HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 20, 2026

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. Vandana Mohit, Member for Chaguanas East; the hon. Phillip Watts, Member for La Horquetta/Talparo, and Mr. Brian Manning, Member for San Fernando East, who have all requested leave of absence from today's Sitting of the House. The leave which the Members seek is hereby granted.

BILLS OF SALE (AMDT.) BILL, 2026.

Bill to amend the Bills of Sale Act, Chap. 82:32 ("the Act") to increase the renewal period for the registration of a bill of sale from three years to five years. The Bill also seeks to increase the period that must elapse from the date of registration or renewed registration of a bill of sale, after which a renewal is required, from three years to five years, brought from the Senate [*The Minister of Land and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries*]; read the first time.

Motion made: That the next stage be taken later in the proceedings. [*Hon. S. Hosein*]

Question put and agreed to.

REAL PROPERTY (AMDT.) BILL, 2026.

Bill to amend the Real Property Act, Chap. 56:02 ("the Act"), to remove the jurisdiction of the Registrar General in relation to applications to bring land under the Act in respect of imperfect and possessory title, to transfer such jurisdiction to a Judge in open court and to provide for related matters, brought from the Senate

[*The Minister of Land and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries*]; read the first time.

Motion made: That the next stage be taken later in the proceedings. [*Hon. S. Hosein*]

PAPERS

1. Statement of the President under Section 11 of the Special Operations Act, 2026 setting out the Specific Grounds on which the decision to declare a Special Operations (Closed Area) Order, 2026, for the Maloney Buildings Housing Development, Maloney Gardens, Maloney, with effect from November 10, 2026 was based. [*The Deputy Speaker (Dr. Aiyna Ali)*]
2. Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the Ombudsman for the period January 2025 to December 2025. [*Dr. A. Ali*]
3. Unconsolidated Financial Statements of Lake Asphalt of Trinidad and Tobago (1978) Limited for the year ended September 30, 2017. [*The Minister of Finance and Minister in the Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development (Hon. Davendranath Tancoo*)]

   Paper 3 to be referred to the Public Accounts [Enterprise] Committee.
4. Financial (Prescribed Forms) Regulations, 2026. [*Hon. D. Tancoo*]

Mr. Speaker: Member for Oropouche West.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (ENTERPRISES) COMMITTEE REPORTS (Presentation)

The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the following reports:

Vehicle Management Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited

The First Report of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee on a Follow-up Examination of the Implementation of the Recommendations in the Eighteenth

Report of the Committee on the Audited Accounts, Balance Sheets and Other Financial Statements of the Vehicle Management Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the Financial Years 2015 and 2016, First Session (2025/2026), Thirteenth Parliament.

National Quarries Company Limited (NQCL)

The Second Report of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee on the Examination of the Audited Accounts, Balance Sheets and other Financial Statements of the National Quarries Company Limited (NQCL) for the Financial Years 2016 to 2020 and a Follow-up on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Committee's First Report in the 11th. Parliament, First Session (2025/2026), Thirteenth Parliament.

URGENT QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Member for Arouca/Lopinot.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Tabaquite Booster Station
(Vandalism at)

Mr. Marvin Gonzales (*Arouca/Lopinot*)**:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To this Minister of Public Utilities: In light of the vandalism at WASA's water infrastructure at the Tabaquite Booster Station, what urgent measures are being put in place by WASA to minimise these acts of criminality?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Public Utilities.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*].

The Minister of Public Utilities and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Barry Padarath): Thank you most kindly, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I join once again with WASA and the Ministry of Public Utilities in condemning the vandalism that has taken place not only at Tabaquite, but, over the

last couple of months, across the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago as it relates to WASA assets.

In light of the continuous incidents of vandalism, WASA and the Ministry of Public Utilities have reached out for specific technical equipment and manpower support across a few state agencies. This is now a matter of national security, and therefore I will not want to say more to compromise our combined efforts.

Mr. Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Gonzales: Thank you very much. Supplemental question to the Minister. Thank you very much for that information, Minister. I am happy to hear the request for support from other state agencies. Supplemental question: Can you say whether or not, at that point in time when this matter occurred, there were security measures at the Tabaquite Booster Station?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister.

Hon. B. Padarath: I spoke with the CEO of WASA this morning, and I am so advised.

Mr. Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Gonzales: Thank you very much. Supplemental question, Minister, can you say whether or not anyone was arrested at this point in time for this serious criminal act that continues to affect thousands of our citizens across the board?

Mr. Speaker: Yeah—alright. Let us move to the second question—I agree. In any event, whether someone is arrested or not, let us not get into a discourse on that. Member for Arouca/Lopinot, your second question.

El Socorro Booster Station
(Mechanical/Electrical Failures)

Mr. Marvin Gonzales (*Arouca/Lopinot*)**:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Public Utilities: In light of the reported mechanical and

electrical failures at the El Socorro Booster Station that impact the supply of water to several communities, what urgent measures are being put in place to assist affected customers?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister.

The Minister of Public Utilities and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Barry Padarath): Thank you most kindly, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, WASA has advised me this morning that out of the two pumps that operate out of the El Socorro Booster Station, one is currently functional. The other should be up by 4:00p.m. later today. In light of that, I can also announce, based on the question posed by my colleague from Arouca/Lopinot, that we have taken immediate steps right now to ensure that the El Socorro Booster Station starts its refurbishment work.

This was a booster station that was left to languish by my colleagues opposite, with very little maintenance, and therefore we have seen the result of that by the continuous breakdowns from last year into this year. But in this last financial package presented by the Minister of Finance, we were able to put some money towards some refurbishment work that will commence in this fiscal year to alleviate those challenges.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Mr. Young SC: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Minister, based on an Unplanned Service Interruption Notice from WASA, and the affected areas being the Port of Spain area predominantly, as well as Port of Spain South, Picton II and Knaggs Hill Reservoirs, Barataria, Laventille, Port of Spain, St. Ann's, Morvant, Cascade, East Dry River, Dibe, Long Circular, Port of Spain, St. James, St. Barbs, Cocorite, Gonzales, and Belmont. These people have had no water for the past month. How is this going to affect them?

Mr. Speaker: Member, all right. I know you want to catalogue the areas in your constituency. But I will just ask you to bear in mind the supplemental question must comply. It should not be more than 15 seconds in length. But Minister.

Mr. Young SC: It was less.

Mr. Speaker: No, it was not less. No.

Mr. Young SC: [*Inaudible*]—until interrupted.

Mr. Speaker: No, no.

Mr. Young SC: So how is it going to affect those areas?

Mr. Speaker: Minister.

Hon. B. Padarath: Mr. Speaker, I think if the hon. Member had listened to me carefully, he would understand that by later today the other pump will be up and running. And therefore, a lot of the challenges that those areas are facing will be alleviated, and there is a long-term plan in terms of refurbishing the El Socorro Booster Station that my colleagues left unaddressed.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Member for Arouca/Lopinot.

Mr. Gonzales: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Supplemental question. Minister, with respect to those high, elevated areas where normally it would take days upon mis-scheduling, when you have this disruption in place. What is being put in place to address the shortages and the disruption in the schedule for communities that live on high, elevated areas, those customers that live on high, elevated areas?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister.

Hon. B. Padarath: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, also understanding the challenges that we may not be able to meet every demand and critical need for water across the country, I have asked WASA to look at the amount of water trucks that they have in those areas and to work with representatives to see where we can

provide additional assistance to bring about a greater measure of relief in the absence of the second pump being functional. But as I said, by 4.00 p.m. today it should be functional.

My colleagues raised the issue of elevated areas, and these elevated areas just did not arise out of thin air. The situations have existed for quite a while—and had they left us with pumps that were functional over the last nine, going on 10 years—their own constituencies. So, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West listed out all the areas in his constituency but failed to acknowledge that even when he served for that short one month as Prime Minister, they did nothing in those constituencies to fix the pumps that my colleague from Arouca/Lopinot is now referring to.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. B. Padarath: So, if you did not fix it then, do not expect that it is going to happen by the flip of a switch—and in just a year and a couple of months. So, they have told us what? "Deal with it." We are dealing with it.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. B. Padarath: But we are dealing with it by cleaning up your mess that—

Mr. Young SC: You are dealing with it by taking away water from Port of Spain.

Hon. B. Padarath:—you failed your constituents. You failed your constituents for the 10 years that you were in office.

Mr. Young SC: Punishing, geographic discrimination.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House.

The Minister of Public Utilities and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Barry Padarath): Thank you kindly, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government is in a position to answer all questions listed on the Order Paper with the exception of Question 66. I asked for leave of the House, Mr. Speaker, to

have this Question deferred for two weeks.

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Marvin Gonzales (Arouca/Lopinot).

Construction of Goodwood Police post
(Status of)

66. Mr. Marvin Gonzales (*Arouca/Lopinot*) asked the hon. Minister of Homeland Security:

With regard to the construction of the Goodwood Police post, can the Minister indicate the following:

a) the name of the contractor on the project;

b) the method of procurement used, whether it was open tender, limited tender or sole select;

c) the name of the Consultant/Engineer for this project;

d) the name of the entity responsible for the evaluation of works on behalf of the Government for this project; and

e) whether this project has been abandoned due to structural problems associated with soil erosion?

Question, by leave, deferred.

Mr. Speaker: Can I now call on the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West?

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Preventive Detention Orders
(Details of)

20. Mr. Stuart Young, SC (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*) asked the hon. Homeland Security: to the Minister of Homeland Security:

In light of the end of the State of Emergency, on September 17, 2026, and the release of persons detained pursuant to Preventive Detention Orders (PDOs)

during the State of Emergency, which commenced in March 2026, would the Minister inform this House of the following:

a) how many persons were detained pursuant to PDOs;
b) how many persons were released following the revocation of their PDOs;
c) how many persons were released upon the expiration of the State of Emergency, without their PDOs having been revoked; and
d) how many persons detained pursuant to PDOs were subsequently charged with an offence(s)?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Homeland Security.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Homeland Security (Hon. Roger Alexander): Yeah, thank you, Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's East.

Hon. Members: West.

Hon. R. Alexander: West, West. I do not know if you were sitting in this Chamber before, but I would have answered this question before. I think you were absent on the day in question. However, however, however—the answer to the first part of the question, which is (a), 57 persons were detained. And this information is provided by the Commissioner of Police, in light of the end of the State of Emergency on September17, 2026, and the release of persons detained pursuant to the Preventative Detention Orders (PDOs) during the State of Emergency, which commenced in March2026.

1.45 p.m.

I say again, Member, 574 persons were detained, 412 persons were released following revocation of their preventative detention order. No persons were released under SOE expiration, while their PDOs remained unrevoked, and 260 detainees were subsequently charged with offences. Thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Question No. 21, Member for Laventille West.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Reopening of Laventille Community Swimming Pool (Details of)

21. Mr. Kareem Marcelle (*Laventille West*) asked the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs:

In light of the Minister's indication that the Laventille Community Swimming Pool would be reopened in the first quarter of 2026, can the Minister indicate:

a) whether the renovation works at the Laventille Community Swimming Pool have been completed;

b) whether the pool has been reopened to the public;

c) if the answer to part (a) is no, provide the reasons for the delay in completing the renovation works; and

d) if the answer to part (b) is no, when is the pool expected to be reopened

Mr. Speaker: I am advised that the hon. Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation is acting in the position and is in a position to answer the question. Hon. Minister.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation and Acting Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Eli Zakour): Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question is in four parts. Responding to (a), there were no renovation works undertaken at the Laventille Community Swimming pool. Part (b), the pool is not open to the public. Part (c), there are several structural issues, structural cracks, pool leaks and areas of rooted steel along the portal frames at the Laventille Community Swimming pool, hence a comprehensive assessment report has to be undertaken to determine the extent of the repairs and renovations

necessary prior to commencing works at the facility. Part (d), a structural assessment report along with the other preliminary works are expected to be undertaken in fiscal 2027. The recommendations of that report will determine the duration of the repairs and refurbishment works. A reopening date will be determined upon the completion of the works at the facility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Hosein: Mr. Speaker, may I just rise? I have looked at the contents of this question. I just want to enquire, Mr. Speaker, whether or not the Member has a conflict of interest with respect to this particular matter?

Mr. Speaker: Barataria, I do not think that arises.

Hon. Member: It does not.

Mr. Marcelle: And no, I do not—

Mr. Speaker: All right. There is no—

Mr. Marcelle: Saddam.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Member for Laventille West, there was not a need to respond, okay. So that question has been answered; do you have a supplemental?

Mr. Marcelle: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: All right. Can we take your first supplemental?

Mr. Marcelle: Thank you very kindly, Mr. Speaker. And for the record, I have no conflict of interest in the Laventille Community Swimming Pool, Barataria/San Juan.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Marcelle: "Fass and out of place". Supplemental question to the Minister. Can the hon. Minister indicate which state agency would be spearheading the project management in relation to the renovation works and plans, please?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, are you in a position, having regard to your answer,

are you in a position to answer that now?

Sen. The Hon. E. Zakour: No, I am not, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Okay. Question No. 23. Member for Laventille West.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Laventille Steelband Festival Foundation
(Status of Grant Funding for Emancipation Parades)

23. Mr. Kareem Marcelle (*Laventille West*) asked the hon. Minister of Culture and Community Development:

With respect to fiscal 2025 and 2026 applications for grant funding submitted by the Laventille Steelband Festival Foundation for funding in relation to the Emancipation Steelband Street Parades, can the Minister indicate:

a) the status of the applications;

b) where any application remains outstanding, the reason/s for the delay in its determination; and

c) the reason/s for the delay in the disbursement of the approved funding?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Culture.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Culture and Community Development (Hon. Michelle Benjamin): I thank the Member for this question. Mr. Speaker, as it relates to part (a), I have been advised by the Grants Committee of the Ministry that an amount of $100,000 was paid to the Laventille Steelband Festival Foundation for their event in 2025.

As it relates to part (b), the Laventille Steelband Festival Foundation submitted their application for 2026 on August 27th, 2026, for an event which took place on 8th August, 2026. As it relates to part (c) of the question, a meeting has been requested by the Laventille Steelband Festival and it is being scheduled with the technocrats to discuss the way forward.

Mr. Speaker: Laventille West.

Mr. Marcelle: Thank you very kindly hon. Minister for your response. One question, in relation to the $100,000 that was paid for the 2025 Laventille Steelband Festival, can you indicate when this payment was made, please?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister.

Hon. M. Benjamin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe it was paid in this fiscal as I inherited a system of late payment. And even when I took office, I was paying grants from 2024, and I did not want to not honour any previous approval that I met on file, so I have been paying.

Mr. Speaker: Question No. 24. Member for Laventille West.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

East Port of Spain Development Company Limited
(Appointment of Board of Directors)

24. Mr. Kareem Marcelle (*Laventille West*) asked the hon. Minister of Housing:

With regard to the East Port of Spain Development Company Limited (EPOS), can the Minister indicate:

a) when would the Board of Directors be appointed;

b) if the Board has not yet been appointed, the reason/s for the delay in the appointments;

c) how many projects were executed by EPOS between May 2025 and September, 2026 without a Board of Directors in place; and

d) during the period May 2025 to September 2026, how many employees:

i. were terminated; and

ii. contracts were not renewed?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Housing.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Housing (Hon. David Lee): Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With regard to Question No. 24, it is a four-part question. Part (a), as stated in the Standing Finance Committee, Member, arrangements are being made to appoint a Board of Directors. Part (b), the Board has not been appointed as yet, but we are currently—as I stated in the Standing Finance questions, an internal evaluation of the company is being conducted presently.

Part (c), how many projects were executed between May '25 to September '26? No new projects were executed. We are continuing based on the information I have, old projects, to ensure that the old projects that are outstanding were completed during the last fiscal. Part (d), how many employees were terminated? None were terminated Member. Twelve employees' contracts had expired, and their employment subsequently continued on a month-to-month basis up to September 30th, 2026.

Dr. Moonilal: Well said, well said.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Marcelle: Supplemental.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, Member for Laventille West.

Mr. Marcelle: Hon. Minister, you have indicated that there is an internal assessment that is affecting the appointment of the Board of Directors. Might I ask, one, my first supplemental is, what is the deadline in relation to this internal assessment to appoint the Board of Directors?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister.

Hon. D. Lee: Mr. Speaker, I just want to correct the record. The statement that the Member made, there is no internal evaluation being conducted that is affecting the appointment of the Board of Directors.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Marcelle: Second supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Can the hon. Minister indicate whether the Board of Directors would be appointed in this fiscal, 2027?

Hon. D. Lee: I want to assure the Member, again, as I did in the Standing Finance Committee, that that will be in place shortly.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Arouca/Lopinot.

Mr. Gonzales: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Supplemental question to the Minister. Minister, in the absence of a board at that state entity, what corporate governance measures have been put in place by your Ministry to protect the taxpayers of this country?

Mr. Speaker: All right. That does not arise from the primary question.

Hon. Member: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: It does not. Arouca/Lopinot.

Mr. Gonzales: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Gonzales: Minister, matters that require board approval, what is in place to have those matters approved at that state entity in the absence of a board?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister.

Hon. D. Lee: Mr. Speaker, through you to the Member, there is an oversight by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and they are handling that.

Mr. Speaker: The four questions have gone. Question No. 28. Member for Arima.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Institute of Marine Affairs
(Appointment of Board of Directors)

28. Mrs. Pennelope Beckles-Robinson (*Arima*) asked the hon. Minister of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development and Minister in the Ministry of Finance:

With regard to the appointment of a Board of Directors at the Institute of Marine Affairs, can the Minister state:

a) whether a Board was in place during the period April 29, 2025 to September 15, 2026;

b) if the answer to part (a) is no, can the Minister state when will the board be appointed?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance I am advised will answer the question.

Dr. Moonilal: "Oh yes."

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Finance and Minister in the Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development (Hon. Davendranath Tancoo): Thank you very much Member for your question. Member, this is a two-part question. The answer to question (a), this is question 28 (a), the answer is no. With regard to (b), the Cabinet is currently considering the appointment of a new Board of Directors at the Institute of Marine Affairs. The Ministry remains committed to advancing this process, or for facilitating the appointment of an appropriate board to provide effective governance, direction and oversight for the continued advancement of the Institute's mandate and strategic objectives. Thank you.

Mrs. Beckles-Robinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Hon. Minister, having regard to the fact that it is more than 18 months without a board, can you advise how the operations of the IMA are impacted?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, I am of the view that that question does not arise from—it is a carefully drafted question, and I am of the view that it is not a proper supplemental question. Next question, honourable.

Mr. Gonzales: [I*naudible*]

Mr. Speaker: Yeah, you may once you have the leave of the—

Mr. Gonzales: All of us can ask supplementals. I do have the leave. Minister,

matters that require board approval at the Institute of Marine Affairs, what system has been put in place by your Ministry to have those issues addressed?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister.

Hon. D. Tancoo: Hon. Member, I think my colleague, the Minister of Housing, has provided clear suggestions to a similar question asked before. There is already a structure headed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry that would treat with these issues.

Mr. Speaker: Arouca/Lopinot.

Mr. Gonzales: Thank you very much. Thank you, Minister. Minister, what legal authority does your Permanent Secretary have to replace the functioning of a duly appointed board at that institute?

Mr. Speaker: All right. Minister, I think the Standing Orders—there is one and if I am pressed to find it, I will find it. It is impermissible to seek to elicit a legal opinion by way of a question. And Member, I am sure you know that, right? The Standing Orders do not permit you to ask a question eliciting a legal opinion or a legal view. It is in here. If you need me to find it, I will find it for you. Fourth question? You have another one? Question No. 29. Member for Arima.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Trinidad and Tobago's First Nationally Determined Contribution (Status of)

29. Mrs. Pennelope Beckles-Robinson (*Arima*) asked the hon. Minister of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development:

With regard to Trinidad and Tobago's first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the UN, can the Minister provide the following:

a) an update on the status of its implementation under the Paris Agreement; and

b) the amount of emissions released in each sector identified in the NDC?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Finance and Minister in the Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development (Hon. Davendranath Tancoo): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago submitted its first intended Nationally Determined Contribution on the 21st of October, 2015, to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which became the country's first Nationally Determined Contribution upon ratification of the Paris Agreement on the 22nd of February 2018. Trinidad and Tobago's NDC, that is the Nationally Determined Contribution, outlines the country's commitments under the Paris Agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change. It identifies key sectors for emissions reduction and establishes actions to support the country's transition towards a more sustainable, climate-resilient economy. Significant progress has been made towards establishing the institutional, technical and financial arrangements required to implement and monitor the country's climate commitments.

Key achievements include: the development of an NDC implementation plan; the development of an NDC financial investment plan; conduct of an indebt gender analysis and an action plan in the context of NDC implementation; design and operationalization of a measuring reporting and verification system to facilitate tracking of the GHG emissions and NDC implementation which has expanded into a more comprehensive national transparency system; the development of Trinidad and Tobago's First Biennial Transparency Report 2024, outlining progress in GHG emissions reduction and NDC implementation; updating of the national climate change policy; participation in the climate and clean air coalition and fiscal incentives to accelerate electric vehicle adoption. Trinidad and Tobago has submitted its second NDC to the UNFCCC on the 26th of January 2026, and

approved a new climate change policy on 17th July 2025.

In answer to part (b), Trinidad and Tobago, as a party to the UNFCCC, is required to submit reports on the status of implementation of commitments under the Paris Agreement as articulated in their NDC. The amount of emissions released in the year 2022 for each sector identified in the first NDC as contained in the Third National Communication First Biennial Transparency Report to the UNFCCC are as follows: power generation sector, 5,848.59 gigagrams of carbon dioxide equivalent; transport sector, 2,328.48 gigagrams of carbon dioxide equivalent; industrial processes and product use, 15,185.65 gigagrams of carbon dioxide equivalent and fugitive emissions from fuel, 14,994.59 gigagrams of carbon dioxide equivalent.

Updated emission data has been determined as part of the process of the development of the Fourth National Communication Second Biennial Transparency Report, which is expected to be completed by the 31st of December 2026. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Member for Arima.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. Beckles-Robinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Hon. Minister, with the 92-megawatt Brechin Castle Solar Farm being taken off the grid, how does this impact on Trinidad and Tobago's implementation of the nationally determined contributions?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, I—I, hon. Minister.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Hon. D. Tancoo: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am anxious to provide answers to the Member for Arima's questions, and if she would format

them properly and put them in the proper context and sequence and timing, I am sure that I will be able to provide such an answer.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: All right. Before moving, Member for Arouca/Lopinot, the Standing Order I was referring to was Standing Order 30(d):

> Questions must not "be repetitive, ask for an expression of opinion or seek legal interpretation or opinion;"
>
> And (g), so a combination of both,
>
> "…be asked for the purpose of obtaining an expression of opinion, the solution of an abstract legal question, or the answer to a hypothetical proposition;"

So those are the two Standing Orders, right.

Mr. Gonzales: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Speaker: Sorry?

Mr. Gonzales: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Speaker: You are seeking clarification—

Mr. Gonzales: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Speaker: You are not sure?

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Gonzales: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the supplemental question that was posed to the Minister was in relation to the point that he made that the Permanent Secretary—

Mr. Speaker: Yes, and the point that he made, you sought to suggest—

Mr. Gonzales: I am not finished yet, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: All right. Well I think I will—

Mr. Gonzales: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And the Minister said that the Permanent Secretary is providing oversight to the state agency. I was just

simply trying to get from the Minister what was the legal basis for the Permanent Secretary replacing the function of a duly appointed Board.

Mr. Speaker: No. He never said so. The Minister never said that the Permanent Secretary replaced the function of a duly appointed Board. You see—

Mr. Gonzales: I said that was my question.

Mr. Speaker: No. No. No. That was not your question. Your question was, what was the legal authority of the Permanent Secretary to exercise supervisory jurisdiction over the, the Board.

Mr. Gonzales: Yeah.

Mr. Speaker: And that clearly runs afoul of Standing Order 30(d) and 30(g), the cumulative and combined effect of those two Standing Orders. All right, so let us move now to question No. 30, the Member for Arima.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Impact of El Niño on Trinidad and Tobago (Government's Plans to Address)

30. Mrs. Pennelope Beckles-Robinson (*Arima*) asked the hon. Minister of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development:

With regard to the impact of El Niño on Trinidad and Tobago, can the Minister indicate:

a) the plans being implemented by the Government to address the impact of El Niño; and

b) the status of implementation of those plans?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance and Minister in the Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development (Hon. Davendranath Tancoo): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much to the Member of Arima for her question. The answer to Part a), an interministerial committee has been

established coordinate national preparedness for planning, mitigation and response activities in anticipation of the forecast impacts of the El Niño 2026 weather phenomenon on Trinidad and Tobago.

The committee comprises members from the following Ministries: the Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development, which would chair the committee; the Ministry of Public Utilities; the Office of the Prime Minister, Communications Department; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government; the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries; the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure; and the Tobago House of Assembly.

The interministerial committee has prepared a national action plan aimed at strengthening national preparedness, protecting vulnerable communities and reducing the potential effects of drought, water shortages, wildfires and extreme heat. This action plan outlines a five-pillar framework for national preparedness and resilience as follows:

Pillar one, water security, agriculture and livelihood support. It aims to strengthen water security and safeguard agricultural production and livelihoods against adverse effects of drought. Pillar two, disaster management, infrastructure and public information. This pillar seeks to enhance disaster preparedness, strengthen emergency response capacity and safeguard critical infrastructure and public safety.

Pillar number three, bushfire prevention and public space risk reduction. This addresses the need to mitigate wildfire risks, protect communities and minimize the potential environmental and infrastructural impacts of bushfires.

Pillar number four, health, heat response and protection of vulnerable groups. This pillar prioritizes the protection of public health and the safety and

well-being of vulnerable populations against extreme heat and other El Niño-related conditions.

Pillar number five, coordination, community engagement and monitoring. And this pillar emphasizes interagency collaboration, community participation and effective oversight to facilitate a coordinated and accountable national response to El Niño.

In answer to question Part b), the national action plan is to be submitted for the approval of the Cabinet of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Member for Arima.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. Beckles-Robinson: Thank you. Hon. Minister, you mentioned a national action plan. Could you also indicate whether there is a national adaptation plan?

Mr. Speaker: Hon Minister.

Hon. D. Tancoo: Hon. Member, again, I encourage you to put your questions in specific writing, and I would be able to provide those answers for you as you do.

Mr. Speaker: All right, question No. 67, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Unipet/T&T National Petroleum Marketing Company (Fuel Subsidies Owed)

67. Mr. Stuart Young, SC (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*) asked the hon. to the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries:

Can the Minister advise how much money is owed for fuel subsidies by the State as at October 26, 2026 to:

a) Unipet; and

b) Trinidad and Tobago National Petroleum Marketing Company (NP)?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Thank you, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In response to question No. 67 on the Order Paper, Mr. Speaker, the fuel subsidy arises when the Government of Trinidad and Tobago regulated wholesale price of petroleum products, the regulated prices lower than the applicable market-rated reference prices, presumably inclusive of the approved gross margin sale.

The subsidy is calculated monthly by multiplying this price difference by the actual volume of each petroleum product sold. Consequently, the subsidy liability fluctuates with international petroleum product prices, exchange rates and domestic consumption volumes, even when regulated, local selling prices remain unchanged. The Petroleum Production Levy and Subsidy Act provides for the financing of the fuel subsidy through contributions from qualifying crude oil production under the petroleum production levy, which the Government of Trinidad and Tobago takes responsibility for and then meets any shortfall.

Subsidy obligations are incurred monthly. Where payments from Government funding to the National Petroleum Marketing Company and Unipet are insufficient to settle these obligations, the unpaid amounts are carried forward. Dating back to the 1990s, this recurring shortfall between subsidy obligations and actual payments has resulted in the accumulation of outstanding subsidy liabilities across successive financial years.

Mr. Speaker, in the context of this question, it is important to note that the fact is that over the years there has also been a challenge faced by Government in covering subsidy payments. A vivid example is in fiscal 2018. The outstanding subsidy liability was $1.4 billion, and no money was allocated in the budget for the

subsidy. In 2019, the outstanding subsidy at the start of the fiscal was over $2 billion. Only $400 million was allocated by the then Minister of Finance, the Member for Diego Martin North/East. Only $400 million out of a fiscal need of $2 billion. And in reality, only $58.5 million was actually released by the Ministry of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, in that context, in that context, I wish to indicate that the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries receives monthly fuel subsidy submissions. It is against this background that we can state the amounts owed to Unipet and National Petroleum Marketing Company as at 31st October, 2026. At 31st October, 2026, Unipet fuel subsidy at $0.44 billion; National Petroleum fuel subsidy at $1.33 billion, with a total of $1.77 billion.

May I add, as a recent development, Mr. Speaker, with our great compliments and commendation to the Minister of Finance, in October 2026, quite recently, the Ministry of Energy requested the release of $450 million for fuel subsidy payments. The Ministry of Energy has since prepared the cheques for this amount on the 18th of November, 2026. And that amount of $450 million will be made available through the work of the Minister of Finance, and we want to thank him for that.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Young SC: Thank you very much. So, Minister, at this date of the 31st of October, 2026, over $2 billion are owed to NP and Unipet, and you are only providing $450 million. Minister, what is the current solvency of NP as a result of, of this $2 billion, $1.8 being owed to them?

Mr. Speaker: All right, that does not arise. Minister, you do not have to answer that question.

Mr. Young SC: Okay. Second supplemental.

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Young SC: Minister, you took a long, long, long run-up and talked about billions owed in 2018 and 2019, et cetera. At no point in time, certainly when I was—

Mr. Speaker: All right. Port of Spain North/ St. Ann's West, can I just remind you—

Mr. Young SC: "Why yuh didn't remind him when he was—"

Hon. Members: [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Port of Spain North, all right. Okay. Pursuant to Standing Order 55, take an hour's walk.

Mr. Hosein: Correct.

Mr. Speaker: Take an hour's walk.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Exit the Chamber for an hour.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Exit the Chamber for an hour.

Mr. Imbert: You have to warn him first.

Mr. Gonzales: Mr. Speaker, can I—

Mr. Speaker: Exit the Chamber for an hour.

Mr. Gonzales: Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Young SC: Standing Order 55?

Mr. Speaker: Exit the Chamber for an hour. I am not entertaining any argument on that. Exit the Chamber for an hour. You will return at 3:12.

Mr. Young SC: 3.20?

Mr. Speaker: 3:12. Exit the Chamber for an hour. You want to ask a supplemental? No. No. No.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Juan Pablo Segura (Official Visit)

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs (Hon. Sean Sobers): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been authorized by the Cabinet to make the following statement: During the period 16th to 18th November, 2026, Mr. Juan Pablo Segura, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs of the United States of America, paid an official visit to Trinidad and Tobago. The visit formed part of continued efforts by both Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America to deepen diplomatic and economic ties in areas critical to our shared interests.

Mr. Speaker, during his stay, Assistant Secretary Segura met with representatives of both the Government and the private sector to advance shared energy, security and commercial priorities, in a meeting with the hon. Prime Minister. On Monday, November 16th, 2026, the hon. Prime Minister, Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, met with Assistant Secretary Segura at the Diplomatic Centre. I was pleased to join the Prime Minister at that meeting, along with my colleagues, the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, the hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal, and the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, the hon. Mr. Wilfred Nicholas Morris.

The discussions focused on expanding cooperation in national and regional security; attracting foreign investment; strengthening energy partnerships; and creating new economic opportunities for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

2.15 p.m.

Both countries reaffirmed their long-standing friendship and their commitment to developing a stronger, mutually beneficial partnership. The Prime

Minister expressed the Government's appreciation to His Excellency President Donald Trump, his administration, and the American people for their continued friendship, cooperation, and support and reaffirmed this Government's determination to work closely with its American partners to advance shared strategic interests.

On the issue of security cooperation, Mr. Speaker, security cooperation featured prominently on the Assistant Secretary's agenda. The meeting underscored the importance of continued collaboration and the security challenges affecting Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean. On Tuesday, 17 November, 2026, Assistant Secretary of State Segura visited the maritime operations command centre at Staubles Bay, accompanied by the Chief of Defence staff and the contingent from the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, US officials and the Minister of Defence.

During that visit, both the US and Trinidad and Tobago reviewed the results achieved against transnational threat networks and, in particular, how the activities of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force align with the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition, the A3C. Assistant Secretary Segura was extremely impressed with the work of the joint US-T&T task force and pledged enhanced military assistance to Trinidad and Tobago to further strengthen its national security apparatus.

On the issue of energy cooperation. Mr. Speaker, energy cooperation remains a significant component of the relationship between our two countries. Trinidad and Tobago is seeking to strengthen its position as a regional energy producer while pursuing opportunities for investment and economic expansion. Assistant Secretary Segura himself described our natural resources as one of the biggest assets that Trinidad and Tobago possesses and underscored the importance of this country's energy success to the United States and regional economic

security.

Investment opportunities, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Assistant Secretary Segura has signalled that the United States, I repeat, the United States, has identified a pipeline of some US$5 billion in potential investments—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Sobers:—by American investors, supported through American finance institutions including the US International Development Finance Corporation, the DFC, and the Export-Import Bank of the United States, EXIM. These investments include but are not limited to data-centre development, artificial intelligence infrastructure, and the refurbishment and recommissioning of the former iron and steel plant at Point Lisas.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Sobers: These projects could generate more than 5,000 jobs to Trinbagonian nationals.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Sobers: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will continue to work closely with our American counterparts to ensure that proposed investments move beyond discussion to implementation, and to position Trinidad and Tobago to benefit from changing global investment patterns.

Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Trinidad and Tobago has continued to strengthen its longstanding relationship with the United States through high-level engagement on shared security and economic priorities. These engagements have included the Prime Minister's participation in the Shield of the Americas Summit in Doral, Florida, at the invitation of His Excellency President Donald Trump, and meetings with United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington, DC, and St. Kitts. "Doh worry, I will be on time."

The visit of United States Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau in August 2026, followed by Assistant Secretary of State Juan Pablo Segura's visit earlier this week, provided further opportunities to advance this cooperation. These exchanges reflect the Government's commitment to a constructive and mutually beneficial partnership with the United States. The Prime Minister has reaffirmed our determination to work with international partners to combat narcotrafficking and transnational crime, while supporting regional stability and economic development.

Mr. Speaker, the Government maintains that stronger diplomatic engagement with the United States, as this country's largest trading partner, can contribute to greater economic opportunity, enhanced national security and long-term development for our country. The Government will continue to keep this honourable House and the public informed as various initiatives continue to progress. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. All on time. All on time.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

BILLS OF SALE (AMDT.) BILL, 2026

Mr. Speaker: Hon. 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): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move:

> That a Bill entitled an Act to amend the Bills of Sale Act Chap. 82:32 be now read a second time.
>
> Mr. Speaker, the matter before the House today is a very simple, practical, common-sense, and non-contentious matter engaging the attention of these elected Members of Parliament. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that this Bill received unanimous support in the other place on Tuesday—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—and I hope that position holds, because I know sometimes my colleagues opposite are quite unpredictable. So, I do hope that we also get the support from my colleagues opposite today.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is three clauses long, with really one substantive amendment, which is simply to increase the period of registration of a bill of sale for a period of three years to five years; very simple, practical amendment to benefit many citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And, Mr. Speaker, what is a bill of sale? A bill of sale is a legal instrument whereby one places a chattel on security for the advancement of maybe a sum of money, and that particular instrument has to be registered in order to give notice to the world that this instrument operates under a particular liability. And if you look at section 4 of the substantive law and section 3, Mr. Speaker, it spells out and outlines particularly what is a bill of sale.

One of the most popular bills of sale that we use in Trinidad and Tobago would be for when persons take mortgages for motor vehicles. When one has to mortgage a motor vehicle, they will approach the financial institution and, on approaching the financial institution, will enter into their credit agreements and so on. But apart from that, they will also have to execute a bill of sale, which thereafter has to be registered at the office of the Registrar General.

In the other place, they kept asking me for the statistics of the bills of sale for every particular year, which I did, in fact, outline and provide to the Senate, Mr. Speaker. So, I want to just place it on the record in this place also. In the year 2018, at the Registrar General's Department, 20,814 bills of sale were registered. In 2019, 22,098 were registered. In 2020, 19,034 were registered. In 2021, 18,432 were registered. In 2022, 21,354 were registered. In 2023, 18,623 were registered. In 2024, 20,580 were registered. In 2025, 21,792 were registered, and as of

Tuesday this week, 2026, 16,970 were registered. And, for the period 2018 to November 2026, a total of 179,697 bills of sales were registered at the Registrar General's Department.

I will give the practical importance of this, Mr. Speaker. I see we have many nurses and many midwives in the public gallery—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—and on my way into the Chamber, the President of the Nursing Association, Ms. Cox, would have accosted me at the Rotunda and asked me that I recognize their presence in the Chamber. We recognize your presence here and the midwives.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: So, for example, for example, Mr. Speaker, if my friend, the president of the association, decides that she wants to purchase a motor vehicle, the current law as it stands, if she goes to a financial institution and has to get a mortgage, that registration of the bill of sale only is effective for a period of three years. What that means is that if, for example, based on the prices of motor vehicles, one may want a very nice vehicle or so on, most of the loans, based on what the Bankers Association are telling us, extend for a period of over three years, maybe five years, seven years, nine years, and in some instances, 10 years.

So let us assume that a loan is for 10 years. It would mean that the life of that bill of sale will have to be re-registered twice, registered in the first instance, and then re-registered twice after giving you that nine-year period for the life of it. And every time you have to register the bill of sale, you know what that means? You have to pay the lawyer. You have to pay the financial institution. You have to pay registration fees at the Registrar General's Department. You have to go by the Minister of Finance through the Stamp Duty Department and have it

re-registered and re-stamped and so on.

Well, what this is doing now is simply saying, do not register so much. We are going to give you a five-year period. So, in the first instance, you register, it will be effective for five years, and when it is re-registered, it will be a further five years. And this is an amendment that was requested by the Bankers Association of Trinidad and Tobago. So, I think we understand the practical importance of it. It is lower cost for the citizen, lower cost for the consumer, less bureaucracy, and every time you register something at the RG's Department, that is human resource also being used up, where we can funnel and use and manage that human resource in a more effective way, and I will show you when we deal with the other Bill, Mr. Speaker, which I do not want to get into problems with for anticipation.

Mr. Speaker, so if one decides not to register this bill of sale, what happens is that it becomes unenforceable. The law is very clear on that, and therefore, it must, in fact, be registered. The registration is mandatory. Because, if one looks at section 17, which we are amending, it says this, that:

> "The registration of a bill of sale must be renewed once at least every three years, and if a period of three years elapses from the registration or renewed registration of a bill of sale without a renewal or further renewal (as the case may be), the registration shall become void. The renewal of a registration shall be effected by registering an affidavit stating the date of the bill of sale and of the last registration thereof, and the names of the parties thereto as stated therein, and that the bill of sale is still a subsisting security."

So, the law is very clear. You do not register, it becomes void. You do not renew the registration, it becomes void. Therefore, the rights that operate within the bill of sale will no longer be enforceable. Simple, simple matter that we are engaging this Parliament with.

Mr. Speaker, this particular renewal, as I said, if someone does not register on time, this is what happens. You have to go back; you have to go by the courthouse. You have to go and knock at the judges and ask for a late registration. So therefore, you know what that means? More money, more expense, more time. So, this particular amendment, as small as it may be, will have a great effect, especially on the consumers of Trinidad and Tobago, another one of those practical, common-sense approaches by this administration, led by the hon. Member for Siparia.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And Mr. Speaker, out of a matter of record, I wish to just read into the *Hansard* the request being made by the Bankers Association, and this is a letter dated the 10th of April, 2026, to the hon. Attorney General, Sen. John Jeremie, SC. And the letter reads, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

On behalf of its members, the Bankers Association of Trinidad and Tobago respectfully requests your consideration of a targeted amendment to the Bills of Sale Act, Chap. 82:32, specifically section 17 of the Act, which governs the renewal of registration of bills of sale. Section 17 of the Act presently mandates that—and I would have quoted it earlier, so I would not re-quote it.

2.30 p.m.

In compliance with this provision, lenders are required to re-register bills of sale at three intervals to preserve the validity and priority of their security interest. And whilst this requirement may have been appropriate at the time of enactment, BATT, which is the Bankers' Association, is of the view that developments in the financial sector, particularly in consumer lending, have rendered the requirement increasingly misaligned with current market practices. In particular, the average tenor of loans for new motor vehicle financing now ranges from seven to 10 years,

and, consequently, lenders are now obligated to undertake multiple re-registrations over the life of a single loan facility. This results in an administrative burden that is both repetitive and costly, without delivering a commensurate benefit in terms of legal certainty or consumer protection.

In light of the above, BATT respectfully proposes a simple legislative amendment to extend the re-registration period from three years to five years, in line with the legislative requirements in Canada and Australia, thereby aligning the statutory requirement with prevailing loan tenures. Mr. Speaker, what we did was that when we looked at the request being made by the Bankers' Association, we also looked at what other jurisdictions have done. Cabinet was informed, Mr. Speaker, when we looked at the United Kingdom, specifically, section 11 of the Bills of Sale Act 1878—because these things are very dated. These Bills of Sale legislation all over the world is very dated. It says that in England, in the United Kingdom, registration of a bill of sale, whether executed before or after the commencement of this Act, must be renewed once, at least every five years. So, therefore, England, the United Kingdom, moved towards the five-year benchmark, which is in line with what we are doing here today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we looked at the New South Wales jurisdiction and the British Columbia jurisdiction, there are the Bills of Sale Act 1898 of New South Wales, and the Bills of Sale Act 1897 of British Columbia. They also prescribed a five-year renewal period, which is in line with what we are doing here today. In Australia, however, Mr. Speaker, and in Canada—under Australia, there is something called the Personal Property Securities Act 2009, and in Ontario, you have the Personal Property Security Act also in 1990, and what those jurisdictions have done, Mr. Speaker, was replace their traditional bills of sale regime and replace it, instead, with these personal property security legislation. But what they

did is went, even a step further, and they said, "Well, we are not giving no fixed statutory renewal period." What they allowed, Mr. Speaker, was the parties themselves to determine the period in which the bill of sale will be effected for, and that is what those jurisdictions have done. However, we indicated that we are not going to go that direction. We are aligning our laws with that of the United Kingdom, in particular by creating a registration period for three to five years.

Mr. Speaker, at the Registrar General's office, as I mentioned, it creates a heavy administrative burden to the already hardworking and burdened staff at that office, and therefore this particular amendment will, in fact, bring some level of relief, and bring some more levels of productivity within the work of the public service. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if there is anymore I can say to justify this particular amendment. I think this is something that deserves the support of my colleagues opposite, and I am hopeful that they will, Mr. Speaker, and I beg to move.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Question Proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Port of Spain South.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Keith Scotland SC (*Port of Spain South***):** Mr. Speaker, let me firstly congratulate, from this side, the new executive of the Trinidad and Tobago Registered Nurses Association, particularly Ms. Cox.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland SC: Ms. Cox, you walk in some very esteemed shoes. Your predecessor, I think, Mr. Idi Stuart, he did well, but I will warn you about the company you keep. I noticed Barataria boasted that she spoke to him.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland SC: When you speak to him, he may need a night nurse, but congratulations, I think I owe you an e-mail. I will do that this week, but congratulations to you, and on this side, we welcome you and your membership. Now, Mr. Speaker, brevity was not a hallmark of Barataria/San Juan, but he has been very brief today, and I want to say that we are surprised. On this side, what we have is a consistent Leader of the Opposition, who has said that when there is good legislation, in the People's National Movement, we will support it.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland SC: And it is good to have consistency. Mr. Speaker, we have three very limited concerns on this Bill. The first one is, even though, Mr. Speaker, the Bill seems to be benign, we are wondering if the balance between administrative convenience, which is non-renewal for every three years as opposed to renewal for five years, if that was weighed against the protection of creditors. We note that there was an input from the Bankers' Association, which, of course, will always serve their interest.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the definition of the "bill of sale" in the parent Act, and that Act, I think, is a 1925 Act, the 18th of June. Mr. Speaker, a bill of sale is not merely a document filed away in an office. It is a legal instrument that can transfer ownership of personal property, either absolutely or by way of security. In many instances, these instruments form part of a commercial transaction and lending arrangement, because they provide a mechanism through which creditors can secure obligations, and debtors obtain access to financing.

So, the registration and renewal requirements serve an important purpose. They provide a system through which the continued existence of the bill of sale as a registered security can be formally recorded. Our simple concern is whether extending the renewal period from three years to five years adequately balances the convenience of the parties with the need to maintain accurate and reliable

registration records.

An additional two years may seem insignificant, Mr. Speaker, but in commercial transactions, two years can represent a considerable or a very meaningful period. Circumstances can change, debts may be repaid, obligations may be varied, parties may change. So, the question is what safeguards will ensure that the additional two years do not result in outdated or inaccurate information remaining on the register for longer than necessary. That is the first point.

The second reservation we have is the position of debtors and the third parties. While creditors have a legitimate interest in protecting their security, debtors and third parties also have an interest in knowing whether the property is subject to an existing registered bill of sale. A registration system must provide, therefore, for some degree of certainty to persons who may wish to purchase or finance their affairs in a certain way by use of a bill of sale. The longer the registration remains enforced without a renewal requirement, the greater the importance of maintaining accurate information about the underlying security. So, we therefore believe that there must be some—when this five-year period is enacted, it does not undermine the reliability and the usefulness of the registration system. Mr. Speaker, the protection of creditors must not be considered in isolation. The rights of legitimate interest debtors and third parties must also be taken into account, and we just put that on record.

The third reservation is the need for public awareness and effectiveness of notification. Section 17 is clear that if the prescribe expires without renewal, the registration becomes void, not voidable, void. Under the proposed amendment, that period will become five years. But what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that persons who hold legitimate registered bills of sale are aware of their obligations? We think that along with this amendment should come some public

awareness programme. So, that will inform holders of these bills of sale of their rights. So, there must be some guidance, particularly for small businesses and individual lenders; persons who may not have regular access to legal advice.

Mr. Speaker, there is a situation in Port of Spain South up on the hill. A very notable legal firm used to give persons little letters of comfort, which would be their bills of sale. You would not get a deed, you know. All up Calvary Hill, all up Shouter Hill, all these areas, you see them with their—

Sen. Jeremie SC: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. K. Scotland SC: Yes, hon. Attorney General, you may know about it—you see them with their little parchment piece of paper, which the solicitors at the time used to type up on their typewriters. We need to have a more open system where people can know what these things are all about, and therefore, they can have a greater idea of this amendment and how it will affect them. So, Mr. Speaker, we want to encourage implementation. We want to encourage awareness. And we want to say that, on this side, in keeping with the Leader of the Opposition's position, if the legislation overall is good, we will support it, and on this side, we support it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Member for Barataria/San Juan.

Hon. S. Hosein: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am shocked that my friend was equally as brief as I was. I think today is a strange day, but a good day. I think my friend from Port of Spain South really raised one particular issue that I can respond to in terms of questioning and querying whether or not the information on the Register is up to date and accurate, and then that would affect, of course, persons who are intended purchasers, because then if the property is undercharge, whatever financial institution or lender can, in fact, create or enforce rights

pursuant to the bill of sale.

What I can inform the House, Mr. Speaker, is this, is that on the PBRS system, we have the online digital registry where persons can perform searches of all registered bills of sale at real time on the Internet. However, it does not mean that one should not do their due diligence, as my friend, being a responsible attorney, is, and still checking the manual register also to ensure that no charges operate. I think all attorneys understand the importance of search and ensuring that any property that you purchase is free from encumbrances. As long as one believes or does their proper searches and conducts their due diligence, and realizes that all outstanding liabilities have, in fact, been satisfied, that property remains free from encumbrances and can then pass to its new owner. So, we do have the PBRS system that is up and running, and that is house-managed and dealt with by the Office of the Registrar General. So, Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. I beg to move.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

2.45 p.m.

House in committee.

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

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

House resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Minister of Land and Legal Affairs.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

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

REAL PROPERTY (AMDT.) BILL, 2026

Mr. Speaker: 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): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move:

> That a Bill entitled a Bill to Amend the Real Property Act Chap. 56:02, to remove the jurisdiction of the Registrar General to receive, process, and approve applications to bring land under the Real Property Act in relation to imperfect and possessory title to transfer such jurisdiction to a judge sitting in open court and for related matters, be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation—I may not be as brief as I was before. This is an important piece of legislation that will, in fact, address some very long-standing issues in Trinidad and Tobago, and, in particular, Tobago. Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill came out of a manifesto promise where the Kamla Persad-Bissessar Government indicated that we are going to fix historical injustices and engage in a process of title reform in Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: I want to speak to the people of Trinidad and Tobago who may have had many long-standing issues in relation to title, and this Bill significantly impacts the people of Tobago. The Prime Minister made a statement in this Parliament on the 5th of June 2026, and the Prime Minister said that this Government will tackle:

"…the long-standing issue in Tobago of land tenure once and for all."

Once and for all.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And so, like the previous legislation that was passed, Mr.

Speaker, this Bill almost received unanimous support in the other place. Almost. Almost. When the division was taken, Mr. Speaker, we had 29 Members voting for the Bill, but one Independent Senator decided to abstain. For what reason, I cannot tell, the Member did not contribute to the debate, so it will just lead me to speculation. So, that is within the Member's right. But I think this particular piece of legislation is an important one that even the Opposition supported. I mean, somebody made a—

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Even them. Somebody made a quip that she may be more PNM than the PNM. I do not know about that.

Hon. Members: Ooh!

Hon. S. Hosein: I "doh" know, right? I do not know. But this piece of legislation, the effect of it, Mr. Speaker, is to encourage people in the country to have proper title, and the reason we want proper title is for this. It is that you have certainty of ownership, and you have a marketable title, which means that you can take your deed or your certificate of title to the bank and cash it.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: It is simple terms. A bank will never give a mortgage on a particular property if you do not have title. That is the first thing that you do. The bank checks your title to determine: One, who the owners are; two, if it is free from encumbrances, and; three, that makes it a good and marketable title.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Speaker, we have two systems of land law. We have what we call the common law system, and then we have what we call the registered system or the real property system. The Conveyancing and Law of Property Act governs the common law system, whereas the Real Property Act, which we are amending, governs registered titles or what will be shown on a

certificate of title. The distinctions with the two systems are these, Mr. Speaker. Under the common law title, when one has to trace title, first you have to find a root of title, and when you find a root of title, then you have to come up and get the chain of title. What that means is this.

Based on the common law system, the law requires that you have to show good title for a period of 20 years. There are exceptions to that rule, but let us use 20 years. When you find that title up to 20 years, you then have to look at all of the transactions that go after the chain and make sure that the chain is unbroken, and then you can confirm title. However, with the RPA system, which we are dealing with, it is called the Torren system, or what we call the mirror principle. So, there are two certificates of title. These are some very huge documents. They used to call them Crown Grants also. Many persons may be familiar with those titles.

There are two of these certificates that exist. One is always kept at the office of the Registrar General, the land registry, and one is kept with the proprietor or the owner. At the back of the CT, you will see all of the transactions being registered there by virtue of a stamp, signature, and endorsement. So, if, for example, Minister Ameen owns a property, it will be endorsed on the certificate of title. If she decides to transfer the property to someone, it will mean that, at the back of the title, it will reflect that that property was, in fact, transferred, and that is mirrored on the certificate of title that is kept or housed in the custody of the Registrar General.

[MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

So, that is what we call a sure title. Many people say that it is a stronger title. That is a matter for debate, but the principal reason for saying it may be a stronger title is this. It is because the State assures the lands. So, if something

goes wrong with the registration, the State compensates for that particular issue. Whereas, in the common law system, that does not happen.

What we are amending here today, Mr. Speaker, is this. There are three categories of matters. One deals with perfect title, one deals with imperfect title, and one deals with possessory title. Let us get the easy one out of the way. Perfect title. I explained earlier that if you have common law title, you are able to establish your route, you are able to establish your chain, you can go to the Registrar General's office and say, "I want to now convert my lands from the common law system to the RPA system", and the Registrar General will issue a certificate of title. That is the easy one. Because you have no issue. There is no contention.

But when we get to the other category of imperfect title, someone may not be able to find a route, a good route. Someone may not be able to establish a chain because there is something unbroken in the chain. Maybe you cannot find someone. Maybe a probate was not done. Maybe a beneficiary was left out of a deed. Maybe some beneficial owner was not reflected on a deed. Maybe the words of the deed may have been bad, and therefore you cannot rectify it at this point in time.

So, what happens, Madam Deputy Speaker, is this. An application is made to the Registrar General, and then, after that application is made to fix the imperfect title, the application goes to the judge. It goes to the judge. But who checks it first? It is the public servants or the officers at the Registrar General who check it. They check it first, and then it goes to the judge. And you have matters of queries, because someone might query and say, "Well, look, you left out this from the application, or you left out that from the application." And therefore, that does what? Create a delay. It prolongs the process before it eventually reaches the

desk of the judge. The same applies to possessory title.

There is something called the judges' guidelines, or the judges'—well, the judges' guidelines. I would not go so far as to say judges' rules, because this is a matter of established practice. It is not law. It is not subsidiary legislation. It is not regulations. The judges themselves came up with these judges' guidelines, and they indicated that all these applications follow a particular format before it reaches the desk of the judge, because the applications are coming in different formats and so on. And then you have issues of queries, because there is one particular issue in the judges' guidelines that I have wrestled with. Possessory title is adverse possession. You must have exclusive, undisturbed possession of the lands for a period of 16 years if it is private land, and 30 years if it is state land.

There is also a debate whether or not that applies to state lands. But with respect to the private lands of 16 years, the judges' guidelines tell one that they must establish possession for a period of 30 years. And if you do not establish that title for a period of 30 years, that is a query. But the law is 16 years. And therefore, there is a query notice that is issued to the attorneys, and then that answers and goes back to the RG. And only when you believe that the title or the application is in order, then it goes to the judge.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to give you some examples of how this really operates in real life, because it might be very shocking to some in this Chamber to determine or hear how long it takes some time for these particular queries to be dealt with. Madam Deputy Speaker, at the Registrar General's office, you have what we call the examiner of title, being the person who will, in fact, be dealing with some of these query notices. And this is what was one of the matters that was addressed by the Cabinet.

There is an application in 2017 that was filed, Madam Deputy Speaker. The

application was received on the 19th of January 2017, and I ask Members to listen to this. Application received on the 19th of December 2017. The query letter was sent on the 24th of March 2017. The response was received on the 4th of March, 2022.

Hon. Members: Wow!

Hon. S. Hosein: And you know where that application was? Sitting at the office of the Registrar General. There is an application filed on the 24th of January, 2018. The query notice went out on the 26th of March 2018. The query was answered on the 18th of October, 2023.

Hon. Members: Hmm.

Hon. S. Hosein: So, you have people's lands and their matters five, six, seven years sitting in a box waiting for a query to be answered before it eventually reaches the judicial officer. I want to be very clear, Madam Deputy Speaker. We are not taking away any power of the Judiciary. Ultimately, it is always the judge who will decide all of these matters. What we are changing today, Madam Deputy Speaker, is removing that entire process of lodging at the RG's office. File the claim in court, and let the judge manage the matter up front. He will determine what he wants, if he is satisfied.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And therefore, you will find matters being dealt with expeditiously, fairly, and you will have people getting their titles on time. On time.

3.00 p.m.

Because you know what happens, and my friend from Arouca/Lopinot may understand this if he—I do not know if you practice conveyancing but it is a common practice. The attorneys themselves, because you have these CPR rules

now, you find attorneys giving preference to compliance with deadlines because there are sanctions. If you fail to file, for example, witness statements, you will not be able to place evidence before the court unless you apply for relief from sanctions.

So what we are suggesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, is this, when I realized what was happening with these RPO applications it meant that we had to fix the system. So I said let us meet with the Judiciary. I met with the Chief Justice, Justice Boodoosingh. Justice the hon. Nadia Kangaloo was in the meeting. The hon. Justice Robin Mohammed was in the meeting, and the hon. Justice Devindra Rampersad was in the meeting. And a suggestion came out from the Judiciary: why does the Judiciary not manage these applications up front, rather than leaving it at the Registrar General's Office? Because when the judges see the application, it would mean immediately that that judge can be satisfied of what he requires additionally if the application is in order and therefore he can give directions.

And when he gives directions, Madam Deputy Speaker, the attorneys have to comply with those directions by a particular date, and I am in no way blaming attorneys but what I am saying is that this system can encourage greater compliance with treating with applications. Because these, on the level of work sometimes, may be the low-priority matters. Whereas you have other contentious matters that might take the front burner in terms of resources for attorneys. So what we are saying is that, let the judge manage these cases up front.

And I will tell you why this is important for Tobago. Madam Deputy Speaker, I looked at the land package that was passed in 2000. It has the Land Tribunal, it has the adjudication Act, and so on, but that cannot be implemented overnight. I wanted to get a fix because people have been waiting for far too long.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And I thought, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this in fact will be one of those greater fixes before we can get the other packages up and ready. Tobago, for example, faces two problems—and I jokingly spoke to my friends from Tobago east and west earlier on about this—in Tobago there is a practice or a custom where they give land by word of mouth. They tell a person to go and occupy that piece of land and there is no paper trail. Because, of course, it is family relations, and so on. And then the other matter that Tobago faces is something that was not within their control, is that there was a hurricane that destroyed a lot of the historical records in Tobago, which left persons unable to show good root of title because the record has been destroyed. Hurricane Flora, the Member is right. And therefore, we are suggesting that this will help.

Now, I met with the Chief Justice together with the RGD team, the surveys and mapping team in Tobago last August, August 2025 and we spoke of this and we identified certain problems. One, the RG's office did not have enough field investigators to go out and verify. We did not have enough surveyors on the island of Tobago and therefore the applications may be expensive. The Chief Secretary is looking at ways and mechanisms in which the THA can assist citizens and persons in Tobago with respect to the legal part of it. I gave the commitment with respect to the surveys part of it, and we have increased the number of staff of field investigators when I inherited office.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And that, "this is not no ol' talk", promise made, promise kept. Last August I told the Chief Sec I am going to increase the staff. I met that office with seven investigators. To date it is up to 22 investigators.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And the reason why those investigators are important is because

when I met with the Judiciary, the judges themselves say that those reports are exceedingly helpful for them. Because what happens, Madam Deputy Speaker, is this, if I go through the judge's guidelines you have to also include within your application matters such as witness testimony. Which means that you have to go and find a person who is willing to be a witness for you to say that I knew that this person was living on the land for that 30-year period. You get a neighbour, you get some person to say that. And then the investigators go out onto the field and interview these persons to determine the veracity of the information that they provide in their affidavits. And when that happens the judges will get the report to determine if we could believe this witness or not.

We are suggesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, at this point in time, file your application. The judges will have the investigators report together with the application. The RG will appear in these matters. The judges can determine what additional things they need.

I will tell you why some of these applications are held up. The record keeping at what we used to call the Warden's Office are not the best. They are manual records, in books. And part of the judge's guidelines, which is not law, by the way, says you have to go and get an abstract of title from the Warden's Office. Sometimes you cannot find the book. Sometimes you cannot find the person who is keeping the book. And therefore this holds up applications for months and years.

A judge may look at the application and say, but I do not need this, because he already gets a title report. He gets the field investigator's report. He gets an appearance by the Registrar General's Department to correct, clarify, provide further information for matters on the application, and so on. And therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are suggesting that this fix can really truncate the

period of time in which these applications are dealt with. Because once these are filed in the courtroom, it starts in the courthouse and it ends in the courthouse. It should not start in the RG department and then end in the courthouse. If ultimately the court is to decide the matter, why are we starting at the RG office? Just start it at the Judiciary.

One might then ask opposite, whether or not the Judiciary has enough resources to get this done. I know that may be an argument that may be raised. Madam Deputy Speaker, this was a suggestion that came from the Judiciary. This was a suggestion. And, therefore, we are speaking to the stakeholders within the system and we are listening.

So while my friends opposite may raise the issues of the land packages and so on, at this point in time, if we wait on that, Madam Deputy Speaker, nothing will get done. We have to find an easy, practical, common sense approach.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And this happened due to the leadership of the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—serving as the best Minister of Legal Affairs, previously. So I follow in very large shoes. And what would have come out from this, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that the Prime Minister, having the experience of the Legal Affairs Ministry, would have then said let us create the Ministry of Land and Legal Affairs.

Because when we met office, you had the Commissioner of State Lands Office, housed at the Ministry of Agriculture. You had Surveys and Mapping, Ministry of Agriculture. You had the Registrar General's Office in the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs. You then had the Valuation Division,

which plays a critical role in the Ministry of Finance. So you had one, two, three different Ministries dealing with lands. The Prime Minister said no, let us place all of these agencies and divisions that deal with land under one Ministry. And that is why today, Madam Deputy Speaker, I can boast to say that over 800 ex-Caroni workers received their residential lots.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: I can say that over 100 recipients so far have gotten their state grants that they have been waiting for, for decades. You have had Certificates of Comfort. We, I think reached about 500 right now, that were outstanding for five, six, seven, eight years. I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not want to bring you into the debate, but I think you were present at one of those distribution ceremonies only this week at the Land Settlement Agency.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: And these are the historical injustices, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we have in fact promised. Promise made, promise kept, and more to come. More to come.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: So, Madam Deputy Speaker, these particular matters outline exactly what the Government intends to do within this particular piece of legislation.

[*Mr. Young SC enters Chamber*]

I can indicate, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we heard complaints about misuse of advertisement. We heard misuse of notice, and so on. We believe that we are not touching or interfering with any of the safeguards in the current law.

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Madam Deputy Speaker, I think the Member for Port of Spain

North/St. Ann's West may have been premature—

Hon. Members: [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—in his entrance back into the Chamber.

Mr. Lee: He came out of the naughty corner too early.

Hon. Member: Small pin.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Hon. S. Hosein: I think he heard the word expeditious and he reached into the Chamber.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we believe that we are on the right track with this piece of legislation. The safeguards are in place. We are removing levels of bureaucracy. We are cutting away red tape. We are taking a practical common sense and an inexpensive approach to bringing relief to the people of Trinidad and especially the people of Tobago. I beg to move, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Question proposed.

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

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

Mr. Stuart Young SC (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*): Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. As they say, with God with me, none of them can be against me.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Young SC: Madam Deputy Speaker, I listened as attentively as I could to the Member for Barataria/San Juan for the last few seconds. This Bill seeks, as the previous speaker said, piloting the Bill, to deal with a longstanding set of really administrative-type issues that have plagued those who do transactions with respect to the transfer of land, the gifting of land, et cetera, the field of

conveyancing. And say at the outset, Madam Deputy Speaker, save for litigation associated with the conveyancing and adverse possession, it is not an area that I have by any means expertise or experience in dealing with conveyancing.

However, whilst we associate with what the Member for Barataria/San Juan has said, in some aspects, that there are long inordinate delays and in particular, dealing with Tobago. And Tobago is unfortunately a jurisdiction that has been plagued for decades with respect to the issues related to the transfer of land. And as I heard the previous speaker say, it is because of the culture of Tobago combined with a lack of proper record keeping and deeds and the cadastrals and these types of things. In fact, I believe the Government would be engaged in a process with using technology to do GIS mapping of Tobago to try and make the process easier.

Basically, in essence, what this piece of legislation is seeking to do is to remove from the Registrar General certain powers that he or she has under the law with respect to certain titles and to put it before the Judiciary.

I heard my friend very carefully trying to cross the t's and dot the i's and talk about consultation and very openly saying he met with the Chief Justice. That, of course, could be of some cause for concern. We did not get the details as to what that meeting was about or how proper is it really for the Executive to be meeting with the Judiciary and the Chief Justice as opposed to—because it is not Ministers. They are not doing the conveyancing. They are not the ones who are using the land registry and all of the associated tools with it.

3.15 p.m.

It really should have been the technocrats—under instructions from the Executive—meeting with the technocrats. However, he has said what he has said, and said that there was consultation. Well, it is not only the Judiciary that is the

relevant stakeholder in this matter. One of the questions that comes to mind immediately is: Did the Executive also meet with those who utilize these conveyancing transactions—the registry, deeds and searches, et cetera—i.e, the lawyers who practice in the field of conveyancing?

And I will admit that I took the opportunity to read some of the *Hansard* from the other place because there was a particular Senator whose contribution, in my respectful opinion, who was very useful. It is clear to me—and that is Independent Sen. Jones-Simmons—that she did a lot of research with respect to this, and consulted—as she said throughout her contribution—with practitioners. So the first question on consultation is: Did you consult the practitioners in this area? I think the answer is no; otherwise, the Minister would have told us so. Of course, secondly, another set of important stakeholders to make this system a success are the land surveyors. Because very often, there are ones who are put down on the ground, given the "brief"—so to speak—the retainers to go out and survey the lands. And in that itself, there are very often—especially if it is contentious—a lot of issues, because you have to get permission to go on the lands, or somebody else is claiming the land, et cetera.

I do not think that these proposed amendments, which I am sure will pass, are going to be any panacea to save or greatly assist what is taking place in Tobago. I am sure the Minister—he now has a whole Ministry dedicated to lands—is going through that process or continuing the process of the GIS mapping and working with people on the ground to get this thing done. Because, as he said, very often, it would be a passage of land from generation to generation with absolutely no documentation—no will, no original deed or title for the land, et cetera.

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. S. Young SC: Correct. And in fact, recently I had someone come to me to do the application in Tobago. And the system still is going to require the witnesses because the judge will need to be satisfied as to that person's claim to title to the land. And one of the difficulties you find in that alone—and it will not be solved by this; the burden will now be put on the Judiciary and I will come to the specifics as to how the Judiciary may not be as well equipped to deal with the administrative side—is that you have difficulties.

So if two generations ago, a great-grandfather bequeathed the land to a granddaughter and she then had two grandchildren, and it passes down like that, et cetera—now to go back and get witnesses who may have been around at the time—there is a lot of difficulty with that in Tobago. You have also found that frequently now—because of the frustration in society—that it is leading to disputes that sometimes become very violent disputes. Again, this is not meant to address that. So, I say at the outset that this legislation is a step in the right direction, but it is certainly, in our view, not going to provide the complete solution, and no legislation will, to the difficulties that the Minister has described that he is now aware of. It is going to depend a lot on the resources, and not only the resources granted to the Judiciary and to the judge.

Because what they are doing now is that they are moving it out of the hands of the Registrar General, where there were whole departments, public servants, and others who would do the work. They would go out, and they would check the title or claims. They would go out and do the land investigation, et cetera. The Judiciary does not have the resources, so immediately, all it talks about is going through the CPR—the Civil Procedure Rules—and a Fixed Date Claim Form. So, one immediate question—and I do not think the legislation could provide for it so we look forward to, I guess, the guidance that will come, maybe from the

Judiciary, as to how this exercise is to be performed. Because the level of evidence that will be needed to be presented to the judge for the judge to be certain to make an order that there are no competing claims is certainly not addressed by that.

In fact, what you are doing is you are now putting that burden on the Judiciary. Any practitioner would know that right now there are no speedy trials. No matter how the Judiciary would like to speed up on the civil side, matters that are being filed, the quickest that you are seeing—simple judicial reviews, Fixed Date Claim Forms, and these types of actions being heard—is within a period of a year, and that is the quickest. You also have them expanding way beyond that. So that leads us to another concern we have, especially for the people from Tobago. Because now this process is forcing you to go and retain attorneys to go to court.

Whereas, before, a lot of it could have been done by the land clerks, clerks doing searches, and laypeople. So now, especially if it is any idea of contention, you are going to have to hire instructing attorneys, counsels, and these types of things. And we are being told that those costs are astronomical, more so in Tobago, because it may be a smaller pool, and that these applications can cost in excess of $100,000. Now the person seeking to regularize their land, and rightly so, is having difficulty in meeting those costs as it is. Now that you are forcing everything into the court system, it is no longer optional. So, what is going to take place with that?

I also heard the Minister talk about the RG, the Registrar General, who will be represented at these court hearings, as you would expect. Because you are going to need someone to provide the court with that sort of guidance and comfort for the court to be able to make an order. Obviously, the person making the application will put forward what they say is their claim to the title. The process as it is, as we understand it, allows for others outside of a court system, if they have

any claims to the land to make their claims and for there to be some sort of adjudication via surveying and evidence being given by witnesses, et cetera. Where does that process go?

So, back to the consultation. Was there a consultation with the practitioners in this area of law? Was there a consultation with the land surveyors? The next thing is that we are already in the civil court system facing some level of potential backlogging. You are finding, very often, with applications being made, that unfortunately, the Judiciary will become a more litigious society. The Judiciary is struggling to give early dates for hearings. Where will this fit now on the list of prioritizations? And in particular, how many civil courts are there sitting at any given point in time in Tobago? Is this now going to overburden the list in Tobago? What additional resources are going to be provided? Is the Judiciary going to be provided with a new department that specializes in taking over some of the existing services provided by the Registrar General's department, the land investigators, and those who would go out and produce the reports, in order for the judge—he or she—looking at the application to have that certainty to make the type of order that we are now requesting them to make? And that is a serious concern that we have.

Now, in looking at the amendments, which are very, very short amendments—and as the Minister said, it is really to take out of the Registrar General's hands. And there are a number of delays that have taken place there. I am sure by now, as well, for many years, there was a bit of a jurisdictional dispute—if I can call it that—with the Registrar General in Tobago about who had the jurisdiction to do certain things, and that, too, led to many delays despite Cabinet Notes being passed with new instructions, et cetera.

A concern that we have is the cost of these applications, and consideration should be given to some sort of fee schedule or fee structure with a ceiling on this.

Because, of course, this also requires the person making the application to have a land valuation. So, you have the cost of attorneys, maybe attorneys for court proceedings, land valuations, and land surveys. Would the Government give consideration to a fee schedule with this application to try and contain those costs?

There are long delays in the process due to some of the requirements that cannot be met. I heard the Minister talking about the Warden's Office—I do not know if by the time he came out in practice they still had the Warden's Office, et cetera. I remember right here in the early 90s in the Red House, you used to have to come in by the Rotunda. When I was doing an in-service training at 16, you had to go and sit down on these long desks like this and go through the deed books that they would bring for you, et cetera. So, we welcome any move away from that system and to make it easier for the RPO system to really take place as it should.

Now, what about queries that will be then made by the RG? Does the RG department now have sufficient and adequate staffing and resources? Because if you are now requiring them to participate in every single court application, that is very different from the sort of job that will take place at a desk, in an office where they are doing certain things. Because the Minister would know, very often, if you go for court proceedings, and if it is—I assume these will not be—they will kind of fall into a chamber court system where a judge may put a number of them on the same day—that would be an efficient use of time. And then, do you have the RG staff coming out of office? So those are the types of resources for the Judiciary and the Registrar General's office. Also, is assistance going to be given to those via, I guess, some sort of legal aid form? Will this also fall in there, in particular, in Tobago, where you have a lot of older residents from Tobago who are seeking to get their land regularized and may not be able to afford the cost?

Now, there are real problems with locating and finding witnesses who could

give the type of evidence that is going to be required. And now that you are putting a judicial officer—a judge of the High Court in charge of this process, then they still have the problem of the witnesses. Because a judge is going to need evidence before himself or herself to satisfy them that they can go ahead and make the order.

Another matter that dawned on us is: Is there going to be an appellate process? Should we give consideration, for example, as happens in election petitions, that you can just say, "Look, this stops at the Court of Appeal", to again, take away any additional expenses and just bring finality. Because what people are looking for, and what you are trying to solve here, is to have finality in title for the land—so to give consideration to that as well.

The issues with getting the field officers to investigate and the field investigator reports: Is that going to be an absolute requirement for the Judiciary to have those reports before them? I mean, I do not think we can legislate for that, because that might be infringing on the separation of powers, but certainly, it is something that should be suggested as part of the programme. And then a question that arises, in particular, for practitioners, looking at this: By the switching to a judge, is there now going to be a dedicated system where the judge has resources accessible to himself or herself to be satisfied that the titles have been searched properly, et cetera? Is that going to be provided by the Registrar General's Department? Where is that going to come from? Exactly what role will continue to be played by the Registrar General and all those officers who were part of the process before, that we are moving it across to a judge in chambers for perfect title, or for imperfect title, a judge in open court? What happens? And then, another question that follows on that straight away is: What about the examiner's report? Where does that come in? Who provides that? What are the additional expenses

now going to be for someone who wants to get this title for their land?

3.30 p.m.

We accept that the current rules and laws and administrative processes are very archaic, maybe too complex in some respects. So, we understand why there would be a belief that a solution is just transferring it to a fixed date claim form to be decided by the court. But we hesitate to think that that will be able to solve all of the problems. As I said, we ask that consideration be given to a schedule because we are very concerned. We are hearing and in fact, the Senator, who seemed to have done her research, talked about applications being a deposit to start of $30,000, and the applications costing up to $100,000, which, of course, is a disincentive to get it done because the land may be less valuable than that in the first stage.

So, in essence, Madam Deputy Speaker, our position, as it was in the other place, as the Opposition, is that we are supportive of the amendments being proposed. We hope that it will provide some level of alleviation for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, and in particular, Tobago and the citizens of Tobago, because they have had long-outstanding land issues—just looking to see some of what I picked up the Minister saying on my—

Mr. Scotland SC: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. S. Young SC: Yes, when I was outside. Oh, his facetious statement, I cannot leave it unattended to. Talking about one abstention in the other place and saying that that Independent Senator is more a PNM than PNM. Being PNM is not a bad thing in the first place to start with.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Young SC: But I can guarantee to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago that a President-appointed Independent Senator is not PNM or a member of the PNM,

and the continual attacking of persons who have a different opinion to the Minister and those on the other side, they really should desist from assassinating—well, it is not assassination; it is actually elevation to be called PNM.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Young SC: So, I could not even say it—is far from being defamatory. It is the opposite of being defamatory. It is the equivalent of a national award.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. S. Young SC: Minister, we hope that the complaints about the long delays that you talked about at the Registrar's office and things sitting in the box— I cannot see—and that is why we need to know exactly what is the role the Registrar General is going to play because they have to play a supporting role for the application. A judge is not going to want to just hear from the applicant. The Registrar General, presumably, is playing that independent role, that look, we have done some research, this is what we found. So, how is that not going to continue in delay?

Really, Madam Deputy Speaker, we do not intend to keep ourselves or the Minister and the Government here much longer than is absolutely necessary. Those are our concerns. You have our support for the piece of legislation. We ask that you give consideration to the concerns, in particular the cost-effectiveness for those who this is meant to assist, and with those few words, I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member for Tobago West.

Mr. Joel Sampson (*Tobago West*): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. You know, it is always a pleasure to rise in this honourable House to present. I am

seeing—I am getting some eyes from my colleagues just across, you know, but I am here about Tobago's business today and not any bacchanal or banter.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. J. Sampson: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Real Property (Amdt.) Bill. This is an important piece of legislation, and I want to begin by reminding this honourable House that land is much more than a parcel of property. For the people of Tobago, land represents inheritance, identity, family, history, security, opportunity and, in many instances, the only significant asset that a family possesses. For Tobagonians, the history of land ownership is steeped in the struggle against an oppressive colonial system, which deprived ex-slaves of titles, even if money was transacted for the sale of properties. In many cases, that is the history of what is known as family land today in Tobago. And we do not want to forget the effect of Hurricane Flora and the disappearance of many legal documents of land ownership.

For generations, Tobagonians have lived on land passed down from parents and grandparents. They have built homes, raised families, cultivated agricultural lands and contributed to their communities. Yet, despite generations of occupation, many families continue to experience difficulty establishing clear and legally-recognized title to the very land that they have occupied for decades. This is often no fault of our fore parents, as they had to fight a legal system that turned a blind eye to unscrupulous landowners, begrudgingly allowing slaves to own provision grounds not exceeding four acres. Later on, when the sugar industry in Tobago collapsed, and estates were abandoned as owners fled back to England, neighbouring plantation owners annexed vacant land just to prevent the residents' enslaved population from claiming access.

It was only when these planters could not pay the higher property taxes that a law was passed in Tobago to allow peasants to own up to 11 acres. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, the land issue in Tobago has been and will always be a touchy subject, which I will address with caution as I support the initiative to bring relief to the majority of Tobagonians facing the issue that threatens their ownership of a piece of paradise.

Madam Deputy Speaker, imagine knowing that the land on which your family has lived for 40, 50, or even 60 years belongs to your family, but being unable to properly establish legal title to it. Imagine wanting to develop the same piece of land, obtaining financing, passing it on to your children, or using it as security for a business venture, only to find yourself caught in a complicated and lengthy process. That is the reality that many families face in Tobago, and that is why this Bill matters.

It seeks to modernize the legal process for bringing land under the Real Property Act, particularly, in cases involving imperfect and possessory title, by transferring the relevant jurisdiction from the Registrar General to a judge. This is a step towards strengthening the administration of justice, improving confidence in the process, and addressing a long-standing challenge in our land administration system. Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to place this Bill firmly within the context of Tobago, because to Tobago, this legislation has particular significance.

The issue of land ownership and land title regularization is not a new issue in Tobago. It is a long-standing concern that has affected families, communities, farmers, homeowners and persons seeking to invest on the island. It is an issue that has been discussed for years, raised repeatedly by residents, and brought to the attention of successive administrations. As the Minister would have stated, he met with this Chief Secretary in 2025, and they acknowledged the long-standing

difficulties affecting land title in Tobago. Discussions included the need for an expedited process and the provision of resources to address outstanding applications. This demonstrates that the current administration has recognized the urgency of the problem and has begun engaging the relevant institutions to find solutions.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. J. Sampson: Madam Deputy Speaker, the people of Tobago have waited long enough. For too long, families have had to navigate uncertainty over property that has been in their possession for generations. For too long, residents have heard promises of land regularization, improvements in administration, and greater efficiency. While previous administrations had opportunities to make meaningful progress on these matters, the persistence of the problem demonstrates that much more needed to be done.

I am not here to suggest that every land title problem in Tobago can be attributed to one administration. The history is complicated, and some of these issues stretch back generations, but I am saying that after years of discussion, the people of Tobago deserve more than explanations. They deserve action. They deserve a government that is prepared to confront the problem, modernize the process, and put the necessary institutional arrangements in place. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is the significance of what we are doing here today. This Government is moving simply beyond acknowledging the problem. It is taking legislative steps to change the framework through which these applications are dealt with.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Tobago House of Assembly has an important role to play in the development of Tobago, but development cannot happen effectively when residents and investors are uncertain about land ownership. The

THA's Land Management Department already undertakes important functions, including assisting residents with land information, cadastral information, surveying and mapping and applications relating to State lands. However, there is an important distinction that must be made: The THA's land management responsibilities and the judicial determination of title are not the same thing. The Bill does not transfer the judicial authority to the THA. Rather, it creates an opportunity for the THA to work more effectively with the Ministry of Land and Legal Affairs, the Registrar General's Department, and the Judiciary and other relevant agencies.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I see several practical opportunities arising from this legislation. The THA can work with the relevant national institutions to identify and organize outstanding imperfect title applications. The THA can become an important partner in helping residents navigate the new judicial process. The THA can use improved land information to strengthen its development planning. The Assembly can help connect land title regularization with Tobago's wider economic development agenda.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let us bring this discussion down from the legislative Chambers to the homes and communities of Tobago. Think about the elderly woman in a village who has lived on the same parcel of land since childhood. Her parents lived there before her. Her children grew up there, but when she wishes to pass that same property onto her children, she encounters uncertainty because the legal documentation is incomplete. Think about the young Tobagonian who wants to build a home but cannot confidently establish the title to family land. Think about the farmer who wants to invest in irrigation, improve agricultural production, or expand his operations but faces uncertainty over the legal status of the land. Think about the family that wants to settle an inheritance

matter but has been unable to bring closure to a dispute that has lingered for decades.

Madam Deputy Speaker, these are not abstract legal issues. These are real-life challenges that affect people's livelihoods and their ability to plan for the future, and this is why I believe the amendments are important. By placing imperfect title applications before a judge in an open court, the Bill provides a judicial forum for the determination of these applications. It is important, however, that we recognize that the Bill does not automatically confer title on anyone, nor does it guarantee that every application will be resolved immediately. Applicants will still have to satisfy the relevant legal requirements, and the court will have to examine the evidence. But what this Bill does is establish a clearer judicial route for these matters. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is progress.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to make a broader point about the direction that Tobago is heading. For years, Tobago has been promised development. We have heard the language of transformation, empowerment, opportunity, and progress. But development must be measured by what changes in the lives of ordinary people. It must be measured by whether a family can secure its property rights, whether a young person can build a home, whether a farmer can expand production, and whether an entrepreneur can confidently invest. The people of Tobago have endured long-standing challenges, and they have every right to expect a more responsive approach to governance.

3.45 p.m.

This new Government has an opportunity to usher in a different chapter. A chapter in which long-standing issues are not simply acknowledged and passed from one administration to another. A chapter in which Ministries work with the Tobago House of Assembly, rather than operating in isolation. A chapter in which

legislation is used to remove unnecessary obstacles, improve public administration, and deliver tangible results. A chapter in which the people of Tobago are treated not as an afterthought, but as equal partners in the development of Trinidad and Tobago. Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill is one important part of that new direction. It signals that the Government is prepared to examine systems that are no longer adequately serving the public and make the necessary changes.

It signals that the concerns of Tobagonians are being taken seriously, and it signals that the work of resolving long-standing land title difficulties must move from discussion to implementation. Madam Deputy Speaker, there is another important dimension to this Bill that I wish to highlight: the relationship between land ownership and economic empowerment. Tobago's economic future must be built on the ability of its people to participate meaningfully in the island's development. We speak about growing agriculture, expanding tourism, encouraging entrepreneurship, improving housing, and creating opportunities for young people, but how can we fully unlock these opportunities if people cannot establish clear legal rights over their land?

Land is an economic asset. It can support agricultural production. It can facilitate legitimate investment. It can provide security for families and create opportunities for future generations. When a family has a secure legal title, it has greater certainty in making decisions about its property. When a farmer has properly established ownership, it can provide a stronger foundation for long-term agricultural investment. When property rights are clear, disputes can be addressed through the appropriate legal channels, and development planning can proceed with greater confidence.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Tobago must not be left behind in the national development agenda. We must ensure that Tobagonians are in a position to benefit

from the opportunity that development brings. One of the first steps towards that objective is ensuring that people have a fair and accessible pathway to establishing their legal rights over land. Madam Deputy Speaker, a government is judged not simply by the legislation it passes, but by the lives it improves. This Bill gives us an opportunity to improve the lives of people who have been waiting for legal certainty over their land. It gives us an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the central government and the Tobago House of Assembly. It gives us an opportunity to demonstrate that Tobago's concerns are receiving the attention and seriousness they deserve. That is what a new dawn should look like. Not simply new promises, but new processes. Not simply new announcements, but measurable action. Not simply new political leadership, but a new commitment to delivering for the people of Tobago.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Tobago deserves better, and the people of Tobago must now see the results of a government that is prepared to act. This Bill is an important step in that direction. It is an opportunity to modernize our legal framework, strengthen judicial oversight, improve the administration of land title applications, and create a pathway towards resolving long-standing challenges. But, more importantly, it is an opportunity to restore confidence; confidence that the concerns of ordinary Tobagonians matter. Confidence that their children and grandchildren can inherit not just land, but legally recognized property rights. Confidence that Tobago can move forward with greater certainty, stronger institutions, and better opportunities for economic development.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the people of Tobago have waited long enough for meaningful action on land tenure. Let this legislation be a part of the turning point. Let us move from uncertainty to security, from promises to performance, and from decades of unresolved challenges to a future of opportunity. The new dawn for

Tobago must be one in which development is not just spoken about but experienced by the people. One in which the ordinary Tobagonians are empowered to own, protect, develop, and pass on what belongs to them. One in which the people of Tobago are not left behind but are at the centre of national progress. For these reasons, Madam Deputy Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this Bill, and I urge all hon. Members to support its passage. I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member for Port of Spain South.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Keith Scotland SC (*Port of Spain South*): Madam Deputy Speaker, I listened well to the hon. Member for Tobago West how he praised the Government, "Too long have we festered the day", I wonder how ANR Robinson is feeling now.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland SC: I hope that the people of Tobago understand what was done to their legacy with that vote that was taken on the ICC.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Hosein: Madam Deputy Speaker, 48(1), this is a strict debate about the Real Property Act. I do not know where the Member is going in an international jurisdiction right now. He was going good all the time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member, let us remain relevant. Thank you.

Mr. K. Scotland SC: Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, you see, for too long Tobago, "PNM ain't do nothing fuh Tobago", it is not so. That is the point I want to make, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is not so.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland SC: As I end on this point, there is a saying in Lambeau, "Show

me yuh fren and me ah show yuh yuh character yuh know", so "allyuh" continue, continue your association.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland SC: Madam Deputy Speaker, we support this because we have consistency and principle, however, we would want to bring to the attention of the movers of this amendment that, on this side, we recognize the significance of land ownership and, particularly, home ownership, both in Trinidad and, particularly, in Tobago. Because for many families in Trinidad and Tobago it represents generations of sacrifice, productive years of hard work. In many instances, it may be the only significant asset that a family may ever own.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a must read, is *A House for Mr. Biswas*. That is a must read. If you understand the didactic for *A House for Mr. Biswas*, that was his life's essence, you know, to get a house, and he achieved that. On this side, we understand that we will try to support the Government when they attempt to bring legislation that would make the attainment of one of your main assets in life more regulated and more transparent. However, I would want to signal three concerns that we have, and one is really with greater accountability to prevent false declarations.

I would want to ask if the hon. Attorney General and the Minister will consider strengthening parts of the Bill by requiring an express statutory obligation that has applicants identify all known persons who may have legal or beneficial interests in the property; disclose known transactions, transfers, inheritances and arrangement relative to their claim of ownership; declare any known competing claims or material disputes that are affecting the property, and confirm, whilst making the application, that the information that they have put before the judge is to the best of their knowledge, true and correct. That will strengthen the process,

and it certainly, Madam Deputy Speaker, would lead to a situation that provides greater accountability and greater disclosure by applicants who have to apply for the title before the judge.

The second strengthening proposal that we have is the verification of land boundaries and cadastral records. Madam Deputy Speaker, particularly in Port of Spain South. Port of Spain South is a myriad of connecting streets and boundaries. One minute you are in Dan Kelly; the next minute you are in Pump Trace, and "ah half ah minute yuh in Picton", you know, all on the same road. Sometimes on one side of the road you are in Desperlie Crescent, on the other side of the road you are in Foster Quevedo. So we would prefer, or we would respectfully suggest, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the opportunity that is presented now, to strengthen cadastrals, to strengthen boundaries is taken, because the existence of a certified survey plan does not necessarily mean that every discrepancy between historical land description and existing cadastral records is resolved. If these matters are not identified and properly disclosed before an application is determined, they may create complications after a Certificate of Title has been granted. We would ask the hon. Minister and the Attorney General to look at this as a means or a mechanism of improving the amendment.

The importance of implementation cannot be overstated. The transfer of jurisdiction to the Judiciary will require administrative arrangements. The hon. Member, Stuart Young, has told us about the backlogs, and the Judiciary is really under pressure, both in the civil and the criminal jurisdiction, and this is adding to that. Even if they add 10 more judges, where are we going to house them? The Hall of Justice is full. The centre down at the towers, it is full, but it is something that needs to be considered. So this presents an opportunity to improve the legal framework that governs the registration of land in Trinidad and Tobago, and the

matters that are addressed in this debate are important because the ownership of land is very critical.

I recall, Madam Deputy Speaker, years ago I said, you know, I told my mother, "Ah want to buy ah car". She said, "You fool, yuh could live in ah car"? "Buy ah piece ah land", and that stuck in my mind. So it is important, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the people of Trinidad and the people of Tobago—I just want to remind Tobago that they really cannot rewrite the history of the PNM in Tobago, you know. The PNM has a very strong DNA in Tobago, strong.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland SC: And this thing "For too long", for too long, what? We are here to support good legislation; this is good legislation. Again, hon. Leader of the Opposition, I want to thank you for your consistency, which is what Trinidad and Tobago needs at this point in time, consistency—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. K. Scotland SC:—and with that, Madam Deputy Speaker, we lend our support to this.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I propose that we take the tea break now. We will return at 5.00 p.m. This House is now suspended.

3.58 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

[Mr. Speaker *in the Chair*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Land and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Land and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (Hon. Saddam Hosein): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to address a few matters that were raised by Members opposite. But really, I want to congratulate that contribution made by the Member for Tobago West—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—having acknowledged our priority when it comes to serving, delivering and bringing relief to the people of Tobago that was long in waiting. But, Mr. Speaker, you know, there is a saying that people like to "throw salt in yuh rice". Is it sand in your rice?

Hon. Members: Sand in your rice.

Hon. S. Hosein: Sand in your rice. Well, I think they are trying to throw some sand in our rice today, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: You see, the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West made it look as though I had some clandestine meetings with the Chief Justice and that I should not have met with the Chief Justice. We are partners in democracy.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Lee: "Dem used to meet with the last Chief Justice all de time".

Hon. S. Hosein: They were meeting the President, the last occasion, and intercepting a list from the President's office. I did not do that. In fact, I met with the Chief Justice, Mr. Speaker, and there is a media release from the Judiciary with a picture of myself and the Chief Justice. I want to read it. The media release says:

> "The Honourable Chief Justice, Mr. Ronnie Boodoosingh, today received a courtesy visit from the Honourable Saddam Hosein, M.P., Minister of Land

and Legal Affairs and Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, at the Waterfront Judicial Centre, Port of Spain.

The meeting focused on matters relating to applications for land to be brought under the provisions of the Real Property Act."

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. S. Hosein: August 5th,2026. No secret meeting.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: This was published. A media release was sent out.

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

Mr. Lee: "Dey eh accustomed doing dat yuh see. Dey accustomed with de secret meetings".

Hon. S. Hosein: What secret meeting? That they are saying that I am engaging in. This is transparent. They had a former, former Prime Minister who went in a house owned by the Integrity Commission's Chairman to discuss matters of State and business there, you know.

Ms. Ameen: "In de dead of de night."

Mr. Lee: "About two nights ago dey had another secret meeting".

Hon. S. Hosein: I do not know what time they did that meeting, but I do not want to know the time.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Mr. Lee: "I saw Brian Manning in ah secret meeting in Belmont".

Hon. S. Hosein: "I mean, dey have secret meetings about who want to be de next leader, across there eh".

Mr. Lee: Correct. "Dey had it about two days ago".

Hon. S. Hosein: Mr. Speaker, today, while we are on the matter of land and the importance of land, because land is investment, land is money and land is heritage.

Today, the Prime Minister turned the sod for the first phase of the revitalization project.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Phase One, Invaders Bay Mixed-Use Development, a 135-room AC Marriott Hotel, convention centre, eight restaurants that will generate over 1400 jobs in Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Today, I congratulate our Prime Minister on this very important, important milestone that we have marked as a government.

Mr. Speaker, the Member asked about consultations and so on. This is a matter that has been languishing for years. For years.

Mr. Lee: "Dey doh want to see growth".

Hon. S. Hosein: In 10 years, they did nothing to assist the people of Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, they tried to amend this Real Property Act, you know.

Mr. Lee: You serious?

Hon. S. Hosein: They tried, yeah. They brought it in a package. "I doh know why dey like packages so much". The Law Association, by the letter dated the 20th of May, 2019, had to tell them this about their package when they tried to amend the Real Property Act. They said that:

Their legislation—meaning PNM's legislation—we remind you that the proposed legislation continues a fundamental and radical departure from established practice and the common law in the sphere of conveyancing and property law.

They said:

> The proposed amendments to the RPA—which is the Real Property Act—appeared to operate contrary to the Torrens system on which the RPA is based, which is a registration of title system, in which the register itself must

record all interests affecting property. These amendments are, in fact, an anomaly as interests outside of the register which are not endorsed by reference of the relevant certificate of title are now given recognition. Further, it is inconceivable that a registered proprietor would relinquish his certificate of title for the registration of a contract for sale. Further, having regard to our rejection of the proposed amendments to the RD Act, all consequential amendments to the RPA should be removed.

"Dat is PNM style. Dat is PNM style, and they want to know who we talk with"? We are talking to the people of Trinidad and Tobago and the stakeholders in this particular matter.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Now, I do not want to be too unkind to my friend from Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West. He made an initial disclosure that this area of law is not familiar to him. So, I would imagine that the submissions he made would have been made not maliciously, but out of ignorance.

Dr. Moonilal: No area is familiar to him.

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Hon. S. Hosein: So, now that he has a little more time on his hands because he is no longer a one-day Prime Minister, he could learn a little more of the conveyancing law. You see, he says that, "Who will check claims to title of the lands?" He says, "Who will check that?" Do you know when you file the application, what accompanies the application is a title report prepared by a title clerk which has to be submitted by your attorney-at-law? Fundamental, basic, foundation of that application. He says, "Will the RGD still go out and check on those applications and check on the witness statements and so on?" The RGD office will always do that. The Bill is not going to stop that. That verification

report, through the field verification exercise, will still be conducted by the RGD office. The Member does not know that? That is fundamental. That is basic information.

Mr. Lee: Law 101.

Hon. S. Hosein: Law 101.

Ms. John: Elementary

Mr. Lee: Like he missed that programme.

Hon. S. Hosein: He then says, "People now have to go to court." I know he got expelled from the Chamber, so he may not have heard the piloting of this debate. But in all categories, be it perfect, imperfect or possessory title, you still have to go to court. All applications had to go to court. I think I made that very clear. That instead of starting the application in the RG office and finishing it in the courthouse, start it in the courthouse and finish it in the courthouse. Common sense approach. Common sense approach.

So, he then says, "People now have to go to court." And so on. He said, "Will the RG be represented? "Well, of course. Even in the current law, as soon as the application reaches the step of the court, on the desk of the judge, the RG office must be represented. They appear in all applications because they are the custodians of the investigation reports and also the record keeper of all the titles in Trinidad and Tobago. Again, a basic, basic requirement that the Member is unfamiliar with.

He then says that we should have a free structure. Now, I heard Members say this is an expensive exercise, an expensive application, and so on. But we here cannot legislate, per se, the cost of these things. It all varies. However, if the Member has an objection with legal fees, and how expensive it may be, I just ask

him to reflect on the period 2015—2025. He will see that $1 billion alone was spent in the office of the Attorney General.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: The AG Office alone. He will then find over $200 million was spent on the EMBDC on a political witch hunt. Then, you will find millions and millions spent in other state enterprises. I think they paid one Vincent Nelson some money, too. Yes. Then comes today to talk about the expense and the legal fees. "Why yuh did not take some of ah dat money and help de people of Tobago pay legal fees?"

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Why? Instead, "allyuh take money and full de friends, families and financiers of the PNM's pockets with legal fees". That is what they did.

He then says, "Lawyers in the RG office will now have to appear in these applications." Again, the lawyers in the RG office were always appearing in the application.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Law 101.

Hon. S. Hosein: Law 101. Then he says that witnesses will have to attend. He says witnesses will have to attend court. Well, if the Member understands basic knowledge—basic, basic law here—in Hugh Wooding Law School—

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—there is a course called Civil Practice and Procedures I. "We eh reach II yet eh. We just dealing with I".

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Hon. S. Hosein: One. They teach you about claim forms. So, you have a claim form, and then you have a fixed-date claim form. These matters will originate by way of a fixed-date claim form. What accompanies a fixed-date claim form? An

affidavit. When you give affidavit evidence, it is sworn evidence that you provide that accompanies the claim form. If the judge requires you or a party requires cross-examination, then you ask the witness to come to court to be examined. But when you file matters like constitutional motions and so on, "yuh doh not bring de witnesses to court". The judge relies upon the affidavit evidence that accompanies the claim form. So, what we are doing here is making it easier for people. When you file your evidence, the investigator goes and checks to see if what the people are saying is true. The judge sees the report. If the judge has an issue, he could call the witness or not. But ordinarily, the judge will give weight to the affidavit evidence without the requirement of the attendance of a witness.

Look. I mean, look, I have a judgment here. I mean, I have to use the judgment, Mr. Speaker. I did not want to use it. It is a Privy Council appeal, *Dominic Pitilal*—why is the Attorney General laughing so much? *Dominic Pitilal, Earl Eli, Ashmeed Mohammed v. the Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago,* delivered on the 17th of November2026. This judgment vindicated the Persad-Bissessar administration of 2010—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—when it came to that state of emergency. The Prime Minister in 2010 was not afraid of the criminals and was not afraid to take courageous, bold steps—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—to make Trinidad safe. Again, she is doing it in this administration. But, you know, Mr. Speaker, "dey used to run around all ah of town". Sen. Faris Al-Rawi and former, former Prime Minister Rowley, running all over town, "Oh"—forgive my courtesies here, Mr. Speaker but—"Kamla doh want to swear affidavit. Anand doh want to swear affidavit. We go lose de case. It will

cost the taxpayers billions of dollars." Well, I do not think the Prime Minister swore an affidavit; I do not think Anand swore an Affidavit, and you know what? "We win de case".

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Imagine the Privy Council relied on the affidavit evidence of one Brigadier Sandy, former Minister of National Security, Mervyn Richardson, Deputy Commissioner of Police and Ann Marie Alleyne-Daly, Assistant Commissioner of the Special Branch. At paragraph 105 of the judgment, this is what the Privy Council said about affidavit evidence:

> "105. The Board has already explained that the clear thrust of the case law is that the courts must give considerable weight to the assessment of the executive and senior members of the security and police services who are tasked with gathering and assessing threats."

They got that from reference to the three affidavits deposed by the three deponents. Simple, basic, law 101. Law 101. The Member refused, or he does not understand these simple, simple matters. I think he should have spent some more time outside.

He then spoke about the appeal procedure. The appeal procedure. In this case, Mr. Speaker, the law is clear. If a certificate of title is issued or granted by way of fraud or some material misrepresentation, there is a procedure to set it aside. You can go to court and set it aside. We are not interfering with that particular procedure. So, if the RG issues it, on the instruction of a judge, you could go and set aside that based on whatever relevant grounds of deception and so on.

He then says—oh, this was incredible. He says, we are giving all this burden to the Judiciary now. That they will have to go and do the investigation. I never in my life heard a Judiciary investigating anybody. I never heard that in my

life, you know. He said, "Now the Judiciary will have to get these field investigators to go and check everything." I know that was clear, clear in his argument. The Registrar General's office will still do the investigation. I went to length to even say I inherited seven of those investigators. Today we are up to 22; four are going into Tobago, and we will increase the numbers, Mr. Speaker. We will increase the numbers.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Then—

Mr. Lee: "He did'nt ha' nothing to say really".

Hon. Members: [*Laughter*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—he said, "Whether we will still have the search title." Well, this is, I mean—yeah. This is funny.

Mr. Lee: The Prime Minister understands what she is doing.

Hon. S. Hosein: Yeah.

Mr. Lee: The Prime Minister understands.

Hon. S. Hosein: Yeah. He said, "Will we still have to search title?" Of course, you will have to search the title, and then the RG office will examine the report to verify whether or not the title is in fact accurate or not as presented in the application.

5.15 p.m.

And then, I think, the Member for Port of Spain South then stood up and talked about some matter with ANR or some kind of thing like that. In 10 years, in 10 years, we had to come back into Government to ensure that the people who were allocated lands in the Cove Estate received title. We did that earlier this year.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: I gave a commitment. The Prime Minister gave a commitment

that Friendship will be coming next; Friendship will be coming next. Imagine they built an airport in Tobago and they do not own the land. We have to come and sort out title issues. "Dey build house up in Caura, dey doh own de land. I doh know, I doh know what to say about these people, dey clearly don't understand land law." In fact, they may not understand any law.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Then, the Member for Port of Spain South, another Senior Counsel, he said, "We must have an express statutory provision", and he said, "The Attorney General, the Minister must look at this, that we must disclose that the person in fact must disclose whether or not there are other interests operating on the lands." Well, I mean, if the Member had a copy of the judges' guidelines, right, I will just take him through. Item V of the guidelines:

The applicant must state that he is not aware of any mortgage or encumbrances affecting the land or that any person other than himself has a legal or equitable estate or interest therein.

So, the guidelines actually tell you already that you have to disclose whether or not any other interest is affecting the land.

But let me take them back even to the statement of case and the claim form. There is something called a Certificate of Truth, that you must sign when you file a claim form, which says that, "I believe the contents and the particulars set out in this claim form are true and correct." And then when you depose the affidavit, the first thing you have to put on the affidavit is, "I so and so, do solemnly swear and believe the truth of the content of this affidavit." And then if you rely on hearsay evidence, you have to say that you rely on hearsay evidence.

Mr. Speaker, I am astonished here, you know. I am astonished that two Senior Counsels stood up in this Parliament and made those kinds of arguments,

you know. "I feel that they should go back in the law school and do mooting yuh know, and dem law school students will give dem ah run for dey money yuh know." I think we are going to also assist with the fees for the Hugh Wooding Law School students. That is a commitment being given by this Government under our leadership of the Prime Minister.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Then the Member says, and I am certain because the Member may not have ever filed one of these applications, that is why he made this argument. He said, "we must verify the boundaries."

Mr. Lee: Which Member said that?

Hon. S. Hosein: Port of Spain South says, "We must verify boundaries." Now, the most fundamental thing is that when you are applying for the land to be brought under RPO, you have to tell the court and tell the RG the extent of the land, and the four boundaries of the land or whatever. And on top of that, you have to have a survey plan accompanying the application showing the boundaries of the land. And on top of that, a surveyor must make a declaration saying that he surveyed the land and he served a notice to all of the neighbouring persons that he served them a notice saying that he is going to survey the land, and they should be present when the survey is being conducted. And then the Member comes to say, "Well, we must verify boundaries."

Mr. Lee: "And he is ah Senior Counsel."

Hon. Members: [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. S. Hosein: That is a Senior Counsel. That is Senior Counsel. That is a Senior Counsel. So, Mr. Speaker, you realize that these individuals really do not know what they are talking about. They are clueless—

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein:—and that is why the land administration system in this country collapsed over the last 10 years and we are fixing it under the Member for Siparia.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: So, Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I need to detain this House anymore. I do not know if I have to convince anyone in this House or even the listening population about the competence of the Members for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West and Port of Spain South. But, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is good law. The only thing we have to do again for today's exercise, we have some amendment that we will circulate. I will not go into the nature of those amendments. I will explain it at the committee stage, but it is really to tighten up the drafting of the law. This is a very archaic piece of law. We want to make sure that we get it absolutely correct in terms of the drafting. We are solid with respect to the policy; we know this is going to benefit the people, especially the people of Tobago, and I beg to move, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

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

Clause 4.

Question proposed: That clause 4 stand part of the Bill.

"In the proposed new subsection (3)—

(a) in paragraph (a), delete the word 'and';

(b) in paragraph (b), delete the words '.'.' and substitute the words '; and'; and

(c) insert after paragraph (b), the following paragraph:

'(c) possessory title under the provisions of this Act shall be construed as a reference to an application described in sections 8 and 18.'"

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Mr. Hosein: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we have one amendment—three separate amendments, two being typographical and other minor changes. However, the substantive amendment will just be to include the words at the new subsection (c). This is in fact circulated so that everyone is clear that we are also dealing with possessory titles as circulated.

Mr. Chairman: The question is that clause 4 be amended as circulated.

Question agreed to.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 5.

"A. In the proposed new section 3(2), delete the word 'An' and substitute the words 'Subject to subsection (4), an'.

B. In the proposed new section 3(3), after the word 'title', insert the words 'or possessory title'.

C. In the proposed new section 3, delete subsection (4) and substitute the following subsections:

'(4) An application for bringing land with perfect title under the provisions of this Act —

(a) shall be submitted to the Registrar General in Form A of the First Schedule; and

(b) may be heard and determined by a Judge in chambers.

(5) Sections 20 and 25 shall apply to an application under subsection (4).'."

Question proposed: That clause 5 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Mr. Hosein: Again, Mr. Chairman, there are three different pieces of amendments to clause 5. However, two again are just minor changes. The substantive amendment deals with respect to bringing lands under the RPO, which has perfect title. Those will be heard in chambers. Those are not needed to be heard in open court and the form A form that is already prescribed in the parent Act, we are just making it abundantly clear that that is the particular form that an applicant will use, as circulated.

Mr. Chairman: The question is that clause 5 be amended as circulated.

Question agreed to.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 6.

"Delete clause 6."

Question proposed: That clause 6 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Mr. Hosein: Mr. Chairman, in this particular amendment, deleting clause 6, and we will have new clauses to come thereafter.

Mr. Gonzales: Is it consequential that the new clause comes after?

Mr. Hosein: It will be unnecessary in view of the previous amendments.

Mr. Gonzales: Because of the previous amendment or the amendments to come after?

Mr. Hosein: The previous amendments and the ones to come also, yes.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 6 deleted.

Clause 7.

"Delete clause 7 and substitute the following new clause:

'Section 8 amended

7. Section 8 of the Act is amended by deleting from the words 'in the following manner' to the words 'Schedule, if' and substituting the words "upon an application'.'."

Question proposed: That clause 7 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Mr. Hosein: This is the amendment to section 8 of the Act. What we are doing in this particular section, Mr. Chairman, these are just some matters in which we are tightening up the language and clearing up the drafting.

Mr. Chairman: The question is that clause 7 be amended as circulated.

Question agreed to.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 8.

"Insert after the words ''duly published'', the words 'and substituting the words', and at his discretion, to direct the applicant to cause notice of such application to be served in accordance with such requirement upon all persons who shall appear to him to have any interest in the land which is the subject of such application, and to be advertised three times at least in one daily newspaper published in Trinidad and Tobago, and in such newspapers published elsewhere as to the Judge may seem fit; and the Judge shall

specify the number of times, and at what intervals, such advertisements shall be published in each or any of such papers and shall also limit and appoint a time, not less than one month nor more than two years from the date of the first of such advertisements in the daily newspaper, upon or after the expiration of which the Judge may direct the Registrar General to bring such land under the provisions of this Act, unless a caveat is lodged in the interval, and may amend or vary any order previously made: Provided that the Judge may, after settling such advertisements as shall have been directed, require the applicant to procure their due publication, and he shall not direct the Registrar General to bring the land comprised in the application under this Act until satisfied that such advertisements have been duly published'."

Question proposed: That clause 8 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister

Mr. Hosein: This particular amendment will touch and concern the manner of advertising. Previously, it was the RG who would really direct how the publications are made. Now that the application starts with the court, we are preserving a power for the judge to give that direction in terms of the publication. So, it is really a simple amendment.

Mr. Scotland SC: Chairman, is it that they will have concurrent jurisdiction to do the publication, or it is just the judge alone now with exclusive jurisdiction?

Mr. Hosein: Yeah, the judge will decide and you will see also that the judge can direct the Registrar—

Mr. Scotland SC: The Registrar?

Mr. Hosein: Not to bring the land under the RPO unless he is satisfied of the publication criterion.

Mr. Scotland SC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairman: The question is that clause 8 be amended as circulated.

Question agreed to.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 9.

"Delete clause 9 and substitute the following new clause:

'Section 18

amended 9. Section 18 of the Act is amended by—

(a) deleting the words 'the Registrar General or';

(b) inserting after the words 'caveats; and', the words 'the Judge shall not direct'; and

(c) deleting the words 'may refuse'.'."

Question proposed: That clause 9 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Mr. Hosein: Mr. Chair, this deals with respect to the caveats and these caveats will in fact play an important role. We have circulated the amendments to section 18 now, and these are really for the judges to deal with the caveats. Previously, it was the RG and now this will form part of the case management conferences and directions.

Mr. Chairman: Port of Spain South.

5.30 p.m.

Mr. Scotland SC: What will happen to caveats that are already lodged?

Mr. Hosein: I did not—

Mr. Chairman: What will happen to caveats which have already been lodged?

Mr. Hosein: Those will all be subject to the directions of the Court because this Bill only deals with the applications going forward.

Mr. Scotland SC: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Hosein: Correct. Because if members want to utilize this new—what we call the "fast track procedure", they could withdraw their applications from the RG's office and refile under this new law.

Mr. Scotland SC: Do you think it may have been necessary then to put that in so that people could be aware that it is a—

Mr. Hosein: That does not have to form part of the law. I think that is a—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: They have lawyers.

Mr. Hosein:—yeah, that is a procedural matter.

Mr. Scotland SC: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, shall I put the question?

Hon. Members: Yes.

Clause 9, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

New clause 10.

Sections 10, 22 and 23 of the Act are amended by inserting after the words "Registrar General", wherever those words appear, the words "in respect of an application under section 3(4), or the Court in respect of an application under section 3(3),".

New clause 10 read the first time.

Question proposed: That the new clause 10 be read a second time.

Question put and agreed to.

Question proposed: That the new clause be added to the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

New clause 10 added to the Bill.

New clause 11.

Section 24 is amended by inserting after the words "Registrar General", in

the first place where they occur, the words, "in respect of an application under section 3(4), or the Court in respect of an application under section 3(3),".".

New clause 11 read the first time.

Question proposed: That the new clause 11 be read a second time.

Question put and agreed to.

Question proposed: That the new clause be added to the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

New clause 11 added to the Bill.

Mr. Hosein: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: I am advised that it is an automatic editorial function that does not form part of these proceedings. I think we all know from our experience as lawyers that, really—the editorial functions do not form part of the legislative process.

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

House resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Land and Legal Affairs

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Hosein: Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the Real Property (Amdt.) Bill 2026 was considered in the committee of the whole and approved with amendments. I now beg to move that the House agree with the committee's report.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Acting Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Members: [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Wilfred Morris): Thank you. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Leader of Government Business, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the question is that this House do now adjourn to a date to be fixed, those in favour say aye—

Mr. Gonzales: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to advise my colleague that next Friday is Private Members' Day. So, is it that we are not going to have Private Members' Day at the scheduled time?

Hon. W. Morris: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition will have their Private Members' Day.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: In due course.

Mr. Speaker: All right, I think prior to the intervention of the Chief Whip, the ayes had it.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.36 p.m.