the upstream producers that were utilising it. What we did when we came in, is we started to demand with our production sharing contracts that we as the Government

be allowed, through the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, to market some of that gas. So, the gas that was being used by the Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream to be supplied to Niquan was already contracted gas and this is why they have run up this bill. Fortunately, Trinidad and Tobago Upstream Downstream took a decision to protect the taxpayers, its shareholders, by terminating the contract, and will be pursuing Niquan for that amount.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Monetisation of the Dragon Gas Field

(Details of)

67. **Mr. David Lee** (*Pointe-a-Pierre*) asked the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Industries:

Based on the recent granting and publication of a license by the Venezuelan Government to Shell and the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago (NGC) for the monetisation of the Dragon Gas Field, will the Minister indicate: a) what specific payments will the NGC be required to make to the Venezuelan Government before gas is produced, as required by the license; and b) when will these payments be made?

Madam Speaker: Minister of Energy and Energy Industries.

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Stuart Young): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Dragon Field and Dragon Gas, unfortunately, they are obsessed with. The licence for the exploration and exploitation of non-associated gaseous hydrocarbons of the Dragon Field was awarded to Shell

Venezuela S.A., Shell, and NGC Exploration and Production Limited. NGC Exploration and Production Limited has a minority share in the licence with Shell having the majority share as required by the licence payments of:

1. Royalty;
2. A special consideration of 5 per cent of the income obtained from the export of gas from Dragon Field;
3. Annual subsurface rental;
4. Social contributions of US\$ 1 million per year are required to be paid to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

NGC Exploration and Production Limited has a minority shareholding in this licence and will be required to make its share of the above payments in this regard. There was also a signing bonus to be paid in instalments as is normal in exploration and production licenses of this type. The exact terms of such payments are covered by confidentiality due to the competitive nature of the industry.

The payments referred to at 1 and 2 above will only become due when production commences from the Dragon Field. Payments relating to 3 and 4 are payable annually from the effective date of the licence.

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As a follow-up question to the Minister. Minister, based on what you said that Shell has the majority ownership and Shell has asked about an extension of the OFAC Licence, could you state if this Government has negotiated an extension of that OFAC licence?

Madam Speaker: Minister.

Hon. S. Young: Thank you very much, again, for an opportunity to clarify

which is misinformation in the public sphere, Madam Speaker. Shell has not requested any extension of the licence related to the Dragon Field.

The OFAC licence. The OFAC Licence, which a specific amended licence granted to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, is one that expires at the end of October next year and Shell was not the applicant nor the holder of that licence. Shell executives have confirmed up to a few days ago, when I met with the number two, that they have not made any such requests as was incorrectly reported by a Reuters report. There has been no request by Shell for any 15-year extension.

However, what I can tell the people of Trinidad and Tobago is that I continue to be directly in conversations with those in the White House, with those who are responsible for OFAC et cetera as we pursue the interest of Trinidad and Tobago and at this stage, there is absolutely no indication of anything that will be deleterious to a specific amended licence, and they recognize as well that for us to be able to pursue and bring this gas to market an extension will be necessary and we do not foresee any difficulties with that.

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Another follow-up question based on the Minister's original response to my question. Minister, you said that payments are to be made bonus on \$1 million, I am just seeking clarification, is at the start of production or before production funds have to be paid to the Government of Venezuela?

Hon. S. Young: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as is normal with licences of this type as I said there is a signing bonus to be paid in instalments. By definition that means that that time has begun, so

that will be paid prior to production in instalments, there is some tied to feed and there are some tied post-feed. There are other payments that are to be made that will only come after production. That is royalty and the special consideration of 5 per cent of the income obtained from the export of gas from the Dragon Field.

The annual surface rental and social contributions of US\$1 million per year are to be made now during this period on an annual basis as is normal with licences of this type. For example, in Trinidad and Tobago, we charge our upstreamers with exploration and production licence and production sharing contracts even before they begin exploration and production. Such types of fees that then sponsor scholarships for people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Lee: Thank you. Another follow-up to the Minister, could you state to date how much funds have been paid to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago either through NGC or directly from this Government?

Madam Speaker: Minister.

Hon. S. Young: No funds have been paid to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva South.

Board of Inland Revenue

(Notices of Assessment Issued as at April 2024)

68. Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (*Couva South*) asked the hon. Minister of Finance:

How many Notices of Assessment were issued by the Board of Inland Revenue as at April 02, 2024?

Madam Speaker: Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis) Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, 32,940 Notices of Assessments were issued by the Inland Revenue Division for the period January 1st 2024 to April 2nd 2024.

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Minister, given your acting responsibility on behalf of the Minister of Finance, taking into consideration that the Government took a decision for the Board of Inland Revenue to issue Notices of Assessment up to the 30th of June 2024, could you inform this House how many Notices of Assessment are still to be issued?

Madam Speaker: Minister.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Madam Speaker, I do not have that information with me at this time, but if a question is posed I am sure either I or the substantive Minister would be able to answer.

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva South.

Mr. Indarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Given again the acting responsibility by the Member for Arouca/Maloney, Minister are you in any position based on the Minister of Finance, having left as Acting Prime Minister, did he leave the information with you as it relates to how many Notices of Assessment which were issued as at the 2nd of April 2024? How many notices have been challenged or queried at the Valuation Division of the Ministry of Finance?

Madam Speaker: Minister.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, because the Minister of Finance had to leave to receive other information with regard to

his position as Acting Prime Minister, he did not leave that information with me.

Mr. Indarsingh: He is tardy.

Hon. C. Robinson-Regis: But again, once a substantive question is posed, we will be able to give that answer. Thank you, Madam.

Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings)

(Amdt.) Bill, 2024

An Act to amend the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings)

Act, 2011 (Act No. 20 of 2011) [*The Attorney General and the Minister of Legal Affairs*]; read the first time.

Motion made: That the next stage be taken forthwith at a later stage of the proceedings. [*Hon. R. Armour SC*]

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The Attorney General.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

ICC MEN'S T20 CRICKET WORLD CUP 2024 BILL, 2024.

Order for second reading read.

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Reginald Armour SC): Thank you, Madam Speaker. In accordance with Standing Order 64(1)(b), I beg to move:

That a Bill entitled an act to make provision for the efficient and effective staging of the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024 and for related purposes be now read a second time.

Madam Speaker, Members will note that the T20 World Cup Cricket event is being hosted in the United States of America and in six CARICOM

countries, namely Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and in Trinidad and Tobago.

We have been coordinating, and hard at work around the clock to meet certain deadlines agreed upon by the CARCOM host countries and the ICC in order to successfully manage what is undoubtedly an event of great magnitude and international viewership. Additionally, we have been working closely with our co-CARICOM host countries to harmonise primary and secondary legislation for the T20 World Cup event. The coordination efforts have included national inter-ministerial meetings, regional meetings of Attorneys

General and Ministers of Legal Affairs, CARICOM meetings of National Security and law enforcement, meetings of chiefs of immigration from the six CARICOM host countries on matters of immigration, border control and management and on the passage of this harmonised piece of sunset legislation to facilitate the hosting of this event.

2.20 p.m.

The coordination efforts, Madam Speaker, have included many long days and nights by local, key local regional and international officials who have been trying to meet the short deadlines. Let me take this opportunity publicly to thank all who have worked tirelessly to bring us to this point.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC: Hon. Members are advised that all six CARICOM host countries are in the process of and attempting to pass sister sunset omnibus legislation within a certain period to achieve temporal and legislative harmony. I can report that all six CARICOM countries, host

countries that is, have at this time introduced similar omnibus sunset legislation before their Parliaments. Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia have passed their legislation and like us, Guyana and Antigua and Barbuda are in their Parliaments this very week.

Madam Speaker, I wish to mention that the Bill before this House has received minor amendments in the other place and I will highlight those few amendments later in my presentation. The history and policy behind this legislation, Madam Speaker, begins with Cabinet Minute dated June 16, 2023, when Cabinet agreed to approve the submission of a bid for the hosting of the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024 in Trinidad and Tobago over the period June 1st to June 30, 2024.

Following the submission of the bid on June 16, 2023, Cricket West Indies, CWI, and the International Cricket Council, ICC, accepted the bid submission and identified Trinidad and Tobago as a host country for the tournament, awarding four group-stage matches and one semi-final match. The agreement for the hosting of the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024, that is to say the host agreement, was executed on the 19th of September, 2023. The host agreement contains the terms and conditions for the hosting of this very historic event and deals with, among other things, the protection of commercial rights of the sponsors, control of ambush marketing, matters of security and stadia licences and the establishment of the local organizing committee.

Members are asked to note that the first special meeting of the Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) and Attorneys General of T20 World Cup 2024 host countries was held in

Trinidad and Tobago on March 8, 2024 and March 9th of that very month. CARICOM community host countries recommended at this meeting, among others things, that the Attorneys General of the host countries complete drafts of the necessary pieces of sunset legislation, one of which we are engaged with today.

The first special meeting in acknowledging that the CWC 2020 was less than three months away, agreed that the CARICOM host countries should utilize legislation precedence from the 2007 Cricket World Cup as useful precedence for legislation for 2024. Members will therefore notice that the 2024 Bill, while similar to its 2007 precursor Act has been interrogated to ensure that all persons, sponsors and its spectators alike are treated fairly.

May I remind hon. Members and reassure hon. Members that this piece of sunset legislation like its predecessor the 2007 World Cup Act must be enacted to give effect to the Government's obligations for CWC 2024 T20 World Cup and will automatically expire on the 30th of June after all obligations are fulfilled.

Madam Speaker, it is anticipated that this event will be viewed by approximately 2 billion persons virtually. We anticipate thousands of spectators to come to our shores to be physically present to view the matches scheduled to be played here in Trinidad and Tobago, a unique opportunity for Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean to showcase our countries.

In anticipation of the influx of persons, Madam Speaker, to our isles and for ease of travel during the extended specified period, the hon. Minister of National Security has already signed sunset immigration regulations that

will expire after the T20 Cricket World Cup. In that regard, Immigration (ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024) (Mutual Recognition of Visas) Regulations, 2024 were published by Legal Notice No. 69 of 2024 and laid in the other place on the 23rd of April, 2024 and in this august House on Friday, 26 April, 2024. Those Regulations are subject to negative resolution of Parliament.

The Regulations, Madam Speaker, deal with the mutual recognition of visas by CARICOM host countries during the period May 15th to July 15, 2024. So we have regulations in place that will take effect from tomorrow in relation to the T20 World Cup. Members are asked to note—I beg your pardon. On Wednesday the 15th.

Members are asked to note that notwithstanding the Mutual Recognition of Visas, Trinidad and Tobago will retain its sovereign right to refuse entry to any persons seeking to enter Trinidad and Tobago, if the admission of that person would be contrary the Immigration Act or the Immigration Regulations. Members and the wider community are reminded that the group-stage matches are to be held from June 12, 2024 to June 17th at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy. The semi-final match will be held on June 26, 2024 at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy. Warm-up matches will be held at the Queen's Park Oval, while the practice sessions will be held the Queen's Park Oval, the Sir Frank Worrell Memorial Ground at the UWI, St. Augustine, and the Diego Martin Sporting Complex.

Madam Speaker, I wish to state without fear of contradiction that this T20 Men's Cricket World Cup 2024 will be the largest sporting event hosted in the region since 2007, and is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- High-quality event management to demonstrate indisputably to the world the Caribbean's capacity to successfully plan and execute a world-class event, specifically world-class cricket with supporting facilities;
- Infrastructure improvement to make permanent improvement to the sporting and general country infrastructure in the Caribbean;
- Widespread economic opportunity;
- Unique Caribbean promotion;
- Regional integration;
- Enhancing the international popularity of cricket and a premier tourist designation to promote Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean as a premier tourist destination to all of the world's nationalities.

Madam Speaker, this event will also serve to establish our country and the region as a sport tourism destination to advance the process of regional integration and to enhance the profit and popularity of cricket in the West Indies and throughout the world.

There is a local organizing committee which has been established to execute the obligations assigned to us under the agreement for the hosting of CWC 2020 for cricket between CWC and Cricket West Indies and the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. That local organizing committee is responsible for providing advice and support to CWI in implementing the event plan, assisting with execution of government guarantees, procuring necessary personnel and expertise required for formulating and implementing the tournaments plans and liaising with government agencies and others relevant authorities to implement plans and

assist with marketing and promotion of the tournament and tournament activities.

That LOC local organization committee has been working hand in hand with senior persons within the Government responsible for health and safety, disaster management, emergency services, Customs and Immigration, transport, police and security, communications, telecommunications, satellite and the like, sport, utilities and intelligence. I want to take the opportunity to commend the Chair of the LOC Mr. Douglas Camacho for doing an excellent job to date—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC:—and to congratulate the local organizing committee for their hard work in satisfying their obligations under the hosting agreement. There are many deliverables that will be brought into being under the host agreement and the steps which this Government is taking, and I would emphasize that a number of the deliverables have to do with match day preparations, hence the need for this omnibus sunset legislation to create the enabling environment to achieve this goal.

Another deliverable which is important, is addressed to proximity to medical facilities. The four venues chosen for the matches and the practice sessions are all within close proximity to public and private hospitals. Safety and security was another key deliverable. Disaster management, equally another key deliverable, and all the while ensuring, Madam Speaker, that we put in place a sufficient working operationalization apparatus for the successful accomplishment of this significant event.

Madam Speaker, the Bill is divided into six Parts. The first Part deals

with Preliminary matters. The second Part deals with CWC 2024 Special Arrangements. Clause 1 provides for the short title. Clause 2 provides for the interpretation. May I point out that in the other place there was an amendment to the definition of “dangerous weapons” which was agreed upon and voted on in the other place and is brought here today, and Members will observe that those few amendments which have been passed in the other place are in bold font in the Bill which is before the House today.

Clause 3 provides for the:

“declaration of any area within the control of...” this committee or “(CWI) as a CWC 2024 venue.”

Again, there is an amendment here so that Members will observe there will be—

“...a public notice...in the *Gazette* and...”—

to be published in at least two daily newspapers.

May I go on record to thank the effective cooperation and support which we received in the other place from the Independent Senators of that other place.

Clause 4 provides:

“...for the CWI to have control of the...2024 stadia during a match period subject...”—of course—“...to the rights of...local”—authorities “...responsible for public health, disaster management or national security.”

Clause 5 empowers the Commissioner of Police to exercise rights of

control over traffic arrangements within any match venue and during any match period. This is a replication of the Commissioner of Police's existing general powers to effect road closures on a temporary basis and other orders governing vehicular flow and parking arrangements which are normally exercised around Carnival time.

Clause 6 makes provision—"...for sale and distribution of" tickets for "CWC 2024" persons, by persons solely authorized by the CWI and there are penalties in the Bill for scalping.

Clause 7 is to be read in conjunction with the First Schedule which lists the CARICOM host countries to give effect to the mutual recognition of visas issued by the countries who have agreed to facilitate travel amongst those CARICOM host countries. The mutual recognition of visas which I have mentioned earlier will give effect during the period 15th of May, 2024 to 15th of July, 2024 so that persons arriving into the Caribbean at any one of those Caribbean host countries will have a single point of entry and under the mutual recognition of visas can thereafter move freely, subject of course, to some examination by Immigration authorities through the other five host countries.

Clause 8 provides for the Minister with responsibility for Immigration, that is to say, our Minister of National Security, to provide with sufficient efficiency and within seven days of being requested, work permits and approvals and documentary evidence required for same, and shall remain valid and effective until the conclusion of CWC 2024.

I pause there to just address a question of concern that was raised in the other place on the seven-day period as to whether that is sufficient time,

and to emphasize the point that I emphasized in the other place, that all Chief Immigration Officers have been meeting over the last several months and it is they who have come up with the confident ascertain that they can process Immigration requirements within that seven-day period once application is made.

Clause 9 seeks:

“...to give effect to the obligation of Host Countries regarding the waiver of import and export duties.”

And here too, there was an amendment in the other place under clause 9 to give a sectional definition of the term “licencee” as used in the clause.

Clause 10 provides:

“...for exemption of taxes and duties on CWC 2024 tickets.”

Part III of the Bill, Madam Speaker, regulates the match venues, CWC 2024

match venues. Clause 11, for instance, prohibits:

“...the unauthorised entry into and exit from a stadium.”

Clause 12 prohibits:

“...entry on the playing field and...other areas within the stadium as may be indicated...”

Clause 13 provides:

“...for the designation of any area within a CWC 2024 venue for the duration

of a match period as...”—either—“...a reserved area or”—as “...a reserved

seat..."

—and appropriate controls are provided for under that clause.

2.35 p.m.

Clause 14 seeks:

"...to suspend the privileges of members of a stadium, with the consent of the owners of the stadium..."

And I emphasize that. Clause 14 seeks:

"...to suspend the privileges of members of a stadium, with the consent of the owners of the stadium..."

So that such privileges as may be suspended will only be done with the full operating consent of the owners of the stadium, and this has been secured.

Clause 15 prohibits:

"...certain specified conduct of persons within..."— the venues.

Clause 16 provides:

"...for the prohibition or restriction of certain items as specified in the Second Schedule...dangerous objects..."

And we recall that that was one of the amendments that I have pointed to, that was already provided for under the interpretation clause, the definition of "dangerous objects". And I pay tribute to very useful contributions of the Independent Senators of the other place in producing a very useful definition as amended.

Clause 17 provides:

"...for the surrender on request, of prohibited items or items...which may be used in a manner prohibited by the Act for which this is the Bill."

Examples, illegal drugs, fireworks, flares and explosives.

Clause 18 provides:

“...for the prohibition on the sale of goods or services in a CWC 2024 venue during a match period.” And again, I emphasize, as I did in the other place, that there has been active consultation by the owners of stadia in collaboration with CWC 2024 personnel, with the normal vendors who operate in the location of stadia, so as to ensure that normal vendors are allowed opportunities for sale of their items and will not be prohibited once they fall within the regulatory framework which is being put out.

Clause 19 authorizes:

“...the taking of photographs of persons who are suspected on reasonable grounds to have committed or...been involved in the commission of an offence in a CWC 2024 venue.”

Clause 20 provides:

“...for any person in a CWC 2024 venue, who has committed or...been involved in the commission of an offence, to provide his name and address to a police officer.”

Madam Speaker, Part IV of the Bill takes into consideration clauses 21 to 26 to make provision for the “Control of Advertising”. One of the Bill’s cornerstone philosophy conserves the protection of commercial rights, a major obligation laid down in our commitment by the hosting agreement. I will, in due course, dwell a little bit on that when we talk about ambush marketing.

Clause 22 prohibits certain advertisements on structures. Clause 22 provides:

“...for the prohibition of the use of airspace during a match period over a CWC 2024 venue...”

But there are, of course, exceptions to that reserved for national security aircrafts.

Clause 23 provides:

“...for the prohibition of certain advertisements that relate to or are connected to CWI that are false or misleading.”

Clause 24 prohibits:

“...the commercial broadcasting, telecasting, recording or filming of any information relating to CWC 2024 activity without the approval of CWI.”

Clause 25 prohibits:

“...certain trade practices...”

And this is what I was going to speak about:

“It deals with what is known as ‘ambush marketing’ by an association as well as with ‘ambush marketing’ by intrusion.”

Members of this House may recall ambush marketing as an attempt by persons or companies to claim or infer association, however slight, with an event of which it is not a direct or official sponsor. An example which comes to light from the former 1996 World Cup was the “Nothing Official About It” campaign by Pepsi during that 1996 Cricket World Cup, who had stolen the thunder entirely from the official sponsor, Coca-Cola, in that year, in one of the most disruptive moves in ambush marketing history in India. The campaign was regarded as both combative and disruptive, and showed cricketers rejecting the official drink of the Cricket World Cup 1996, in

favour of the unofficial drink. This is why an ambush marketing clause is very important in order to protect the commercial rights of official sponsors.

2.40 p.m.

Clause 26 prohibits the promotional use of CWC 2024 tickets. Part V of the Bill, Madam Speaker, deals with the protection of CWC 2024 marks, indicia and images. Clause 27, prohibition for the unauthorized use of a CWC 2024 mark. Clause 28, the prohibition on the infringement of a CWC 2024 mark, or any other mark of IBC, WICB or CWI. Clause 29 seeks to set out the CWC 2024 indicia and images that are not to be used without authorization, and that list is contained in Third Schedule.

Madam Speaker, clause 31 seeks to specify that CWI or IBC may license a person to use any one or more those images. Clause 32 provides for the prohibition of the unlicensed user of CWC 2024 indicia or CWC images. Clause 33 seeks to ensure that the legitimate interest of third parties in the use CWC 2024 indicia and images are not unreasonably compromised. It provides that the use of marks, indicia or images for the purpose of or in connection with the provision of information or for the purposes of criticism or review is not of itself an infringement.

The provision of factual information such as reporting in the media is to remain unaffected, and this particular clause we took very special care to ensure that the fundamental rights of the freedom of the media are not affected by the provisions of this Bill. Clause 34 provides for detention of goods that have at CWC 2024 mark or other indicia.

Clause 35 obliges the comptroller to notify CWI or IBC of the detention of goods and to make provision for the application of injunctions.

Clause 36 authorizes the comptroller to release the goods in question where no application for an injunction has been made within the specified time. Clause 38 seeks to preserve pre-existing rights, so it is to make it clear that existing rights granted under the Trade Marks Act or the Industrial Design Act, in relation CWC 2024 indicia images or any other protected thing are not affected by the operation of the Bill.

So for example, subclause (3) seeks to make it clear that the Act does not apply to and is not intended to apply to the use of a registered business name. Similarly subclause (4) the Act is not intended to apply or affect the use of the name of an incorporated company where that company or business pre-existed prior to the community effect of this legislation, this Bill that we are debating today.

Madam Speaker, Part VI of the Bill deals with remedies. We will see that clause 39 allows the court to grant injunctions. Clause 40 provides that it is an offence to publish, not an offence, sorry, that the court may order person by such means as the court thinks fit including by broadcast or Internet publication to publish corrective advertisements if it is satisfied that the person has contravened the provisions respecting the use of marks, indicia or images.

Clause 41 provides for damages to be recoverable by action in court. Clause 42 for an order by the court granting relief by way of an account profits. Clause 43 to provide limitations on claiming both recovery by a way of loss or damages and the damages based on an account profits. Clause 44 provides for the destruction or delivery of the goods by order of the court. Clause 45 any other remedy that maybe provided by the law.

Clause 46 allows for the making of regulations and the amendments of the schedules to this Bill by order of the Minister with responsibility for support, of course by way of negative resolution. Clause 47 provides that the Act is to bind the State and clause 48 would provide for the expiry of the Act on June 30th, 2024.

Madam Speaker, Cricket World Cup 2024 will be the largest sporting event, as I have said, hosted in this region since 2007. It will demonstrate indisputably to the world of the capacity to successfully plan and execute a world-class event, and will promote Trinidad and Tobago and the region as a whole, as a premier tourist destination for all the world's nationalities.

Madam Speaker, the mutual recognition of visas will allow for integration and movement among our fellow CARICOM host countries, and it is my hope, that it is providing even as we meet at the CARICOM level to create the larger single domestic space, free movement of CARICOM nationals that this piece of legislation will set the precedent for the greater example, that we are at the moment discussing among attorney-s general for the free movement of CARICOM nationals.

The single domestic space under this legislation will allow for free movement of CARICOM nationals and visitors to our shores amongst the six countries of the CARICOM region, during the currency of this T20 Cricket World Cup. It is my hope that it is one more step in the right direction to bring us together as a region as well as enhancing the profitability and popularity of West Indies cricket throughout the world. Madam Speaker, in all of the circumstances, I ask Members of this House to vote wisely today to debate rationally and I beg to move, thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Question proposed.

Madam Speaker: Member for Caroni Central.

Hon. Member: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Arnold Ram (*Caroni Central*): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the recognition this afternoon in this august Chamber, as we debate:

“An Act to make provision for the efficient and effective staging of the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024 and for related purposes.”

Madam Speaker, I could speak for us on this side, many of us are cricket fans on this side. For many years the Member for Siparia would be hosting a one day cricket tournament. My colleague to right of me, Member for Chaguanas West will have his cricket clinic every August. So we are very keen supporters of cricket and of cricket in general of this T20 World Cup. I think it is only fitting that the Bob Marley tune, “I don't like cricket. I love it, yeah!” That is the tune of the Members on this side.

Hon. Member: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. A. Ram: Madam Speaker, I know that Members opposite, I am not sure whether they love cricket as we do, but I know for certain they have become [*Laughter*] very close to former cricketers. I know that they are courting a former cricketer to be the candidate for Moruga/Tableland—

Hon. Member: “Wah”?

Mr. A. Ram:—at the next general election and I think the Member for Arima can confirm or deny that, but that is a matter for another day. Madam Speaker, this something that is very close and dear to us on this side. The

hosting of this World Cup is not something we are generally—the Bill before us is something that we generally have objections to.

There are, however, certain provisions in which we would like to draw to your attention of those opposite for their active consideration and for them to take note, as we move towards this very important aspect of the Cricket World Cup in the West Indies from June 1st to June 30th. Madam Speaker, I will by I will do so by perusing different clauses in the Bill before us this afternoon. When you go to clause 3 Madam Speaker, it speaks about the “declaration of a CWC 2024 venue and match period,” and the method by which this will be done, Madam Speaker, is for the Minister to publish in the *Gazette* and also in at least “one daily newspaper”. Madam Speaker, many of us and many of the persons are who may be affected by this particular declaration will not necessarily have access to the *Gazette* or may not be reading the newspaper of that particular choice by the Government.

I am asking, Madam Speaker, there must be a way by which we could have this information available to those in the public, so that they have the dissemination of the information of what is considered a CWC 2024 venue and the a match period. It could be brought to their attention in a much more regularly available manner. I will probably ask that if the Government, via—you know, a lot of people are using Facebook and other social medias sites as a compared to reading the newspaper, or looking at the *Gazette* whether that can be considered by the Government in publishing the venues, as well as the match period for those members of the public, especially the out traveling public, and members who live close to the Brain Lara stadium.

Madam Speaker, we have known that we were putting these packages

in place according to the hon. Attorney General, so it is the 16th of June, 2023. We knew that what we bid for, and we knew that this is the package we wanted. Madam Speaker, we are not certain whether there have been any traffic plans being developed, whether any evacuation plans have been developed for the particular area so that persons within the close vicinity of the Brian Lara stadium will have some degree of understanding as to what will take place on the match day and if there is an emergency.

We do not have to put the final version out now, but nothing stopped the Government prior to now, to introduce the proposed emergency plans, the proposed traffic plans, because the Brian Lara stadium, I mean, outside of hosting a lot of events around Carnival, has been used, to an extent, for some T20 games in the past. So we know for example, what is the traffic management plan and what existed prior for those events so that we could at least published those in anticipation of the 2024 World Cup. Additionally, Madam Speaker, I say that subsection (3) are the same clause 3 it says:

- (a) “may include areas that are to be used for a purpose ancillary to the holding of a CWC 2024 activity;”

And it also include, Madam Speaker:

- (b) “may be comprised of two or more non-contiguous areas ...”

Madam Speaker, that creates a level of uncertainty for our members. For example, we are saying that we are going to use at present, the local organizing committee is saying that we are going to use the Brian Lara for the matches, we going to use Queen's Park, as well as Frank Worrell Field at

the University, together with the Diego Martin facility. What about if for some reason they decide to use the Balmain Cricket Centre? And someone in the vicinity of the Balmain Cricket Centre, which is also one of the better facilities in Trinidad and Tobago, let us say for example they want to use that, and somebody has an activity or some event that is close in either time, or when that ancillary activity is being held, what will happen to their activity should that take place?

There is a degree of uncertainty for many members of the public and we ask that the Government consider if those activities and those areas can be highlighted now, so that persons will have some degree assurance and some degree of certainty as to what and when activities are taking place Madam Speaker.

As you go to section 4 according to the explanatory note it say that it deals:

- (2) "...with public health, disaster management or national security."

What is most peculiar, Madam Speaker, is that there was actually a threat made to the Caribbean nations for the T20 Cricket World Cup and according to this Fox News Sports on May 7th 2024, it indicated that:

"Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister, Dr. Rowley, has confirmed security agencies ... aware of a potential threat to next month's T20 World Cup."

You know, peculiar as well, Madam Speaker, Dr. Rowley indicated that:

"... in order to ameliorate these dangers, we at the local and regional levels have remained alert to many threats and singularly or together

have our intelligence and other security agencies working to protect the population in countries and at venues throughout the tournament.”

Madam Speaker, I am not too sure of what it is that Dr. Rowley speaks about, in terms of the nations working singularly or all together to have intelligence, and other security agencies to protect the countries. The only time I have known that security agencies in the Caribbean have worked together is a matter involving a certain individual that took place in Barbados. I am not sure that they are working together to actively deal with any security threat that may or may not occur by this threat which was placed on the Caribbean nations, Madam Speaker.

2.55 p.m.

Additionally, I do not think that, you know, coming out of the news for the last couple days wherein certain revelations with respect to criminals that are spying on police stations will cause much amelioration of the fears of those at the ICC or other persons willing to visit Trinidad and Tobago for these games. So, Madam Speaker, the threats are real. I know that the Bajan Government has introduced legislation to back a robust security for the World Cup and they have done so since the 24th of April. We have not done anything near towards alleviating and/or ameliorating the dangers that we may face in this World Cup with this threat that is looming over the Caribbean nations.

Madam Speaker, I move to clause 5. Again, when you look at the traffic control and deliverables, this deals with the Commissioner in relation to the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, regulating the making of

deliveries within any CWC 2024 venues. Madam Speaker, we know where the venue is, why can we not have a plan now? I do not think the Government needs this Bill to be passed today for a plan or a proposed plan to be there for the staging of this World Cup. Is it a one-mile radius? Is it a two-mile radius? It is a three-mile radius? When will we know that? I hope the hon. Minister who comes after can give some indication as to what is the radius within the Brian Lara stadium for wherein it was declared a CWC venue, because the businesses around that area, they need to know.

What about if I have a grocery located within—close to the Brian Lara stadium, and by this declaration here I cannot take deliveries and other things? I cannot have people visit my premises, visit my establishment. We have the Palmyra Junction right there as well. A lot of business activity takes place there; Williamsville side. Madam Speaker, those are things I think need to be developed very early because we are on the 23rd hour to the World Cup and the faster the Government can lay its plan, at least for the general public to know, and for those, particularly within the Brian Lara stadium, it will be of great assistance to them.

However, Madam Speaker, I mean saying that on the side I want to also make the point that based on the games I have seen, and I have taken a photo of some of the prices going out for the T20 World Cup in terms of the party stand, because a lot of our Members they also visit—I mean, a lot of Members visit the party stand, and these are the kinds of prices that we have for the party stand. For West Indies versus New Zealand on the 12th of June, \$150; this is, I think is US, \$150 US; Afghanistan versus PNG, \$25; New Zealand versus Uganda, \$100; New Zealand versus PNG, \$25. That gives

some kind of indication to me, Madam Speaker, as to the crowd that is going to be at the Brian Lara stadium. Because if you have an event in one instance is \$150, and a next one is \$25, you can generally tell that the event or the next day on the 13th of June the event for \$25 will generally attract little or no supporters, or no keen interest at that event.

So, Madam Speaker, I think that you know, just like in 2007—and as the Attorney General rightly said, this is the next big event after 2007 that we have in the Caribbean that we can boast about. What can Trinidad boast about? In 2007 they went for the Brown Package. Many will remember that. At that time then Prime Minister Mr. Manning, he was touting himself as the father of the Caribbean of some sort, and he went for the Brown Package. Now, almost 20 years later, we have gone for the—I will say the S Package. We get the very short end of the stick, Madam Speaker. Very short end of the stick. Again, we are not serious. The Government, the PNM Government is not serious about cricket and about hosting these events. Had they been so keen we would have at least made a bid for a better package like Barbados did because we have the capacity.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. A. Ram: We have the capacity. Do not mind the capacity cost us \$1.5 billion. We now have the capacity of the Brian Lara Stadium. They built the Diego Martin stadium. It has the world famous Queen's Park Savannah.

Sen. Mitchell: The Oval.

Mr. A. Ram: Sorry, Queen's Park Oval. We have the world famous Queen's Park Oval that has had many West Indian cricketers, former world West Indian cricketers, participating that were members of the Queen's Park

Cricket Club.

So, Madam Speaker, again, I think that we have gotten the shortened end of the stick, something that I personally have a problem with as it relates to us showing our keen interest in the hosting of these events. When you look at clause 5(1) (a), (b) and (c), to some extent some persons may say that it affects your enjoyment of your property, especially if we are unable—if you give me reasonable notice that, hey, they are going to have the cricket World Cup on these days, you cannot have these activities taking place at your business premises or at your home, generally people would accept that. But now at the 23rd hour we are not sure what are the traffic controls and deliverables within the cricket venue, and we are imposing restrictions relating to parking of vehicles within a venue. Because, remember, the CWC 2024 venue is not just the venue itself, it is the ancillary around the venue, and again, we have not known at this time whether it is a one-mile, two-mile or three-mile radius, Madam Speaker. So those are some of the concerns with respect to clause 5.

With respect to clause 6, Madam Speaker, this speaks about the sale and distribution of the CWC 2024 tickets, and it prohibits the resale of tickets, and I think the aim here is to prevent scalpers from charging exorbitant fees for tickets that were purchased beforehand and go on site and try to resell. But, Madam Speaker, what provisions are we making for those who, let us say for example, one person or a family may have purchased five tickets for everybody to go and there is some tragedy within the family and none of them can go? So they give me their tickets, and I am going on site there to sell these tickets. I would be liable in contravention of this to a fine

of \$60,000.

Hon. Member: Sixty?

Mr. A. Ram: Madam Speaker, \$60,000, it is right here, section 6(4). So, what are the provisions made for that? And I am suggesting, maybe, a website of some sort, a hotline number of some sort, be set up so that persons can notify. They can notify CWC or the LOC that there is a certain tragedy within my family, or there are certain reasons I can no longer attend, it can be work commitments. It can be anything, but they can no longer attend and therefore I have this ticket available, which I am going to hand over to somebody to sell. You can identify the person if so required, and this is the ticket number, and the person can then resell the ticket. Outside of that, if somebody gives me a ticket when I am going there, I am thinking about a \$60,000 fine, because this is the fine for the reselling of the CWC 2024 tickets.

So, what I am suggesting, Madam Speaker, is that there be some reporting mechanism which would allow for someone to be notified that there is an issue, that I cannot attend, and therefore I want to resell my ticket, or create a platform by which reselling of tickets can take place. It is easy. It is transparent. You put it up online, this is the official site, this person wants to sell back their tickets, and somebody purchases it online. Click of a button, Madam Speaker. So those are some of the things I think will assist and not have us tied up with, or having a summary conviction of \$60,000. So, Madam Speaker, those are my points with respect to clause 7.

With respect to clause 8, I think the Minister addressed that, one of the points about the barrage of requests that the Chief Immigration Officer may

incur within a seven-day period, and whether we are increasing staff and what will happen to regular requests, whether the CWC—the Cricket World Cup—requests will take priority over regular requests. Those are some of my points I wish to raise with respect to clause 8.

With respect to clause 9, my concern is how will the Customs official know that a particular item listed here is in connection with the T20 World Cup?—because these are every-day effects. You have personal effects, food, food supplements and beverages, something that come through the port—our ports—regularly; medical supplies, medical instruments and pharmaceuticals. I mean, everything listed here, Madam Speaker, are every-day items which are imported into this country on a daily basis. How would the Customs officials know which items are specifically for the T20 World Cup? Are there going to be issues?—some sort of certification.

So, for example, I am representing a particular team or I am the agent for that particular team, am I granted a licence or certificate of some sort so that when I bring these items the Customs officials will know that this is in connection with the T20 World Cup? I read some of the comments from the other place and one particular Senator indicated, you know, Trinidad has a lot of smart men and smart women, and whether we are opening the door for some of these items to come through our doors without taxes. Because we are exempting these items from any tax into Trinidad and Tobago. So that is some of the considerations that I would like to put before this August Chamber with respect to clause 9.

Madam Speaker, when you look at clause 10, it deals with the exemption and tax and duties of the designated persons. In the definition,

the designated persons include members of the ICC, CWC, and so forth. So generally, the majority of the financials— My point here, Madam Speaker, is that the majority of financials returns will occur to foreigners, because those who come here will take tax-free income and leave our shores. It is a classic case of the ICC using their superior power, via this Government, who has rubber stamped their regulations to hit the citizens of this country for six. It is a classic case of that. Madam Speaker, when we have to pay land tax, and online tax, and this tax and those other kinds of taxes, these people are taking their income tax free, and I think that is something that is of concern to me.

Madam Speaker, I promise my stay at the crease will be very short today, but there are just a couple other things which I would like to bring to your attention before I leave, and it has to deal with—One of the other things it has to do with is clause 16 and the possession of certain items, one in particular being musical items. Because, Madam Speaker, we have our own cultural and diverse traditional expression. When we visit our games, whether it be football or cricket and so on, there are certain instruments which are loudly displayed as part of our traditional Trinidad and Tobago. One in particular will be the steelpan, the others will be the tassa drums and so forth. But those things cannot necessarily fit under my seat and therefore—and then you have the “riddim” section, Madam Speaker. So, what provisions are made for persons carrying these items? Is it that they have to repurpose it for the purpose of attending a game? I mean, Madam Speaker, it just does not make logical sense in respect of limiting, and in our cultural diversity and the way in which we celebrate and enjoy our cricket

and our sporting event.

Madam Speaker, one particular difficulty I have with respect to clause 17, and when you look at clause 17 it talks about surrender of prohibited items. Madam Speaker, 17(5), it reads as follows, and I want the opportunity to read this, just this one line into the *Hansard*. It says:

“The ICC or WCI shall be liable for compensation for any loss or damage occasioned by the surrender of an item under this section.”

So if I bring an item—I will just use my pen here. I use an item and I surrender this item to the ICC official or the police, whoever, and there is loss occasioned—there is some loss. Let us say, for example, this pen explodes and it soils the suit of an official, and they want to claim compensation. The fact that I am the surrenderer of this item I would be liable. But you are the one who took the item away from me. What guarantee is there, Madam Speaker, that when you take the item from me that you did not handle it improperly? That you did not mismanage it in some form or fashion to cause the damage? So I have a difficulty with that, Madam Speaker. Because I am not the one who wilfully surrendered the item. You are telling me that I must surrender this item, and when I surrender this item if there is any loss occasioned by this item I am then liable. Something is drastically wrong with that. It is something that I would want the Government and whoever is following after to tell us. What can be done to deal with this issue in terms of when I surrender an item and there is any loss occasioned, that I am not liable for acts that you may do on this item, Madam Speaker?

3.10 p.m.

And what happens, Madam Speaker, if there is damage to my item? I saw somewhere that someone can take photographs of the spectators and so forth, the CWI officials and other persons can take photographs of persons and keep it for seven days. But what about when I transfer an item to you that you made me surrender and it is damaged in your care, what is there for me? Can I also hold you liable for compensation, and what is the—so basically, what is the redress that I have for an item which was damaged in your possession?

As we move on to clause 18, Madam Speaker, it deals with the sale of goods or services, and really the prohibition of goods and/or services. Now, what provisions are there for the regular small man that we will go in our events, our cricket and our football and so forth, to now apply for a permit? Because, Madam Speaker, only those who have a permit are allowed to sell.

So let us use the nuts man for example, Madam Speaker. Is there a regulation, is there some form of document now that I can point the nuts man to, so that he can be registered with the CWI or be a vendor on that day or for those matches? I do not know. Maybe members could just sell, but I do not know, right. What is the process to apply? Where can I find it, right? We are seeing that, you know, and these are all entrepreneurs. These also contribute to our experience at our games and if they are absent, I am saying, I will be surprised that anybody can enjoy it as much as they do. So they would normally take advantage of the economic activity out there, Madam Speaker, when it comes to these games, because these are individuals who are not well off, but who are trying to make an honest and good living.

Madam Speaker, again when you look at clause 19 this is where the

persons are authorized to take photographs of activities which they consider to be in contravention of some—contravention it says, Madam Speaker, of some illegal act and so forth. Madam Speaker, when we look at clause 29, this basically deals with the use and the infringement on the mark and indicia. Madam Speaker, we do not know what these marks are.

Madam Speaker: Member for Caroni Central, you have three more minutes of original speaking time left. You are entitled to 15 minutes extended time to complete your contribution if you so wish.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. A. Ram: I avail myself, Madam Speaker, thank you very much. Madam Speaker, as I was saying with respect to clause 29, which deals with the marks and indicia of the images. Madam Speaker, I do not know what these marks are. We are a couple of days away from the World Cup. Now, I see that there is a Schedule here, Part I, it says Cricket World Cup, CWC—in the version that I printed there is no mark. So I still do not know what the marks are and I do not think that that is a secret. So let us put it out there and indicate to the public, these are marks and any marks which have not been patented and/or trademarked before this date will be an infringement upon this Act or an infringement towards the CWC 2024 Cricket World Cup. We need to know that. I mean, I do not know of any Member who knows what the official mark is and/or indicia. “Ahh”, good, so look we are seeing something coming out there, but I have not seen anything. So it should actually be in the Schedule. All the Schedule has here is just some, it says:

“Cricket World Cup

CWC

CWC West Indies

World Cup Cricket.”

That is what it says. There is no mark here to say, okay, this is in contravention or these are the official marks of the Cricket World Cup.

So, Madam Speaker, with the couple minutes I have left I want to indicate to you and indicate to this august Chamber that the Government when they spoke in the budget last year, Madam Speaker, and I know it is not about the budget, but it is about the special sporting commission. They spoke about the special sporting commission which will deal with, at that time, they indicated, the World Cup that is happening next year. Remember this is last year's budget, which is October 2023, that said there will be a special sporting commission to oversee the funding for events and to incorporate schools and communities into a structure for its growth in sports. But they are notably absent from any involvement in this Cricket World Cup.

When is this special sporting commission going to be set up, Madam Speaker? We have not heard about that. We hear about a local organizing committee. So basically, when is this going to be set up as promised and are they going to be playing any part in this Cricket World Cup such as a major event or is it just another example of the Government misleading the public in time for budget.

Madam Speaker, we have not been told about the revenue that this tournament will generate. Yeah, that is a benefit, it is a benefit, it is a benefit, tell us. What is the estimated revenue? What is the secret? There is

no secret. Tell us, what is the expected visitor arrival? How much we expect? What is the revenue to be generated? Tell us, right. In the budget last year the Government allocated \$21.8 million to renovate this fairly new facility.

Madam Speaker, we must not forget and this country must not forget that it cost approximately \$135,000 per seat at the Brian Lara stadium, when it is \$5,000 to \$6,000 per seat elsewhere in the Caribbean for facilities built around the same time. It is almost one hundred and twenty-something dollars more, US, per seat, we must not forget that. And they have allocated \$21.8 million additionally to renovate this fairly new facility in time for their 2024 World Cup. However, the Government is yet to say how much revenue is going to be generated from this event, whether it is greater than the \$21.8 million that we are going use and spend to renovate this facility.

The Minister of Finance, I know he may be struggling with respect to the questions about revenue, but maybe the Minister of Sport and Community Development can tell us based on the deal negotiated in respect of—not deal in that manner, Madam Speaker, in respect of the package, negotiate. What are we about to expect and earn in respect of hosting this tournament. Because truth of the matter is that when this tournament was announced it was meant for a good deal for the United States and the sport of cricket as it serves to promote the growth and development of cricket in the United State with the Caribbean receiving the smaller slice. And we are really seeing this with allocation of games within the Caribbean, that the negotiations were not best for Trinidad and Tobago. We continue to receive, at that time it was the letter B now it is the letter S package for this World

Cup.

So there are questions to be answered as to whether the spending of this \$21.8 million to renovate a new stadium, to host this tournament was a wise one from this Government and everyone is watching when it comes to what is taking place. Madam Speaker, just before I end I would like to remind this House that it was, I want to say Senator because Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. A. Ram:—who represented this country, represented the Prime Minister at the regional talks, I believe it was in 2013, and there were significant strides in the development of cricket with his input.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. A. Ram: I want to say, Sen. Dr. Gopeesingh, many may not know, but he was a former opening bowler for Trinidad and Tobago and a former Queen's Park member and player.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. A. Ram: He was quite formidable in his days as he is now in the Senate. So, Madam Speaker, with those few words I want to thank you for the opportunity this afternoon to present some points with respect of this Bill engaging the attention of this House and for the Government to consider some of the recommendations made on this side for the improving of the Bill. Madam Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts and Acting Minister of Sport and Community Development (Sen. The Hon. Randall Mitchell):

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity of course to add my support to this ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup Bill as the Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts and, of course, Acting Minister of Sport and Community Development. Madam Speaker, I do not propose to be too long because we have debated this type of legislation already back in 2006. But the purpose of this Bill as was the purpose in 2006 is to allow for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to better and more effectively carry out its obligations under the hosting agreement.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the hon. Member, very early on in his contribution he indicated that he was in support of this legislation and he asked some questions which will be answered. But we are excited, next month, in the month of June, of course cricket lovers and fans everywhere will turn their focus to the West Indies, to the Caribbean, to Trinidad and Tobago as we host another Cricket World Cup. And was said, it will be the largest sporting event to be held since 2007.

Madam Speaker, let me turn very quickly to answer some of the questions that the hon. Member for Caroni Central asked in his contribution. He asked about vendors and rightly so, but perhaps he missed, and I am holding in my hand an advertisement calling all vendors, and this advertisement is put out by the ICC:

“Calling all vendors!

Secure your spot at the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup for 2024

matches in Trinidad!”

It identifies the match dates, it identifies the email address by which you express your interest and it asked you to indicate the country of interest, business name, contact person, contact number and so on.

So, Madam Speaker, vendors are taken care of. The nuts man can apply. The person selling pepper roti can apply and there is a process by which they make the application. This thing is well planned out and we expect that it be well executed under this People's National Movement Government.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, he went on to speak about clause 3 and I am not certain that he read clause 3 carefully. But clause 3 actually says, and I quote in 3(1):

“The Minister, after consultation with the Committee, may by public notice published in the Gazette and in at least”—two—“newspaper in daily circulation in Trinidad and Tobago.”

And that is the usual prescription for the publication of notices. So it will be published in at least two daily newspapers and of course the digital format will also be used to publish these notices.

The Member spoke about whether or not these Cricket World Cup venues can be highlighted now. They have been highlighted. We know where the main stadia will be, the Diego Martin Sporting Complex, the Queen's Park Oval, Sir Frank Worrell Memorial Ground and as well in the Brain Lara cricket stadium. We know where they will be. This is already known and once this legislation is proclaimed, then it will be published in

the prescribed way.

What is the radius of the Brain Lara stadium or what is the radius of the Cricket World Cup venue and whether private owners will be affected? Madam Speaker, if you examine clause 3 all the way to the end, you would notice that, it says:

“The Minister, after consultation with the Committee”—and the committee here being the local organizing committee—“may by public notice...declare any area within the control of the Committee or CWI or both...”

3.25 p.m.

So one of the questions you ask is: Well, how does this area come within the control? It is two ways. Either it is owned or controlled by the Government, and the Government has ceded control to the committee, the Local Organising Committee, or the CWI, or in the case of private property, only with the consent of the owner. So there are persons—private property owners are not going to be affected. An area cannot be designated a Cricket World Cup venue without the consent of private property owners.

Madam Speaker, this 2024 Men's T20 Cricket World Cup will be co-hosted by the West Indies and the United States at nine venues: six in the Caribbean, that is Trinidad, Barbados, Antigua, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Guyana, and three in the United States, in the states of Florida, Texas and New York. This format is different from the 2022 format, in that it has been expanded from the 16 teams to now 20 teams, and this is as a consequence of the growing popularity of the sport, especially in the United States and Canada. As the Attorney General had indicated, in June of last year, Cabinet

approved our bid to host a group package of four group stage games, including a West Indies game as well as one semi-final, and that bid was accepted.

In September 2023, the hosting agreement was signed between Cricket West Indies and the Government, and this agreement sets out entirely the terms and conditions and obligations of the parties relative to the hosting of the Cricket World Cup, and touches on the areas of the creation of the Local Organising Committee, traffic management, safety and security, disaster preparedness, commercial rights, immigration, intellectual property rights and taxes, among other things, that are now before us in the legislation. But, Madam Speaker, let me make one thing absolutely clear. Notwithstanding the legislation being before us today for passage, with the support, of course, as they have indicated on their side, the matters within the hosting agreement by the local organizing committee, since they have been assembled in December of 2023, many of those matters have already been done and have already been settled.

With respect to destination marketing, Tourism Trinidad has already been ensuring the placement of in-stadia advertising in accordance with the ICC standards. Tourism Trinidad, they are booking ad spaces with the ICC's broadcast partners to be broadcasted to diaspora clusters across the globe. They have been embarking on digital destination marketing campaigns on platforms, such as Facebook, Google, Instagram and Spotify. And they have already created a dedicated landing page for all of those visitors who intend to come here specifically for the Cricket World Cup.

In terms of other deliverables, Madam Speaker, the local organizing

committee was assembled, began its work. There have been a number of meetings since December 2023. The LOC is chaired by Mr. Azim Bassarath as well as Mr. Douglas Camacho, and it includes representatives from several government agencies, such as the Ministry of National Security and its agencies; the police service; the defence force; fire; Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management; the Ministry of Sport and Community Development; SporTT; Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts; the Tobago Tourism Agency as well as Tourism Trinidad; the Ministry of Works and Transport and its agencies; the Ministry of Health; Customs and Excise; Immigration; Swissport; EMA; UDeCOTT; and the Trinidad and Tobago Cricket Board.

And to answer my friend from Caroni Central, the LOC has already finalized, as I am advised, a comprehensive national security plan. The LOC has finalized a health and safety plan. They have finalized a traffic management plan, including a park and ride system, arrival and departure, logistical plans for teams and officials, venue operations plans and a marketing plan for promoting the tournament, all of these deliverables with a view to achieving a seamless execution of the tournament with the best possible experience for all concerned—players, patrons, coaches, the media—and ensuring at the same time that citizens' daily routines are not unduly affected.

With respect to the economic development, one of the key policy objectives, Madam Speaker, in the hosting of the Cricket World Cup is the widespread economic opportunity for all. With respect to visitors, we have estimated and we expect to receive between 10,000 to 20,000 visitors here

for the Cricket World Cup during the month of June. Therefore, if we estimate that the average spend at a conservative US \$1,500 per person, we estimate conservatively that visitor spend would be approximately TT \$150 million. And this is just visitor spend. This does not consider corporate local spend nor does it consider local spending during the event. And this, Madam Speaker, creates the usual economic stimulation that is associated with these type of tourism events. There will be direct and indirect earning opportunities across various sectors, including transportation, tour guiding, tour operators, bar/restaurant owners, street food vendors and, of course, temporary employment to meet with the increased demand for services. So in total, Madam Speaker, we estimate that this sporting event could be estimated around \$200 million conservatively and that, of course, would benefit our economy.

Madam Speaker, we dealt with clause 3 of the Bill and it shows how a venue could be so declared and so designated. Clause 4, of course, once it is so designated and once the stadia licence has been signed:

“CWI”—Cricket West Indies—“shall, for the duration of a match period, have full and unrestricted control of”—such—“a venue...”

It speaks to the traffic control for deliveries and overall traffic management in clause 5. It treats with scalpers—and I will answer the Member for Caroni Central. Generally, with these types of tickets, tickets are non-refundable, unless, of course, there is rain, no ball is bowled, the match has to be cancelled. But tickets, generally, are non-refundable. So there is absolutely no reason to resell, and this, clause 6, prohibits that type of reselling and prohibits scalpers.

The Attorney General dealt with the recognition of visas, the mutual recognition of visas, so that where a visitor enters into the CARICOM region and a person is required to get a visa for one Caribbean territory and a similar visa is required in Trinidad and Tobago, they do not have to apply for another visa. Trinidad and Tobago, by the Immigration Regulations, will recognize the visa granted by that other CARICOM territory.

It treats with work permits, Madam Speaker, and it places some time limits on the Immigration Division to grant a work permit. Once the applicant complies with all the requirements, it places the obligation to grant that work permit within seven days of being requested.

Import and export duties: Madam Speaker, I expect that regulations will be laid that treat with how persons get these items imported, exempted from duties, both coming in and going out of the country.

Madam Speaker, Part III deals with conduct in a CWC venue, and that is clear. Part IV deals with certain advertising arrangements. Madam Speaker, there is not much more that my friend has raised.

With respect to limiting cultural diversity, Madam Speaker, the restriction or the prohibition of having musical instruments that cannot fit underneath your seat, that is a health and safety issue, but the Member has, in his contribution, described certain party stands. Apart from party stands, there will also be fan parks within the Cricket World Cup venues and outside of Cricket World Cup venues, inside the stadia and outside of the stadia, and our culture will be on full display within the party stand and within those designated areas once it does not affect health and safety concerns.

With respect to the special indicia and marks, well, Madam Speaker,

those are in the public domain, and have been for quite some time, and I expect that those special trademarks will be listed on the IP register here in Trinidad and Tobago. So those are not anything to be concerned with.

So, Madam Speaker, as I said, I would be brief, and in conclusion, we are faced with the excitement of hosting yet another major sporting event, the largest since the 2007 Cricket World Cup, and we will certainly grasp all of those opportunities before us. We will demonstrate, yet again, our capacity to successfully plan, execute and host a world-class event in Trinidad and Tobago as a leading sport tourism destination. We will expose the beauty of Trinidad and Tobago's landscape, culture, attractions and festivals with massive visibility provided through this tournament. Madam Speaker, in 2022, there were approximately 3 billion views when the World Cup was held in Australia. And the last Cricket World Cup held, which was an ODI cricket world cup held in India, broke all records, with approximately 6.5 billion views worldwide. Those present tremendous opportunities for us here in Trinidad to advertise and display all that we have to offer.

So I excitedly await this Cricket World Cup. I wish the West Indies all the very best and, Madam Speaker, I commend this Bill to the House and, of course, I welcome the support from the other side. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Couva South

Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (*Couva South*): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, as I join this debate here this afternoon. And having listened to the Attorney General, and the Acting Minister of Sport and Community

Development, and the substantive Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, they have really not put any runs on the board—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—that can really convince the population of the country. If you listen to them, they were lacklustre, they were pedestrian.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Anybody looking on at this debate will not be convinced to go to the Brian Lara stadium because they have really not done it with a sense of passion and a sense of fervour as it relates to how we look at cricket and how we play the game. I see the Acting Prime Minister is a bit animated. I hope that he is animated in dealing with the Auditor General as how he wants to focus his attention on me here this afternoon.

3.40 p.m.

Madam Speaker, this is, and it has been established by my colleague and the two Government speakers as it relates to the context of this particular piece of legislation and this 2024 World Cup—T20 World Cup, being the ninth edition of the World Cup and it will be co-hosted by the West Indies and of course, the United States.

There will be 55 matches and it is the first ICC World Cup Tournament to feature matches to be played in the United States. And of course, cricket fans will know that it will be contested by a record 20 teams; the top eight teams from the last T20 World Cup in 2022. They are Australia, England, India, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, and Sri Lanka. Of course, in the context of the region, it will be played at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua; the Kensington Oval

in Barbados; Providence Stadium in Guyana; the Darren Sammy Cricket Ground in Saint Lucia; and in Saint Vincent and Grenadines, the Arnos Vale cricket ground and of course, in our very own Trinidad and Tobago, the Brian Lara Cricket Academy.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And we in the—

Mr. Deyalsingh: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Minister of Health, you should pay attention to the neonatal deaths in the country.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Hon Member: And stop planting garden.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Alright, alright.

Hon Member: And stop planting garden.

Hon Member: Jeez, come on.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And I will focus on what I have to do on behalf of the Opposition in this Parliament. We in the United National Congress, we in the Opposition, would want to extend a very warm welcome and cordial welcome to all of the competing teams, their respective managers, coaching staff, the technical staff, captains, players, fans and supporters. And in the context of the international cricket councils, executive management, umpires, match referees and so on, Madam Speaker.

But Madam Speaker, it is important just to highlight or just to seek clarification or make some points in the context of the legislation that is before us. Because at the end of day, I will not give them the room or the opportunity to stand and say, or indicate, that the Opposition, the United

National Congress does not have a sense of patriotism, we do not understand the passion for cricket and so on. I want to put on record that the United National Congress is in full support of the T20 competition being hosted in the region.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: But we have a responsibility because you see, Madam Speaker, recently Trinidad and Tobago hosted a cricket world cup or, not a cricket world cup but a CARICOM cricket symposium which brought about stakeholders in the region to Trinidad and Tobago between the 19th of April and the 20th of April 2024. And at this cricket symposium which the theme was—sorry, it was between the 25th to the 26th of April, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago hosted the CARICOM Regional Cricket Conference under the broad theme of reinvigorating West Indies cricket, a collaborative and strategic direction and so on. And the President of Guyana made a statement and he explained that the symposium would put the spotlight on the business of cricket.

3.45 p.m.

“A Symposium dealing not only with cricket as a sport, but the business of cricket, and ensuring the region remains a viable place for the business of cricket, and that we are not pushed out”—that we are not push out—“of the business of cricket”

I think that in the context of the legislation that we have before us, we have to ensure not only in 2024—because cricket will continue to exist in the CARICOM region and in Trinidad and Tobago as the sport of choice, as a sport that we all have a passion for, a sport that we want to return to rule the

roost. We want to return to become the number one, and in wanting to return to that number one spot we have a fundamental responsibility that whatever legislation that we participate in, whether it is from a national point of view or a regional point of view, we have to accept the fact where cricket is. Cricket is a business and we must be able to protect our locals and those within the region in the context of international cricket competition and legislation which is before the House.

Madam Speaker, I heard the Minister—well the Acting Minister of Sport and Community Development. I want to give him his appropriate accolades and so on in this House here this evening because he is a visitor and we would want to ensure that we treat our visitors right. At the end of the day, Madam Speaker, the Minister indicated that Trinidad and Tobago—and he outlined the matches being played at the Brian Lara stadium, the group matches and the fact that there would be one of the semi-finals and practice games being played at the Queen's Park Oval and also the Sir Frank Worrell Memorial Ground at the St. Augustine campus and the Diego Martin Sporting Complex. He indicated this group of matches will attract somewhere in the vicinity of 20,000 visitors to Trinidad and Tobago.

That may be a good intention on the part of the Minister. I do not know if he has already consulted with the airlines and so on that are flying in to Trinidad that he has been able to arrive and conclude at that data. But what is important for us on this side of the Opposition, because we have no problem with games being played at the Brian Lara stadium or Academy. The seating capacity out there is approximately 15,000. The Queen's Park Oval is known to be one of the most iconic cricket grounds in the world. It

is spoken of by a number of sporting commentators and cricket fans. I do not know, Madam Speaker, if you have had the pleasure of hearing Henry Blofeld.

Madam Speaker: Just leave me out of the debate. Please continue.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: I will leave you out, Madam Speaker. But I do not know if my colleagues on the Government side would have had the pleasure of hearing the voice of Henry Blofeld, that famous commentator, describing the scenes at the Queen's Park Oval and giving that sense of history and flavour as it relates to cricket being played at the Queen's Park Oval.

So Madam Speaker, as I said, we have no problem, but we would like if, probably in his winding up, the Attorney General could clarify why the Queen Park Oval was not granted any of the games. Also for me as a cricket fan, in 2007 we got the Brown Package and in 2024 based on the games that would be played in Trinidad and Tobago again, this seems to be Brown Package number two. I want to ask the Government, because they speak about their sense of fervour and commitment to West Indies cricket. You would have had the Prime Minister of our county being the Chair of the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on Cricket, but we must hear from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Where was their passion? Where was their commitment? Where was their fervour? How much did they spend in terms of the bid to get the group of matches that we have been allocated in Trinidad and Tobago? How much did they spend? Because at the end of the day this regional symposium on cricket, how much did it cost the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago? What are the tangible benefits?—not only for

West Indies cricket, but how will it benefit Trinidad and Tobago's cricket to get our young people on international teams and onto the West Indies team to reassert ourselves in the context of cricket supremacy from a global point of view.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: We were told that there was a regional symposium on crime and it cost the country, the taxpayers, \$3.4 million, and in this context nothing has been delivered to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: There have been no tangible benefits, and again the Opposition in our quest for information, our quest for transparency and accountability and good governance, we will ask the question on behalf of the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago: How much did it cost the taxpayers of this country, Madam Speaker? It is not because we are unpatriotic or we have no passion for the game, we want to know the figures at the end of the day.

The Acting Minister of Sport and Community Development, Sen. Randall Mitchell, indicated that there was a comprehensive— He said that the ICC was working with the local organising committee and there was a comprehensive national security plan, a health and safety plan, a transportation plan, and a marketing plan, and the daily routine of our citizens will not be disrupted. And, as I said, he did indicate that approximately between 10 to 20,000 persons would arrive in Trinidad and Tobago. The spend based on your calculation and the statistics that you have been supplied with, \$200 million will be spent within the economy of

Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Acting Minister of Sport and Community Development and the Attorney General—and the Attorney General in his winding up probably could provide some further clarity for all of us in this House. We continue to hear of a comprehensive national security plan. The citizens of this country, they are reeling. They are prisoners in their own homes because there is no comprehensive plan to address crime fighting in this country.

Additionally, I do not know which land they live in, but could they tell me, and can they deny whether travel advisories have been issued by the Governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Australia and so on, and it is because of the worrying issue of crime, the worrying issue of crime. Can we give that sense of comfort to the visitors who are expected to arrive in Trinidad and Tobago so that their concerns can be allayed? They can come in our county in a very safe environment and they would be treated in a manner that we would all want them to experience, the cuisine and the culture and all that is Trinidad and Tobago, which we are all proud of as citizens of this county. That comprehensive national security plan I will go in the direction of also where we were told, Madam Speaker, and I want to get it right, that there was a terror threat that emerged for this World Cup.

I want to read from an article by one Bert Wilkinson dated the 7th of May, 2024. “Terror threat emerges for World Cup”

And:

“Emanating from northern Pakistan, the threat to cause disruption to

the tournament beginning on June 1 and running for the entire month, has led to a scramble of meetings and virtual consultations involving the regional security system known as IMPACS, the International Cricket Committee (ICC), federal agencies in the US and national police systems across”—Trinidad and Tobago.

“Trinidadian Prime Minister Keith Rowley who has responsibility for regional security and cricket, made the threat known to the cricketing world this week, saying officials are taking it seriously as the threat was laid bare by a Pro Islamic State media outlet had called for attacks against the World cup by warning that ‘people indulging in amusement would ultimately face the day of reckoning. This is not a game but rather a blood deal,’” the group had said in Urdu.”

Madam Speaker, this was raised. The Prime Minister alerted us. Up till today, who on the Government side—and I hope that in winding up again the Attorney General can allay the fears of our citizens in relation to what was stated publicly. Because we continue to hear of a comprehensive security plan and where—I wish the Minister of National Security—But then again it would make no difference for him to join this debate.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: It would make absolute no sense. So for me to ask the Minister of National Security to reassure the citizens of this country will be an exercise in futility. It may be an exercise in wasting my oxygen also.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Where is he?

Mr. R. Indarsingh: So Madam Speaker, could the Attorney General tell us, has the threat that was stated, has it been lowered, has it been eliminated? I

am dealing in the context of the reality also because terrorists operate in a very clandestine manner. They try their best to destabilise established security systems and so on. But can you give the citizens of this country that sense of assurance that if they make the journey to the Brian Lara stadium or any of the venues, and those of us who would want to travel outside of Trinidad and Tobago within the region when the World Cup is taking place, that they could do so with a sense of comfort, travelling without a sense of apprehension and concern, if they so desire, with members of their family and friends and so on?

4.00 p.m.

This is an important issue, you just cannot speak and you cannot provide clarification, or you cannot give your citizens a sense of comfort as it relates to national security. And, Madam Speaker, in fact for me the biggest threat facing the people of Trinidad and Tobago is the Government of Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And additionally, national security takes into consideration what we may call a comprehensive evacuation plan and so on. God forbid, no one on this side or no citizen on this side, or no citizen in this country wants any unfortunate incident to occur at any of the venues. But we have to deal with the reality of a Government that has been totally incompetent for the last nine years.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And I say so, Madam Speaker, if you are dealing with the issue of evacuation plans, and the possibility of accidents taking place on

match days and so on, do we have enough fire tenders, do we have enough ambulances and so on, on standby? Do we have an assigned fleet of medical personnel and so on? These are the things that we need to reassure ourselves on. And this is why when we stand to debate as it relates to legislation, it is not that we are unpatriotic or we do not understand our responsibility, we have a fundamental responsibility on behalf of the people of this country who do not have a voice—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—who do not have a voice. And this is why we will continue to probe the Government and put them under scrutiny, that is the reason. Because we were subjected to a headline recently, the front page of the *Newsday* newspaper. Imagine there was a fire in somewhere in Mount Hope, fire tenders arrived without water. Two pieces of breathing apparatus, two breathing tanks to be shared within a team of fire officers. And I have to ask the fundamental question when they boast and say to the country, “We have a comprehensive national security plan”. Do they have fire tenders, do they have breathing apparatus for the fire—

Mr. Lee: Ladders.

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—firefighters? Do they have ladders, do they have, you name it, to respond to any untoward situation which may occur? So what they are saying to us here is a wish list.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: This is a wish list that has been created, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And they cannot, if they cannot provide the information that we are asking for, then if I had to be a selector to pick the Attorney General or the Acting Minister of Sport and Community Development on my first 11, they would not even be reduced to carrying towels or bringing water on the cricket field.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

Mr. Lee: Reserve bench.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: They would not even make my reserve team.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh: They would not have even been qualified to bring water or towels on the playing field, Madam Speaker, based on their track record, their inability to put runs on the board.

Madam Speaker, that leads me to another issue. Because you see, they like to talk a lot you know, they love to talk without putting the issues or giving you the information as it relates to what is needed on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, Madam Speaker. We also heard, and sometimes it is important to—because I do not want to run afoul of you and then you tell me, I was not confining my contribution to the clauses in the Bill and so on. And you know that I always like your guidance, and your forthrightness in dealing with us in the Parliament, and striving for us to be better parliamentarians and so on. But, Madam Speaker, I want to go to clause 5. And the whole issue of traffic control and deliveries within cricket venues and so on.

“5.(1) The Commissioner may, in relation to any match...issue traffic directions under the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act...”—

and so on.

All these things are very commendable, Madam Speaker. Very, very commendable in terms of what is stated here. But in reality, when we look at operationalization on the day, Mr. Attorney General and the Acting Minister of Sport and Community Development, it is always a horror story to get into the Brian Lara stadium. It is always a horror story.

Mr. Lee: Yep.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: And I hope that again in this comprehensive—

Madam Speaker: Member, you have three minutes left of original speaking time, you are entitled to 15 more minutes extended time if you wish to complete your contribution. So, are you going to avail yourself?

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Yes, Madam Speaker. Given the Opposition's passion for cricket, and wanting to see our citizens get into the stadiums, the Brian Lara stadium and the venues in a very decent way. We will want to ensure that the questions are answered and so on.

So, as I said, as it relates to the horror story and getting in and so on, I am hoping and I am pleading that the relevant Ministers—and the Attorney General is a very senior member of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago, so he could probably liaise with the absent Minister of National Security at this point in time.

Mr. Lee: Instruct him.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: I do not want to use the words “instruct him”, because I do not know how they operate within that Cabinet and so on. On this side there was always a sense of comradery and support for each other. But to ensure that there are policemen and adequate number, contingent of

policemen on the day, and police men that are people-friendly in relation to, or what we would call customer-friendly. You do not need police in riot gear and staff and so on, intimidating people, but rather in terms traffic management and control, using that sense of communication and style that will really encourage people, and not frustrate people into getting into the Brian Lara stadium on that said day. And also, in their communication with the wider public, because I heard the Minister indicate that the shuttle and the drop-off zone and all these—

Mr. Lee: Park and ride.

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—and the park and ride, and all these facilities are being established. But again, if you ask members of the public, are they aware, have they been communicated with, you spoke about it being gazetted and publication in two of the national newspapers and so on, but these things need to be effectively communicated. Because as I said, Mr. Minister, if you ask the average citizen whether there is a vibe, there is a feeling that a cricket world cup is taking place in Trinidad and Tobago, there is none. Because we drive along the East-West Corridor or I drive all the way to my constituency, fulfilling my sense of duty on a daily basis, and there is no sign, no signage on the Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway, or even within the precincts of the Brian Lara stadium to indicate that the Cricket World Cup is beginning on the 1st of June.

Mr. Lee: What?

Mr. R. Indarsingh: I had a discussion with my very erstwhile colleague, the former Minister of Education, and very distinguished former Member for Caroni East, Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, who returned to the country I think only a

few days ago. And he said to me he walked through the airport and “he doh” even have an idea if a cricket world cup is starting. And this is a man who played cricket for Trinidad and gave—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—his service to the region in the context of cricket and so on. And that is why I am saying, they boast, they indicate that there is a local organizing committee headed by who? Who are the members of this committee, how are they communicating with the average citizen? Madam Speaker, this piece of legislation while it may have laudable intentions—as a schoolboy I journeyed to the Republic Bank youth stand, one of the best vantage points in the Queen's Park Oval. The Learie Constantine stand, the concrete stand, the grounds, these are where the heart and soul of cricket was in terms of Trinidad and Tobago's existence.

If you ask anybody who had that sense of passion as it relates to cricket, whether this piece of legislation will get them into the Brain Lara stadium, no. And that is why sometimes persons will come to the conclusion that legislation of this nature really does not give them that sense of impetus to want to continue to be part of West Indies cricket, because it creates a sense of relationships between the boards, big business, and the International Cricket Council. And there is nothing in terms of benefit for the ordinary cricket fan who has given much of his life, his blood, sweat and tears, and passion for wanting to see the West Indies rise again, in terms of cricket, Madam Speaker. And Madam Speaker, in terms of Part II and conduct and entry—Part III, sorry:

“Conduct in CWC 2024 venue”

“11. Entry into and exit from...”—the—“...stadium in a CWC 2024 venue”

Madam Speaker, 11(2) says:

“(2) No person shall enter or leave a stadium during a match period except through an entrance or exit designated by CWI or as otherwise permitted by CWI.”

A T20 game, the average time is three hours, but let us say, a valid ticket holder goes into the game or enters the stadium and he or she has some kind of emergency, and they have to leave the stadium whether it is for an hour or so. Will they be permitted re-entry to the game? Will they? I have seen where people leave the Queen's Park Oval, and they were never allowed to be readmitted to the game.

And these are the things that we must be able to argue for in defence of the people that we represent, Madam Speaker. And at the end of the day, Madam Speaker, we were given an assurance as it relates to clause 18 which focuses on the sale of goods or services, that the nuts man, the small and medium sized vendor and so on, will be afforded the opportunity. And I hope that the local organizing committee, through the Government—and I see the Minister is displaying some advertisement, holding it up. If you want to honour the memory and legacy of the late Jumbo, you will ensure that this is followed through, and those who are to engage in selling and so on, that there is—we have not been told what is the cost as it relates to written authorizations?

We are saying that we are facilitating or we are playing a role for the small and medium-sized man, but have we been told what is the cost or what

charges will be placed on these small and medium-sized business entrepreneurs by the International Cricket Council? Because at the end of the day, Madam Speaker, we have ceded our rights at these venues. Because even members, if there is a practice game at the Queen's Park Oval they cannot have rights to enter. Even the hospitality booth owners and so on, they have ceded their rights. I do not know how many hospitality booth owners exist at the Brian Lara stadium and so on.

4.15 p.m.

And this is why I am saying that whilst we speak in glowing terms and say and indicate that we are indeed protecting the rights of the nuts man and the small vendors and so on, we must be able to provide that sense of clarity.

Madam Speaker, in the context of where we are too, I must return to this point about national security and that comprehensive security plan. Because indeed, if our local law enforcement agencies are collaborating with the Caribbean agencies and federal agencies out of the United States of America, from an intelligence point of view, a national security point of view, I as a citizen looking on will be very concerned because our national security intelligence apparatus is in shambles. It is in chaos, Madam Speaker. Who are they liaising with at the Strategic Services Agency?

Mr. Charles: Pastor Brown.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Who is in charge at the Strategic Service Agency at this point in time?

Mr. Charles: Pastor Brown.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: I do not know who is the head. The substantive head was sent on leave. We were told a comprehensive audit and so on is being—

Mr. Scotland: Madam Speaker, 48(1).

Madam Speaker: So, Member for Couva South, I do uphold the objection on 48(1). Okay? I understood you are weaving certain aspects but I think you are going beyond what is required for this debate. I would ask you to rein in and come into the matter which is before us, which is dealing with the ICC Men's T20 Cricket.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: Madam Speaker, I gave you my fullest assurance during my contribution earlier that I will take your guidance into consideration.

So the very important issue also, as I said, as it relates to clause 7— and clause 7 points in the direction of recognition of visas issued by the CARICOM host country and so on, in conjunction with the mutual recognition of visas, will have effect during the 15th of May, 2024 to the 15th of July, 2024, Madam Speaker. I do not know if the Attorney General can give us the assurance that all requests for visas and work permits, and so on, have been approved. We are 18 days away. Are there any outstanding amounts?

In the context of the national security threat too, Madam Speaker, have any application for work permits and visas—have they been denied? Are they pending because of this so-called threat that we are hearing from a terrorist point of view? These things need to be clarified for the public of Trinidad and Tobago and for the CARICOM. If they are working in

collaboration with all the Ministers and all the agencies, provide that clarification not only for the people of Trinidad and Tobago but for the CARICOM region. Display your sense of commitment to regionalism also because this is something that you all stand and parrot, but in terms of following through and implementing, it is talk, talk and talk, just like an arrest is imminent, we are following all leads, we will spare no effort, there will be a whole-of-government approach—

Mr. Charles: No stone unturned.

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—and we will leave no stone unturned. And when you look in terms of national security, the entire constituency of Couva South is living like prisoners in their own homes.

Madam Speaker, one final point, on behalf of the cricket fans and on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago—and I see the Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts is looking at me but I am sure that he will agree with me.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Mr. Charles: I am sure.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: In the context of transportation also around the venue, I have made a case for police and people to be properly trained, and we could go on and on. Roadworks are currently in progress from Chaguanas to Chase Village, and even before beyond Chase Village. And I do not know, Madam Speaker, if you are—all right, I will refrain from drawing you into this debate. I do not know if Members on that side have ever been caught in the traffic jam, the congestion that is currently occurring as a result of those roadworks. And again, in the context of planning, in the context of the

deliverables that they boast of here this evening, the Opposition is saying to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, take into consideration—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—coming up with additional initiatives so that the visiting teams, the spectators and even the local public do not get into additional chaos and traffic and congestion on match days. Because if it occurs, Madam Speaker, I will not blame the Local Organising Committee, but I will blame the entire—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago. And the Opposition will be looking on, we will be looking on and we will be doing our own sense of what we would call a post-mortem, in terms of how this wish list that they have presented to the Parliament of this country, as it relates to the T20 World Cup, did they deliver? And, Madam Speaker, based on their track record for the last nine years—I want them to succeed. I am a cricket fan.

Mr. Charles: “Doh bet yuh money”.

Mr. R. Indarsingh: But if I am a betting person, Madam Speaker, I will not even put \$1 in terms of saying that they will succeed. But at the end of the day, the United National Congress indicated where we are. We would welcome all to this part of the globe. We will plead with the Attorney General to use his—

Mr. Charles: Influence.

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—influence within the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago to take into consideration the issues that we have raised here this afternoon.

And we want to tell the West Indies team, led by Captain Rovman Powell, and includes Vice-Captain, Alzarri Joseph; Johnson Charles; Roston Chase; Shimron Hetmyer; Jason Holder; Shai Hope; Akeal Hosein; Shamar Joseph; Brandon King; Gudakesh Motie; Nicholas Pooran, who is from the constituency—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. R. Indarsingh:—of Couva South and in McBean; Sherfane Rutherford; Andre Russell; Romario Shepherd, our best wishes and we hope that they will bring home the ICC T20 trophy to the West Indies and continue to be part of that resurgence of West Indies cricket. I thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Diego Martin Central.

The Minister in the Ministry of the Officer of the Prime Minister (Hon. Symon de Nobriga): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. de Nobriga: Madam Speaker, thank you for recognizing me to join briefly this debate on the ICC T20 Cricket World Cup 2024 Bill, 2024. Madam Speaker, I followed the debate in the other place and I have tried to follow the debate as we have had it here and, Madam Speaker, this Parliament sometimes sees a brilliant exercise in talking out of two sides of your mouth, you know, and I will start with, if you do not mind, Madam Speaker, in the Senate.

Madam Speaker, in the other place, all Independent Senators voted for this Bill. There were some amendments, none of which were, if I remember correctly, proposed by the Opposition. The Opposition stood up and was

vociferous in their claims as to why this Bill, why this T20 World Cup was problematic, why we are going to have issues with it, and then, knowing very well the benefit that it would have for this country but also not being able to associate themselves with any success that this Government's actions may bring to the country, abstained.

Madam Speaker, the last speaker before me started and ended his contribution, and I expect to see that being clipped to be used on social media, as is their want, by saying that the Opposition—just like the Member who led off for them—fully supports this, and then went into his own wish list, which I would expect is reflective of the Opposition's thoughts on this, as to everything that could possibly go wrong, and why people should see this as a danger, and why they should not come to Trinidad, and why they should not go to the stadium, and then puts in words like “patriotic” and puts in, “We support this,” and then goes on to call the Members of the team as if his contribution was anything but against the success of this tournament to be held in the region.

Madam Speaker, the Member for Caroni Central raised a few issues that I do not think the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Arts addressed, and I just want to very quickly. He spoke about the “Special Arrangements” under the Part II of the Bill, clause 3(1), and talked about the necessity to not only advertise in the papers, but to go online and advertise online and whatnot. And I just wanted to clarify that particularly after the Committee Stage in the other place, there were amendments but very importantly, as had been detailed and pointed out by the Attorney General, it is in at least

two newspapers in circulation as well as the *Gazette*. So there is there is nothing that binds anyone to only two newspapers and the *Gazette*.

On top of which, also dealt with any other place and it is clear—Madam Speaker, they have some issues with caucusing, right. It was for all to see the last time they were here. However, it is important that the leaders of the two Houses on the Opposition side speak with the people who are going to represent their party here so that there is a fulsome debate based on fact, we are not rehashing things that were said in one place and we actually get somewhere. The country demands better than that.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. de Nobriga: The Attorney General in the other place pointed out that all these newspapers are online. And not only online in their full sense, but also all of these newspapers also post articles to their social media pages. So there is in there, there is already an online presence that is tied to the media and let us be frank—not Frank Worrell, eh. But this is something that is of national and regional importance, and all right-thinking citizens and organizations will attach themselves to the success of it, unlike what has been said here and in the other place.

Madam Speaker, the speaker before me raised a few issues and as I said, while he started off with, “The UNC is in full support of the T20 World Cup,” he then went into his words, a wish list. It would seem that, as usual, the Opposition is giving us, as I said, their own wish list for everything that could go wrong, no matter how remote it is.

4.30 p.m.

Madam Speaker, he raised an issue about national security—a comprehensive security plan that includes an evacuation plan, and where is this and what not. The LOC includes representation from the ODPM, from the Municipal Police, and from other stakeholders that are attached to the national disaster preparedness and response, and, as a result of that, we can be assured—because here is the thing. You would think that we have never done this in this country. You would think that, at no point, this is the first time this has ever been done. We are talking about an expectation of 20,000 people here. Every Carnival we have 60,000 visitors.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. de Nobriga: All across this country, through Port of Spain, in San Fernando, in Chaguanas, all over, and in those events over the course of Carnival, all our stakeholders come together to ensure the success of Carnival year after year after year.

Madam Speaker, it is a fact that we held our own stage of the 2006 World Cup here in Trinidad and Tobago as part of a regional World Cup. It is a fact that, last year I believe, we had the Youth Commonwealth Games where we had a thousand athletes from 70 countries come here successfully. It is a fact that we had in this country the 50th anniversary of CARICOM and the CARICOM Heads of Government Conference held here. It is a fact that we had the Regional Crime Symposium addressing crime and violence as a public health issue. It is a fact that just recently we had the CARICOM Regional Cricket Conference, and all of these activities require a partnership, require stakeholders coming together, require a plan, require people who understand logistics on the day, and it is done every time

successfully for the betterment of this country and its regional and international esteem.

So when the Member comes here and speaks about traffic, well yes, there may be some traffic, as there is. I remember sitting in traffic when there was cricket around the Queen's Park Oval. I remember that. But, could you imagine, Madam Speaker, if we had decided, as was asked by one of the Members—and here is the issue, eh. I am saying it as if we were making the decisions. The venues that were chosen were chosen as part of an assessment that was done in this country by the ICC and the CWI. They are the ones who chose it, and the Attorney General, both in the Senate and in his opening statement, described in part, if not completely, the criteria that would have been utilized, inclusive of proximity to health facilities, medical facilities and what not. We went through all of that, and the Members opposite stand up as if that is a revelation.

Madam Speaker, I thought that this was a straight-forward debate. Because, if they so love cricket in the way that they say they do, then we should be working together to make this a success as quickly as possible. I saw the Member for Caroni Central stand up and deliver an opening salvo. Well, Madam Speaker, it was spirited but it may be that he would have heard the Chief Whip for the Opposition in the other place, not you Pointe-a-Pierre, in the other place, who was very clear that their selection for a possible Minister of Sport and Community Development is not him. So he wants to make sure that he gets his knocks in now so that somebody, even if it is as a backup, he could get pick.

4.35 p.m.

But, Madam Speaker, as I said, we have a track record, the same track record that the Member for Couva South would seek to disparage. We have a track record in this country, and in this region of hosting successful tournaments.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. de Nobriga: And that is not a distant memory. That is last year, year before that. That is recent, we have proven—but of course that is for who will want to see. And we know clearly, that that is not the position of the Members opposite.

And on another topic that the Member raised—because he said that if they were to see traffic going into the Brian Lara stadium he would blame the Cabinet. Well, Madam Speaker, tell them. Madam Speaker, tell the Members opposite, then do not send your supporters to go and picket on the highway. Do not send your people to cause all manner of obstacle in order to prove what you want to be proved.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. de Nobriga: Because we have also had to deal with that, “and clog up toilets with jersey, and pant, and towel, and all kinda ting”. So, if you, do not want to see that, then be a part of the solution, because you are constantly a part of the problem. Madam Speaker, we are here—you could say what you want to say, but I know you are on your way out. My apologies, Madam Speaker. My apologies.

Madam Speaker—

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Hon. S. de Nobriga:—yes, we could say—I do not suffer on this side. I bask in the glory of the PNM. Madam Speaker, we on this side, are saying, that we are here today, not only to pass this Bill. But, why are we here today? We are here today, because yet again, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, under the leadership guidance of the PNM, and its Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley, has taken a position, that we will stand with our regional partners, and be a part of a regional activity. Because we see ourselves as a stakeholder, in this togetherness, that is the CARICOM region. Who is going to be here?

I was happy to see that it was not repeated here, but, it bears addressing. I heard Members of their team, disparaging the countries that are in our group, Madam Speaker. The population of Uganda is 47.25 million people. This is Uganda's first World Cup. An entire nation will be behind them; 47.2 million people. The population of New Zealand—who by the way, was the runner up in 2021, and I believe in the last World Cup was a semi-finalist, is 5.12 million. The population of Papua New Guinea—that they washed their mouth on Papua New Guinea—is 10.49 million people.

Madam Speaker, in our region in terms of the cricket-playing countries, another 6 million. And that is not even where we start to speak about the diaspora. And, Madam Speaker, the West Indies is playing here. The West Indies, two-time champions, 2012 and 2016. And, we still have—granted that we have fallen off a bit, in terms of our performances, but the West Indies brand is still strong, and it still is a global brand.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. de Nobriga: And, Madam Speaker, maybe one of, if not the only thing of note that the Member opposite regaled us with, after going through all the countries that would be a part of the tournament, is to tell us about the resounding success of the CARICOM Regional Cricket Conference. And I want to thank him for that. Because, I would not want to stand here and be accused of blowing our own trumpet. But, he went into details. He, being the Member for Couva South, went into great details, about what was discussed in that symposium, that conference. And Madam Speaker, it was about building back West Indies. That brand, our team. What better way to do, what better way, than to be a part of the hosting of the T20 World Cup?

Madam Speaker, I have to admit, that when it first came around, I was one of those curios who was not a fan of T20, but I understand now, clearly that it is not the end of test cricket. It is not the end of one day. In the same way, that radio was at the end of newspapers, and television was not the end of radio, and social media will not be the end of any of them. It has its own unique brand, in a global environment now, that is so immediate, that people no longer, in large part, in particular with the younger demographic, no longer want to look at—not even a whole day, much less five. So this sort of punchy, fast paced sporting event, is more and more relevant. And we have seen, not just from a West Indies perspective, but also, because of what the global brand of T20 is, both at national and at club level that this is a real opportunity for those countries who produce cricketers, and to borrow the words of my Prime Minister, at the conference “we can play this game”.

Madam Speaker, I do not intend to stay long here, because I think that the merits of this Bill speaks for itself. I think that the hon. Attorney

General, and our Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, who is the Acting Minister of Sport and Community Development, have done a very good job of speaking about it, not only from a legislative perspective, but also from a policy perspective. And despite the doom and gloom that would be put here, I am hard pressed to find, what could be so offensive about this, about this Bill, and about the event that this Bill is attached to. What could be so offensive, that you would come here to find the most far-flung, far-fetched possibility, and put that forward, as if this could happen as shores left, goes in front of right?

Madam Speaker, how will we benefit, \$200 million—I think \$200 million was the figure put forward by the Minister of Tourism. And that \$200 million is going to be reflected in the hospitality industry, hotels, Airbnbs for all the teams that are here, all of the ancillary staff, the management, their families and friends, and their fans, the media, the people who are attached to the equipment for all of these things. All have to be accommodated in our country. Beyond that, what happens outside of the game? Well outside of the game, like all of these things, there are going to be team outings, the media are going to go out to lime, there are going to be all manner of activities that are going to directly impact, bars, restaurants, cinemas, you name it.

So, that sector is also going to be directly impacted by this spend. Madam Speaker, rental cars, taxis, maxis, shuttles, there are all manner of activities as—attributed with transportation, is going to be directly impacted by it. Personal chauffeurs, so, I want to go to this game, I will call person X who has his maxi, or his taxi, and he will pick up my friends and I, so that

when we go down there, we will have a good time. We can have a couple of drinks, and not run afoul of the law. Madam Speaker, all of these things directly impacts local economic development, and the community level economy. How could we—what is so egregious about that? How could that be an issue? But Madam Speaker, beyond that there is also the promotion of brand T&T. Us being able to reflect the magnificence of our culture, the magnificence of our people. Not only to our regional partners, but also to an international stage.

Madam Speaker, I have a note here you know. Something I definitely wanted to touch on. Oh well. Madam Speaker, we have the ability to speak to billions of people worldwide, as Trinidad and Tobago, reflecting our culture, reflecting our smiling faces, reflecting the way that we celebrate. And, it was either the Member for Caroni Central, it may have been, you know, who made an issue, because of the Bill itself. There would be no opportunity for the instruments, and all of the things associated with the way that we celebrate. And I want to thank the Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts for clarifying that, that will be on full display. But beyond that, it was also pointed out by Attorney General, in the other place, that instruments were under section 2, which is restricted, as opposed to prohibited. And therefore, there was a level of discretion that would be in place by the organizers, as opposed to something being prohibited, like a weapon that would simply not be allowed.

So, as I said, Madam Speaker, this Bill is something that I am happy to have associate myself with. This Bill is something that I think, that the Opposition should not reflect the actions of their colleagues in other place,

and vote with us, to make this thing a success. You have said that you have supported, you have said that you—even if it is just at the book ends of your presentations here. Well, then support it. Just simply support it.

Madam Speaker, I am the representative of Diego Martin Central. Cricket is alive, and well in Diego Martin Central. Being played by Diego Martin North Secondary by St. Anthony's College. It is the—

Hon Member: [*Inaudible*]

Hon. S. de Nobriga: —Diego Martin North Secondary, Madam Speaker, is a Secondary School, within the boundaries of the constituency of Diego Martin Central.

Mr. Imbert: A sporting complex.

Hon. S. de Nobriga: We will get there. I will give you your time. Alright.

Hon Member: [*Inaudible*]

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Madam Speaker, I am very happy to say that, while the Diego Martin Sporting facility is not in the constituency of Diego Martin Central, it is simply across the road, and will be visited by the members of the constituents of Diego Martin Central.

Hon Member: If they will allow you.

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to see their own idols now. But to see the future stars, to see what they could be, to see excellence that could look like them, to see what they could.

Madam Speaker, I know as a young boy being in the Oval, watching Desmond Haynes and Gordon Greenidge, watching Viv Richards—I know what it was like to be a student of Fatima College, and knowing that Brian Lara was only a few years ahead of me, and he was an international cricket star, and being able to say that I know him. I was able to touch him, to see him, at his best.

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4.50 p.m.

Madam Speaker, even as we speak about cricket, this Government held a regional symposium on crime and violence and addressing it as a public health issue which meant—not that it would be managed by the Minister of Health, but which meant that it required an all-of-government approach and one of the key issues that was raised was the presence and the necessity for sport as an option, not only as a job but also as an option of your time, particularly for young people to keep them out of trouble, to teach them discipline, to put them in environments where they would be able to benefit from direct mentorship. I am happy to say that—

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, you have two more minutes.

Hon. S. de Nobriga: Thank you, Madam.

Madam Speaker: You have two more minutes of original speaking time. You have 15 more minutes if you wish to avail yourself of it to continue your contribution, please proceed.

Hon. S. de Nobriga: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am happy to say, that at the Ministry of Sport and Community Development, there are numerous programmes that are being rolled out addressing sport and bringing sport into communities, particularly at the youth level, driving—not just encouraging young people to get in but also to develop current administrators, groundskeepers, and pushing sport through our communities as a means of bringing our young people away from unproductive pastimes and into a productive use of their time. And what better opportunity would there be than to show these young people what sport, what is capable when you follow sport to the end. The possibilities that are there for you, even if it is not at an international level but we see club cricket in T20 being played across the globe, let us encourage that. Let us not try to find every possible way to say this is a bad idea, let us not look for a problem with every solution.

Madam Speaker, I join my colleague the Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, and commend this Bill to the House. I thank the Attorney General for bringing it, and I look forward to the Opposition's support for this most worthy Bill. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. David Lee (*Pointe-a-Pierre*): Thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker, as I join this debate, I do not intend to be long, I will do a T20, not like my colleague before me, not like Diego Martin Central.

Madam Speaker, let me first start off by saying that we on this side support this Bill, let me start off by saying that.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Lee: I do not know where the Member for Diego Martin Central got that we—

Hon. Members: Senate.

Mr. D. Lee: Madam Speaker, I think my presence—

Madam Speaker: Members, let us have one debate here, and let us confine our debate to here, right. We are not in the other place, go on, Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. D. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for reminding us that we are in the Lower House. Madam Speaker, as I said that we are not against T20 World Cup cricket being held in Trinidad and Tobago, that is a given. We are in support of cricket, we are in support of any sporting community or field of discipline in our country but, Madam Speaker, the issue is not this Bill, eh. Madam Speaker, the Bill is a simple Bill, I think it has what, 43 clauses or if my—48 clauses, Madam Speaker, and it is a carbon copy, I think, of a previous Bill when we had World Cup, the 50 overs World Cup back in 2006, a carbon copy of that.

And what my colleagues, what we have been saying this afternoon,

Madam Speaker, is that even though the Bill is before us and we are in support of the T20 World Cup, the Bill is a carbon copy of 2006 and it could have been tweaked and changed for the betterment of the country, and for our citizens, Madam Speaker, that is what—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Lee:—my Members have been fighting for this afternoon. I think even in the other place they had raised issues with it, Madam Speaker, and even the hon. Attorney General in the other place when he was piloting that same Bill talked about that, that we had a lost opportunity of tweaking the Bill because it is a carbon copy of 2006. It is there on the *Hansard*, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the issue that I have—and I am happy, as the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, that T20 cricket, the three main matches plus the semi-finals are being held in the south land, I want to put that squarely. I am happy for myself as the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre and my other colleagues from the south land—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. D. Lee:—we are happy that these matches are taking place in the south. For too long we have had serious matches in the north, so I am happy it is in the south, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Charles: For once.

Mr. D. Lee: But, Madam Speaker, on the 12th of June, the first match is taking place in the Brian Lara Cricket Academy, New Zealand versus West Indies, that is a big match, Madam Speaker. The second match on the 13th of June, Afghanistan versus Papua New Guinea, these are two new countries

that are taking part in the T20 and we wish them well. Afghanistan, I think is ranked number 11 in the ranking of T20, Madam Speaker. And in the third match on the 14th of June, we have New Zealand versus Uganda, a good match for the south people who love cricket in our country Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the issue we have really and truly, when I listen to my other two previous colleagues, is the operationalization of this particular piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, because the venue that it is being held in the south land the Brian Lara stadium, the issue of transport, the issue of traffic has been raised by my colleagues before, even—we will be on showcase as a country. The first match is on the 12th of June but there are several practice matches before that, Madam Speaker—that there was an influx of visitors during the month of June, Madam Speaker, and my concern as a Member is when that arrival aspect of this tournament, Madam Speaker, there will be thousands—as the Acting Minister of Sport and Community Development mentioned, between 10,000 to 20,000 individuals are scheduled to arrive in our country.

And in the same time during the month of June, Madam Speaker, we all know it is a time when we have another influx of foreign students, students who would have studied abroad coming back home, families would be moving back and forth during that period of time, Madam Speaker. And we understand the nightmare that happens on arrival and departure in our airport, Madam Speaker. And I am very concerned right now, we have issues on arrival when individuals' normal times when they arrive, and you see lines backed up in the Immigration.

So, I am hoping that the LOC—and I know there are teams on the LOC that represent the Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Works and Transport, Madam Speaker, and the list goes on. But we are hoping on this side that those issues are ironed out before the influx of these visitors to our shores, Madam Speaker. Because, it will not put us in a good light if things were to happen where visitors start to complain about the Immigration lines and just to get out of the airport, Madam Speaker. So, I really hope—and that is the issue that we have been trying to highlight in our contributions. I know my colleague from Couva South might be a little bit, you know, he is a little excitable at times, Madam Speaker, so I am trying to bring back what we are really trying to say with the operationalization of this piece of legislation, Madam Speaker.

We talked about traffic, Madam Speaker, just moving from Port of Spain on those match days to the stadium of Brian Lara, which is located in Tarouba just off of Pointe-a-Pierre, Madam Speaker, on a normal day right now, because of what my colleague mentioned of the works that are going on between, I would say from Monroe Road to Chase Village, Madam Speaker, it is horrendous. We were told back then sometime earlier this year, that those works would have been completed by April this year, if my memory serves me right, and to date, it is still ongoing and it is a problem, Madam Speaker. So, we are hoping once again, that our colleagues here on our side, in the Opposition side, we are just highlighting issues and trying to put the Government on notice to prevent it from happening for the sake of our country because we will be on show, Madam Speaker—

Hon. Members: [*Desk Thumping*]

Mr. D. Lee:—that is all we are saying, that is all we are saying. We are not condemning the Bill, we are not against the T20 cricket World Cup being staged in Trinidad and Tobago, Madam Speaker.

What I hope as a citizen, I hope we could have gotten a better package, Madam Speaker, because I would have liked to see a lot of different teams, Madam Speaker. And what my colleague, I want to reinforce what my colleague from Couva South was saying, that given what is happening in sporting disciplines throughout the world, we are hoping that what is happening with America being one of the key stakeholders in this T20 World Cup, that West Indies cricket, we do not get pushed out and especially Trinidad and Tobago as being a first-class nation in holding World Cup and Test Cricket matches on the whole, international matches on the whole, Madam Speaker. Because, that is something that we have to be fearful of, and I am hoping—our Prime Minister, I think he is the head of the CARICOM cricket committee.

Mr. Indarsingh: Diego Martin North/East might have done a better job.

Mr. D. Lee: Diego Martin West—that we were hoping that we would have gotten some better matches.

Madam Speaker, on the issue of local content, again I have a little concern especially as being held in the south land, I know my colleagues, Tabaquite, myself, Pointe-a-Pierre, my colleague here, Naparima, and so forth, Couva South, we border that particular area, Madam Speaker. And as far as local content with our schools, Madam Speaker, we were hoping that because —when you look at where the practice matches are being held, one venue is in Diego Martin, I think Diego Martin North/East, Madam Speaker.

Another one is in the East-West Corridor, Madam Speaker. Another one is in the Oval, Madam Speaker, and we were hoping that besides the Brian Lara stadium which are the actual matches, that we could have had a practice venue in the south land also, Madam Speaker, maybe in Couva South there is a—

Mr. Indarsingh: Cricket centre.

Mr. D. Lee: The cricket centre, Madam Speaker, that is the kind of negotiations we would have thought that this Government would have had when they were negotiating this piece of legislation, Madam Speaker. So that it augers well for the students and the young men and women in the south land. My colleague, I forgot him, from San Fernando West, Madam Speaker, would have been part of that.

5.05 p.m.

I am also hoping, Madam Speaker, I do not know if it is too late, I know the couple of matches are on the 12th, 13th and 14th of June, Madam Speaker, and I make no—I cast no aspersions on the teams, Afghanistan and Papua New Guinea, Madam Speaker. But when you look at those—and I am being real, Madam Speaker. When you look at that particular match that is being held on the 13th of June, while it is being showcased, the TV rights are the big rights, Madam Speaker, having a venue that is 10 per cent filled, given the teams that are playing, it does not augur well for us as a country. All right? That is the reality, I am sure, that would happen.

I am hoping that the Government would consider negotiating some maybe reduced prices, so that the school children and their parents could attend those matches, Madam Speaker, to lift even the teams that are there

playing like Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea. Even the other match—I know the 12th of June will be a sold-out match, that is New Zealand versus West Indies, Madam Speaker. I am sure that it is sold out already. But the other one on the 14th of June, New Zealand versus Uganda, again, we could, you know—the Government could negotiate with the Cricket World Cup with the prices and invite the schools surrounding the southland to attend these games, Madam Speaker. I mean, it will augur well for us as a country, Madam Speaker, to fill that stadium. No matter what match it is, what teams are being played, that when that, you know—when you are on the camera and you are on the World Wide Web and you look at the stadium and you see it is filled, Madam Speaker, supporting whatever team it is, it augurs us well as a country, Madam Speaker.

As far as local content, I know the Government spoke about vendors and so forth. I am really hoping that even outside of the stadium, vendors might want to set up, and I hope that some allowance is made because you know us as a culture, Madam Speaker, you know, we tend try to sell as we go along, Madam Speaker, and vendors pop-up all over the place. So we hope from the southland that our vendors, the pepper roti lady, the “doubles” man, and so forth, can have a play in these matches and this World Cup that is happening in our country in the next few weeks, especially around my colleagues like Gasparillo, Claxton Bay, Marabella.

The other issue I want to talk about quickly, Madam Speaker, is the element of policing and crime. I know, again, the infrastructure—and I am hoping that when the LOC meets with that Ministry of National Security, that the assets are given to policing, especially in southland, Madam

Speaker. I had a meeting just last week, Madam Speaker, with the Southern Division, and the meeting was really about Pointe-a-Pierre and the facilities of the police and so forth.

In one particular police station—I would not call it—they are down to one vehicle, Madam Speaker. They are hoping, Madam Speaker, and I am hoping that out of that meeting—mention was made about this Cricket World Cup. And they are hoping—the Southern Division is hoping because of the importance of the World Cup coming to the southland that extra assets would be given to them in policing what is happening in the coming weeks with the T20 World Cup, Madam Speaker. They are also hoping, Madam Speaker, that when they are given these assets, extra police vehicles and so forth, they are able to retain it, Madam Speaker. They are really hoping that they could be able to retain those assets when the World Cup matches are over. I am hoping, I am pleading—

Hon. Member: *[Interruption]*

Mr. D. Lee: Pardon? What is that?

Hon. Member: *[Interruption]*

Mr. D. Lee: I am hoping, Madam Speaker, that those assets that are assigned to the Southern Division during this T20 World Cup, remain in the Southern Division to actually complement what we already have in our particular police stations of St. Margaret's, Gasparillo, Marabella, et cetera. So I really hope that. Because one of the issues that we saw even in the December, Madam Speaker—and we talk about the issue of crime. In the December, we had an English side playing the West Indies in the Brian Lara Cricket Academy, and they could not even come out of the Hyatt hotel

because there was some shooting that took place right outside on Wrightson Road. So I am hoping that the Government is aware of situations like that, Madam Speaker, because it would not augur well as a country during that period of time.

So, Madam Speaker, we are not against the Bill—as I wrap up. I do not plan to be long. We are not against this piece of legislation. Actually, we are happy that our country is on showcase, but we are hoping that all the different divisions and the Ministries work together to ensure that at the end of it, we come out in a better place as a country. With those few words, Madam Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker: Member for Tunapuna.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Esmond Forde (Tunapuna): Thank you. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to enter this very important debate, which states:

“An Act to make provision for the efficient and effective staging of the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024 and for related purposes.”

Well, my colleague for Pointe-a-Pierre, I think the only assurance which has already been made by the Acting Minister of Sport and Community Development, and also the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs is that systems, regulations are in place to ensure that traffic concerns will be dealt with, all the necessary concerns about crime and what is going to take place, again, teams are in place to ensure that those provisions would take place.

What I would like to just make mention of is with regard to the grouping that we have in Trinidad and Tobago: Papua New Guinea, Uganda, New Zealand and the West Indies. As we know, in T10 cricket, on any given day, any team can win a T10 game, and it is important and we must be reminded that those teams would have qualified to be in the West Indies and USA to play cricket for the Cricket World Cup 2024. So, again, no disparity with regard to Papua New Guinea, Uganda, and well, we know the status of New Zealand and our West Indies team.

Madam Speaker, this Bill encompasses several key provisions designed to regulate different aspects of the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024, and the provisions include, one, venue declaration and control; two, ticketing and entry requirements; thirdly, visa requirements and work permits. As we all know, the hon. Attorney General would have gone through, in his laying of the Bill, all the necessary requirements: tax exemptions and duty waivers, which is, again, customary to ensure that all individuals coming to play cricket in the West Indies will be well taken care of; security and conduct regulations, very important; intellectual property protection. And then, as we know, Madam Speaker, there would be benefits and there would be drawbacks, and all those considerations have been identified in this particular Bill.

The ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup Bill, 2024 consists of 48 clauses. It will be taking place from June 01 to June 30, 2024, consisting of 20 teams, with a total of 55 matches. The main venue, Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba. We have supporting venues, again, Sir Frank Worrell Memorial Ground in UWI, St. Augustine; Queen's Park Oval, Port of Spain;

Diego Martin Sporting Complex in the Diego Martin area. We will be having a total of four regular games at our stadium in Trinidad and then one semi-final, most important. I think most individuals have not identified that we will be also hosting a semi-final game here in Trinidad and Tobago. The countries—there are eight Caribbean countries and then USA, which will have three cities hosting these particular games. An average of 20,000 visitors is expected, an anticipated revenue of \$200 million and we will have approximately 2 billion persons, virtually, worldwide. What else can we ask for in our beloved Trinidad and Tobago and, again, our CARICOM region?

Madam Speaker, I would just like to highlight probably about three or four clauses, which will be mainly focusing on the 20,000-plus visitors and the sporting fans of Trinidad and Tobago and the CARICOM region. Madam Speaker, clause 11 speaks about—

“Clause 11 would prohibit the unauthorised entry into and exit...”—
of a particular stadium.

“A person must be a permitted entrant within the meaning of the Bill to enter and may only leave through an official exit, unless otherwise permitted.”

As we all know, Madam Speaker, Trinidad is a sporting public. We love our sports whether cricket, whether football, basketball, we love our cricket, and it is very important that for the anticipated amount of persons attending that they must be made aware of what are the regulations. So in clause 11, we could identify:

“(1) No person shall enter a stadium during a match period unless he is a permitted entrant.”

—which is very important.

“(2) No person shall enter or leave a stadium during a match period except through an entrance or exit designated by CWI or otherwise permitted...

(3) A person who contravenes this section commits an offence and”—again—“is liable to a summary conviction....”

So, again, to the individuals who have purchased their tickets, please ensure that you abide by the necessary regulations. It is an international tournament and it is very important.

I could go on to clause 12, Madam Speaker:

“Clause 12 would prohibit entry on the playing field...”

Right. Very important. We are not at Constantine Park. We are not at, you know, I mean, the Mandela grounds to know that, you know, you could just run on freely when a six is hit, when a man makes a century as the case may be. So again:

“Clause 12 would prohibit entry on the playing field and such other areas within the stadium as may be indicated during a match period.”

Now, again, it will also include the practice matches and the supporting matches at the other venues. Very important, Madam Speaker.

“Contravention of this”—again—“provision constitutes an offence and the offender...”—again, could be liable to a charge or some sort of penalty and could also be— “...removed from the...”—particular—“...venue.”

So again, Madam Speaker, clause 12:

“Unless authorized by CWI, no person shall, during a match period,

enter or be present in or on—

- (a) any part of the playing field;
- (b) any other part of the stadium if it is indicated that entry into that part is not permitted...”

Thirdly:

“(c) any part of any other CWC 2024 venue if it is indicated that entry into the part is not permitted.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(b) and (c)...”—as indicated—“...that entry is not permitted may be given in the following manner;

Again:

“(a) an advertisement;”

It will be clearly identified, the prohibited areas at the particular venue sites. Pamphlets will also be issued. Right?

“(d) a direction...”—by—“...a police officer or an authorized person;”

There will be persons at the venues directing you, where you can sit, where you can go, where you cannot go, as the case may be. And it is important, as the public who will be attending these matches, this will be made clear to all these individuals, and it is clearly stated in this particular Bill.

“(f) a sign erected in, at or near an entrance.”

“(e) a fence, chain or barrier around the path or across an entrance into the part...”

Again, it is not the first time we will be going to a cricket game. It is not the first time we will be going to a cricket game. It is just that it is a Cricket

World Cup and we need to emphasize the importance of ensuring that we are on show and that we do well within our Trinidad and Tobago public.

Madam Speaker, I will then like to move now to clause 13. It:

“...would provide for the designation of any area within a CWC 2024 venue for the duration of a match period as a reserved area or any seat within a CWC 2024 venue as a reserved seat. A person who is not a holder of a CWC 2024 ticket authorising him to be in a reserved area or occupy a reserved seat shall not do so unless authorised by CWI.”

5.20 p.m.

Contravention, again, can lead to being put out, for want of a better word, for being, you know, redirected, in order to ensure that we do comply. So it is important again, Madam Speaker, that clause 13, the area designated, reserved, if you are not allowed to be in a reserved section, again, do not proceed to that area.

Each ticketholder will have an identified ticket, would have an identified seating accommodation, unless you notice that whether it is that you will be in the mount, which is an open space. But, other than that, each area will be designated; any seat within a CWC 2024 venue, as a reserved seat.

Secondly:

“(2) No person shall enter or remain in a reserved seat or occupy a reserved seat unless that person is—

“...the holder of a CWC 2024 ticket conferring authorisation to do so...”

Again:

“...the Government...”—as well as with regard to the regulation of—

“...CWI, shall not, in any suit, action or proceeding be liable...

“(a) to pay compensation to any person for the suspension or any privilege under this section...

(b) to reimburse any person for the whole or a portion of any payment made by the person to obtain any privilege which was suspended under this section.”

And again, it is clear the ticket that is in your hand will be the ticket that will be allocated for the particular seat or position or particular stand that you would be entitled to. Any individual, again, whether it is that you want to roam, you want to go to another area, which is not authorised, again, regulations are in place, guidelines are in place, and individuals will surely have to comply accordingly.

Madam Speaker:

“...Clause 15 would prohibit certain specified conduct of persons within any CWC 2024...”—area.

Again, Madam Speaker, conduct is very important with regard to ensuring that discipline, attitude, and conduct are well taken care of at our particular venues. And again, clause 15:

“...A person shall not in any CWC 2024 venue—

(a) misuse, deface, damage or tamper with any building...seat, chair, table, structure, vehicle, craft, truck, pipe, tap, tap-fitting conduit, electrical equipment, wiring or sign”

Again, we do not need to go into the details. Right, what would have

probably happened on previous occasions—on past occasions at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy. We need to ensure that things are properly well in place in order to ensure that we conduct ourselves appropriately.

“(b) evacuate or cause to be evacuated any part of a CWC 2024 venue unless authorised by CWI;”

No person shall be allowed to:

“(c) erect any structure, erect or display any sign...”—any—
“...banner or other thing, in contravention of this Act unless authorised by CWI;”

Only persons allowed to do those things will be given the necessary authorities, and again, they will be granted those permissions prior to the start of any particular games.

No person shall:

“(d) block any stair...”—any—“...step...”—any—“...aisle...”—
any—“...gangway, overpass, underpass, pontoon, bridge, entry;
exit or other thoroughfare, unless authorised by CWI;”

Again, it is very important, your seat is where you would be allowed to watch the matches from. Again, we anticipate no overcrowding, guidelines would be in place, regulations would be in place, and again our fire services, police officers, and the designated workers on that day will ensure that these procedures are adhered to.

“(e) throw or use any stone...”—any—“...bottle...”—any—“missile or...”—any—“...other dangerous object;

(f) disrupt, interrupt or behave in a manner that may disrupt or interrupt any CWC 2024 activity or disrupt, or interfere with,

the comfort of persons at the CWC 2024 activity;

(g) interfere with the equipment of a person taking part in a CWC 2024 activity;

(h) operate or use a loud hailer, a public address system or other broadcast device or any other device that may interfere with electronic or radio communications unless authorised by CWI.”

Again Members, again, to the listening public, to those out there, these are regular guidelines that are usually adhered to when we go to any sporting event. It is just that because of the magnitude of this particular event, we need to make it clear to ensure that guidelines are followed for this particular period which runs from 1st June to 30th June, 2024.

Again:

“(i) conduct public surveys or opinion polls, or solicit money, donations or subscriptions from members of the public unless authorised by CWI...”

5.25 p.m.

So, again, clause 15, Madam Speaker, we need to ensure that the guidelines are followed. Clause 16, Madam Speaker:

“Clause 16 would provide for the prohibition or restriction of certain items as specified in the Second Schedule. These would include dangerous objects, weapons and any article capable of being used as a weapon.”

Again, Madam Speaker, “dangerous weapons” are categorized:

(a) explosives;

- (b) incendiary devices;
- (c) firearms;
- (d) gas;
- (e) weapons;
- (f) glass of any description instrument;
- (g) instrument
- (h) object that can be used as a missile;
- (i) article or material which can be used to—
- (j) maim, disfigure, disable or cause bodily harm or death to a person;

It is important, again, Madam Speaker, based on clause 16 that these regulations and guidelines are followed:

“(1) No person shall, bring into or have in his possession at a CWC 2024 venue, during a match period—

- (a) “any weapon or dangerous object or article capable of being used as a weapon;”

Again, it is standard. We are going to watch cricket. We are going to watch cricket.

- (b) “any animal other than a guide dog if the person is blind...”

Again, we take nothing for granted, so we need to ensure that it is in the regulation.

- (c) “any article specified in Part I of the Second Schedule.”

“(2) No person shall bring into or have in his possession at a CWC

2024 venue during a match period, any article—

- (a) which may be used to—
 - (i) erect a structure;
 - (ii) deface or damage any structure within that venue;
 - (iii) adversely affect the safety of the public within that venue”

The person must not be able to:

- “(iv) disrupt or interrupt a CWC 2024”—match or game.
- “(v) interfere with the comfort of persons within the CWC 2024 venue or their enjoyment”—of a game.

Persons must not:

- “(vi) distract, hinder or interfere with a person taking part in a CWC 2024 activity ...”
- “(vii) engage in conduct prohibited under section 18”

—which is clearly identified. Again, we must ensure that these guidelines and regulations are adhered to. Madam Speaker, we need to ensure that again, there are restricted venues, right?

“The following items shall be restricted in all CWC 2024 venues:

- “1. Large banners and flags, and flag sticks above 1.6m in length.”

So, again, it is clearly stated the length of the flag that will be allowed at the venues.

“2. Musical instruments that cannot fit under the venue’s seat or on a person’s lap or is louder than 70 dB.”

Again:

“3. Coolers or lunch boxes larger than 30 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm.”

So that is the diameter that you will be allowed with, with regard to particular coolers. Again, all these regulations will be listed in this newspapers of Trinidad and Tobago as we go along within the next couple days. When the Bill is approved today, I presumed that all the necessary advisements and guidelines will be issued accordingly.

“4. Folding not intended for mounds.”

And also:

“5. Tents or umbrellas not intended for mounds.”

Madam Speaker, it is clear, it is covered. The Attorney General, along with the Ministry of Sports, has put together the necessary relations and guidelines by having meetings again with the ICC and CWI to ensure that all guidelines and regulations are taken care of in order for us to have a successful 2024 Cricket World Cup.

Madam Speaker, the ICC Men’s T20 Cricket World Cup is a prestigious international cricket tournament organized by the ICC. The tournament features the world’s top cricketing nations, right, again, top cricketing nations. So, Uganda is a top cricketing nation. Papua New Guinea is a top cricketing nation, because they have qualified and gotten the merit in order to participate. They will be one of the 20 teams that has been selected worldwide in order to be at this cricket tournament.

The T20 format is known for its fast pace and exciting game play.

The 2024 edition of the tournament is jointly hosted by the USA as identified, and the Caribbean, making a significant moment for cricket expansion and new territories and showcasing the sport's global appeal. The ICC T20 Cricket World Cup 2024, Bill, is proposed legislation aimed at facilitating the efficient and effecting staging of the tournament.

Again, as identified earlier, the Bill consists of six parts. It consists of 48 clauses and it addresses various related venue management, traffic control, ticketing, security, intellectual property rights, and protection. Again, each one of these provisions, there is a particular committee that has been identified that is in place in order to ensure for the efficient and effective operations of these particular provisions, as we go into June 2024.

The primary objective of this Bill is to ensure for the successful organization of this particular tournament. Madam Speaker, as we all know for every sporting event, every event for this magnitude there will be an economic boost. So hosting a major sporting event like the T20 Cricket World Cup can stimulate the local economy through increased tourism, hotel bookings, transportation services, and spending at local businesses. Again, for each individual, the cab driver, the taxi driver, the maxi taxi driver, the nuts person, whatever concessionaires that will be allowed, in and around the particular stadium, and the particular supporting match venues will all have an opportunity to benefit.

As identified by the Acting Minister of Sports, there is an estimated \$200 million income anticipated, so each strata of the persons who are involved in businesses will be able to benefit, come for the month of June 2024, within the five matches that will be hosted in Trinidad and Tobago,

and also the supporting matches which is very important.

As a result of hosting, infrastructure development. To host such an event, there is often a need for infrastructure development and upgrades such as, the stadium renovations, transportation improvements, and accommodations. These investments can have long-term benefits for Trinidad and the Caribbean improving its overall infrastructure and attractiveness for future events, with regard to tourism.

We talked about to get on the Uriah Butler Highway in Chaguanas where some works are taking place. Again, nobody has to be a rocket scientist. It is known if the infrastructure is not completed, definitely there will be no work during the month of June, in order to ensure that there will be no added traffic congestion. It is obvious.

Mr. Charles: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. E. Forde: Naparima, I am not recognizing you, right—

Hon Members: [*Laughter*]

Mr. E. Forde: —it is obvious. The Minister of Works and Transport is listening to us, as we speak, Works and Transport. So I am assured that the contractors will ensure whether it is that within the next two/three weeks, the job can be finished, or whether it is that work will have to stop as we go into the month of June.

We could talk about global exposure. The T20 Cricket World Cup is watched by millions as we know, two billion persons are estimated to be watching us virtually, around the world, alright. Our fans worldwide providing Trinidad with significant—not only Trinidad our CARICOM partners—global exposure. This exposure can enhance this country's

international reputation, promote tourism, and attract foreign investment for the future. You are always hearing about sports tourism.

Fourthly, we can promote sports tourism. Hosting this T20 Cricket World Cup can help promote sports tourism within the Caribbean region and encourage participation in the sport at all levels, from grassroots to professional. This can lead to increased interest in cricket among our youths, more investment in cricket infrastructure, and the development of local talent throughout, not only in Trinidad and Tobago, but again the Caribbean and CARICOM region. Madam Speaker, we can also look at the hosting of this Cricket World Cup in the Caribbean to serve as a catalyst for further regional and international integration in several ways. And I can highlight a couple ways which this can be done. One, shared identity and pride. Cricket holds immense cultural significance in the Caribbean, often transcending national boundaries. Hosting this World Cup can unite the diverse countries of the region, under a common cause fostering a sense of shared identity and pride among Caribbean nations.

I hope that again, we can also forge a good relationship right here within the Parliament, with regard to hearing the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, say that they will be supporting the Bill. They are not against cricket, they are not against T20, but we trust that you all will be supporting the Bill, today.

Collaborative efforts, very important. Organizing a major sporting event like this T20 Cricket World Cup, requires collaborative efforts among various stakeholders, including governments, sporting organizations, local communities dealing with the ICC International Cricket Council, dealing

with Cricket West Indies, and all the stakeholders to ensure that this tournament becomes a success. This collaboration can facilitate closer ties and cooperation between Caribbean countries leading to greater integration and mutual support.

Madam Speaker, tourism and trade, very important, with regard to hosting a massive tournament like this. The influx of visitors, estimated to be 20,000-plus visitors, during the World Cup, can boost tourism and trade within the Caribbean region. The increased economic activity can encourage countries to work together to capitalize on the opportunities presented by hosting this event, such as promoting regional tour packages, and showcasing local products and services. Yes, they are coming to watch cricket, from all parts of the world, but remember, on the cricket off-days, we have the Maracas Beach to showcase, we have the Pitch Lake, we have Devil's Woodyard, we have various sites, Mount St. Benedict, Caura River, Caura Valley. We have various places that individuals can go to on the non-cricketing days in order to ensure—this will result in further income for individuals on a daily basis, because remember, it is for a particular period and Trinidad and Tobago will have its period during the five matches that we will be hosting.

The legacy of cooperation is very important, the legacy is very important. The collaborative efforts and partnerships form during the preparation and hosting of the World Cup can leave a lasting legacy of cooperation among Caribbean countries. This legacy can serve as a foundation for future joint initiatives and projects aimed at addressing common challenges and advancing shared goals. Again, friendships would

be developed, networking would be developed, relationships would be developed, not on a governmental basis also, but among individuals. Somebody will make a friend during the Cricket World Cup. I am sure somebody will be able to make a new friend, meet a new friend, meet a new individual, and again, friendships can develop along those areas.

In summary, hosting the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, in the Caribbean and the USA, has the potential to strengthen regional integration by promoting, collaboration, fostering a share sense of identity, boosting economic corporation, and leaving a legacy of partnership and solidarity among Caribbean nations, and further strengthening our CARICOM region.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024, Bill, represents a comprehensive legislative framework aimed at ensuring, the successful organization of the tournament while addressing various operational, logistical and regulatory aspects, while offering benefits in terms of efficiency, security, and intellectual property protection. It also proposes, challenges relating to complexity, compliance, and accessibility that warrant careful consideration, and mitigation strategies during implementation.

Madam Speaker, I thank you, and I support fully as the Member of Parliament for Tunapuna, this Bill in this House, this afternoon. I thank you.

Hon Member: [*Desk thumping*]

5.40 p.m.

Madam Speaker: The Attorney General.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Reginald Armour SC): Madam Speaker, thank you very much for this opportunity for what is going to be a very brief wind-up. I have listened with interest to my colleagues on this side in support of the Bill, and I have listened with interest to my colleagues on the opposite side. I just want to remind the viewing public that this is an important piece of legislation for exactly the reasons that the hon. Member for Tunapuna has just outlined: The opportunities that are going to come to Trinidad and Tobago with the two billion persons virtually who will be viewing this event, and the thousands of spectators who will be coming to Trinidad and Tobago for the matches that are scheduled here. And just to remind everyone: June 12th to June 17th at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy; the semi-final match on June the 26th at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy; warm up matches at the Queen's Park Oval; practice sessions will be held at the Oval, at the Sir Frank Worrell Memorial ground at the University of the West Indies St. Augustine, and the Diego Martin Sporting Complex.

So altogether we are going to have a feast of opportunity for cricket spectators, and we are going to have significant economic development in Trinidad and Tobago by reason of the visitors that we will have to this country; hotel rooms, vendors selling their goods, and generally the business fillip that this country will get. So I welcome the opportunity to bring this Bill to this House, I must confess, and I obey your injunction not to dwell on it unduly, but I confess that I was taken aback in the other place by the strident behaviour and remarks of the other side in the other place. I was saddened when decrying remarks were made of Papa New Guinea, because

“that is all we had playing in Trinidad and Tobago”, and I could not understand the basis on which there could be that quality of opposition to what is unarguably simply a good idea, good opportunity, and I beg to move. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

Madam Chairman: This Bill has 48 clauses and three Schedules.

Clauses 1 to 48 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedules 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to: That the Bill be reported to the House.

House resumed.

Bill reported, without amendment, read the third time and passed.

Madam Speaker: The Attorney General.

**ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE (INDICTABLE
PROCEEDINGS) (AMDT.) BILL, 2024**

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Sen. The Hon.

Reginald Armour SC: Madam Speaker, I beg to move:

That a Bill to amend the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Act, 2011 (Act No. 20 of 2011), be now read a second time.

Madam Speaker, preliminary inquiries have long been recognized as a bottleneck in our justice system contributing to incessant backlogs and

delays. In March 2023, prior to the proclamation of the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Act, 2011, also known as AJIPA, nearly 38,000 indictable matters languished in our District Courts. It must be understood that these numbers did not merely represent cases, but affected individuals, victims, families and communities awaiting closure and justice in their matters.

Madam Speaker, this Government took the decisive step finally to abolish the antiquated pre-trial procedure of preliminary inquiries which plagued our justice system. For the first time in our nation's history, a novel, efficient and electronic approach to pre-trial proceedings was established. The abolition of preliminary inquiries is one of the major reform initiatives undertaken by this Government which works in tandem with several other reforms and demonstrates our commitment to achieving swift and fair justice for all, through a comprehensive overhaul of the criminal justice system. Madam Speaker, to name a few:

- We have seen the establishment of specialized court divisions;
- The introduction of judge alone trials;
- The decriminalization of certain road traffic offences;
- New plea bargaining legislation;
- The establishment of a public defenders system;
- And significant resources consistently applied to the justice sector to improve its plant/machinery/processes.

The long awaited abolition of preliminary inquiries through the AJIPA complements these major reforms.

The record will demonstrate, Madam Speaker, that the Government has placed significant importance on eliminating preliminary inquiries. Additionally, and this is important, to ensure that all parties involved were prepared, this Government has actively and continuously engaged key stakeholders for the past 12 years in order to gather feedback and to refine our approach to the abolition of preliminary inquiries and the implementation of a more effective pre-trial mechanism. This commitment to responsive governance is evident in the ongoing dialogue which continues with stakeholder over the years to the present.

It has resulted in six amended Acts ending with that which in June 2023, I brought before this House to introduce the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) (Amdt.) Act, 2023, Act No. 12 of 2023. That Act provided for, among others, the enforcement of electronic filing which reduces the archaic paper-based systems. The requirement for early filing of the indictment, as this has been identified as a source of delay; stricter timelines for compliance by both parties to the proceedings; and the elimination of adjournments and elimination of cross-examination or additional oral evidence. That Act, AJIPA, was proclaimed on the 12th of December, 2023.

Madam Speaker, in the sensitization process that 2023 Act was formulated subsequent to significant consultation with stakeholders since 2023. Additionally, in December, 2023, only last year, the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with the Office at the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs embarked on a sensitization training

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC (cont'd)

for stakeholders on this AJIPA and the systems and processes contained therein. During these sessions the Judiciary demonstrated the new electronic filing systems for initiating indictable matters before the High Court through novel web portals using case-lines and case-centre software for all evidential uploads, evidential management and case preparations. The stakeholders whose representatives attended these joint demonstrations included:

1. The Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago, of course;
2. the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service;
3. the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions;
4. the Public Defenders' Department of Legal Aid and Advisory Authority;
5. the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service;
6. the Forensic Science Centre;
7. the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago, the Criminal Bar Association and the Southern Assembly of Lawyers; and
8. the Tobago Lawyers Association.

5.55 p.m.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Madam Speaker, I cannot emphasize too much the consultative process that has continued throughout in refining this AJIPAA and its subsequent amendments. And I am pleased to inform that with the groundbreaking impact of the proclamation of AJIPAA, there was more recently introduced the Criminal Procedure Rules, 2023, which have accumulatively demonstrated a sea change that has prepared all stakeholders

to embrace and to enable a more swift system of administration of justice.

Notably, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this was recently exhibited in the case of *The State vs Sheldon Doodnath*, details of which were published in a media release of the Judiciary on the 1st of May, 2024. The Judiciary's release indicated that:

“In the first arraignment hearing of an indictable case filed under the AJIPAA legislation”—the sitting judge, Madam Justice Lisa Ramsumair-Hinds, in her ruling—“set the court's expectations for criminal trials.”

The case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was filed on the 11th of January, 2024, alleging offences including kidnapping and the larceny of a motor vehicle. The sufficiency hearing was concluded on April 16, 2024, with the accused committed to stand trial before the San Fernando Assizes.

Let me pause there to illustrate the difference that AJIPAA has made. Preliminary enquiries, until AJIPAA was brought onto our statute books, took up to 13 years. This case was filed on the 11th of January, 2024, and the sufficiency hearing, which is the concluding stage of what would otherwise had been a preliminary hearing, was concluded on April 16, 2024.

Remarkably, therefore, four months after the accused was charged, the pretrial hearings commenced, the initial and sufficiency hearings were completed, the Master committed the accused to stand trial, the accused appeared before a High Court judge for trial, and the presiding judge now indicates and anticipates that the trial will be completed before the end of July, a mere six months after the filing of the indictment. Let me repeat that.

A High Court criminal trial under AJIPAA may be completed a mere six months after the indictment was filed. This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is progress. This is progress that this Government has brought to the improvement of the criminal justice system of Trinidad and Tobago.

The presiding judge went on to emphasize the new Criminal Procedure Rules, which has established strict timelines, ensuring strict and managed court progress. And indeed, one of the things that was highlighted in the media release and in the order of the judge, which I have read, is she cited the Criminal Procedure Rules, mandating that during:

“...every hearing the Court must...”—ensure that the—
 “...accused’s plea...”—is taken or if already taken, it must—
 “...ascertain whether the accused is likely to plead guilty or not guilty.”

The rule underscores the importance of all counsel, prosecution and defence adhering to timelines, consistent with that new process, the new Criminal Procedure Rules and AJIPAA. Among the orders made by the judge, was that, I quote:

“Variation of time limits by agreement of the parties is prohibited.”

In other words, now that the court has set its deadlines, the court has said the parties are not allowed to change those deadlines.

Mr. Hosein: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am constrained to just stand on—

Mr. Young: What is the Standing Order?

Mr. Hosein:—48(1), relevance, please, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a very strict Bill. It only has three very short clauses, which is a definition issue.

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Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Please, Members. Overruled. Proceed.

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have always been told, in every opportunity of any presentation of any case before the court, the Member for Barataria/San Juan should know.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I ruled on that.

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC: Thank you. Thank you. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is very important to appreciate about the amendment of the enabling Act—what is very important to appreciate about the enabling Act, which we are about to amend today, is to understand that there is now established court-driven process with the courts managing the responsibility on attorneys to advance their cases without using court hearings to do things that parties can manage for themselves, allowing court resources not to be wasted and conferring strict responsibility on attorneys appearing in our courts to progress the case to conclusion. All parties are encouraged to achieve swift justice, marking a significant departure from the old culture of delays that plagued the previous system prior to AJIPAA and the Criminal Procedure Rules.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC: I turn now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the substantive provisions of the Bill, a short Bill.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC: The Bill seeks to amend one clause of

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AJIPAA—

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC:—section 21, with what I stood to pilot three amendments. But I am going to pilot only two of those three amendments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I am withdrawing one. So the first amendment that I am asking this House to receive and to consider is the amendment to section 21, introduced by clause 3(2)—clause 3 of the Bill.

“Section 21 of the Act is amended –

(a) in subsection (2) –

“(i) in paragraph (a), by inserting after the words ‘police officer’...”

I beg your pardon, let me just get to—the first amendment that I wish to bring to the attention of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to incorporate the definition—I will turn first to the last which appears—to incorporate a new definition of “police officer”, that is to say, to involve the insertion of a new subsection (9), which will incorporate the definition of “police officer” as outlined in the Proceeds of Crime Act.

This amendment is deemed essential in order to address the existing gap in the Act where “police officer” is not sufficiently defined. And that amendment will read:

“For purposes of this section, ‘police officer’ means an officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and includes an officer of the Customs and Excise Division, an officer of the Board of Inland Revenue or any officer of an agency of the State, lawfully vested with

investigative powers similar to those exercisable by a police officer appointed under the Police Service Act.”

Further to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, additionally, section 21(2)(a) is being amended to include the word “given”, thus enabling acceptance of statements provided by witnesses driven or recorded by authorized persons other than police officers, within the strict definition of “police officers”.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the amendment that seeks to substitute the word— in section 21(2)(a), that seeks to substitute the word “or”, with the word “and”, I withdraw that amendment. And I withdraw that amendment, it was originally a recommendation from the Public Defenders’ Department. We had anticipated that by the time I stood here today, we would have received feedback from other stakeholders, because as I have said at the beginning of my pilot today, we encourage consultative feedback. We are awaiting the feedback from the Director of Public Prosecutions and therefore, I withdraw that amendment because I would like first to get all the consultation in. So the only two sections that are being amended are those that I have outlined.

In all of the circumstances, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask this House to support the improvement of the already effective, working legislation, AJIPAA, to support the amendments which I propose to this House on those two limited respects. And with respect, I beg to move. Thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Question proposed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I recognize the Member for Barataria/San Juan.

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Mr. Saddam Hosein (*Barataria/San Juan*): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein: And I think I have 45 minutes in order to look at this particular piece of legislation where we are amending one section of the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Act, 2011. And I emphasize on the year 2011, because this was a policy of the People's Partnership Government to abolish preliminary enquiries.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein: This was a policy decision taken by the then government because we understood the lag in the criminal justice system. I think this has been a public debate ever since maybe Arima was a law student, in terms of the relevance of preliminary enquiries. Trinidad and Tobago has taken that bold step on the 12th of December, 2024, through successive administrations, to have these proceedings, that were very cumbersome on the Magistracy, abolished, because you have to look at what happened in the past. It was one trial taking place in the Magistrates' Court, where you will have witnesses attending, being cross-examined extensively after a barrage of adjournments to get to that point of the preliminary enquiry hearing. The magistrate is not sitting as an arbiter of fact. All the magistrate is required to do is determine whether or not it is a prima facie case before it could proceed to the Assizes for a trial before a judge and jury. We also have legislation now that provides for judge alone trials.

So the exercise that we are asked to engage in today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is

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nothing complex, is nothing cumbersome and it is now even shorter because the Attorney General has now caused an amendment to his amendment Bill, where he is removing one of the amendments and deleting where we are going to insert the words “or” as the word “and”.

Dr. Moonilal: Brilliant, brilliant.

Mr. S. Hosein: So the only two amendments before us is including the word “given” at section 21(2)(a) of the parent law and then inserting a definition of “police officer”. And this is not any brand new definition of “police officer”. It is being lifted out of the Proceeds of Crime Act and transposing on this particular piece of legislation. So it is no rocket science that we are engaged in here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, none at all.

So let us look at what the first amendment does, because the Attorney General really did not give us an indication of what it does but he told us about another case that has no relevance to this particular legislation. So the first amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is really—the section now, the parent law will read:

A signed original statement which was recorded by a police officer or given by the witness.

So what this really does, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it makes it clear that the statement can, in fact, be recorded by the police officer or it can be recorded by the witness themselves.

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Mr. S. Hosein: If you read it in the first original form—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, hon. Members on the Government side,

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again, please, if you are having any conversation, in low tones. Other than that, please. Proceed, Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Mr. S. Hosein: Yes, please, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thank you very much—or the witness statement could be recorded by the witness now and be given to the police officer. The original drafting was very restrictive, in terms of just having the statement being recorded by the police officer, and we could all understand that there are some constrains with respect to that particular drafting.

I now have to skip the amendment that was withdrawn and I have to look at the last amendment, which is the new insertion of subsection (9) at section 21. And if one looks at the Explanatory Note of the Bill, it talks about the transposing of a particular or the identical definition from the Proceeds of Crime Act, Chap. 11:27, to the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Act, 2011, to now give that definition of “police officer”. And I just want to read the definition into the record, which is that:

“...‘police officer’”—now—“means an officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and includes an officer of the Customs and Excise Division, an officer of the Board of Inland Revenue or any officer of an agency of the State, lawfully vested with investigative powers similar to those exercisable by a police officer appointed under the Police Service Act.”

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And when you look at what the Explanatory Note says, it talks about a gap was created. In terms of the:

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“...uncertainty especially in cases where tax investigators from the Board of Inland Revenue are involved in recording statements, since these investigators are not explicitly recognized as ‘police officers’”.

So, there is a particular gap that the Government, the Executive, identified with respect to tax investigators and the recording of statements and having the power to so in fact record.

I know we have some problems right now with finding some missing money. I think it is about \$3 billion is missing, \$1 billion of expenditure unaccounted for. So I really hope that this Bill may have some bearing and relevance to what is taking place now—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein:—that they may have to in fact call in certain persons to record some statements from them—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein:—to let us know where the money exactly has gone.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Hosein: So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are happy on this side to raise no objection with this Bill and I thank you very much.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I recognize the Member for Port of Spain South.

Mr. Keith Scotland (*Port of Spain South*): Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Port of Spain South.

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Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only persons who should fear the taking of witness statements by a police officer, they are all there on the ID parade line up—

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Mr. K. Scotland:—at No. 1, 2, 9 and 8. They are all there. They are the ones who should fear. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know it is the pig that gets hit with the stone that make the most noise.

Hon. Member: It is the biggest one.

Mr. K. Scotland: Oh. So that is what is going on there. Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: I would like to listen to the Member in peace.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members please. Members please, the precedent has already been set, you know what I mean? Five minutes. So let us proceed please. Port of Spain South.

Mr. K. Scotland: Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I say to the hon. Member for Naparima, as he rides out into the sunset, he could get any device he wants to ride.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland: Ride out. Ride out. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Act really tries here to—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, please. If I am unable to hear I

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would not be able to make a judgment. So please, let me hear Port of Spain South.

Mr. K. Scotland: It is a part of a suite of legislation and resources put into the Judiciary to try to assist and to augment and improve the criminal justice system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill as it seeks to amend the sufficiency hearing and the AJIPA, it really now strengthens the status quo. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we now have existing in Trinidad and Tobago, based on the resources put by the Government and a PNM Government of Trinidad and Tobago, this is what we have.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland: O'Meara, we have three "court house", three hearing rooms; San Fernando, which is in repair, when it is completed we will have four; Princes Town, one; the Hall of Justice, eight; and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you use the second floor for judge-alone trials, we will have at least 15 rooms; and in Scarborough we have two. There are now 13 criminal judges who would sit on the Bench to deal with matters that now would come from AJIPA. So what is before you and before this country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is now an amendment in order to cure certain lacunas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember when we were looking at the Indictable Offences (Preliminary Enquiry) Act some years ago there were two sections which were mandatory. The hon. Attorney General will tell when he was in practice they were mandatory, and when a magistrate did not follow those mandatory provisions—I remember Mr. Ramasar and Mr. Ken

Sagar, both deceased, we took points before Justice Best, as he then was, and the court threw out the preliminary enquiry, threw out the indictment because of the failure to adhere to the process in the legislation. If this Government does not correct this now as we are doing, it may result in challenges and that is why we are doing it. So let me edify the other side. Although it is simple, it is far-reaching and it has very significant implications.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland: When a potential witness statement does not follow the status and the Act, what is the provisions of the Act, the formalities of the Act, it will be subject to challenge. And what the first amendment does is that it seeks to now put where a police officer—there are two situations that exist now. The first thing, Sir, is that if a police officer records a statement, then that statement is admissible under AJIPA. But the second one is, if the witness gives the statement then that statement is admissible. But what happens when someone who is not a police officer receives a statement from a witness like, let us say, an investigator in the Police Complaints Authority? Then that statement may not be admissible under AJIPA as it stands now. That is what the legislation and the amendment seeks to cure in that, if there is a statement now that is given by a witness to any other person, then that statement will go in and is admissible under AJIPA.

The second one goes to the definition of police officer and all it does is that it incorporates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the definition of a police officer, it incorporates a Custom and Excise Division officer and also an

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officer, let us say, of the Board of Inland Revenue. All it does, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it brings the definition of police officer in alignment with the other pieces of legislation. This is called good and sensible governance—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland: —a phrase and theme that is alien to the Members on the other side. In the regard, I thank the hon. Attorney General for his diligence.

Ms. Ameen: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. K. Scotland: Madam, I greet you with two palms.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member. Member for Port of Spain—

Mr. K. Scotland: I greet you with my double palm.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member. Port of Spain South, address the Chair please.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

Mr. K. Scotland: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I put—sorry, sorry. Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me give you an example. If a witness has a report in a statement and he or she supposed to report and does not, the police officer then can maybe take the report and present that statement being given by the witness even if the witness is reluctant. So—“Orrrrr.”

Mr. Charles: I did not want to, but I have to stand on Standing Order 51(1)(b). “Ah hearing over and over ah simple ting being made complex and this is not a primary school.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again. Proceed. Proceed Member.

Mr. K. Scotland: So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we are doing here is we

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are about a serious amendment. Albeit, it may look innocuous, we are about a serious amendment to the Bill, and I would like to thank the hon. Attorney General for the promptitude in which he has brought this to the Parliament. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Attorney General.

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Reginald Armour SC): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just two short point, one of which I have already made and, that is, the refinement of AJIPA is being promoted through an ongoing continuing process of consultation, and the amendments that we are here today to seek to ask this House to approve are the benefit of consultations and correspondence which we have had with the Board of Inland Revenue, the Police Complaints Authority, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and the Public Defenders' Department. That is point one.

The second point is that on the 26th of March, 2024, my office wrote to key stakeholders requesting feedback on continuing issues dealing with AJIPA. We have received some feedback. We expect to get more. So I serve notice on this honourable House that we may yet be back again with further amendments to refine the legislation as I seek to ask this House today to approve and I beg to move. Thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Can I have this time? Thank you. Thank you, Members.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Chairman: I bring this committee of a whole in session.

Dr. Moonilal: Are there any amendments? We have not had the benefit of the amendments in writing, circulated, as is provided in our rules.

Mr. Chairman: Again, hon. Member, again the Chair has agreed that the hon. AG who made the amendment on the Floor will be allowed to present it on the Floor as we proceed with this particular committee.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Clauses 1 and 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 3.

Question proposed: That clause 3 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. AG.

Mr. Armour SC: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I ask this House to take the amendments to clause 3 to amend section 21 as set out in (a)(i) and (b), and I wish with leave of the House to withdraw (ii) of (a). To delete it, yes.

So the words in c (i), I am deleting the word “or” and substituting the word “and”, and the word which follows thereafter “and” be deleted.

Mr. Chairman: Repeat it again, hon. AG.

Mr. Armour SC: Clause 3 which seeks to amend section 21 of the Act, I

am asking that (ii) which read in paragraph c(i), by deleting the word “or” and substituting the word “; and”, that those two lines be deleted.

6.25 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the question is that clause 3 as amended, by deleting subclause (2)—

including the roman numerals—and the whole clause?

Hon Member: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Roman (ii) as—and deleted.

Sen. Armour SC: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: The question is—

Mr. Lee: Chair, I am just seeking clarity. Are we just deleting 3(ii)? That amendment, are we deleting the entire amendment? Are we keeping “or”?

Sen. Armour SC: We are keeping 3(a)(i).

Mr. Lee: Right.

Mr. Armour SC: We are keeping 3(b).

Mr. Lee: Correct.

Sen. Armour SC: We are deleting 3(a)(ii). All of it.

Mr. Young: Easy.

Mr. Lee: All of it. Yes.

Mr. Chairman: 3(a)(ii).

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Hosein: Chair, Mr. Chair?

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Moonilal: Imbert, you do not have a plumber to call?

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Dr. Moonilal: Not Denyse Plummer.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Hosein: Chair, Chair?

Mr. Chairman: Please, let us proceed.

Mr. Hosein: Chair, in subclause 3(a)(i), at the end of (i) you would have to also delete the word “and”—the “;” and “and” and place a “.”.

Mr. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Hosein: You have to.

Mr. Chairman: No, again—

Mr. Hosein: No, you have to delete it. There is no longer a “b” so it has to be deleted.

Mr. Imbert: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Hosein: Be serious Minister of Finance.

Mr. Chairman: Hold on, one second. Clarify, AG— Clause 3 [*Confers with Clerk*].

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Imbert: No longer a “b”? Where “b” gone?

Mr. Young: Mr. Chair, it stays because “b” stays.

Mr. Hinds: Get his attention. Mr. Chair.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Armour SC: Chair.

Mr. Chairman: AG, just clarify for me.

Sen. Armour SC: Yes, in response to the Member for Baratavia/San Juan, the word “and” at the end of (a)(i) remains. Because it follows, it will be “and” then “b” or by inserting.

Mr. Hosein: But AG, you would have to take off the (i) also.

Sen. Armour SC: Yes, the (i) will be deleted.

Mr. Imbert: Be corrected by the law review [*Inaudible*].

Mr. Chairman: [*Inaudible*] of the decision. Okay Members. Thanks for the clarity, thanks for the information, Members.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to: That the Bill be reported to the House.

House resumed.

6.30 p.m.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Members. Attorney General.

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to report that the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) (Amdt.) Bill, 2024, was considered in the committee of the whole and approved without amendments.

Hon. Members: With amendments.

Sen. The Hon. R. Armour SC: With amendments. I now beg to move that the House agree with the committee's report.

Bill reported, with amendments, read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Leader of the House.

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Friday the 24th day of

May, at 1.30 pm. That day is Private Member's Day and we would be grateful to get what we will be doing on that day from the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, thank you.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the 24th is two weeks away so I did not plan to get Private Member's Day today, so I will have to inform my friend from Arouca/Maloney—my Member, in a couple of days.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk and laughter*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, thank you, Leader of the House and Chief Whip. Hon. Members, there is one matter that qualifies to be raised on the Motion for the Adjournment of the House. I will now call on the Member for Chaguanas East. Member, you have 10 minutes.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Strategies to Mitigate Against Suicide (Government's Approach)

Ms. Vandana Mohit (Chaguanas East): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I stand to raise a most urgent and important matter on the adjournment which reads as follows: Given the increase in the number of suicides in Trinidad and Tobago, there is an immediate need for the Government to adopt an all-embracing approach through strategies to mitigate against persons contemplating suicide.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to introduce this raised matter on the adjournment by stating that it is with great distress and much introspection that this matter is being raised at this august forum. Further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to preface this matter by stating that all 41 constituencies are gravely affected by this inherent development that has seen an astronomical rise in the numbers in this country. And I want to share with you that

several conversations with older heads in my very own constituency revealed that this phenomena of suicide was far and few in the county when it did occur in older periods or ancient times, I may say, mainly arising from a little “tabanca”. This is what we know it to be like.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Ms. V. Mohit: But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the big question is: why therefore is there such a steep increase in suicide rates in Trinidad and Tobago according to available data. And this data comes from the Ministry of Health in recent years.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Ms. V. Mohit: In March 2022, Dr. Hazel Othello—if I have it correct, according to *Loop News*, would have reported as she announced—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am having a serious challenge even—it is, yes for some it may be funny.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no, no.

Ms. V. Mohit: But it is serious.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again Members, please, right. The Member has 10 minutes. Members please, the Member has 10 minutes in order to convey her information and please let us do it in silence please. I think we are very close to the adjournment. Yes, go ahead. Ten minutes.

Ms. V. Mohit: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So as I was saying, Dr. Hazel Othello in March 2022, according to *Loop News* would have reported or announced, and in her announcement she disclosed that Trinidad and Tobago, the Police Service recorded a gradual increase in deaths by suicides over the last three years and according to the statistics she revealed.

Trinidad and Tobago—“registered 92 suicides in 2019, 104 in 2020 and 128 in 2021.”

And Mr. Deputy Speaker:

“The 2019 figure compared well with the global and regional average of nine suicides per hundred thousand as the county registered 8.3 suicides per hundred thousand.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, whilst these figures in themselves reflect the international mean, greater interest ought to have been placed on this development given that this country, Trinidad and Tobago, and the world at large, would have been in the midst of the rampaging COVID-19 pandemic. And the very pandemic would have exacerbated those figures because it created psychological problems such as self-imposed isolation, problems such as death of relatives and close friends, problems such as unemployment, problems such as closure of businesses and even increases in substance abuse.

Mr. Deputy, Speaker, what is quite alarming is the recent figures and development which indicate, and I want to quote from a news article as recent as the 31st of March, 2024, where it states: “Male suicide rising in T&T”:

“There has been a 25 per cent increase in suicides in”—Trinidad and Tobago—“over the last eight years, according to data from the Ministry of Health.

Between 2016 and 2019, 371 people took their lives, an average of 93...”—persons—“per year. Comparatively, between 2020 and 2023, 478 people died by suicide—an average of 120 per year.

Men have accounted for 83 per cent of self-inflicted deaths in this country since 2020. However, data about the most common motives is not available.”

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which brings me to my reason for bringing this matter on the adjournment. The Government of the day must pay great heed to these unwanted occurrences whilst acknowledging that suicide can arise from social, environmental, biological, or psychological factors, which, and we will all agree at times, the Government may not be able to prevent such occurrences, they still must take heed. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the Government must do is adopt an all-embracing approach via strategies to mitigate against persons contemplating suicide.

A suicide hotline is simply not enough. I know the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services would say that we have 800-COPE but it is simply not enough based on the figures that we are dealing with. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this matter is a serious and heart-wrenching matter and therefore I wish to elucidate to the Government of the day that some measures and mechanisms to mitigate against suicide since it will be foolhardy or reckless of anyone to delude themselves into believing that the Government can eliminate suicides totally, and that is totally understandable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, therefore, there must be a multifaceted approach to prevention strategies involving critical sectors of society inclusive of health care, inclusive of education, inclusive of community organizations and social service agencies.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Ms. V. Mohit: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in light of this, I wish to share some

strategies the Government can implement to mitigate suicide risk especially amongst males.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, you have three minutes.

Ms. V. Mohit: Sure. Promoting mental health awareness. Across the board, encourage much more open discussions about emotions, stress, et cetera. I know the Minister of Health would say the Government is involved in mental health awareness programmes. It needs to be deeper to enhance access to medical health services. Ensure that mental health services are readily available and affordable, and accessible to citizens. Implement suicide prevention programmes not just a hotline.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another major issue, address substance abuse, which is a significant risk factor for suicide. To those opposite I just want to share that I know sometimes when responding we would say the Opposition would raise matters to score political points. This is not my intention at all. All of our constituencies are affected by this and therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker—and I want to share with you before I close, even an elderly man recently attempted suicide because of frustration with the crime situation and this was reported.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing I just want to urge the Government to carefully consider what I have said and shared in this matter because by implementing a combination of these strategies, governments can work towards reducing the incidence of suicide, providing better support for individuals at risk including males who are statistically more prone to suicide. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say to this House in closing, choose life, together all 41 of us, we can prevent suicide.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I call on the Minister of Health.

The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrance Deyalsingh): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This Motion will find absolute support from this side and I will tell you why. The issue of suicide is not to be politicized and I do not intent intend to. However, the Member is correct, a hotline is not enough and I will say what else we are doing. The all-embracing approach.

Addressing the issue of suicide and suicide ideation is really a whole-of-Government, whole-of-society approach. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has a role to play. The Ministry of Sport and Community Development, Ministry of Youth Development and National Service under the Hon. Foster Cummings in providing opportunities especially for men and he will tell you what he is doing for men in this country. The Ministry of National Security and the Ministry of Health. But let us focus on my colleague's Ministry, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. They have a National Family Services Division, a Social Welfare Division, a Division of Ageing, to provide relative and relevant resources when required.

Psychosocial support is also provided and on the critical issue of suicide, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is mindful of that. And the Member is right, it is not only a hotline. However, I think one of the best Divisions in the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to treat with the holistic approach of suicides is their family case management services. And callers could access—under that Ministry, the

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services where the Hon. Donna Cox has piloted the family case management services.

6.45 p.m.

And let me tell those outside there who are thinking about suicide, who have suicide ideations, you are not suffering in silence, you are not alone. The Government is on your side with the following services.

One, if you have a family member who you think may be contemplating suicide, is depressed, you have resources for abuse and incest; you have resources to tackle domestic violence, which is a cause of suicide; you have marital counselling; you have counselling for depression, financial issues because coming out of COVID, we recognized that unemployment is an issue. So the family case management services also provides assistance for financial services, life crises. So a lot of this is there—and counselling. So that Ministry is well equipped, but the conversation is to lead people who are contemplating suicide, who are depressed, to access services.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in supporting the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, the Ministry of Health also has its own FindCareTT. And I just did a quick Google search, I typed in “suicidal ideation thoughts” and do you know what was the first one that came up on the Google search? FindCareTT. So FindCareTT, which is a collaboration of 30 entities working with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, has 30 entities to help people with mental health crises 24/7. So if you are depressed, you can call up. If you are contemplating suicide—and the suicide prevention page, as I have always said, is the most visited page on FindCareTT. So it is more than a

hotline. The services are there, the Government has heard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the Ministry of Health working together with the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services in decentralizing mental health, we are rolling out these decentralized mental health to health centres. I visited the Barataria Health Centre a few months ago, speaking to women who are coming there with their domestic violence problems. The Petit Valley Health Centre, where my colleague visited with me, is testimony to what we are doing to make services available.

The South-West Regional Health Authority—and in the few minutes I have left, I want to talk especially to the Gen Z crowds. The Gen Z people are the young people born between 1997 and 2013. They are showing higher rates of depression and suicide. The international research is showing that Gen Zs, who use social media more than three hours per week, have a twice higher rate of mental disease. And we keep telling people, delink from these social media platforms, because what is happening on social media is cyberbullying, which is leading people to suicide around the world, and I am sure Trinidad is no exception. It is the fourth leading cause of death—suicide—of people between the ages of 15 to 29. So this is an opportune moment to tell Gen Zs, to tell people young people, you are not alone.

However, what we are faced with now, we did not face 10 years ago, because the Member spoke about the changing landscape of suicides and a lot of this has to do with the negative impact of social media and social bullying. So our Gen Z population, their mental health challenges are totally different to what we went through as young people, to what our parents went through as young people. And in recognizing that, I will give you an

example. The South-West RHA went in to 22 schools in south, targeting Forms 3 to Upper 6, 258 students and 32 teachers were spoken to. We got feedback. We spoke to them about depression, self-harm, suicide and coping strategies.

Under the North Central Regional Health Authority, they have launched a CALM Project, together with the University of the West Indies, and we identified that ages 12 to 19 were identified as most at risk. So how do we cope with that? We teach them the coping strategies to deal with acute mental health crises, including truancy, skipping school. Because when you skip school and you fall behind, that adds to your mental state. Self-injury, suicide, body image shaming, this is something we did not have to deal with as young people in school. But it is a reality now because teenagers now are much meaner to their colleagues, to their peers, than we were—anxiety.

So all of these facilities, through both the Ministry of Health and the RHAs, and the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, are available. And I want to congratulate the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, and let everyone know, if you are under stress—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member, you have two minutes.

Hon. T. Deyalsingh: Yes—if you are under stress, make use of the case support system under the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. The family case management services are there for you, do not suffer in silence. All the Government's apparatus is there to support, it is there to help.

And lastly, with the last minute, I was in my constituency office once.

Strategies to Mitigate Against Suicide
(Government's Approach)
Hon. T. Deyalsingh (cont'd)

2024.05.13

A woman calls—put on to me, “I am contemplating suicide.” I am no psychologist, I told her call FindCareTT. She called back in 45 minutes and said, “Thank you, you saved my life.” Services are there, make use of them. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.53 p.m.