



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Debates of the House of Representatives

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**OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE WADE MARK
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE NELA KHAN
DEPUTY SPEAKER

Friday 28th March, 2014

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Friday, March 28, 2014*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**PAPERS LAID**

1. Audited Financial Statements of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission for the year ended December 31, 2010. [*The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh)*]
To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.
2. Response to the Sixth Report of the Joint Select Committee established to inquire into and report to Parliament on Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions (with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission) on the Re-evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission. [*The Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Nela Khan)*]
3. Response to the Twelfth Report of the Joint Select Committee established to inquire into and report to Parliament on Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions (with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission) on the Re-evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission. [*The Deputy Speaker (Mrs. N. Khan)*]
4. Second Report of the Child Protection Task Force. [*The Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development (Hon. Clifton De Coteau)*]

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS
(Presentation)****Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions
Point Fortin Borough Corporation**

Mrs. Joanne Thomas (*St. Ann's East*): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following report:

Thirteenth Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into and report on Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions (with the

exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission) on a review of the Administration of the Point Fortin Borough Corporation.

**Government Ministries, Statutory Authorities
and State Enterprises (Group 2)
Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission**

Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey (*La Brea*): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following report:

Fifteenth Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into and report on Government Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2), on the Administration and Operations of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC).

Insurance (No. 2) Bill, 2013

The Minister of Transport (Hon. Stephen Cadiz): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following report:

Second Interim Report of the Joint Select Committee on the Insurance (No. 2) Bill, 2013.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Before I ask the Leader of the House to speak, let me just inform hon. Members, that at the last sitting of the House, question No. 116 was answered by the Minister of Transport. However, the question was inadvertently repeated on today's Order Paper.

Hon. Leader of the House.

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, just to indicate that the Government would be answering the questions on the Order Paper. However, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs is unavailable, and I will ask that questions directed to him, be deferred for one week.

Also, we are in a position to place on the record several of the questions for written submission. We did last week answer, I believe, the one question posed to the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, and today, we intend to place these answers in written format to the House.

Mr. Speaker: Do you want to tell us which ones they are?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, during the course of the proceedings, I will clarify on the ones.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The following questions stood on the Order Paper:

Illegal Quarries

- 65.** A. Could the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs state:
- i. How many illegal quarries have been identified throughout the country?
 - ii. Where are these illegal quarries located?
 - iii. How many persons have been arrested and charged for illegal quarrying from June 2010 to date?
- B. Could the Minister list all the licensed quarries that operate within the country? [*Miss A. Hospedales*]

**Petrotrin Oil Spill
(Suspension of Workers)**

- 73.** Could the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs state:
- A. With respect to press release No. 8 dated December 27, 2013 from Petrotrin, could the Minister confirm whether there was a leak during loading operations on or about December 26, 2013?
 - B. If the answer to part A is in the affirmative, could the Minister state:
 - i. What quantity of oil was spilled?
 - ii. Whether any employee(s) were suspended due to this mishap? [*Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon*]

Questions, by leave, deferred.

**Saut Deau Road, La Canoa, Santa Cruz
(Completion of Roadworks)**

- 67.** **Mrs. Joanne Thomas** (*St. Ann's East*) asked the hon. Minister of Local Government:

With respect to the completion of roadworks at Saut Deau Road, La Canoa, Santa Cruz, could the Minister state:

- a) When will paving works begin?
- b) When will the project be completed?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of Local Government. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Marlene Coudray): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the paving of the road at La Canoa in Santa Cruz, the Chairman of the San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation has advised that the said road is within the budget for this year's fiscal, and that the corporation is awaiting a release of funding to commence the work, so, that an exact date of commencement or completion cannot be given at this time, but it will be done by September 30, 2014.

**Maracas Bay ECCE Centre
(Commencement of Works)**

68. Mrs. Joanne Thomas (*St. Ann's East*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

Could the Minister state:

- a) Whether any approval has been given by the Ministry for the commencement of works at the Maracas Bay ECCE Centre?
- b) The projected date for the commencement of works for this Centre?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry of Education, by virtue of the policy directed by this administration to bring about universal early childhood education, was given the authority for the commencement of works for construction of Early Childhood Education Centres throughout Trinidad and Tobago, bearing in mind the demography of the student population ages three and four.

And from June 2010, we moved expeditiously to begin construction of Early Childhood Education Centres, and within the first-year period, we were able to complete 29 Early Childhood Education Centres throughout Trinidad and Tobago in areas such as: Arouca/Maloney, Tunapuna, St. Augustine, Diego Martin North/East, Couva, Toco/Sangre Grande, Siparia, Arima, La Horquetta/Talparo, Naparima, Caroni Central, Oropouche East, San Fernando, Chaguanas East, Moruga/Tableland, Cumuto, Manzanilla, St. Joseph, Couva South, Laventille East/Morvant and Mayaro.

Mr. Speaker, 30 Early Childhood Education Centres were completed, and then we moved on to the completion of another 24 Early Childhood Education Centres, under the IADB Phase One Programme. We worked on ensuring construction of ECCE Centres in D'Abadie/O'Meara, Caroni East, Lopinot/Bon Air West,

Moruga/Tableland, St. Ann's East, Couva South, St. Joseph, St. Augustine, Barataria/San Juan, Arima, Arouca/Maloney, Princes Town, Naparima, San Fernando East, San Fernando West, Fyzabad, Point Fortin.

So, Mr. Speaker, up to about two months ago, we had completed the construction of 54 new [*Desk thumping*] Early Childhood Education Centres. Subsequent to that, we continued to move towards completion and work on a number of ECCE Centres, because to satisfy the requirements of housing our 49,000 students, ages three and four, and even moving with a private sector/public sector partnership, we know we have to construct close to beyond 100 Early Childhood Education Centres, to achieve our goal.

So we began construction of another 29 under the conventional system, and another six under the pre-engineered prefabricated system. So 29 and 6; 35 Early Childhood Education Centres, are going to be started within a two-week period from now, Mr. Speaker, another 35. So 54 plus 35, we would have completed 54 plus 35, will start in two weeks; that is 89, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, we are commencing discussions with the IADB Phase Two Programme for another 26. And it is not only in Trinidad we are constructing Early Childhood Education Centres, Mr. Speaker, but Tobago as well. We have earmarked to construct five Early Childhood Education Centres in Tobago, and what has been given to us like: Belle Garden, Milford, Bon Accord, Adventure, Plymouth, Calder and Roxborough. We are also going to be constructing one in Morvant, Mount Pleasant, Morvant/Laventille, St. Ann's East, No. 1 Cascade Road, St. Ann's East, another one, La Pastora, Upper Santa Cruz, La Horquetta/Talparo, Transportation Street, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to inform the Member for Laventille West, that her ECCE Centre, the centre that she has been asking for, construction, Spree Simon, on Pleasant Road and Eastern—[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: That is Port of Spain South.

Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:—Port of Spain South? All right. That will be starting in two weeks' time. [*Desk thumping*] So, Mr. Speaker, having completed 54, we are starting 35 in two weeks, that is 89 plus another 26, that will be 115 Early Childhood Education Centres, we hope to complete before term begins again in September 2014, Mr. Speaker. We are working towards that, but we know for certain, 54 plus 31, 85 will be completed by September, and we are working to see whether we can get others completed before the end of the year.

So, Mr. Speaker, the one at Maracas Bay that had been asked for by the Member for St. Ann's East, that was having some difficulties as far as the allocation of the land. The Commissioner of State Lands approved in February of this year, that the site is unencumbered and work will start in the programme that we have, and will start in two weeks' time as far as that is concerned.

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

**Textbook Rental Programme
(Receipt of School Books)**

74. Miss Marlene Mc Donald (*Port of Spain South*) on behalf of Mrs. Patricia Mc Intosh (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

Could the hon. Minister state:

- a) As at January 1, 2014, how many schools have not received textbooks under the Textbook Rental Programme for the Academic Year 2013-2014?
- b) The names of the schools?
- c) When will these schools receive textbooks?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Members of this House. The People's Partnership Government embarked on a massive textbook programme when we came into office in 2010, to ensure that we provide text books for students in every area from early childhood education, to primary school and to all secondary school students.

1.45 p.m.

In 2010, we spent \$17,874,220 on textbooks for primary, secondary and also special education. In 2011, we spent \$35,662,000; 2012, we spent \$84,857,589, and in 2013, as at January 31, 2014, we had spent \$70,028,613. We project that in 2014/2015 fiscal year we will have to spend another \$41 million. So, Mr. Speaker, for the four years we have spent, from 2010—2013, approximately \$250 million in provision of textbooks for students and materials in early childhood education, special education, primary and secondary schools.

Mr. Speaker, we provided, from Infant Year I and Infant Year II to Standard 5 in 2010, 247,105 textbooks. In 2011, we provided 195,704 textbooks, and in

2012, 756,685 textbooks, and in 2013, which was a top-up basically, 239,791 textbooks. That is from Infant Year I to Standard 5.

From Forms 1 to 6, Mr. Speaker, in 2010 we provided for our students in secondary schools, 107,537 textbooks; in 2011, 146,366; 2012, 436,463, and in 2013, 120,196 textbooks. So in total, Mr. Speaker, in 2010 we provided for our students in primary schools and in secondary schools, approximately 354,000 textbooks; in 2011, 342,000; in 2012, 1,193,148 textbooks, and in 2013, 360,000 textbooks, approximately. So the provision total for the four years that this administration has been in governance, we have provided close to 2,230,000 textbooks for our students in our schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

In 2013/2014, the Ministry of Education Textbook Rental Programme is now in the second year of its cycle and, as such, this is a replacement or a top-up exercise. In this year the textbook procurement exercise, the Ministry's objective was to top up items in the following areas. At the primary level it was projected to purchase 249,138 textbooks at a cost of \$16,932,000, approximately, and this would have comprised of annual replacement of 53,455 for Infant I and 46,358 for Infant II, and these are workbooks in reading, language arts and science. And we would provide a 10 per cent replenishment that is 140,062 textbooks for Infant I to Standard 5.

So, Mr. Speaker, for the Infant Years I and II, we were replacing the workbooks for reading, language arts and science. At the secondary level, it was projected to purchase approximately 148,580 textbooks at a cost of \$17,989,608, and this comprises annual replacement of 18,111 dictionaries and atlases at Form 1 as required. All students entering Form 1 are given dictionaries and atlases. A 10 per cent replenishment, that is 37,203 textbooks for Forms 1 to 6 as applicable, and the replacement of 54,988 for Form 4, and 9,892 for Form 6.

Now the students use the books that we provide for them, when we provide them in Form 4, they use them in Forms 4 and 5, and when we provide them in Lower 6, they use them for Lower 6 and Upper 6. At the special education level, we provided regular textbooks requested by special schools, that is the special education level. We have 22 schools in Trinidad and Tobago, special education schools, approximately 12 Government and 10 private. Large print and Braille textbooks for visually impaired students are provided and manipulative learning materials and resources for differentiated learning styles.

Mr. Speaker, the Educational Facilities Company Limited leads and manages the textbook procurement and distribution of textbooks, and learning materials for

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the Textbook Rental/Loan Programme, and textbooks are procured through two methods: a direct contracting sole select and an open competitive tendering. Sole select or direct contracting is used to procure textbooks based on ownership of titles by identified publishers. Most textbooks are procured in this method to secure economies of scale and required quantities. Mr. Speaker, as of January 01, 2014, all schools—[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect, 36(1). [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, until and Standing Orders are changed to deal specifically with this matter, you know the Speaker cannot direct a Minister how to answer. Okay. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: You asked me a question, I am answering. I am answering the question, Mr. Speaker. As of January 01, 2014, all schools would have received their top-up. Mr. Speaker, as of January 01, 2014, all schools would have received their top-up. The special education component encompasses large print and Braille textbooks which required clarification of copyright and reproduction issues.

I want to summarize the distribution status as of January 01, 2014. As far as primary is concerned under sole select, 87 per cent were provided; as far as secondary under sole select, 70 per cent were provided, and special education 94 per cent. Mr. Speaker, under the sole select, primary and secondary, there was completion of deliveries to all schools by February 28, 2014. [*Desk thumping*] And under the competitive primary and secondary completion of deliveries, they were completed to all schools by March 14, 2014, with the exception of the atlas, the shipment of which from the suppliers, the publishers that came from Australia went to Panama, but this will be delivered by April 14.

For special education, manipulatives and large print deliveries have been completed by March 14, 2014, and the braille textbook deliveries will be completed by April 10, 2014. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Port of Spain South.

Miss Mc Donald: Yeah, supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question was specific, how many schools—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: No! No! No! No! No! What is the supplemental?

Miss Mc Donald: The supplemental is—*[Interruption]* Well I am asking. I am stating. All right.

Mr. Speaker: Do not repeat the question. You have to respond—*[Inaudible]*

Miss Mc Donald: What are the names of the schools who have not received books up to 2013/2014, and when will these schools receive the textbooks?

Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: Mr. Speaker, I have been advised by the Ministry that the sole select, primary and secondary, completion of deliveries have been done to all schools by February 28, 2014; that is almost a month ago. For the competitive primary and secondary completion of deliveries, this was done by March 14, 2014 with the exception of the atlas shipment which will be delivered by April 14. For special education, manipulatives and large print deliveries have been completed by March 14, 2014, and Braille textbook deliveries will be completed by April 10, 2014.

Miss Mc Donald: Further supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister stating that all schools have received their textbooks?

Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Member of Parliament was listening. I just read the answers. I will give you again, Madam. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Speaker, I want to re-emphasize for the benefit of the Member for Laventille West that the sole select, primary and secondary, completion of deliveries—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Member: Port of Spain South.

Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:—Port of Spain South—to all schools, the sole select, primary and secondary—there are two methods of it: a sole select and a competitive—sole select, primary and secondary, completion of deliveries were completed to all schools by February 28, 2014, and the competitive, primary and secondary, completion of deliveries to all schools by March 14, 2014, with the exception of the atlas which will be delivered before April 14, and for special education, manipulatives and large print deliveries were completed by March 14, and Braille textbook deliveries to be completed by April 10, 2014.

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

**Technical/Vocational Studies in Secondary Schools
(Details of)**

75. Miss Marlene Mc Donald (*Port of Spain South*) on behalf of Mrs. Patricia Mc Intosh (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

Could the Minister state:

- a) How many vacancies exist in the area of Technical/Vocational Studies in Secondary Schools?
- b) The schools that are currently without the requisite teachers as a result of these vacancies?
- c) What provisions have been made to accommodate students who are pursuing Technical/Vocational studies in those schools adversely affected?

The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh): Mr. Speaker, the CVQ qualifications in the secondary schools programme has been a major pursuit for the Ministry of Education in our quest to diversify the education sector and to bring about the realization of the fullest potential of our children, and we have been focusing on a movement in addition to the academic qualifications for the incorporation of Caribbean Vocational Qualification, Level 1 and Level 2. Level 1 at the ordinary level or CSEC level, and Level 2 at the CAPE level.

Mr. Speaker, in 2009 there were 32 schools doing CVQs in the secondary schools programme, and we continued to increase the number of schools doing those programmes. In 2010, 40 schools were doing it; in 2011, 43; in 2012, 44; 2013, 46 schools, and I am pleased to say that in 2014, 97 out of 134 [*Desk thumping*] secondary schools are doing CVQs now, Mr. Speaker, an improvement of almost three times the number. The number of candidates doing CVQs in the secondary schools increased from 2009, 1,314 candidates were doing CVQs and in 2014, 3,025 students are now doing CVQs.

2.00 p.m.

We have also increased and improved on the occupational areas. In 2009, 27 occupational areas, or what you call occupational standards, we have now moved that to 34 subject areas of the occupational standards for CVQs. In 2009, units awarded were 7,657, and up to 2012, the statistics and figures I have, the units awarded were 14,497. So the diversification of our education programme

continues swiftly, with a lot more students doing the curriculum vocational qualification and tech/voc education. In 2013, 620 students were awarded full CVQs.

We are trying to work with the denominational board schools to offer CVQ levels, and in 2009, none of these schools had decided to take it up; now 11 of the denominational board schools are doing the CVQ levels. So even in the traditional board schools there is now diversification in their education programme.

The occupational standards are 34, and amongst them are areas like commercial food preparation and carpentry. Fifty two schools are doing commercial food preparation; crop production/grow box operations, 49 schools; data operations, 28; electrical installation, 31; fabric design, 18; furniture making, 13; general cosmetology, 24; metal work engineering, 26 schools; motor vehicle repairs, 13 schools, and welding, 23 schools.

Mr. Speaker, we have had to move and work with the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training. My colleague, Minister Karim, has been doing a tremendous amount of work in the tertiary education sector in skills training as well, utilizing the skills of YTEPP, MIC, NESC and NTA, the National Training Agency. We were able to get a number of skilled personnel from their programmes to supply the demands in our secondary school system, to bring about technical and vocational teachers from TVT I to TVT III and TVT IV. So we now have 900 teachers carrying the technical vocational teacher designation TVT I to technical vocational teacher TVT IV in our secondary schools—900 teachers.

The question is asked: how many vacancies? Up to the end of last year I am advised that we had 69 vacancies, but advertisements went out and 25 of these vacancies have been filled out of the 69. I am advised that another advertisement is going on so that we can fill the other 44 vacancies. The first advertisement went to the print media on February 28, 2014.

With respect to dealing with the vacancies, forty-something at TVT I teachers to TVT IV, we have decided to adopt a two-tier approach to deal with that area. The first is at the level of the school; the heads of departments or another teacher with relevant content, knowledge and skills is asked to deliver appropriate elements of the curriculum. Tutors and instructors are now hired on contract to teach the content at the level of the Ministry, and we are continuing to engage with tertiary providers to submit the names of candidates who have the skills in the desired tech/voc areas for employment as instructors. We are also working with the Ministry of Public Administration for the provision of scholarships for training of young persons with the interest and prerequisite qualifications.

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Mr. Speaker, we have 900 TVT I to TVT IV teachers in our schools. We are now doing close to 34 occupational standards. We have almost completely filled our vacancies and many more schools are, in fact, engaging in doing the CVQ training.

Mr. Speaker, the CVQ training—we are moving stronger so that the students who qualify with Level 1, we are now working with CXC and the other principals to see whether they would consider the CVQ Level 1 certification as one of the five subjects that can be entertained for taking the students to the CAPE level, and at the CAPE level, Level 2 of the CVQs will be done, and then beyond that the Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training takes over in terms of the training for Level 3 and Level 4.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Cascade and St. Ann's Rivers
(Clearing of)**

76. Miss Marlene Mc Donald (*Port of Spain South*) on behalf of Mrs. Patricia Mc Intosh (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*) asked the hon. Minister of Local Government:

Could the Minister indicate when the Cascade and St. Ann's Rivers would be cleared of bush and debris?

The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Marlene Coudray):
Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Local Government is not in a position to answer question No. 76 since the Cascade and St. Ann's Rivers are main watercourses and fall under the purview of the Minister of the Environment and Water Resources.

**First Citizens Bank
(Overdraft Facility for Caribbean Airlines)**

108. Miss Alicia Hospedales (*Arouca/Maloney*) asked the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy:

- A. Could the Minister state whether an overdraft facility has been established for Caribbean Airlines with First Citizens Bank?
- B. If the answer to part (A) is in the affirmative, could the Minister state:
 - i. When was this overdraft facility established?
 - ii. The name of the authorizing officer who signed on behalf of Caribbean Airlines?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and the Economy, I wish to state that an overdraft facility has not been established for Caribbean Airlines with First Citizens Bank, and as such there is no need for a response to part (b) of the question. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Do you want to ask a supplemental?

Miss Hospedales: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister whether or not there were any attempts made to establish the overdraft facility.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: Mr. Speaker, I have already provided the answers to the hon. Member.

UTT Special Education Teacher Graduates (Details of)

102. Miss Marlene Mc Donald (*Port of Spain South*) on behalf of Mrs. Patricia Mc Intosh (*Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

Could the Minister state:

- a) How many UTT graduate teachers in Special Education have had their status regularized?
- b) How many of those who had received scholarships since 2006 have been placed in Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) Centres?
- c) How many vacancies exist for ECCE teachers at ECCE Centres throughout the country?

The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh): Mr. Speaker, the thrust of education, of bringing equity, accessibility and quality in education has been the watchword for our Government and the Ministry of Education. In that context of bringing quality education, the Ministry of Education strove expeditiously to ensure that all our teachers in our schools are fully qualified.

As a requirement of ensuring that we bring the qualification level of all our teachers up to date, we moved on to ensure that we provided scholarships for the assistant teachers within our primary schools. We have approximately 7,000 teachers in our primary schools, and in our secondary schools approximately 7,500 teachers. We have about 126,000 students in the primary schools and about 96,000 students in the secondary schools, and I said at ages three and four we have approximately 49,000 children.

In the primary schools when we compare teacher to student ratio, we are way more advanced than the developed countries. We have a teacher to student ratio of approximately one to 13 students in our primary schools, whereas best practice international standards go to one in 18 and one in 20 teacher to student ratio. So we can undoubtedly say with strength that our teaching within our primary schools is well served by our teachers.

But we had a number of assistant teachers who came in with O level certification, and over the three to four years, we have given close to more than 600 to 700 scholarships for these assistant teachers to go to UTT to become certified. There were a number of students who were given scholarships under the past administration, and they ought to be complimented for that, but we made sure that we continued to improve the quality of our teachers.

When the first set of teachers came out in 2010, a number specialized in primary school specialization, some specialized in special ed education and some specialized in early childhood care and education. I have been advised that 86 teachers in the primary schools were certified as special ed teachers, and 48 had specialized as ECCE teachers. Almost 250 have so far specialized as primary school teachers with a bachelor of education. So we have close to almost 98 per cent of our teachers in our primary schools having either a teacher's training diploma or a bachelor of education certification. So we can certainly say that the quality of our teachers in our primary schools is extremely good at the moment.

The special ed teachers, the teachers who specialize in special education—the Chief Personnel Officer and TTUTA together with the Ministry of Education, had over a period of time established that for a teacher to become a special ed teacher in a primary school, despite the fact of having a degree from UTT, they had to undergo a three-year teaching programme or be three years as a teacher within the system before they be considered as a special education teacher.

That matter has been receiving the attention of the Ministry of Education for the last three years. We have been approaching the Chief Personnel Officer, together with TTUTA, asking for these special education teachers to be regularized to become Teacher I, and we have met stumbling blocks along the way by the Chief Personnel Officer's department, one of which was said that they must be trained to become good teachers by pedagogical skills.

During the summer of 2013, the Ministry of Education sought to bridge these teachers in an education programme and retraining for about a six-to eight-week period whereby the teachers are qualified according to the CPO's job description and requirement.

The Chief Personnel Officer, I am advised up to just a while ago before coming, indicated by the end of March this year all these special education teachers would have become Teacher I. We are hoping that the Chief Personnel Officer would ensure that all our teachers who came out from the University of Trinidad and Tobago, who are special education teachers, can be given the certification of Teacher I.

So we have 86 teachers with special education qualification. I think only six of these have been moved on to Teacher I, and we are waiting for the Chief Personnel Officer to give us the go-ahead to give to the Teaching Service Commission their recommendation, so that Teaching Service Commission can now consider moving these special education graduates to become Teacher I. The same exists for the teachers who have been trained with early childhood education certification and specialization.

So the same problem occurs for the special ed as well as ECCE, but we are continuing to work feverishly with the Chief Personnel Officer and the Teaching Service Commission to regularize their status.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

**UTT Graduate Teachers In Special Education
(Employment of)**

103. Miss Marlene Mc Donald (*Port of Spain South*) on behalf of Mrs. Patricia McIntosh (*Port of Spain North/ St. Ann's West*) asked the hon. Minister of Education:

Could the Minister state:

- a) How many UTT graduate teachers in Special Education are employed as Special Education Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools?
- b) How many posts for Special Education Teachers have been created since May 2010 in Primary and Secondary Schools throughout the country?

The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh): Mr. Speaker, this question No. 103 piggybacks on question 102. It is almost a similar question asked here:

How many UTT graduate teachers in Special Education are employed as Special Education Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools?

Oral Answers to Questions
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I just gave the chronology of events related to the teachers who were given scholarships, the UTT graduates coming out from 2010—2013. We have the difficulty of the certification by the Chief Personnel Officer and the Teaching Service Commission.

So, all those who specialized in special education from UTT, the graduate teachers, only six of the 86 are employed as special education teachers.

2.15 p.m.

It is the thinking of the Ministry of Education now to move these teachers out of the main stream of the primary schools and the secondary schools.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, it is 2.15 p.m. The rest of the questions will go forward to the next Order Paper at the next sitting of the House of Representatives. Continue, please.

EXPIRATION OF QUESTION TIME

The following questions stood on the Order Paper:

La Canoa Road, Santa Cruz

(Roadworks)

69. Could the hon. Minister Works and Infrastructure state:

- a) Whether the Ministry gave instructions to cancel any road works at La Canoa Road in Santa Cruz?
- b) Whether the commencement of any roadworks in La Hoe Road in Laventille has been cancelled?
- c) When will work on these two roads commence, if the answers to parts (a) and (b) above are in the negative? [*Mrs. J. Thomas*]

Seafood in the Gulf of Paria

(Test for toxicity levels)

82. Could the hon. Minister of Food Production state:

- (a) The dates during the past two years when tests were conducted on the fish, shrimp, crab and oysters in the Gulf of Paria to ascertain toxicity levels?
- (b) The results of those tests stated in part (a) above? [*Mr. F. Jeffrey*]

Importation of Crabs and Oysters

- 84.** Could the hon. Minister of the Environment and Water Resources state whether there are any plans to import crabs and oysters into the coastline of the southwestern peninsula to replenish the destroyed stock, and if not, why? [Mr. F. Jeffrey]

**La Brea and Erin Fire Stations
(Construction of)**

- 85.** With respect to the construction of the La Brea and Erin Fire Stations, Could the hon. Minister of National Security state:
- (a) The names and addresses of the contractors who were awarded the contracts to build both fire stations?
 - (b) When will construction commence?
 - (c) The estimated cost of construction for each fire station? [Mr. F. Jeffrey]

**Bridge at Ibis Circular Road, Paria Gardens, Aripero
(Construction of)**

- 86.** Could the hon. Minister of the Works and Infrastructure state explain the delay in the construction of the bridge at Ibis Circular Road, Paria Gardens, Aripero, when an assurance was given from the Ministry of Works that construction would have commenced since 2012? [Mr. F. Jeffrey]

**CEPEP Teams
(Details of)**

- 104.** Could the hon. Minister of Housing and Urban Development state:
- (a) How many CEPEP teams are functioning in the constituency of Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West?
 - (b) Whether the Ministry intends to deploy more CEPEP teams in the same constituency to deal with the unkempt landscaping issues within the constituency and if so, when? [Mrs. P. Mc Intosh]

**Caribbean Airlines Limited
(Move of US Banking Settlement Arrangements)**

- 109.** A. Could the hon. Minister Finance and the Economy indicate whether there is an initiative to move Caribbean Airlines' US banking settlement arrangements to First Citizens Bank?

- B. If the answer to part (A) is in the affirmative:
- i. When will the settlement arrangement take effect?
 - ii. The name of the person leading the initiative on behalf of Caribbean Airlines? [*Miss A. Hospedales*]

**Caribbean Airlines Limited
(Hiring of staff in Trinidad and Tobago)**

- 110.** With respect to the hiring of staff by Caribbean Airlines, could the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy state:
- a) Whether a decision was taken by Caribbean Airlines (CAL) to discontinue the hiring of staff practice in Trinidad and Tobago and if so, when?
 - b) The number of persons hired by CAL in Trinidad and Tobago during the period 2010 to 2013?
 - c) The number of persons hired by CAL in Jamaica during the period June 2010 to present?
 - d) The number of employees in Trinidad whose contracts were not renewed by CAL during the period June 2010 to present?
 - e) The number of persons in Jamaica whose contracts were renewed by CAL during the period June 2010 to present? [*Miss. A. Hospedales*]

**Ministry of Finance and the Economy
(Contracts to Ernst & Young)**

- 111.** With respect to the award of contracts to Ernst & Young by the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, could the hon. Minister Finance and the Economy state:
- a) The number of contracts awarded to date?
 - b) The dates the contracts were awarded?
 - c) The contract sum for each job done?
 - d) What tendering procedure was followed in the award of these contracts? [*Miss. A. Hospedales*]

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**Maloney Mall and Bon Air Village Plaza
(Details of Vacant Booths)**

- 112.** Could the hon. Minister of Housing and Urban Development state:
- a) The number of vacant booths at the Maloney Mall and the Bon Air Village Plaza?
 - b) Why were these vacant booths not assigned to tenants over the last three years?
 - d) When will the vacant booths at the Maloney Mall and Bon Air Village Plaza be assigned? [*Miss. A. Hospedales*]

**Chief Financial Officer of Caribbean Airlines
(Dismissal of)**

- 113.** Could the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy state:
- a) Why was the previous Chief Financial Officer of Caribbean Airlines dismissed?
 - d) When was the effective date of dismissal? [*Miss. A. Hospedales*]

Question time having expired, questions 69, 82, 84, 85, 86, 104, 109, 110, 111, 112 and 113 were not dealt with.

ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have been advised that the hon. Prime Minister has a statement to make. She is not yet in the Chamber. She was here, but she left. I would like the indulgence of the House to revert to this question of “Statements by Ministers” sometime later on in the proceedings. Do I have the support of the House?

Agreed to.

Let us proceed, please.

**MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
(ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE) BILL, 2014**

Bill to amend the Administration of Justice (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) Act, 2012, the Jury Act, Chap. 6:53, the Criminal Offences Act, Chap. 11:01, the Dangerous Drugs Act, Chap. 11:25, the Indictable Offences (Preliminary Enquiry) Act, Chap. 12:01, the Young Offenders Detention Act, Chap. 13:05 and the Police Service Act, Chap. 15:01 [*The Attorney General*]; read the first time.

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE
Insurance (No. 2) Bill, 2013
(Extension of time)**

The Minister of Transport (Hon. Stephen Cadiz): Mr. Speaker, having regard to the Second Interim Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Insurance (No. 2) Bill, 2013, I move that the committee be allowed an extension of eight weeks in order to complete its work and to submit a final report by May 31, 2014.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West. [*Desk thumping*]

**WASA AND NGC
(AWARD OF CONTRACTS)**

Dr. Keith Rowley (Diego Martin West): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Whereas the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) has determined that there is to be a Waste Water Treatment plant at the Beetham Water Treatment Estate; and

Whereas WASA has passed the process for the selection of a contractor to the National Gas Company, (NGC); and

Whereas this process has resulted in the NGC selecting a contractor whose price is millions of dollars above the nominal low bidder among competent contractors:

Be it resolved that the House take note of these developments and call upon the honourable Prime Minister to immediately stop this award and review the overall circumstances to ensure that the public interest is protected and state resources are not stolen or wasted in the arrangements between WASA and NGC with respect to this water supply project.

Mr. Speaker, not for the first time as a Member of this House, I have had to raise for the public benefit, matters relating to attempts to treat with water and sewerage issues in Trinidad and Tobago.

At an earlier time, when we as a country guided by the Government, decided to expand our water supply, a decision was taken to go by way of desalination, and opportunity was afforded for a desalination plant to be built and to benefit its

own as in Trinidad and Tobago. At the time when that decision was taken, there were questions about the feasibility or whether it was the best approach to go with desal or surface or groundwater. But that was not the main issue. The issue was, having taken the decision to obtain water by desalination, what was the procedure being followed to determine who will be the beneficiary of that opportunity. And the Government then, which is substantially the same Government now, at the time stood accused of acting corruptly to ensure that that opportunity fell to selected persons who had been defended and protected by the then Minister.

The Government protested vehemently, and WASA used all kinds of grease, all kinds of oils, all kinds of perfumes to convince the country that all was well with that project. It turned out, not too long after when a forensic investigation was done, allegations of corruptions were substantiated by evidence, and attempts were made to prosecute people, and one such person is now hiding away in Israel, not risking leaving the Israeli border because in Trinidad and Tobago a case can be made to have such a person arrested. And of course, since then the plans have changed on this one and it remains a part of our water supply system.

I want to comment though, at the time when the Government sought to convince us that there was a case to be made for the desal plant, and the arguments were about cost of desalinated water, in order to sell the argument to the population of Trinidad and Tobago, the then Minister, Minister Ganga Singh, told the Parliament when questioned in the House, that the desalination water was for Point Lisas because a case was being made that if that water gets into the public system, it will eventually at some time in the future, lead to local people paying a higher water rate or the Government subsidizing WASA in a particular way. To get past that argument, the Minister said that the water will be for Point Lisas.

I can tell you today, the south of Trinidad is more dependent on desal water than any other part of the country and the production is now 40 million gallons a day, as against the 20 million gallons at the time. So we are into desalination.

But the matter before us is a matter that is taking place now. And I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to a publication by WASA on its website which talks about the Government of Trinidad and Tobago approaching the IDB and obtaining facility of loans of US \$546.5 million. And the purpose of that is to treat with waste water rehabilitation programmes. So the Government of Trinidad and Tobago set about to treat with waste water and approached the IDB to deal with it.

There is another publication in the *Guardian* of September 2012 where the head of WASA, Executive Officer Dion Abdool, said that WASA would be

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embarking on a \$5.5 billion expenditure in a five-year period, 2012—2016, to deal with the latter focusing on the development of waste water infrastructure by the way of IDB involvement. And of course, that procedure.

What we have noticed from where we sit in the Opposition, when that money was being directed to waste water, it was directed to waste water systems except at Beetham; San Fernando, Malabar and other expenditure. But then Beetham, the main waste water facility, was not part of that; was not mentioned to receive that. But the IDB which provided the loan for the national waste water upgrades and expenditure, would be under the view that Beetham was going to be part of the expenditure that would attract the IDB funding.

But interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, the concept of recycling waste water from Beetham to Point Lisas is not new. The possibility of recycling the water is always there; should it be done or should it not be done? The previous Government got technical assessment, looked at it, came to a conclusion that it was not the most cost-effective thing to do.

This Government apparently looked at it and came to the same conclusion as well because at the 208th meeting of the WASA tenders committee, April 11, 2011, a meeting that was chaired by the Chairman Indar Maharaj, and involved the CEO, Ganga Singh, and the programme director Mr. Ramchan Ramcharan, they took a decision then, like the previous Government, that this was not the way to go. This was done in the context of approving the termination of the contract of ACON Limited for the programme manager work for the Beetham Water Re-use Project.

So, ACON was on the job to do this. The Government decided it should not be done and fired ACON; and hear the reasons given. The reason number one, was the cost to treat and transport reclaimed water from Beetham to Point Lisas, a distance of 36 kilometres is more costly than desalinated water.

Mr. Imbert: Everybody knows that.

Dr. K. Rowley: And reason number two, the construction of a 21-million gallon desal plant at Point Fortin further negated the feasibility of this project. This was WASA's position in 2011. And of course, Mr. Speaker, it was based on reasonable argument. But something kept happening at WASA which I must spend a couple minutes explaining to you.

When the new Government came into office, one of the first things they did in 2010 was to appoint Ganga Singh, the former Minister of Public Utilities, as an executive officer in WASA. Just before the Government came into office, a new

CEO of WASA was hired by virtue of international search and a proper evaluation procedure, and WASA had got a new CEO, who was an Englishman. The new Government paid him off to go and got him out of WASA. So he left having done no work, having not carried out his contract. He was paid and he left the job and the Government inserted Ganga Singh as the CEO. In this Parliament we raised questions about that. Why is Ganga Singh being made CEO of WASA? He is a lawyer. He has no engineering skills, no management skills; nothing.

The Minister at the time, Emmanuel George, told us, he was only there temporarily, and when the new board was appointed, the post would be advertised and all applicants would be considered and an appointment would be made in that position. No such thing happened. Secretly and quietly the new board confirmed Ganga Singh as the CEO of WASA against the background of an assurance given by the Minister in this Parliament.

The next thing we know at the next Cabinet reshuffle, of the many reshuffles, Ganga Singh was made Minister of Water and the Environment, where the water resource department of WASA, which was a department of the Ministry of Public Utilities, was made a Ministry and Ganga Singh was made Minister of that Ministry and put in charge of billions of dollars of projects and contract award in WASA. “Doh” forget that, Mr. Speaker.

But the same Government that did that, appointed a chairman of WASA, one Mr. Indar Maharaj, who was the chairman and still is the chairman of NGC. So they have created an environment where Ganga Singh is Minister, end up in the Ministry and the Cabinet, after being CEO of WASA, who decided that there will be no recycling project, but before he left there the recycling project came back to life.

2.30 p.m.

This document which is the final report, Beetham Water Re-Use Project, Technical Study and Concept Design, this is dated October 2012. Remember, in 2011, the WASA tenders committee under Mr. Indar Maharaj and Mr. Ganga Singh determined that this project was not feasible for the reason I just gave. But something happened between then and October 2012. So they returned to the project, and the project in all its glorious details—all in here [*Shows document*]—complete details of what the project concept is and all the inputs that you could want to go out for an RFP (Request for Proposals). So, WASA had a change of heart that it would do this project. But it will not do it as a WASA project. It will now hand this project to the NGC. Do not forget, the chairman of WASA is Indar

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Maharaj, taking this decision at WASA to hand this project to NGC where Mr. Indar Maharaj is the president. So himself conceived the project against the previous tenders committee advice and position that they would do the project but it will be done at NGC.

The details of the project are all here for you, Mr. Speaker. And, interestingly enough, WASA went—hear what the project entails. Estimates have been prepared for two types of costs: capital cost. Capital cost is the cost to plan, design, permit and build the water recycling plant at Beetham with 34 kilometres of pipe network to transfer product water to Pt. Lisas, excluding the purchase of land and so.

So, this is what the project is and it all in here with sketches and designs and all the costings but, interestingly enough, WASA's in-house estimated cost for this project is US \$101 million. *[Interruption]* So, we go from do not do it, it does not make any economic sense and, of course, it has estimates for the operation and maintenance and so on. So WASA conceded and decided to pursue this US \$100 million project, but they handed it to NGC. At NGC the proposals are now invited in September 2013. During the budget debate, when I saw WASA passed this project to the NGC, and knowing what we know about it and knowing the conflict that exists and the potential for bid rigging that exists between NGC chairman and WASA chairman, and the history of the desal plant, I raised this matter in the budget debate of September 2013, pointing out to the Prime Minister that there was a potential for the abuse of public moneys in this conflict arrangement. The Government did nothing. The Government left it there to NGC.

And may I point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that the NGC is a state company that sits on about \$15 billion of taxpayers' money in cash. If you look at the annual report of the NGC of 2012 you will see that the NGC has in its position under its control \$12 billion in cash. This Government, which has been raiding the Treasury awarding contracts and doing all kinds of things, now set its sights on the cash at the NGC, and WASA is the first rat to appear and what is happening here, Mr. Speaker, is that this project is conceived to get NGC to award the contract. How they proceeded? They invited tenders. And I pointed out then in the budget debate that inviting tenders for this huge contract, you cannot have a return period of seven weeks. You will have a problem.

That is not enough time for persons who are hearing about it for the first time to make a proper bid. WASA insisted that it was seven weeks, and I told the Parliament then that if that is the case you would have difficulty getting companies with bids. Sixteen companies expressed an interest. In fact, 16

companies paid US \$5,000 apiece to get the document. Now, no matter how wealthy you are, you do not just throw away US \$5,000. You had some kind of interest. Five thousand dollars to get the documents. And 14 of those companies indicated a willingness to want to bid. But, between the beginning of the process and the end of the tender period where there were requests for extensions, and some extensions were granted after not granting extensions, it turned out that of the 16 companies that bought the package and of the 14 that indicated that they would make a bid, 14 of the 16 companies walked away from the exercise. So, only two companies continued in the process.

Mr. Speaker, you would have seen advertisements all over the place plastered by the NGC when this matter became a public debate recently, and they talked about best practice. They went to the IDB, as I mentioned a while ago. Now, best practice for a tender with IDB money would have seen this project immediately re-tendered, because whatever would have caused those 14 contractors to walk away you would have had to rectify it so that bidding could take place among a larger number of contractors so that you can get the benefit of competition and you can have some possibility of good chance of there not being bid rigging. But NGC was quite happy to see 16 contractors come forward with a willingness, many of them—some of the best international performance in this particular area with expertise, experience and financial strength, the NGC was quite happy to see them go.

In fact, at our office before it came to that, we were advised that people not connected with this project were telling certain local contractors, “doh bother to bid; doh waste your time, because the contract is going to X and Y. Yuh hear dat”. Listen, lo and behold, contractors came to their conclusion when they saw what was happening at NGC/WASA, they withdrew themselves; 14 out of 16, and then when it got to that stage, the evaluation was done at NGC. One contractor who happens to be a very lucky contractor, who, so far has got over \$700 million work in the last 36 months, in a variety of projects in all kinds of areas, that contractor bid and the higher bid from that contractor was US \$167 million. That is just over a billion dollars.

The other contractor was approximately \$100 million, because there were two options that contractor gave if we did X it would be \$95 million; if we did Y it would be \$103 million, or something like that. Bear in mind that the WASA in-house estimate of 2012 for the project was US \$100 million. So, here it is WASA conceptualized the project and had an estimate of US \$100 million and you get a tender process with 16 contractors, two put in their actual bid; one, at a \$100

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million plus or minus \$5 million or \$3 million, and the other one at \$167 million. The NGC found a way and an argument to award the contract to SIS and their associates for US \$67 million more than the other contractor.

When that was raised as an anomaly coming out of this process which in itself should have been aborted, the Government through NGC started this campaign to convince the public that they were getting the best deal, and this ad campaign started that this project is a great arrival to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Not telling you that the project is not really necessary at this time and it is not a priority, and that they themselves had determined it not to be economically viable, and they are telling you this 10 million gallons of water; we need this. The sheiks of the Caribbean with oil and gas money, we would be spending one point something billion dollars for 10 million gallons of water.

Bear in mind that WASA as we know it now is producing 220-odd million gallons of water. So, for another 10 million gallons of water, which we set out to get from recycling, we will pay \$1-plus billion for it.

If it is that you want 10 million gallons of water for Point Lisas, there are other ways of getting it, but they chose this way for a specific purpose. Because, the other way of getting it, whether you like it or not, was simply to expand at desal in Point Lisas, and that option was available because we are now into desalination in the country. There is a desal plant in Point Lisas, right there in Point Lisas. In fact, a new desal plant could have been put in Point Lisas for far less than that, but something happened among the desalinators and it was better for them to come back up in Port of Spain, build the plant in Port of Spain, cost us a billion dollars and build a pipeline to go down.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, when you examine the local input and the foreign input in the consortium, all that the local contractor was going to do in this contract that was awarded on March 10, was to build the pipeline. So, these people at WASA/NGC resurrect a project which they themselves deemed not to be feasible, award it for a billion-plus dollars, just so that SIS could get to build a pipeline to Pt. Lisas for \$60-plus million, because all the foreigners are coming to bid when they build the plant. The plant could be built in Pt. Lisas if you have to. And if they were really concerned about another option, instead of going after sewerage water in Port of Spain, they could have extracted brackish water from the Caroni Basin next to Pt. Lisas, cheaper, and take it to Pt. Lisas. There is no issue! And nowhere in the statements made, including here in this Parliament, did anybody say that the quality of effluent going into the Gulf is so bad that it must be dealt with now. They cannot say that, because it was not like that, and not too

long ago we spent a significant amount of money upgrading the Beetham plant to ensure that the quality of effluent going into the Gulf was satisfactory to us in Point.

So, it is a question of recycling water. We are going to recycle and get back the water we used in this sewerage system; 10 million gallons worth. When you look at 10 million gallons of water for \$1-plus billion, but it turns out—I had my staff do the calculation for me—that in this project, we would be paying US \$15.18 per gallon. US \$15.18 will be the cost of that project to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. So I had my staff look at what other people are paying elsewhere in the world. Well, bear in mind that WASA's water in Trinidad and Tobago, produced by WASA, the 200-plus billion gallons, is about \$1.75 per gallon.

Hon. Member: Oh, my goodness.

Dr. K. Rowley: WASA is currently producing water at approximately \$1.75 per gallon. Some clients are more expensive but that is the average kind of price. Of course, the expenditure in those plants was older expenditure, but let us suppose you are paying four times that price. This new one that is going to come on now, under this arrangement, is going to cost us US \$15 per gallon.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Horrific! Horrific! How could you do this?

Dr. K. Rowley: So, let me look at a similar plant doing the same process in Washington in the United States. This plant is producing 10 million gallons of water—it is about the same size as the one they are producing here—their cost per gallon, US \$2.60.

Mr. Imbert: What!

Dr. K. Rowley: US \$2.60 per gallon in Washington state, and it does not matter which country you are in, it is the same process you are using if you are taking sewerage grey water and passing it through a known process to get industrial water out of it. And they are doing that for US \$2.60. This is the same thing that happened with DESALCOT, where the Bajans were getting desalinated water for a certain price and we were going to get it here for much higher than that in the earlier incarnation of the UNC. *[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, my friend says, the more it changes the more it remains the same.

Now I look at another plant, one of the more expensive ones, in Australia. They are doing 3.7 million gallons. That plant cost US \$21 million to build. So, ours would be three times the size, so multiply \$21 million three times; \$63 million. But we are paying \$167 million for ours.

Hon. Member: No! No! No! Shame! Shame!

Dr. K. Rowley: That is what WASA and the NGC have done to us.

2.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, but who is this lucky contractor? This is a contractor that was hardly heard of in Trinidad and Tobago until the UNC came into office. In fact, the first time that contractor appeared in the public domain, to my knowledge, is when allegations were made that the contractor was building the Prime Minister's house, and that the equipment in the yard, the name was painted off so nobody could know.

If I was carrying oranges for the Prime Minister or tins of sardines for her, I would want the whole world to know because my product is good. If I was paving her yard I would want everybody to know, but they seemed to want nobody to know because at the time this contractor was working on the Prime Minister's house they painted off the name of the company. Since this Government came into office, this contractor under EFCL, they got \$54 million of school work; under NGC, a number of jobs; under NIPDEC, \$233 million; under the PURE road paving programme, another \$89 million; under WASA, \$200 million; they are supplying buses to the PTSC, \$36 million; the Siparia market, \$45 million, and if you add this new one that we have got on March 10, it comes to \$1.688 billion of work that this contractor got. This contractor must be so lucky—and then it happens also to be the same contractor who is alleged to have built Ashworth Jack's house in Tobago out of pumpkin and cucumber.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Shame! Shame!

Dr. K. Rowley: I met them in Tobago running the THA election for the TOP, so it might just be happenstance that they are the best bidder in this project, but look at what happened.

Let us go to what the—I forgot to mention to you, while the Chairman of WASA is the Chairman of NGC—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: President, President.

Dr. K. Rowley:—is the President, the CEO of NGC, another interesting connection is that the Chairman of NGC is a close associate and acted in interest with the SIS group, and is the legal person to the SIS group. [*Interruption*]

Miss Cox: Shame! Shame!

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: What! Chadeesingh?

Dr. K. Rowley: Yes, Chan Chadeesingh. He is not the chairman now, but they have had a very close relationship, very close relationship.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: How much worse can this get?

Dr. K. Rowley: And, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: This is like a cobweb.

Dr. K. Rowley: So here it is—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Allow the hon. Leader to speak in silence; I have to come to his protection, please.

Dr. K. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I thank you. Thank you for keeping both sides quiet. Mr. Speaker, so we are not talking here about \$1 million or \$2 million, you know. This, the people of Trinidad and Tobago, if it is that we decided as they did in the boardroom of WASA that we are going to have this plant to recycle this water, what is in front of the people of Trinidad and Tobago is that we can get it done for US \$95 million. We are choosing to do it for US \$165 million.

Miss Cox: Scandalous, scandalous!

Dr. K. Rowley: The one that gave you the bid of US \$95 million also has a maintenance bid for \$41 million with parts. The one that has the higher bid is charging you US \$58 million without parts. When this scandal broke, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs ran to the Parliament, in the dead of night, because he heard that the JCC was going to issue a statement calling for this project to stop.

So he came in here on Friday night and he made a statement. And if you read the statement, Mr. Speaker, the statement creates more questions than answers, because here it is, after this curious development and growth of this CEO at WASA to Minister—and they installed the chairman in both WASA and NGC, and they invited tenders and somehow they managed to run away 14 people from the process, the Minister came in here and sounded like a salesman for SIS, because he was giving reasons, I presume he said I was advised, right, as to why SIS was the better bid. And it was painful to listen to the Minister talking about SIS had the highest score; SIS had plant design—that was the best; SIS proposed to pay a pipeline technology; SIS had construction programme that was better; SIS had better pumps; SIS had greater local content; SIS had extensive membrane, and SIS and so on. And then he said words to the effect that the price that SIS quoted, the \$165 million, is pretty much a fixed price because SIS said, well, the only thing

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they might change their price for is if the price of steel goes up on the world market. But then he came to the other contractor and he gave you reasons why they were left out, and one of the reasons he gave is that they too said that if the price of steel goes up they will want to adjust their price accordingly.

So if both contractors gave you that as a consideration why is it being raised to differentiate them? Because both of them said our price involves this, but if the price of steel goes up on the world market we will have to review the steel input on it. The Minister came and gave you that as a reason, so one said it may change the price and the other one said if the price goes up we will have to look at it. Then he goes on to name how many points SIS got more than the other contractor at technical level, the deviation of the plant design, all the things he said to negative the low bid contractor raises the question. How could this be so when you have a two-envelope system? Because up until the Minister spoke in this House I did not know about a two-envelope system. That made it worse, because a two envelope system means all the interested parties in envelope one would put their technical proposals in there—all the ones he outlined here, and the second envelope would be price proposals, price. But the Minister comes here and takes issue with the low bidder and tries to justify disqualification of the low bidder on the grounds that there were technical shortcomings on the part of the low bidder.

So, that opens the question immediately, did the low bidder failed to be a responsive bidder when you opened the first envelope? And if the answer is yes, why then did you open the price envelope? Because in a two-envelope system the second envelope is only opened for the price discussion if you pass the first envelope? So having opened the second price envelope you have automatically qualified the contractor as a technical proposal which can do the job.

So it is disingenuous for NGC and the Minister to come here in this Parliament and try to tell us that the low bid contractor failed on anything technical, because had that been so they would not have been allowed to have their second envelope opened. And then he goes on to say—the second reason of the two he gave, was that the low bidder did not confirm a price for pipeline variations because the bidder may find things on the pipeline that may cause the price to increase. Well, that is even worse, because it was WASA and NGC who went out for proposals, invited proposals, awarded a contract without any geotechnical data on the pipeline route.

So here it is, you did not tell the contractors, here is information on the pipeline route. And the contractors said, well, we will reserve to treat with it if you go along and we meet mud now, you meet quicksand it will have to be at

your cost. You disqualified the contractor for that and it says the other contractor said that he will absorb whatever he meets on the pipeline. Well of course, he could, he could absorb a bridge across the ocean because he is getting US \$60 odd million more. And what is worse, when WASA was asked why you have not given the contractors geotechnical information—there are spokespersons in NGC saying “we using” a known corridor. In other words, a route that we already know what is there, so there is no real problem with that, so he cannot vary too much because we know what is there.

So out of the left side of their mouth they are using a known corridor to explain why they have not given the contractor technical data of a geotechnical nature. On the other side of their mouth they are saying we disqualified a contractor on the grounds that he, his price may have to go up if there are changes found on the route. All of that is taking us, me and you and the rest of the country for fools, all of that.

So carnival weekend, on Carnival Wednesday, when the rest of the country was partying and “waylay-waylay”, this thing just happened to come to a head, Carnival weekend, just like section 34, Independence night, we were out there watching fireworks, having a drink here and a party there, they proclaimed section 34.

Miss Mc Donald: Like a thief in the night.

Dr. K. Rowley: This was done Carnival week, leading into Carnival. Offices not opened, you cannot hold a press conference because of Carnival Wednesday, the low bidder was informed on Carnival Wednesday that “your bid has failed” and I am now seeing from WASA that they informed the high bidder that “you got the bid”, and they entered into a contract. The same day I was in this Parliament informing the country that the Treasury was being raped by WASA and the NGC, and a small clique, a handful of people, who the Government selected to do it, they entered into the contract with SIS. So they now bind taxpayers to this. Then at NGC you would have seen them put up all kinds of ads telling you how wonderful things have gone. What they are not telling you, that in the build-up to this, the same Indar Maharaj, as President of NGC has been selecting and hand-picking people at a management and high level, and inserting them into NGC, sidelining people in the NGC and replacing them with other people.

So in other words, the process is you sideline who is there, you filled vacancies with your handpicked people and you put them to do your bidding when this largesse comes to you from there. I do not have the time to go into the

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details here, but this thing came to my office and it is signed, it comes in the name of “disgruntled staff”. And they gave—yes, “disgruntled staff”, and they gave information on a number of appointments made at NGC under this same Indar Maharaj, which run counter to the good order of NGC that was known up until 2010. But the interesting thing is a change was made at NGC in September 2012, which happened to coincide with the same time that WASA was embarking on the change of position. Just when WASA was going to return to this project as its way of getting 10 million gallons of water, NGC changed its employment policy. Let me read for you what the old policy said:

A minimum of three candidates shall be shortlisted for each selective vacancy. When there are less than three internal candidates suitable for the position the company shall advertise externally.

So if you have more than three, you advertise within the company. If you have less than three, you advertise both inside and outside. That was the policy, version three, clause 2.4. Under this president they changed it to say:

However, in some circumstances the company may simultaneously post internal and external ads where it can be shown that (a) there may be less than three persons who have qualified suitably or (b) at the discretion of the president.

But do not laugh, Mr. Speaker, because we laughed before. When I filed a question in this Parliament asking the UNC Government whether NIPDEC had awarded the Piarco Airport contract in keeping with NIPDEC tender rules, the Government came to the Parliament and quite truthfully said, yes.

3.00 p.m.

What the Government did not tell us was that facing that question, NIPDEC personnel, appointed by the Government, had changed the tender rules to make it read: all singular equals plural and all male equals female. That sounds laughable, but the effect of that change was to allow NIPDEC to award tender, to invite a tender where the project was more than \$1 million. Because before that change that seems to be so innocuous—before that change was made when I filed the question—if the project was more than \$1 million, NIPDEC would have had to invite tenders, but since they had only invited a tender to handpick their contractor, they would have had to lie to the Parliament and say, yes, they did it or come and admit in the Parliament that they did not award it, according to the

tender rules. So they changed the tender rules to be able to say, yes, it was awarded according to the tender rules, but hiding from you what the new rules were.

So this president now gives unto himself the power to hire NGC staff at his discretion, and I do not have the time today to go into the details of who is at NGC and how they got there, and how unqualified some of them are. So when they lift up a billion-dollar idea from WASA and carry it to NGC, I am not surprised to see that the NGC in-house estimate was US \$50 million more than the WASA estimate.

I told you a while ago that the WASA estimate—WASA is the authority on sewerage; it is WASA's project, WASA did the work. Look the document here! WASA had it down as a US \$100 million estimated project, but by the time they handed it to NGC, it became a \$150 million in-house estimate, and they are now telling us that since the NGC estimate is US \$150 million, and SIS bid is \$165, it is in the ballpark of the NGC estimate, but no reference whatsoever to its comparison with the \$100 million estimate at WASA.

I am telling you that because if you are told that, in all the ads that they have in the papers, if you are told that, you have to ask yourself: why are we paying \$50 million more for something that we said we are going to invest \$100 million in? And this is the same NGC that we know does not have the competence to do these things.

How do I know that? When NGC set about to build its own office complex—its own office, an office, not even a plant, eh. This plant is a technical plant to do technical things. NGC had set about a few months ago to build an office complex and they had to sub it out to other people because they did not have it in-house to do it. But the interesting thing is this, they did it in a way to attract the attention of the Minister of Finance and the Economy because a big scandal broke that SIS—same SIS—was being handed an NGC contract for \$700 million to build NGC's head office.

The Minister of Finance and the Economy intervened and the project was stopped, on paper. I leave you, Mr. Speaker, to go to NGC and find out what has happened since and how much work SIS has done on that project, even though it is supposed to have been stopped.

But before that, in September 2012, this story appeared in the *Guardian*. “WASA board”—and that was the Ganga Singh-led Ministry and board and Indar Maharaj was chairman. “WASA board cancels \$70 million contract”. They were

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testing the water here. Let me read for you, Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, a couple paragraphs, and this is the *Guardian* of September 24, 2012:

“The award of a \$70 million Water and Sewerage Authority...contract has been scrapped after it was discovered that attempts were being made to rig the selection process. The contract was for the maintenance of water treatment plants at Caroni, North Oropouche, Navet and Arena pumping station.”

The *Guardian* went on to report:

“On the basis of the pre-qualifying process two companies—TOSL Engineering Limited and...(SIS)—were shortlisted for the job. Investigations revealed TOSL submitted a bid of \$65.3...million and SIS of \$69...million. Documents showed WASA officials had estimated the job to cost \$70 million.”

So WASA estimated the job for \$70 million, “go out” for competition, SIS bid a tad below \$70 million, and another reputable company in south Trinidad bid \$65 million and WASA proceeded to give the job to the one for the higher price. The selection team recommends an award of a contract to TOSL at a price of \$65 million. So the selection team chose the low bidder. Out of the blue, instructions came from somewhere, and instructions “doh” come from below; they come from on top. It says:

“...on August 3, just hours before the report was expected to be signed by the evaluation team, a directive was given for the report to be scrapped and for a new evaluation team to be set up. The question of who gave the directive remains unanswered. But the T&T *Guardian* understands that the reason given as to why a second evaluation was necessary was a decision to include additional members in the evaluation team.”

So after the evaluation team came to a recommendation, the director at the top who could give a directive, said, “No, no, we want more people in the evaluation team” and more persons were added.

“Documents show that approval was granted in July”—of 2012—“for the additional members to join the evaluation team the day after the evaluation of bids had already started.

So they sent their operatives into the process:

“However, a second evaluation team was set up and this time SIS was chosen for the job. Recommendations were made for a contract to be awarded to SIS in the amount of \$69...million...”

So in other words, in this Government there are people who insist that if SIS “cyar” get the job, no contract would be awarded. If SIS “cyar” get the job, we will put people in there who will recommend that they get the job, and that is what has been going on.

“The...Guardian learned that on September 13, TOSL executives wrote to the chairman of WASA, Indar Maharaj, expressing concern over the development.”

And the *Guardian* continues, and the company wrote to Indar Maharaj at WASA and hear what they told him.

““The company responded to the tender and it has been reliably confirmed by the WASA’s selection team report that TOSL placed first in all categories. We were left in shock when informed otherwise’.”

So a company, nationals of this country, a reputable company, with the capacity to do the job, placed first in every category, but now is left in shock because the job was given to SIS for \$4 million more. [*Interruption*] No, no. One was \$65 and one was \$69—\$4 million more.

But to this Government \$4 million is chick feed. So what? But to the people in La Horquetta, in Carapichaima, Diego Martin and Laventille, \$4 million is plenty money, and \$400 million is “ah set ah” money. What could we do across this country with \$400 million? I had to stay in Diego Martin West, in Carenage, and watch, up to now, an unfinished, untouched facility at the beach in Carenage, and this Government told me that the reason why it could not be done in 2010, or 2011, or 2012, or 2013, is because there is no money. But this Government could find \$400 million more to give to SIS for a contract that could be done by— [*Interruption*] And they want us to accept that, and listen to all their “fool fool” ads on the newspapers.

But you know, an interesting thing happened, as I was going through this. Well, I will come to it in a minute because I want, Mr. Speaker, to tell you, the more things change, the more they remain the same. I went back to my files, and I want to put my summary into the *Hansard* so that you could see where we are now; where we came from, and of your own volition, Members in this House and, Mr. Speaker, you included and the population, whether you could determine if we have progressed at all in the last few years.

There are interesting similarities in the award of the contract by NGC for the Beetham Waste Water Project and Package 9 and Package 13—CP9 and CP13—of the Piarco Airport project. CP9, despite eight companies being prequalified to

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submit bids, only one company, Northern Construction, submitted a bid in the amount of \$283 million, including a bifold door that I told this Parliament had cost \$98,000. At the time when I had told this country that a door was bought for the airport for \$98,000, there were those who thought I was just being—their favourite word—reckless. However, it was—

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member for Diego Martin West, address your observations to the Chair, please.

Dr. K. Rowley: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I am really talking to you; I am not talking to them. Thank you. A bifold door, for \$98,000, that was confirmed when the Linquist forensic audit was done.

In the case of CP13, despite 10 companies being prequalified, only two companies submitted bids: Calmaquip Engineering Corporation and Suarez of Florida. Calmaquip was awarded the contract despite their bid being approximately \$100 million higher. Sounds familiar? One hundred million dollars higher in a bidding process where you so operated that the rest of the contractors saw it was a beauty contest; did not bother to put in a bid, and when you come down to two, you gave it to the higher one for \$100 million more. That was Piarco.

But later on, the findings of a forensic audit conducted by Bob Linquist on the award of these contracts indicated that there was collusion between the engineers and the preferred contractors. Note the word, Mr. Speaker, “collusion” because I am alleging collusion and conflict between the principal parties, WASA, NGC and others—same thing happening again.

Then on November 29, 2005 a grand jury in the United States indicted local persons and foreign persons on a conspiracy to transport money obtained by fraud in Trinidad and Tobago. That was the outcome, and out of that came section 34.

In the case of the current award, sufficient public information exists that establishes a relationship between NGC chairman and SIS to raise concerns of impropriety in the award of the contract; just conflict by association.

Then, Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned earlier on about NGC talking about best practice, not knowing what the phrase means, because any best practice where you invite 16 contractors, many of them world-class contractors, and 14 walk away, having expressed a willingness to bid, best practice would have seen you aborting the process and going back out for the benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

That is what should have happened, but that did not happen. We went ahead and they awarded the contract, knowing full well that as they published these inanities where one contractor is given a benefit because he is saying that a price increase may arise, and the other one significantly increased the risk, and every day I have to see my taxes being spent in these—[*Flips through papers*—every day, compounding the injury to all of us.

But then, I ask the question, this haste, this hurriedness, this project that is going to make us—whatever it is going to make us, according to the ads—is it complying with the rules and regulations? What is happening? WASA went to the EMA—I have my file here of the EMA. You could go to the EMA and get the files.

3.15 p.m.

WASA applied for a CEC for the plant and a CEC for the pipeline route. The application for the plant is No. 3864 of 2013, and the one for the pipeline is No. 3951 of 2013. A series of correspondence have been passing between WASA and the EMA. Suffice it to say, that by February 17, 2014—which is the last correspondence—EMA is still asking WASA for further information, meaning that no CEC has been issued for the project.

More importantly, as you go through this file you will see the conversation between the agency and WASA—the EMA—and where it is at. The EMA has determined that a CEC is required, but the EMA has not determined whether an environmental impact assessment is required. That is still being discussed. So even as the EMA has not yet determined if an EIA is required so as to get WASA or NGC to comply with it, they have gone ahead and committed taxpayers to a billion-dollar project, knowing full well that it now exposes the State—taxpayers—to a repeat of what happened with the smelter.

Let me remind you, Mr. Speaker, that the aluminium smelter was not stopped for poisoning people or not having gas and the price of gas and so on. It was stopped in the court because the court determined that the consultative process was not sufficiently robust and they should go back and do it over. I think it was Justice Mira Dean, or whoever it was. That was the ruling and that was the beginning of the stopping of the aluminium project. The Government never proceeded and they said the project is ended.

Here you have a billion-dollar project entered into with eyes wide open while the EMA has not even determined whether an EIA is required, and having determined that a CEC is required. That is for the plant and the same thing applies to the pipeline. But if this project is now stopped as it can be stopped in the court

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because it does not have the relevant approval, there are people in this country who can approach the court to have it stopped. But in the meantime, because they are rushed from Carnival to now, by now they might have paid or intend to pay the contractor hundreds of millions of dollars in mobilization. Once they pay him that money—taxpayers will not get it back because once they pay him the \$200 million or \$300 million or \$400 million mobilization and the project goes to court and is stopped by other parties, the contractor would have got that money for nothing—and the election is 2015 and is now in a good position to do in Trinidad and Tobago what was done in Tobago in 2013, and they know it. They know it.

Something struck me as odd when I went through these documents based on the Minister's performance here in the Parliament. He came to the Parliament to tell us all the reasons why ATLATEC—the Mexican company with the local partner—had to be thrown out from the process because they were deemed to be technically incompetent. But do you know, Mr. Speaker, when I was going through the EMA documents, I found that WASA's conversation with the EMA was based on the technical work of ATLATEC, the same ATLATEC that the Minister came here and gave reasons why they could not do the job because they have technical problems in their capacity. WASA, in talking to the EMA—and here it is: "Review of Analytical Report" done by International Analytical Group (IAG). That report was done for ATLATEC and, interestingly enough, it talks about samples that were received on July 30, 2013.

So in July 2013, ATLATEC was sampling the water around the area to determine how to bid. Curious eh? If the RFP came out in September, under what circumstances was ATLATEC sampling the water in July; and how did WASA get ATLATEC documents to put to the EMA as part of their conversation with the EMA; and when it came to a point of awarding the contract after ATLATEC got past the first envelope stage, meaning, we are satisfied that you have the capacity to do it technically, a Minister can come to the Parliament and say that, "Uh-uh, is no longer price of the second envelope, is ATLATEC technical capacity that caused them to fail?" Read it! The Minister is there. He has made a case against ATLATEC on technical grounds from envelope one because they want to do with ATLATEC what they did with TOSL.

In the case of TOSL there was a \$4 million difference. In the case of the current project with ATLATEC it is a \$400 million difference. But it serves this country right. If the country had intervened and demanded that heads roll at WASA with the TOSL matter when only \$4 million was involved, we might have saved ourselves this problem now with the \$400 million excess. Because there are

people in this country who believe that the Opposition is a nuisance, and that the Government is made up of angels, and the Prime Minister is a queen, and the people that they appoint are qualified and that they are honest and they will not bother.

But interestingly enough, while I was digesting this in preparation for coming to the Parliament—I get my *Express* and my *Guardian* as usual and I read them.

Hon. Member: What happened to the *Sunshine*?

Dr. K. Rowley: I get that too. Mr. Speaker—and here it is, “Coudray: Stop \$71m contract.” Coudray here is reference to the Minister who left here this afternoon. “Coudray: Stop \$71m contract.” And once again, same modus operandi. Same modus. Local government went out to outfit the famous building of “spiders”, 1 Alexandra Place, a building that the Government rented. Previous Government rented it. This Government determined that they would not use it. It has not been used now for almost four years. Pay millions of dollars to the—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Al-Rawi.

Dr. K. Rowley: It could be to you. It does not matter. Mr. Speaker, pay millions of dollars. The Government has the building, so it is a government building. They are paying for it. Not a soul has gone there to use it because the issue has always been who will outfit the building, and the outfitting started by inviting a set of—I will not use intemperate language, but it did not involve known companies involved in outfitting. A new set of companies who appeared on the scene were invited and the traditional ones were not invited. Seven were invited and it boiled down to two. Do you know Nelson’s calypso after a while it boil down to two? It boiled down to two because the rest walked away. Because once they understand what is happening they walked away so they left two.

Elvis Marketing and COSL—“Only three bidders were able to meet the deadline.

However, the Sunday Express learned only Elvis Marketing...and COSL Office Supplies Ltd met the complete guidelines as outlined by PSAEL.

According to PSAEL’s evaluation...November 29, 2011, obtained by the Sunday Express, the representative of 2S Enterprises Company Ltd arrived at 10.20 a.m. and the bid was not accepted because...tender box was closed...”—and it is said by the company “Elvis Marketing Ltd, the evaluation report said, did not submit a bid security and as a result was not further assessed.”

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So somebody who came after the bid was closed was allowed to put in their bid, and one that was in was thrown out because according to the evaluators they did not submit a tender bond.

“Companies were required to submit a \$100,000 bond with their proposal. The evaluation report said COSL...met with...key components for the job...

It is concluded that the sole qualifying bidder for the”—job—“was COSL.”

So you end up with two. You throw out one of the two on the grounds that they are disqualified. They did not submit the bond.

“It is therefore recommended that the board of directors review the above findings and give directive to allow the evaluation committee to open...the financial bid.

However, the Sunday Express learned the bid package was not returned to Elvis Marketing...and by letter dated January 20...the company’s CEO, Elvis Seelochan, queried the reason for”—his—“tender being disqualified.

The letter obtained by the Sunday Express read:”—and this is Seelochan’s letter—“Further to our letter dated December 6, 2011 when we raised a suspicion that our tender document may have been tampered with. We now enclose a copy of the bond document from GTM Insurance...Ltd”—for—”\$100,000, which was submitted with the tender documents.”

So in other words, Elvis had submitted their tender documents dated November 02 for a bid that was closing on November 17. They would have us believe that Elvis Marketing went and “buy” a bond on November 02 to put in his pocket and did not put it in with the submission which closed on the 17th. Long and short of the story is that by the time it got to the award which grew from \$20 million to \$40 million, we are now hearing that Minister Coudray has stopped this outrage because it is now at \$71 million.

Mr. Speaker, this is what is going on in Trinidad and Tobago. This is what is going on in Trinidad and Tobago. What it means is that this Government, through its handpicked operatives, have placed them in strategic positions to do the Government’s bidding and they have been acting with impunity. Whether they came with a DESALCOTT label or there are new varieties, they are placed all over in state enterprises carrying out this kind of rape of the Treasury.

I am telling the people of Trinidad and Tobago that the next budget and the expenditure from here, until the general election, will be seen in the context of

this rape and this outrage, where people are now talking in terms of hundreds of millions of dollars of excess expenditure and projects which are not even required, where they are deemed to be economically unsound or low down on the priority list. Those are the projects that you see because the Government from here on in, through its handpicked operatives, will proceed as they are proceeding here to damage the public interest by awarding a series of contracts in this way where tender processes are questionable, bid rigging is the order of the day and selected handpicked persons are beneficiaries of huge generosities of public money. That is what is happening here and if we do not want to see it, we can close our eyes. The bottom line is the Treasury of Trinidad and Tobago is being raped by elements of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

It is not by accident that the Government having gone to the IDB would have steered clear of the IDB and the Beetham water project, because no way in the IDB would this have been tolerated for IDB money. No way! And if it was, this complaint that I am making here now would have caused the IDB to trigger its review process because there is procedure for that.

So, today, Mr. Speaker, the same way the Prime Minister jumped into the ministerial project and ordered it stopped, only to be told by the court that she was wrong, I am calling on the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, today, to stop this project. [*Desk thumping*] And I am calling on the Integrity Commission to investigate this matter thoroughly [*Desk thumping*] so that those persons who have in their possession the detailed information about this bid rigging should be talking to an investigator of the Integrity Commission. There is bid rigging here and this is misconduct in public office on the part of the persons who are trying to pull wool over our eyes. [*Desk thumping*]

3.30 p.m.

When I leave this Parliament, I will collaborate with the legal fraternity outside to go to the court to have this project stopped because it does not qualify under the laws of Trinidad and Tobago and the IDB. [*Desk thumping*] I am calling on NGC to pay no public money to the contractor on this matter. This project is going to be stopped.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, \$167 million—listen to NGC talking to the *Business Guardian* and this is dated “March 2014 Week Three”—just last week. The President of the NGC:

“...NGC to expand to North America”

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I told you earlier on, NGC is sitting on \$12 billion to \$15 billion in cash. This same arrangement that is there now doing this is aiming to spend that money. So Moody's is talking about NGC, and, of course, it is NGC that gives Moody's its information. Moody's says NGC has \$12 billion, and quote:

“Having money sitting idly does not make any sense,…”

You see that? That:

“...money”—in NGC—“sitting idly does not make any sense, so in fact one of the things we have started to do—we have brought on a consultant for our...investments...”

I wonder if the Ministry of Finance and Economy knows that NGC is now an investment agency.

Mr. Speaker: You have 10 seconds again.

Dr. K. Rowley: Is that the same NGC that went to Clico Investment Bank and lost so much money there?

Mr. Imbert: Two billion.

Dr. K. Rowley: Now, they are told, on this same project, the NGC, in talking to Moody's is talking about, \$181 million project among the small projects NGC is engaged in. So this Beetham Water Treatment project, this outrage, this one point something billion dollars for NGC is a small project, and for the first time, I am seeing that it has now grown to \$181 million.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Trinidad and Tobago must stand up and defend themselves from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

Miss Marlene Mc Donald (*Port of Spain South*): Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion and I reserve the right to speak.

Question proposed.

The Minister of Sport (Hon. Anil Roberts): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] It is amazing that the Leader of the Opposition would end off by calling CIB of which the PNM member, Sen. Faris Al-Rawi, was a member of that board when they invested and lost the taxpayers' money. But, Mr. Speaker, today, once again, I have to stand here in this Parliament and—[*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, I sat silently, please. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: You have my full protection. Member for Port of Spain South and the Member for Point Fortin.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I must lay on the *Hansard*, and for your noting, that on my attendance here at the Parliament today, after the Leader of the Opposition, for two weeks, was on radio campaigning and calling on PNM supporters to come out and circle the Parliament. Well, they did not circle the whole Parliament, they circled a little piece but, unfortunately, I am a Member of Parliament who comes here to do my work, and when I came here, PNM supporters in red jerseys were accosting, grabbing, pushing, shouting, cussing, acting like hooligans. I am not able as a Member of Parliament to accept that from anybody [*Desk thumping*] and I have put it on the record. I have already sent a letter to your secretary complaining about it because it is unacceptable, it was hooliganism. [*Continuous crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: No, no, I am saying that you, Member for Point Fortin, have been constantly interrupting these proceedings. When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, you interrupted him. Now, the hon. Member for D'Adabie/O'Meara is speaking, you are interrupting him again. I ask you not to interrupt the proceedings, observe Standing Order 40(b) and (c) respectively. If I have to rise again, I will ask you to retire to the Members' Lounge. Continue, hon. Member.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, thank you. But it is just to note because all parliamentarians, whatever political party, we must act with respect, and the citizens can protest. Protest is a democracy but what I received—and you know, I am very soft and I cannot take too much pressure [*Laughter*] so when I was accosted today, I almost cried. But, on a serious note—and the media was very present—that sort of behaviour cannot be tolerated by anyone. The People's Partnership would not tolerate any of our supporters treating any Member of Parliament like that, and I would hope that the PNM and the Leader of the Opposition will also denounce that behaviour [*Desk thumping*] because his members in PNM jerseys were acting—to quote the Leader of the Opposition's words and terms—like rabid hyenas in an African forest. Not our school children who are misled and need education and need guidance—I do not know how he could call our children and say that they are acting like rabid hyenas in an African forest—but the adults in PNM jerseys here today, I am stating here that they were acting like hooligans, like hyenas in an African forest.

Mr. Speaker, I must commend the other protestors, whoever was there to protest. They have conducted themselves—CWU, the people against the oil spill—

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whoever was out there—over the years. Kirk Waithe who comes out there every afternoon taking hot sun, he was not there today, but they behaved themselves respectfully. They protested and that is okay, fantastic, but that PNM behaviour will not be tolerated and cannot be tolerated, Mr. Speaker, and I have sent you a letter, it is upstairs.

But, moving right along to the Leader of the Opposition who has brought us all here; let me deal with a few as usual. To coin a phrase from the Member for Diego Martin North/East, there are the true facts and then there are Diego Martin facts. [*Laughter*] Indar Maharaj is the President of the NGC and not the Chairman, as the Leader of the Opposition said on about three occasions. The ACOME plan which was rejected by WASA costed—you see, the Leader of the Opposition leaves out salient facts. The cost of it that ACOME said, when it was rejected, was US \$463 million. He kept that, he had the information, but he would not share the truth, because when you are trying to build a case without facts, you have to hide the truth. So therefore, at US \$463 million, it was not feasible. WASA then did a conceptual design and so on, in-house, and got it to US \$100 million—he is correct—and that drop of US \$363 million, the project became feasible. It is simple economics, simple maths, but geology does not have mathematics in it. So, Mr. Speaker, the record is clear.

Furthermore, the \$100 million WASA concept document did not include the two booster stations, it did not include the transmitting line, it was just a conceptual document at \$100 million. When the issue was carried further by the technocrats, by the engineers, by the architects, to a final design, it came out to be US \$149 million, but we will get more to that in a while.

Now, the Member continues to repeat falsehoods about SIS building the Prime Minister's house. He did not tell this Parliament that he has received two or three pre-action protocol letters already from the Prime Minister to tell him to cease and desist from stating that falsehood. SIS never worked on the Prime Minister's house. The Prime Minister's husband is a doctor, he makes good money. The Prime Minister makes small money, now, for the last four years, because she "take bluelights" instead of being a lawyer and making lots of money. They built their house since 2003 "chirrup, chirrup, chirrup," like how my mother—"dey say I dougla"—and Indian people does build their house—"chirrup, chirrup". When they get money, "dey buil' ah piece, dey buil' ah piece", and I see the former Senator, Fitzgerald Hinds, took that also. He built it "chirrup chirrup" and has a mansion up in the hills up there, so we will ask him about that when he comes down in Laventille West.

Furthermore, again, the Member for—and these are just small issues, I am going to get to the substantive issue just now. Again, the Member for Diego Martin West comes here in the Parliament and, again, attempts to cast aspersions on people's character. He went outside and said that the present chairman of NGC, Chan Chadeesingh, was a former Chairman of SIS. Chan Chadeesingh paid for a disclaimer to say that was not true. It is false. He was never chairman of SIS. He comes back here today and talks about a close relationship. Chan Chadeesingh is a lawyer. He did a case for a company and I—*[Dr. Rowley stands]* Mr. Speaker, I did not interrupt this gentleman.

Dr. Rowley: I did not say he is the Chairman. I have never said any such thing.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is disclaiming that he never said that the gentleman that you referred to is a chairman. That is what the hon. Member is saying, so if he is saying so, I have to take his word, but you can continue to deal with that matter.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I will just read the “Disclaimer” into the record since some people's memory goes a bit soft at certain times. The man spent money to put this in the newspapers and said:

“Re: Article published at Page 4 of the Express Newspaper dated 13th March, 2014 - Title caption ‘Rowley writes Carmona on water plant contract’ - Letter to President Anthony Carmona from Dr. Keith Rowley - Leader of the Opposition.”

And the contents therein of that article based on quotation from Dr. Rowley. This man paid his money for this big thing.

“This is to advise that Mr. Chan Chadeesingh referred to in the captioned article has never been appointed nor has he served as Director, Chairman or Officer of Super Industrial Services Limited...”

You see, in order to make corruption, you have to find a relationship and if it is not there, you have to concoct it. Some people might say there is a relationship between the Leader of the PNM and his chosen, losing candidate for Chairman of the PNM, Mr. John Rahael, and Joseph Rahael and Milshirv and a relationship between the Leader of the PNM—there is one leader of the PNM—and Mr. Orville London in Tobago. There is a relationship between the PNM and the PNM THA and the PNM Chairman, John Rahael, and the Milshirv deal with the purchase of land which ended up in a loss to taxpayers of \$320 million. Now, if you are coming to talk corruption, you could talk about that, but let us get back to the facts.

Again, we have here that the Member for Diego Martin West also went out to call some figures that scared even members in the audience saying that in Australia, the price per cubic metre is US \$2.48 and down here in Trinidad, what NGC and WASA is going to do is US \$15. Because I do not know what is per cubic metre, I opened my eyes, I say, “Oh gosh, that is something to go and check out”. Do you know what is the truth? NGC/WASA water treatment plant that is coming will produce water at US 0.56 cents, not US \$15, 56 cents—not to transmit, to produce—and DESALCOTT right now produces at 0.95 cent per cubic metre.

Mr. Speaker, I am hearing rumblings, I sat very quietly as I listened to his inane contribution without fact, now the facts are coming out, they are starting to talk. I have a very short time; I have five hours to put into an hour and fifteen minutes.

3.45 p.m.

DESALCOTT, 95 cents; Seven Seas, US \$1.67—so they prescribed this plant, NGC/WASA Water Plant in Beetham is very economical. But, now let us get into more of the action.

Member for Diego Martin West came here and told everybody in the country: the IADB; you must stick to the IADB, you must listen to the IADB. The IADB is the greatest organization in the world and this Government wants to dodge the IADB because we are nefarious, and we are terrible and we are ugly. That is what the Member for Diego Martin West, our Prime Minister in waiting, that is what he just said. Okay. Well, Monday May 21, 2007, right here in the *Hansard*, that very same human being, the Member for Diego Martin West, this is what he said about the IADB. And I quote:

“Our position in the PNM is that, ‘Look, the people of Trinidad and Tobago elected us...’”

“Dais dem; dey will never do dat again.”

“...to treat with their problems and the bureaucratic position of the IADB bureaucrats is not what we were elected to endorse.”

So the PNM and *Hansard*, Member for Diego Martin West “say IADB, all yuh run, dey trying to stop us, yuh cyar serve people, dey bureaucratic, dey slow, we need to serve people”. And today he stands up here with big “gallery” and have people “roughing me up” downstairs, to come and say: go by the IADB. That is the Member for Diego Martin West. [*Crosstalk*] “Ah now start; allyuh keep very quiet here now.”

He started off his contribution—“and leh meh calm down dey; yuh supposed to tell meh go softer”.

Mrs. Khan: Yes, take it easy.

Hon. A. Roberts: “Leh meh calm down.”

Mr. De Coteau: Take “ah” breath.

Hon. A. Roberts: Yes. “Leh meh take ah breath here because this one ah really want everybody to hear. Ah doh want to go too fast.” The entire contribution of the Member for Diego Martin West, he started off, and we all heard him, he said—the PNM Government said: wastewater is “ah no go”; it is a terrible thing; it is too expensive; it is not needed; we do not want it; more desal, give more desal but no wastewater plant. “De PNM would never do wastewater plant”, therefore we, People Partnership, against the sensible PNM want to do something that is so terrible, that is out “ah” whack; will not help 200,000 people; will not give 10 million gallons of pure water to our citizens; “we just make up dat” and it is terrible. We are bad people. “Allyuh” listen carefully. “Media allyuh take picture yuh know.” Watch this one, you know.

This is a Cabinet Minute from—“ah going slow”—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: “Whuh” is the date?”

Hon. A. Roberts: From 2004—September, 2004.

Hon. Member: Who was the Government?

Hon. A. Roberts: The PNM was the Government, as far as I remember but “meh brain eh so good since I just geh married again, right”. [*Laughter*] “But ah tink de PNM was de Government.” This is 2004. Member for Chaguanas West “listen to yuh boy carefully ’cause ah see yuh was gehing excited with what he saying at times”. 2004, PNM Cabinet, which means the Government, hear what they agreed to. It is agreed to—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Member for Diego Martin West?

Hon. A. Roberts:—Member for Diego Martin West, well we are not sure if he was there in—he does get fired so much but I think he was there—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Before he was fired.

Hon. A. Roberts: He had just been fired in November 2003 from Planning and Development Ministry and he went I think Ministry of Housing—yeah, he

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was still there, yes. “He was dey. Dis before the last fire. He geh fired in 2008 again, April 2008.”

“Cabinet...

...accept...

the immediate commissioning of a water and wastewater master plan...”

This is 2004, right. And lower down:

“...and arrest the degradation of the sewerage systems; a major component of the plan would be the provision of water and wastewater services to accommodate Government’s industrial development and housing programme.”

“Buh wait! Dat is just where the original PNM;” they say yes wastewater, let us go, but let us get more info before we go. Now, we flash forward three years, PNM in power. Leader of the Opposition now, was in Government, in Cabinet and I hold up a Cabinet Minute of November 3, 2007; two days before a national general election!

“Yuh talking bout Carnival”, the Wednesday before Carnival, the Wednesday before Fantastic Friday; I am talking about two days before a national general election. Let me read what the Cabinet of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago agreed to, the PNM Cabinet. “Yuh see ah geh excited again, leh meh calm back down. Leh meh calm back down. Let meh read it.” Nice paper. I am going to the back. They went back to the master plan, 2004, you see continuity.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Rowley was in the Cabinet?

Hon. A. Roberts: This is the—

“Cabinet agreed:”

Yes, the Member for Diego Martin West was not fired until April, 2008. “Media, check out meh point; check out meh facts, you know, because I doh like to just talk like that, you know”, I like to talk facts.

Mr. Speaker: Just address your contribution to the Speaker.

Hon. A. Roberts: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. [*Laughter*] Mr. Speaker, you check out “meh” facts. Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the PNM Cabinet—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Including.

Hon. A. Roberts:—including then Minister of something, Member for Diego Martin West—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Trade and Industry.

Hon. A. Roberts:—because he had changed—Trade and Industry—then Minister of Trade and Industry, the hon. Member for Diego Martin West.

Cabinet—“agreed:

to the implementation of a Water Reuse Programme at the Beetham Wastewater Treatment Facility, at an estimated cost...” [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

“Leh meh read back that so allyuh could pound harder because ah want the country to know what Member for Diego Martin West is about cause this is serious business.” This is Trinidad and Tobago’s reputation and “yuh playing” with it by just talking, talking, talking. These are the facts. He just came out here and he said there is—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Calm down.

Hon. A. Roberts: “Ah know but ah had to—when ah hitting, ah hah to hit hard. Let meh read it again.” The PNM Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, two days before an election, COP was raging; UNC, Jack Warner put \$43,000 down in Mid Centre Mall with Dr. Roodal Moonilal and Siparia and “ting”, big bacchanal—PNM—“Monday people going to vote”. Friday before the election, PNM Cabinet, they met. So they—“election coming, Mr. Speaker, all of us hitting—taking sunburn, shaking hand, begging for votes, the Cabinet—ah feel dey meet in jersey and ting”. The Cabinet met and—

“agreed:

to the implementation of a Water Reuse Programme at the Beetham Wastewater Treatment Facility...”—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Cadiz: “You sure bout dat boy?”

Hon. A. Roberts: And his entire argument, Member for St. Joseph, was based on the fact that this policy came from the People’s Partnership. The PNM would never do that, it was ridiculous, it makes no sense, “is just to tief, is to raid the Treasury, is to steal, steal, steal”. And PNM furthermore, ladies and gentlemen, “I eh finish there yet”. The PNM went further; the PNM went further. They not only approved that, they said:

“...at an estimated cost of \$698 Mn....”

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Seven hundred million dollars. “Now, dais TT day.”

Dr. Gopeesingh: What year?

Hon. A. Roberts: That is TT. That is 2007.

Hon. Member: Seven years ago.

Hon. A. Roberts: The issue we are talking about, seven years ago, if anybody understands the net present value of money, seven—and this is estimated eh. You know, when “yuh” get back into the scope and you do detail and so on, “yuh” always go up when “yuh” tender because the estimate, when “yuh puh in yuh package”, the companies go into great detail; they put every bolt, every nut, everything, and it goes up normally from your conceptual estimate. But the estimate in 2007 was \$700 million and the Member for Diego Martin West today is saying that ATLATEC US \$95 million, which is \$612 million—it is \$86 million less than what PNM estimated in 2007. He is saying that that is a legitimate price, a legitimate bid, and in what fantasy, in what realm, on what planet, after which earth could that actually be possible? [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: Seven years after.

Hon. A. Roberts: Seven years after. “Anybody who does buy doubles know that in 2007, you coulda get ah doubles for \$2.50; now is \$4.00.” Anybody who buys bodi in the market know that it has gone up. Well it has come down now under Devant Maharaj but the price “still raising”. But this PNM dangerous. His whole afternoon, he is telling you, the people, that this Government corrupt, look at it, \$167 million. He did not tell the truth because the negotiated contract, which we would get into just now, is \$162 million, but all of that and here it is the PNM, in the dead of night, election, people studying to vote, Cabinet meeting to approve \$700 million for wastewater.

So now that I have totally debunked the Member for Diego Martin West, let me now speak to the population “becau I doh make joke when is corruption”. I have always stood against corruption, whether is Calder Hart, Uthara Rao, Malcolm Jones, wherever it comes, wherever it comes. Now—[*Interruption*—Mr. Speaker, please. “Ah not playing today, yuh know, dis serious ting.” They are laughing because they are a joke.

Mr. Speaker: Silence please.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, it is sad today that I am here defending spurious, ridiculous, unresearched, nonsensical, untrue allegations about my

Government when I should be at the funeral of the greatest Olympian who won the first—Rodney Wilkes—down in San Fernando Anglican Church—[*Desk thumping*]*—*and I humbly apologize that I had to miss the funeral because I had to deal with the Member for Diego Martin West but I sent representatives and I say condolences to each and every one, his family, his friends and to all of Trinidad and Tobago. And to those who “doh” know about Rodney Wilkes, go to the archives that the Ministry of Sport has created and read up on him; fantastic soldier, first Olympic Medal, Silver, in London, 1948. May God rest his soul.

But not only that, today the West Indies played a brilliant match, Sammy and Bravo, [*Desk thumping*] Sunil Narine and Badree, embarrassing the Australians, and I have to come here and defend a nonsensical Motion, from a Member who does not remember what he “say” yesterday and what he “say” today. He does not know if “is Vision 2020 or 2030”. He used the *Guardian* today quoting; yesterday “he say the *Guardian* is the worst”. “Lennox Grant write ah article, he get vex and run dem down.” And this is all before he ever get “ah blue light yuh know”. I could understand when the Member for San Fernando East, for example, when he stopped listening to people after a while and you know he was not listening. He “say” three smelter and so on. You could understand because he had blue lights for a while. He was there since 1971. He became Prime Minister in 1991 to 1995. He had four years “ah” blue lights. Then he came back in 2001, he had eight or nine years “ah blue lights before staritist take him”. But the Member for Diego Martin West gone clear. “He eh geh one day ah blue lights yet” and this is what we have to put up with, Mr. Speaker. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, I was in Barbados when this statement about corruption in my Government came out. “I in Barbados with meh wife watching cricket, West Indies playing good, beating up England.” So I sitting down quiet but as we start to talk, everybody, after they “find” out that I am a Government Minister, they would all, one after the next, whether from Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Jamaica, St. Maarten, they had people from Curacao, from London, from Millwall, after a while when somebody tell “dem” but “dais” the Minister of Sport, Trinidad and Tobago. All “ah dem” would come because the Leader of the Opposition’s statement went global, went viral, went international, it went on news, TV, social media, twitter, “all kine ah ting” because he does not realize that the position that he holds is a very important one. People normally listen to somebody in that position. Now they realizing they should turn off “dey” ears and “dey” hearing aid when this person talks. But the position is a respected one and so everybody coming up to me, Mr. Trinidad and Tobago.

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And yes, “ah” wearing red, white and black. “Some ah the PNM hooligans who accosted meh say yuh wearing the right colour.” Yes, because this is Trinidad and Tobago colour, “not no PNM colour”. Red, white and black [*Desk thumping*] and when I am in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, and people are attacking my country and saying: boy I want to come Trinidad, “allyuh hah so much money, len we some ah dat, allyuh tiefing, allyuh doing dis”, because of statements like this, you have to understand that people must always put their personal motivation and their personal goals below that of the country.

Mr. Speaker, 2012 Olympics, I was sitting down there with George Bovell. I was in the stands and I had coveted an Olympic gold medal for a long time. Since 1979 when I made my first swimming national team, since my brother was the star boy, I was coveting this medal. I hoped Shastri could “ah” get it—Shastri Roberts—then when “ah” was coaching, trying hard to get this medal for “meself”, for “meh” family and for different countries—Trinidad and Tobago—and I coached other athletes. So “ah” coveted this medal, Mr. Speaker.

4.00 p.m.

But I was in the Olympics and I saw a mistake occurring during the start of the Olympic final with George Bovell and I knew as a coach that the officials had made a mistake. And as coach I would have shouted out and interrupted the start so that the start would be done properly, so that George Bovell would have his chance for gold. But in that 18 seconds that I had to make a decision, I made the decision to keep quiet because I was not only a coach, I was also the Minister of Sport for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and had I interrupted a start, it would not have been a coach—[*Interruption*]

Miss Cox: Mr. Speaker, 36(1), please, what is the relevance of this to the Motion?

Mr. Speaker: I think he is making a point in connection with the matter. Continue.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, the point I am making and I do not expect people—you will hear the point. I do not expect you all to understand. Mr. Speaker, I know that you will understand that there is a greater good, the public good, that national pride, that patriotism, that what is good for your country is more important than what is good for yourself. [*Desk thumping*] You would not understand that.

Mr. Speaker, “I begging for protection from the Member for Laventille East/Morvant because ah ready geh rough up enough fuh de day and I ain taking no more. I ain taking no slap here today. Ah telling yuh straight.” [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, let me just tell you, at that moment I could have thought about what I had coveted for 33 years. I could have said: listen to me, we are going to lose because I knew we would lose. He was holding his breath and we could not win that medal, that I had coveted. But I said put country first. “Keep quiet, hush, we get licks we come seventh,” but at least my country was not embarrassed. There was no BBC and CNN to impact my nation because it could have impacted me, no big thing but I could not, because of the office that I currently hold, not permanently, but currently, that I had to act in a different way and it would be nice if a leader of the Opposition would understand that irresponsible statements without fact would just gallery with pure politics because he has coveted the Office of Prime Minister since 1996, or before.

But on record in this country, he has coveted that Office of Prime Minister, so much so that he went at the Member for San Fernando East in 1996. “He geh ah blowout,” but he went at it. Since then he has desired that office so much that the country does not matter, Trinidad and Tobago does not matter, the reputation, the investments, the jobs, the water for people, 10 million gallons of pure water. That is not important. What is important is that he must become the first Myron B Prime Minister, the first black Prime Minister. That is what is important. That is what Myron B sang. A man told me that Myron B sang a whole calypso, an ode to the Member for Diego Martin West and that probably the Member for Diego Martin West would have paid him. “Ah say no, no, no, no way, not the Member for Diego Martin West. He woulda never know dat. He woulda never done dat. Myron B sing he ting on he own.” Secondly, I said “I ain sure he even hear Myron B because he doh like dem kindda thing and thirdly, if he heard Myron B he would not have the humility and the appreciation and the people skills to call Myron and say: bredda, thanks fuh de kaiso” because we are talking about serious issues here.

In the Motion and in the comments, this Leader of the Opposition has attacked the Prime Minister in the most vile manner: attacked her character, made up falsehoods about contractors, and that is unfortunate because the world is watching.

Now, let us go to summarize the process, because the Leader of the Opposition flippantly said that the Minister came here and “de Minister say dis

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and de Minister say dat and de Minister.” The Minister is not involved in any process whatsoever. The process was done under the financial rules of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, under the financial and procurement rules of WASA and NGC. Let us analyze carefully because we had the Uff enquiry which brought about many recommendations. So, when hearing about corruption the first thing I do is grab my Uff enquiry report, go to the recommendations and see what the report says and what process was followed. So let us analyze this process, which the Member for Diego Martin West failed to deal with. He went all around the Sun, “down tuh glass door in airport, something ‘bout TOSL, COSL but we here to deal with a specific Motion and he gave us no facts.”

Let us talk about the facts. The Member for Diego Martin West has said that the lowest bidder was ignored and that only two actually bid. Now, let us be very careful. Sixteen people, he said, picked up packages and paid for packages. First all—“before dat, there was an advertisement so any and all who want tuh bid coulda bid.” In Milshirv was there an advertisement? Who knew that the THA wanted a building of 84,000 square feet? Who knew that the THA was looking for three acres of land? “But, no Rahael tell THA dey need de land, dey buy it.” I am sure other people have three acres of land that they would have liked to sell to the THA for \$12 million. But not only that, six days later in the Milshirv the THA turns “round and lease the land right back tuh de same company, de same Rahael, de same chairman who the Member for Diego Martin West wanted to be chairman and geh vote out, and lease it back for 199 years at \$10 and then, on top ah dat the Rahael group, close to—yuh see the Member for Diego Martin West cannot say it because they have a very close relationship since Renaissance, very close, very friendly, so yuh see yuh doh have tuh make up anything.” There is no disclaimer. You will see no disclaimer tomorrow about what I say, because it is factual and then “dey say: listen, THA you just lease back de land for us. Hear what we go do, we will build ah 84,000 building for you.”

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 36(1), the Member is imputing improper motives. I have no relationship with Renaissance—
[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Standing Order 36(5).

Dr. Rowley: Standing Order 36(5), sorry. I have no relationship with Renaissance. The Member is imputing motives to me that are not correct. I ask for your protection.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member is saying that he has no relationship with the people that you are accusing him of and you are—so I uphold that particular Standing Order. Okay?

Hon. A. Roberts: Right, no problem, Mr. Speaker, but the country knows so I am very glad that the country is seeing.

I am moving on. [*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, I did not interrupt the gentleman.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I rise for your protection.

Mr. Speaker: Please, I sustain the point of order. Hon. Member, move on, please.

Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Sir. Mr. Speaker, I will move on. Let us understand that under the Uff enquiry, under the Uff recommendations, there are quite a few. Let us read No. 37, because this is for the attainment of free and fair competition. Now, people do not need to be reminded why we had the Uff enquiry because the PNM had misappropriated and corruptly gave to their friend and family millions and millions and millions of dollars. “We doh have tuh remind dem about dat.” But the Uff enquiry is here and they have recommendations. And “For the attainment of free and fair competition” No. 37 says:

“Procurement rules applying to Government agencies in the field of construction should, in general, be the same. Agencies applying different procurement rules should either justify any differences or take steps to adopt uniform rules.”

The rules in this case were the Ministry of Finance and the Economy rules. They conformed to the tendering rules of WASA and NGC and they conformed to best practice worldwide.

No. 38 of the Uff enquiry recommendations:

“It should be the responsibility of all Government agencies and of ministers to ensure that, in any tender situation, it is clear beyond doubt what rules are applicable to the tender process...”

In other words, you must not change the rules, midway, you must not collect packages and then change and say no dual propulsion in the rapid rail and Bombardier then have to complain that they did not get a fair shake and Trini Train 1. Remember that. You must not do that. You must keep the rules clear and do not change them.

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Well, here were the rules. Now, keep in mind the rules were not done by some friend and family. The rules, the RFP, were done by companies CPG, KPMG, internationally renowned companies, but the Member for Diego Martin West just left that fact out. “He say de Minister did dis and de Minister did dat and the Chairman of SIS and the chairman of dis did dat.” All untrue! And here it states, in this document—and the taxpayers’ money, yes it has to be wasted because of the spurious, scurrilous, inaccurate allegations of a government and a nation made by a senior official. So the truth has to come out. If somebody tells fibs you have to tell the truth. So if it is any waste of taxpayers’ money it should go to the bill of the Member for Diego Martin West. And it states here: What method was used in the evaluation process?

It must be noted that the predetermined methodology developed by KPMG—not developed by NGC, BP, SIS or any individual, by KPMG. So when you attack them you are attacking an international firm—in July 2013, defined the outcome by identifying combined issues. It used a two-envelope system and it stated at the outset—and it is stated clearly for all who picked up packages—the highest overall score is the best bid and it should be noted that the one with the lowest overall price may not be the best bid.

Now, we heard some inaccuracies from the Member for Diego Martin West again. He said that the hon. Minister came and reported that ATLATEC did not qualify, they were incompetent, they failed in the technical. That is not true. They did not fail. They were in second place out of two. They did not fail. That is not true. Their score was lower than the other group, which is not SIS alone, it included Hyflux and it included Foster Wheeler. We have not heard about that from the Member for Diego Martin West, because to make his false corruption claim, to try to win election, to try to remain the leader, to try to get what he covets most, the Prime Minister’s chair, he has to fabricate, so he tries to make his case and what a weak case it is.

So, therefore, when the Member for Diego Martin West came out and said that there is bid rigging because the lowest bidder was not chosen and it is a two-envelope system, and if you fail you are incompetent in the technical, which was 70 per cent, “why yuh open de bid?” They did not fail. They were 10 points behind and so, therefore, the competition continues into the financials and when you open the financials, the Member for Diego Martin West also told you, and tried to pretend and left numbers out there, before the process, the non-political, apolitical technocrats with degrees, not fake degree, real degree, “de bright people”, they came up with an estimate, a detailed estimate, of US \$149 million.

So when you look at a bid of US \$95 million, which is \$325 million less than what the engineers, the architects, the consultants, say it should cost, you can see that that bid is absolutely ludicrous. That bid is lower than what the PNM Cabinet, on the eve of election on November 03, 2005, it is \$78 million less than what they approved as an estimate, even though he said they never approved anything.

So, we move on here to No. 39 of the Uff recommendations. This is the bible for procurement. [*Continuous crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I am trying to listen to the hon. Member but I am getting interruptions. I ask all Members to observe Standing Order 40(b) and (c), respectively and respect the person who is on the floor. He has my full protection. Continue, hon. Minister of Sport.

Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Sir. Mr. Speaker, 39:

“The reviewing of tenders and the making of decisions upon the award of contracts should be undertaken in as transparent a manner as possible, including demonstrating clear compliance with procurement rules...”

Now, the hon. Minister came here and gave a report and the Member for Diego Martin West would like the population to feel that the Minister “went and write dah report”. The Minister is not involved in the tender process in anything or any form. He came and gave you the report, based on the evaluation team, what they stated, and he gave the reasons that the evaluation team gave for the SISL, Hyflux and Foster Wheeler why they did well and also why ATLATEC did do not do as well.

But let me jump ahead a little bit because it was rather unfortunate for the Member for Diego Martin West, who just cast aspersions on citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, on all those who were involved in the process, and he just labelled them as political stooges. Everybody is at the behest of this great thieving people.

But let us say who and what did what, and when and how.

4.15 p.m.

First of all, CPG Consultants, they did the initial RFP. Now, who is CPG? I do not know who CPG is. Let us find out:

“CPG Corporation (CPG Corp) is the corporatised entity of the former Singapore Public Works Department (PWD). With more than 2,000 talented individuals in the CPG group of companies,”—they—“are one of the leading development professionals in the Asia-Pacific region...”

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So CPG is involved in bid rigging because the Member for Diego Martin/West, covets San Fernando East's position, and wants to covet the Member for Siparia's seat? These are serious things. The country is open for business. The Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment has just announced that last year \$2.9 billion of foreign direct investment is coming in, more is coming—economy, when that comes, it is people's food on their table, and we are playing games “'bout who want blue light and who doh want blue light”? So that is CPG.

Now, who else was involved in this process? There is KPMG; well, everybody knows KPMG. So let me “doh even waste time”. Now, the evaluation team, let us talk about the evaluation team, because if you just listened to the Member for Diego Martin West, you would feel that, “Anil and Rupert, and all ah we sid down dey, sid down have ah lime, eat ah doubles, and decide who getting ting, buh” when you cast aspersions, you cast aspersions on citizens of repute. Hear the evaluation team:

“A six (6) member cross functional team from within NGC's group (‘the evaluation team’) was convened to evaluate the proposals received. The evaluation team evaluated the proposals received independent of CPG. However...”

—as clarification was required, the international consultants were there for any clarification.

The members of the evaluation committee, who the Member for Diego Martin West was saying, they corrupt, they terrible, lock them up, well, let us see who they are, and where they are from. I do not know. Let us find out:

“Ron Traboulay”—who has an—“MSc. in Maritime Management; BA Management; Adv. Dip. Business Management.

Mr. Traboulay has been employed with the National Energy Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited, a fully owned subsidiary of NGC for the past 14 years.”

“We only in Government four years, but according to the Member for Diego Martin West, Indar Maharaj start to put ah set ah PP inside de ting, and humbug de process”. Fourteen years, NEC, 2000 “he dey”, he went through all PNM—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member. Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Minister of Sport and Member of Parliament for D'Abadie/O'Meara has expired.

Motion made: That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]

Question put and agreed to.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, that pursuant to the Standing Orders, that the Member be allowed to conclude his contribution before the taking of the tea break.

Mr. Speaker: The question is that we allow the hon. Member to conclude his contribution and that would be at exactly 4.48. The hon. Leader of the House has sought leave of the House for us to continue into that period until the conclusion.

Question agreed to.

Before I allow you to continue, hon. Members, Member for Diego Martin North/East, Member for Diego Martin West, I need your undivided attention.

Mr. Imbert: Is it tea break?

Mr. Speaker: No, no, we will come to that.

VISITORS (KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA)

Mr. Speaker: We have in our audience today, in the Speaker's Gallery, some members from Saudi Arabia. First person I would like to recognize here with us from Saudi Arabia is Dr. Fahad Al Dawood. He is a Judicial Inspector General of the Ministry of Justice in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. [*Desk thumping*] And he is also a professor of international justice at the Naif Arab University.

We also have Mr. Shahzad Rasul Muhammad, he is Ambassador of Peace, United Peace Federation, United Nations. He is the President of the Trinidad and Tobago Saudi Arabia Chamber of Commerce in Saudi Arabia. Welcome! [*Desk thumping*]

They are accompanied by one, Mr. Khan. He is the cofounder and Chair of the Trinidad and Tobago local branch of the Saudi Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Khan, welcome! [*Desk thumping*]

[Each visitor stands on hearing his name]

Okay, let us go, hon. Member for Diego—Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara, Minister of Sport. [*Desk thumping*]

**WASA AND NGC
(AWARD OF CONTRACTS)**

Hon. A. Roberts: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Freudian slip; I have been a constituent of Diego Martin West for many years. I have not seen him yet. [Laughter] But anyway, we are talking about those citizens who the Member for Diego Martin West described as jokers, placed there as puppets. One of them, Ron Traboulay, “who dey 14 years, nobody eh put him dey, and all of those degrees, ah cyar even count how many degrees he has”.

Another one “Ernest Esdelle”—this is the evaluation team. No Minister or no chairman or no NGC went and evaluate anything. So understand the facts. So if there is bid rigging, and corruption, “is these citizens”, that the Member for Diego Martin West is attacking, and they do not have protection from him; understand this. Hear it:

“Ernest Esdelle”—a—“Registered Civil Engineer”—with an—“MSc. (Project Management)”,—a—“B.Sc. (Hons.) (Civil Engineering)”,—with—“(Construction Engineering and Construction Management)”—a diploma in—“(Administration). 34 years’ experience in Building...”—

—but because “ah man covet ah seat, and covet ah blue lights, he throw Ernest Esdelle in de mix”.

“Robert Baird, Diploma in Instrumentation; ABE, (Association of Business Executive) Business Management - Parts 1 and 2.

Mr. Baird has been involved in the Oil and Gas Sector, employed with the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited...for the last thirty (30) years.” [Crosstalk]

Partnership in Government four years, but the Member for Diego Martin West said we shuffle people and start to bid rig. [Crosstalk] This is not funny, this is serious business. It is irresponsible, “an ah man selfish”, and want for aggrandizement. We come in here to defend this, when we have serious business to do. If there are serious issues, we look at them and deal with them, but this cannot continue time after time. Email, OPV; he stood in this Parliament and said that the Attorney General had lost, and he and the Member for Diego Martin North/East said, we will have to pay \$1.4 billion. “De Government win \$1.382 billion, dey never say sorry.” [Desk thumping]

“Dey start to say we going an devalue money, we blacklist”, all sorts of fearmongering, irresponsible behaviour when an economy is being built.

Hon. Members: Strangers to the truth!

Hon. A. Roberts: Strangers to the truth!

We also have: “Nazim Sarjad,”—

—“allyuh doh take ’im on you know, because de people want to hear this. Doh worry” with the Member for Diego Martin North/East, you know, because the Member for Diego Martin North/East has to study “rapid rail coming back”. Since “rapid rail reach back”, he and the Member for Diego Martin West is “fren”. [Laughter] “Before dey fighting, the Member for Diego Martin West say rapid rail coming back, and the Member for Diego Martin North/East jump and say, allyuh vote for the Member for Diego Martin West. Dat is it, dat is PNM.” [Laughter] “So leave the Member for Diego Martin North/East, dem is fren now”, right?

“Nazim Sarjad”—a—“BSc. Geomatic Engineering”—an—“MSc., Engineering Construction Management”—and he is—“currently pursuing Ph.D. Civil Engineering.

He joined the NGC in 1984...” [Crosstalk]

But Indar Maharaj, “pushing een people, take out, push een, putting een people to do his bidding. Dis is not ah joke, dat is ah Prime Minister in waiting, ah cyar even say it, ah nearly choke.” [Laughter]

Hon. Member: “Doh say it.”

Hon. A. Roberts: “Doh say it.”

“Lee O’Reilly”—

—“dis is the evaluation team, dis is de people with de bid seal, who—de two package, de two envelope, dey open it, dey went through it, and dey evaluate it, based on whatever categories dey used, dese are de people. So if they have any bid rigging, is these people.” The PNM should apologize to each and every one of these people in writing. They should apologize vehemently. This is unfair to human beings who have lived their lives and are serving their country, [Continuous desk thumping] to be attacked by “ah man suffering blue lightitist”. And the Member for San Fernando East, “ah see yuh shaking yuh head, yuh know de blue lightitist since 1996, he coming at yuh. Now he coming at the Member for Siparia.” [Laughter and desk thumping]

Mr. Manning: Leave me out of this.

Hon. A. Roberts:

“Keith Hordatt, BSc”—in—“Mechanical Engineering and Economics. “Ah”, Keith Hordatt—

“He joined NGC in April 2013...” [*Crosstalk*]

So, it must be Hordatt, yeah, yeah. It must be Hordatt.

He—“holds the position of Project Manager, Construction Services Division. He is an accomplished construction Project Manager, with over 25 years in project delivery in Industrial, Commercial, Residential Healthcare and Infrastructural....”

Not only that, for this bid rigging to occur, the case put forward by the great Member for Diego Martin West was that people paid for packages and they did not put in a final bid. Anyone and everyone know that not everyone who picks up packages puts in a bid, that is up to their individual choice.

4.30 p.m.

But what the Member for Diego Martin West is saying is that these companies colluded. Understand the allegation. So it is not that Kentz Caribbean and Latin America LLC decided for whatever reason, they have other work, they did not bother, they had the capacity, they could not bid, they could not get the finance. Not that! Not legitimate reasons. Kentz Caribbean wanted to give the contract to somebody else so they came out, and VINCI Construction Grands Projects, they did the same thing. They helped rig a bid for somebody else. JLF Construction, technological/intercontinental, Aqualia Infrastructure, all of these international companies colluded to give a certain company a consortium a contract.

That is what the Member for Diego Martin West would like the country to believe, and we are fed up of insinuation, lack of basis, no fact, and you are attacking people, companies, who have worked all their life and because you have a high office you think you could just attack them, because you want to sit down in the Member for Siparia’s chair. Now, the Member for Diego Martin West also went on to state that there are other means that people will use and go to court and so on, but he did not know that before he brought this Motion? Because if anybody has any grouse or any problem with any process in Trinidad and Tobago, there are avenues open to citizens to get redress. “Yuh doh jump in ah Parliament and bring ah Motion, and bring PNM people in jersey to rough up the Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara.”

That is not how we operate in a civilized democracy. We are not hyenas in an African forest. A lady got so excited she pulled off her wig and waved it on my face. [*Laughter*] I could not see good. I thought it was Camille. But anyway, he said you can use the—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Member! Member! Member! Please! We have to respect all Members of Parliament, whether they are in this House or—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: How many people they had incoming?

Mr. Speaker: No! No! No! I understand where you are coming from. So I want to advise you, do not impute or use insulting language towards any Member of Parliament. Continue, please.

Hon. A. Roberts: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize to my former swimming mate, Camille Browne. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, you can use the courts, you can get judicial review. If any company or citizen has a problem with an issue or they think they are being unfairly treated, they could file for judicial review. They could file a complaint with the Integrity Commission for investigation. They could file a complaint with the DPP Office. They could go to the Commissioner of Police for an investigation. They could go to the FIU. They could go to the Equal Opportunity Commission. So why did the Member for Diego Martin West not do any of those things? Why did he come to the Parliament to create a scene, to rough up people outside with their supporters? Why?

You want to know why? I hold in my hand a letter—now, if you all remember there were two bidders for the project. There were two bidders who put in full documents. I hold in my hand a letter from ATLATEC, the losing bidder. Let me read it into the record for the people of this nation, and especially for international businessmen and conglomerates who would like to invest in the sweet democratic, calm, relaxed, non-violent Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The date: March 20, 2014.

Mr. Indarsingh: Take your time.

Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, my brother. This letter was sent to:

“The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited,

Orinoco Drive,

Point Lisas Industrial Estate,

WASA and NGC (Award of Contracts)
[HON. A. ROBERTS]

Friday, March 28, 2014

Point Lisas,

Port of Spain,

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago West Indies.

Re: Tender Number 75/13-Design and Build, And Operation & Maintenance
Of The Beetham Water Recycling Plant.

Dear Sirs,

This letter refers to the project at caption and serves to state that Atlatec is in no way aggrieved at the outcome of the evaluation process.”

March 20, 2014, to the NGC.

Hon. Member: So what happened to that?

Hon. A. Roberts: What happened to that? I am now coming to tell you what happened to that. You should not have asked that. Thank you. What happened to that?

Hear what happened to that, Mr. Speaker. We are here; a Motion has been brought by the Leader of the Opposition, the whole world watching Trinidad and Tobago. Unfortunately we have guests, but good thing they heard the truth because if they had left [*Desk thumping*] earlier they may not have wanted to invest in Trinidad and Tobago, but since they have heard the truth, they are smiling, they are relaxed. They say, “Ah boy, we could spend we money because there is a good Government in place, a sane Prime Minister who is relaxed, love people and supports people, and encourages supporters to treat people with respect. She is not reckless and arrogant even though she has had blue lights for four years. She is still on the ground and humble.”

A man without blue lights attacking journalists, attack *Express*, attack *Guardian*, attack Lennox Grant. When Lennox Grant said, “No, that is not true”, he attacked him in a different way, and not a blue light yet. That is a frightening thought for all of those who are looking for leadership and not a blue light yet. No “staritis”.

Ms. Cox: Mr. Speaker, 36(1), please. Relevance.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, connect, please.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, let me connect this, please.

Let me read the letter again. This is a letter from the party, the company that lost. The company that went through the process and came second, they have no problem. They understand the process was fair. They went through. They got their reasons why they lost. They accepted why they lost, and they have written it to state that they accepted it and have no problem, but the Member for Diego Martin West comes, rallies the whole troops, cause corruption in every meeting, on radio—why is it? And the Member for Port of Spain South asked me—but connect, well let me connect.

So I asked myself, I went through the process and I read it, and I said, “But wait nah, this process was fair”. I went through the Uff enquiry recommendations, I said, “Yes, it conformed to the Uff recommendations”. I said, “It conformed to all propriety, fairness, transparency, equity, it makes sense. The evaluation committee was not connected. They had different levels, from OPG who did the RFP to KPMG, to the evaluation committee, to the tenders committee, to the board approval, nothing was changed, nothing was tampered with—nothing. I said, “But wait nah, so what is the Member for Diego Martin West about? What he going on about?”

Then he comes here, rally the troops. Two weeks to ring the Parliament. “They ring 20 feet downstairs.” A man who wants to be Prime Minister could only bring out 100 people after two weeks, you have a problem. “Allyuh better vote for something else.” Anyway, and I am asking myself: Why? Why? Why? Why would we be here? Why do I have to miss Rodney Wilkes funeral? Why am I debating this? And you know, Mr. Speaker, I put it to you that the Member for Diego Martin West was not forthcoming with the truth about himself. I put it to you. I am being very careful, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one of the tenets of procurement, one of the tenets of governance is that on any issue in which you have an interest, whatsoever, that you should disclose that interest before getting involved in any form or fashion in any process, you should disclose that interest. For example, when the former Minister who used to sit here in D’Abadie/O’Meara, Karen Nunez Tesheira, went in as Minister of Finance of the PNM Government to negotiate on behalf of us, the citizens, and we came out with a terrible deal when she went into a meeting with two owners of CL Financial, Mr. Duprey and Mr. Monteil, and the poor Central Bank Governor, to make a deal for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, she did not disclose—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: She forgot.

Hon. A. Roberts:—well she forgot that she too was an owner of CL Financial at the time. She owned 10,400 shares, but she did not say anything.

That was terrible. That was wrong, and we are waiting on the Integrity Commission on that. It does take time. They do go fast on certain things. If you go by the house and pull up by the gate you might get things done fast, but in normal process “they does take their time” with other matters, but I am not going by anybody house “to eat no scones and drink no tea”. But you should declare your interest. Mr. Speaker, I am going to allow the Member for Diego Martin West a moment to reflect, to recollect, because you know as we move on our memory is not as it used to be—if there is any possibility that the Member for Diego Martin West would have any interest whatsoever in a wastewater plant in Beetham.

I will give way for you to state any possible interest, conflict, whatever. I will give way if you would like to state it.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to the Member for inviting me to join his discourse. I want to put on record, I have no interest whatsoever in a wastewater plant in Beetham, or anywhere in the world for that matter.

Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Hansard*, you got that clearly? [*Laughter*] Okay. Let me now take you to a *Hansard* document of Friday April 28, 2000, in the debate on the Desalination (Award of Contract). Friday April 28, 2000, House met at 1.29 p.m., they started a little earlier than us, Mr. Speaker, because probably people were not beating up MPs downstairs. [*Laughter*] Yes, I malicious.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Get to the point.

Hon. A. Roberts: I will listen to my Prime Minister and get to the point.

Mr. Speaker, during that debate the then Member for Diego Martin West stated, when challenged by Minister Ganga Singh, the Member for Diego Martin West stated in trying to clarify a point:

“Mr. Speaker, as you would know, or as you may know, outside of my parliamentary duties I practise professionally as a geologist. One of the services I provide to the public at large is hydrology and in that capacity I happened to accompany a group of local businessmen, investors, who sought my services as a geologist. I accompanied them”—the business and the investors—“to the office of the Minister”—

Who was the then Ganga Singh.

“as they sought to discuss with him the potential for private sector investment with respect to the upgrade of the Sea Lots Sewer Treatment Plant. It is in that context that I went to the office of the Minister.”

Mr. Speaker, I now understand why we are here. I now understand. ALCATEC has no problem. The process went through all the finance rules. The tender was Uff recommendations. The people went through the process. The evaluation committee is well-advanced and existed for a long time, but I now know why the Member for Diego Martin West has a problem. He had a group of investors that he was close with, he was advising and they were dealing with a sewer treatment plant. Now I ask the question—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Member: Cabinet passed it. The PNM Cabinet passed it.

Hon. A. Roberts: Yes. Well they later on passed it and he was a Member of the Cabinet that passed it.

So let me read—and I gave him an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to clear, because I do not want to take it he may not have remembered, but I gave him an opportunity to declare all interests, and I am saying here that in the evidence, in the face of evidence of a clear process, individuals of great qualification, international communities—*[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden a lot of noise.

Mr. Speaker: All right, you have my full protection. Continue, please.

Hon. A. Roberts: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am hearing shouts of that is quite 2000. All right, that is quite 2000, but you had an interest, you wanted to build a sewer plant, you had investors, you had businessmen, you then come into Government—*[Interruption]* I am speaking.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, I rise under 36(5), to reinforce the Member is imputing improper motives. I have no interest, I have had no interest, I have no interest in any water treatment plant or sewer treatment plant in Bacolet. I have no interest. And in my presentation today, I have no interest in Beetham. The matter I raised in the House of this water treatment plant, I have no interest in Beetham and the project, and this plant. The Member is imputing improper motives, and I crave your indulgence. Right. My professional services 13 years ago do not give me an interest.

Mr. Speaker: Yes. I think the Member is referring to the *Hansard* report—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: He is saying I have interest.

Mr. Speaker: No, I do not think he is accusing you in the—*[Interruption]* Wait! Wait! I need no help or assistance. If the Member goes in a direction that breaches the Standing Orders, I will intervene. I will however guide the Member and tell you that you are coming very close to infringing the Standing Orders in terms of the conduct of a Member. I ask you to, at least when you are making your statements and you are making reference to the *Hansard*, do not impute improper motives to the Member in question.

If you wish at the appropriate time to file a substantive Motion—*[Interruption]* I do not need any help, please. Members of the Opposition Benches, Leader of the Opposition, I am on my legs. Kindly be guided.

Hon. A. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. And, Mr. Speaker, I beg for a little injury time, because I know the emotions—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: You have eight more minutes.

Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Sir.

Now let me read from the *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, because it baffled me since hearing about this corruption in this water plant. Now normally when I hear corruption my initial response is, “Boy, leh we find out. Oh gosh, somebody do something”, but when I heard it from the Leader of the Opposition now, based on his track record of accusing the AG of racism because he went to ask in New York and the AG said he never went anywhere, when he said the OPVs, we will lose and we have to pay money, and we ended up winning, he never apologized; when he accused everybody of wanting to commit murder and having email for six long months, while people plotted to kill journalists, and he brought that to the Parliament six months later, I understood that “blue lightitis” is a very serious thing.

I had to take what that Member says with not a pinch of salt, but with all the salt that Gandhi and his followers made at the beach in India back in the '40s, when they went to produce salt. I had to take what he said, and I came to find out the truth, and I found out that the process was fair, it was advertised, everybody had an opportunity. There were evaluation teams, there were different levels of professionals throughout, and someone won, great for them, but I could not understand; but why is this, what is going on?

I have a letter from the loser. The people who lost, ATLATEC, writing on March 28 to NGC saying, “Listen, doh worry with what the Member for Diego

Martin West and dem say, yuh know. We went through the process, we found it to be fair, and we accept that we have lost.” End of story.

4.45 p.m.

This is the people who should be the most upset, so why is the Member for Diego Martin West so upset? I put it to you that I read into the *Hansard*, after giving him an opportunity to declare, to answer, to say, because before anybody gets involved in any decision making you must disclose. You must say, “Boy, that is my son. That is my brother. I work with them. I did this, and therefore...” I bring this issue, so that everybody is aware of the information. He said he did not have any interest whatsoever.

I read from the *Hansard* of April 28, 2000. The then Member for Diego Martin West in the discussion and debate on the desalination contract stated to then queries from Ganga Singh:

“Dr. K. Rowley.” Mr. Speaker, please, I do not know what—[*Interruption*]
“Mr. Speaker, dey getting on like dey outside.”

[*Hon. Roberts takes his seat*]

Mr. Speaker: You have my protection.

Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am a bit rattled from earlier events this afternoon; you have to forgive me for being a little tender—hooligans at the gates. [*Laughter*]

“Mr. Speaker, as you would know,”—this is the Member for Diego Martin West—[*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, they have no discipline. I am begging. She is threatening me.

Mr. Speaker: I did not hear about the threats, but please, I am asking the Members for Laventille East/Morvant and Port of Spain South to observe Standing Order 40(b) and (c), be silent when a Member is on his legs. Continue, hon. Member.

Hon. A. Roberts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am reading from the *Hansard*—and remember the contribution of the hon. Member. He said first and foremost, it was a ridiculous idea. Waste water was too expensive; it is not good; it is terrible. We then showed that he did not agree with that position; that is his today position. However, we went through and I showed you that while he was a Member of the Cabinet in 2004, he agreed to a Cabinet Note to create and to do a master plan for wastewater treatment. [*Crosstalk*]

WASA and NGC (*Award of Contracts*)
[HON. A. ROBERTS]

Friday, March 28, 2014

I then showed you a Cabinet note from the PNM Cabinet of November—they met twice: November 01—Mr. Speaker, please.

Mr. Speaker: You have three more minutes.

Hon. Anil Roberts: November 01 and November 03, 2007, in the heat of election fever, the PNM Cabinet met twice to agree and confirm, so it was an urgent—normally Cabinet meets once a week, Thursday. They met twice: November (1). The note was brought quickly, it was approved, and then they came back two days later on the third to confirm it. They met November 01, November 03—election was November 05—to approve \$700 million for a wastewater plant in Beetham. The Member for Diego Martin West was in the Cabinet at that time.

I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, and I read into the *Hansard*, from the Desalination (Award of Contract) debate, April 28, 2000, the Member for Diego Martin West says:

“Mr. Speaker, as you would know,...outside of my parliamentary duties I practise professionally as a geologist. One of the services I provide to the public at large is hydrology and in that capacity I happened to accompany a group of local businessmen, investors, who sought my services as a geologist. I accompanied them to the office of the Minister as they sought to discuss with him the potential for private sector investment with respect to the upgrade of the Sea Lots Sewer Treatment Plant.”

Same one, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ramadhar: Same one?

Hon. A. Roberts: I impute no improper motives, but if it is improper, the people already know.

I can say today that we have gone through the process. The NGC and WASA, the water treatment plant, is a fantastic project that will free up 10 million gallons of pure water for poor people. Not for middle class, not for rich people. Poor people will go and turn on their taps and get a 24/7 supply. WASA has moved from 2010; 18 per cent of the population had 24/7 supply. Now, today, 53 per cent of the citizens have a 24/7 supply of water, and by the end of the year that figure will be up to 74 per cent, and when the wastewater plant comes, it will move to 100 per cent, where you could get water anywhere: in Balisier House, at the golf club or following blue lights down the highway. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Adjournment

Friday, March 28, 2014

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Friday April 04, 2014 at 10.00 a.m., and to serve notice on that day it is the intention of the Government to debate, and take through all its stages, the Finance Bill, 2014.

**Spiritual Shouter Baptist Liberation Day
(Greetings)**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, before putting the question for adoption, we all know that on Sunday, March 30, marks the anniversary of Shouter Baptist Liberation Day. We are all aware that holiday took place on March 30, 1996, after decades of struggle by the Baptist community in our country. It is only appropriate and fitting that we pay tribute and we put on record our appreciation and solidarity, with the Baptist community in particular, and people of Trinidad and Tobago in general. I now call on the hon. Prime Minister to bring greetings on this occasion.

The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC): I thank you for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to extend warm greetings on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to the Spiritual Baptist Shouter community in commemoration and celebration of Spiritual Shouter Baptist Liberation Day, as the Speaker has indicated, March 30, 2014.

It was truly in the fires of hope and prayer that the Spiritual Baptist Shouter community could now celebrate today, after being discriminated against for many, many years. Their struggles and triumph are truly inspirational to all and serve as fitting reminders that we must never take our freedoms for granted.

You recall, Mr. Speaker, as you mentioned just now, it was in 1996 that the Government of which I was a part granted a public holiday to the Shouter Baptist in commemoration of the repeal of the Prohibition Act which had prevented them from openly practising their religion. Let me hasten to add, that Trinidad and Tobago remains the only country that celebrates a public holiday for members of the Spiritual Baptist faith. I think we deserve to take credit for that. [*Desk thumping*]

As Prime Minister of our beloved country, I am proud to say that in Trinidad and Tobago every creed and race find an equal place, and this is something that my Government will rigorously defend and uphold.

Spiritual Shouter Baptist Liberation Day
[HON. K. PERSAD-BISSESSAR SC]

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Over time, this religious event on the national calendar has been increasingly embraced by citizens as a reason for nationwide celebration and heritage appreciation. This speaks to diversity and pluralism that defines our nation's character.

Mr. Speaker, the Shouter Baptist community, sons and daughters of our soil, have made and continue to make sterling contributions to the development of our young democratic nation, and we are eternally grateful for this.

It is fitting then, Mr. Speaker, that as citizens of this great nation of ours, we can join hands with our brothers and sisters of the Shouter Baptist faith and celebrate with song and dance, with thanksgiving in our collective hearts for all we have accomplished, the great things we are yet to achieve, with boundless faith in our destiny, to build an authentic future for ourselves and for generations to come.

As we celebrate the repeal of the Shouter Baptist Prohibition Ordinance, I wish to state that there are still laws on our statute books which remain as continuing discrimination against the Spiritual Shouter Baptist faith. In this regard, I intend to ask my Minister of National Diversity, Minister Samuel to take a look at those statutes, Minister Samuel, for us to look at those statutes with a view to removing all the discriminatory provisions against the Spiritual Shouter Baptist faith.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. May God continue to bless our nation. May God continue to bless us all, and I thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself and those of us on this side with the kind sentiments expressed by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago to the members of the Spiritual Baptist faith. Every year at this time we acknowledge in our presence persons who have had a history of struggle for a religion which had been ignored up until it was acknowledged by the independent Trinidad and Tobago, before independence, and it should be acknowledged as part of the cultural heritage, not only of the Spiritual Baptist members, but of Trinidad and Tobago in general.

Our country is one which is characterized by citizens who serve in a variety of religions, and we have a number of ethnic groupings in our country. Therefore, when we acknowledge the existence and the contributions made by persons of

ethnic groups or religions better than our own, it says to the rest of the country and the world that we accept that we are one people and we have harmony in diversity.

So today, Mr. Speaker, on the verge of the national holiday, I wish on my behalf and on behalf of all of us on this side, and all of us in this House I must say, the best for this year's anniversary celebrations, and those of us who make the time to go out and spend the day with members of the Spiritual Baptist community, look forward to the enjoyment of the day that we normally have out there, with songs of praise and the singing and dancing.

On that score, I would like to wish all members who practise the Spiritual Baptist faith a very happy holiday and comfort in the nation of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I would like to also put on record my greetings to the Spiritual Shouter Baptist community as they prepare to celebrate on Sunday, March 30 this year, the national day given to them and the whole of Trinidad and Tobago, deemed Spiritual Shouter Baptist Liberation Day.

Hon. Members may recall that Trinidad and Tobago is the only country in the world to celebrate this day by way of a public holiday, which is yet another measure, not only of our uniqueness, but of our rich diversity which we must guard jealously.

It is also important that Members of this honourable House and the national community at large take note of the trials endured by our Spiritual Shouter Baptist brothers and sisters to gain the recognition they deserve, so that as a nation we can truly live the words of our national anthem that, "every creed and race can find an equal place" in our country.

I therefore join with the hon. Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition before me, and on behalf of my family and the Parliament, in wishing all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, especially those of the Spiritual Shouter Baptist faith, a happy and holy Spiritual Shouter Baptist liberation day 2014.

Motions on the Adjournment

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I am reminded that there are two matters, but there is an agreement that one will be addressed this afternoon before we adjourn this sitting.

Seeing that we have been here for a long while, I would like to suggest that we suspend the sitting at this time and we resume at 5.30 p.m.

Motions on the Adjournment
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This sitting is now suspended until 5.30.

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.30 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

**False Qualifications
(Failure by Government to act)**

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. Colm Imbert (*Diego Martin North/East*): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Government has a habit—and I have fallen prey—of asking me to keep adjourning my Motions, I have no intention of doing that today otherwise they will think I am in collusion with Members opposite.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the matter—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Please! Please, allow the Member for Diego Martin North/East to speak in complete silence. Please!

Mr. C. Imbert: I only have 15 minutes, you know.

Mr. Speaker: Complete silence. Please! You have my protection. Continue, hon. Member.

Mr. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, the matter before the Parliament is the failure of the Government to act proactively with respect to persons who tender false qualifications, false papers as they are now popularly known in the calypso world.

Since this Government came into being we have had a plethora of persons holding high office or seeking to hold high positions within the state enterprise sector and within the government departments who have false papers, and I think it is worth doing a summary before we get into some of the more recent examples of false papers. And I would like to read into the record an article from the—let me just deal with one matter immediately, and that is the question of the former general manager of the Airports Authority, that is Mr. Birju, and if I read from an *Express* article dated September 29, 2013, headline, “Cadiz: No police report yet in Birju matter” and it reads as follows:

“Transport Minister Stephen Cadiz has not yet decided if an official police report will be lodged against Deyanand Birju.” [*Interruption*]

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Minister went on to say that if the police are brought in Mr. Birju would suffer from embarrassment. The Minister also went on to say that he is not a lawyer and therefore there is really not much he can do about this

matter because he really does not have any expertise in the area of dealing with people with false qualifications. But, what was Mr. Birju's misdemeanor? Mr. Birju claimed to have a degree certificate from the University of Massachusetts, Boston in the United States. And the article indicates that:

“Calls to the university last week revealed after diligent checks, the certificate purporting to be issued from the institution was not authentic.”

And there have been several media reports on this and the authorities at the University of Massachusetts have confirmed that not only was the certificate bogus but it contained manifest inconsistencies with false names of the head of the university and the trustees of the university. In other words, it was a forgery, and the official Government response to that is that:

“...the police involvement could only add greater embarrassment to Birju and his family...”

And the Minister is not a lawyer so there is nothing he can do about it. So, that is Airports Authority, Mr. Speaker.

Let us go to the case of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission. We have here an article from the *Express* again, April 03, 2012:

“Omar Khan has quit his chairmanship of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission.

Khan said...there were ‘a number of reasons’ for his exit from the State utility, but primarily because he couldn’t juggle his dual responsibilities as manager of the Trinidad and Tobago cricket team and T&TEC chairman.”

He said:

“‘The chairmanship consumes a lot of time’—and—‘I have been discussing with the Minister...for several months now.’

Checks by the *Express* have, however”—revealed—“that his resignation comes over allegations about his involvement in the selection of contractors for T&TEC street...lighting projects”—

and the question of inaccurate or false qualifications.

Mr. Khan had alleged that he had a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of the West Indies and an MBA from the Arthur Lok Jack School of Business. When confronted the Minister said he had no idea

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how a CV—well, I have to say bogus qualifications on it, the bachelor's degree from UWI and the MBA from Arthur Lok Jack School—from Mr. Khan arrived at the Cabinet with false qualifications.

With respect to this one, Mr. Speaker, I personally contacted the University of Manitoba and I discovered that the University of Manitoba—because when he was confronted he said that no, it was a mistake. He had a degree in engineering from the University of Manitoba, which he claimed he had got by distance learning. I personally contacted the University of Manitoba and they said that they have never offered a degree in engineering by distance learning. So, it is just not true and, of course, we know that he does not have an MBA from the Arthur Lok Jack School.

Then, of course, we have the famous Resmi Ramnarine. This is actually information overload. We have heard so much about Resmi Ramnarine, but it is worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that the person who recommended Resmi Ramnarine for the head of the spy agency, Mrs. Julie Browne—and I am reading again from an article dated February 05, 2010:

“Browne has so far escaped unscathed from the debacle surrounding Ramnarine's falsely-stated credentials which was submitted as an appendix to Cabinet Note 92. Deputy SSA director Browne, who wrote a glowing letter of recommendation for the 31-year-old intercept technician, has failed to respond to repeated calls from this newspaper about the central role she played in getting Ramnarine appointed to the director's chair.”

Ramnarine had embellished her CV, claimed she had a bachelor degree from the University of the West Indies, a claim also made by the Member of Parliament for Tabaquite and the then Minister of National Security, Mr. John Sandy, eventually Resmi—and St. Augustine as well—Ramnarine resigned and changed her name.

Now, let us go to one that I personally dealt with, Mr. Speaker. A gentleman by the name of Kurt Ajodha who claimed to have a bachelor's degree in engineering from the University of the West Indies; a bachelor of architecture degree from the New York Institute of Technology, and claimed to be a certified project management consultant. I personally checked this as well. He never got his degree from UWI; he never got a degree from the New York Institute of Technology and he was not a certified project management consultant. He also claimed to be a FIDIC engineer, another false statement, Mr. Speaker. Kurt Ajodha. When he was outed he resigned.

Mr. Speaker, before I go to the most recent examples of false papers, we have a situation right now at Town and Country Planning. It has made the news. I have in my possession a CV which was published by the Alma Jordan Library, St. Augustine, Digital Library Services Centre, for a lady by the name of Stara Ramlogan, and on that CV which was downloaded from the University of the West Indies website, the lady claimed to have a bachelor's degree in social work and welfare from the University of the West Indies, which she claimed to have got in 1994. I have in my possession the certificate that the lady, her actual certificate, Mr. Speaker, and I will read into the record:

University of the West Indies, School of Continuing Studies, St. Augustine, Social Work and Welfare.

This is to certify that Stara Ramlogan has successfully completed the course in Social Work offered by the UWI School of Continuing Studies.

By no stretch of the imagination—I am sure that the Member for Caroni East, being a former university professor, would be aware that the School of Continuing Studies in 1994 would not have offered a degree programme in social work, would be aware that this is not a bachelor's degree. This is the actual certificate that I have in my hand, and this is the actual CV downloaded from the library of the University of the West Indies, which the lady claims to have. At least, on the website it is claimed that the lady has a bachelor's degree in social work.

Now, the question is, why are these people doing these things? Mr. Speaker, in order to deal with some of this, I have some articles here and one of them is named, "What makes job seekers lie on their resume" and the other one is "Uncovering the multi-million dollar fake degree industry". This is from cnn.com dated January 12, 2010:

"With competition still fierce in the jobs market, some people might be tempted to beef up their resume by buying a fake degree.

The problem of fake degrees is nothing new, but the Internet has made it easier than ever to obtain a bogus qualification.

George Gollin, a board member of the U.S.-based Council for Higher Education Accreditation, told CNN he estimates that more than 100,000 fake degrees are sold each year in the U.S. alone. Of those, around one third are postgraduate degrees. He added that a bogus degree will typically cost \$1,000."

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The people who submit these false qualifications come from all walks of life. Like Mr. Birju, he gave an example of one American who bought a bachelor's degree in nuclear engineering and is now working in the control room of a nuclear power plant. [Interruption] He bought a bachelor's degree in nuclear engineering and is working in the control room of a nuclear power plant. This is the United States. These examples are being given by Mr. George Gollin who is a member of the US Council for Higher Education Accreditation. You could believe that? Buys a degree and running a nuclear power plant. Gollin was instrumental in dealing with St. Regis University. The St. Regis Degree Mill was estimated to have made \$7 million from selling fake qualifications to more than 9,000 customers in 131 countries. In 2008, the couple behind this St. Regis Degree Mill was each jailed for three years.

Now, we have in Trinidad and Tobago an Act called the Forgery Act. And in the Forgery Act, it is an offence to utter a false certificate. It is subject to a fine and to imprisonment. The whole point of all of this, I could have listed endless examples of persons in the state enterprise sector—[Interruption]

Mr. Speaker: One more minute, hon. Member.

Mr. C. Imbert: I am aware—and in government departments who have tendered forged papers, false certificates, manifestly bogus documents and in each case, Mr. Speaker, the Government has taken no action even though there is a Forgery Act in place.

I was shocked when Mr. Cadiz said he does not know what to do. The Forgery Act is very clear. It is an offence to utter a forged certificate. It is punishable by imprisonment.

5.45 p.m.

I want to know—you have the person at National Quarries who tendered a false certificate claiming she had a degree from a non-existent programme. I want to know why this Government is being aware of all of these examples I have given: Adjodha, Birju, et cetera—these people have uttered forged documents. Why are the police not getting involved? Why is the Minister of National Security not getting involved? Why is the Government not taking action? Why are you so soft on these people? Please explain.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy.

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After having listened to the Member for Diego Martin North/East, I want to make it absolutely clear that this Government, in no way, has condoned, or in any way, attempted to be, what I would call lackadaisical in its approach in dealing with persons who would have allegedly embellished their résumés or CVs in relation to state enterprises and statutory authorities throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

I have heard the Member for Diego Martin North/East articulate why persons have not been prosecuted and he has called for the Minister of National Security to be performing the role of charging nationals of this country. That, indeed, for me, is a very reckless statement.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 44. I am being misrepresented. I never said that. I would like my time to correct that, please.

Mr. Speaker: If you have already done it—[*Interruption*] He said you are misrepresenting him.

Mr. Imbert: I never said that the Minister of National Security should lock up anybody. I said the Minister of National Security should get involved because this is an offence. These are crimes. Get involved.

Mr. Speaker: Continue, hon. Minister.

Mr. Imbert: Not to lock up anybody.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: From where I sit, Mr. Speaker, the role of investigations and so on, is not that of the Minister of National Security; [*Desk thumping*] it is the work of the Commissioner of Police and officers under his jurisdiction, and agencies under his jurisdiction, and an experienced Member, such as the Member for Diego Martin North/East, should not be descending into this realm because he would be the first one—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: “Dah is your answer?”

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—to jump up in tandem with his colleagues—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: “Dah is your answer?”

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—and accuse the People’s Partnership Government of—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: “Yuh eh doin nuttin?”

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—politically interfering—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: All right, “do nuttin.”

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—in the work and business of what is supposed to be the Police Service of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the Member for Diego Martin North/East when he moved this particular Motion—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: You have my protection. Continue, please.

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—and I find a bit—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Do not worry with the Member for Member for Diego Martin North/East. I shall protect you. Please continue.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, when we campaigned as a party that sought the confidence of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, we made it very clear that we will be committed to the highest traditions of governance, accountability and transparency in office, and all those who would be found, in keeping with due process, to be transgressing on the hallmarks of accountability, transparency and so on, would be dealt with, and dealt with decisively in keeping with due process.

The Member for Diego Martin North/East attempted to accuse the Minister of Transport for not being proactive, for not being decisive, as it relates to what transpired at the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. I want to state categorically here this evening, that with respect to the issue surrounding Mr. Dayanand Birju, the former general manager of the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, that matter has been referred to the police service of this country for further investigation and so on.

Additionally, too, the Member for Diego Martin North/East attempted to insinuate, or paint, or tarnish, or come to the conclusion that it was this administration that hired Mr. Birju at the Airports Authority. I want to place on the record here this evening that he would have been working at—he came across to the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, and, in fact, when it was brought to the attention of the authorities at the Airports Authority and also the line Minister with responsibility, in keeping with due process—something that they may not be too familiar with in relation to adhering to due process because their tenure was full of glaring examples of going against the rule of law and due process in Trinidad and Tobago—it was dealt with decisively in terms of him being no longer employed at the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, I could say that, again, the Government dealt with other issues of embellishment of certificates and CVs and so on, decisively. Again, Member for Diego Martin North/East, by not being hasty, but being committed again, to the rule of law [*Laughter*] by ensuring that the proper investigations were done and when the appropriate findings were brought to the attention, persons were relieved of their position.

The examples could be seen in the former chairman at T&TEC when the then Minister of Public Utilities, Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George, instituted the appropriate investigation and took the decisive action in relieving the then chairman of T&TEC of his portfolio.

In addition to that, we could see also at the Public Service Transport Corporation, a gentleman by the name of Ishwar Jadoonanan, he, too, was allegedly involved in embellishment of his CV and certificate and so on, and, again, in keeping with due process, the appropriate investigations were pursued and the line Minister, via the board of the Public Service Transport Corporation, dealt with this particular issue in a very decisive manner.

This is, again, in keeping with the Government's philosophy and commitment to ensure that wrongdoing will not be condoned. In fact, the Minister of Transport has also advised me that in keeping with the highest form of transparency and reviewing the systems and so on, in relation to the agencies under his jurisdiction, he has ensured that all the résumés of the boards under his purview, and also the senior management of the agencies under his purview, have been reviewed, and reviewed in the most rigorous manner, to ensure that they have passed the test in keeping with what we want to uphold in relation to persons who are holding public office at the level of state entities and also at the respective management levels in state enterprises throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I could recollect, very glaring, examples when those on the other side would have appointed persons to positions who did not possess the appropriate qualifications or the criteria for the office that they would have been able to function in.

Mr. Imbert: Who?

Mr. Cadiz: Too many to mention.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: They are too many to mention, but [*Laughter and desk thumping*] I think I could remember a gentleman at Petrotrin serving on the board of directors of Petrotrin—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Who is that?

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—who did not have a speciality in the oil sector.

Mr. Imbert: Who is that?

Hon. R. Indarsingh: A gentleman by the name of some Mr. Shimming, I think, did not possess the appropriate qualifications to be existing as a director of Petrotrin, and I do not know—I am subject to correction, but I do not know if, indeed, the individual possessed qualifications beyond a School Leaving Certificate.

I am forced to ask the question, Mr. Speaker, at the level of the board of directors, or the board of governors of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, I could clearly recollect someone who would have possessed a doctorate in literature, serving on the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago. So I ask myself the question: is it a sense of hypocrisy in relation to the mover of the Motion here this evening, or is it a case of when they are in political power, they move with a sense of abuse and a sense of high-handedness, and a sense of arrogance in appointing who they want to, where they want to in relation to fulfilling the business of the State?

So I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this Government is headed by a Prime Minister and her Ministers of Government who are committed to ensuring that when wrongdoing is brought to the fore, it will be dealt with in a very decisive manner. [*Desk thumping*] No one is above the law. I want to reiterate, no one is above the law, and we are committed to ensuring that at the level of the state entities and the statutory authorities of Trinidad and Tobago, we find the appropriate fit to ensure that there is proper accountability, governance and the highest form of tradition to ensure that taxpayers' moneys are properly expended on behalf of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.57 p.m.