

SENATE*Tuesday, February 03, 2026*

The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to Sen. the hon. Dominic Smith, who is out of the country.

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from Her Excellency the President, Christine Carla Kangaloo, O.R.T.T.:

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Her Excellency CHRISTINE CARLA KANGALOO, O.R.T.T., President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

/s/Christine Carla Kangaloo

President.

TO: MR. RISHI TRIPATHI

WHEREAS Senator the Honourable Dominic Smith is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago;

NOW THEREFORE, I, CHRISTINE CARLA KANGALOO, President as aforesaid, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 (1)(a) and section 44 (4)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, do hereby appoint you, RISHI

UNREVISED

TRIPATHI, to be a member of the Senate temporarily, with effect from 3rd February, 2026, and continuing, during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of Senator the Honourable Dominic Smith from Trinidad and Tobago..

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's, this 3rd day of February, 2026.”

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Senator Rishi Tripathi took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance as required by law.

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE (RULING)

Mr. President: Hon. Senators, I wish to advise that pursuant to Standing Order 13, I have received correspondence from both Sen. Anthony Vieira SC and Sen. Dr. Amery Browne, seeking to raise two matters of privilege. I have since studied both submissions carefully, and I am convinced that neither submission meets the threshold to be raised as a matter of privilege. I so rule

BAIL (AMDT.) BILL, 2026

A Bill to amend the Bail Act, Chap. 4:60, brought from the House of Representatives [*The Attorney General*]; read the first time.

Motion made: That the next stage be taken on Friday 06, February, 2026.
[*Hon. J. Jeremie SC*]

Question put and agreed to.

PAPERS LAID

1. Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Ombudsman for the period January 2024 to December 2024. [*The Vice-President (Sen. Kenya Charles)*]
2. Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2025. [*Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Sen. The Hon. Darrell Allahar)*]

URGENT QUESTIONS

Mr. President: The hon. Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

MV Blue Wave Harmony

(Time frame for Operationalisation)

Sen. Dr. Amery Browne: Thank you, Mr. President. To the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation: Given recent shortages of goods and services across various sectors throughout Tobago, can the Minister indicate the time frame for the operationalisation of the *MV Blue Wave Harmony*, and what interim measures are being implemented to ensure cargo delivery to Tobago?

Mr. President: The honourable Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation (Sen. The Hon. Eli Zakour):

Thank you, Mr. President. Prime Minister, please allow me to refer to Standing Order 24(1):

“Questions may be put to a Minister relating to any subject or department under the Minister’s administrative responsibility.” With respect to Question 1, the seabridge falls under the purview of the Minister of Works and Infrastructure. Certainly, Sen. Dr. Browne should have known such urgent questions—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. E. Zakour:—should be directed to the proper Minister. Thank

you, Mr. President.

Sen. Nakhid: “Bunch ah PNM dunce.”

Mr. President: Sen. Dr. Amery Browne.

Sen. Dr. Browne: Next Urgent Question.

Mr. President: Okay. Sen. Dr. Amery Browne.

**Domestic Travel for Carnival Period
(Contingency Arrangements in Place)**

Sen. Dr. Amery Browne: Thank you, Mr. President. In light of rising public concern, can the Minister state what contingency arrangements are in place to meet increased demand for domestic travel during the national Carnival period?

Mr. President: The hon. Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation (Sen. The Hon. Eli Zakour): Mr. President, with respect to Question 2, the assumption is that Sen. Dr. Browne is referring to the air bridge which is operated by Caribbean Airlines, which does not fall under my purview. It falls under the purview of the hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. Browne: Mr. President, just for clarification, the Minister has made a false assumption. Can he please answer the question?

Sen. The Hon. E. Zakour: Mr. President, the domestic travel is operated by the air bridge Caribbean Airlines. Caribbean Airlines falls under the purview of the Ministry of Finance.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, thank you by way of a supplemental question. Is the hon. Minister aware that domestic travel includes the PTSC, which falls

under his portfolio?

1.45 p.m.

Mr. President: I do not think that question arises. It does not arise.

Hon. Senators: [*Laughter*]

Sen. Allahar: Mr. President, is that an opinion or statement of—[*Inaudible*]

Mr. President: No. I have ruled. I have ruled on that matter. It does not arise. It does not arise. Any supplemental, Dr. Browne?

Sen. Dr. Browne: [*Inaudible*]

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. President: Sen. Dr. Amery Browne.

Sen. Dr. Browne: Did you call on the Leader of Government Business?

Mr. President: The hon. Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister and Leader of Government Business.

The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Sen. The Hon. Darrell Allahar: Mr. President, with respect to Question No. 31, we have the Minister of Homeland Security here who is ready to answer the question.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. D. Allahar: And just to save time, with respect to Question Nos. 32, 33 and 34, the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, similarly, is very ready to answer those questions today.

Mr. President: Thank you.

Sen. Dr. Browne: Mr. President, if I may? Deferred question for written answer, would the Leader of Government Business give an indication?

Mr. President: The Leader of Government Business.

Sen. D. Allahar: Mr. President, the answer to that question has been approved, and it ought to be on its way by email to the Clerk and it will be circulated today.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION**Prime Minister's Overseas Travel
(Details of)**

With regard to the Prime Minister's overseas travel for the period September 2025 to October 2025, can the Prime Minister:

- (i) identify the participants comprising the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago to the UNGA 2025;
- (ii) identify all other individuals who traveled from Trinidad and Tobago to the United States to support the participation of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago at the UNGA 2025;
- (iii) provide the particulars of all costs associated with the travel and participation of the individuals listed in (i) and (ii) above;
- (iv) provide a detailed breakdown of the costs associated with the hosting of the T&T diaspora event in New York which was attended by the Prime Minister; identify the individuals accompanying the Prime Minister in her travel from New York to Washington DC during the period;
- (v) and provide the particulars of the costs associated with the travel and participation of the Prime Minister and the other individuals listed at (v) above?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**Murder-Suicides
(Measures to Reduce)**

31. Sen. Dr. Amery Browne asked the hon. Minister of Homeland Security:

Given the recent tragic incidents of murder-suicides with a history of domestic violence, can the Minister indicate what measures are being implemented to reduce the incidence of these crimes?

Mr. President: The hon. Minister of Homeland Security.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Homeland Security (Hon. Roger Alexander): Mr. President— and I thank you for the question, Sen. Amery Browne. The Ministry of Homeland Security, and in particular, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, is deeply concerned about murder-suicides, especially those linked to a history of domestic violence. These tragic events, Mr. President, underscore the critical need for early intervention, robust victim support and coordinated preventative strategies.

In response, Mr. President, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, through its Victim and Witness Support Unit, and crisis response team, has implemented a range of targeted measures aimed to reduce domestic violence-related crimes, strengthening early intervention mechanisms and preventing escalation to fatal outcomes. These measures include, Mr. President, psychosocial, emotional and investigative support services to victims and survivors of crime, including those affected by domestic violence, through the Victim and Witness Support Unit, Mr. President. This includes counselling, safety planning, referral to partner agencies, and ongoing case management for high-risk situations.

Immediate on-site intervention follows domestic violence-related incidents, such as murders, attempted murders and other high-risk conflicts through the crisis response team. This team works closely with investigators and support services to stabilize situations, support affected families and reduce the risk of escalating violence.

Mr. President, public sensitization and community outreach: The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service continues to prioritize public education and prevention initiatives designed to raise awareness of domestic violence.

Available social and support services, and the importance of early reporting

and interventions: These initiatives include youth mentorship programmes, male empowerment initiatives, women's wellness programmes, teen survival group interventions, early abuse symposiums, community lectures on domestic violence investigations, and nationwide youth violence prevention and digital safety education.

Collectively, Mr. President, these programmes address early warning signs, such as coercive control on healthy relationships and other risk factors associated with violent escalation.

Mr. President, recent statistics from the Victim and Witness Support Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service indicate the following services provided during the reporting period. Counselling, support to victims and emergency interventions for victims experiencing escalated threats, 25. Crisis deployment, including homicide and high-risk domestic violence cases, six. And support provided to affected families, including children, 10.

Mr. President, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service remains committed to addressing domestic violence through strengthening victim support services, crisis intervention, proactive management of high-risk cases, interagency collaboration, and sustained public sensitization efforts, with the overreaching goal of preventing further loss of life and enhancing public safety. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: Sen. Dr. Browne, you have—oh, okay.

Sen. John-Bates: Yes, please. Supplemental question, please, for the Ministry of Homeland Security. Now, Minister, thank you. You would have given us some statistics as it relates to the number of certain programmes that the police would have undertaken. For example, you would have said counselling and emergency, 25. But my question is: In relation to the community lectures, which you indicated

were undertaken as it relates to public education and prevention, can you tell us how many community lectures were undertaken in 2025?

Mr. President: The hon. Minister of Homeland Security.

Hon. R. Alexander: Mr. President, I humbly apologize for not having those figures here before me. There is no issue in me providing the information to you at a subsequent time. If you want it in writing, we will.

Mr. President: Another supplemental?

Sen. Dr. Browne: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. President: Sen. Dr. Amery Browne.

Sen. Dr. Browne: Thank you, Mr. President, and I thank the Minister for his response. Are any of the measures listed by the Minister new initiatives, and if so, which are the new initiatives?

Mr. President: The hon. Minister of Homeland Security.

Hon. R. Alexander: Mr. President, when you have sections in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service that, for years, were underutilized and now—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. R. Alexander:—they have found a new meaning through leadership—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. R. Alexander:—to some, it may seem like it is very new, but in fact, it is now working, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. Browne: Mr. President, I appreciate it, but could we have a response to the supplemental question? The Minister in his initial reply—

Mr. President: No. Ask the Question.

Sen. Dr. Browne: May I ask it again then, if necessary?

Mr. President: Yes.

Sen. Dr. Browne: Of the initiatives listed by the Minister in response to the question, which, if any of them, are new initiatives?

Mr. President: All right. I think the Minister has attempted to answer. He might not have satisfied your standard, as you may want to call it, but he has, in fact, responded to it. If there is another question, I will allow.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: Any other supplemental, Sen. Dr. Browne?

Sen. Dr. Browne: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. President: Okay.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Increase in Traffic Fines

(Details of)

32. Sen. Dr. Marlene Attzs asked the hon. Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation:

Given the recent increase in traffic fines with effect from January 1, 2026, can the Minister indicate whether:

- (i) these penalties form part of a broader, national road safety policy framework; and
- (ii) the necessary manpower, institutional capacity, and resources are in place to support effective enforcement?

Mr. President: The Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation (Sen. The Hon. Eli Zakour):

Mr. President, the Ministry confirms that the recent increase in traffic fines, which took effect from January 01, 2026, forms part of a broader, coordinated national road safety policy framework. While there are many approaches that governments

may adopt to improve road safety, the Ministry is keenly aware that regulatory systems can be undermined when penalties fail to provide adequate punitive and deterrent value.

The adjustment of fines is therefore not an isolated measure, but a deliberate policy instrument aimed at reinforcing respect for the law, strengthening accountability and discouraging behaviours that place road users at risk. The primary objective remains the reduction of traffic violations, serious injuries and fatalities, and the promotion of a safer and more responsible road culture.

In this context, the increase in fines complements a range of ongoing national road safety initiatives being pursued by the Ministry. These include: The improved deployment and maintenance of traffic signs and road safety infrastructure; sustained public education and awareness campaigns; the expansion and strategic utilization of traffic wardens; amendments to relevant legislation to address emerging risks; the decentralization of vehicle inspection stations to improve compliance; the empowerment and modernization of transport officer functions; the regulation and standardization of driving schools; and the strengthening of inspection licensing regimes. Collectively, these measures are intended to operate as an integrated framework, combining enforcement, prevention, education and institutional reform to deliver lasting improvements in road safety.

Part (ii) to the question: The Ministry continues to review and actively take steps to ensure the manpower, institutional capability, and resources required to support effective enforcement of the revised penalties and a wider road safety agenda. At present, through the combined efforts of the transport officers and traffic wardens, supported by established enforcement partners, the Ministry is satisfied that the institutional arrangements and operational resources are, at this

time, adequate to support enforcement objectives. Ongoing assessments are being conducted to ensure the staffing levels, deployment strategies and operational tools remain aligned with service demands and enforcement priorities.

At the same time, the Ministry emphasizes that capacity building is an ongoing process. Performance indicators, service data and compliance trends are continuously changing and being monitored to identify gaps, pressures and emerging needs. Where such indicators suggest the requirement for additional personnel, training, technology or infrastructure, the Ministry reconfirms its commitment to securing an expanse in the necessary resources. This adaptive approach is intended to ensure that enforcement remains effective, credible and responsive, thereby supporting the broader goal of sustained improvements in national road safety.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping.*]

Sen. Dr. Attzs: Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you, Minister, for that comprehensive report. I look forward to seeing the policy framework as it unfolds.

Services at Licensing Offices

(Measures to Improve)

33. Sen. Dr. Marlene Attzs asked the hon. Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation:

Given the heightened demand for services at the Licensing Offices and authorised vehicle inspection stations, can the Minister indicate whether:

- (i) measures are being implemented to strengthen internal controls, oversight mechanisms, and accountability systems at the Licensing Offices and authorised vehicle inspection stations to minimise corrupt practices and illegal activities; and

- (ii) specific accommodations are in place for elderly and differently abled drivers seeking to comply with the law, particularly in relation to vehicle inspections and renewal services?

Mr. President: The hon. Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation (Sen. The Hon. Eli Zakour):

Thank you, Mr. President. Part (i): The Ministry acknowledges the heightened demand at license offices and authorized vehicle inspection stations, and confirms that measures are being actively implemented to strengthen internal controls, oversight mechanisms and accountability systems in order to minimize opportunities for corrupt practices and illegal activities.

These measures include: Continuous reviews of operational procedures, the standardization of inspection on licensing processes, and the expansion of supervisory and audit functions to ensure closer monitoring of transactions, decision-making and service delivery. Emphasis is being placed on segregation of duties, clear documentation requirements, and improved reporting structure to reinforce transparency and institutional integrity.

The Ministry is advancing the use of electronic systems and data-driven monitoring to enhance traceability, detect irregular patterns and support timely management interventions. These systems allow for better oversight of inspections, testing outcomes and licensing activities, while strengthening accountability for officers and authorized facilities.

The Ministry also continues to work closely with management and relevant enforcement oversight bodies to ensure that breaches of procurement are properly investigated, and that disciplinary and legal consequences are applied where necessary, thereby reinforcing public confidence in the regulatory framework.

2.00 p.m.

Part Two: Specific accommodations are in place to ensure that elderly and differently-abled drivers are supported in complying with the law, especially in relation to vehicle inspections and renewal of driving permits. Systems have been implemented to identify and assist elderly persons where challenges may exist, allowing for priority service to reduce waiting times and physical strain. In addition, designated differently-able parking is available at licensing facilities to improve accessibility and ease of movement.

Further, measures include the decentralization of inspection services to bring them closer to communities, thereby, reducing travel distance and congestion at central offices. Where necessary, staff are sensitized to provide guidance assistance, flexible processing and reasonable accommodations during inspections and renewal transactions. Collectively, these initiatives are intended to promote inclusivity, dignity and equal access, while ensuring that drivers are able to meet their legal obligations in a fair and supportive environment.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. M. Attzs: Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you to the hon. Minister. I know that the population is quite pleased to hear that we have all of these arrangements in place, particularly for elderly and differently-abled.

**Use of Windscreen-mounted Devices While Driving
(Measures to Address)**

34. Sen. Dr. Marlene Attzs asked the hon. Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation:

Can the Minister indicate whether the Government is considering additional regulatory or enforcement measures to address the growing use of windscreen-mounted devices for video calls, recording, or live streaming

while driving, which may distract drivers and impair visibility and road safety?

The Hon. Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation (Sen. The Hon. Eli Zakour): Mr. President, the Ministry is deeply concerned about the increasing use of mobile and windscreen-mounted devices for video calls, recording and live streaming while driving, as these practices have the potential to distract drivers of obstruct visibility and significantly compromise road safety. While technology continues to evolve, the fundamental obligation of a driver to maintain full control of a vehicle and undivided attention to the road remains unchanged.

The Ministry is therefore, closely monitoring the growing trends in mobile and peripheral devices, particularly, those that may be used in ways that undermine the intent and effectiveness of existing driving laws. This review is aimed at determining whether additional regulatory provisions, clear definitions or strengthening enforcement mechanisms, are required to adequately address emerging forms of distracted driving. The overarching objective remains that the law be responsive to technological change while preserving the paramount goal of protecting lives and promoting safer routes. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. M. Attzs: Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you, Minister, once again, for your comprehensive responses. Thank you.

Mr. President: Yes, let us continue.

COPYRIGHT (AMDT.) BILL 2026

Mr. President: The hon. Minister of Land and Legal Affairs. **Hon. Senators:** [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Land and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (Hon. Saddam Hosein): Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I beg to move:

That a Bill entitled an Act to amend the Copyright Act, Chap. 82:80 to extend the duration of the term of protection for copyright and neighbouring rights for authors, performers and producers of sound recordings; to extend the duration of the term of protection for moral rights for authors and performers; and to provide for related matters, be now read a second time.

Mr. President, it is quite an honour to join my colleagues in this Chamber. I left here in 2020 and the people of Barataria/San Juan insisted that I stay with them for another five years.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Subsequently, Mr. President, the Ministry of Land and Legal Affairs was consolidated into one Ministry by the hon. Prime Minister, and within that Ministry's portfolio, it has with it the Intellectual Property Office, and that is why we find ourselves here today to deal with this amendment to the Copyright Act. Mr. President, this particular matter engaged the attention of the major stakeholders in the industry, and today, I want to acknowledge two individuals who are joining us right now in the public gallery. One, Levi Mayers, the President of the Copyright Music Organization of Trinidad and Tobago, and Mr. Asten Isaac, the President of the Trinidad and Tobago Copyright Collection Organization.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Mr. President, they may have had some differences some time ago, but under the watchful eye of the Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property

office, they are now seated next to each other in the public gallery in this very honourable place.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: I also want to express some deep sympathy for my colleague, Sen. Baig, who called me this morning expressing that he wants to be here, but I told him where he is we cannot hear him today, but we will acknowledge him.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: So, I wish Sen. Baig a speedy recovery, Mr. President, and that he could join us once more.

This Bill is opportune as we are now in the Carnival season, because it deals with those persons in our society who have more talent than us, Mr. President. They can perform. They can sing. They can write. his Bill, is to lend that protection to those individuals. I hope that I come to the Senate today with what we will consider as non-contentious business. So, Mr. President, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its commitment to further strengthening the national intellectual property landscape of Trinidad and Tobago, through this amendment of the Copyright Act. These amendments constitute part of Trinidad and Tobago's Intellectual Properties Office, evolving and robust legislative agenda which seeks to ensure that our IP laws respond to the needs of our creators, inventors, innovators in a digital economy.

Mr. President, the participation of our Government and IP legislative reform is not new. As early as 1996, several IP Bills were piloted by one, the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Senior Counsel—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—in her then capacity as the Minister of Legal Affairs. According to *Hansard* reports, these debates occurred on the 9th of July 1996 and the 5th of

August 1996, concerning IP legislation and such reform was further addressed on the 11th of April, 2000 through the Miscellaneous (Amdt.) Bill, in 2000.

This historical commitment demonstrates our recognition of IP, as a driver of creativity, innovation, trade and economic development. As such, the introduction of this suite of IP laws brought Trinidad and Tobago into conformity with international standards, including the World Trade Organization's agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights or TRIPS. These Acts cumulatively modernize our IP system and provided comprehensive statutory protection for key aspects of IP. They continue to influence the legislative agenda, which now focuses on amending the copyright law to reflect contemporary realities.

In this respect, the Copyright (Amdt.) Bill, 2026, must be understood within the broader context of copyright reform. During consultations with stakeholders, from the private and public sectors, which inform the early amendments to the Copyright Act to incorporate the Marrakesh Treaty, to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually-impaired or otherwise print disabled, and the Beijing Treaty on Audio Visual Performances. Further reform was requested to specifically extend the duration of copyright and neighbouring rights protection.

The Copyright Music Organization of Trinidad and Tobago, COTT, proposed an extension of the term of protection, which was widely supported by stakeholders. This sentiment was also echoed by international stakeholders, such as the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, and forms the basis of the Bill, which is presently before us. IFPI supported this request and was helpful in providing the duration of protection across multiple jurisdictions, demonstrating that a 70-year term has become the prevailing global standard. This information,

together with the data provided by Mr. Mayers, was useful in the preparation of the policy to ensure evidence-based decision making.

Following this, the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Council, in close collaboration with the TTIPO, prepared the pertinent legislative amendments, which were reviewed by the Copyright Law Division of the World Intellectual Property Organization to confirm their conformity with international treaties and norms. Particular attention was paid to the computation of time for copyright duration, ensuring clarity and legal certainty in determining when protection begins and ends. Mr. President, the computation of time is closely related to the question of the public domain. According to WIPO,

“The public domain is generally defined as encompassing intellectual elements that are not protected by copyright or whose protection has lapsed, due to the expiration of the duration for protection.”

Whilst the public domain plays a critical role in education, research, innovation and cultural development, this Bill prioritizes clarity in the duration to avoid premature entry into the public domain, which can undermine the economic rights of creators and distort competition. An IFPI consultant notes that sound recordings for iconic catalogues of works such as *Jean and Dinah* would have already entered the public domain. This Bill therefore, seeks to strike an appropriate balance between protecting creators and ensuring eventual public access.

Additionally, the Government recognizes, that IP protection must further be supported by mechanisms for valuation and commercialization. In this regard, the intellectual property valuation guidelines, developed through an initiative involving the Inter-American Development Bank, the UWI, St. Augustine Centre for Innovation, Entrepreneurship, TTIPO and stakeholders such as, First Citizens

Bank are particularly significant. These guidelines provide a structured approach to valuing IP assets. For instance, I note our Government's support through the Ministry of Culture for our legendary Calypsonian, Timothy Watkins, also known as the Baron.

This Bill, does go to the heart of ensuring that our creatives can recoup compensation, for the extended duration of protection of their works, through valuation of their IP to access financing and investment. The relevance of this Bill, is further underscored by the transformation of the music industry. Previously, revenue was generated through physical formats such as vinyl records and compact discs, CDs. However, today, digital platforms are prevalent and streaming services such as Spotify, iTunes, Amazon Music, among others, allow Trinidad and Tobago music to reach global audiences instantly, but also require longer protection periods to ensure meaningful returns over time.

This Bill ensures that our copyright framework keeps pace with technological shifts. Our artistes in their golden years will now enjoy longer periods of protection, such as our legendary Tobagonian and the Calypso Queen of the World, Calypso Rose. Mr. President, this Bill, also sits alongside other elements of the Government's IP agenda. In this regard, we continue to support the work of the TTIPO, and recognize its initiatives to support the creative ecosystem through WIPO's creative economy data model. It is a comprehensive measurement instrument, designed to evaluate Trinidad and Tobago's ecosystem by considering the institutional environment in which creative output is produced—resources required for creative production and creative outputs that demonstrate impact.

The Government remains firmly committed to development and protection of IP, as a strategic tool for economic growth, innovation and competitiveness, and

this commitment extends to the protection of geographical indications and certification marks. GIs, are signs used on products that have specific geographical origin and possess qualities or reputation, data to data origin, while certification marks are signs indicating that goods or services, have been certified by an independent body in relation to one or more characteristics.

Mr. President, it is my pleasure to inform this honourable Senate that before I came here, the Ministry of Land and Legal Affairs would have, in fact, launched and unveiled, together with the Cocoa Development Company, the certification mark for Trinidad and Tobago Trinitario Cocoa Company.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: An initiative that we spearheaded in the Ministry. We started it last year May, and today, we have delivered. Promise made, promise kept, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

2.15 p.m.

Hon. S. Hosein: Mr. President, I also wish to highlight the success of the workshop on “Enabling Access: Unlocking the Potential of the Marrakesh Treaty - Regional Workshop for Selected Caribbean Countries”, which was held on the 27th of November, 2025. This workshop was skillfully organized by WIPO in cooperation with the TTIPO and NALIS. It was well attended by heads and representatives of various IP offices and provided the framework for contribution to the development of a regional approach for accessible book production and exchange, with a focus on supporting secondary school students through accessible textbooks and exam materials.

So, Mr. President, taken as a whole, the Bill will support fair remuneration and further stimulate innovation through the creative industries. It will also

contribute to cultural preservation, economic growth and stability, as well as alignment with international standards, while striking a balance under copyright law. This Bill, although few in clauses, is wide in scope and of significant national importance. This Bill is born out of the need to recalibrate our legal framework so that it resonates with the realities of today's creative economy.

As artistic expression continues to evolve in form, reach and commercial significance, the safeguards that uphold it must evolve in tandem. The legislation, therefore, redefines the temporal boundaries of protection, expanding the lifespan of copyright and neighbouring rights from 50 years to 70 years. In so doing, it casts a wider and longer shield over the fruits of creative labour. Simply put, the main clauses such as clauses 3, 4 and 5, which seek to amend sections 19, 19A and 21(4) of the parent Act, change "fifty" to "seventy" in the extension of the term of "copyright", "neighbouring rights" and "moral rights".

Mr. President, allow me to go through the clauses of the Bill. Clause 3 of the Bill would amend section 19 of the Copyright Act to extend copyright protection for authors from the current term of 50 years after the death of the author to 70 years. In a case of joint authorship, the term is calculated from the death of the last surviving author. A familiar example is where a lyricist and a composer collaborate to create a single song intended to be exploited as one musical work. Protection therefore endures until 70 years after the death of the last surviving author, thereby ensuring that the joint creative effort is fully safeguarded.

Furthermore, clause 3 also seeks to extend the protection for "moral rights" for authors for the same period of 70 years. "Moral rights" preserve the personal and reputational connection between a creator and their work, including the right to be identified as the author and the right to object to derogatory treatment. For example, an author may object to alterations that distort the meaning or integrity of

a literary work, even where the economic rights have been licensed or assigned.

Clause 4, Mr. President, would amend section 19A of the Act to extend the duration of moral rights for performers from the current 50 years to 70 years. Under the amendment:

Those “...rights endure until the end of a period of seventy years computed from the end of the...”—calendar—“...year in which the performance was fixed, or...”—where the performance—“...was...not fixed, from the end of the year in which the performance occurred.”

This ensures that a performer’s moral interest in his or her performance remains protected for a longer period, thus reflecting the enduring personal connection between performers and their performances.

I take a moment to explain what “fixed” means. According to WIPO, “fixed” refers to:

“...fixed in a tangible form.”

“Fixation” may mean, for example, that the work is written on paper, stored on a disc, painted on canvas, or recorded on tape. For example, a work of choreography would only be protected once the movements were written down, in dance notation, or recorded on videotape, or more modern formats.

Likewise, clause 5 of the Bill proposes to amend section 21(4) of the parent Act to extend the duration of neighbouring rights’ protection for performers from 50 years to 70 years. As amended, those neighbouring rights will subsist until the end of a period of 70 years computed from the end of the year in which the performance was fixed, or where the performance was not fixed, from the end of the year in which the performance occurred.

“Neighbouring rights” arise when a person contributes creatively to a work without being its author, such as a singer who performs a musical composition

written by another, and the extension ensures that performers are also able to benefit from and control the exploitation of their performances over a longer period. By way of illustration, a singer who performs a calypso composition written by another enjoys neighbouring rights in that performance, separate and distinct from the composer's copyright.

Clause 6 of the Bill seeks to amend section 22(2) of the principal Act to extend the duration of neighbouring rights' protection for producers of sound recordings from 50 years to 70 years. Under the amendment, protection endures until the end of 70 years from the year in which the sound recording was published, or where the sound recording has not been published from the end of the year in which it was fixed. This recognizes the significant financial, technical and organizational investment required to produce and distribute sound recordings and allows producers to better leverage those investments over time.

Clause 7 of the Bill would amend section 23(4) of the parent Act to extend the duration of neighbouring rights relating to equitable remuneration for performers and producers of sound recordings. The amendment provides that where:

“...a sound recording is published for commercial purposes, used for broadcasting or public communication, or publicly performed...”—the right to equitable remuneration subsists—“...for seventy years...from the end of the year in which the sound recording was published.”

Where—“...the sound recording is not published, the protection...”—runs—“...from the...fixation...until the end of a period of seventy years computed from the end of the year in which the sound recording was fixed.”

Clause 8 of the Bill would amend section 24(2) of the Act to clarify the calculation of the duration of the rights conferred under that section and to ensure

consistency with the updated language of the amendments introduced by this Bill. Section 24 of the Act sets out the exclusive neighbouring rights of broadcasting organizations, including the rights to authorize or prohibit the rebroadcasting of a broadcast, its communication to the public, its fixation, and the reproduction of any such fixation. The amendment to this section does not alter the substantive scope of those rights or the existing 50-year term of protection. Instead, it clarifies the language, describing the method by which the term is calculated. The amended language expresses the same legal effect in clearer terms, providing that protection subsists for a period of 50 years computed from the end of the year in which the broadcast first takes place, thereby improving interpretive certainty and consistency across the Act as amended.

Mr. President, may I ask what time do I end?

Mr. President: I think you end at 2.48.

Hon. S. Hosein: 2.48?

Mr. President: Yes.

Hon. S. Hosein: In Trinidad and Tobago, the Copyright Act, as amended by Act No. 18 of 2000, Act No. 5 of 2008 and Act No. 14 of 2020, provides for the minimum duration of the term of copyright protection for authors and performers consistent with various treaties, which are administered by WIPO. The Copyright Act is in conformity with the provisions of the international legislative framework, governing the duration of the term of copyright protection. This means that contracting parties, such as Trinidad and Tobago, are obliged to offer copyright holders the minimum protection provided in the treaties and conventions. This means the increased protection is left to the discretion of the contracting party, which will apply their national laws and traditions. If contracting parties wish to be more favourable towards the copyright holders, they can.

The treaties and conventions facilitate a great amount of discretion to contracting parties which can be implemented accordingly. Examples include the following. Under the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the general rule is that protection must be granted until the expiration of the 50th year after the author's death. There are, however, exceptions to this general rule.

In the case of "anonymous" or "pseudoanonymous" works, the term of protection expires 50 years after the work has been lawfully made available to the public, except in the case of a pseudonym. It leaves no doubt as to the author's identify or if the author discloses his or her identity during that period. In the latter case, the general rule applies. In the case of audio-visual works, the minimum term of protection is 50 years after the making available of the work to public release, or failing such an event from the creation of the work. In the case of works of applied art and photographic works, the minimum term is 25 years from the creation of the work.

Article 14 of the TRIPS Agreement provides that the term of protection for performers and producers of phonograms shall last at least until the end of a period of 50 years computed from the end of the calendar year in which the fixation was made or the performance took place. Article 17 of the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty provides that the term of protection to be granted to performers and producers of phonograms must be at least 50 years. The WIPO Copyright Treaty also provides that the term of protection must be at least 50 years for any kind of work.

Article 14 of the International Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organisations, or the Rome Convention, provides that protection must last at least until the end of a 20-year

period computed from the end of the year in which:

- “(a) the fixation was made-for phonograms and for performances incorporated therein;
- (b) the performance took place for performances not incorporated in phonograms;
- (c) the broadcast took place...”

Mr. President, I now move to the computation of time. With regard to the terms of these rights, for instance, in Article 5 of WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, and Article 5 of the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances, both treaties use the same formulation, 50 years computed from the end of the year in which the performance was fixed. This was also the formulation used in Article 14 of the Rome Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations and Article 14.5 of the Agreement of Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights with respect to performers' economic rights.

Mr. President, I move to other comparative jurisdictions. Under the Copyright Act, authors are given the minimum copyright protection stipulated. On the international landscape, several jurisdictions have increased the term of protection to the author's life plus 70 after the author's death. This appears to be the new global standard for the duration of copyright protection. The United States of America and Europe are critical markets for copyright-protected works created by Trinidad and Tobago authors. Most publishers and authors consider it the measure of success to seek and obtain publishing contracts in those markets. They have the extended terms.

The retention of the current 50-year term of protection for sound recordings will continue to subject right holders to unfair competition in a fast evolving digital

ecosystem, especially in light of the fact that a 70-year term of protection has become the new standard across the globe with at least 69 countries providing a term of protection of sound recordings of 70 years or more, including Jamaica, the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Singapore, and the European Union. Mr. President, I am bold enough to say that I think we have the sweetest music in the world.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: The reason for the extension of the term in the European Union was concisely explained in an article by *Intellectual Property Watch*:

Performers often start their careers young and the 50th term means that many are not protected for their entire lifetimes and may face an economic gap later in life.

The EU Council of Ministers said:

The EU directives on copyright and related rights therefore often provide higher protection than is provided for in the international treaties and agreements.

For this reason, the Council stated that:

The term should be lengthened from 50 years to 70 years, and under Directive 2006-116-EC on the terms of protection of copyright and certain related rights, performers and record producers have 50 years protection. The directive was amended by Directive 2011/77/EU, which extended the rights of performers and phonogram producers of music recordings from 50 to 70 years.

According to the World Health Organization's official estimate, updated on the 2nd August, 2024, the life expectancy in Trinidad and Tobago is 71.7 years, and while there has been an increase in life expectancy since the creation of these

rights under the international framework, the neighbouring rights' protection term has not changed. This means that the producers of sound recordings and performers may not be able to benefit from their work during the entirety of their lifetimes.

2.30 p.m.

The United States is instructive. In October 1998, the US Congress passed the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act, sometimes called the “Mickey Mouse Protection Act”, which extended US copyright by 20 years for works of individual authorship. The term became life of the author and 70 years. That means the Disney Company’s Mickey Mouse copyright benefited from the extension, retroactively, in the US, in that sense, that it applied to existing copyrighted works, even though the author had long passed by the time the law was passed.

In this Bill Mr. President, the law does not revive works that have already expired and entered the public domain. The Bill does not operate retroactively. Real-life examples, Mr. President. Taken together, these amending provisions protect creativity encourage investment and support long-term cultural development.

According to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry’s Consultant, Mr. Miles, in his letter dated the 23rd of October, 2020, the following information was presented:

1. “Jean and Dinah”—

I wish that I could sing it to you, Mr. President, but I do not have that talent.

—1956—

My colleague, Sen. Swaratsingh, is singing.

—composed by Slinger Francisco, performed by Sparrow, sound recording.

The author is alive. The copyright will be protected for the author's life plus up to 50 years after the author's death. The sound recording is 70 years old. At 50 years old in 2006, the sound recording went into the public domain on the 1st of January, 2007. The legislation is therefore urgent to prevent other works from going into the public domain, meaning it becomes freely available for all of us to use.

"Tempo", 1976, the author died in 1977, composed by the Maestro. The copyright will be protected for 50 years after the author's death. That is up to 2027; thereafter, it will go into the public domain. The sound recording is 50 years old in 2026. At 50 years after publication and being recorded, it will go into the public domain on the 1st of January, 2027. This legislation, therefore, will prevent this iconic work from going into the public domain.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And, Mr. President, there are so many other examples, since every single author who is alive today or who has passed less than 50 years ago, will benefit from this legislation. This includes examples such as the estate of Richard "Nappy" Mayers and his timeless catalogue. And his son is here with us today, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Extending the duration of protection for copyright and neighbouring rights for authors, including works of joint authorship, performers and producers of sound recordings, as well as extending the duration of protection for authors' and performers' moral rights, is expected to deliver several important benefits.

One: Strengthening international competitiveness in the creative economy. Longer terms of protection will place Trinidad and Tobago's authors, artistes and

producers in a stronger position to compete internationally, particularly within digital markets.

As noted in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Creative Economy Report 2008, the creative industry is operating at the intersection of creativity, culture, economics and technology, and has the capacity to generate employment income and export earnings while advancing cultural diversity, social inclusion and human development.

In the absence of effective legal protection, creators are unable to control or monetize the use of their works, diminishing incentives to invest in creative activity. Intellectual property law, therefore, plays a critical role by conferring time-limited exclusive rights.

Two: Ensuring equitable compensation for creators. Longer terms of protection help to ensure that authors and performers are able to benefit economically from their works over the course of their lives.

Three: Reinforcing the objectives of copyright protection by extending the term of protection, copyright law more effectively fulfils its primary purpose of encouraging the creation, dissemination and continued investment in new works.

Four: Safeguarding cultural heritage. Enhanced protection will contribute to the preservation, development and continued exploitation of Trinidad and Tobago's cultural expressions and creative output.

Five: No negative impact on consumers. Extending the duration of copyright and neighbouring rights protection does not result in increased prices for consumers.

Six: Encourage both domestic and foreign investment in the creative sector. It will expand opportunities for right holders to generate sustained economic returns from their work.

WIPO Studies on the Economic Contribution of the Copyright Industries showed that in many countries, the copyright industries have made a significant contribution to the GDP and employment. In some countries such as Australia, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America, the contribution to the GDP is over 10 per cent; 10 per cent. In many countries, five per cent to seven per cent of the work force is employed in the creative industries sector.

In the study conducted by Dr. Vanus James, entitled:

“The Economic Contribution of Copyright-Based Industries in Trinidad and Tobago”

—Dr. James notes that, and I quote:

“...copyright-based industries contributed 4.8% of the GDP and 5% of all jobs in 2011...”

According to Dr. James:

“The evidence suggests that the copyright sector of Trinidad and Tobago can thrive and grow in a competitive global environment...”

And given the contribution which copyright industries make toward our GDP, increasing the term of protection is expected to stimulate the copyright industry in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. President.

The retention of the 50-year term of protection will disincentivize foreign companies, as well as local companies, from investing in new artistes and new music. This undermines the very core purpose of copyright law, which is to incentivize the creation and dissemination of new works.

Where recordings fall out of copyright protection, they cease to generate income for right holders, meaning the revenues available for reinvestment in new artistes and repertoire are reduced. This negatively affects both society and the economy.

A 70-year term of protection will provide for a longer potential economic life of a sound recording. In turn, this will increase investments while providing recording artists in Trinidad and Tobago with the security of knowing that their recordings have full potential to generate income during their lifetime.

Further, the 70-year term of protection will incentivize record producers to continue to offer recordings to local consumers in updated and restored formats as they are developed, therefore, supporting the development of the music industry in Trinidad and Tobago.

The extension of the term of protection will ensure that iconic music catalogues in Trinidad and Tobago, inclusive of calypso music, chutney, soca and steelpan that are set to fall out of copyright protection, will continue to economically benefit right holders.

The process of expiration of the term of copyright protection of all genres of sounds and sound recordings into the public domain is ongoing.

According to the IFPI, the effects of term extension show that the extension of the term of protection does not have an impact on consumer pricing, as I said, for example, when music pricing models in the new digital age have evolved over time, that are based on a monthly fee for unlimited access. Many of us, I think, use Apple Music, Spotify and so on. This means that consumers are paying to access recordings that are protected by copyright, as well as recordings that are not.

The term of extension ensures that the relevant right holders are remunerated by the digital service providers for those uses that will not affect the price paid by the consumer. The extension of the term of protection therefore, has obvious advantages of stimulating growth in the music sector and ensuring creators are paid for their work without impeding the use of their work.

When we speak of income and remuneration collective management

organizations that administer IP rights for the works of our creators, many of these CMOs have reciprocal agreements to represent foreign repertoire and also represent local repertoire based on their respective membership. Authors will also have the power to leverage their work through licensing or, alternatively, they may even have to sell their catalogues through assignments.

As I mentioned prior, there are valuation guidelines for IP, and we hope to do work with the TTIPO and other agencies on furthering this objective.

And, Mr. President, while we are in this time, it is an opportune time, as I said, to bring this Bill as we are in the height of the Carnival season. And I must commend my Cabinet colleague, Minister Benjamin, on, I think, what is one of the most organized—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—fun, effective, Carnival seasons. I mean, “de place just full ah vibes”, Mr. President.

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

Hon. S. Hosein: People are enjoying the Flava. It is full of flavour in the Queen’s Park Savannah. I was there one night, Mr. President. The John Cupid Village; it was a success. Pan semis and Pan on D’ Greens, again, a big success, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And we look forward to hosting “the greatest show on earth” under a UNC government.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Mr. President, this Bill is long-awaited, as daily, more and more work will enter the public domain, once left unaddressed. This is also just the beginning of a series of efforts that this administration seeks for the upliftment of

the creative ecosystem. Mr. President, this Bill signifies another milestone in a longstanding journey by the Government to recognize, protect and uplift the contribution of our creative industries. And Mr. President, with these few words, I say this Bill is respectfully yours, and I beg to move.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Sen. Faris Al-Rawi.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Faris Al-Rawi SC: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, this Bill comes at a very important time in the national landscape of Trinidad and Tobago. The Bill before us is an amendment to the Copyright Act, and it proposes, in eight short clauses, critically important reforms. It really is representative of a continuation of work and development over many years, and it allows for a harmonization of laws across the globe, without which, Trinidad and Tobago would be “shunned”. We would be denying ourselves international participation, which I will come to a little bit later.

The context of the Bill really offers something which is not very new in respect of one aspect, and then challenges us to have a novel way of thought in respect of what we can possibly do otherwise in terms of our economic development.

I had the pleasure, Mr. President, of moving significant amendments to the Copyright Act by Act No. 14 of 2020. In Act No. 14 of 2020, we introduced the Marrakesh Treaty obligations. In short, providing by way of example, over half a million books to visually impaired and print disabled persons in this country.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC: We introduced the operative terms of the Beijing Convention

out of 2012, coming forward, to ensure that the neighbouring rights enjoyed by performers, particularly in the audio-visual works that were fixed, were given broad participation and introduced moral rights for them as well, and we introduced technological protection from devices that could breach IP, in terms of our positioning. Now, that was all done—skipped over by my learned friend this afternoon—because it represents a continuity of requirements on our part.

Today, in one part of the Bill, in clauses 3 and 4, we are extending the copyright in respect of life plus 70. We are moving from life plus 50 to life plus 70. Those are called *post mortem auctoris* rights, meaning rights which survive your death.

2.45 p.m.

Contrary to what my learned friend has said, it is not a new concept. In fact, it was quite interesting to remind myself that copyright existed since the Statute of Anne, where you had 14 years copyright in your lifetime, and if you are still alive, you got a further 14 years. That was way back in 1710. In fact, the concept of life plus 50, which my learned friend reflected upon, perhaps a little inaccurately, has been around since 1908 and 1906 in the United States. It was, in fact, Mark Twain, known by his real name, Samuel Clemens, who testified to Congress as to the importance of life plus 50 for copyright protection. His philosophy then grounded in four points which are relevant today, which I will come to in short while. But the movement in life plus 50 was anchored for us in the Berne Convention, and if I recall that was in 1908, and that saw us move in 1965, in Germany, to life plus 70. So this is not a new concept created by the world all of a sudden. Since 1965, we have had life plus 70, but that became a reality in 1993, with the European Union's directive for harmonization.

In 1998, the British introduced their copyright laws, but in the United States

of America, they have enjoyed life plus 50 certainly for well over a century and more. Now, those are in relation to a certain category of rights. Life plus 70, which we are moving to in amending the law, these apply to copyright. And under our legislation, one needs to turn to section 5 of the Copyright Act.

“Copyright is a property right which subsists in literary and artistic works that are original intellectual creations in the literary and artistic domain...”

The second part of our Bill deals with the neighbouring rights, and the neighbouring rights for the listening public are to be found in a different section of the Copyright Act, that is in Part V, where we deal protection of performers, producers, sound recordings and broadcasting organizations. We amended that in 2020, to ensure that we had audio-visual fixation being dealt with. But these neighbouring rights in this Bill here today, we are moving from 50 years to 70 years. Other jurisdictions, in particular in the European Union and the United States of America, in the European Union, it is at 70 years, since in or around 2011, when the directive was adopted and then harmonized, but in the United States of America, it went to 95 years and that is in recognition of the real aim of this Bill.

How does one monopolize rights with a legitimate aim, allow certain exceptions, as we have in our Copyright Act? You could look at sections 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the Copyright Act, where you have exceptions to copyright ownership. You have exceptions to ideas, but the original works are protected, artistic works, literary works, and then neighbouring rights, the things around actors and performers and films, et cetera. We are looking at a basket of rights and the question is, how do you monopolize rights to allow for creation to allow for property to prosper? Because, Mr. President, make no mistake, this Bill really concerns the economic prosperity of artistes.

If we take the line that my learned friend offered, the Minister in piloting this Bill, it was 49 years ago that Bob Marley sang “Redemption Song”, very applicable today as we think of the difficulties that our society is navigating. We have the classic examples of “Jean and Dinah”. We have David Rudder in 1986, “The Hammer”, “Too Young to Soca” by Machel Montano in 1986, “Now is the Time” by Calypso for Africa, “Pan in A Minor” by Lord Kitchener, all in 1986. But when you look to the repertoire of what we have on the neighbouring rights side, we do agree that there is a legitimate aim in immediately moving from 50 years to 70 years for that.

Now, there is a live debate as to who is really the beneficiary of this. Is it really the performer, in the case of the neighbouring rights? Is it the author? Because these economic benefits that are associated with copyright for the author going to life plus 70, neighbouring rights going to 70 years, they are the difference between make or break, and I am very pleased to see the CMOs, the collective management organizations, here with us. I would like to publicly salute the Controller of Intellectual Property, Mr. Regan Asgarali SC—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC:—for the excellent work that he has given to Trinidad and Tobago; his predecessor, Mazina Kadir; others; Mr. Richard Aching, who was there at that office. That office, the Intellectual Property Office, has anchored a critical negotiation of collective management rights which are associated with this. Because if you want to take avail of the provisions in this Bill and you want to have some money in your pocket, hard to come by in Trinidad and Tobago, which I will come to in a little while, you have to have a properly functioning collective management organization structure to work with this law. If you do not, you will find that you have given the baby with the bath water, thrown it out, thrown the

baby out, thrown away life. And it is because we have had a dedicated presence, down to writing, I am sure the speech of the hon. Minister today, in good form, to reflect upon all of the elements that we must have in this debate. It is really the backbone of the public service of this country that has done yeoman service—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC:—for us all, and Mr. President, and I wish to publicly salute them because without fear of favour for successive governments, and I really do salute them, including recently returned member of the CPC’s department, who I see in the Public Gallery, who was on loan up the islands for a few years, Mr. Ryan Awai, who I know has a penchant and a privilege for drafting intellectual property laws.

Mr. President, if we look at how the exploitation of these rights are in a positive way, how does one make money off of these rights, it really is important to reflect upon the fact that there are four points to be gleaned, and again, allow me to say to the nation, everybody ought to go on the website of the Intellectual Property Office. In their publicly available documents, you will find very interesting articles called “Reimagining Copyright’s Duration” by Rebecca Giblin; you will find the “EU Extends Copyright Protection From 50 to 70 Year”, an article by Dugie Standeford; you will find the Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property Office’s reflections, coming out of their strategy in 2013, and more particularly, the Cabinet Notes of November 01, 2024, which anchored our positions. But inside of there, you will see a host of tools available.

You will see, for instance, the reforms that I had the pleasure of introducing: The online filing system using the WIPO mechanisms. You will see online payment systems. You will know, and if I may say so, that under the last Government, Trinidad and Tobago acceded to and deposited and activated the

largest number of international treaties in the history of our country's IPO realm. And therefore, I am very pleased to see this work come forward. It has been long in gestation. It is nothing novel in the sense of it having existed in the European Union, and in the United States of America, and in other conventions and treaties, but it is timely as it was being born. Why is it timely?

If we look to the copyrights that we are extending and we look to the neighbouring rights, in particular, that clauses 5, 6, 7 and 8 deal with, we are compelled to go to the revenue of Trinidad and Tobago. When we look to the published revenue of Trinidad and Tobago, and we note, for instance, that revenue from intellectual properties are not necessarily disaggregated in the way that it can because it is enjoyed by the private sector, but from the private sector, taxation and other issues come, we have to be careful that our economy is, in the shortfall that is happening right now, a shortfall in excise duties, be it the several hundred percent increases in the taxation of bar owners, of gaming licences, or spirits and alcohol, when you look to that and you look to the place of intellectual property in meeting that shortfall, it becomes critical.

My friend, the hon. Minister, said something which took me aback a little while ago. He stopped to pause to celebrate the Minister of Culture and Community, Michelle Benjamin, saying that the vibes are real and this is the best Carnival possible. Well, I had to "rock back" when I am looking at the Bill on that. Because where are collective management organizations gaining revenue from under these provisions of these clauses, when you look to the Bill in point? They are earning it in bars. If you look to equitable relief, equitable contribution under the Copyright Act, if you are going use a song in a broadcast or in a performance, you have an equitable contribution, it goes 50 per cent to the producer, 50 per cent to the artiste under our laws. But, Mr. President, when you

look to the daily *Express* and you look to the front page of the daily *Express* on Friday, January 30th, it says:

“Owners blame alcohol, gaming tax hikes as drinking establishments close across T&T”

Headline is:

“Bars Go Bust”

A whole article on:

“Bars shut...”—down—“...amid taxes hike”

And when I am looking to the Bill in particular—

Sen. Allahar: Mr. President, 46(1), please.

Mr. President: Yeah. Yeah. Overruled, continue.

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC: Thank you.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC: So when we look to the Bill itself, and the legitimate aim of the Bill in extending copyright and neighbouring rights, where it is going to be earned is critical. Collective management organizations looking for equitable contribution in copyright law, as I welcome the Leader of Government Business to the debate, has to be earned in a place. What we do know is that at least 150 bars will no longer be doing that. When we look to the provisions of neighbouring rights, as we seek to entrench them to 70 years now, and we look to places like the Carnival artistes and bands that will have to pay copyright contributions to collective management organizations like COTT, or in equitable contributions if a court says so, one has to take notice of Monday, February 02, 2026:

“Govt to tax Carnival artistes”

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC: So when the hon. Minister comes to us and says, “Vibes in

Trinidad.” “I doh know” what vibes he is talking to because this is, most respectfully, the most subdued Carnival that I have seen, perhaps equal to COVID.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC: The gyms are empty, the bars are empty, the events are at “buss” point, and therefore, this Bill is very timely. Thank the Lord it was prepared long before this Government came into office. But the point is that the economy is under serious attack, and we need to make sure that there is a viable alternative in law.

Now, when we look to the four aims of this legislation, in looking at its proportionality, in looking at the monopoly that we ought to, we are torn between the instrumentalist theory of copyright and right retentions, and the naturalist theory. The instrumentalist theory says, basically, give the most limited form of copyright available in time, whether to authors under the provisions of section 5 of the Act or neighbouring rights, as we are looking at in this Bill, and it says take the most limited time, or the naturalist says, look, take it in perpetuity.

3.00 p.m.

But the four aims that we are looking for really have to be, whether we are incentivizing initial cultural production. Secondly, if we are incentivizing further cultural production, that is, investment in new artistes by earning big for the previous artists, for example.

Thirdly, are we incentivizing ongoing works by preserving them? For instance, in digitizing old analogue features of recordings, et cetera. Are we recognizing and rewarding authors’ creative works? I would say that we are, in fact, touching all four of these. The question is, should we take avail now with a special majority, which could easily be obtained on this law of actually going retroactive in the preservation of rights as the United States did? In 1998, the

United States of America decided that they would in the Bono arrangements, the Mickey Mouse legislation as my friend called it, that they would actually take the rights retroactively to revive the rights and to allow the property right to prevail. This is perhaps a Bill where we can do retroactivity and so deem it, with the benefit of the property right deeming to be resurrected or to come back into position subject, of course, to contractual provisions that may exist.

Now, Mr. President, there is also something that we have to look at, which is, are we really dealing with the appropriateness of the time period? Are the neighbouring rights properly at 70 years? Are the life-plus-70 term periods effective for the section 5 rights in the Copyright Act, that is, authors, et cetera? I think, Mr. President, and I think we are bound to, although we ought to be thinking outside of the box, and let me explain that. If we do not harmonize the rights, we are going to put ourselves out of reciprocal treatment from Europe and perhaps the United States of America. Therefore, I think we are bound to harmonize our product that way. But if we were to go for a different cycle of rights with a more aggressive implementation of initial rights, reregistered rights in different periods within that time frame, perhaps we could get more benefit for the persons who would enjoy these rights, because after all, Mr. President, economic rights can be assigned.

They can be kept. They can be shared. Those are the economic rights. Moral rights which are the rights to paternity. The right to be anonymous if you chose to be. The right to not have your work used in a derogatory fashion. Those moral rights are really personal to the author. However, they can be assigned by testamentary disposition. So, do we want to treat with those or by operation of law? So, do we want to treat with those two rights in a different way? I think perhaps now is the time to do that, and I would wish to humbly recommend to the

Government that they consider carrying on a project which I started which is, looking to anchor the Intellectual Property Office into an intellectual property authority—

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC:—where the authority can have two forms of intervention. One in the regulatory and management side, but in the other equation where they can allow for prosperity of the industry, that is, work with people, manage people.

Again, on the website of the IPO office there is an incredible publication, “How to Make a Living from Music” by David Stopps. It has chapter and verse from the WIPO, World Intellectual Property Office, on what is involved in making a living by money. Because you are not going to earn that living here under this Government. Self-right is where you have to go to and push your positions to have some degree of prosperity, but in an intellectual property authority with linkages to the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism, with linkages to the Ministry of Culture and Community Development, with linkages to the Attorney General’s Office, Legal Affairs or wherever it may be.

That is where we are going to see entrepreneurship turned into money, and that for our people where you have had a 400 per cent increase in natural gas, where you are seeing Nutrien closed down, Proman closed down. You are seeing collapses of businesses left, right and centre the business of copyright and what can be earned in copyright is critical. Of course, associated with an intellectual property authority would be the prosperity under industrial designs, under trademarks.

I heard my friend boasting a little while ago of having supposedly incepted the Trinitario brand anchoring in May 2025. Rubbish! That is a project that has been the combined work of the European Union, the IPO office, in multiple

incarnations. That is just not true, Mr. President, and therefore, the sun does not rise and set in one place in this country. Here is where we have to recognize the hard work and persistence of people who populate the Intellectual Property Office and the practitioners in the arena. An IP academy, an IP authority would allow for this to be introduced into the entrepreneurship level in schools in other areas.

Now, Mr. President, what is very interesting, again, for submission in the context to reform to the law. Even though derivative works, even though joint authorship works, even though works can be created independently is the whole revolution of intellectual input, artificial intelligence. I dare say that that an aim has improved if we were to look at the fact that with greater protection periods in the neighboring rights of 70 years, and in the life-plus-70 years for artistic and other works, we are going to, at least, have people stand by the fact that their work can be protected. It is going to be harder and harder, because the minute you have an original production, there is no copyright over an idea per se. The means of its expression in whatever expression it may be, those become critically important avenues for us. And as we look to intellectual property rights, I want to remind that the Government can enjoy intellectual property. I will give you an example.

In the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government two years ago, we wrote software under my direction for a programme called the Local App, which has government copyright attached to it. It only came first in the entire world out of 189 global competitors' countries, Trinidad and Tobago came first in the world with this app. You know what is the fate of that app is? It was thrown away and discontinued. Why? Because the Government changed. A technique in intellectual property which would allow for copyright to be anchored in the life plus 70. The Copyright Act allows the Government to enjoy the proceeds of intellectual property in certain circumstances. Why on earth would you want to

throw away an app that came first in the world to report problems in local government and to do ease of business? Why? That just does not make any sense. With an intellectual property authority, you would have the ability to anchor products like that down so that they would stand the vagaries of political moving and pulling and throwing.

For 10 years I kept my eyes on the Intellectual Property Office, and at no point in time did the PNM Government ever once throw away products in intellectual property of the kind that I am seeing going on now. A literal sabotage to efficiency and production in our country. I condemn it, but there is an opportunity to get it right. We have a Minister of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence. A whole Ministry of artificial intelligence where copyright can prevail, where copyright can reside, where economic potential can provide.

So, Mr. President, the fact is, there is a legitimate aim in this law, both for the copyright, the moral right and the neighbouring rights. The fact is that we have come a very long way in Trinidad and Tobago. But the next steps include activating what works right. This is not all hail Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Member of Parliament for Siparia, tribute as is done. It has to—

Sen. Allahar: Mr. President, that is insulting.

Mr. President: I did not hear. I was speaking to my colleague here, let me know what was said? I am not too clear.

Sen. Allahar: Mr. President, he used insulting language. He said, “This is not an all hail Kamla Persad-Bissessar tribute”. That is insulting. What does that have to do with this debate? We are debating law here.

Mr. President: Yeah. I will advise and uphold what my colleague has said. If that is what he would have said, Sen. Al-Rawi, I would ask you to be very cautious in your language. Okay? Continue.

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC: Thank you so much for your guidance. I too consider certain things insulting, but I will not go there. Mr. President, we cannot be earning our keep by licking boots constantly. We cannot be earning our keep by kowtowing and bowing because you are afraid to be fired or you are afraid to have negative reflection. It does involve having to stand up and say, right is right and wrong is wrong. By way of example, for another place, many examples can be offered. I will not go there today. I am tempted to, but I will not go there today to distinguish what I call enforced servitude over commonsense.

So, Mr. President, the Bill has a very legitimate aim. The question is, can we do better in terms of a carve out? I humbly submit that there can be carve outs in the period of protection that we offer in the life-plus-70 period, and in the 70-year period that we offer for neighboring rights. I respectfully suggest that the Intellectual Property Office ought to continue on its way to become an intellectual powerhouse of the Caribbean as it is. We in twining the Intellectual Property Office with Singaporean experience and implementing the intellectual property backbone for IT infrastructure from WIPO at our IPO office. We did very well to launch our IP in the right direction.

Our economy is under massive pressure with this Government. Businesses closing down by the day, and if intellectual property does not come to provide some degree of salvation, then “crapaud smoke we pipe”. I would love to see the hon. Member, the Minister who piloted this Bill at Skinner Park on Saturday waiting to see if it goes on because that is where you are going to see artistic ability in its truest form as country is capable of doing. We reflected on Jean and Dinah which was a reflection of Trinidad and Tobago’s experience post the moving of the and the leaving of the Americans and their bases. But let us see exactly how our society prevails. Thank the Lord God we do not have in law the ability to detain

people who get other people vex, because “de” whole of Skinner Park might have been locked up and detained. Thank the Lord that ended on January 31st. But the simple point is—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Allahar: Mr. President, what is the relevance of that? What is the relevance of that?

Mr. President: Again, I uphold the point that the Leader has raised. I do not understand the relevance of it. So could you go on to your other point, please.

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC: I thank you, Mr. President. A very famous literary work once said, “Thou doth protest too much”.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. F. Al-Rawi SC: Very, very, very poignant today, “Thou doth protest too much”, my learned friend. Mr. President, there was a very interesting quote from Boyle and I do not mean Boyle from the 18th Century or 17th Century versions. James Boyle “The Second Enclosure Movement and the Construction of the Public Domain” in 2003 said with respect to creativity, that there seems to be some

“...innate human love of creation that continually drives us to create new things even when homo economicus...”—

I had to break it in two—

“...would be at home in bed, mumbling about public goods problems?”

That captures the essence of people that want to frustrate themselves over irrelevancies versus people that are desirous of creativity for the good and welfare of our society.

This law is something that I think could include a retroactivity clause with a special majority inclusion which will be supported by the Opposition, I can say so now to look at property rights with certain carve outs being extended so that there

can be an economic prosperity to the survivors of persons or persons who are in the winter of these years. We saw the experience of the Mighty Sparrow going through his journey with diabetes, well-published, et cetera, where a little money makes a difference. You could look at the time value of money. You could look at the depreciation of cultural value, but there are some things that still stand out in our society.

3.15 p.m.

There are artists who are very relevant today, long after their passing; even in their lifetime and in the winter of their years, Mr. President. We certainly support what is before us now. It is by no means novel and unique to this Government's innovation. It is something that was in the works for quite some time, and we are very pleased to participate in the support of this, Mr. President. We caution Trinidad and Tobago that this is a very useful tool to be looking at because you "cyah rely on the code being yellow." Thank you, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: Sen. Anthony Vieira SC.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Anthony Vieira SC: Thank you, Mr. President. Before I begin, may I take the opportunity to acknowledge in our public gallery the presence of Mr. Carl Jacobs, one of our iconic performers.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. A. Vieira SC: Mr. Ottie Mieres, a Director of COTT and one of the most experienced managers in the country. And, I understand that Mr. David Rudder also wanted to be here, but he fell sick. May I also acknowledge the presence of the Controller at the IPO Office, Mr. Regan Asgarali SC, and the Deputy Controller, Dr. Kavish Seetahal. Thank you for being here.

I am grateful to the Government for bringing this Bill today, and I rise to lend my support. This Bill, though modest in its textual amendments, is profound in its economic, cultural, and legal consequences for Trinidad and Tobago. At the outset, I wish to declare a personal interest, not a pecuniary one, but an intellectual and an institutional one. Some time ago, I raised precisely this issue in this honourable Senate by way of an Adjournment Motion. I asked then for the extension of the term of copyright protection from 50 years to 70 years. Today, I welcome the fact that Parliament is finally being invited to do what was long overdue.

I should also indicate that I have acted previously for the World Intellectual Property Organization in crafting amendments to the copyright legislation, including amendments in relation to the Beijing and Marrakesh Treaties, and many years ago, when the hon. Prime Minister was the Attorney General in relation to Works of Mas. This Bill represents continuity, not novelty. It reflects years of stakeholder consultation, international engagement, policy development by the Intellectual Property Office, and sustained advocacy by our creative sector. In that sense, it is measured, evidence-based legislation. So what does the Bill do?

Mr. President, the central reform before us is straightforward. Clause 3 amends section 19 of the Copyright Act to extend the duration of copyright and moral rights for authors from life plus 50 years to life plus 70 years. In the case of joint authorship, protection runs for 70 years after the death of the last surviving author. Clauses 4 to 7 extend corresponding protection for performers, producers of sound recordings, and equitable remuneration. Again, from 50 to 70 years, with careful clarification as to how those periods are computed. Clause 8 does not extend the terms for broadcasters but improves internal consistency in the Act by clarifying the method of calculation. These are not radical departures. They are

calibrated amendments aligned with international norms and treaty flexibilities.

It bears noting that copyright is not a concession. It is a property right. Our Copyright Act expressly recognizes copyright as a form of property capable of assignment, licensing, inheritance, and commercial exploitation. It is the legal foundation upon which creative industries are built. When we speak of authors, composers, performers, and producers, we are not speaking of hobbyists. We are speaking of workers, entrepreneurs, and investors. Creative works are capital-intensive investments. They require time, skill, financing, marketing, and risk. The duration of copyright protection determines whether that investment can reasonably yield returns over time whether during the creator's lifetime or through his or her estate. A 50-year post-mortem term is increasingly inadequate in a world of longer life expectancy, delayed commercial exploitation, and digital rediscovery of catalogues.

Mr. President, laws sometimes appear abstract until one considers their real-world effects. Under our current law, iconic Trinidad and Tobago sound recordings from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s have already fallen into the public domain. They continue to be played, streamed, broadcast, and monetized, but no longer for the benefit of the creators or their families. Families of cultural icons lose income. Not because their work lacks value, but because the law cuts off protection too early. The extension proposed in this Bill restores fairness. It ensures that creators and their heirs share in the enduring economic life of works that form part of our national heritage.

Further, it bears noting that Trinidad and Tobago does not legislate in a vacuum. We are a party to the Berne Convention. Article 7 sets a minimum term of life plus 50 years, but Article 7 (6) expressly allows States to grant longer protection. Globally, life plus 70 years has become the prevailing standard. It is

the norm in the United Kingdom, the European Union, the United States, Canada, Australia, and many Latin American countries. These are not abstract comparators. They are our principal export markets for music, film, literature, and audio-visual content. Without harmonization, our creators suffer a structural disadvantage. Under Beren's rule of comparison of terms, protection abroad cannot exceed the term granted in the country of origin. In practical terms, our authors leave value on the table.

This is what this Bill corrects, that asymmetry. In terms of economic and development impact, I would say that the extension of copyright duration is not anti-development, but pro-investment. International evidence shows that longer protection periods encourage reinvestment in catalogues, incentivize restoration and the digitization of older works, attract foreign and domestic capital, strengthen collective management systems, and increase export earnings from creative goods and services. In the digital economy, value often accrues over time, not immediately. Streaming, licensing, synchronization, and archival exploitation all depend on long-term rights certainty.

This Bill, therefore, supports diversification of the economy and growth of the orange and creative economy. For those who would argue that copyright terms delay entry into the public domain, that is true. But the public interest is not served by the premature impoverishment of our creators. The public domain is enriched when works are preserved, restored, and made accessible. That requires investment, and investment requires protection. Moreover, the Bill does not disturb existing expectations, limitations, fair dealing provisions, or access for education, research, or libraries. The balance struck by the Act remains intact.

As we approach our Carnival, this legislation is not just timely. It also touches on issues relating to dignity. A society that celebrates its artists in death

but denies their families protection in law sends the wrong message. A society that consumes its culture but fails to protect its creators undermines its own identity.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. A. Vieira SC: Extending the term of copyright protection is an affirmation that creative labour matters. In concluding, let me just say that this Bill is timely, principled, and necessary. It brings our law into harmony with international standards. It corrects an economic imbalance. It strengthens the legal architecture of the creative industries, and it honours the contribution of Trinidad and Tobago's authors, performers, and producers. For those reasons, I am happy to lend my full support to this legislation. I thank you.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: Sen. Francis Lewis.

Sen. Francis Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and fellow Senators. Forgive me, my voice is a little hoarse. I am now recovering from the flu.

Sen. Dr. Swaratsingh: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. F. Lewis: [*Laughter*] I rise as an Independent Senator to acknowledge and welcome the Copyright (Amdt.) Bill, 2026 currently before this honourable Senate. What I wish to do, if it is okay, is to place it in a wider national context and offer some reflections on why this moment matters. Not just in legal terms—though I welcome that Minister—but the economic and developmental ones that matter.

At the outset, I want to acknowledge the importance of the amendment, and I, too, will be supporting it. A modern copyright framework is long overdue, and in this day and age, upgrading it continually—it is really a continual work that has to be done. But the work in the area of digital distribution, streaming platforms, artificial intelligence, and global content markets, it is a real task to continually keep up. This Bill is welcomed. Minister, I think you are hearing a broad

consensus across the Senate.

The amendment, though, is for me not simply a technical exercise. It is not simply about aligning statutes with international treaties as necessary as those need to be, and modernizing definitions. But it is also, in truth, about unlocking the economic value of creativity and treating intellectual property not as an afterthought, but also as a strategic national asset. This is a suggestion, not a criticism, but it would have been wonderful in the introduction to the Bill to just put, very briefly, in context the orange economy of Trinidad and Tobago. The best numbers I have, Minister, are that it is probably about 5 per cent of our GDP, but that itself is a guess. To my colleague, the Minister of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development, it would really be useful—and I know it is soft and squishy—to crystallize a little bit more clearly what is not just its contribution but its real economic potential. I know others have struggled with this, but I think it is a very worthwhile struggle.

Copyright reform needs to be seen not just simply, as I said, as a legal exercise, but as an economic policy. You know, paradoxically, many of the creators behind many of our globally admired cultural expressions struggle to earn a sustainable livelihood. Many of the individuals and small enterprises—and it is a collective and shared task responsible for the creative output—remain economically vulnerable.

3.30 p.m.

You know, it is not simply a lack of talent or ambition. It is largely a result of structural gaps in protection; in financing; in market access; in institutional support. In that context, it is not a failure of talent. It is a failure of systems. A modern copyright framework and the system that underlies it is the foundation in which our creative industries need to stand. Without clear, enforceable,

technologically relevant copyright protection, our creators cannot confidently licence their work and they cannot accurately value their creative assets and seek to generate the income required.

It is in that context, I would suggest, particularly to the Minister of industry, that this needs to be understood not simply as intellectual or economic policy, but also as cultural policy, an area for which your Ministry has a broad ambit. The Bill is necessary, but not sufficient. Copyright reform, I put to this House, needs to be the first step in building a more complete, a more comprehensive orange economy. We could lament all the troubles that the economy is going through, but what people are looking to from us is to say, okay, what can we do? And there is much that can be done that the orange economy gives access to, because it taps into the individuals and it taps into the creativity that is part of the ecosystem in Trinidad and Tobago.

An effective orange economy needs modern IP laws, such as this is seeking to do to modernize. It requires collective management organizations, such as our colleagues, that are transparent and trusted. It requires access to financing mechanism tailored to creative enterprises, and that is a task and a half. It requires export facilitation for music, film, fashion, design, digital content. It requires ongoing education, both in IP literacy but also in all the broader aspects so that creators understand and use their rights and understand where the opportunities are. And most of all, it requires reliable data and valuation frameworks so the sector can be measured so that it can be scaled and that the appropriate attention can be brought, not just for when the creativity wows us but for the economic import it brings.

Without these complementary pillars even the strongest copyright laws will fail. This moment matters. We meet at a time where Trinidad and Tobago is

seeking to diversify its economy, and to reduce the vulnerability external shocks and to create meaningful employment particularly for younger persons. I know I had a little bit of controversy on how I define younger, but we leave that for the moment. The orange economy offers precisely that opportunity, it is labour intensive, it is capital intensive, it is creative intensive, something that is in the DNA, apparently, of Trinidad and Tobago. It is driven by talent, already abundant in the population; it is export-oriented; it is, how does one create economic policy out of the creation of joy, which is what our people do. It aligns naturally with digital platforms and global demand. But none of this can be realized if the creators remain informal, underpaid and under protected.

The copyright reform such as proposed in this House sends a powerful signal, not only to artistes and creators but to investors, potential international partners and our own diaspora of which there are, what? A million, half a million people outside of Trinidad and Tobago who acknowledge this country as their home of origin, that it sends a signal to all of these persons that Trinidad and Tobago is serious about doing business in creativity.

So my question would be, how do we use this necessary amendment, Minister, as a launching pad, not a finishing line? I am not suggesting that you said it was a finishing line, but to really encourage that thinking to go forward, to catalyze greater coordination among creative sectors and agencies, to encourage the private sector, private partner ownerships which is the only way that this will work to shift from viewing culture as an expenditure and recognizing it as an investment. And to our national mindset that understands creativity is a generator of wealth, of dignity and national identity. Many of us are old enough to remember when talking about being a steelband man was not something said with pride. Look at the difference over 20, 30, 40 years. How we carry that forward is

the legacy that others have given us. When creators are protected they innovate, when innovation is monetized industries grow or can grow, and when they grow the nation can prosper.

So, in conclusion by advancing the copyright amendment we are taking a necessary step towards justice for creators. By pairing it with a broader vision of the orange economy we take a necessary step towards economic transformation. Copyright law, and I commend you Minister, stands at the centre of that structure, but without clear and enforceable copyright rules, creators would struggle in all kinds of ways. But by itself it is not enough. So, the call I would propose to colleagues, is how to use this as an opportunity for a continued step in the phase of economy transformation. So, I propose, let us support the legislation not in isolation, but as part of a very deliberate strategy to build an eco-system where creativity is protected, valued, financed and exported for the benefit of all of Trinidad and Tobago, and I commend this Bill. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: Sen. Anil Roberts.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister in the Ministry of Housing (Sen. The Hon. Anil Roberts): Thank you, Mr. President. We come here to talk about creativity and brilliance and achievement, yet none of the speakers before me saw it fit to congratulate our two Trininis, Trinbagonians who received Grammys: Jolene Mendes and Kwamé Ryan.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:—from Fatima College. And this is why this debate is not only so timely, but so brilliant. I had to force myself to listen to the former Attorney General, Faris Al-Rawi. The Senator talked about projects, all that he

could do and should have done, would have done, but achieved nothing. And every time we come here he regales us with all the work he did quietly in some office that never saw the light of day and never came forward to help our creatives produce intellectual property protection and create rights and copyright for our people going forward.

This—Sen. Vieira I agree with you, it is long overdue. But if it is long overdue, what was Sen. Faris Al-Rawi doing for 10 years?

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: On Friday, 17 May, 2024, there was a Matter on the Adjournment brought to the Parliament, and the UNC, then in Opposition, asked for the amendments to come to the Copyright legislation to protect our artistes, to protect our great works and nothing came. April 28th came, Saddam Hosein came, the UNC came and we are here today.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: The hon. Faris Al-Rawi says, this comes at an important time, and critically important reforms are here today; T&T will be served and shared, yet, he was AG for six years and in a government for nine and a half years, how come the time was not critical back then? How come the reforms were not critical? All of a sudden a new government comes and moves forward with a policy to protect our creative rights because we believe in merit, we believe in the brilliance of our people and he is trying to claim some responsibility and trying to give us praise. We need no praise from the PNM.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: The PNM remains where they are, stay right “dey”. Yet, for the period that he sat there he said he looked for 10 years at the intellectual property rights and that nothing he interfered with. But during that 10 years he

collected at least \$69 million in rent from a building that he did not have commercial property to collect.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I rise on Standing Order 46(1).

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: You did not collect rent?

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: If you want to bring a substantive Motion against me, do so, but not in this debate.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: You are not that important. [*Inaudible*]

Mr. President: Hello, hello, please. Hon. Senator, you cannot raise that during an ordinary debate. If you want to raise the conduct of the Senator, you have to bring a substantive.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Yeah.

Mr. President: So I have ruled that, right.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: All right, Mr. President. He is not that important, but he stood there and regaled us with all the so-called work he did, but nothing he achieved. Never brought anything forward but he collected a lot.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: I rise on Standing Order 46(5) as well.

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. President: Yeah, yeah. Just read—

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Yes, yes, yes. I apologize. He said he is not “ah he”, I agree with that; Sen. Faris Al-Rawi, former Attorney General of the PNM. He reminds me, just like he is talking there, about a fella, a “padnah” I used to have. We went in an Army Fete one time and he stood up there for about five hours looking at a sweet lady, and he would not make a move, he would not dance, he would not do anything.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I rise on Standing Order 46(1).

Mr. President: Yeah. I understand. Let us not personalize. Continue, please.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. President, I am talking about a man who just spoke for 40 minutes, said that he did all the work but achieved nothing. I am using an analogy of my friend who went Army Fete, stood up for five hours watching a lady, and then “a next man come and take the gyal” in one minute.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: That is what he reminds me of.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: I rise on Standing Order 46(1).

Mr. President: Okay, I think you better move—

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: I will move on, I will move on, but I would like to give him a tissue to wipe his eyes, the mascara is running.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: But the Ministry of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence, the former Attorney General looked across and said, we have a Ministry of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence. When he was Attorney General they had a Ministry of no intelligence. When we are earning our keep, he spoke about the artist earning the keep, but he was earning his keep while he was Attorney General collecting rent, not studying the artist.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I rise on Standing Order 46(6)—

Mr. President: Yeah, I have ruled on that.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: And 46(1).

Mr. President: Yeah, yeah, I have ruled on that. So hon. Senator, again—

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Yes. Well as we move on, the Bill also talks about the moral authority for people to not use people’s intellectual property and their works in the incorrect manner. And here we had a former PNM Attorney General calling

Bob Marley, 49 years ago, “Redemption Song”, and trying to equate the lyrics of Bob Marley to the oppressive, tyrannical regime of the PNM. That nearly made me choke on “meh” dinner mint, because Bob Marley in that song said:

“Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery;”

On April 28, 2025, the people of Trinidad and Tobago did just that.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: He said:

“None but ourselves can free our minds.

Have no fear for atomic energy,

‘Cause none of them can stop the time

How long shall they kill our prophets,

While we stand aside and look

...Some say it’s just a part of it:

We’ve got to fulfill the Book.”

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: We fulfilled the book April 28th. We fulfilled the book on January 12th with Tobago 15-0. The book of the PNM is at an end.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: I rise on Standing Order 46(1). Can we at least get a clause in the Bill?

Mr. President: Please, continue, please.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: He cannot interrupt me. He does not know when you have skills he can get up and down as much as he wants, you know, whether the pants tight or he have on—

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: “Yuh talking about Lurbz. Ah geh horn. Why you so interesting ah gehing horn. Doh worry if ah geh horn, nah.”

Mr. President: Please, please, please.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: “Doh worry bout dat, nah.”

Mr. President: Please, please. Let us stop the crosstalk and Sen. Faris Al-Rawi—

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: [*Interruption*]

Mr. President: Please, please, please. You spoke, when I say you, the hon. Sen. Faris Al-Rawi spoke. I sought in my role to avoid anyone interrupting. I do not think anybody interrupted. I think the hon. Senator is speaking, but you are in this constant excessive crosstalk and you know that is not permissible, okay. So allow the hon. Senator to speak. If you have to raise a point of order you do it, but the crosstalk I am not going to permit it. Hon. Senator—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, thank you, I do not need the protection, you know. I know you may understand when you were younger, because when you “ha sweet woman” sometimes the risk is “yuh will get horn”. He would not understand that.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

3.45 p.m.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: So, Sen. Faris Al-Rawi said that it is a subdued Carnival. “Well, I doh know wey he liming with de boys and dem, in de gym or wey he is,” but all over this country, the Carnival is energetic, the vibes, the lyrics, the music, the pan, the stick fighting, across—

Hon. Senator: Inch by inch.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:—inch by inch. So where ever he is, it is subdued. Maybe that is the Balisier House because the construction stopped, but all over this country, the Carnival is moving and the Flava is great and we move forward to

have a safe Carnival to continue to—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:—diversify the economy. And this Bill would ensure that all the great works, all the intelligence that is utilized to make and to write and to produce great works of art will be protected for years—up to 70 years after the death of our brilliant artistes who we are proud of.

Imagine, a PNM member, a member of PNM is talking and boasting about what calypso has become and how brilliant he feels down in Skinner Park. Well, all of that calypso that the PNM killed, and the PNM is dead now, Skinner Park or no Skinner Park, he has lost his seat in San Fernando West—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:—and he has lost his position as Attorney General, and he lost his Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, so they could sing what they want, but nobody cares.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: I rise on Standing Order 46(1). I invite the Member to bring a substantive Motion against me. He apparently is hot and sweaty over it. Could we have some—

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: I am responding to it.

Mr. President: Okay. I understand, but 46(1) does not apply. Continue, please.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: It does not apply. He brought up calypso. We are in the Copyright Bill. We are talking about authors and producers and protecting intellectual rights, and I am here to show that the PNM did to calypso what they wanted to do to the intellectual property and the Copyright Act, by not bringing this legislation, which we have to thank this Minister for bringing it to protect.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Because if you notice, since 1986, when the PNM started to control calypso, ask Joan Yuille-Williams, “why de tents buss, why de tents do not make money, why nobody want to steal Cro Cro music,” because it is nonsense—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:—it is racist, it is divisive, and it is PNM. PNM does not control calypso, like the hon. Member would like us to believe. Orlando Octave may not be selected by the PNM judges but the people will hear his artistry, his brilliance and enjoy his music.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Because the PNM loves to control.

Imagine their greatest bard, the man who wrote classic pieces of nonsense, like “Corruption in Common Entrance” and “Lick Bottom African”, that man had to get a CEPEP contract. And is it not ironic, that the one gentleman now, who has a lot of questions to answer about Cabinet approval to extend CEPEP contracts to 2029 is now trying to boast about calypso in Skinner Park? PNM can have their calypso. The people voted them out with all that calypso. The tents are not making money. They want to control the artistes because independence—

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: I rise on Standing Order 46(1), please.

Mr. President: Continue.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you. You see, he does not even understand the Bill. That is probably why he was unable to bring it—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:—and that is why we needed an intelligent man to bring this Bill forward. Because the PNM leaves artistes in poverty, waiting for handouts, waiting for a selection to go into a tent, waiting to get a grant to have a

tent, even though the seats are empty. They make a little “cacadah” from the PNM, but the art form, the culture, the brilliance, the double entendre is all gone because they weaponized calypso and the people weaponized their finger against the PNM to reject them. So let them continue with that.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Imagine the PNM for an election in Tobago, “dey try to tief ah whole song” and they had to get on the verge of the election—

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: I rise on Standing Order 46(1).

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: What?

Mr. President: Okay. I overrule, continue

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: On 46(1)? He is not even understanding the Bill. There was—the PNM just had an election, January 12, 2026. The PNM took the intellectual property of Prince Swanny and VAS Productions. They had to send them a pre-action protocol letter because they did not have the permission or paid for the rights to utilize the song. The PNM had to accept and accede with their senior council, Gilbert Peterson, aka the oil bunkerer, that they could not use it and would not use it. That is what this Bill is about. This gentleman, who spent an inordinate amount of time in law school, cannot read the Bill and understand why we are here.

The PNM also, in the 2020 election, took the work of Trinidad Killa and used it down in Point Fortin, and his well number one PNM calypsonian, Cro Cro, and the PNM Mayor of Point Fortin, who also had a \$2.5 million CEPEP contract, were seen on video cursing out the artiste who was just asking to be paid for the utilization of his intellectual property. This is why the United National Congress comes here, to protect our artistes, so that they are not hungry.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: “Imagine, dem tief a whole song and still loss, 15-0.”

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

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: The song’s name was “Lift up”. The PNM thought it meant “thief up.”

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: The copyright infringement also, it is not only music and production. The PNM does not respect people’s intellectual property rights. In 2020, in the election, the then Commissioner of Police had to berate the PNM for taking his image and putting it on their manifesto. They had to fallout with that. This is why the PNM did not bring the Bill because they never have the ability to create their own. They have to always take from somebody else and that is why they are a failure.

Imagine also in the 2025 election, that we saw a picture of their selected prime ministerial candidate, Stuart Richard Young, with a logo of the PNM, copying exactly Michael Jordan, the most famous logo in the history of the planet. The PNM tried to thief the logo but it lasted one day, just like Stuart Young in the Prime Minister’s Office.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: They could not use it again. So, this Bill is timely, it is critical and I thank the Government for bringing it. But you see, that is what the PNM is about, control. They want to control independent institutions, they want to control everything. Their former Prime Minister, the former, former, went by the President to control the Police Service Commission to select a Commissioner of Police.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I rise on Standing Order 46(1), with the greatest

of respect. I was reined in in much tighter circumstances, Mr. President.

Mr. President: I do not know what you are referring to. Who reined you in in tighter circumstances?

Hon. Senators: [*Laughter*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: The man is confused.

Mr. President: You are not referring to me? Connect and let us go.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: I will connect, just like T&TEC is connecting across this country right now and people have electricity, unlike under the PNM.

Control, freedom, intellectual property, they do not even understand what this Bill does. It protects people for generations, their wealth creation, their property, and when you have the ability to earn revenue, to earn large sums of money, that gives you a freedom from oppression, from tyranny, from people telling you what to sing, how to sing and paying you to sing in a tent. So, this is a way to ensure that our artistes are no more struggling and walking cap in hand to the PNM looking for something “to sing bad about Kamla and Siparia, but sing good about ah man from Tobago who was ah teacher and breed ah child at school age. Dey doh sing about dat. Is bess I write some kaiso too, but I would not make Skinner Park but dat is all right. We go make it in an election, when dey call election, whether San Fernando West, Toco/Sangre Grande, Barataria/San Juan, across the country. We prefer that victory so that now we could bring legislation here to protect each and every one, because when UNC wins, everybody wins, expect PNM.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: The PNM has shown that they are anti-protection because their former Attorney General, who boasted that he was there so long, he never brought this, why? Because this provides protection. And when this

Attorney General brings another Bill to protect people, to keep them safe, to allow the police and the army to move in and keep people safe, the PNM votes against that. And when there is protection coming in and we want to have the DPP's Office funded to give protection to the people, to move cases forward, that PNM Government underfunds the DPP's Office because they are anti-protection, they are anti-safety, and they would also want to come and ask for special majority but we on this—

Sen. John-Bates: Mr. President, I have a Standing Order to raise.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Which one?

Sen. John-Bates: Standing Order 46(1). None of this is relevant to the Bill. Control and starvation of the PNM is not relevant to an intellectual property debate.

Mr. President: Please, just connect the—

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: I know, I know. The hon. Senator probably was not paying attention, but this Bill is about protection; protection of rights, protection of freedom, protection of intellectual property. The PNM did nothing for nine and a half years to protect and copyright—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:—and we are wondering why, and I am showing you that the DNA of the PNM is to not protect people. They do not protect labour, they do not protect music, they do not protect people, they do not protect sports, they do not protect children, they do not protect their own constituency. They protect no one expect themselves.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: You are too young and you may not understand what you are in. You just joined a party because it looked nice and the Balisier might

look good, but you have to understand your history and where they come from.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: This Attorney General sat down in a Cabinet and recused himself 100 and something times. He protected himself and his family—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. Browne: Mr. President, Standing Order 46(1), once again.

Mr. President: Again, Sen. Roberts, just refer to a clause in the Bill and tie it in and let us go, please.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I also rise on another Standing Order, please, 46(6), the very improper motive ascribed just now; very improper to me.

Mr. President: I appeal, again, to Senators, let us try to keep the debate at a certain level, and let us not personalize debates, and let us not impute improper motives to anybody. Okay? Let us continue, please.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Yes. No imputation—

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, Standing Order 46(6), I ask that he withdraw those statements.

Mr. President: No, I have ruled on the matter already. I have asked him to—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: I will not withdraw that he recused himself over 100 times. That is true and those recusals are on the record in Cabinet. And if he would like them to be withdrawn, he will withdraw them himself. I might even say it on Doubles and Coffee because he comes here and pretends that he cares about people, when he only cares about himself and his family.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I rise on 46(1), 46(6), and he is also contradicting your direct ruling made a moment ago. If the Senator wishes to bring

a substantive Motion against me, bring it on, but this is not the way to do it.

Mr. President: All right, okay. Please—

Hon. Senator: [*Inaudible*]

Hon. Senators: [*Laughter*]

Mr. President: I do not think that anyone should threaten—

Hon. Senators: [*Interruption*]

Mr. President: Please, please, please, please.

Mr. President: I do not think that anyone should be threatening—okay? Okay? Please.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: I will move on, Sir, for you; for you. Oh my goodness, I am so scared, Faris will deal with me. Make sure when you run, your pants do not split. Yes.

Hon. Senators: [*Laughter*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Yeah, he still gone back by—[*Inaudible*]

Mr. President: Let us not—listen, listen. We do not want the debate to deteriorate, please. Let us not get into this personality—area, personal reflections, and I think—I appeal to my colleagues and Sen. Roberts, let us not personalize the matter. I think we have said enough. Let us continue, please.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Mr. President. The hon. Member, the former Attorney General, who passed laws that were overturned in the courts so many times, he had to run up and down the stairs, he just stated in his contribution that if we wanted, on this side, to make it retroactive that he and his PNM supports and others would vote for the special majority. Where was that special majority last week when we wanted the special majority—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:—to keep the people safe, to stop the bloodshed, to

allow citizens to live like they live in their fancy buildings, with their rental?
 Where was that special majority?

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: I rise on Standing Order 46(3), Mr. President.

Mr. President: I do think he is—[*Inaudible*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Continue, please.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

4.00 p.m.

Sen. A. Roberts: That is the typical PNM, you know. They do not care about the truth. “He is just so happy that he believes I geh horn. Well I am happy to give you some excitement, brother. Cool yourself. But is alright.” So moving right along, Mr. President. Well, imagine these people were in charge of our country. No wonder the country is in a mess that it is. An Attorney General who cannot read a Bill and understand could not bring any real legislation to help the people, only study themselves and that is why we are here.

When you are talking about the Copyright (Amendment) Bill, 2026, the bill brings freedom, empowerment, and independence. For example, they gave examples of other songs. What about Gypsy’s captain, the ship is sinking sung in February 1986. And just after that December 1986, for the first time, the country got rid of the PNM

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. A. Roberts: For the first time, the country could breathe and take a—what about that. Ah mean, that song right now, years later, 39, nearly 40 years later in April 2025, was even more apt. But the problem was that at this time, Gypsy was on the ship that was sinking.

Hon. Senator: [*Laughter*]

Sen. A. Roberts: And the captain changed twice. So this kind of intellectual property, we must protect Gypsy, even from himself.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. A. Roberts: People would have to understand that the duration is important. Why? Because creative works do not expire when an artiste passes away. Section 19(1) of the Copyright Act, as amended, states that generally:

“copyright and moral rights...”—are—“...protected during the life of the author and for fifty years...”

We are now going to 70, because there are cases that you would understand. The Bob Marley case—he quoted Redemption Song, not knowing that Bob Marley was singing about people like him and his government to free the people from that kind of oppression.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. A. Roberts: It is ironic, Calypso Rose, we have to protect her moral rights because these people, these PNM, might take her music and apply it to themselves, and she may never want that because she may not understand what sort of evil reigns in that Balisier House.

This Bill is very important because artistes do their work not for political expediency, not to get a little high-five or a picture with a tight pants man in a gym. They do it from love, from creativity, and should get their money whenever their family, their grandchildren, should. And this Bill protects those rights for 70 years. There is the example of the Beatles. The catalogue continues to generate b-b-billions of dollars. And that is why this is important. We have artists now, Machel Montano, Kes Dieffenthaler, when we are all gone, their music will live on. “Savannah Grass” may live on for the next 200 years. His family is now

protected because of the Minister of Land and Legal Affairs, because of Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. A. Roberts: One can only remember when you talk about intellectual property, and Sen. Vieira is so correct. Who can remember the war that took place with Brian Charles Lara and Digicel, when Digicel took control of West Indies cricket, and Brian Charles Lara was bMobile? Between 2003 and 2010, there was the oppression of Lara because the intellectual property rights were not respected. Dinanath Ramnarine fought for West Indies cricketers, fought for their intellectual property, and their rights to be respected—

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. A. Roberts:—so that they could choose to sell and be endorsed by whom they want. Brian Charles Lara, the captaincy was taken away and so on. This Bill will also protect and create a tapestry of intellectual property laws moving forward, so that all intellectual property will be protected and each individual who deserves to earn from it will do so.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Senator: They would not know because they want to take a PTSC bus to Tobago.

Sen. A. Roberts: The PNM would not understand that. The PNM would not understand that because the Attorney General of the PNM did not even know that buses cannot drive over water, about PTSC driving to Tobago.

Hon. Senator: [*Laughter*]

Sen. A. Roberts: I mean, it is really ridiculous sometimes. “Ah wonder why I put on a suit and ting to come here and debate these fellas who have no oxygen flowing in dey brain.”

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I rise on Standing Order 46 (4).

Hon. Senator: [*Crosstalk*]

Sen Dr. Browne: Unparliamentary.

Mr. President: I do not approve that. Continue.

Sen. A. Roberts: Thank you. Thank you.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. A. Roberts: Thank you, Mr. President. “Stick break in he ears and he cah learn. He cah debate me, he cah disturb me.” He is not intellectual enough.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I rise on 46(4). This is on a rollercoaster of insults, Mr. President. I do not respectfully believe the Senate is meant to be like this. If so, then we will engage in internecine warfare. That cannot be proper behaviour on the hon. Senator’s part, for your consideration.

Mr. President: Alright, alright. Listen, Sen. Roberts, Sen. Al- Rawi. Senator Roberts, continue, but please refer to the Bill. And again, let me just put on the record, if you want to bring a matter dealing with a Member’s conduct, we have to do it on a substantive Motion. So, try to be guided as you go along, and get back to the connection.

Sen. A. Roberts: Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. A. Roberts: Because this Bill, as I connect it, offers freedom, offers opportunity, offers economic salvation to our artistes, our producers, our authors, that previously was not there, because that Attorney General of the PNM did not care. I am proud to be Trinbagonian. I am proud of our people—

Sen. Dr. Browne: Mr. President, Standing Order 53(1)(b).

Hon. Senator: “How much time he will say that?”

Mr. President: Again, just connect your points, please.

Sen. A. Roberts: Thank you Mr. President, I am a proud Trinbagonian. I am a proud African. I am a proud East Indian. I am proud to be here, and I am proud to be part of the UNC Government that is protecting creative rights.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. A. Roberts: You see, on the other side, some of them are not even proud of who they are, because they have to change their name from Seukeran to Al-Rawi. God bless. Thank you, Mr. President.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I rise on 46(1), 46(4), 46(6). This is overbearing, Mr. President. I ask for your protection.

Mr. President: Again, you do not have to go there.

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Tell the truth.

Mr. President: Yeah, please, you do not have to go.

Sen. A. Roberts: Tell the truth, okay.

Mr. President: Please, you do not have to go there.

Sen. A. Roberts: “When he got in Pres, his name was Seukeran, da’is all I sayin. Dais is de truth.”

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I rise on the constitutional privileges of the Parliament, apart from the Standing Orders. Not only are these outright untruths, told by somebody with questions to answer, but they cannot be accepted, Mr. President.

Hon. Senator: [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Surely, in your experience, you agree with me, surely.

Hon. Senator: [*Continuous crosstalk*]

Mr. President: Please, please, please.

Sen. A. Roberts: “Who you shouting at?”

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: You.

Mr. President: Let us just cool the temperature. Cool down. Let us conduct ourselves as we are supposed to conduct ourselves, in a professional way. So could we, again, refer to people, refer to the clauses, do it in a professional way, and let us proceed without hurling any kind of accusations or insults. Please, let us go.

Sen. A. Roberts: Mr. President, I will just tell you that I am proud to be on this side. Proud to support this Bill. Proud that we are here to protect our intellectual capital, our artists that create our culture, make us proud of who we are, not being PNM. Calypso is not PNM. Music is not PNM. Pan is not PNM and PNM is only about themselves, and that is why they remain on that side—

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:—whether with tight pants, loose pants, or skirt. So thank you, Mr. President. And I ask for the support of all the Senators to protect our culture, our history, and our brilliance, and continue to save us from the mediocrity and the chaos of the PNM.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: Sen. Janelle John-Bates.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Janelle John-Bates: Mr. President, thank you for allowing me an opportunity to intervene in what has turned out to be a bit of a spicy debate today, although it was one that I thought would have been pretty simple, because the objectives of the Bill are simple and limited in their scope. The Bill at hand seeks to extend the duration of copyright protection for authors, the duration of moral rights for authors and performers, and the duration of neighbouring rights for performers and producers of sound recordings, from 50 years to 70 years. It also

extends the duration of neighbouring rights protection for equitable remuneration for performers and producers of sound recordings. Simple, useful, admittedly, and welcome.

We have said from the outset that we do support the Bill, because we believe that this Bill recognizes the creative work of our artistes and performers as real work with real economic value. That this Bill would recognize that the intellectual work of our creatives is a labour of love for some of them, and is a reflection, for them, of who they are as a person. And this Bill is a simple modernization of the law. Nothing novel, nothing visionary, simple and welcome. Mr. President, before I get into the substantive portion of my contribution, developing on those three points that I would have identified, in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Macbeth had a famous soliloquy where he was reflecting on life, and he said that it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Alexander: Mr. President, I stand on Standing Order 46(1).

Sen. J. John-Bates: On what?

Sen. Alexander: No, I know, because they have been doing that for all the time, and he was a lot closer to the actual Bill than she is.

Mr. President: Alright, continue, but let us try to bring down the temperature. Continue.

Sen. Janelle John-Bates: Yes, yes, yes. The connection was going to be made quickly. Mr. President, the connection is this: When I heard the last speaker, all I heard was sound and fury, and nothing of significance was said.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. J. John-Bates: Everything that was said was said in a vociferous tone, but none of it relevant to why we are here today, which is to extend some rights from

50 years to 70 years. Instead, we descended. Mr. President, there was only one thing of relevance that was said by Sen. Anil Roberts. The only thing that he said that was truthful and of relevance is that when UNC wins—well, partially true—everyone wins, except PNM. And, Mr. President, I would agree with that, because we can see that this Government has a policy to victimize PNM-controlled corporations in the way that they have denied them funds. We can see that in the way they have completely fired—

Sen. Alexander: Mr. President, I stand on 46(1). We reach corporations now. That has nothing to do with this.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: I think I am giving—

Sen. Janelle John-Bates: Mr. President, the connection, for those who do not understand it, is this: I am rebutting what he said. Nobody in the PNM wins, apparently, under this Government.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Janelle John-Bates: Victimization upon victimization, based on the policies that we can see. But I do not have to beat that dead horse. It is there for those who have eyes to see.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Janelle John-Bates: If Sen. Anil Roberts really wanted to make a relevant contribution to this debate, I would have expected to hear him speak about new technologies that are affecting copyrights. The Minister would have made some passing reference to reforms and in the copyrights, and that this Bill is somehow connected to some agenda that they have. I guess it was his way of attempting to convince us that they have some commitment to the development of IP in this country. I would have expected to hear something about that from Sen. Anil

Roberts.

I would have wanted to hear something about the new realities facing our creatives under copyrights. Something about AI-generated performers.

Hon. Senator: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. J. John-Bates: I would have wanted to hear what the Government has been about the rising of synthetic voices, digital cloning. That is the kind of stuff I wanted to hear.

Mr. President, I was amazed when I saw on Facebook some reference to something called Trinidad's first AI soca artiste. "Ah say ah AI soca artiste called Jou Vay?" And apparently she had some first single called "So Alive". That blew my mind. And those are the kind of things I thought I would have heard about today because that raises some fresh copyright and performer rights questions. Who really owns the work when some AI-generated—I do not know—programme creates something like a soca song? Apparently, I saw this on Facebook as well, there is some controversy about up-and-coming soca artistes using AI to create a song and apparently, radio stations are pushing back against that by denying airplay.

4.15 p.m.

These are the kinds of new issues I would have wanted to hear about. Instead, I am hearing about horn and horn and horn. I mean, come on. I thought I would have heard something about the—because, you know, I want to stand with Sen. Al-Rawi, and, I think it was the mover of the Bill, in recognizing that there are some representatives of the collective management agencies here. I am happy to see that they are sitting next to each other in a congenial mood. But stakeholders have said, time and time again, in the public fora, that the existence of multiple collection management agencies in this country is a cause for concern. I

thought I would have heard something about that.

There is a bit of a grey area in relation to the law there. It is out there, by stakeholders in the industry, that the regulations governing these collective management agencies need clarification. So, that is why I want to join with Sen. Al-Rawi in the call for the IP office to move to an authority.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. J. John-Bates: Because we need some standardization as it relates to these organizations. Apparently, it is causing confusion in the industry. That confusion extends to promoters. It requires them to pay higher taxes. There is confusion surrounding the licence holders, and these are questions that I thought would have been addressed today. Now, be that as it may, Sen. Anil Roberts said that, you know, “dey doh need no praise from de PNM”. That is not what we are here to do. We are here to praise you. We are here to do what we have always said that we are here to do, that is, support good legislation.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. J. John-Bates: We are not here to oppose for opposing’s sake. So, when we come here and we recognize the strengths of a legislation, it is not to give you “no” praise. We are not here to boost your head, you know. We are here to say that we could support this Bill. It is a simple law, but it is good law.

There are some laudable objectives with this Bill. For example, this Bill, as I would have said, recognizes that creative work is real work. Mr. President, there was a time in this country where every parent seemed to only recognize three professions: lawyer, doctor, and engineer. Everybody wanted their child to be that. But we have, it seems to me, moved away from that kind of concept. Parents now recognize that there is value in creative work. They understand that creative work can entertain. It can educate. It could provide some mental relief from

mental stress. There is value in the work, and, essentially, because of that, people are earning a living from their creative work.

This is not a pastime anymore. It is real labour, and Sen. Vieira would have indicated why it is real labour, the time needed to invest in the work that they are doing, the skills that you have to develop, whether informal or formal skills, and the schooling that you would have attended to develop these skills. So, it is real work. Although it may be enjoyable—a lot of the creative work is enjoyable; writing a book, choreographing work, and content creation—it may be enjoyable and fun for those who are doing it, but it is still work. Therefore, these creators need to benefit economically from their work, and this Bill goes some way to ensuring that they can benefit economically for a longer time, and for that, we say that is a good thing.

Beyond the economic aspect of the work, this Bill also recognizes that, for example, the creative work is also personal, and that is what takes us to the moral rights issue. Creative works are almost an extension of self for some people, and I would understand that, because I know the Minister said that these people are more talented than us. But some of us have some talent. I sing as well. So, I understand how it feels to express yourself in that way.

Moral rights are rights that give you the right to be credited for your work. Sometimes it is not about the money, it is to be recognized for what you are doing. It gives you the right to object to the distortion and mutilation of your work, and it gives you the right to protect your reputation. We see that in clauses 3 and 4 of the Bill, which extend the duration of moral rights to 70 years after the death of the performers. So, extending moral rights protects and shows respect for the creative identity and legacy of the author of the work, not just the income aspect of it. But as I said, the income aspect is not one that we can gloss over. As was stated

before, this is a property right. These copyrights are property rights that people can pass on to their children if they so want to do.

You know, we would have heard here mentioned some of our older performers and artistes in the Soca and Carnival space, and much respect to those who have been called, but we have to look at the younger ones as well. How does this Bill or the extension of the rights benefit the younger artistes? Let us take, for example—bringing it home for somebody to understand from a practical level. Take a performer like Mical Teja Williams, known by his sobriquet Mical Teja. He is only 29 years old. He has put on a show. He performs on many stages both locally and abroad. This Bill will mean a lot to him.

Because of the extension of rights, a TV station cannot just air his concert recordings without him giving them permission. No one can just duplicate his performance, record it, and sell it, and make a profit off of his work. No one could upload his performance and stream it on a platform without his authorization, and for a 29-year-old who has to think about down the road, that is very important. So an extension for 50 years to 70 years will ensure that long after he is no longer able to perform, once he has not, you know, given authorization to other persons to do what I have just said with his rights, he would be able to benefit financially well into his golden years. That is laudable. So, we appreciate the Bill for that.

So, in conclusion, Mr. President, as I have said, I am not here to stand up long. I think we all can recognize the importance of the extension, as I have said, simple, not visionary. There are other pieces of legislation we think have to be brought to the table. Perhaps the Government is taking it inch by inch, perhaps. Maybe that is why we are here today, but we support the Bill. The long and short of it is that we support the Bill. It is sound. It is beneficial to creators. It is a step. It is not the destination, but good legislation deserves support regardless of which

side introduces it. With that, I thank you.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Nakhid: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. President: Okay. Sen. David Nakhid, Parliamentary Secretary.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs (Sen. David Nakkid): In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful. Mr. President, why the contention? Sen. John-Bates went from Guaya all the way up to Chaguanas and back, to tell us that it is a good Bill. So, where is the contention? What is it about? To score political points? Even the context—she quoted *Macbeth*—showed you exactly the intent and purport of the PNM, completely out of timing and incorrect. Because, you are talking to the only person in St. Mary’s who got an A in English Literature; *Macbeth*. I come from a house where everything you do wrong or right, there is a quote from Shakespeare. So it goes like this:

“Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
 And then is heard no more. It isa tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.”

I grew up with that. I grew up with that. It does not mean what you said. It is not about somebody coming and talking and shouting. It is about life being meaningless and empty, just like the PNM.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. D. Nakhid: It is you all, in nine years—no, forget nine years—in 47 years of governance who did absolutely nothing for the Calypsonians and the people who are creative in this country; absolutely nothing. “I could call one by one de amount ah dem who die poor and broke because all yuh eh do nothing. All yuh come down here to talk about what yuh want to do and we going inch by inch. You all did nothing. I never see ah bunch ah hypocritical, reprehensible people who just have nothing to say.”

A simple Bill to give people a chance to improve the lives of their families, not from 50, but to 70 years. Everybody agrees with that. All of you all agree with that. But you all are trying to come and score some political points, and letting people quote incorrectly from *Macbeth*. We have a bunch of intelligent people over here. All yuh is just ah bunch ah opportunity and opportunists on dat side”.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. D. Nakhid: Mr. President, you know to get up and talk after these—you know, it is so easy. It is so easy. You do not even have to jot down notes. You just have to listen to them with this empty rhetoric about “the UNC this, and they eh doing that”. Okay, simple question, what did you all do for the creative sector? What did you all do? What did you all do for pan? You know I can talk about pan from now till thy kingdom come. What did you all do for pan people? You all let a whole 1 per cent conglomerate come and control the creative arts and pan. “Dey making yuh have ah factory for pan”. Who benefits from that? Rudolf Charles? “Spree” Simon? Neville Jules? Not one of them.

You all just come and talk and talk and talk and hope to convince somebody hearing you all. But your whole narrative is wrong. Your whole narrative is wrong. Your whole intent and purpose are wrong. This is a simple Bill that the UNC, under Kamla Persad-Bissessar, brought to the table. Did you all do it? No.

So what is the purpose? I mean, according to my father, what is the raucous? What is the raucous? Just come and say, “Well done, UNC. Thank you very much”, vote, and we could go our way.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. D. Nakhid: That is all. I heard Sen. John-Bates mention so many things that really did not align with the situation on the ground. It really did not align. You know, it is an attempt, basically, to put the UNC as being opposed to creatives. Again, I do not like to get into the race thing. But, it is alarming to me how they are always trying to paint the UNC as somehow being against creatives because a lot of our creatives are people who look like me, maybe a little darker, but they are African people, our Afro-Trinbagonians. We are the ones who helped them. We are the ones who raised grants. We are the ones who increased their grants. We are the ones who have lifetime achievement awards. We did that. We did that between 2010 and 2015. One of the people involved in that—I call him my uncle—they do not even know who he is, Thunderbolt Williams. He gets a grant every year that Kamla Persad-Bissessar created. A lot of other Calypsonians who were on their deathbeds dying got assistance from the UNC. So, I do not know where they get this kind of moral haughtiness to feel that they have done something for the creatives. They have not.

All they have done is stoke the fires of race. That is what the PNM does, stoke the fires of race. “The UNC doh do nothing. Is ah Indian party”. That is all they do. When you look at reality on the ground, and the situation, we are the ones who come with a sober, clear, and purpose, purposeful with intent to make the lives of the creative sector in this country better. That is what this Bill is about, nothing less, nothing more.

I will not go into Sen. Al-Rawi’s contribution on the Bill, because there was

really nothing to see. You know, it was just a lot of talk about, you know, what they have done and what they would do. I think most people, by now, are fed up. Sen. Lewis, he talked about how we need to see some deliverables. We need to see what would be the impact. Well, we have created an economic corporation, more or less, to support this Bill. So there is going to be an ecosystem around this Bill where we will look to see how this drives into our push in the tourism sector.

Hon. Senator.: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. D. Nakhid: We piloted that already. We want to make sure that this will go into how we improve the tourism sector.

4.30 p.m.

Because if we get this Bill going for the calypsonians, the creative sector, what you do is you ensure that the tourism sector will have progress going forward in all art forms, because there are so many art forms involved in the Carnival, it is not only pan and calypso. There is costume making, all these things—

Hon. Senator: Wire bending.

Sen. D. Nakhid:—wire bending, all these things, especially with the costumes. It is something that we have not, as a Government, really delved into. This Bill helps us propagate that and perpetuate that. So that will be the answer to your questions. So it is not something that is only geared towards the creative sector. It is also geared towards the economic side of Carnival as well. And I hope that puts your worries about that—because it is a legitimate worry, but I do not think it is something that has been delved into like we intend to. And that economic cooperation that we intend to put with this copyright, together with all the other facets of the Carnival, including, as I said, the tourism sector, we will ensure.

Now, in my opinion, I can only speak from the pan side, and I speak about the finest steel orchestra in the world—

Sen. John-Bates: Exodus.

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

Hon. Senator: Renegades.

Hon. Senators: [*Laughter*]

Sen. D. Nakhid: I will let everybody name these non-descript bands, and then I will talk about the finest steel orchestra in the world, Laventille Desperados.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. D. Nakhid: When we look at their collection over the years, when Laventille Desperados was going to places like Carnegie Hall, playing in these places when no other steelband orchestras even knew what it was to travel. We were playing in 1966, 1969, Carnegie Hall and all these places. All that music will now be protected. All that music that people just take and play all over the world, in Japan, in Brazil, they are playing, now that is going to be protected.

So when I see the family of my uncle, and they are now in relative discomfort, I cannot say poverty. I am not dishonest at all, but from their contribution to the art form, they are not where they should be economically. That is a crying shame. That is a crying shame that the family of Rudolph Charles is not living the life, the luxury that you see some of these people associated with the PNM, making millions off of Carnival. Millions off of Carnival. People who never knew how to play a pan or never went to a pan yard and stayed up until 2.00 a.m. watching people rehearse over and over, section by section, playing and playing. And they are making millions out of Carnival. And when I see the people who I know put their blood, sweat and tears into this thing, into the art form we now call pan, that is the most recognized art form around the world, let us be clear. It is more recognized than calypso, than anything else.

I went to Japan a couple of years ago. They have more pan schools in Japan

than we have in Trinidad and Tobago, probably, everywhere. And the people who created that art form never benefited from it. And we have people now associated with that side, millionaires out of it, millionaires. And I will call their names because as you know, Nakhid doh care, HADCO and they—they have control of the pan, of the pan making and all that. Why? And we from this side we will ask those questions, why the people who invented the art form, they are not the ones to benefit from it? Why people associated with the PNM, the one-percenters always seem to get the sweetheart deals? Why? We have to ask that question. Why we have to have people begging, begging, to get their just due and then they come here pretending that they care, pretending to be contentious. They have nothing to be contentious about. This Bill is very straightforward, improving the lives of the people in the creative sector. That is it.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. D. Nakhid: So, I did not intend to be long, but I had to answer a few things from Sen. Lewis and Sen. John-Bates because I understand what it means to be in Opposition. I sat there for five years. But not once can you find me on the *Hansard* getting up to say a piece of nonsense.

Hon. Senator: [*Laughter*]

Sen. D. Nakhid: Getting up to say something that is untrue. I will get up and say something that is pointed, pointed at the heart of injustice or oppression or poor governance. They just get up and talk, I mean, can anybody seriously tell me what all the contention is about? In the end, they come back and say, “Yes, this is a good Bill, we really like this Bill, it helps the creative sector”. I will do what they did not do. I will say less. With those few words, Mr. President, I thank you.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries (Sen. The Hon. Ravi Ratiram): Thank you most kindly, Mr. President. As I rise to lend my unequivocal support to the Copyright (Amdt.) Bill, 2026. A measured, progressive and internationally aligned piece of legislation that advances the protection of intellectual copyrights in Trinidad and Tobago, strengthens our creative economy and safeguards the legitimate interest of creators across multiple sectors, including our critical and expanding agricultural value chain. Mr. President, intellectual property is no longer an abstract legal construct confined to academia or specialized commercial activities. It is a fundamental pillar of modern economic development. The Bill before this honourable Senate reflects Government's strategic commitment to ensuring that our legislative frameworks keep pace with evolving global standards, technological advancement, and the reality of value creation in a knowledge-driven economy. Mr. President, the principal objective of this Bill is straightforward yet profound. It seeks to amend the Copyright Act, Chap. 82:80 by extending the duration of copyright and neighbouring rights, protection of authors, performers and producers of sound recordings, as well as extending the duration of moral rights for authors and performers.

Currently, under the principal Act, copyright protection subsists for a period of 50 years after the death of an author. Clause 3 of the Bill, Mr. President, proposes to amend section 19 to extend this period to 70 years following the death of the author, or in the case of joint authorship, 70 years after the death of the last surviving author. Similarly, clauses 4 to 7 extend the duration of protection for performers and producers of sound recording for 50 years to 70 years, while clause 8 provides clarity in respect of the commutation of the protection period for broadcasting organizations.

Mr. President, these amendments are neither arbitrary nor excessive. They are carefully calibrated to ensure coherence within the statutory framework and alignment with international best practice. Mr. President, Trinidad and Tobago is a profound signatory to the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Work. Article 7 of that convention establishes a minimum protection period of the life of the author plus 50 years. However, critically, Article 7(6) expressly empowers member states to extend this period through domestic legislation. This Bill, therefore, represents a lawful and prudent exercise of sovereign legislative authority. Indeed, comparative legal analysis demonstrates that numerous jurisdictions have already implemented extended protection periods. For example, Mexico provides copyright protection for life plus 100 years, while Dominica provides life plus 75, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines provides life plus 75 years.

Mr. President, it is imperative that Trinidad and Tobago does not lag behind our regional and international counterparts. A robust intellectual property regime enhances investor confidence, encourages creative production and positions our nation as a competitive participant in global, cultural and knowledge markets. Mr. President, the Bill recognizes that copyright is both an economic and moral entitlement. Economic rights allow creators to control reproduction, distribution, public performance and commercial exploitation of their works. Moral rights, on the other hand protect the personal and reputational relationship between creators and their work, including the right of attribution and the right to object to derogatory treatments of their creation. Extending protection for moral rights ensures that creators and performers maintain their dignity, reputation and legacy across generations. This is particularly important in a society such as ours, where cultural expression forms a core element of national identity.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Ratiram: Mr. President, the creative sector represents one of the fastest-growing components of the global economy. Music, film, digital media, literature, and broadcasting are industries in which Trinidad and Tobago has long demonstrated excellence and international influence, and we must congratulate all our creative minds, our artistes—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Ratiram:—and everyone who would have contributed, positioning us to where we are today. By extending protection periods, this legislation creates a stronger incentive structure for creative investment. It allows artistes, producers and performers to derive sustainable income streams from their intellectual output. And, Mr. President, while I may not profit from this industry, it is remiss of me if I do not declare to you that I myself have been an artiste over the years gone by.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Ratiram: I would have collaborated with my colleague who is here in the public gallery, Mr. Asten Isaac, and I salute him—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Ratiram:—with our song, “Carry the Flag”, it is there on *YouTube*, we can look at it.

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Ratiram: So, by extending the protection period, this legislation creates a stronger incentive structure for creative investment. It allows artistes, producers and performers to derive sustainable income streams from their intellectual output. But more importantly, it enables families and estates of creators to benefit from generational wealth derived from intellectual labour.

Mr. President, it is prudent in any democratic legislative process to anticipate and address concerns that might be raised regarding this is Bill. However, these concerns do not withstand careful scrutiny. The Copyright Act already contains well-established, fair dealing provisions and statutory exceptions that safeguard public interest uses, including education, research, private study, and reporting, and these protections remain fully intact under this amendment. Further, intellectual property is a recognized proprietary right grounded in principles of economic fairness. Just as tangible assets may lawfully benefit their successors, so too should intellectual labour generate legitimate generational value, thereby strengthening incentives for creators to produce work of enduring national and cultural significance that can be passed on to generations to come.

Moreover, rather than imposing undue barriers on industry, the Bill enhances legal certainty and clarifying commutation of the protection period and standardizing statutory interpretation, thereby reducing administrative ambiguity and potential litigation. International experience consistently demonstrates that robust copyright regimes stimulate investments, expand licensing opportunities, attract creative sector financing—

Sen. Dr. Browne: Mr. President, Standing Order 42(11).

Sen. The Hon. R. Ratiram:—and increase export—

Sen. Dr. Browne: I do not know if the Member has sought your leave.

Mr. President: Yeah, he can proceed. Continue, please.

Sen. The Hon. R. Ratiram: Thank you most kindly, Mr. President. Such policy direction is consistent with government's diversification agenda and our commitment to strengthening the non-energy revenue streams here in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. President. And this amendment supports Trinidad and Tobago, the diversification of our energy, and the creative and knowledge-based sector as a

meaningful contribution to sustainable national development in our country.

4.45 p.m.

Mr. President, I want to emphasize a dimension of this Bill that is sometimes overlooked, the relevance of the agricultural sector. Agriculture today extends far beyond primary production, Mr. President. It encompasses things, such as branding, agro-processing, digital marketing, knowledge dissemination and technological innovation. Intellectual property protection, including copyright, plays an increasing significant role in this ecosystem.

Allow me the opportunity to explain, Mr. President. Firstly, copyrights protect agricultural research outputs, technical manuals, training publications, training material and digital educational content, produced by our agricultural institutions, universities and research agencies. By strengthening copyright protection, we incentivize investment in agricultural research and knowledge development in this entire area.

Secondly, Mr. President, the agricultural sector increasingly relies on multimedia storytelling and branding to enhance commercial value of agricultural products. Initiatives, such as geographical branding, like how we have our Montserrat cocoa, our Gran Couva chocolate, and so forth. Geographical branding, promotional documentaries, digital campaigns and marketing material all rely heavily on protected creative works. Strong copyright protection ensures that the producers, cooperatives and agribusiness enterprises can safeguard their intellectual assets from unauthorized exploitation.

And, Mr. President, thirdly, this legislative enhancement supports the development of agro-tourism and cultural agriculture, including cocoa tourism, culinary heritage initiative and farm-based industries. These sectors rely heavily on protected audio-visual production, creative content and documentary

storytelling that preserve and promote our agricultural heritage. So, indeed, Mr. President, as Trinidad and Tobago continues to promote premium products, such as our Trinitario cocoa, protected intellectual outputs become integral to market differentiation, international branding and export competitiveness.

Mr. President, as we focus on the strategic crops within the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, our Trinidad and Tobago Trinitario cocoa is one of the strategic crops that we can boast about wherever we go in the world.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Ratiram: So I ask you for an opportunity to allow me to “dance the cocoa” a little this evening as it relates back to this Bill.

You see, Mr. President, Trinidad and Tobago’s Trinitario cocoa stands as one of the nation’s most distinguished agricultural and cultural assets, globally recognized for its exceptional genetic heritage, superior flavour profile and historic contribution to the international fine flavour cocoa market. As a hybrid originating from the criollo and forastero varieties, Trinitario cocoa represents innovation born from years of resilience by our cocoa farmers, as well as the adaption, and today continues to position Trinidad and Tobago as a premium producer with a global cocoa value chain.

Mr. President, today’s launch of the Trinidad and Tobago’s Trinitario cocoa certification trademark by the hon. Minister of Land and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the hon. Saddam Hosein, marks a historic and strategic milestone in safeguarding the authenticity, quality and geographical reputation of this prized commodity. And once more, we should congratulate Minister Saddam Hosein on spearheading this initiative.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Ratiram: This certification, Mr. President, not only protects

the integrity of our Trinitario brand, but also enhances market differentiation, strengthens export competitiveness, and empowers our local cocoa farmers and processors to command premium value for their cocoa in the international market.

The Copyright (Amdt.) Bill, 2026, complements and reinforces these national efforts by strengthening the broader intellectual property framework that supports agricultural branding, promotional storytelling, research publication and digital marketing associated with Trinitario cocoa.

Modern agriculture competitiveness extends beyond cultivation, into the protection of our creative and intellectual outputs, such as documentary content, educational material, promotional campaign, and heritage narratives that elevate Trinidad and Tobago's cocoa industry on the global stage.

By extending protection of the intellectual work and ensuring creators and producers maintain long-term control over their content, this Bill supports the sustainable commercialization of the Trinitario cocoa brands, protects investment in agro-tourism and product development, and reinforces the Government's strategic objective of building a diversified, knowledge-driven agricultural economy, anchored in innovation, authenticity and global excellence.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. R. Ratiram: So, Mr. President, as I wrap up and I conclude my contribution, in advancing this legislation, our Government, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, demonstrates its commitment to building a resilient, innovation-driven economy that rewards creativity, protects creators and promotes sustainable national development.

Mr. President, for these reasons and for what I have mentioned earlier, I wholeheartedly support the Copyright (Amdt.) Bill, 2026, and I respectfully urge

Senators on all sides of this Chamber to lend your support of its passage. Thank you.

Mr. President: The Minister of Land and Legal Affairs.

The Minister of Land and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (Hon. Saddam Hosein): Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I wish to thank my colleagues for their contribution on this particular Bill, which I thought would have been a very non-contentious matter. It certainly got a bit heated in this Chamber.

Mr. President, I want to thank the Attorney General especially, for really the tremendous work that he and his office and team would have put in terms of the drafting of this piece of legislation.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And there are just a few points I wish to respond to. Sen. Al-Rawi, he gets very upset every time we say good things about our Prime Minister because there are a lot of good things to say.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: The fact is, Mr. President, the record will speak for itself. The commencement date for the Copyright Act would have been the 1st of October, 1997, under the UNC Government, under Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

In fact, on our way out of government in 2015, we passed the Trade Mark Act of 2015, under a Persad-Bissessar-led administration.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: But you see, Mr. President, I think there is an issue of jealousy because we have a leader we can boast of.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: We have a leader we can boast of. I think they are confused of

who is leading them.

And my friend, Sen. Al-Rawi, said this is not a new concept. And I agree because we started it back in 1997. We saw the need for reform and we are back here, in 2026, getting it done. We are getting it done.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Promises made, promises kept. And he said, you know, the EU would have adopted this back in 2011, and I quote that he was keeping his eye on it. Mr. President, he was keeping his eye on it. I do not know where his eyes were but certainly, it was not on this Bill. So, Mr. President, it took us less than nine months to get this done to support the creative industry, to support our talented people of Trinidad and Tobago. We will do it, and we will do it again and again until we could bring the most relief and support to the people of Trinidad and Tobago in every sector. Because we said, when UNC wins, everybody wins.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And you see, my friend complained about Carnival. He said, what? “It buss?” He said “it buss dis year?” Mr. President, I saw him struggling through the crowd in CIC. I saw him struggling. He could not make his way through the thick crowd in CIC. So, I do not know “what fete he thinking it buss. But I think it have a fete coming up soon that the PNM having that he is anticipating will buss. Yeah, I think he is anticipating that one will buss.”

Mr. President, the Senator asked, why is it that this Bill is not operating retroactively and that they will lend us a special majority support. You see, it is very difficult to take legal advice from my friend, especially after his performance with the CEPEP matter. So, I cannot take legal advice from him, Mr. President, at all. I am afraid, we may have to pay cost.

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

Hon. S. Hosein: So, Mr. President, I will defer of the advice of the experts in the field. So, the World Intellectual Property Office would have advised our local IP Office, do not let this thing operate retroactively and I take that advice, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: I take that advice. So, I do not have—oh yeah, there is one more thing that Sen. Al-Rawi would have put on the record and I think I need to correct the record—two things actually. He said that bars are closing down all over, Mr. President. Now, Mr. President, I am a man, I do not consume alcohol. “I doh engage in no rum talk and I doh go to bars,” but it have an *AZP News* article here that I am seeing. It says:

“Bar Owners Dispute Online Claims of Closure”

And this article is dated the 1st of February, 2026—that is two days ago—and I quote, Mr. President:

“Not all bars named on the list circulating on social media—purportedly of establishments closed due to rising taxes—have actually shut down.

Some bar owners said they were confused to see their businesses included on the list, which began circulating three days ago. *AZP News* visited several establishments in the South on Friday night and Saturday morning.

At the former Rum Station Bar at San Francique, a new business—NiteLife Restaurant and Bar—was opened on Friday night.”

This, I think, they said was closed down, you know.

“This after five weeks of around-the-clock preparation.”

So, Mr. President, it is very difficult to take any advice or information from my colleagues in the Opposition. It is very, very difficult to do that, Mr. Speaker, because the facts speak for themselves. Facts are a stubborn thing. Facts are a

stubborn thing.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And then my friend tried to fear-monger. Mr. President, this is—they are doing this, not up here but in the other place also. He said that we are going to tax the Carnival industry. I think he said that in his debate. He said that we are going to tax the Carnival industry, taxing everybody. Well, Mr. President, I do a lot of research and I came here with some research. So I happened to find a *Trinidad Express* article dated the 11th of March, 2020. Who was in power in 2020? I think it was my friends opposite. The article is titled:

“Non-compliance level is high’
Minister Allyson West on Carnival taxes”

Let me get into the article, Mr. President.

“Carnival is big business”—I am quoting—“generating hundreds of millions of dollars in increased sales of alcohol and food for supermarkets and retailers every year.

But all-inclusive fete promoters, masquerade bands, soca stars, music truck owners, well-located bars as well as hotels and guesthouses collectively generate millions of dollars for their owners.

...how many local businesses either declare their Carnival-related income or pay the appropriate taxes on that income?”

Then the article goes on by quoting former Minister Allyson West:

“She said the TTRA’s focus will be on ensuring that there’s equitable compliance with the tax law.

She outlined that this includes ensuring that:

One—and I quote, Mr. President:

“• the tax net captures all taxpayers, including those from the informal

sector and those involved in periodic activity, such as events promotion and Carnival activity.”

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: So, do you understand what is happening here, Mr. President? They are, in fact, accusing us of something that they were going to do with the TTRA. That is why one of the first actions we took as a government was to repeal the dreaded TTRA; to repeal the dreaded TTRA.

5.00 p.m.

Mr. President, I go now to the contribution by Sen. Lewis, in terms of the orange economy, and the quantification of these matters. I am happy to report that the IDB, through the Ministry of Planning, is already embarking on such a project in terms of the quantification of the creative industry, not just Carnival alone, but round-the-clock creative industry in Trinidad and Tobago. I can also tell you from the IPU side of things that the TTIPU office has already engaged with the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) through a creative economy data model which is already an ongoing project collecting data, and information. So, Mr. President, the work is being done.

Hon. Senator: We are on it.

Hon. S. Hosein: We are on it.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Mr. President, I want to tell my friend, Sen. John-Bates, I think she said that we need to move the IPO to an authority and so on. I want to tell you, Mr. President, that under this Government, and the leadership of the IPO office, Mr. Asgarali, that the both CMO's have in fact engaged in mediation, and there will be a model coming very soon. In terms of going forward, there is no need to make the IPO office any authority. There is no need to do that. That will be done,

we are allowing the creative industry to regulate themselves in that manner.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Let them do it. I do not know how we reach from an argument, Sen. John-Bates, from one that we are trying to protect people work, give them protection to victimization. She accused us of victimizing people. Nothing in this Bill, not a single clause has anything to do with victimization. This Bill, this particular piece of legislation does not apply to one group, it applies to every single person.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: It applies to every single person. It does not apply to anyone group. And again, Sen. John-Bates raised an issue of AI, and in terms protection, and so on, I want to advise the Senator that according to copyright law—and I am going to use two jurisdictions, one in the US, and the other will be in the EU. Copyright, is really for human authorship, it is not solely by machine, I mean if there is some element of machine, yes fine, but you are copyrighting human authorship, human talent. So therefore, that does not qualify for copyright protection.

Mr. President, I am very shocked at the level of preparation, and analysis in this place by my friends in the Opposition.

Hon. Senators: You are very diplomatic.

Hon. S. Hosein: The US copyright office says that you only protect the fruits of human creativity. “Simple yuh know”. You cannot type up on ChatGPT, create a fake image of Anil Roberts, and put it on the Internet and say, “That has to be copyrighted”. That is not how this thing works. This copyrights human creativity and authorship. The EU says, that the author must own the intellectual creation. So, human creativity remains a key factor for protection. But, Mr. President, in

local parlance, and since we are in the Carnival season, they did not do it, we did it so “it hutting dem”.

Hon. Senators: “It hutting dem”.

Hon. S. Hosein: “It hutting em”.

Hon. Senator: Tabanca.

Hon. S. Hosein: This Government will continue to do all that we can to ensure to protect all of the citizens, because on this side, Mr. President—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—on this side, we are giving them performance, we are giving them performance, and we are giving them performance. I thank you very much, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Senate.

Senate in committee.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Senators, there are eight clauses, there are no amendments, so, I am taking all eight clauses together.

Clauses 1 to 8 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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

Senate resumed.

Bill reported, without amendments.

Question put: That the Bill be now read a third time.

Hon. Senator: Division.

The Senate voted: Ayes 30

Allahar, Hon. D.
John SC, Hon. J.
Roberts, Hon. A.
Swaratsingh, Hon. Dr. K.
Maharaj, Hon. S.
Baptiste, Hon. L.
Alexander, Hon. P.
Ratiram, Hon. R.
Persad, Hon. Prof. P.
Chaitan-Maharaj, Dr. N.
Charles, Ms. K.
Zakour, Hon. E.
Nakhid, D.
Rasheed, D.
Tripathi, R.
Browne, Dr. A.
Al-Rawi SC, F.
Roberts-Radgman, Mrs. M.
Dhanpaul, V.
Cummings, F.
John-Bates, Mrs. J.
Vieira SC, A.
Chote SC, Ms. S.
Attzs, Dr. M.
de la Bastide SC, M.
Jones-Simmons, Ms. M.

Lewis, F.

Murray, Dr. D.

Lalite-Etienne, Mrs. A.

Mc Nish, C.

Question agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

5.15 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

6.15 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Mr. President: The hon. Minister of Land and Legal Affairs.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

LAND ACQUISITION (REQUISITION) ORDER, 2025

The Minister of Land and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (Hon. Saddam Hosein): Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Whereas it is provided by section 5(1) of the Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58:01 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) that the President may by Order, declare that land is required for a public purpose;

And whereas it is provided by section 5(2) of the Act that Parliament may by resolution approve an Order made under section 5(1);

And whereas the Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2025 was made by the President under section 5(1) of the Act as Legal Notice No. 388 dated the 24th day of October, 2025;

And whereas it is expedient to approve the said Order;

Be it resolved that the Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2025 be approved.

Mr. President, again, I thank you for the opportunity to allow me to enter

and join this House in settling what is a very long-standing matter plaguing the good people of Tobago. This morning, I had the honour to deal with intellectual property with our Trinitario cocoa. We dealt with more intellectual property a short while ago with copyright, and now we are going into real property, in which we are dealing with lands.

Mr. President, the matter before us is a simple one, but it is exceedingly meaningful. We arrive at this juncture after 18 years. Eighteen long years it took us to finally formally vest this particular piece of land in the State. This parcel of land belongs to what we now call the Tobago Race Club Limited. It comprises of 40.4913 hectares that can be found registered in Certificate of Title, Volume 3085, at Folio 131; bounded on the north by the Claude Noel Highway, on the south by the Tobago Land Bank Company Limited, on the east by Estate Trace and on the west by Road Reserve 10.00 metres in the parish of St. Patrick, in the ward of Tobago.

Mr. President, the first notice that is before the public was a section 3 notice, where, according to the provisions of the Act, section 3 gives the intention of the State to acquire a particular parcel of property. This was done in 2008. Thereafter, we moved to the section 4 notices, which then allowed physical possession of the lands. This was published via Legal Notice No. 31 on the 12th of February 2009. So, after that, Mr. President, the matter went silent. Silent.

It took a United National Congress Government to try to start the settling of this particular matter, where compensation now that had to be paid to the Tobago Race Club was, in fact, paid between the period 2010 to the 2015 period. We demitted office then, in 2015, and Mr. President, not a single thing was done by the former administration. Not a single thing was done. One hundred acres of land

leaving Tobagonians titleless. And, you know what is even worse, Mr. President, is that they announced the major expansion of the ANR Robinson Airport in Tobago, having to relocate persons from where they live, some of them even had title, and place them on a parcel of land where the State did not even have title, rendering these people titleless.

Mr. President, we are here to fix it and give justice to the people of Tobago.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: It cannot be that all of us in this honourable Chamber know the issues plaguing Tobago with respect to title. And, this was one of the easiest matters that we can get to fix that 100 acres of land, vesting it in the State, thereafter going into the THA, because the THA is responsible for all state lands, save and except the Prime Minister's residence and the President's residence in Tobago. And, Mr. President, when I went into this file, there were Cabinet Notes drafted that never saw the daylight of the Cabinet room between the period 2015 to 2025 under the PNM administration.

One of the first things I did, Mr. President, is that when I saw this particular matter after it was raised with me during a visit I did with the Chief Secretary last year—he raised this matter with me. Immediately, Mr. President, we went to the Cabinet, and I went to the Cabinet on the 11th of September, 2025, and immediately the Cabinet approved this matter to bring relief to those Tobagonians, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: You see, when we deal with Tobago on this side, Mr. President, we do not deal with Tobago every four years. They tend to deal with Tobago, Mr. President, every time there is an election. Every time there is an election, you hear

my friends opposite talk about autonomy, and they talk about fixing land tenure in Tobago. There is no election, Mr. President, and we are getting the work done.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: We are getting it done. And, if they think that they can fool the people of Tobago, they have to think twice because they suffered the greatest defeat, 15-nil, recently, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Mr. President, 15-nil, 15-nil. Mr. President, this matter, we would have thought that they would have given some priority, that they were actually moving people physically to this location. It took a UNC Government in under nine months now to get this matter going and to give those Tobagonians titles finally. But, I am not stopping there, Mr. President, because in the other place, and I am sure it will be raised there, there is a parcel of land also, abutting or adjoining this parcel of land called the Friendship Estate.

The Friendship Estate, I can announce, that matter will be brought very soon to the Cabinet for a decision. The reason that has not been brought as yet is that they have some final surveys in order to be completed. It has to go to the Director of Surveys. Once all is in order, that matter will be brought to the Cabinet. The section 5 notice will be published, and very soon, I will be asking your honourable Chamber to give consideration to that particular matter, because these two parcels go as really one estate per se, although they are two separate acquisitions. They are very close to each other, Mr. President.

Mr. President, when we are able and are finished with this particular exercise—as I said, it is a simple exercise. It is a Motion. The direct benefit to the people of Tobago will now be able to obtain registered titles. They can take that

title to the bank, and they can get mortgage financing. They can also secure their business or home improvement loans. They could use their properties as collateral. They could now be formalized into the financial system so that they can monetize that particular piece of property that they have. I know many persons—and this is one of the reasons why we created the Ministry of Land and Legal Affairs. It is a long-standing issue in terms of tenure.

It does not only affect Tobago, but also Trinidad. And, persons often will tell me that they are afraid to improve their homes because “I do not know that this piece of land I live in, I will get a lease for it. I will get a deed for it.” So when these persons are given the comfort now of having their title in hand, they will feel more confident to use their homes as collateral, and as a financing tool and mechanism, so that they can access financing, and the direct benefit will be to stimulate the economy of Tobago.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: We will reduce all of those stressors and so on.

Mr. President, the good thing is that I am so happy that I can boast here today in terms of what is taking place at the Ministry of Land and Legal Affairs. When I went there firstly, I was appointed as the Minister of Legal Affairs and a Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries. Thereafter, what the Prime Minister would have done, in her wisdom, was consolidate the Valuations Division, the Land Management Division, the Surveys and Mapping Division, and the Registrar General’s Office all into one. Formerly, RG was in the Legal Affairs Office of the Attorney General. Valuations was in the Finance Ministry. You had the Surveys and Mapping in Agriculture. Each one of them has to speak to each other on a daily basis. They have a critical role to play in terms of regularization

of tenure and title. All of them under one umbrella Ministry now, Mr. President, you have matters flowing in a more quick, efficient and expeditious manner so that we can bring that level of security to the people of Tobago.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: That is why, Mr. President, I can proudly say that over 600 ex-Caroni workers were able to get their leases—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—their residential leases in under nine months. That is why I can tell you that over 200 persons were able to be given certificates of comfort under the LSA.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And that is why I am so happy to say today that 500 citizens will benefit from the Land for the Landless Programme, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Sixty per cent of the lands will be given to the general citizenry, 20 per cent is being reserved for public servants, and 20 percent is going to be reserved for recent graduates of any tertiary education institution.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And, Mr. President, that is not happening by chance. It is happening because a progressive decision was taken to consolidate all of these divisions within the Ministry of Land and Legal Affairs to take us to this point today.

Mr. President, this again, I hope, is another non-contentious matter. My friends opposite sat on this matter for 10 years. They did absolutely nothing for this particular piece of land. We were able to get this done in nine months, Mr.

Land Acquisition (Requisition)
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Hon. S. Hosein (cont'd)

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President, and I beg to move.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Question proposed.

Mr. President: Sen. Melanie Radgman-Roberts.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Melanie Roberts-Radgman: Thank you, Mr. President. Let me say from the outset that there is no intention to make this contribution a contentious one, although the goodly Minister went places that we really did not need to go. It has become very, very obvious that the PNM seems to live rent-free in the heads and the minds—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman:—and the hearts of those on the other side. Every minute, as Sen. Cummings likes to say, is PNM, PNM, PNM.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: Every minute we have to hear that. I mean, we are on a procedural matter. It is a simple matter, one that we agree with. You have our support. So, we did not expect the run-up that we got.

6.45 p.m.

Mr. President, the acquisition of state lands for public use is not a novel idea. It is not something that has never happened before. It is a routine thing; an administrative piece of work that happens under any government. This is not something that the UNC just came up with a couple of days ago. And I am sure we can all remember with some level of displeasure the kind of pushback and fight that the “PNM, PNM, PNM” would have gotten previously when we made attempts to acquire different pieces of land for public use.

Now, let me just say that while those on the other side seem to possess some sort of affinity for obstruction, confusion, and contention, we on this side, we, the People's National Movement, "PNM, PNM, PNM", support progress for the people of Tobago. And in this regard, we really and truly take no issue with the Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order being brought by the Government. It indeed aligns with our core principles and our very strongly demonstrated approach as it pertains to access to housing for individuals and families in Tobago.

And our track record speaks for itself, despite any sort of attempt to discredit the work that the PNM has done in this regard. We do have a track record. It stands; the people of Tobago continue to live with it. They continue to benefit from it. And this new acquisition, while it is supported and welcomed by us, it is but a drop in the bucket when you really compare it to the housing initiatives that would have been delivered by the People's National Movement across Tobago.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: And if we were to take a look at the period 20—let us go from 2001 to 2021, we would know that the People's National Movement implemented a very structured and somewhat evolving housing programme across Tobago. And this spans from your service lot developments to completed housing solutions to even mixed housing types, while also securing strategic lands to support long-term settlements, expansion, and national infrastructure development on the island.

Many families benefited from these. We had builders and contractors benefiting from these. We have had many workers benefiting from these. And as a Tobagonian, when I think about almost every single housing development that has taken place in Tobago under the leadership of the People's National

Movement, I think I could identify at least a few persons that I know of; a few families who were positively impacted by each of these developments.

And I mentioned that we would have started off initially with the service lots type of developments. The goal was really to expand access to land for the people of Tobago. So we wanted to support self-built housing while maintaining some sort of planned settlement growth. I think at that time it was because the People's National Movement realized that the culture in Tobago would have been one where we like getting our piece of land, and then we build our own style of houses. So when you think about the Calder Hall development, for instance, that represents a very early phase of the service lots type of development. And the model still exists. So we have the Shirvan Road service lot development that was undertaken a couple of years ago when persons were relocated from the Crown Point area because of the airport expansion. And that would have entailed preparing the residential lots and then your drainage, your water, and your electricity. We would have distributed between 40 and 60 service lots. And then, we did a similar development that the Minister would have mentioned across in Cove as well, for similar reasons; persons relocated from Crown Point, and they were able to get these lots fully developed and then construct housing. In some cases, they are small businesses in this area as well.

And then of course, there is the Courland development, and that is one that we are particularly proud of in Tobago. That is a prime development. The houses in that area are quite gorgeous. Approximately 114 to 116 service lots were distributed to the people of Tobago by the People's National Movement. And then of course, we had up in the east, Belle Garden Phase II.

Sen. Allahar: Mr. President, I think we are going all the way to Courland and up

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in the east of Tobago. Relevance 46(1). Thank you.

Mr. President: All right. Yes, I am giving the hon. Senator an opportunity to connect her points.

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: Thank you, Mr. President. I am just responding because the hon. Minister would have mentioned—

Sen. Allahar: You went all over Tobago.

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman:—some of his initiatives as well. So it is just in direct response to that. All right? And then, Sen. Allahar, we also had the Blenheim service lot development there as well, and you are invited to visit as well.

Sen. Allahar: “Nah, ah cah complain.”

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: Okay.

Sen. Allahar: “Cah complain.”

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: And it does not end there, Sen. Allahar. We also delivered single—

Hon. Senator: She is disregarding the rules.

Hon. Senator: Go ahead—[*Inaudible*]. Do not get distracted.

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: All right. Thank you. Yes, we also delivered single-family housing developments during our tenure as well, and this was an alternative to the service lot model, where we completed about—I do not have the figures here, but basically, under these types of developments, you had—

Hon. Senator: Plenty, plenty, plenty.

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: Plenty, plenty, plenty. All right, we are going with that.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: We had the detached single-family housing within

fully powered and planned residential developments. And here, we produced finished housing units supported by again, road networks, drainage systems, and utilities. And then, back in the east, we have the Renaissance in Roxborough—

Sen. Allahar: Mr. President, I rise again on relevance. Where are we going? Tobago is a small place. She is going all over. She is covering the whole of Tobago, and we are dealing with just one.

Mr. President: Yeah. I want to uphold the Standing Order raised by the honourable leader. If you can come back to the particular estate; Shirvan Estate. I think that would be more relevant to our Motion that is before us. Continue please.

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: Of course. Thank you for your guidance, Mr. President. We are here, we are contemplating, and we are discussing the acquisition of state lands to facilitate residential housing for families and communities across Tobago. So what I am doing is showing some of the similar types of housing that would have been carried out, and also kind of talking about the time frames. The hon. Minister would have mentioned that there would have been a gap between the section 4 notice, and then anything else was done until now. I am sure in the work that was done during that period—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman:—the period that the Minister would have asked why the gap was there. So I am just showing what happened during that period. It is relevant to the Minister's query about what happened between the issuance of the section 4 notice and what is happening now.

All right, and if I can continue, during this period from the issuance of the section 4 notice to where we are now, we would have also undertaken—we would have spent the time also implementing mixed housing developments. So you have

Adventure Phase II, where we introduced mixed housing types for the very first time on the island, and what we did was to combine single-family homes with townhouse-style units to cater to a variety of income levels and household needs. So whether you are a low-income, middle, or upper-income, we ensured that all families across Tobago had equal and equitable access to decent homes and good communities. No zones, just fair, equal, and decent treatment for all Tobagonians.

And the public programme records indicate that roughly 239 housing units were planned under that Adventure Phase II project, and at least 79 townhouse units were delivered into the national housing stock. And now, just like the Government is hoping to do today, during this period of time—so from, I guess, 2010 or whenever the Minister would have pointed, the People's National Movement pursued strategic land acquisition to secure Tobago's long-term settlement and housing needs.

These acquisitions were intended to support future residential—much like the residential community that we are contemplating today, community and infrastructural development. So we would have commenced acquisition of the Adelphi Estate again, for housing and community development, and then the Friendship Estate that was mentioned by—

Sen. Allahar: Mr. President, 46(1). This is a very narrow Motion.

Mr. President: Yeah. Sen. Melanie Roberts-Radgman, I would like you to just— if you look at the Land Acquisition Motion, I think it is confined to 100 acres. I think it is the Shirvan Estate, and there are houses there that are—based on what the Minister said—seeking to regularize title. It has nothing to do with anything outside of that arrangement. But I think we should try to zone in and confine ourselves to the Land Acquisition Motion in terms of the framework, I propose.

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Continue please.

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: Thank you, Mr. President. I am guided. And I had just segued before I was interrupted by the hon. Senator into the acquisition of the Friendship Estate, which was actually opened up in the debate by the hon. Minister. And the point I was making was that we would have commenced the process for the acquisition of the Friendship Estate mentioned by the Minister, and it was acquired to enable further settlement expansion and planned residential growth.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: One of our main areas of focus has always been the acquisition of lands to provide homes, communities, and development for the people of Tobago across various income brackets, age groups, and family structures. Now, Mr. President, when we decided as an Opposition that we had no objection to this Order or this acquisition, it was not my intention necessarily to stand in the Senate and speak on the great and lasting legacy that is the People's National Movement. But unfortunately, I could not allow the untruths and some of the misleading statements made by those on the other side to pass without refuting them, and without correcting them firmly. Nonetheless, Mr. President, we do affirm our commitment to the development of the island of Tobago, and to the people of Tobago. In central government, we will do it, and in the THA, we will do it.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. M. Roberts-Radgman: In government, we will do, and in Opposition, we will do it. This has been and will continue to be our approach. So, before I close, Mr. President, on behalf of this responsible Opposition, I call for accountability,

transparency, equity, and fairness in the manner in which this acquisition is carried out. Of course, having due regard to the rights and interests of all the Tobagonians who will be impacted by this action. We also call, as the Opposition, for fairness, accountability, transparency, and equity in the execution of the proposed housing development proposed for these lands.

Time and time again, we have spoken about the importance of, of course, including our local contractors and service providers in the execution of state projects. So as the Government advances its proposal and its intentions, it is my hope, and it is my encouragement, that our people will not be sidelined even as we open up the project on a national scale. And then, finally, Mr. President, once again, on this side, we call for accountability, transparency, fairness, and equity in the eventual allocation and distribution of these homes. And to close, Mr. President, as our friend Prime Minister Modi would have once said:

“Mere good governance is not enough; it has to be pro-people and pro-active. Good governance is putting people at the centre of the development process.”

And with these few words, Mr. President, I thank you.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: Sen. Francis Lewis.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Francis Lewis: Thank you, Mr. President. My contribution will be fairly short. I thank my two colleagues who spoke earlier to give me a bit of historical context. Forty-nine hectares translates to 121 acres. I am sitting here listening to this, and I am hearing the moral argument for the Order. I have no problem with it. But I am not hearing information that I need to make or have confidence that what

we are being asked to approve, that the required information is being shared with this Senate.

I was criticized for saying that I am new at this business, and I am. I was not here ten years ago. I feel as though I am joining a conversation in the middle. So here are my questions, and they are very simple: What is the economic value of this transaction? I did a quick search online, “Land in Tobago in the Lowlands”. There is one plot that is 23,000 square feet listed between \$2.1 and \$3.23 million. Another one-acre plot at \$2 million, and a five-acre plot at \$6.5 million.

6.45 p.m.

When I worked through the numbers, this suggests that the economic value of this is somewhere between, in TT dollars, \$250 million to about \$600 million. That is serious economic value. It has nothing to do with the moral worth of the argument, but that belongs in the presentation by the Government for approval to do this.

Beyond the economic value, how many people are affected? Not in total all the various projects that are happening, but in this specific project, how many specific people are being affected? How many families? When I talk about a conversation enjoined in the middle, once this Order is passed—and I think there is a general consensus that it seems to be a good thing, and let us do it—the people who are listening to this debate, they ask themselves, once the Order is made, what happens to get it to an end point? Because we are, unfortunately, accustomed to things happening in the Parliament and it takes a long time before the people, in whose name this is being done, see the end benefit of it.

So, the questions I have is, when we look at this, what is the economic value? How many people are being affected? What will happen once the Order

goes through—and I am presuming that it will—and once the land has been acquired, these 121 acres, how much of it is being used for very specific purposes? How much of it is specific to the people who have been displaced because of the airport project or for other projects? These are not generalities. This is people's lives. This is a significant piece of value. I think the Senate needs to be informed of this in making its decision. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. President: The hon. Sen. Anil Roberts, the Minister in the Ministry of Housing.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister in the Ministry of Housing (Sen. The Hon. Anil Roberts): Thank you, Mr. President. Sen. Roberts-Radgman, you said you did not come to talk untruths. So, I would just like to ask you, when you regaled us with all that PNM from 2001 to 2021, and you said, “We built this and we did that,” and so on, were you a Member the PNM, or were you a Member of the PDP until 2017? You would like to clarify? No? So therefore, if you were not a Member of the PNM, it will be incorrect to say, “We did this and we did that.” When you come in the Senate, you have to be—it is not funny, you know, it is a very serious—you cannot put things on the record that are not true. You were not PNM, so you were not “we” and you are not from Paris, France.

And do not take advice from Sen. Al-Rawi, because you might have to pay \$250,000 because “he does loss everything.” But we do not live rent free. PNM does not live rent free in our heads. It lives in \$69 million rent right next to you and \$500 million in contract.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts (cont'd)

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: That is why they in our heads, do you understand? Because we need that money to be shared amongst the people, especially of Tobago. Six hundred and nineteen rescuers live in our heads. That is not rent free, that is “buh-buh-billions” of dollars.

So, the disrespect of Tobago by the PNM continues, and it continues here today. So this might seem like a simple Motion, but we are here, once again, for the UNC Government to correct the record and to treat Tobago as an equal partner with love and respect.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: So, do not come here and cover people’s eyes. I am half Tobagonian. “I doh get involved in Tobago thing too often,” but when I hear disrespect and the PNM talking about Tobago, it really boils my blood. Because here it is that the UNC Government and a Minister sitting there, the hon. Saddam Hosein, met with the Chief Secretary only last year, and right here, a wrong that has existed for decades, has been corrected by this Government just like that.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: We must understand where your 15-0 came from. “Allyuh buy dat.” That did not come by mistake. You know what it is to get 15-0, 15-nil, 15-nada, 15-none? That is a serious thing.

Hon. Senator: They worked hard for it.

Sen. John-Bates: Mr. President, I rise on Standing Order 46(1), please, relevance.

Mr. President: All right. I will give him a little opportunity to develop his points, continue.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts (cont'd)

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Oh my goodness, you are learning from the wrong set of people. The relevance is, respect due to Tobago.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: “Fire bun PNM. Tobago doh want to hear from PNM. De way allyuh talk, all dat project yuh do and yuh get 15-0? Like nobody lives there in all dem house.”

Hon. Senators: [*Laughter*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: The Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2025, Cove Estate. Pursuant to section 5(1) of the:

“The President...”—of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is empowered to—“...by Order declare that”—any—“land is required for the public purposes.”

There is a procedure to be followed in order for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to formally acquire the land as set out in sections 3, 4 and 5.

Mr. President, “I doh normally take my time and read out thing” but this is so critical, because Trinidad and Tobago, we have had a history of PNM’s dominance, PNM’s refusal to accept Tobagonians as equals. They had people sitting down as Members of Parliament for Tobago, but fighting the PNM position, rather than fighting the Tobago position, and this must end. We must stand side by side and Kamla Persad-Bissessar says that is how she will govern.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: On the 28th of January, 2020, the then Minister of Finance, the hon. Colm Imbert, revealed a two-year project to expand the ANR Robinson International Airport. However, this meant that persons who were living on the perimeter of the airport would have had to be relocated. And we might want

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts (cont'd)

to rush this Motion, you know, but no, these people suffered. House and land. These are human beings. Their children were studying for exams. They were unceremoniously kicked out, disrespected and could not get their money. “So allyuh take all yuh time and listen.” The half Tobagonian is talking today, Mr. President, and these people deserve this to be on the record, because the PNM likes to push their heads in the sand under Pigeon Point and pretend like they love people. It is the most disrespectful government in the history of the Caribbean. This meant that persons who were living on the perimeter of the airport would have had to be relocated since that land would have been required for the expansion.

A two-year contract was then signed by representatives of the National Infrastructure Development Company, NIDCO, and the contracting company for the expansion, China Railway Construction. It is ironic that there was another Chinese company who got some HDC contract that the PNM then had to rescind, because it was the most corrupt contract in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, with excesses and advance payments of 30 per cent mobilization fee, “half ah buh-buh-billion” dollars, overpriced, and they had to withdraw it and rescind it, when none other than the then former, former Prime Minister was the Acting Minister of Housing, but then said, he did not know how the Cabinet Note reached to the Cabinet, when only the Minister, who is in charge. could sign the red file for the Cabinet Note to reach. But that is the PNM. That is the pathology of the PNM, and it is been unmasked.

In January 2023, Minister Imbert stated that some \$237.79 million was paid out by the then Government to residents whose lands had been acquired to

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts (cont'd)

facilitate the construction of the new airport terminal and associated works at the ANR Robinson International Airport.

NIDCO, being the executing body of the project, published a video in 2019, which outlined the procedure of acquiring the land surrounding the airport. The video stated the following order of events. You see, they put it on the record. They put dishonesty on the record, and we have to correct it. The then President of Trinidad and Tobago published a legal notice in the *Gazette* of the land required for the expansion of the airport in March 2019, pursuant to section 31(a) of the Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58:01.

The Commissioner of State Lands was also allowed to enter the lands to take surveys and do studies. The then President of Trinidad and Tobago then published an Order later in September 2019—just before sitting down to meet with the former, former Prime Minister, to discuss the removal or withdrawal of a merit list and then the collapse of the Commissioner of Police and so on, around that same time—authorizing the Commissioner of State Lands, without waiting for the formal vesting of the land in the State under section 5, to take possession of the land and apply it for any purpose connected with the use to which it is intended to be put on acquisition, pursuant to section 4(1) of the Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58:01. This included construction of the ANR International Airport. This allowed the affected residents six months from the service of this notice to vacate their land.

If that is not oppressive, if that is not disrespectful, if that is not tyrannical, I know not what is. So, save me the sanctimonious nonsense about the PNM in Tobago from 2001 to 2021, where money went through Tobago like a dose of salts

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts (cont'd)

over \$23 “buh-buh-billion” and nothing to show for it., overruns on every single project, but people disrespected. Your 15-0 was coming. It was bought. It was purchased. It was delivered.

This would have followed with valuations of each parcel of land, negotiation with each landowner and a settlement on a price. In terms of the valuation, NIDCO claimed that the owner of the land would have obtained a valuation report for their land, which was their claim for compensation. The owners would have been encouraged to use a valuator registered with the Institute of Surveyors of Trinidad and Tobago. The State would have had then to pay the cost of the owner’s valuator and the valuator would quantify the owner’s claim under the recognized heads of the claim. The owner would then submit this claim to the body approved to do so, which was ACQ & Associates at that time.

In terms of the negotiation, NIDCO claimed that the State would have undertaken independent valuations. The owner and the State then entered into negotiations with ACQ, and before agreement, the owner was able to make a claim for an advance payment up to 80 per cent of the State’s value.

Sen. Roberts-Radgman: Mr. President, 46(1), please—

Mr. President: No.

Sen. Roberts-Radgman:—these—

Mr. President: No, yeah, yeah, yeah, 46(1). I overrule. Continue, please.

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: Listen carefully, you may learn something instead of misleading the Senate by saying that “you is ah PNM, 2001 to 2017.” You were not. So you did not know what they did. You are a lifetime Member now, “so yuh does go retroactive?”

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts (cont'd)

Hon. Senators: [*Laughter*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: “I doh understand that.” But this is something confusing. “You gone retroactive PNM?” But that is excellent. That is brilliant. You are amazing. Yeah. You really suit the PNM. That is true. “Okay, doh disturb meh nah.” I was born PNM, but I will never die PNM. I realized how evil PNM is.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: I did not choose PNM. “I come out PNM. Dat was in pampers.” Yes. But when I learned that it is wrong, and it is evil, and it is wicked, I burned my card, never to return.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts: “You choose dat. You was PDP and you choose. Doh compare dat, please. Doh disturb me.” This is important.

In terms of the negotiation, Mr. President—I am glad that you are paying attention, because you may want to understand the relationship that Tobago has had with PNM. Imagine, Tobagonians spit out a Tobagonian 15-zero. “Dat doh happen” unless something is drastically wrong with that human being.

In terms of the negotiation, NIDCO claimed that the State would have undertaken independent valuations. The owner and the State then entered into negotiations with ACQ, and before agreement, the owner was able to make a claim for advance payment of up to 80 per cent of the State’s value. The ACQ then submitted settlements to the State for approval.

In terms of settlement, NIDCO claimed that the State approved compensation and the owner would have had to be paid. The owner would then vacate the property. The President would have then declared that the

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts (cont'd)

land is required for public purposes by an Order in January 2023, pursuant to section 5(1) of the Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58:01. This formally vested the land surrounding the ANR Robinson International Airport in the State.

That was in the PNM, who was in charge of the State.

As a result of the ANR Robinson Project, Crown Point residents were displaced. The Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2025, seeks to provide the land for the establishment of a housing settlement and expansion of villages.

To correct the wrongs, to correct the disrespect, to correct the oppression of the tyrannical PNM.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:

The previous administration took no steps to provide alternative housing or housing opportunities for those displaced by the ANR Robinson International Airport construction.

“Who dead, dead. Who homeless, homeless. Go yuh way. Dat is PNM. Dat is why yuh get 15-0.”

7.00 p.m.

It was not a secret. “Ah didn’t have ah crystal ball, but I know when people are fed up, and the people across Trinidad and Tobago are fed up of the PNM. Dey doh kno who is dey leader, dey doh know where dey going, dey doh know how to do it”, and that is why they will remain over there.

Compensation is not enough. People were displaced from family homes, nurtured communities, and had a way of life in their established community. The Land Acquisition Order, 2025, once approved here today would finally

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts (cont'd)

provide a reasonable housing and community alternative after five—after years of being displaced without any due consideration from the previous PNM Government.

Neither the Prime Minister—or the PNM Prime Minister—or NIDCO spoke of or mention relocation of displaced homes. As a result, the process has been fraught with legal action, compounding the clear and apparent lack of consideration for the people of Tobago affected. The Land Acquisition Order before the Upper House today represents true leadership, true respect, equality, equity, and upholds the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

That is what the Member for Siparia rules by, she rules with fairness and love across Trinidad and Tobago—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. The Hon. A. Roberts:—and would not obfuscate or shirk her duty because the PNM—I have 15 reasons, but I will save “allyuh”. I will use that for Doubles and Coffee; 15 reasons why you got 15-0, including the dishonesty that was stated here today, including the disrespect of a Chief Secretary by a former, former Prime Minister in a public event, including opening “ah airport dat dey have no gas for de plane in order to mamaguy people”.

That is the PNM, and that is why you all are over there. So with this, we are now say to Tobago, the United National Congress hears you, we see you, we love you, and you are our equal partners in governance moving forward. Thank you, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: Sen. Dr. Amery Browne.

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Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. Amery Browne: Thank you for recognizing me, Mr. President. Mr. President, I think we need to define for this Government, once and for all, what is meant by a non-contentious debate, because just like earlier today we entered these proceedings anticipating broad support for measures that are deemed non-controversial by basically every Senator that has spoken thus far. Such support was also granted on one of the measures in the Lower House, but for some reason this Government appears unable to engage in non-contentious discourse.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: If you listen to them very closely, Mr. President, it really does sound as if, psychologically, they are still in Opposition railing against the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

I mean, Mr. President, on two occasions we have had Sen. Roberts intervene, very loud decibel, and ranting and raving, so I am forced to respond to some of the submissions that he has put in the *Hansard* here today. Mr. President, it is a good thing this is a simple majority debate, because if there was one Senator with the ability to unscure a goal for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne:—just as was done not too long ago, it would have occurred in this particular debate.

Mr. President, Sen. Roberts rose after an extraordinary and erudite contribution by my colleague—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne:—who is authentically from Tobago and was representing the clear voice of Tobagonians in this Senate, reflecting some appreciation of the

accurate history of public works and infrastructure on that island. And, yes, the Senator, my colleague, gave a fairly exhaustive list and went into some detail in outlining the work done by the People's National Movement, including work that would have entailed the land acquisition of lands for public purpose.

So I was listening to Sen. Roberts to glean any rebuttal or refutation on his part for any of the items listed by Sen. Melanie Roberts -Radgman. I did not hear any of that. All that I heard, again, at very loud decibel, "All dat and you loss", and I think he gave the scorecard, "All dat and you loss, 15-0." I just want to tell the Members of this Government, yes, "All dat and you lost", all that to say, the People's National Movement does not do public works just with an eye on the next election.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: We do, and we have always done public works with an eye on the next generation, both of Tobagonians, Trinidadians, and Trinbagonians. So that is the philosophy.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: So, win, lose or draw, we will continue to perform on behalf of the people of both islands and the country altogether.

So it is not just about an election result, election reward, et cetera, et cetera. But the most disturbing part of the contribution we just heard, Mr. President, and there were several disturbing elements, were the very vigorous references to corruption raised by Sen. the hon. Anil Roberts. He made heavy weather of corrupt airport contracts, Mr. President, and I believe the reference was, "The most corrupt airport contracts", et cetera, et cetera, but, Mr. President, I have two things to say in response to that submission. Number one, by my recollection, it was a

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United National Congress Government that gave this country—

Sen. Alexander: Mr. President, I would like to ask how far—[*Inaudible*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Mr. President, may I proceed with my contribution unless the—

Sen. Alexander: 46(1), Mr. President, I just want to ask, how far away from the actual Motion he is going to go?

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. President: Alright. I am going to allow him to develop and once he is—I will intervene. Continue, please.

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Mr. President, I am responding to the contribution of the Senator who just preceded me. If Sen. Alexander is lost in the proceedings of the Senate, well—

Sen Al-Rawi SC: Again.

Sen. Dr. A. Browne:—once again, I cannot help him.

Sen. Ratiram: Mr. President—

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: I cannot help him. So, Mr. President—[*Inaudible*]

Sen. Ratiram: —I rise on Standing Order 46(1), this is not about the Standing Order raised by the hon. Member. This is about what—

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. President: Okay. Okay. Yeah. I am saying that I listened to 46(1), I am allowing the Member to continue. If he is going off course, I will interject and intervene. Continue.

Sen. Alexander: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Thank you for allowing me to respond, Mr. President. Mr. President—

Sen. Alexander: I would like to stand on 46(4), and I said it last week that Sen. Browne and Sen. Al-Rawi have a running crosstalk about—

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Mr. President, I will continue my contribution, but because you are on your legs, I will have my seat. What is going on?

Mr. President: Yeah. Yeah. All I would like, I just want to remind colleagues that when you raise a Standing Order, I do give a little flexibility to allow you to explain, but I do not want a dialogue or a narrative. All I want Members to do is to say, 46(4) or (6) or (8), and I have the Standing Orders here and I will rule. So to give an explanation, I want us to avoid that. That takes up time. So you are raising Standing Order 46—

Sen. Alexander: (4).

Mr. President: (4), and that is offensive and—

Sen. Alexander: Against me.

Hon. Senators: [*Laughter*]

Mr. President: No, that is offensive and—

Sen. Alexander: Offensive and insulting.

Mr. President: Yeah.

Sen. Alexander: Could I stand?

Mr. President: No. No. No. That is the Standing Order. So what I am saying is that I am going to allow the Member to continue, and I did not see much in that one, but I am going to follow very closely on what Sen. Browne is saying and I will rule accordingly. Continue, please.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Mr. President, this is the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago, this is not the playground at St. Mary's College.

Mr. President, I was on the quote that was shared by Sen. Roberts when he referred to the airport contract as the most corrupt contract in his recollection, and I was—

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Mr. President, can I be allowed to proceed in silence?

Mr. President: You have my protection, please.

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: We are not giving out O'Levels or A'Levels here, unfortunately. Mr. President—

Sen. Alexander: Mr. President, 46(4), he just did it again, and that is what he and that is what—

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: He is continuing with the same Standing Order over, over and over.

Mr. President: Yeah. Listen, I do not think the person made reference to anyone. He made a general statement, which he is entitled to do, once he does not impute or refer to any particular Member that would be in breach of the Standing Orders. So continue, please.

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Mr. President, every time they interrupt, I will say it again, the most corrupt airport-related scandal in the history of Trinidad and Tobago was given to this country by a United National Congress government.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: If they interrupt me again, I will say the same thing because it is the truth, not just with respect to Trinidad and Tobago, but the entire English-speaking Caribbean. So I was very astounded to hear a UNC Senator making those references. But I want to go a little beyond that because we are talking about corrupt contracts, and if it is Sen. Roberts who is our correspondent in this matter, I

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would have anticipated some revelation or indication of insight into the LifeSport programme, where—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Allahar: Mr. President, 46(6), he is imputing improper motives.

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. President: Alright. Just as how Sen. Al-Rawi objected to any imputation or raising issues of conduct surrounding him, I would uphold that Standing Order. If you want to raise a matter involving a Member, the way you referred to Sen. Roberts by name and LifeSport, I am saying you are imputing improper motives indirectly and I am asking you, and so on, if you want to go that route and you want to investigate or raise the conduct of a Member of this House, do it properly, not in an ordinary debate. Continue.

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Thank you, Mr. President. And for an abundance of clarity, I wish to make or refer no improper motive to Sen. Roberts. If in this debate though, the Government were to make any allegation of corruption against the People's National Movement, I would invite any Member of this UNC Government to provide some details to the people of Trinidad and Tobago—not Sen. Roberts, any one of his colleagues, Mr. President, with respect to the horrific LifeSport scandal where \$420 million—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne:—was sequestered for gangsters, for murderers, and there are even concerns in the public domain—

Sen. Tripathi: Mr. President, 46(1), please.

Sen. Dr. A. Browne:—about the death of Dana Seetahal.

Sen. Tripathi: 46(1).

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Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Senator: “Why yuh doh say dat outside de Parliament”?”

Mr. President: Okay. Okay.

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Senator: “Why yuh doh say dat outside de Parliament”?”

Mr. President: Okay. Alright. Listen, now I have ruled on this matter on the LifeSport but it seems as though it was not properly communicated. You have continued along that particular line and I am saying to you that you have also made a lot of allegations which are not only imputing but—

Sen. Roberts: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. President: Please. So I am saying that, move on, move on from that subject matter, lest I call on you to apologize for what you have just said. So let us proceed and move on, please. Thank you.

Sen. Roberts: [*Inaudible*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Thank you, Mr. President. It seems that we have gotten under the skin of Sen. Roberts.

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Mr. President, could I be allowed to proceed in silence.

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. President: Hello, hello, hello, could we have quiet. And please, Sen. Roberts, please do not shout across the Floor, and that language is not permissible. Please. Okay? That is not parliamentary language. So, please, let us conduct ourselves professionally. I have ruled on this matter, move on, please.

7.15 p.m.

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Thank you for your protection, Mr. President. Mr.

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President, again, this should have been non-contentious—

Sen. Roberts: [*Interruption*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne:—but Mr. President, he continues to interject across the Floor. This should have been non-contentious. It is the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that sought to open this debate, and now it seems they want to play mas but are afraid of powder.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Mr. President, I accept your ruling fully, and I will move on from that particular issue. But we are in a debate. I heard Sen. Lewis rise in his chair, and ask—

Hon. Senator: [*Interruption*]

Mr. President: Please.

Sen. Dr. A. Browne:—a series of very specific questions, Mr. President, in the course of this debate. And then a Senator rose to respond, and I heard not a—maybe I misheard—single response to the questions posed by the Senator. I believe those questions are worthy of response from the Government. Not seeking to extend the debate much further, but these questions have been posed, and I want to implore the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, before the conclusion of the debate, to provide some additional information as has been requested on the Floor of the Senate.

And, once again, there are some of those questions that the Opposition might be able to contribute to in response to Sen. Lewis, but we are on this side of the aisle. You are the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. So instead of talking about an airport scandal and all sorts of other historical references, just some valuation and indication of quantum, as requested by Sen. Lewis, probably would have made for

a more substantive contribution.

So, Mr. President, in speaking about the people of Tobago and their welfare, I think it is important that we connect with their current sentiments while we are engaged in this debate. I am sure the people of Tobago are quite pleased with the Motion brought by the goodly Minister; they are also under a bit of pressure. And, there is that old saying that you can treat with my infrastructure, but you also have to treat with the things that are immediately in front of me as well. So, it is just to reflect our connection and concern that the challenges currently being experienced with supplies in Tobago, we would hope the Government would find the opportunity—

Sen. Allahar: Mr. President, 46(1). This is a very narrow Motion.

Mr. President: All right. Let us conclude it. Continue. Yeah.

Sen. Dr. A. Browne: Thank you, Mr. President. No need to get excited. So, Mr. President, just connecting to those contemporary concerns on behalf of the people of Tobago. We will continue to advocate for the people of Tobago, no matter which side of the aisle we find ourselves. I want to congratulate, once again, our sister from Tobago, Sen. Melanie Roberts-Radgman—

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Sen. Dr. A. Browne:—for doing an excellent job. I would have hoped that this debate would have already have been concluded, but I thought it necessary to rise and—

Hon. Senator: [*Interruption*]

Mr. President: Please allow the Member to continue.

Sen. Dr. A. Browne:—respond to some of the assertions made by my erstwhile colleague across the aisle. Mr. President, with these few words, I thank you.

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Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: I would like to advise Members before I call on the hon. Minister of Land and Legal Affairs to speak. We have to be very careful on both sides; because the contention is really on both sides here. We have to be very careful in making allegations about any Member of this honourable House. If you want to raise allegations about any Member in terms of his or her conduct, do it properly on a substantive Motion, not in the course of an ordinary debate. I am very disturbed and troubled by the language that has passed across this Floor a short while ago. I would ask Members to be very careful in the future. Sen. The Hon. Saddam Hosein, Minister.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Land and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (Hon. Saddam Hosein): Thank you. Mr. President, you referred to me as a Senator. I do not know if you want me back in this place.

Mr. President: The hon. Minister of Land and Legal Affairs.

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk and laughter*]

Hon. S. Hosein: I do not know if you want me back in this place.

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. President: You are bringing back the old days. Because you see, I remember you sitting there with me. So, forgive me.

Hon. S. Hosein: All forgiven, Mr. President. Mr. President, I listened to the contributions of my colleagues opposite. I really only have one colleague to give a substantive response to and that is Sen. Francis Lewis. The other two contributions were devoid of merit and any logic. It was all full of politics and fluff and that is why they got 15-nil.

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Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: So, let me frontally just answer Sen. Lewis. Sen. Lewis, your first question was: What is the economic value of this transaction? I can tell you on the record that it is \$50 million. It was, in fact, negotiated. Most of the moneys have been paid to the Tobago Race Club Limited, and there is a balance that is still outstanding.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: You asked also: What happens when the Order goes through? In relation to the law, once the land is formally vested into the State, it will go directly to the THA, which has management of all state lands in Tobago. They will now be responsible for the regularization of this particular estate. So that is the answer there.

What are the plans for Cove? I can tell you the initial intention for the acquisition had to deal with housing and settlement. That has, in fact, commenced with the relocation of the residents based on the airport relocation programme.

So, on the property, I am advised by the THA, that there are persons currently there who were relocated, but they are without title. So, there is a house, and they are living there. There are some businesses that were, in fact, moved across there. So that is operating. The other parts of the land, central government is not going to get involved in THA business, in terms of that land will be regularized based on THA.

Sen. Dr. Swaratsingh: And vested in THA.

Hon. S. Hosein: Yeah. And be vested in the THA. So, if they decide to expand the housing development that is the prerogative of the Tobago House of Assembly. We are not going to get involved in Tobago's governance in that regard. We leave

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it for the people of Tobago to determine their way forward.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: But what was surprising, Sen. Lewis, is when I had to respond to you, I had to learn that the expansion project of the airport, where the expansion is, would you believe that is not in the State? That is not in the State. So, in fact, now I have to go and bring those particular Orders now to vest the airport in the State. The expansion project is not in the State. Could you imagine that? And that is the mess that they left us in. You know when those plans were completed? Those final approved plans were done in 2019. We are now in 2026. They sat on their hands and did absolutely nothing, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Nothing, Mr. President. Nothing. Nothing.

Then, I want to say, Sen. Melanie Roberts-Radgman, you purported to deliver all of those houses to the people of Tobago. But, they were not convinced in January of this year. That is why they took the PNM out of Tobago. They took them out of Tobago. What I was expecting to hear my colleagues opposite respond and say was what the reason for the delay was. None of them in the Opposition Bench could have explained to the people of Tobago—

Hon. Senators: Why?

Hon. S. Hosein:—or explained to the Senators why there was a delay. Why? The plans were approved. Why was there a delay? It simply is that they do not care for the people of Tobago.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And Sen. Roberts-Radgman raised a point. Mr. President, I do not want to bring you into this debate, but in my early years in this place, you told

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me, “Do not ask a question you do not want an answer for”. Sen. Roberts-Radgman raised the Adelphi Estate. Now, I had to pull the records immediately about Adelphi. A part of the Adelphi is now vested in CLICO, and another part is vested in one Sharon Clark-Rowley.

Hon. Senators: Ooohhh.

Hon. S. Hosein: And there were several transactions, when I pulled the certificate of title, where parts of it were then transferred to one Rohan Sinanan. I do not know if you know who he is. Then I saw another piece transferred to Noel Garcia and Maureen Garcia.

Hon. Senators: Ooohhh.

Hon. S. Hosein: I do not know who is that. And then there is one transfer to Garth Alleyne. I do not know who that is. I do not know. I do not know who these people are. These are public records available, stamped, registered, endorsed at the back of the CT with Adelphi. So, Sen. Roberts-Radgman, you do not ask a question you do not want an answer to.

Then she spoke of how we must have fairness. We must have transparency. We must have accountability with state lands, acquisitions, and so on. What about when—she spoke of all of the housing developments in Tobago except Inez Gate, where the former, former Prime Minister got a discount on a townhouse from his really good friend for half a million dollars. I did not hear Sen. Roberts-Radgman speak of that.

Sen. Roberts-Radgman: Mr. President, 46(1) please.

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. President: No, he is responding. Sustained. Please.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

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Hon. S. Hosein: Thank you very much Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: You see, Mr. President, the Member asked for transparency and accountability, and went into all matters of detail. Sen. Browne went into the airport in Piarco, I think, then he went to LifeSport, and so on. But what they should tell is, while he was sitting in the Cabinet, why did Michael Quamina get a parcel of land Down D Islands for \$2,500 per month, measuring at least, I think it was 20,000 square feet, about four lots of land for \$2,500 a month? Why did Howard Chin Lee get the lease for Alcoa?

Sen. Al-Rawi SC: Mr. President, I rise on Standing Order 46(1), please.

Mr. President: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. I overrule that. Continue.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Thank you very much. And, as we are on the point of acquisition, Mr. President, tell us why a sitting government Minister was trying to negotiate a private interest in a parcel of land called Kay Donna. Tell us. Tell us why. If you want transparency, you want accountability and fairness, I will give you the response. And ,if you turn all the way to your left, if I want to respond to Sen. Browne, you may have colleagues who occupy state lands.

Hon. Senator: PNM. PNM. PNM. PNM.

Hon. S. Hosein: But I would not get into those matters here, Mr. President. I would not. I would not get into those matters. But I did not intend to go down this road. Sen. Browne took us down here. Sen. Roberts-Radgman took us down here, Mr. President. If they want transparency and accountability, I will give them the answers, Mr. President.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And then Sen. Browne said that if we required a special majority, if it was not a simple majority, that we would have lost because of Sen. Roberts' speech. So, you are going to deny the people of Tobago titles because you did not like Sen. Roberts' tone or that he spoke the truth that you did not like? That is the politics that they are engaged in, Mr President?

Hon. Senators: [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. S. Hosein: That is what they placed on the *Hansard*, Mr. President? Mr. President, I had to go and look at a definition of something called "sanctimonious hypocrisy". It is the behaviour of acting morally superior, pious or self-righteous while secretly violating the very principles one proclaimed.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: It is absurd, Mr. President. Mr. President, what we are doing here is correcting a historical wrong. There are more of these matters to settle. I give the assurance to the people of Tobago, I give the assurance to the people of Trinidad, that whatever I can do as the Minister of Land and Legal Affairs, with the consent and the approval of the Cabinet, and within the four corners of the law, I will try my best, Mr. President, to ensure that I can bring relief and regularization and tenure to people.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: If I must leave at a young age with a legacy, Mr. President, I want to ensure that young people are assured that they have something called security of tenure that they can live on.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: I thank you very much, Mr. President. I would like to thank my colleagues, the Independent Senators, and also the Opposition Senators, for

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engaging in this debate. I thought it was non-contentious, it would have a little contention, but it was a pleasure to be here in this House after six years. It is a pleasure to be here. I hope to be here even more often, Mr. President, to engage your House in the business of giving people lands in an equitable, fair and lawful manner. I thank you very much, and I beg to move.

Hon. Senators: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. President: Did you say “I beg to move?”

Hon. S. Hosein: Yes. I did, Mr. President.

Mr. President: Okay.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That the Land Acquisition (Requisition) Order, 2025 be approved.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. President: Leader of Government Business.

Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Sen. The Hon. Darrell Allahar):

Mr. President, at this point, I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn to Friday, February 6th 2026, at 1.30 p.m.

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 7.31 p.m.