



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

# Debates of the House of Representatives

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3rd Session - 11th Parliament (Rep.) - Volume 18 - Number 33

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**OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE ANNISLETTE-GEORGE  
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE ESMOND FORDE  
DEPUTY SPEAKER

**Friday 27th April, 2018**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE: JACQUI SAMPSON-MEIGUEL**

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*Papers Laid*

*Friday, April 27, 2018*

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Friday, April 27, 2018*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAVERS**

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Members, the hon. Anthony Garcia, MP for Arima; the hon. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn, MP, Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West; the hon. Ayanna Webster-Roy, MP, Member for Tobago East; and Mr. David Lee, MP, Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, have requested leave of absence from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the Members seek is granted.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Princes Town Regional Corporation for the year ended September 30, 2014. [*The Minister of Finance (Hon. Colm Imbert)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the Financial Statements of the Mayaro-Rio Claro Regional Corporation for the year ended September 30, 2005. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]
3. Audited Financial Statements of the Water and Sewerage Authority for the year ended September 30, 2013. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]

*Papers 1 to 3 to be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.*

4. Consolidated Audited Financial Statements of the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for the financial year ended December 31, 2017. [*Hon. C. Imbert*]

*To be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.*

5. Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Health to the Sixth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity on the Examination of the Impact on Mental Health and Family Life of Remandees at the Remand Prisons. [*The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis)*]
6. Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development to Eleventh Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the

- Audited Financial Statements of the Land Settlement Agency for the financial years 2008 and 2009. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
7. Annual Report of the Police Complaints Authority for the period October 01, 2016 to September 30, 2017. [*The Attorney General (Hon. Faris Al-Rawi)*]
  8. Annual Administrative Report of the Arima Borough Corporation for the period October 2014 to September 2015. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
  9. Annual Administrative Report of the Arima Borough Corporation for the period October 2015 to September 2016. [*Hon. C. Robinson-Regis*]
  10. The Delegation Report of the ParlAmericas Dialogue on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Panama City, Panama from February 22 to 23, 2018. [*The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Esmond Forde)*]

#### **SPECIAL SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT**

##### **Notifications Pursuant to Section 123 of the Constitution (Presentation)**

**The Minister in the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds):** Madam Speaker, I have the distinct honour to present the Report of the Special Select Committee established to consider and report on the process followed in relation to the Notifications pursuant to Section 123 of the Constitution.

#### **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (ENTERPRISES) COMMITTEE REPORT (Presentation)**

##### **National Training Agency**

**The Minister in the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds):** I thank you again, Madam Speaker. I have the distinct honour to present the Twelfth Report of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee into the Examination of the Audited Accounts, Balance Sheets and other Financial Statements of the National Training Agency for the financial years 2008 to 2011.

#### **URGENT QUESTIONS**

##### **Petrotrin Refinery (Deficiencies in Procedures)**

**Mr. Prakash Ramadhar (St. Augustine):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries: Could the Minister state whether he is aware of an Internal Audit Report made public yesterday that identifies deficiencies

in Standard Operating Procedures by Petrotrin, for the measurement of crude oil and a practice which if continued would be “disastrous” to Petrotrin’s refinery?

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries is not aware of any such Petrotrin internal audit report which the Member for St. Augustine has indicated was made public yesterday.

Based on the issues identified in the question, namely deficiencies in the standing operating procedures and an implied negative impact on Petrotrin’s refinery, I have contacted the chairman of Petrotrin this morning and requested that he investigate the claims made in the question and provide a report to me as soon as possible, together with a copy of the said report.

**Madam Speaker:** Supplemental question, Member for St. Augustine.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, having heard the Minister say that he is not in possession of such a report, would you have any objection to receiving a copy from me for the purpose, first of all, for authentication and also for your edification?

**Madam Speaker:** Member, I would not allow that as a supplemental question. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

#### **Immigration Officers (Allegation of Asylum Racket)**

**Mrs. Christine Newallo-Hosein (Cumuto/Manzanilla):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of National Security: In light of a recent report that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is investigating an allegation of an asylum racket involving immigration officers, can the Minister inform this House whether this report is indeed accurate?

**Madam Speaker:** Minister of National Security.

**The Minister of National Security (Hon. Maj. Gen. Edmund Dillon):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, perhaps the Member may wish to rephrase the question a bit since the immigration officers are not involved in the asylum procedure.

**Madam Speaker:** Supplemental, Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla?

**Mrs. Newallo-Hosein:** Could the hon. Minister indicate whether or not there is a racket concerning the asylum seekers?

**Madam Speaker:** Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Madam Speaker, the word “racket”, I cannot understand what the Member is referring to. But what I can say, the process in terms of asylum seekers involves the—[*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order! Order, please.

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** The process with respect to asylum seekers involves Living Water Community who receives applicants on behalf of persons seeking asylum which is then referred to UNHCR, who would then issue a certificate for asylum seeker. That is the process. So that if the Member can clarify, I can then indicate whether what investigations she is reporting.

**Madam Speaker:** Supplemental question. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Could the Minister tell us whether any of the 82 Venezuelans were repatriated, had these certificates issued by UNHCR?

**Madam Speaker:** I would not allow that as a supplemental question. Member for Caroni Central, supplemental.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Could the Minister indicate how many Venezuelan nationals have applied for refugee status in Trinidad and Tobago over the last few months?

**Madam Speaker:** I will not allow that as a supplemental question arising out of the question. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Madam, through you to the hon. Minister, could the hon. Minister say prior to the Prime Minister’s statement to the nation yesterday at the post Cabinet, whether or not he had any consultation or conversation with the Minister on the substantive matter involving the UN’s position?

**Madam Speaker:** Member, I would not allow that as a supplemental question.

### **Point Fortin LNG Plant (Ratio for Allocation of Gas)**

**Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie** (*Caroni Central*): To the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries: Based on recent discussions held with Shell by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, can the Minister inform this



House whether the issue of a ratio has been discussed for the allocation of gas to the LNG plant at Point Fortin versus the supply of gas for downstream users?

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Industries (Sen. The Hon. Franklin Khan):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the supply of natural gas for LNG and petrochemicals has been, and continues to be a function of contractual arrangements. As a Government, we honour our contractual obligations. Unfortunately, due to the lethargy of the former administration—

**Hon. Members:** “Ahhhh”.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Khan:**—the negotiation of gas supply to the downstream did not take place in a timely manner. This resulted in the downstream industry, some companies being out of contract for gas supplies and had to be facilitated by ad hoc arrangements. It took the intervention of the Prime Minister and Minister Young—I was ill at the time—at a Houston meeting in April 2017 with bp and EOG, to restore some order to the domestic gas supply—[*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** Thank you, Stuart.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Khan:** It took another strategic intervention in London, but at present, discussions are ongoing between Shell and the NGC for a new domestic gas supply. Given the exploration and development activities being undertaken by Shell, downstream users will see a significant improvement in gas supply. Shell has indicated that gas from its Starfish development is due to come on stream shortly, in a matter of the next quarter of this year. Shell has also committed to substantial investments in other ECMA fields to ensure an assured and improved gas supply to the downstream sector.

**Madam Speaker:** Supplemental, Member for Caroni Central?

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes. The discussions with Shell on these matters, since they involve Atlantic LNG and the partners of Atlantic LNG, does that raise any difficulty in resolving this issue on the basis of discussions with Shell alone?

**Madam Speaker:** Minister of Energy and Energy Industries.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Khan:** There are always challenges in negotiations that are complex in nature and that has very high stakes in the financial consequences of such discussion. It is because of that, the Government has taken a focused approach that is being led by the Prime Minister so that we can conclude these discussions amicably in the interest of our foreign investment partners and in the interest of the nationals and citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Caroni Central.

**Dr. Tewarie:** From the point of view of a purely profit motive, there might be a conflict in the interest of the country, Trinidad and Tobago, and the company, Shell. Is the Government in a situation to say whether the national interest can be negotiated in a way that is favourable to the downstreamers?

**Madam Speaker:** Minister of Energy and Energy Industries.

**Sen. The Hon. F. Khan:** The simple answer is yes, but I will just prequalify that. There are two parties at play here. The investor who wants a fair rate of return on his investment, and he is right to require that, and then there is the State, as the owner of the resource, who also demands a fair economic rent on behalf of the resource owner, which is the people of Trinidad and Tobago. I personally, and the Government, do not think they are mutually exclusive events, and we can negotiate win-win situations.

**1.45 p.m.**

**Arrested 15-year-old Boy  
(Counselling for)**

**Dr. Lackram Bodoë (Fyzabad):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of National Security: Can the Minister inform this House whether any counselling and/or psychological services have been rendered to the 15-year-old boy who was arrested and later released for an incident involving the wounding of his mother?

**The Minister of National Security (Hon. Maj. Gen. Edmund Dillon):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Director of the Children's Authority has informed me that the child's father was contacted and he indicated that he will contact the Authority as they were not ready to meet with anyone as yet. The Children's Authority will continue to reach out to the family.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Minister, can you indicate whether any sort of counselling would have taken place while this child was housed at the police station?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Madam Speaker, no counselling was done at the police station because the police normally deal with counselling for victims and the Children's Authority deals with others. So it was under the Children's Authority to reach out and they have done so, which is under the Children Act.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister, can you indicate whether the mother of this child has been provided with any counselling?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Madam Speaker, no, I cannot say at this time.

**Student Raped at School  
(Measures to Deal With)**

**Ms. Ramona Ramdial** (*Couva North*): Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of Education: In light of a recent report of the rape of a female student at one of the nation's public secondary schools, can the Minister please indicate what plans are being put in place to prevent any further incidents of this kind?

**The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis)**: Thank you were kindly, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, all schools have developed a school discipline plan which outlines the proactive, preventative strategies to treat with all issues that will affect the teaching and learning process. In light of the report, school supervisors and principals have been reminded that critical measures must be implemented and monitored in all schools with immediate effect. These include but are not limited to the following:

1. Strategic patrols: all schools must develop a strategic patrol roster which would include patrols by principals, vice-principals, deans, heads of departments, school safety officers and MTS security during roll call and change to the first period, after break time, after lunch time, the last period, at least 30 minutes after school dismisses and at 10-minute intervals by MTS security after 3.00 p.m. until all students have left the compound. Periodic patrols are also conducted during class time.
2. Classroom supervision roster must be instituted by the vice-principal and/or heads of department each day. Students are required to be supervised at all times. Priority supervision will be given to students displaying disruptive behaviour, and classes with discipline issues.
3. An appeal will be made to all teaching staff members to inform the office of their impending absence so as to allow for proper supervision to ensure that discipline and order is maintained.
4. Students must be engaged in constructive activities.
5. Principals, vice-principals, deans, heads of department, school safety officers and MTS security to ensure that there is no unsupervised class—

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Member, your speaking time is now up.

**Hon. C. Robinson-Regis:** Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. Madam, to the hon. Minister: In light of this incident at that public secondary school, it is one of a series of incidents that we have heard about in the public domain—

**Madam Speaker:** Question.

**Mr. Padarath:** The question is, Madam: Could the Minister indicate in light of the recent increases of sexual offences against children in particular, and this incident being one of them, how soon can we see Government bringing legislation to support the sex offenders' registry being implemented?

**Hon. C. Robinson-Regis:** Thank you very kindly, Madam Speaker. That legislation has already been drafted and it will be presented imminently.

**Mr. Charles:** Could the Minister explain, given the protocols that the Minister has enumerated, why these incidents continue to happen and why was there a lapse to allow this incident to occur?

**Hon. C. Robinson-Regis:** Because there was a lapse.

#### **Non-Marking of SBA (Addressing TTUTA Stance)**

**Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (Couva South):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Minister of Education: Can the Minister inform this House how the Government intends to address the stance taken by Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association not to engage in the marking of School-Based Assessments from September 2018 unless their members are compensated?

**The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis):** Thank you very kindly, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, it is the view of the Ministry of Education that the School-Based Assessments form part of teachers' duties. This form of assessment has been in existence for the last 28 years. Further, the position proffered may have implications for teachers' terms and conditions of employment. In this regard, the Ministry will consult with the Chief Personnel Officer and our Legal Services Division for guidance on the way forward. We will be encouraging and engaging our stakeholders on this matter inclusive of the NPTA and the Secondary School Principals Association. Thank you very kindly, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I now advise that question time is spent.

#### **SSC Report (Minority Report)**

**Mr. Singh:** Madam Speaker, on a matter of Standing Order 114, the hon. Member presented the Report of the Special Select Committee, but as members of that Committee we had not viewed the report he presented on the table of this House. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Couva South, I realize that maybe sometimes the distance you may not see when I am standing, but I am standing.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** I apologize.

**Madam Speaker:** Thanks. Member, I have no such information, but having regard to what you just indicated, I believe the report will be debated at some later time and I guess all Members of this Chamber including the members of the Committee would have an opportunity to speak and I so rule.

**Mr. Singh:** Madam Speaker, just for my clarification, when you look at 114(5) it requires the agreement, and if there is no agreement then we must be in a position to submit a minority report. [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Speaker:** Member, that is what it says, but as I indicated the report shall be debated. It has been laid, it shall be debated and Members will have an opportunity if such is the case to present their views, and I so rule.

**Mr. Singh:** Madam Speaker, I just—Madam Speaker?

**Madam Speaker:** Member?

**Mr. Singh:** I understand your ruling, I need clarification, I need clarification. I am in a position to submit a minority report in this matter, [*Desk thumping*] and the question is whether this House, to maintain its decorum and dignity in accordance with the Standing Orders, will accept that minority report? [*Desk thumping*] [*Crosstalk*]

#### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis):** Thank you very kindly, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we will be answering all—[*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Hon. C. Robinson-Regis:**—questions that have been presented for oral answer, and once again there are no questions for written answer. So we would be answering the oral questions.

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**Dr. Lackram Bodoë (Fyzabad):** Thank you Madam Speaker. To the Minister of National Security: Could the Minister provide the reasons the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service did not provide the contractual agreements for repairs of police vehicles totalling \$564,882.25, as stated in the Report of the Auditor General—

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Madam Speaker, if I may? The normal practice is for the question not to be read out. You just have to give—we have a normal practice. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Speaker:** Member, please. Members, it is too early in the sitting for us to be totally disregarding the Standing Orders. It appears that some Members feel that rules are for children. Rules are for everyone and every place, and we shall abide by the rules. Member for Fyzabad, I take it as an error.

**Dr. Bodoë:** My apologies, Madam Speaker.

**Repairs/Serviceing of Police Vehicles  
(Reasons for Non-Contractual Agreements)**

**145. Dr. Lackram Bodoë (Fyzabad)** asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister provide the reasons the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service did not provide the contractual agreements for repairs and servicing of police vehicles totalling \$564,882.25, as stated in the Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year 2016?

**The Minister of National Security (Hon. Maj. Gen. Edmund Dillon):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, with regard to the service providers highlighted in the Report of the Auditor General, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service has indicated that it did not enter into written contractual agreements with any of the five firms which provided repairs and servicing of police vehicles. However, pre-existing arrangements were in place to address vehicle repairs due to a professional relationship between the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and these firms.

The following factors were among the reasons why the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service did not enter into any contractual arrangements:

1. The exact nature of the repairs required for each vehicle was unique based on the actual condition of the vehicle, type of vehicle, type of component failure, root cause of problem and state of disrepair or damage;

2. In many cases an accurate estimate of the price and actual scope of repair work was only determined after a proper diagnosis and assessment of the vehicle. This required components to be removed and disassembled to determine the problem and repairs required in cases of engine repairs, transmission repairs, braking system, major road traffic accidents and air-condition repairs;
3. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service fleet of 1,679 vehicles has allowed the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to negotiate with garages which provided competitive pricing ensuring value for money and savings for the organization;
4. Service contracts usually cover preventative and routine maintenance services. Most of the jobs undertaken by the garages were breakdown maintenance and repairs.

However, Madam Speaker, the firms were prequalified by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to provide services based on the operation and needs of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. The TTPS entered into contractual agreements with suppliers of new vehicles for preventative and breakdown maintenance services.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Minister, could you indicate how many vehicles were actually repaired by this expenditure that was incurred?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Madam Speaker, I do not have the figures right now. What I have is the total amount of vehicles in the fleet, but I do not have how many were repaired as such.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Minister, can you tell us who were the providers in this instance?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Madam Speaker, I do not have the list of the firms, but I know there were five firms that were provided to do repairs and service of police vehicles which can be provided.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you. Minister, can you undertake to provide that answer in writing, and can you indicate whether VMCOTT was included in this expenditure as well?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Madam Speaker, I can provide a list of the firms in writing.

**Cancer Society  
(Non-Payment of Subvention)**

**168. Mr. David Lee** (*Pointe-a-Pierre*) asked the hon. Minister of Health:

With regard to the non-payment of the annual subvention to the Cancer Society for the past three years, could the Minister state the reasons for the non-payment and the expected date that subvention will be issued?

**The Minister of Health (Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. An annual sum of \$1.5 million was approved in this fiscal year 2018 for a period of three years with a payment effective from January 01, 2018. To date, a sum of \$750,000 was paid to the society representing two quarters, that is, for the period January 01 to June 30, 2018. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Indian Trail Road  
(Commencement Date for Repairs)**

**180. Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh (Couva South)** asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

Subsequent to the Ministry's tour of the Couva South constituency on August 05, 2017, could the Minister state the expected commencement date for repairs to the 14 landslips along the Indian Trail Road?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Indian Trail Road is approximately 4.7 kilometres long and four metres wide. It connects Rivulet Road on the west and Mayo Road on the east. The Highways Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport currently maintains approximately 4.7 kilometres of this road starting from Rivulet Road. The other 2.7 kilometres falls under the jurisdictions of the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation.

On the section of the Indian Trail Road, which falls under the remit of the Ministry of Works and Transport, there is one major landslip west of the flyover which is approximately 30 metres long. This landslip is currently affecting approximately one metre of the road width and approximately five metres in length of the road. This problem is as of a result of a lack of proper drainage and carriageway failure due to the vehicular traffic loads since the road is constructed on a ridge.

Madam Speaker, in addition, there is another large landslip in the section of the roadway that falls under the jurisdictions of the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation. The Ministry's assessment reveals that the other landslip occurred as a result of an existing reinforced concrete retaining wall. The entire roadway has been affected by the landslip which occurs as a result of a waterline



leak which causes internal failures and mass movement. Both landslips are on the Bridges, Landslip and Traffic Management, BLT Unit list of landslips and repairs during fiscal 2017/2018. I thank you.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister, given the frequency of landslips in the constituencies like Couva South and Naparima, does the Ministry have a focused professional capability of dealing with landslips, or is it part of a general remit of a section of the Ministry?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Works and Transport has qualified professional engineers and several departments. The BLT department is staffed with senior engineers, and I am confident that they are quite capable of handling all the landslips.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Madam Speaker, I have listened to the Minister of Works and Transport very attentively and he alluded to two major landslips, could—

**Mr. Imbert:** What is the question?

**Madam Speaker:** Please Member. Continue Member.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Madam Speaker, I have a right to talk.

**Madam Speaker:** Member, continue the question.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Yes, to the Minister of Works and Transport again: Could you provide a date as it relates to the commencement of remedial works as it relates to the two landslips that you referred to?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the landslip has been referred to the BLT Landslip Repair Programme, however, it will be done as soon as funding becomes available. Thank you.

**Mr. Charles:** If the Minister is convinced about the capability, the professional and engineering capability of the Ministry to handle landslips, why are there 100 unattended landslips in the constituency of Naparima and the Ministry seems unable to deal with that?

**Madam Speaker:** The question is about Couva South.

**San Francique and Pluck Roads  
(Commencement Date of Repairs)**

**187. Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh** (*Oropouche West*) asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

In relation to the four landslips along the San Francique Road and Pluck Road, could the Minister state the expected commencement date for repairs and the estimated time frame for completion?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan):**

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, with respect to the four landslips along the San Francique Road and Pluck Road, the Highways Division conducted an assessment of each area and indicated the following:

- San Francique Road at the 4.5 kilometre near Lamp Post No. 143: The landslip was due to a failed reinforced concrete retaining wall. It is 50 metres long and three metres in height, and approximately 30 per cent of the width of the roadway has been affected. It has been deemed critical and has been included in the list of projects to be undertaken in Phase II of the Bridge, Landslip and Traffic Management BLT Programme.
- San Francique Road at 4.5 to five kilometres section: Work was undertaken on this landslip in Phase I of the BLT Programme approximately 18 months ago. During this time, there has been several delays in the project included unusual weather conditions.
- La Fortune Pluck Road near the 0.25 kilometre mark: This landslip was created by slope failure. It was placed on the Phase II of the BLT Programme, however, as a temporary measure the Highways Division under the BLT has recommended that piling and shoring work be undertaken in the next quarter of this year to ensure that the roadway accessibility to vehicular traffic is maintained.
- La Fortune Pluck Road at the 0.3 kilometre mark: This landslip is quite extensive. The entire width of the roadway has subsided, thus affecting adjacent properties. A geotech report was executed and it was placed on Phase II of the BLT Programme. Phase II of the BLT Programme is expected to begin in the latter part of fiscal year subject to the availability of funding.

I thank you.

**Mr. Charles:** In light of what the Minister and excuses he has given, would he not admit finally that the Ministry is incapable of dealing with the plethora of landslips—[*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Speaker:** I will not allow that as a supplemental question. Member for Oropouche West.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Hon. Minister, who are the contractors identified to complete this project?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam Speaker, this Government is not in the habit of just awarding contracts without a tendering process. [*Desk thumping*] At this point in time, the landslips have been transferred to the BLT Programme where they will be designed and then a public tender will take place. Thank you.

**Mr. Charles:** Was the *Galleons Passage* given by the tender procedure that you described?

**Mr. Padarath:** And the Diego Martin stadium.

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Princes Town, please do not let have to warn you about that again. I would not allow that as a supplemental question. Member for Oropouche West.

### **Crimes Against Women (Owners of Private Vehicles)**

**196. Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh** (*Oropouche West*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister state the initiatives intended to address the increased reports of crimes against women by owners of private vehicles for hire located in the Central Division?

**The Minister of National Security (Hon. Maj. Gen. Edmund Dillon):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I have been informed by the Commissioner of Police that in order to address reports of crimes against women by owners of private vehicles for hire, located in the Central Division, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service has implemented the following measures:

High police presence in areas where owners of private vehicle pick up passengers;

Public awareness and sensitization;

Members of the public including women are informed of safety tips via contemporary and traditional media such as the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service website, TTPS@gov.tt, Facebook and Twitter pages as well as the YouTube channel;

The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service television programme *Beyond the Tape* is also a key forum through which sensitization and awareness take

place;

The Senior Superintendent of Southern Division features every Thursday on the programme;

Town meetings are utilized as a forum for engagement between members of the community and the police;

Information on personal safety and security is shared and issues of concerns to community members are addressed at these meetings; Partnership with communities also takes place;

Officers from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service at critical and active participants in groups such as station councils, neighbourhood watch groups and village councils. Information on maintaining safety is shared in these groups via direct engagement supported by social media;

There are also active stop and search exercises which are conducted in various areas.

As part of the core operation activities of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, these exercises are actively conducted across nine police geographic divisions, Madam Speaker.

**Mrs. Gayadeen-Gopeesingh:** Hon. Minister, how many reports of violence against women have been recorded for 2018 involving private vehicles for hire?

**Hon. Maj. Gen. E. Dillon:** Madam Speaker, I do not have those figures at hand right now. They can certainly be provided.

**LACK OF CONFIDENCE  
(MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT)**

**Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan (Tabaquite):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

*Whereas* since September 2015 the Government has squandered millions of taxpayers' dollars on the now collapsed sea bridge;

*And whereas* the Government has failed in its every attempt to remedy what is now seen as a disaster and an injustice to the travelling public via the sea bridge;

*And whereas* the Minister of Works and Transport has utterly failed in discharging his responsibility to adequately manage this primary and vital mode of public transportation;

*And whereas* the actions, conduct and non-performance of the Minister of Works and Transport in this regard have been the subject of widespread adverse commentary and criticism;

*And whereas* the procurement and operations of the vessels on the sea bridge since 2015 have been marred by allegations of corruption and nepotism with accompanying stakeholder criticism and public uproar;

*And whereas* the Minister of Works and Transport has presided over the utilization of vessels with serious safety defects and by so doing risking the lives and health of the public:

*Be it resolved* that this House express its lack of confidence in the Minister of Works and Transport and call upon the Prime Minister to revoke the said Minister's appointment forthwith.

Madam Speaker, it is not only we on this side who are calling for the revocation of the Minister's appointment. But way back on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017, in a very telling editorial of the *Trinidad Express*, the headline was "Sinanan and PATT"—that, of course, the Port Authority Board—"must go" [*Desk thumping*] and in that editorial—because the newspaper, the media speaks on behalf of the people of this country and that is very important. They reflect the voices of those who cannot express their voices, and when they speak, they speak very often from an informed position. Madam Speaker, I will show later in my presentation a list of many other distinguished persons in this country, former public servants including the venerable Reginald Dumas who also called for the resignation of the Minister and the removal of the Minister.

Madam Speaker, I want to begin my presentation with something that I think is critical and important in this regard, because today this debate on this Motion is not just about the Minister. It is more than that. It is a debate about whether our friends on the other side would allow what is affecting or what has affected people of this country, particularly the people of Tobago, to trump their party interest [*Desk thumping*] whether they will be patriotic enough to country and trump their party interest. [*Desk thumping*] We would see whether patriotism comes to the fore on their part today and, therefore, I would ask my good friend, the Member for Arouca/Maloney, the Leader of Government Business, whether she will be prepared to lift the whip for the Members on her side [*Desk thumping*]

and whether we will see a true conscience vote on the part of representatives from Tobago East, Tobago West, and the Member for Diego Martin West.

Madam Speaker, this is not a personal matter against the hon. Minister of Works and Transport. He happens to be the Minister in that position and, therefore, there is a certain responsibility that he cannot escape from in this debate, and therefore, I do not wish to personalize this debate against him. But you know, I am driven very deeply in this debate by my convictions and my religious convictions, and very often I am motivated by a story and an incident in our Hindu scriptures, the Mahabharat, where the Lord Krishna became the charioteer and adviser to one of his disciples and friends named Arjuna, who was there in the middle of a battlefield and he saw friends and families on one side and friends and families on the other side, and he resisted. He was resisting whether he should engage in a fight, but the Lord told him that what was important was duty, commitment to duty. [*Desk thumping*] And today it is my commitment to duty and my patriotism to this country which will determine the presentation that I make in this House [*Desk thumping*] because this is about responsibility, this is about duty.

So it is not about the Minister personally, but, Madam Speaker, he is in a particular position and this is about the manner in which he has mishandled a situation in this country that could have resulted in the loss of lives on one occasion when that boat stopped in the middle of the sea and attempts were made to move people from one to the other. This is a story, Madam Speaker, of incompetence, ministerial incompetence, Government incompetence of mismanagement, a story of callousness especially in the way lives of people have been put, in the way people have been treated, in the way people have been left stranded, whether it is at the Port of Port of Spain or the port in Tobago or the airport in Piarco. It is a story of irresponsibility. It is a story of a lack of regard for accountability and spending and above all in my view, is a story of negligence on the part of the Minister. [*Desk thumping*]

### **2.15 p.m.**

My presentation will focus, therefore, on the content of the Motion and in particular on Government's squandermania of taxpayers' dollars on the collapsed sea bridge. Madam Speaker, had they put that *TT Spirit* to dry dock when it should, had they put the *TT Express* to dry dock when it should, had they had a proper maintenance management programme, a preventive maintenance programme—[*Interruption*] They fired Bay Ferries and brought in Mr. McMillan and Magellan which resulted in almost a complete collapse of the sea bridge

[*Desk thumping*] and put the lives of people to risk and has now resulted in what should have been US \$3 million spent on the *Spirit* has amounted to about US \$10 million spent on the sea bridge. Madam Speaker, \$70 million, from what should have been US \$3 million, it had become TT \$70 million expenditure and I would like the Minister to say whether I am wrong on that because those are the figures that are in the public domain.

Madam Speaker, this debate is about issues of procurement. The current Government came into office saying that they will deal with procurement. They rose on the platform of ethics but when you examine what we saw on the JSC through the television—and thank God for public television and the JSC [*Desk thumping*—And the notes I kept from those meetings, I am not surprised that the hon. Prime Minister, despite two of his Ministers—the former Minister of Works and the current Minister of Works—actually disagreeing with the Prime Minister’s comment that this was a crooked deal. [*Desk thumping*] A crooked deal.

When a Prime Minister can tell the people that he thinks that this is a crooked deal and his Ministers are disagreeing, saying that maybe he has information, then I think that the Prime Minister himself has failed because he has not instituted the kind of investigation that is required in order to back up the comments he made. [*Desk thumping*] You just do not come as a Prime Minister and say this is a crooked deal and then you take no action to do it, [*Desk thumping*] to deal with it. Are you really serious, Mr. Prime Minister? Or is it that you cannot go back on your statement you made on the night of election when you were saying, “There is one person I want, I want to commend is Mr. Rohan Sinanan”, who now has become the Minister of Works? [*Desk thumping*] Is friendship trumping other matters in this country?

Madam Speaker, the failure to remedy the situation in what is clearly an injustice to the travelling public and stakeholders whose livelihood depend on a reliable ferry service. Every organization in Tobago, including also the Truckers Association—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Speaker, I would like to hear the speaker, please. I am being disturbed by Diego Martin North/East and Port of Spain North.

**Dr. S. Rambachan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Every organization has spoken about how they have been negatively affected as a result of the lack of proper operation and management of the sea bridge, and what we get instead of that is, even the Prime Minister and the Member for Tobago East coming and saying there is no crisis in

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Tobago and yet everyone else is speaking of the crisis in Tobago. Not every person in this country can afford to travel by CAL and when you cannot afford to travel by CAL and you must do business between Trinidad and Tobago and you are a poor person in this country, and you are denied coming here because you cannot spend \$300 or \$150 on a ticket, but you could only afford that sea bridge because you are poor, then that is why I speak about the callousness of the Government and the callousness of the Minister with respect to the plight of the people and the travelling public of Tobago.

Madam Speaker, the next point I will be dealing with is the disregard for safety of people, utilizing ferries that were inadequate and mechanically deficient, and I will ask the Minister today whether he is aware of a report by a company called Inserve of 34 Lime Street, London to the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago that was written on the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017, and whether he is aware of the contents of this particular report, very damning comments about the management of the sea bridge which I will deal with later on in my presentation. And finally, something that has disturbed me very deeply as a result of all this mismanagement and allowing mechanically deficient boats to operate, the risking of the lives of the passengers. [*Desk thumping*] There are incidents in the world where ferries capsize, where ferries had mechanical failures and hundreds of people died. God forbid that that has does not happen in this country. Thank God, I say today.

Madam Speaker, a Minister is like a manager and a Minister is ultimately responsible for what happens in his Ministry. A Minister—[*Interruption*]

**Madam Speaker:** Members, there is a buzz and while the Member for Tabaquite has a good diction, I am getting a buzz that is persistent and disturbing. Please have regard to Standing Order 53. Member for Tabaquite, you may continue.

**Dr. S. Rambachan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. A Minister is ultimately responsible for what happens in his or her Ministry. A Minister can delegate authority, he can give people responsibility but he can never delegate away his own accountability and responsibility. [*Desk thumping*] The Minister of Works and Transport cannot blame anyone else; at the end of the day, he must take responsibility for what happened. And I recall the Minister making a statement in which he said he is prepared to go. He is prepared, he said—and he did this on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, 2017—and if there is an indictment on the Minister, then I think the Minister's head should roll. And Mr. Minister, I think the public—there is public indictment on your head and maybe you should have done the right thing quite some time back.



Madam Speaker, whatever has happened at PATT, NEDCO and the Ministry of Works and Transport, is the ultimate responsibility of the Minister. [*Desk thumping*] Firing others, whether it is Leon Grant or Charmaine Lewis, blaming others does not absolve the Minister from his accountability and his responsibility that he has to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. If an organization like PATT continues to malfunction, as it is, as Minister, if you continue to preside over such mismanagement, then you are ultimately responsible and you have presided over the mismanagement of the sea bridge, you have failed to take appropriate action and in a sense, you have abandoned your responsibility as a Minister to the people. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, let us deal with squandermania on the collapsed sea bridge. Let us start with the cost of leasing the *Cabo Star*. We will also probably deal with how the *Cabo Star* came about to be leased. The initial lease was for US \$22,500 a day; TT \$155,000 per day. And of course, Madam Speaker, despite the objections of the people of Tobago, despite the objections of the Truckers Association, despite the fact that the truckers would have to put their trucks on the boat and then take another boat or another form of transport to get there, creating great inconvenience, you go back and you renewed the contract of the *Cabo Star*, [*Desk thumping*] to seemingly as it were, please the people, you come and tell them, “Well we got it for US \$500 less a day”, as if that is some way to please the people. “Like sweetie”.

Madam Speaker, I go back to the statement made by the hon. Prime Minister on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August, 2017, when he met with the stakeholders of Tobago and described the procurement of the *Cabo Star* and *Ocean Flower* as a crooked deal. That is a very, very strong statement for the Prime Minister to make, as a crooked deal. It means that he had information that was very important that he makes such a statement. The Prime Minister is a person who, you know, speaks very openly, he does not hide anything, he lets his feelings out and making a statement at that level of the Prime Minister, one has to take him very seriously. And when he said that, it is either an indictment upon his Ministers or an indictment upon the Port and those involved in the procurement process, and the Prime Minister now has an obligation to come and tell us who he was speaking about.

Now, there are two questions I want to ask. One, who gave the authority to sign the deal for the *Cabo Star* and the *Ocean Flower*? That is the first question. And from what we saw at the JSC hearings, particularly the hearing of September 5<sup>th</sup>, it is clear in the Prime Minister’s own words, that he authorized the deal. He authorized it. He said I did not have pen and paper but I gave it on the telephone

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because it was considered an emergency and the Minister had to run me down in Tobago to find me. The second question is—so he gave it. Why was the *Cabo Star*, according to the Prime Minister, contracted at between US \$5,000 to US \$6,000 per day more than the owners of Bay Ferries offered the same boat to PATT? Five thousand dollars to six thousand dollars a day more, the Prime Minister said, that this *Cabo Star* was being paid. When, in fact, he revealed that he had received emails and a whistle-blower which substantiated that there was a direct offer before the special tender closed—before the special tender closed eh, not after, before, so he could have intervened—and it was approximately, therefore, a loss to this country of between TT \$13 million to TT \$15 million.

Madam Speaker, even if you come to know this after you gave authority on a weekend and had a Permanent Secretary come out and sign the deal on a Saturday, why have you not caused an investigation to happen and especially since the Chairman of the Port Authority, Ms. Lewis, has said that there was an anti-corruption clause in the agreement? Why have you not referred it to the police? What, I ask was the haste, to sign up with Bridgeman's on a weekend, who by the way, this is very important, did not own the *Cabo Star* nor the *Ocean Flower* prior to the contract? They did not own it. You are right, Mr. Prime Minister. In the public's eye, it is not just about what I am saying, in the public's eye also, this thing smells of a crooked deal, and I ask therefore, was the Mouttet report intended to cover up the matter to shift emphasis away from a highly suspect procurement process? And that is my feeling. Just like happened at the OAS and you called in somebody and put it in a committee report. The problem repeats itself, as I said, with that OAS fiasco where another person is asked to advise on what really happened.

And from that JSC meeting when I looked at it on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, there are certain incontrovertible facts that demonstrate negligence on the part of the Minister of Works and Transport and the Ministry. The Prime Minister, during his press conference of the 21<sup>st</sup> of August, 2017, following the meeting with the Tobago stakeholders said that a standard tender process was used for the *Cabo Star* and *Ocean Flower 2*. Yet, the Port Authority Chairman, Ms. Lewis, told the JSC that PATT used a special tender process. So there is a difference between a standard tender process and a special tender process. What is the special tender process? And therefore, was the Prime Minister misled by the Minister of Works and Transport and by the Attorney General in this matter? Was he told there was a special tender process or was he told it was a standard tender process? Was he misled and the Cabinet, therefore, made a decision on something that was

erroneous? The Cabinet was misled.

Madam Speaker, the Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works and Transport indicated at the JSC that the Attorney General, the Member for San Fernando West and the Prime Minister personally approved the signing of the charter party agreement with Bridgeman's for *Cabo Star* and *Ocean Flower* on Saturday 17 June, 2017, before Cabinet reviewed and rubber stamped the agreement several days later. You know what is interesting from looking at all of this? The Ministry of Works and Transport did not query the tender evaluation or documents provided by the Port Authority for the *Ocean Flower* nor the *Cabo Star*, they just passed it on to the Attorney General and Prime Minister to sign on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June. Why did you not query the tender evaluation or documents provided by PATT?

The Prime Minister and the Attorney General, and independent counsel, I believe it is Ms. Julian, signed off within 24 hours, and it happened even though each agreement is more than 40 pages long. Were these documents read? The Prime Minister, in his statement, said, "Look, we work from below come up, therefore, I depended on what they told me". Did the Attorney General really review these documents? Did the Minister review these documents or did they just sign these documents and the Prime Minister just went along? What was their haste? That is the question. What was their haste? [*Desk thumping*] It gets even more curious. The charter party agreement approved did not include bank account information and to whom commissions were to be made payable, instead it said owners would deal directly by separate agreements.

Madam Speaker, it gets even more curious, when at the JSC, the Ministry offered the excuse that this procedure was followed due to the urgency of the matter. The result, *Ocean Flower 2* selected but could not make it to Trinidad and "when it come, it was smoking". What was so urgent I ask? What was so urgent that a PS was called out on a Saturday to sign the charter party agreement and mind you, the boats were not even then owned by the Bridgeman's?

Madam Speaker, there is even more. Because I am concerned about the irrevocable standby letter of credit to Bridgeman's. Do we still have to pay Bridgeman's? Twenty-one million dollars. How much was Bridgeman's paid to sail the *Ocean Flower* to Trinidad and Tobago? According to the Minister of Finance and the Member for Diego Martin North/East, it is costing us US \$800,000 to have the *Galleons Passage* sail to Trinidad. Are you telling me that somebody loved Trinidad so much that they are sailing the *Ocean Flower* free to Trinidad? The man has an irrevocable letter of credit. So, we have not been told

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yet who, how much was paid to bring this *Ocean Flower* to Trinidad.

And even when the *Ocean Flower* was being told, that, listen, we no longer want to do business, they still sailed it to Trinidad because they knew they had an irrevocable letter of credit. Bridgeman's only acquired *Ocean Flower* on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, three days after the charter party agreement was signed and they bought that boat for US \$5.5 million. A company who Dun & Bradstreet said was financially broke. A company that you could not even find a proper address for when Mr. Mark Bassant of TV6 went with his people looking. A Dun & Bradstreet report that was damaging; a company that was not in the ferry business, suddenly in a couple of days, finds \$33 million in order to buy a boat. Where did that money come from?

Today, Madam Speaker, you know, we have governments who like to talk down to us sometimes and tell us about ethics and morality and tell us about FATCA and what have you and so on, and today, from the floor of this Parliament, I am asking the Canadian Parliament and the Canadian Government and the anti-corruption unit of the Caribbean Government to seek answers from Bridgeman's especially in light of the Dun & Bradstreet report on this company and to let them declare where and how they got that \$5.5 million. Because there are rumours circulating in this country, in a land of rumours, that the money came from a particular car dealer in this country. Let us find out the truth. How did this company, within a couple of days, get US \$5.5 million to buy a boat and sail it from Korea? You see, because the Dun & Bradstreet report raised major concerns on the seaworthiness of the vessel.

You recall, it is all there, if you trace the history of the *Ocean Flower* at a Dutch harbour. The *Ocean Flower 2* underwent an inspection by the Coast Guard which found serious deficiencies including potential for fire hazards. Madam Speaker, no inspection of this boat was done. Ms. Allison Lewis, I believe, said that Lloyds inspected it but there are different levels of inspection that insurance companies do and therefore we must ask what inspection did Lloyds really do. If they did a report, an inspection and then the Coast Guard is finding that this vessel has potential for fire hazards, then Lloyds also has to answer in terms of its own reputation. [*Desk thumping*] It is serious. It is atrocious, and it is a high order of negligence and a disrespect for tax dollars, that we can hire a boat that the person do not own, but not only that, but a boat that is dysfunctional. As was seen when it arrived in Panama and our own people went out there and condemned it altogether. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, I am appalled to think that a respected public servant, a

consummate public servant, Ms. Allison Lewis and Chairman of the board of the PATT at that time, which selected *Cabo Star*, told the JSC that PATT used a special tender process due to the emergency nature of the situation. Why did it become an emergency situation? Because somebody wanted to get rid of the *Galicia* and that somebody hired “ah fella” called McMillan to go and do a report on whether the *Galicia* was, in fact, suitable—after it had run all these years, suitable for running between Trinidad and Tobago, and that same person admitted that he was also seeking vessels at the request of the then Chairman Christine Sahadeo. This thing smells to heaven. Minister, were you aware of all these machinations taking place? Were you aware of these machinations, Mr. Minister?

Ms. Lewis also said that the special tender process was signed off by Minister Sinanan. And what is worse, in the special tender process, financial stability and information regarding financials of the tendering companies was not received. Was it that the financials for all the companies were ignored because *Ocean Flower* people could not present proper financials? Why did the Committee ignore financial information it had on hand about tenderer Bridgeman’s which indicated that the company was a new company with few employees, little financial history and little experience in the field of ferry provision services?

Madam Speaker, then the *Transporter* and *Atlantic Provider* came on the scene. “Ah barge”, all the sea spray on people’s goods and so on and the *Atlantic Provider*. I ask a question here today. Was trade unionist Michael Annisette lying or telling an untruth when he said to the JSC that there were rumours four months before the *Atlantic Provider* actually started to work that the *Atlantic Provider* was coming to Trinidad? Something also, I believe, that Ms. Diane Hadad also indicated. What we now know is that the board of the Port Authority under the direction of the Minister—because the Minister cannot not know this—signed letters of engagement with the *Atlantic Provider* and the *Trinity Transporter*, no contracts were signed, and they cost US \$22,000 per day for those two boats and “yuh asking me to talk about squandermania”.

You know what, Madam Speaker, listen to this “eh”. What we told, what I saw at the JSC is that the Port Authority said that they sent draft contracts to the Ministry of Works for the *Transporter* and *Atlantic Provider* but the Ministry said they never received them. So without a draft contract, no charter party agreements, what did the Cabinet approve? All the Ministers sitting around the Cabinet table have a responsibility now to say to this country what did you approve? Because you see, this matter of the barge, Ms. Charmaine Lewis, I believe, said at the JSC, after she was shut down, she said that Minister Rohan

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Sinanan asked them to go—that “he knows some fellas who have this boat, yeah, this barge and they bring in oilfield equipment and so on, on the barge and that they want about \$12,000 but yuh could beat them down to \$8,000”.

And then a member of the board, the Deputy Chairman, Mr. Adrian Beharry, he then goes and he claims he negotiated the rate at \$8,000. What is the Deputy Chairman of the board doing negotiating rates when that should be the tenders’ evaluation committee and the role of the management of PATT? Where is this interference coming from? The tendering process—undermining the tendering process. You know, there is a nice thing I listen to often on 95.5: whom the cap fits, let him wear it, because something is fishy and amiss in the procurement process of all these vessels. And that is why it has left people to suspect corruption in the procurement process. [*Desk thumping*] The Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Prime Minister have to investigate this more deeply but I call again on the Canadian Government to investigate their own company Bridgeman’s.

Madam Speaker, the next point I want to deal with is an unsafe boat, the *TT Spirit*. I refer to a report called Inserve and Inserve is a company at 34 Lime Street, London and they did this report on the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2017, a survey for Hull and Machinery Insurers and presented it to the port, Madam Speaker, both for the *Express* and the *TT Spirit* and they talked about the dangers of these boats missing the scheduled dry docking and so on. But when you read this document, this document is a document that speaks of total negligence on the part of the Port Authority and the Ministry of Works. Total negligence.

Madam Speaker, in the recommendations in this document, they talked about the fire hazards, about the *TT Spirit* running on three engines. I wish I could read the entire document into the records. I ask the Minister, again: did he see this report? Fire safety, on the Trinidad and Tobago *Express*, the engine room CO<sub>2</sub> systems are not correct. The reset button is lit which usually only comes on after the release procedure has been exhausted. It also seems that the CO<sub>2</sub> bottles are empty.

#### **2.45 p.m.**

On the *T&T Express* the fire detection system is in poor condition and currently cannot be relied upon, 31 August, 2017. On the Trinidad and Tobago *Express* throughout the accommodation areas, the use of transformers has become widespread. They should be installed away from flammable materials. It says here the defect on both vessels are numerous. Somebody needs to start documenting these.

Then he talks about the *T&T Spirit*. As a minimum, the following would be needed

during the current dry docking. S-O-M-E rebuilt with new crankshaft, and what have you. It is a damning report. All four main engine turbo chargers to be overhauled, all four main air coolers to be cleaned, all four water jets to be overhauled and new bearings and seals. Gearboxes to be checked. What this is saying, without a doubt is that you were running boats that could have sunk in the ocean. You put the lives of people to risk. I am not saying this, you know. This is an expert who is doing this for Hull & Machinery Insurers.

And Minister, you allowed those boats to be run and not put on dry dock? Why? Because you wanted to save face, but you are saving face at the risk of lives of people. That cannot be right, Mr. Minister. It cannot be right, Mr. Minister, by no means. You are, to use a soft term, guilty and so too is the Port Authority.

And NIDCO, taking the *Trini Flash* to send it to Tobago, when you know that that *Trini Flash* should not be running on those waters. How many times have you presided over the sailing of the *Express* and the *Spirit* on three engines? Only in Trinidad and Tobago people get away with this nonsense, Madam Speaker. Only in Trinidad and Tobago people get away with this nonsense. The threat to human safety appears not to be of concern to the PNM Government.

Mr. AG, Prime Minister, look how you all signed off on the *Ocean Flower*, a boat that was found to be so functionally deficient. Never even examined it, and that is why I am saying: Why the haste on a weekend?

When the *Trini Flash* broke down in mid-sea and a rescue operation was mounted, you know it was Mr. Martin Daly who talked about what could have happened. Persons between the two vessels. Remember they were rescuing people from one boat to another. Between the two vessels there was a space described as an open pit by one passenger. Persons clad in lifejackets were scampering on their bellies on the deck of the *Trini Flash* toward the outstretched hands of persons pulling them by their forearms and telling them: "Doh look down into the water". Videos appeared showing that, Madam Speaker. What would have happened if a passenger had fallen between the two vessels? Head injuries? Concussion? Broken limbs? Even a drowning, Madam Speaker. A sudden pitch of either vessel in those adverse seas could easily have produced such results, says Mr. Martin Daly.

I wanted to quote Mr. Martin Daly, because you may think that I am saying that, but here is a prominent Senior Counsel of this country who is saying this. Mr. Minister, I ask you, Madam Speaker, which Minister can condone such a

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rescue operation? What were the protocols? The risk to life was too serious, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, when such an incident happened in Korea, the South Korean Prime Minister resigned over the ferry sinking. Right? Do we have such integrity in this country? Where people, when things like these happen and people are endangered, they will have the integrity and the decency to say time for me to go. I have failed.

Madam Speaker, the Minister mismanaged and failed to discharge his responsibility. How could you, Minister, allow a situation to develop in which a boat is leaving and there are no requirements, despite the Port Authority confirming that an 18-month contract existed with the *Galicia*?

To get rid of the *Galicia*, the issue of conflict of interest was raised about an attorney as a ruse, when everyone will tell you that the contamination of the contract and the conflict of interest are two separate issues. You want to deal with the attorney? Deal with the attorney. But do not use that as a route to get rid of the *Galicia*, which is what you were doing.

You used the excuse that the Hyatt was being damaged and destroyed. Mr. Ferdie Ferreira said they sent people down to dive and they found out that nothing has happened with the Hyatt and nothing was happening there. Would Mr. Ferdie Ferreira, one of your own founders of the PNM, tell an untruth to the Joint Select Committee? The gentleman is a man of integrity, Madam Speaker. So they tried to “lick up” the *Galicia*, “lick it up”. Why? Why, Madam Speaker? Run it out of town.

Madam Speaker, Mr. McMillan, the one who was hired for a company that was only registered after he was hired to do the maintenance and what he called transition from Bay Ferries, and so on, he said here, I want to read:

It appears that someone had a special interest in getting rid of the *Galicia* and paying \$5,000 to \$6,000 more for the *Cabo Star*.

And do you know what he said, given his experience? That he would not pay more than US \$15,000 per day for the *Cabo Star*. So, according to him, we are paying US \$11,500 more per day.

Madam Speaker, the next point I want to make is this *Galleons Passage*. Now, the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East has been advocating the *Galleons Passage*, and that is his right to do so. He also advocated the *MV Su* at one point in time. Madam Speaker, the boat, the *Galleons Passage*, we still have to see



whether it can make the rough waters to Trinidad, because the *T&T Express* and the *T&T Spirit* are 91.3 metres long and 26 metres wide. The *Spirit*, 97.22 metres long and 26.19 metres wide. But the *Galleons Passage* is 74 metres long and 22 metres wide. And it is widely being advocated by those who know in the industry that the *Galleons Passage* would not be able to make the rough seas.

Madam Speaker, today I ask the Prime Minister to revoke the appointment of the Minister, to revoke it. [*Desk thumping*] And it is not only me saying this. Reginald Dumas called for the resignation of the Works and Transport Minister, Rohan Sinanan and the entire port on 17<sup>th</sup> of August, Madam Speaker.

And then you go on and you find the President of the Hotel and Tourism Association, Chris James. He talked about the \$25 million loss, and now we are hearing there is a \$700 million loss to the people of Tobago. The Tobago Hotel and Tourism Association, Chris James; the Crown Point Business Community, Shirley Cooke; the Bed and Breakfast Association head, Kaye Trotman; DOMA President, Gregory Aboud. Madam Speaker, all of these persons, distinguished persons in the society, join me today in saying that the Minister must go, now. And the Prime Minister has an obligation and a duty to carry out his responsibility without fear and without favour.

I thank you, Madam Speaker, and I beg to move.

**Mr. Rodney Charles** (*Naparima*): Madam Speaker, I beg to second the Motion and reserve the right to speak. Thank you.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan):** [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker—

**Hon. Member:** Nobody defend you.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Against that? Let me address you today. Right? Let me address you today. I agree with the Member, we should try to raise the “voop” on both sides because I feel I have some support on that side. [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order, order.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Thank you for the opportunity, Madam Speaker, to respond to this Motion brought against me. And let me thank the Prime Minister and the Leader of Government Business for giving me the opportunity to

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defend myself. I do not need anybody to defend me.

I am so sorry that I do not have anything to respond to, based on the mover of the Motion. [*Desk thumping*] Because what the mover of the Motion claims is that he saw the Joint Select Committee and if he saw the Joint Select Committee, he would recognize that the only item on that Joint Select Committee that was worth anything listening to, is that the procurement of the *Superfast Galicia* should go straight to the Attorney General's office. [*Desk thumping*]

So let me start by saying that I had no problem in giving the mover of the Motion 10 more minutes to make a real point. [*Desk thumping*] However, Madam Speaker, if the mover of the Motion and the colleagues on the other side get their way, today might be my last day in the House and I have no problem with that. So I just want to ask if “if ah could get ah little leeway in meh run up to dis debate”.

You see, Madam Speaker, this Motion “have nothing tuh do with sea bridge. It have nothing tuh do with Tobago. It have nothing tuh do with de Ministry of Works and Transport.” And this Motion has to do with La Horquetta/Talparo and Maxie Cuffie. [*Desk thumping*] You see, Madam Speaker—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Charles:** Standing Order 48(1), relevance.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48(1). I did not see the Maxie Cuffie in here.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** “Ah ask for ah run up.”

**Madam Speaker:** Minister of Works and Transport, I would give you some leeway.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Thank you. You see, Madam Speaker, this Motion was announced in Las Lomas, in the constituency of La Horquetta/Talparo.

**Mr. Charles:** So what. Answer the question.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Wait, wait. Madam Speaker, you see, all this hurrah about Tobago, Tobago people and everything about Tobago and the sea bridge. We know the UNC do not like Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] They never put up a candidate in Tobago in 24 years. The Tobago population do not know what a UNC symbol is on a ballot paper up to now.

**Mr. Padarath:** But you all know about the Calcutta ship.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam Speaker, you see, “they gone” to Calcutta ship because that is what we consider “aapanjab” politics. That is

“aapanjab” politics.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Members, while I understand banter will take place in here, I am not tolerating shouting across the floor and this is the last time I will warn members about it. [*Crosstalk*] Member for Siparia, please, I am on my legs. Member for Diego Martin North/East. Please continue Minister.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You see, Madam Speaker, this whole Motion today about Tobago and so, actually was hatched in La Horquetta constituency, and in Las Lomas the great announcement of a Motion of no confidence in the Minister of Works and Transport, because there is this perception that the Minister of Works and Transport is going up for a seat.

Well, the Member of Parliament for Tabaquite started his Motion quoting from the Bhagavad Gita and all kind of thing about Ram and Krishna, and so. I just want to tell the Members on that side, that while the god-fearing people on this side are praying for our colleague Maxie Cuffie, who want to play “Jamraj on that side, Yamraj, allyuh go ahead. Yes Yamraj, yama.” You see, they on that side, are playing “yamraj, yama”, because he, in our religion, as the Member for Tabaquite said, he is the God of death. So while we are praying on this side for our colleague—[*Crosstalk*]—religion was brought in.

**Madam Speaker:** Every Member in this House, in turn, will have their opportunity to contribute to the debate. Right? Minister of Works and Transport.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Yes, you see, we will continue to pray. So I just want to tell the Leader of the Opposition, wrong place, Las Lomas. Wrong constituency. There is no vacancy in La Horquetta constituency. Maxie is going to be back. And I just want to put on the record wrong candidate Jearlean John. [*Desk thumping*] You see, it is not bothering me. Madam Speaker, I had one conversation with Jearlean John in my life. I do not know the lady. After the election, when she called me to complain the amount she did for the PNM and “why we treating she like dat. Yuh understand?” But I leave that there.

Madam Speaker, you see, you all should ask yourself if she was still in HDC, if she would have been your deputy leader today. That is the question you have to ask. If she could have fooled my leader like how she fooled yours? Definitely out.

Madam Speaker, let me just talk about some of the things that the mover of the Motion spoke, before I go into the substantial Motion. The Member speaks about everything in the newspaper. I wanted to keep this for a little later on, you know, but he said the newspaper speaks for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. I

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am reading from the newspaper here. One of their own, the *Sunshine* Friday 5th December, 2014. *Sunshine*:

Two Directors of the National Infrastructure Company Limited have alleged that Works and Infrastructure Minister, Dr. Suruj Rambachan has been trying to force the board to agree to grant contract to Lutchmeesingh for the Curepe Interchange.

Well if this, if the newspaper is the voice of the people, before I resign, the Member should resign.

**Mr. Hinds:** Can I have that piece of paper please?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** You want it? You could have this one.

Madam Speaker, let me go into this debate, because I have so much to talk about, unlike the moreover, who spoke about the JSC. You see, Madam Speaker, I was appointed in 2016, November. Prior to that appointment, I was asked to serve on two occasions, which I unfortunately/fortunately declined.

On the third occasion, I was asked again and I agreed. And one of the mandates that I got was to go to the port and fix the port. [*Crosstalk*] Jearlean? I do not have to fight Jearlean. One of the mandates that I got was to go into the port and deal with the port, because the port had serious issues. The issues at the port did not start when I came in. The issues at the port started under the UNC Government. [*Desk thumping*] You see, Madam Speaker, we need to understand what is the sea bridge. The sea bridge is a cargo vessel and a passenger vessel. [*Interruption*] Sorry, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I want to ask both sides to please abide by Standing Order 53, with respect to Members who are not speaking, listening in silence. I want to warn both sides. Minister of Works and Transport.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Thank you. You see, Madam Speaker, there is a cargo aspect of the sea bridge and a passenger aspect of the sea bridge. The cargo aspect of the sea bridge, in 2014, when the UNC brought the *Galicia* here, and this is important because you spoke about joint select committee, and all this information would have come out in the joint select committee but you never spoke about it. We did not hear about it. They brought it here for six months. So you are paying about US \$17,000 a day for a vessel to come for six months, but it takes five months to reach here. Something was wrong. Something was wrong there. And when the vessel came here and they paid \$17 million up front, the owner of the vessel told the board of the port and the Government: “But yuh

spend so much money tuh bring meh here, why not give meh ah one-year contract?" And you know what? The board agreed: "We would give you a one-year contract, with six months to renew." They went ahead and they did that.

About nine months into that contract, the owner of the vessel went back to them and say: "Ay, we need tuh geh ah next year yuh know, or else we pulling out our vessel." Although they had a six months. Again, the port, under the UNC, say: "Well, no problem. We doh want yuh tuh pull out de vessel. Take ah next year contract." And that is how they went.

**Hon. Member:** What is the value?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** This is \$58 million. Unfortunately, when this Government came in, my predecessor, Minister Hinds, got a letter from them, indicating, although they have a signed contract to April 2016. In November of 2015, they wrote him and they said: "Despite your contract for April, we pulling this boat in February." This is a signed contract. This was the modus operandi of that vessel that you all brought. Minister Hinds negotiated and they came up with an 18-month contract. And, you see, people keep talking about what 18, what 18-month?

Let me just read. The vessel was pulled from us at a certain time. This is a letter from the attorney, Ms. Theresa Hadad, that wrote to the then Permanent Secretary at the port. So we have a contract with them that is up to October of 2017, but the vessel is pulled the week of Easter. And this is what their attorney, Theresa Hadad, attorneys for Intercontinental:

Our client shall provide the vessel *MV Elizabeth Ross* the purpose of inter-island service between Trinidad and Tobago for the charter party as set out in our 31st October, 2017, at the rate of euros 14,750 being the same rate of the *MV Superfast Galicia*.

I want to quote from one part of this letter.

Our client is prepared, as part of the global settlement contemplated here to bear the cost of redelivering the *MV Superfast Galicia* on the condition that Trinidad and Tobago, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, for the same cost of bunkering.

In other words, what they are saying, they do not want anything but they want to supply this vessel, but this vessel must remove all claims that the Government will have for the removal of the *Superfast Galicia*. In other words, they acknowledge they have a contract with us, and they are willing to supply a vessel but the problem is that the vessel cannot reach in time, so the country must suffer

for at least two to three weeks without a vessel. This is the attorney for the Intercontinental, admitting that there is a contract in place, all right, and they are offering a vessel but we must accept that and drop all claims against Intercontinental. So, to the mover of the Motion, this Minister did not send back any vessel.

So, Madam Speaker, a problem arose there, where the vessel was pulled from this Government. This Government has now proceeded to take legal action for the breach of that contract. And that matter is before the court.

But it is important for us to know that what came out of the joint select committee is that the UNC Government hired an attorney to get rid of the *Warrior Spirit*. That attorney was then hired to look for a vessel. So they paid her to get rid of one, paid her to look for one, invited her to tender for one, paid her to write the agreement for the winning tenderer, which she won, “ah whole kangkalang”. [Crosstalk] It is procurement UNC style.

And this Government, [Crosstalk] no you will hear plenty about that in the Motion. This Government, faced with a crisis, had to put something in place that the day after the *Superfast* leave, we must get goods going to Tobago. At that point in time, as Minister, there was no board in place at the port, and without a board the management liaise direct with the Minister and the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry.

So when they talk about the Minister interfered in a process, there was a negotiation for a barge and a boat. When the port came to the Ministry, they said that the people wanted \$12,000 for the barge. My information to them was that is way too much money. They should try to negotiate down, and I admit that, to \$10,000. You know the UNC Opposition made a hurrah about that. Because you know what should have been the norm of the Minister at that time? “He shoulda say: no, carry it to 14 and put two someway fuh me.” That is what, they are upset. You see they are upset that this Minister said: “Do not pay \$12,000, pay \$10,000.” That was not a norm in a UNC Government.

Madam Speaker, subsequent to that, the Government recognized that that was not the ideal situation to have the *Atlantic Provider* and a barge. Immediately, there was a tender out, and within three months we were able to remove the barge, remove the *Atlantic Provider* and *Cabo Star* came. As of today, the *Cabo Star* would have worked every day it was contracted to. It carried all the cargo and passengers.

There is so much talk. Let me just give you some figures. The *Cabo Star* takes 300 trucks. The *Superfast* took 200. The *Cabo Star* takes 130 passengers. The *Superfast* takes 120. And I admit that there is a speed difference where the *Superfast* is faster than the *Cabo Star*. However, when this Government signed the agreement for the *Cabo Star*, with all intention it was a one-year agreement and they were going out to look for another vessel, and as soon as a more suitable vessel comes, as we speak, that vessel will be engaged. The *Cabo Star* is not the vessel of choice. So, that would have solved the cargo problem.

What happened with the ferry problem? Immediately the new board coming into office, I spoke to the board and I told them: "If you think the cargo problem is bad, you should look at the ferry situation." We have two ferries that are in bad condition. They have not been maintained, and I have seen no information that even the people at the port knows what they are doing with that.

Madam Speaker, let me talk to what the mover of the Motion spoke about, who fired Bay Ferries and who hired Magellan. Because there is this big talk about the PNM Government, the PNM board, firing Bay Ferries, and the PNM board hired Magellan, and Magellan, that did not work out.

Let me just read here from a board minute, dated February 27, 2015. Remember election was in September, almost at the end of the year, September. This is February.

The Authority noted that in accordance with clause 4.8 of the management service agreement between the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago and Bay Ferries Limited, dated 2007, July 01, that the contract for management of the *T&T Sprit* and the *T&T Express*, PATT was required to give six months' notice if it intends to exit the service contract.

And it goes on to say here that the board, the UNC board headed by one Mr. Dhanpat or whoever he was, took a decision and I want to read the decision:

The Authority further directs the following:

Management should issue a letter to Bay Ferries no later than 2015, March 31.

Bay Ferries should submit to pass all operational manuals, OEM standards, operating procedures of the vessel.

And a decision was taken at that meeting to terminate Bay Ferries, long before the PNM came into power.

**3.15 p.m.**

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**Mr. Hinds:** That is right.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Subsequent to that when Bay Ferries came to Trinidad, it was a PNM Government bringing in the vessels brought in—

**Mr. Hinds:** 2005.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** I think it was 2007 on a three-year contract. In 2010 that contract was renewed for a further three years, but by 2013 there were elements of the port who felt that they could have collected that money Bay Ferries was making, and the UNC board in 2013, started to cut Bay Ferries, they cut them to two years. In 2015, they decided they are going to get rid of them, they cut them to one year and that is where the bacchanal on the port started [*Desk thumping*].

The bacchanal on the port started when the UNC decided to get rid of Bay Ferries, and if it is one thing my colleague here is guilty of, is listening and following up on UNC plan. Because UNC plan do not mean good for Tobago at all at all.

You see Magellan was not hired by the PNM. When they decided to cut Bay Ferries in one year and get rid of them, give them six months' notice, it was the UNC that hired Magellan and they gave them, they gave Bay Ferries a 12-month contract to get out, and they gave Magellan a 10-month contract to do a transition plan. So getting Bay Ferries out of Trinidad was a UNC plan, hiring Magellan was a UNC plan. [*Desk thumping*]

And when, Christine Sahadeo—I am quoting from board minutes of the UNC board, eh. Right, this was the UNC—and I say to my colleague what he was probably guilty of is allowing that UNC hash plan with members of the port board, right, that is where this problem started with the ferries.

Because, by the time Bay Ferries left there was no maintenance done on the ferries and there was no plan for maintenance. So, what did we do at that time? The Port Authority recognizing that and being responsible, immediately went out for a tender for a passenger vessel, again the Port Authority with their process everything keep failing and now I understand why, and I will explain to you in a while why things do not work on the port the way it should.

Nothing happened and the Port Authority then went into emergency process and that is where the *Ocean Flower* came out. Unfortunately, the *Ocean Flower* contract was cancelled, and it was cancelled by me as Minister of Works and Transport. So, for those of you who feel that I own Bridgeman, “I eh go cancel



meh own contract.” So come again. [*Desk thumping*]

So, Madam Speaker, that is where things started to happen on the port. Eventually we had to pull one of the vessels out and then operate with one vessel. So in this entire debacle of a year they claimed the sea bridge collapsed, for three months we had to use the *Transporter* and the *Atlantic Provider*, at no point in time was cargo not able to go to Tobago. And over this whole period, it is about 22 days that the port would not have had a ferry going to Tobago and the reason for that is for safety. And I will address the mover of the Motion’s safety issue in a while, about this whole article in the newspaper.

But, what we would have seen happening on the port there is that the port would have worked with Caribbean Airlines and all the ferry passengers were accommodated on the air Caribbean. It might be surprising, because I saw on some article people were saying, why is only in Trinidad you can buy a ferry ticket and get a plane ride, and they are wondering what is the cost to the port?

Well, let me tell you it cost the port significantly less based on their operational costs to send the passengers on the airline. Just to give you an example: about two Sundays ago I was at the port, there were 40-something passengers to go to Tobago that cost the port about \$4,800 to send all the passengers and that included the airline ticket and the bus transportation, you know how much that would have cost if the boat was working and we had to put them on the boat?—\$150,000. Taxpayers would have had to pay that.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** KFC and fries.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Taxpayers would have had to pay that. So, we recognize that there was a lot of inconvenience to the people of Tobago and that is why this Government went and put things in place to ensure that anybody who wanted to go to Tobago for that period would have had an airline ticket available to them. [*Desk thumping*]

Caribbean Airlines leased a plane just so that the ferry passengers could go to Tobago, and what is strange, eh, for that period over 5,000 tickets, seats on the plane, remained vacant. You know why? There are some people in Tobago who are hell-bent on telling people do not come to Tobago. So, as much as the transportation is provided, there are people in Tobago with their own interest, because if you notice there is one call coming from Tobago, forget boat, forget everything, just bring back the *Galicia*. And I am wondering now, how many people really had an interest in that *Galicia*? How many people had an interest in that *Galicia*?

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**Mr. Hinds:** Who “had hadded”.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam Speaker, in that joint select committee one of the biggest challenges that came out there, is how the port does business, how the port does business. And I said, coming in as the new Minister that there was a lot to be desired on the port, because most of the problems that we encountered is because these problems were brewing in the port for years. For years, and nobody was brave enough to deal with it. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, I say today, I have no political ambitions, and if I have a job to do. I will do it. [*Desk thumping*] Jearlene might not even be around by the time the next election call. I will not waste time with that.

Madam Speaker, I have no political ambition and when the Prime Minister told me to go and fix the port, I decided to go and fix the port. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Speaker, let me tell you what we found on the port, and when the Prime Minister came and he said there was corruption in the procurement. Let me tell you what happened on the port. Because you see, I as Minister, with all the accusations you all are making, I have nothing to worry about. The Opposition Leader recently wanted to find out how Rohan Sinanan does be smiling all the time. The reason for that if any blue lights come by my house is to ask me if it have any UNC Ministers living around here. [*Laughter and desk thumping*] Right? So, I could smile.

Madam Speaker, when the Prime Minister went to the JSC and said that there was corruption in the deal, all right? There was a certain offer to the port made to a certain member of management that this country and let me correct you, mover of the Motion, it is not 6,000 less, it was US \$8,000 a day less, close to \$30 million that this country paid more for a vessel and it had nothing to do with the board or the Minister. Somebody did not send that to the board and that is why the Prime Minister made the statement, right? And that is why at the port if you go now you will see a lot of audits, investigations going on and people are home. People are home.

You brought another issue about a safety issue. And you quoted from a report, a report commissioned not by the port, had nothing to do with the port but by an insurance company. And you want to say the Minister is responsible, the Minister should go. But let me tell you about that report. The port knew nothing about that report. That report was done in 2016. The first one in 2016, the one on the *Spirit*. An insurance company did that report, when I saw it in the newspaper I immediately called the port and said—

**Madam Speaker:** Minister of Works and Transport, your original speaking time is now spent. You are entitled to 15 more minutes. If you wish you may proceed.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I need three days. [*Desk thumping*] When I called for the report—let me get the letter here that the Port Authority—let me give you the response that the Port Authority sent to me. I want to read it into the records. So that the mover of the Motion does not feel that the Minister knew about a vessel and he did not disclose it to the committee. I have some much documents here—let me get that one, because that one is important, that one is important. Do not worry, the bombshells coming, it eh start to drop yet.

**Hon. Member:** “Ooohh.”

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Anyhow, Madam Speaker, what that letter that came from the port had indicated that on the search of the port records there was no information to that effect. However, when they contacted the person who did the report, the insurance company, they said they gave a copy to the manager of the TTIT; that is one of the persons on suspension. They gave another report, second time around to the general manager of the port; that person is also no longer there.

These reports were never tabled to the board. However, somewhere along the line it was leaked and the big question is why these things happening on the port.

We heard in the joint select, accusations about directors having contracts in the court. During your time, over \$20 million per year, directors that you placed on the board; union members. We heard allegations of—it was at a joint select. Where members and employees of the port were complaining that they are being sexually harassed on the port—

**Hon. Member:** What!

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Yes, by—[*Crosstalk*]—Madam Speaker, these are the things that came out in the joint select. [*Desk thumping*] UNC never condemned those things. We heard about sabotage on the vessels, people throwing stone and lemons, up to today the UNC never one day condemned that kind of behaviour. I wonder if it is in their interest, I wonder if it is in their interest that it is sabotage.

Madam Speaker, I only have 10 more minutes. But, the mover of the Motion

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spoke about procurement. Let me talk about procurement for a little while.

Madam Speaker, right now in my possession here I have 15 contracts UNC procurement style, 15 contracts. You know what is the strangest thing about these contracts? These contracts are from the Ministry of Works and Transport, during the time of the UNC Government. What is strange is that 14 out of these 15 contracts are for \$345,000—

**Hon. Member:** Wow!

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:**—every single one, but for different—but what is strange—

**Hon. Member:** For box drains.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:**—no it is for dredging—

**Hon. Member:** “Ahhh.”

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** For desilting, but there are 14 for \$345,000 and one for \$599,900.85—how you could lease it for 85 cents? But, you know what is strange about these contracts? Not a single contract and these contracts we are in court for, eh. People are claiming their money.

**Hon. Member:** Who was the Minister?

**Hon. Member:** Jearlene was the Minister.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Well, this has to be the Minister of Works and Transport; it is the Ministry of Works and Transports—

**Mr. Hinds:** Kamla’s Minister of Works.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Well you see, Madam Speaker, I do not know who is the Minister. Because the job that I am doing now, there were eight Ministers in the previous government doing that job—eight.

**Mr. Hinds:** Eight Ministers of Works.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** But you know what is striking and frightening about this? There is no award letter. There is no certification of the work; nothing like that. But you know who certified the jobs?

**Hon. Member:** Jearlene.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** No, not Jearlene. It is worse than Jearlene.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You leave Jearlene alone.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Half of these were signed by the Member of Parliament for Couva North and Couva South. [*Desk thumping*] Yeah, and they were signed.

**Dr. Moonilal:** 48(6). [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam Speaker, I am talking procurement. I have my documents—

**Madam Speaker:** Please continue.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam Speaker, some Bisham Ramoutar, I do not know who he is, or Hematee Maraj. They would have signed off on all the work in the Minister's office and they signed Minister's Assistant, MP Office, MP Office in Couva.

**Hon. Members:** "Whoo!" [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Not, a single contract, Madam Speaker, they have sheets that they—the contract completion report, every one clean. Every single one is clean, right, nothing at all.

**Mr. Hinds:** But, the MP certifying the work done.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** But, wait, what is even worse, on these contracts—

**Hon. Member:** Talk about Tobago.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:**—forget Tobago for now. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, how—

**Madam Speaker:** Order. So that I can hear.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** I need some injury time, I need to finish.

**Madam Speaker:** Minister of Works and Transport, could you direct your contribution to—

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam Speaker, do you know how payment for this is certified? It is certified by the Member of Parliament writing Dr. The Hon. Surujrattan Rambachan, Minister of Works and Transport. I write to tell you on behalf of the contractor—I will not call his name—

**Hon. Member:** "Doh make joke".

**Hon. Member:** On behalf of the contractor.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** The contractor has completed the job of cleaning all the water courses and as such I verify that this work was completed. [*Crosstalk*] And this one is signed by MP Ramona Ramdial.

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Minister. A Member is on his legs.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam Speaker, there is another one signed here—

**Madam Speaker:** Minister, Minister, Minister, a Member is on his legs.

**Mr. Charles:** Standing Order 48(1), the Member for Couva North has nothing to do with this Motion about Tobago. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** I am speaking procurement here. [*Crosstalk*]  
[*Madam Speaker stands*]

**Madam Speaker:** I understand that an issue was raised with respect to procurement and I understand the Minister to be speaking about procurement, how it was done by another side. Please continue. [*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam Speaker, and then I have now another letter written by—well, it is signed and I am not accusing these MPs of anything eh, I am not accusing you all of anything—

**Mr. Hinds:** They stand accused.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** I am just telling you what I am dealing with. What I am dealing with there is another letter signed by Rudranath Indarsingh MP, attached. Right, Rudranath Indarsingh, but he is claiming in his letter, he passed by the river and see a piece of equipment in the river so they should go ahead and pay.

**Hon. Member:** What!

**Madam Speaker:** Member.

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Speaker, 48(4): “shall be out of order to use offensive and insulting language” and imputing improper motives to a member of the House. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam—

**Mr. Charles:** 48(4) and (6). [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Speaker:** I overrule, please continue.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam speaker, I just want to draw your attention to one more piece of procurement in the Ministry of Works and Transport, and again I am not accusing anybody of anything, I just know, sometime “things does happen”, “leh we leave it at that”.

You see, I have one letter here again that I have been taken to court for, through the Ministry about under the URP programme a house that was built hundreds of thousands of dollars, yeah a house—

**Hon. Member:** Not a boat?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Unfortunately, in the court document the contractor claimed he was told by the Minister to go ahead and build the house, and there is no procurement in place. [*Interruption*] No, it is not them, this is court documents, you see. Mr. Speaker—

**Hon. Members:** Madam Speaker.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Sorry, Madam Speaker, sorry, how could I make that mistake. What I am showing is how procurement UNC style is. In this statement in the court the claimant the contractor, Mr. Castiano informed the claimant that his quotation was accepted by the former Minister on behalf of the defendant. So, in other words, the Minister is accepting the price and saying “Yes, go ahead”.

No award, nothing, the man take us to court now. But, you know what he is depending on in the court, and I do not know how these things leak. He is depending on a letter that the Minister then writes the Permanent Secretary informing the Permanent Secretary, I write in respect to the work done on Sum Sum Hill, Claxton Bay.

This project is the construction of a three-bedroom house, and what the Minister is saying is that the sum—

I hereby write to request payment for this job which has been completed.

In other words, Ministers—

**Hon. Members:** That on the sea bridge?

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:**—the Ministers in the last Government were the ones who were certifying jobs and then writing the PS and the—what is happening now is that these contractors just like what happened in another case I was hearing recently where former Ministers now are technically being the evidence for the Government to pay in the court. This is ridiculous, right?

You see, Madam Speaker, I know my time is running out. I sat here and went through a JSC, where they throw everything at me. I sat here for a year and a few months with all kind of accusations. One thing I could tell you is that nobody was able to point any finger and say this Minister corrupt. [*Desk thumping*] Let me tell you something.

**Mr. Hinds:** No Minister on this side.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition also asked a question Monday night. What it is Rohan have on—I do not want to be disrespectful—Rowley. But let me tell this nation what I have on the Prime Minister, Dr. Rowley.

**Mr. Charles:** You finance the campaign.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** I ran a campaign, I did not finance, I ran. At the end of that campaign there was surplus money. That money was deposited in Balisier House, and very soon you will see us doing a new Balisier House, because that is the kind of Minister I am, [*Desk thumping*] and Dr. Rowley— [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Hinds:** “Nobody did not build no house for you.”

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** Dr. Rowley will never have to call a meeting in the Diplomatic Centre where contractors will have to come and explain to the leader how much money they giving, and why it not trickling to them.

**Hon. Members:** Ooh!

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** And if—wait—and if the Opposition Leader “cah” remember that, I will call a fella called Dave Tancoo.

**Hon. Members:** “Whooo!”

**Mr. Hinds:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sen. The Hon. R. Sinanan:** To explain, and if Dave Tancoo cannot explain and cannot remember. I will bring a list of the contractors who were there—had to confess that they were donating money and it was not going where it was supposed to go. Dr. Rowley “doh” have to worry about that with me. That is what I have on Dr. Rowley. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, I look forward to the vote and if the vote goes against me, I want to thank this country and the Prime Minister for giving me the opportunity to serve this country. I know I have done my best, I have stuck to the oath of office and when I leave here nobody will be able to point a finger at me, and say I am



corrupt.

Madam Speaker, I reject this Motion out right. [*Desk thumping and crosstalk*]

**Dr. Roodal Moonilal** (*Oropouche East*): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, if I can bring some calmness to the House [*Laughter and desk thumping*] and begin—the Minister would like to leave within 10 seconds of my contribution, I do not blame him. In fact, I recommend that he leaves before I begin because I really would not like to engage him and he has family and friends and so on and I think they should also take off their TV now and take off their radio. [*Laughter*]

The Minister—let me just pause, the Minister will leave now and I want to begin how the Minister ended. I think he did his best. I think he really did his best and it is the best that he can do [*Laughter*] and today the Minister of Works and Transport has convinced me that he should be fired by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, I do not know where to start, but I know where to end. On a day like today when this Government and this embattled Minister should have come to the House and apologize to the people of Tobago, and apologize to the people of Trinidad, and apologize to the business sector in Tobago, and apologize to the business sector in Trinidad, and apologize to the students of Tobago, and apologize to the students in Trinidad, he chose to apologize to no one.

He came with typical arrogance determined by the leadership of his party, the typical arrogance, blame everybody in the world; I was waiting for him to blame Amnesty International [*Laughter*] and the United Nations Refugee High Commission. [*Desk thumping*]

Because, I am sure they had a contract somewhere in a drain in Couva, I am sure, and I will come to that, rest assured I will come to that. But the Minister came here without apology to the people of Tobago who are looking on they are stranded now at the port, if this was a glass building I would have said look to my right for exhibit A.

They are stranded at the port now there is a four o'clock boat that was delayed. Hundreds are stranded; the Minister did not address them. He addressed the UNC, Members on this side and completely misinterpreted the Motion that was so ably written and filed by the Member for Tabaquite [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, but I do not blame him. I blame the Member for Diego Martin West, when a Minister is unfit, is unprepared, and is unmade for office,

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really you do not blame that Minister, you blame the Prime Minister—

**Hon. Member:** Correct. [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** And the Prime Minister is the one who takes the responsibility. He did his best, I am sure he did his best, he cannot do better. If he resigns today or tomorrow, he cannot do better.

And today the people of Tobago are suffering, the people of Trinidad are suffering because there is a symbiotic relationship between the economy of Tobago and the economy of Trinidad. It has always been like that.

Under this regime, under this Minister and a previous Minister, the economy of Tobago we are told by those who are involved in the economy, not us, has come to a halt. The owner of a hotel across there, Rovonell, I believe, he said he has zero occupancy there. Ms. Hadad is crying on the TV every time you put on the TV in the morning. She is there crying, pleading, begging, for help, for action, for compassion.

The Minister came today and focused on MPs who were writing letters concerning drainage in their constituency. [*Desk thumping*] The *Ocean Flower* sailing on the river in Couva, that was the point?—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** The Rivulet.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** It sailing in Rivulet River. Those things—and came and talk, you know, reading part of a letter not the whole letter, part of, and say the Member for Couva South and Couva North sign. Telling them pay contractors to the Member for Tabaquite.

**Ms. Ramdial:** Evidence.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Absolutely nothing to do with the sea bridge, nothing to do with the boats in question. And I want to tell this Minister who ran away, who fled, I do not know if he going to catch the boat too. [*Laughter*]

I want to tell him who ran away that if you have evidence of wrongdoing after three years your Government in power take it to the police. [*Desk thumping*] And if you cannot take it to the police you have no leg to stand on.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Correct.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** I saw him “gallerying”, went on the what, *T&T Spirit* in the front of the boat, looking like Brad Pitt in *Titanic* and he goes in there coming to Tobago looking like a buccaneer, sword in hand they arrive. The Chief Secretary

had a prepared text for this accidental meeting, they brought a priest and they blessed the boat and so on; two days later the hose on the boat mash-up. This is what happen to this Minister, I do not know, you know he began by saying his Government loves the people of Tobago; I want to say thank God for that, what would you have done if you did not love them? [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

What else could go wrong with Tobago?—I do not know. And you know, when you cannot tell the truth in a small matter we cannot trust you with a big matter [*Desk thumping*] it is a simple point. Stood in this House and went on record and say the UNC do not like Tobago; the people of Tobago do not know what the UNC symbol look like on a ballot paper. But his nemesis, Jearlene John, was a candidate in Tobago in 2002 [*Desk thumping*] on a UNC symbol. But if you cannot get the little things right, it means we cannot trust you for the bigger issues. Because you will not take your time to check something small, it means the big things gone already.

But that was the attitude—blame game. Three years in office, blame game, when we were there, sure, every government would have challenge and so on with sea bridge, air bridge it is normal. But I cannot remember this disaster that we face now where you buy a boat ticket and you get a plane ride, you go in the airport sit down on the ground and get a box of KFC. And when you land at Crown Point, you take a bus to go down to Scarborough because that is where the car waiting for you. [*Laughter*]

### **3.45 p.m.**

Madam Speaker, this has happened; first time since 1897, I am told, we did not have a boat running between Port of Spain to Scarborough. Since 1897 we have had boats running. First time under this administration, they had nothing and the Minister came today and talking about “UNC doh like Tobago”. This is not about UNC; it is about the people of Tobago, the economy of Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] And went off on a tangent about Jearlean John and La Horquetta. If he has a problem with Jearlean John, meet her in the gayelle, meet her in the trenches. She will deal with you. She will deal with him. She will chew him up and spit him out. [*Laughter*] So we are not worried about that. That is not a matter for the House. The business of the people of Tobago today is the matter for the House. That is the matter for the House.

But you see, his Government—when I came here and I recognized that he was speaking first, I knew what happened. “Dey throw him over de boat. Dey throw him to de wolves. Dey throw him over board.” No one in that Government stood

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up today to respond to this Motion in defence of this hapless Minister, who has spent I think one year in politics. Nobody stood up today. But you know, procuring boats in that Government is not his business. They have a committee of Ministers. “Dey procuring, dey tweeting or whatever dey does call it, and telling us when de boat reach Mexico and Panama and Thailand. Dey running de show, but when de time come for de licks, dey send him. Dey send him for de licks.” But they will not stand up in the Parliament and defend this Motion against their Government. They put a junior politician, someone with very little parliamentary experience, coming to tell us the UNC never fight a seat in Tobago.

I want to tell the Minister who ran away 10 seconds into my contribution, and the Motion hatched in La Horquetta, I want to tell the Minister, Mr. Minister of Works and Infrastructure, in this Parliament you are entitled to your opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts. You are not entitled to that; just your opinion. And regrettably he is not before me, he had something very important to do.

So finish with the blame game. He went on to speak about a matter involving the *Superfast Galicia*. You know, that is an amazing story. I must confess to my colleagues and others, when all of these problems started with the boat, “one boat, two boat, three boat”, I got so tired in the morning looking at the news. “Every day is *Ocean Flower*, is *Cabo Star*, is *Warrior Princess*, is *Galleons Passage*, and you cyar understand what happening.” This was like trying to follow an Indian picture without English subtitles. Five minutes you abandon. Well, let me say it to them. You ever tried to watch a German movie without English subtitles? You will abandon the movie quickly. I got lost trying to follow this “bobol”, this web of corruption, this type of, you know—and all to buy a boat.

We were in office before on two occasions. If you want to buy a boat there must be a process that is transparent and clear. You come to Cabinet; Cabinet agrees that we have to get a new boat. The *Warrior Princess* or whatever is 34 years old, you want a new boat, the Port Authority will be charged with that responsibility. You go through a process, procurement, the board and the different levels below. When you have agreed on something, you go to Cabinet, get approval. Now what is hard with that? What could be so hard doing that, that you plunge the economy of Tobago into ruins, plunged this country into a disaster, because you tried to get a boat?

But it happened before with them. You all remember the *Su*? We had a boat that could not float. One day in a parliamentary debate we asked the powers that be if we could get the *Su* by the Hyatt, we wanted to demonstrate something, “dey

say, ‘No it cannot leave Chaguaramas because it will not reach anywhere’.” How much millions, 60? About \$60 million; I think “we sell” it as scrap iron to ISCOTT or something like that. And this is their legacy: any time “dey in office, dey want to buy boat” and invariably it will lead to “bobol” and corruption.

You see, the Minister came; he attacked of course Members on this side, which I thought was most unfortunate, attacking Members on this side on matters that cannot be related to the Motion, but however he said procurement. So he used procurement as a plank to walk on. So I am using the plank, but I am not going to jump off.

So, Madam Speaker, the Minister, I want to put something to him here. One of the problems the country has had—and it is a problem the country has had, not only with this Minister but several Ministers, and we will not call other Ministers’ names, the Motion is not about them. This Minister, we are focusing on.

One of the problems we have had is the overreach of Ministers, that they get into office—I do not know if they do not have training sessions, because sometimes governments do that, as you get into office you arrange intensive training sessions to train new Ministers in the law, parliamentary practice, procurement issues and so on. So they get into office and Ministers start to overreach; get into the business of boards, get into the business of state enterprises. Your job is policy, programme, report to Cabinet, report to Parliament. And they get into breaking the law.

It is fascinating that the Minister raised an issue involving two Members on this side, who he claims write letters recommending contractors. But a Member of Government is on the other side before the police in this country today, because he approved contracts for payments at PTSC. You all remember that? Approving contracts, who should be paid at PTSC, who should not be paid at PTSC; a Minister of Government. The police is investigating him today.

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Who is that?

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** “Is de Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann’s West.”

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** Absolute rubbish.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Well, you could say it is rubbish, the police are dealing with that, as they are dealing with other matters known to the Member for San Fernando West. So, Madam Speaker, they have the audacity—[*Interruption*] My friend, the Member for Laventille West, is interrupting me, but he will not tell us what is the time “yuh does report” a hit and run. That is what you should be

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concerned about, that the time gone for a hit and run. Madam Speaker, you understand he has an incapacity to remain silent.

**Madam Speaker:** Member, I am standing. Please stop the crosstalk. Member for Oropouche East, you have my ear, please continue.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. So it is this overreach that we are concerned about, with the Minister in particular and others, but this Minister. That at all times we got evidence which I saw on television at the JSC, where the former CEO, who was fired in the dead of the night in the most undignified manner, said that the Minister came to her and said, “We have to get a boat. Dey want X amount of dollars, but doh worry, talk to dem, we go beat dem down.” Then today in his own statements he said, “I told them 10k was too much.” How you as the Minister “telling them” how much money is too much?

The Port Authority would do its work. You can go to Cabinet and let the Cabinet determine what is too much, what is too little. “A Minister cyar say— ‘Dat is too much, go back’.” He sent them to do that. The Minister is giving instructions. This is why in the Port Authority we have had three chairmen in less than three years. Three chairmen in less than three years, but two Ministers of— well, one and a half Minister of Works and Transport we have had. [*Interruption*] Well we will fight over one-eighth or a quarter. But, Madam Speaker, that is why in two years they have been changing, like musical chairs at the port.

The legal advisor, Brandon Primus I believe his name is, just jumped ship a few days ago. The legal advisor to the board said, “Ah had enough. Dis ting coming for a fall, I gone,” with everybody jumping off this ship now, because they understand what is happening at the port, what is happening with this Government. And as the time get closer for them to demit office, people are understanding that they can face prosecution if they do the wrongdoing on behalf of this administration.

Look at the people they cannot work with. They cannot work with Helen Drayton, Andrew Jupiter, Terrence Farrell, Dennise Demming, Alison Lewis, who worked in government as a permanent secretary and worked with many of us on this side, many governments. They cannot work with them. Why is it that people whose public persona tells us that they think a particular way, their integrity is up to mark and so on, you cannot deal with them? You cannot, and that is because the Ministers overreach, and I have an example of that. Regrettably the Minister has fled; he fled the precincts today. I do not know if he does not understand that a convention here is when you have a Motion against

you, you will not only participate but you listen, you will take some notes and maybe you would ask another colleague and so on. [*Interruption*] He is back in good time; that means the boat did not leave. [*Laughter*] The boat did not leave.

So I can ask the Minister now, because the Minister was very concerned with the operations of the Members for Couva North and Couva South. I have in my hand a document here and a letter. You see, the letter has to do with parts for a boat—parts for a boat, and I have a packing slip, customs invoice, and it is for parts for a boat. I have another letter here, Caricom invoice, and it is for parts. But you know what concerns me? Not that the Port Authority is buying parts, no, no, no. Although I must say at the beginning, why is the Port Authority buying parts? If you have maintenance contractors and so on, is the Port Authority's role to go and buy a fuse, to buy a hose, to buy an engine for a boat, or is that the role of a contractor who is there to maintain? But you see, Madam Speaker, it raises a fundamental question of the understanding of the role of a Minister and the exposure of Ministers.

In my hand is a letter dated April 01, 2018. Now April 1<sup>st</sup> by itself is a day of some repute. But it is dated:

April 01, 2018, by the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

To: Comptroller of Customs and Excise, Customs and Excise Division, Piarco International Airport, Golden Grove Road, Piarco.

Officer in charge

So it could be attention to anybody, once you are a customs officer in the airport:

Officer in charge

Attention

Dear Sir/Madam [*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Where is this?

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** This is a letterhead of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago writing the Comptroller of Customs and Excise but saying, "Officer in charge". It is written on the 1st of April, which is a Sunday—it is a Sunday:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Permission to clear radar system for *T&T Spirit*. The matter at caption refers.

This is the Port Authority on a Sunday telling Customs now in the airport:

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Please be advised that Mr. Rohan Sinanan...

—and they put in brackets: (Honourable Minister of Works and Transport), in case nobody knew. They put in brackets, “hon. Minister of Works and Transport”, who I think the airport falls under him as well. But they told the airport:

...is travelling with the captioned radar system for the *T&T Spirit* on Caribbean Airlines flight BW483 arriving on Sunday 2018, April 1.

A Minister of Government travelling with a radar system for a boat. “Now, how you reach there? How you reach there? Yuh bringing back a rear-view mirror for yuh car? Yuh bringing back four tyres for yuh”—[*Crosstalk*] Madam Speaker—“Yuh bringing back four tyres for yuh truck?” You are bringing back a radar system, and the Minister of Works and Transport is bringing a radar system into Trinidad and Tobago. And now, they continue—

Now, a Minister travels with a diplomatic passport. That has implications under a convention. “Doh mind yuh doh know de convention on refugee and asylum seekers and so on. We eh sign dat dey say, so is all right.” There are conventions with passport holders who bear a diplomatic passport, one of them is that they cannot be searched at ports of entry and ports of exit. It is the Geneva Convention. So the Geneva Convention gives certain immunities to holders of a diplomatic passport. A Minister of Government is coming back with a radar system—[*Interruption*] “Well, you know you will tell us—listen, we hear bout de drain in Couva just now. Let we hear bout de radar system for de boat, because dey say is for a boat.”

Radar system—so the Minister is coming with a radar system, and he is coming—I checked his flight, I think it originates from Miami. So you are coming from Miami with a radar system on you. “Who buy de radar system? Who purchased dat? Who pay for dat? How was it purchased? Did the Minister buy it? Did he go with money in he pocket and say, ‘Listen, I need a radar system, gimme dat, I have to take it back to Trinidad?’ Yuh get foreign exchange as part of your per diem when you going to buy a radar.” A Minister ought not to be involved that way, in purchasing goods and services of a state enterprise. A Minister that carries a diplomatic passport has other implications for going through airports. It has implications for going through airports. Let me continue with the letter. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Charles:** Drugs!

**Hon. Member:** “Oh gosh Naparima!”



**Madam Speaker:** Member for San Fernando East. Please contain yourself. Member for Naparima, while you are not on your legs you have to be mindful that sometimes things that you say can be heard. I just ask you to withdraw that comment that you made, so that the Member for Oropouche East can continue.

*[Mr. Charles remains seated]*

**Mr. Charles:** Withdraw.

**Madam Speaker:** No, no, no, please!

*[Mr. Charles stands]*

**Mr. Charles:** I withdraw most politely and humbly.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you very much.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Thank you very much. I did not expect the Member for Naparima to withdraw improperly.

Madam Speaker, the letter goes on:

As such could kindly convey—

Well I think it is “could you kindly”, but they left out that:

Could kindly convey permission to for Mr. Rohan Sinanan to transact this matter on behalf of the Authority.

So you are bringing a radar—let us assume it is radar system, because they said it is a radar system—but the Minister is being asked now by a state enterprise to transact business in the airport, because he is bringing boxes or bags of some kind with radar equipment:

Please find attached relevant documentation in regard to the item. This equipment is critical for the Port and for *T&T Spirit*—that is the boat—which will enable the vessel to operate. Please be advised that the proper documentation will be submitted for processing on Tuesday 2018, April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

So they did not have proper documentation; it had to be submitted after:

To get the radar system in—assuming it is a radar system—the Minister pick it up in Miami in “two box”, because there is a reference to two bags or box or something, and brings it down to Piarco and goes to the Customs official and say, “Listen, I bring some radar system here for de port I going”. It does not work like that. It does not work like that at all. That is improper at least. It may be unethical, but it may be unlawful.

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A Minister cannot be “dragging bag”; you are not a porter. You cannot be “dragging bag across airports” and declaring what is in it, because the Customs and Immigration will be told that if you have luggage associated with a ticketholder, and that ticketholder carries a diplomatic passport, “dey cyar search nothing”. So they cannot verify what you bring in. You cannot verify what you bring in. We have heard about plywood coming in this country, and all types of items, and a Minister without proper documentation comes in. And they are saying transact in the airport because you are bringing a radar system. Now we did not know “it had a problem” with the radar system, but assuming that is so, this is highly improper. This speaks to a ministerial overreach and interference and personal and intimate dealings with a state enterprise. [*Desk thumping*]

This Port Authority we have heard—and we have the documents—they go all over the world. They send people all over the world to buy boats. Miami flights are morning to evening. You cannot send a team from the Port Authority, one person, two persons, “Go Miami and look for radar according to some proper procedure, and bring it back into the country in the evening.” If it is something small, what you cannot buy it on Amazon I imagine, so you want to send somebody, go and get the part, come down. A Minister happened to be in Miami—unless he went with the express purpose of buying radar. He happened to be in Miami. “Dey say, ‘De Minister there, tell him bring it down for we.’” The Government is not run that way. Ministers cannot take things on them.

In fact, when you check in they ask you, “Did you pack your bag? Do you know the contents of your bag? Did anyone have handling on that bag? So what did the Minister tell them, “he pack de” radar? He packed up the radar by himself so you know it have nothing else inside there.

When I was a Minister—all of us were Ministers, when we were coming back we brought a box of chocolate for the secretary.

**Mr. Hinds:** A box of cash!

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** “He bringing radar in de country.” And the Member for Laventille, again, Madam Speaker, he would have his turn to talk in the courthouse.

So we want to indicate this letter is a serious letter, and it requires an explanation. And the Minister will go on his phone quickly and get an explanation I am sure. Why is a Minister on a Sunday being asked by the Port Authority—well, he is not being asked here by the Port—but the Port Authority is asking Customs to give him some favourable treatment, because he does not have the

proper documentation on him and “he bringing two boxes inside this country here”, and waive any regulation, waive any process. “We go fix up dat Tuesday.” And the Minister is part and parcel of that. It speaks to something very, very serious.

So you can talk what you want, but this is in black and white; this is the letter. We are not talking about what you talked about in Couva the Drainage Division and so on, because the Member for Tabaquite was Minister of Works and Transport and was in charge of the Drainage Division. This is why MPs would write if they have to, or if they have another problem with works, MPs would write. All MPs write Ministers concerning their constituency issues and so on.

You see, Madam Speaker, we had a history. The Member responded earlier, and it was really regrettable that the Minister had to respond and nobody else came to his aid. But to this moment the Minister has not indicated to us what about that letter of credit, US \$3 million—TT 21/20 million dollars—to Bridgeman. The Minister was very clear he does not own Bridgeman, but did not tell us about the \$20 million letter of credit. What is the status with that?

We cannot ask the Minister about *Galleons Passage*, because I think the Member for Diego Martin North/East is the captain of that boat. So we cannot ask him about that.

He made a big song and dance about the *Galicia*, because in this matter as their own ship goes down they hold onto the *Galicia* as they go down. “De *Galicia* gone”; they went in the public domain and said, “We will not succumb to economic blackmail. The *Galicia* wanted five years.” They will not tell the population that the *Galicia* had three years. They asked for three years with an opportunity to extend by two, and that is how you have three and two, five. But they said they asked for five years. They did not say the cost of the *Galicia*, vis-à-vis the cost of other boats; no problem. Even now if you would help people and people lives would be convenient, they would have ease of doing business, of travelling, you know you could get away with the “lil” \$100 or two you are talking about, and so on, but that has to do with the comfort of the people. That is what it has to do with.

So the letter of credit, well we have not heard about that at all. We had problems at the port, and I do not know, no Minister in this administration seems to be able to manage the Port Authority. That has been there from the time the Minister was in short pants in primary school, it had the Port Authority, and Minister after Minister had to deal with this Port Authority. It was managed. Why

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today? But their reason is the *Superfast Galicia*, because they took an attitude, “Take yuh boat and go.” They told an energy subcontractor in deep south, “Take your rig and go.” They told a company in Point Lisas, “Take it and go”, because the Government has no ability to negotiate themselves out of problems. [*Desk thumping*]

We were also informed in a letter by Mr. Leon Grant, then Acting Chief Executive Officer, dated 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, who wrote a letter addressed to the hon. Minister of Works and Transport Fitzgerald Hinds. I think he served very briefly there as the Minister of Works and Transport. He received this letter from one Leon Grant that spoke—and I do not want to quote extensively—to this issue of the overriding board and the problems there at the port.

Now, it is in the documentation that a recommendation to extend the charter party agreement, the contract for the *Galicia*, went to Cabinet. It went to Cabinet when—

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Oropouche East, your original 30 minutes are now spent. You are entitled to 15 more minutes if you wish to avail yourself of it.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yes, Ma’am.

**Madam Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** So the *Galicia* recommendation went to Cabinet. We believe when the Member for Laventille West in an earlier incarnation was serving there—he had served in Works, then I think Public Utilities, now Attorney General. So it went, but it was rejected. We do not know why, what were the reasons for that. Was it the economic blackmail that we heard about? Was it that? Was it some other reason, or was it simply because it was under a People’s Partnership and UNC administration we procured it? That was the issue. And I will correct the record now.

It is under the People’s National Movement that the Bay Ferries contractor was fired—was fired. It was under their administration they were fired. And they had a big song and dance about that because the company they took after apparently was only doing part of the maintenance. We checked the record, it was when the former Chairman, Christine Sahadeo, I think is her name—well she is known as that as well—the Magellan contract came into operation when she was there as well. So it is the PNM that fired the Bay Ferries contracting company. That was part of their run-up to get down to some other matters.

Madam Speaker, they spoke about the *Galicia* and the boat and so on. The Minister said that the matter involving the *Galicia* is in the courthouse. Now I am not sure what he is talking about. I have enquired as to yesterday, there is no court matter in the court. What you have done is you have written to persons seeking information, informing them that you intend to take action. You have written to persons. The matter is not before the court. So to say the matter is before the court is to mislead. Again, it is to mislead. The matter you have taken up and you have written some letters and so on, and that is a fact. And called the name of the former advisor, I think maritime legal advisor to the Port Authority, and carried a discourse to suggest that that former legal advisor did a report and say the *Warrior Spirit* must go, and then ended up with another boat called the *Galicia* of which he was a part and parcel of it.

If you would get the report on the *Warrior Spirit*, it is a paradox, because the same person in question wrote a report and said the *Warrior Spirit* should stay. So if they had in mind to do something wrong and bring a new boat, would they recommend that the one in service would say? It continues, because they are involved in a blame game. They are involved in a blame game. You know, you could continue blaming for the next two years, which is the maximum you have. You could continue that, but if the people of this country, Trinidad and Tobago, do not get relief, you would have served no useful purpose in office; if you do not bring relief to that problem in Tobago.

What is happening, other speakers on my side will deal with the economy and some hard data on the economy, but it was very visible on the Easter weekend. That same weekend when the Minister became a porter, and bringing in radar in the country and so on, that very weekend, it was visible that a lot of folks from this country who would regularly go to Tobago, were going to Grenada and St. Kitts and St. Lucia for their vacation, because they could not find convenient transport; a lot of people.

And that is how at the end of the day you test your economy, with revenue creation. But you know, we have spoken about a loss to the economy. Tobago is in a difficult position. The Members for Tobago East and West could say anything they want, that is fine, they could do that. We have the views of other key stakeholders there who run, shop and parlour and supermarket, and hotel and taxi service. People in Tobago who run these car rental things are bawling, that they cannot rent cars anymore. If you do not accept that and work with that, you will continue to bury your heads in the sand and bring no relief.

Today is not a day to blame the UNC. It is not; it is to tell us what you are

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doing. And what are you doing? [*Desk thumping*] What are you doing? The *Galleons Passage* is supposed to come I think tomorrow? Is it tomorrow? Tomorrow or Sunday.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Last year.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** No, at the end of April. We were told that this boat is coming near the end of April. I expect the Minister to be on top of the boat, sword in hand, coming in at the port in Port of Spain.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** And a pundit with him.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** I expect he would have an imam and a pundit and a priest with him when he comes in there with the *Galleons Passage*. So is it coming to Trinidad and Tobago at the end of April as we were told? Yes or no? The answer is clearly less, because that is somewhere in Mexico. Now, if we think we have bacchanal, bacchanal now start with the *Galleons Passage*. We are told from technical reports and from persons who are in the know about boats, that that boat is a water taxi from San Fernando to Port of Spain. It will have problems going through the Bocas with the sea conditions there. There will be problems; it could be people overboard again.

I saw that video of persons climbing over from—Madam Speaker, with great respect to countries around the world, I thought that was somewhere in the Pacific Sea, somewhere in the islands in the Far East, somewhere there. I thought that was between the several islands that constitute Indonesia or something like that. They have ferries there. I could not believe that that was Trinidad and Tobago. I could not believe it, that in this day and age you have people jumping from one boat to another, and telling them, “Doh look down, doh look down.” This is the credibility and competence of the Government. Elderly people, you have to help them across from one vessel to a next, and say, “Doh look down. Whatever you do, doh look down.” That is a serious matter. And when you come to the population, you blame all and sundry, whoever sundry is. You blame all and sundry.

**4.15 p.m.**

You come now and cast blame on everybody, but that will not solve the problem. And if you have any information on corruption and so on, why in God’s name do you not take it to the police? You “fraid” to go by the police for some reason? [*Desk thumping*]

The Member for San Fernando West started his career here as Attorney

General telling us about “ghost workers” at the AG building. Three years later we “doh know nothing bout that”, but we deal with that.

You see, Madam Speaker, we have very serious concerns too about the *Galleons Passage*, and we would like the Members opposite to tell us categorically what we can expect when that vessel arrives here, whether it will be able to take the stress and strain of a journey from Port of Spain to Scarborough or whether we will end up in the same position that we are in?

In this debacle we are forgetting that this Government had to pay millions of dollars to LIAT to assist with airlift. We are forgetting that we had to pay money to PTSC to take up people from Crown Point and carry them Scarborough because they came on a plane not a boat.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And they had to pay for KFC.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** And we are not being told that we had to pay a company owned by the sole enquirer, the company owned by the sole investigator, we had to pay his company for chicken and chips in the airport.

And on that matter, did it miss me or did the Parliament receive a copy of the Mouttet report into procurement of these vessels; never received anything. So today we laid a report that “nobody see”, a report laid in this House today that I have not seen and I am a Member of the committee. [*Desk thumping*] They lay report—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Today, it is hours later and we still do not have it.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yeah. The Members have not had a report yet. I received something at 1.36 p.m., and a Minister stood in the House and laid a report that I have not seen as a member of the committee, could not sign therefore, and that, Madam Speaker, is a serious matter that we will take outside. But I am speaking about the Mouttet report, not the report laid by the Member for Laventille West today.

**Mr. Karim:** That is a seagull report.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** That is the one with COP.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** It is about the Commissioner of Police Selection Order; that is what they did today. But we are speaking about the Mouttet report on the procurement of the *Ocean Flower 2* and the *Cabo Star*. And today we ask the Government: tell us when and where you will lay the report, the Mouttet report.

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[*Desk thumping*] And why are you hiding that report? Are you hiding that report because they made critical remarks and comments and findings and observations about the very Minister of Works and Transport who came today, the very Minister. He left again. And you know, you would be careful of people who jumping in and out, jumping in and out, but I imagine there might be another problem developing as we speak. You know, he has become so blight that if he make a paper boat it will sink. Anything they touch it will mash up.

And the Member for Laventille West, a former Minister here, will speak, but the Member for Laventille West when he speaks must tell him if he is also conflicted by talking about that matter. He will tell us as well if he is conflicted, and if he is conflicted, I imagine he will declare that, and it will curtail his contribution.

Madam Speaker, because you see, there are many people who are working across the state sector and I cast no aspersions on anyone here who is related to Ministers in the state sector operating, and it is only when you get correspondence, you can see one from the other because, connect the dots. We were told that there was a Cabinet subcommittee to procure a boat. When we asked and we said the Member for Siparia made the statement and condemned that and say, you cannot use Cabinet subcommittees to procure boats, it “doh work like dat”, or to procure any goods and services. We are told that NIDCO is procuring. Were we told that? NIDCO? NIDCO is procuring.

And when we looked to NIDCO now to see well they procuring boat and so on, all right, we see relatives of Government Ministers as legal advisors and doing legal work for NIDCO. So what are we to surmise? What are we to conclude?—that it is a tangled web that you weave when first—

**Hon. Member:** You deceive. [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Correct. Madam Speaker, the matter as well and this was the—there was a sickening experience with this *Ocean Flower 2*, it was sickening to say the least. Every single day there was another story; there was another story every day about this boat. “Is like, I doh know what blight dat boat”. Every day something went wrong, some problem was experienced here, some problem was experienced there, and I “doh” know why they persisted with it. Who own that? Who was the broker? We had the Minister of Finance in one place saying, we had no broker. Then in another place saying, we had a broker, and we “doh” know who broke the deal or who break the deal.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** It is the same broker who—



**Dr. R. Moonilal:** And all their boats in the company named by the Member for Tabaquite, all of them are the same broker. Whenever they come in office, somehow “dey does” find the same person. He is probably waiting “somewhey” and you find him as soon as you reach and you say, “boat time”, you know, and they are doing that.

Madam Speaker, when they did, and this one affected me, so I just wanted to just put this on the record. And you know, citizens had to use Freedom of Information instruments and so on to go to the companies to get their information, because information is not forthcoming as we know.

Madam Speaker, they sent—the chief executive officer acting, Mr. Grant, did a report on August 08, 2018, on the charter-party agreement between Bridgeman Services and the Ministry of Work and Transport. They executed an agreement, 17 June, 2017. I will make it as simple as I can because we cannot get into too technical business.

The authority took a decision and so on, they executed the programme, they executed a contract June 2017. They did a sea trial. Now, they did a sea trial, I believe, after they signed a contract, that was instructive, and the following were observed. This is the sea trial of the *Ocean Flower 2*. Electrical starting problems; delay in start-up of one engine; all four engines were not operating; exhaust leaks in the engine; fuel leaks from the engine room; need to replace pressure maintenance valves on all four engines; oil leaks around the engine; absence of vessel’s maintenance history; speed capability which averaged 12 to 14 knots is unacceptable for high-speed craft; vessel rocked a lot in choppy waters.

Madam Speaker, I thought I would end with vessel rocked a lot in choppy waters, because today their Government is rocking on choppy waters, [*Desk thumping*] and it is a matter of time before they sink, it is a matter of time.

And today, I ask Members who will speak in this debate, look to the Motion and assure the people of Trinidad and assure the people of Tobago and also assure them that we will and you are prepared to deal with the problems rather than coming here to speak about the Opposition what they did in 2010 and 2015; that is most irrelevant to this day, it is most irrelevant.

And that is why, Madam Speaker, we also ask most sincerely that we lift the whip to allow Members to vote with their conscience because if in all conscience the Member for Tobago East and the Member for Tobago West can vote against this Motion, then all fall down, Madam Speaker, then all fall down. [*Crosstalk*] So they will get a chance, you know, they will get a chance to speak, but I do not

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know if they cannot wait, they will get a chance to speak.

**Madam Speaker:** Your time is now spent.

**Dr. R. Moonilal:** Madam Speaker, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Laventille West. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister in the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs (Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is my submission to begin my contribution on this Motion that the UNC from an ethical, from a behavioural, from a philosophical, from a moral standpoint simply do not understand right from wrong. [*Desk thumping*] They do not understand good from bad, honesty from dishonesty, truth from lie, they cannot distinguish them.

**Madam Speaker:** Member, I will ask you to retract, please.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Untruth. Cannot distinguish them. On a very simple matter the very noisy Member for Oropouche East got up here and told the world that it was Brad Pitt in the *Titanic*. No. Not even that he could get right. [*Laughter*] It was, I might inform him, Leonardo DiCaprio. But even on a simple matter like that, they will not speak the truth, and if you could speak an untruth in the kitchen, you will do it in the bedroom and in the living room too, it is just part of their DNA. [*Desk thumping*]

The UNC to Trinidad and Tobago it is like a duppy, a bad spirit, that evil wicked ghost, evil—

**Mr. Karim:** It come from Les Coteaux East.

**Hon. F. Hinds:**—mean, no good for Trinidad and Tobago and the people of Trinidad and Tobago. You heard them pretending to be speaking in the interest of the people of Tobago today, Madam Speaker? They would not even as my colleague pointed out, they would not even put a candidate, they have no time with that. They invested some money across the water hoping to get the two seats, and they used a company well known to the Member for Siparia, SIS.

Madam Speaker, this Motion calls on the Prime Minister to fire my colleague. Let me just refer to the business of firing for the past five, well not the past, but their five years in office. Anand Ramlogan, a big Attorney General, a big fish in the UNC ethic and behaviour, fired for interfering with witnesses, matter in the courthouse. Emmanuel George, fired.

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** Several times.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Gary Griffith, poor fellow, good horse ended up in the wrong

stable, fired; Anil Roberts, LifeSport issues, fired; Chandresh Sharma, tactile issues, fired; [*Laughter*] Glenn Ramadharsingh, tactile issues too, fired. And you know, the Member for Siparia when the country thought they saw the last of him, brought him back to serve in a part of this country. I tell you ethically, professionally, morally, spiritually, they do not know right from wrong. [*Desk thumping*] They do not. That is why I say they are like a bad spirit to Trinidad and Tobago. [*Crosstalk*]

Jamal Mohammed, innocent little fellow joined them, made a mistake, broke stride with a strong PNM tradition, fired; Christlyn Moore, Madam Visine, same thing, fired; Jack Warner, a big fellow, when the whole world focused on him, when this country spoke at length about him, the Member for Siparia as Prime Minister brought him in the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago, fired too when he started to speak some truths and recognizing that they did nothing for agriculture coming from rural communities and representing rural communities, the only thing that Jack Warner found they had to do with agriculture is some plant-like substance on certain windowsill in Philippine which compromised police officers and found them as a part of something to cover up something—

**Mr. Karim:** What Motion is that?

**Hon. F. Hinds:**—fired. Herbert Volney, they went on the Bench while the man was sitting as a judge and negotiated a candidacy with him, brought him in St. Joseph, got him to get himself involved in the business of clause and section 34.

**Mr. Charles:** Standing Order 48(1).

**Madam Speaker:** Please continue, Member for Laventille West.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Thank you very much. Herbert Volney, fired. Collin Partap, he followed the Member of Siparia very closely, he was dismissed, he was fired for certain drinking issues.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** That is why you had to fire—

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Yes. Verna St. Rose, lady with a loud bell, I saw her a few days ago coming out here to support a cause, fired. And she has something in common with the Member for Siparia, and Resmi too.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Fired.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Fired. Nicole Dyer Griffith, poor girl, fired; Therese Baptiste-Cornelis, fired; Rudratee Nan Gosine-Ramgoolam, fired; Subhas Panday, my good

friend we served in the Senate together, fired. Madam Speaker, Patrick Watson who came out of the university, joined with them, fired; Mary King, goodly lady, academic too, fired. And it was not all, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, 2015, the country fired the whole of them. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, I want to begin, if you would permit me, to amplify, [*Crosstalk*] to elucidate, if you would permit me, because my colleague the Minister of Works and Transport, my dear and proud brother and friend, he told us about certain affairs, the Member for Oropouche raised it, you must permit me to clarify the issue.

The Highways Division deals with roads and highways and bridges and that sort of thing. The Drainage Division in the Ministry is that part which deals with de-silting and cleaning drains. The first question is: Why would the Highways Division—

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Members, it is now 4.30 p.m., we shall take the suspension now and resume at 5.00 p.m.

**4.30 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Laventille West, you have 23 minutes and six seconds left of your original time. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. F. Hinds:** I thank you, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] Madam Speaker, before we took the break, I was asking the question of the then Minister of Works and Infrastructure the Member for Tabaquite: How was it that the Highways Division was engaging in de-silting?—that is irregular to start with. But the Minister of Works and Transport who told us that he had in his possession 15 files, well he does not have them anymore because I have them, and I told him that they need further attention, because he pointed out that given that—the way it was when I was there, up to when I was there, certain officers in the Ministry had certain limits that they could have approved for the issuance of contracts. And that multi-faceted way of procurement allowed a whole lot of wrong things to take place in the Ministry of Works and Transport.

When I was there I put a stop to that, and we established one common procurement unit along the lines of the procurement legislation which we have since operationalized. That was the first thing that I did when I went there, because we went there knowing a lot wrong had happened. And today, the Minister of Works and Transport unearthed and brought proof that a lot went wrong. And I saw my colleagues on the other side behaving holier than thou, like they know nothing about it, the Member for Couva North and the Member for

Couva South.

So let me, based on the reopening of this by the Member for Oropouche clarify what the Minister of Works and Transport was saying. The Minister of Works and Transport was saying, that it was just coincidental that all of these 15 projects carried the exact price, \$345,000, not one cent more, one cent less.

So whoever contractor got it, and the contractor was—and I will call the contractor's name, put it on the record, Ram Ken Contractors Limited, specialist in all civil and construction works of light pole No. 77 Main Road, Tabaquite, Trinidad, West Indies, and maybe the Member for Tabaquite would know this contractor very well. Fifteen such examples we have in front of us, every one of them \$345,000, and with the exception of one which went for \$599,999.85, just 15 cents short of a limit that existed by an officer in the Minister of Works and Transport to issue.

And there is a column on this document which says, MP's representative. So that the person who was overseeing this on behalf of MPs Indarsingh and Ramdial, the Member for Couva South and the Member for Couva North, is a man by the name of Becham Ramoutar.

So, I want to ask the Member Couva South if he knows the man who represented him, who claimed to represent him called Becham Ramoutar. And I want the Member for Couva North to tell us whether she knows the person who purports to be her representative, a certain Hemant Maharaj. And I want the then Minister, the Member for Tabaquite to indicate whether he knows the man by the name of Indar Siewsanakar. Let them get up now if they want to know and tell us whether they know them.

And further to that by letter dated October 16, 2014, all happening under the watch and the leadership and the prime ministerial guide and ethic of the Member for Siparia at the time in a letter addressed, on the letterhead of the office of the Member of Parliament for Couva South, Rudranath Indarsingh MP, email number, and I "aint" wasting time with it, dated October 16<sup>th</sup>, addressed to the one Surujrattan Rambachan, Minister of Works and Infrastructure.

Dear hon. Minister,

Request for settlement of outstanding payments.

So here is the Member of Parliament writing to the Minister requesting settlement of payments and the letter says:

I refer to the subject captioned in relation to the attached correspondence

dated October 7, 2014 received from Mr. Kenrick Ramlogan Director of Ram Ken Contractors Limited.

**Mr. Karim:** Read the whole letter.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Read the whole letter.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** And he goes on, and it is signed by Rudranath Indarsingh. So they are pretending that they do not know, that is on the record. And if they have anything further to say, in my view they should be telling that to some investigator or some police officer somewhere. [*Desk thumping*] Not me. Because the Member for Oropouche West got up here asking, “What does MP and Minister have to do in things?”—and I will tell you why the Minister of Works and Transport was involved in the importation of a part in a little while.

As for the letterhead of the Office of the Member of Parliament for Couva North, I see she is twisting up her face opposite to me, playing innocent. Letter dated the 21<sup>st</sup> of October, 2014, again addressed to the Member of Parliament Dr. the hon. Surujrattan Rambachan, Minister of Works and Infrastructure.

Dear Minister,

I write you on behalf of Ram Ken Contractors Limited situate at light pole 77 Main Road Tabaquite, telephone no. 679 2572.

The contractor has completed his scope of duty to de-silt water courses and so on.

As such I verify—

She outlines five projects—

...and as such I verify the work was completed.

As a former Minister of Works and Transport for 16 months there before my friend took over to continue the good work, and I want to tell you this, Madam Speaker. When the work is done, there are officials in the Ministry, whether it is road works or de-silting [*Desk thumping*] whose responsibility it is to certify that the work was done to protect public money, not no MP. But what was happening here obviously was that the Minister at the time, he was determining that the work was settled on the advice of my two friends who sit opposite me here today, and that is contrary to the procurement and the procedures that we know. [*Desk thumping*] These things, I swear to you, could never happen under a Keith Rowley administration. [*Desk thumping*]

And that is the reason why I stand here today proudly in defence of my friend the Minister of Works and Transport, Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan [*Desk thumping*] in support of him, and to reject this Motion. Because to date, Madam Speaker, not one single right-thinking person in this country, unless if they are sick and deranged, could accuse any of my colleagues on this side of putting our hands [*Desk thumping*] in public money. Not one!

You hear foolishness about cell bill and roaming, well not foolishness, you heard about that. You heard about \$92,000 spent in a hotel in Tobago, you heard about that. You know what? By now in the UNC Government the list I went through, “all ah dem” was the subject of public consternation and indignation and scorn and ridicule. [*Interruption*] As my friend just reminded me, the young and bright doctor, he said misfeasance and malfeasance aplenty. [*Desk thumping*].

So, Madam Speaker, I “doh have no point” now, is only one point I making is to call the police. I “doh” want no point now. You had your time. Madam Speaker, having dealt with that matter, I now ask very humbly that may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in the sight of Jah, the most high, the most living God, because persons raised spiritual matters here, and as I told my Rasta brother [*Desk thumping*] Adrian Leonce a while ago, we did not come here to play. We come here to do serious public business, led by a serious man, Member of Parliament and Prime Minister. And as for “I and I”, I do not come to play. We have a job to do, we live on the salary we get, and we do it in spirit and we do it in truth.

You see the corruption and the wickedness and the deception, the Member for Oropouche East raised the question of that minority report and so on in this debate. We sat with them for the last few days to carry out the mandate of this Parliament on a certain matter pursuant to certain notifications, and we sat, all of us on this side: Mr. Deyalsingh, Member Mitchell, Member Olivierre and we worked conscientiously as hard, brought to consensus on several matters where there were divergences of views. They thanked us last night, congratulated us for the quality of the work, congratulated the staff of the Parliament. And lo and behold, the deceptive, deceiving UNC jumped up to—I am sorry. Come out today and say, [*Crosstalk*] they have submitted a minority report. They are—George Chambers, I love you, they are too wicked! [*Desk thumping*] Boldface! Disgusting! I make no apology for that, and make me scared to be so close in this room to them, but my public duty demands it, and “ah here still”.

The Prime Minister in dealing with the issue around the *Galicia* told this

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country, Madam Speaker, that something was crooked about it, the Prime Minister said so. My Prime Minister “doh” talk lightly, you know. When he speaks in public, he speaks on the basis of actual factual information received. And he was right, something went wrong, a lot went wrong.

**Hon. Member:** And “yuh bounce down de man”.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** A lot went wrong. The question is: If “de ting” was crooked, the question really was, who bend it? Who bend it? When they began this whole story about *Ocean Flower 2*, and “wey is de name of de firm”?—and Bridgeman. They began thinking that they would have found the Minister of Works and Transport in the same condition that many them of them found themselves, they were judging him and us by their twisted standards. [*Crosstalk*]

And, Madam Speaker, the Minister correctly pointed out today, once these issues became alive, the Prime Minister got a private citizen to go on a fact-finding exercise, a certain Mr. Mouttet, and he provided the Prime Minister with facts and figures and information upon which action has been taken, because we now have information from that exercise by Mr. Mouttet which, as the Minister told us earlier, demonstrated that “de ting” was crooked, but it had nothing to do with my ministerial colleague, and as a consequence, persons are being held accountable. Persons are being held accountable, so I really “doh” want to hear my colleagues on the other side, you know, on those matters.

The Minister of Works and Transport, Madam Speaker, I want to tell you is the deputy political leader of my wonderful, beautiful, long-standing People’s National Movement. He is the Minister of Works and Transport, he is a Senator in our proud Parliament. He is a hard-working and successful businessman who gave up his business activities to come and offer public service like many of us have done since independence in this country. He is here making sacrifices in order to serve the people of this country, and I do not think he is a penniless man who needs to interfere with nobody pennies.

So, I stand here proudly in support and express absolute and total confidence in my colleague the Minister of Works and Transport. [*Desk thumping*] And one of the reasons why I do is because as a former Minister of Works and Transport myself and with knowledge, intimate knowledge of some of the matters, let me share with you, Madam Speaker.

Insofar as the Curepe interchange is concerned, you heard one of their friends who now carries on a newspaper, *Sunshine*, you heard my colleague, he tells you in the



*Sunshine* of Friday, the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, 2014, when them and Jack Warner had their break-up over issues, “bo rat”, “woman rat”, “man rat”, you know they had their fight.

**5.15 p.m.**

And the article says:

*Sunshine* was told by two directors of NIDCO—and I am quoting it—that there was a private meeting between Rambachan and the board, which meeting was held at 8.00 a.m. in the Ministry on Tuesday, September the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, two days before the board met to consider Vinci’s bid. Vinci is a big contractor that was involved in that project, the Curepe Interchange.

And just before, Junior Minister Stacy Roopnarine sent an email to Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, expressing concern about the Curepe Interchange and the bidding process, she was fired for that too.

**Mrs. Jennings-Smith:** I remember that, and was caused to apologize.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** And was made to apologize, and humiliated when she as a young woman, a young junior Minister, Minister of State, wrote to the Prime Minister, much like Madam Donaldson Honeywell did, when she was in the office of the Solicitor General, and the Member for Siparia did nothing but fired her. The article continues:

At the private and secret meeting the directors said Rambachan had accused Vinci of being PNM and also accused NIDCO’s board, Deputy Chairman, Prof. Winston Suite and Roger Joseph, Vice-President of NIDCO, as being PNM also.

Well, we know that is how they “does” see the world, UNC and PNM, money and public money, took, take. All of those things. That is how they do it. Right? The article continues:

The directors told *Sunshine* that Rambachan instructed them that Lutchmeesingh must get the Interchange contract, and that they should know who their boss is.

So, when the Member for Siparia as Prime Minister, sent then Solicitor General’s Donaldson Honeywell’s letter to the then Attorney General, when she was complaining about the Attorney General, it is a consistent pattern.

That is why they are warming the Opposition benches today. They will do it tomorrow, and they will do it for the next 15 years at minimum, as long as God lives, as long as I have strength [*Desk thumping*] I will defend this country and ensure that they never get a chance to come back in Government. They have

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tainted everything, corrupted and spoilt everything, Madam Speaker.

So the Minister of Works and Transport can now boast that the contract to complete the Interchange is \$250 million less than the UNC had contracted and put in place. So, by their departure from office, and by his coming, we are now saving the country \$250 million on that Interchange. As for the highway to Manzanilla, we are building that at \$80 million per kilometre, because you have to go through—you know these things are expensive. They were doing it at \$40 million per kilometre more. They were doing it at \$120 million. And this is not Fitzgerald Hinds saying so. These are measured statistical facts gleaned from the records of the Ministry when they were in office, as opposed to what we are doing, and that is to the credit of the Minister of Works and Transport. [*Desk thumping*] You want us to fire him. He is defending the public interest against you. You were fired! And if we had a chance we would fire you again. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Indarsingh:** How much time you get fired?

**Hon. F. Hinds:** We are witnessing in this country, in particular given our economic circumstances, and in all seriousness—[*Crosstalk*]—Madam Speaker, in the Cabinet week after—[*Continuous crosstalk*] Madam Speaker, I need your protection? I am hearing a voice that sounds coarse and sounds like it is—

**Madam Speaker:** Okay. Member for Couva South, I know you do not know the span of your voice. Okay? But, Member for Laventille West, I am sure you can conquer that. Direct your contribution here, and we will be okay.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** I thank you. Maybe I have to have a raspy voice and sound as though I spent a night in a bar too. [*Laughter*] Madam Speaker, what we are seeing in the Cabinet, coming out of the Ministry of Works and Transport, and indeed everywhere else, is the prices and agreed contracts between the same contractors and the State, we are seeing prices going significantly down, down, down, by millions.

So, I want to tell the people of Trinidad and Tobago today, truthfully, you do not know, but we are protecting your purse. We are protecting the public interest. And, you know, Madam Speaker, by way of metaphor, if you have a tank and a six-inch water main bringing in the water, and you have leaks all at the bottom of the tank, and a four-inch main taking the water out when you turn on, you would never fill up. You would be losing. We have sealed all the little leaks, and turn on only when we have to. I want Trinidad and Tobago to know, in the Ministry of Works and Transport, and across the spectrum of the Government, we are saving

you money. The waste and the corruption has been brought to an end. [*Desk thumping*]

And we are not saying that there are not public servants and state operators in the state agencies and private contractors and other people who are accustomed to getting more than they were due, we are not saying that they are not about, but once we shine the light on them we are dealing with it. And they know from the leadership of Dr. Keith Rowley, and they know from the leadership of the likes of Fitzgerald Hinds and this Cabinet, those matters cannot continue under our watch. This “cyar” be a case like where the SIS, under the watch of the Member for Siparia, who is calling on my Prime Minister to fire my Minister, where a contract was given to SIS, a close friend, a certain Krishna Lalla, for \$400 million more than the lowest bidder for that contract. That “cyar” happen around here. That cannot happen.

And that was not their first time, they, the Member for Siparia was Attorney General and Minister of Education in the Panday Government between '95 and 2001. They embarked upon the construction of an airport, a new airport, the one we use every day, up to now. That was to cost you, Madam Speaker, the public \$400 million, the UNC wound up spending \$1.6 billion on that. And the United States Government, their money laundering apparatus—it came up this morning in an FIU interview with us from the Anti-Terrorism Joint Select Committee. The United States money laundering apparatus saw these large sums of money moving out of Trinidad, thought it had something to do with drugs. When they checked it out they realized it was not drugs, and it was something else, money being siphoned from the airport project.

A commission of enquiry was established by the then Prime Minister Manning led by Mr. Clinton Bernard, a former Court of Appeal judge, and charges flew from that. Up to now they are using their deep pockets and avoiding their day in court. They are going to the Privy Council and coming back, all under the watch of the Member for Siparia. That happened. They are out of place to come and tell us about “bobol” and corruption. When I heard the Member for Oropouche using those words today, I said to myself, oh my father God, if this was like the days of the Old Testament, the father would have just strike him down. He using the word “bobol”, and accusing my Government of corruption. They are the epitome of “bobol”. [*Desk thumping*] They are the stone and the stick of “bobol”.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Madam Speaker, 48(6). Madam Speaker, 48(6).

**Hon. F. Hinds:** The Member used it.

**Madam Speaker:** “Yeah, but not the bobol”. I do not think it is that word, which was said. But there are some statements you made after that, if you could just—you are a man of words, I am sure you could say it in another way.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Let me proceed. Let me proceed. I made a note of it, but let me proceed. That is all right. And the Member for Oropouche East suggesting that we do not even know how to buy a “lil” boat. Well, a boat is not something you does buy over the counter like a pack of Panadol or Phensic if you have a headache, you know. A boat is a specialized piece of equipment. And “dem does” try to buy it over the shelf. The Member for Siparia, as Prime Minister, went to China, and the Chinese so understand her foibles and frivolity, they invited her to a shipyard in China, and—

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Laventille West, your original speaking time is now spent, you are entitled to 15 more minutes, if you intend to. Please proceed.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*] What they do not know, everything they do and say, international players study it and watch it through their embassies, you know. So, they had a good idea who she was. Her fecklessness and frivolity, [*Interruption*] and her other attributes.

**Madam Speaker:** Member, proceed.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** I am proceeding. Other traits. [*Interruption*] Any way. Madam Speaker, they invited her to a shipyard.

**Mr. Charles:** Who is “her”?

**Hon. F. Hinds:** The Member for Siparia.

**Mr. Charles:** Right, have respect.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** The Leader of the Opposition. You should be ashamed to hear me say that. They invited her to a shipyard—

**Hon. Member:** Her position.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Well, he grew up next— I agree—she just see a boat, the thing have “Chinee” writing all over it. She just say, “geh meh one ah dat,” like she had a headache or her foot was swollen.

**Madam Speaker:** Member!

**Hon. F. Hinds:** The Member for Siparia. And we ended up with a boat that will cost this country, that cost this country \$1 billion. Just as how we end up with the Couva hospital. When they began with that project, they told us it was a grant from the Chinese Government. When we got into Government and go inside of the books we realized that grant has cost this country \$1.5 billion, and it took the Prime Minister, Minister Stuart Young, last week, when they went to CHOGM to speak with the Indian Prime Minister and others, trying to find a manager skilled in the business of hospital management to come to operate that facility so that we could benefit from it.

As for the Minister of Works and Transport, I would like to commend him. It is not very many people who would go beyond the call of duty, as this man did. This man was on his way back from Los Angeles, my colleague, the Minister of Works and Transport. He is in touch, minute by minute, dealing with the problem of the sea bridge. They tell him, look, we ordered a part and the part is in Miami. He is on his way home: So, how will you get the part, he asked? They say, it will take about two weeks. “Yeah?” And, they have to get somebody, they have to get Cabinet’s approval and all, for board approval, and somebody to go to Miami to collect the part. All of that “go” take two weeks. Meanwhile, the Minister is aware that the people in Tobago were screaming about the breakdown in the sea bridge, and they say all they needed was this part. So, the Minister—they paid for it. It was a transaction between the Port Authority and the supplier in Miami. All the Minister did, with love in this heart, in the spirit of public service, was to be a messenger. To take it, to bring it to Trinidad and Tobago overnight. I think he should be commended. [*Desk thumping*] But I told you the UNC do not know good from bad, nobility from ignobility, wickedness from righteousness, so they came here today to condemn it.

**Hon. Member:** He did not procure it.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** And he did not. Is the port who did. He just assist. He told them, I am passing through Miami, and therefore I would act as your messenger. Trinidad and Tobago, I will act as your messenger. I think the Minister must be commended, man. [*Desk thumping*] Saved the country time, saved the country money, and cut out the noise. But you see, they want noise on the sea bridge. They do not like the fact that the Minister of Finance, on a sub-cabinet committee, after the Port Authority failed six times to procure a vessel. Twice under my watch. I could not understand it. Some problem with specifications. I brought an expert and I attached him to them as an advisor to do the specifications, somehow or the other they got that wrong again. The man left frustrated. So, on two

occasions under my watch they could not procure a vessel to replace the *Galicia*, and four times under the Minister. The Cabinet say, oh my God, the people of Tobago to who we have a responsibility, screaming and crying and suffering, and as for an apology, we extended that a long time ago.

So that, Madam Speaker, the sub-cabinet appointed a six-member team and they found a vessel—God has been good to us—that is suited to the route, and it is on its way. It is known as the *Galleons Passage*, but they do not want nothing good for Trinidad and Tobago. The fact that a boat is coming, the fact that the *T&T Spirit* is back in the water, notwithstanding the one or two little hiccups, as you would expect, because the vessel is an old vessel, and they are trying to make it usable until Trinidad and Tobago could afford to buy another new one. And I will take the opportunity to repeat what the Minister has said, learning from this—and this situation of maintenance is a situation everybody knows. It is a weak point in Trinidad and Tobago's records. We have not been very good at maintaining. I know a young man who has about 37 vehicles, every time an insurance policy is due, or service is due, it has come up on his computer, he gets that done. We “doh” behave like that in Trinidad, unfortunately. So, learning from this, the Minister has put things in place to ensure that the vessel, the new one, the *Galleons Passage* and the others we have, will be maintained professionally and properly.

I could tell you as a former Minister, men who were paid by the Bay Ferries people to do all night, overnight, every night maintenance, men “eh” come to work, men sleep on the vessel, they play draft, they play all kinds of things. Trinidad slack, and the Minister was saying today, the problem eventually came to a crushing standstill under his watch, but that condition, that state of affairs, that disregard for maintenance, and replacement on a rotating basis as necessary, was not in place, and it has been so for 40 years. Our Government has simply decided we want to fix these things, and the Minister was right, a lot of the corruption on the port, because in many state enterprises, including the Port Authority, there are people who make a living off of that. They mastered the system. They know how to live, they know how to get money, and they live in the trough.

The unions have the port in a strangle hold. I was shocked when I went there as Minister. Overtime, they have contract with the port, union. When you work the first day, “dem doh” have one or two in seven, you know, or five in seven days, you know, like most people, you know. When you work there for the first day of the week, your first eight hours—if your first eight hours is on the weekend

or on a holiday you start getting overtime pay because it is a weekend or holiday. So, labour cost wages on the port, phenomenal. Overtime is \$25 million a year, and the port is not earning money, but the Treasury was always there to fill the gap. All of our “tiefing”, and corruption and idleness and waste in this country, the Treasury was there. But today, she is there no more. “When we look back it eh ha nutten in, dem empty it.” They borrow to the limit, they max out the country’s \$12 billion overdraft, they borrow like it was going out “ah” style and spend it in the way I just explained you with “dem” 15 contracts and more. SIS, \$400 million. That is how they do it. Big, medium and small, everywhere. And that is what we face today.

So, Madam Speaker, I am so sick when I read this Motion. And I see the Member for Siparia, she gets on her platform the other night, and she is quoted in the *Express* Wednesday—the Member for Siparia, quoted in the *Express*, Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> April, newspaper. The *Express* saying, and I am quoting:

His leader Keith Rowley continues to try to block for Rohan, and we don’t know what hold he must have—what hold Rohan have on the Prime Minister.

My Prime Minister, nobody “cyar hold on he. He is he own man.” [*Desk thumping*] Own, honest, noble man. [*Desk thumping*] “He doh ha no hold on he”, maybe apart from Sharon Rowley. Nobody, from my knowledge of the man for the last 22 years. And in terms of hold, I want to know what “kinda” hold Resmi had on the Member for Siparia. “Dai is the hold I want to know about.” What could have explained her conduct in that matter? But I would not go back there now. I would say it was robbery, not with v. She continues, the Member for Siparia:

Any other leader would have fired Rohan Sinanan for his incompetence that has led us to where we are today. The sea bridge has been plagued with issues since the PNM came back in office.

Since we came back in office? I have just told you this has been going on for 40 years, all the slackness, and the corruption, and way they hired the *Galicia* in breach of any proper procuring rules. And when we were on the campaign trail in 2015, we told the country about that *Galicia* and we pledged to this country, and the port employees, the port management, the people of Trinidad and Tobago know and the *Galicia* owners know too, this Government not doing it like the UNC, proper procurement.

So, they did not want that. They wanted a five-year contract, as the Minister said, without proper tendering, and they decided they will hold the country to

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ransom, on Good Friday decided they pulling out the service. When they realized they could not get it. And as the Minister said, I was there, I was dealing with them. They were threatening to breach the contract in letters to me, and I did not budge. I went and I got a senior counsel opinion, because letters were passing between the *Galicia*, Intercontinental, their agent/Nyree Alfonso who had the procurement of the *Galicia*, was adviser and consultant to the port, and at the same time, agent for the vessel that they supposedly procured. And there are those who wonder whether she has a deeper interest in that vessel. But, those are matters that will be resolved outside of this House.

So, I went and sought senior counsel's opinion, and because of the letters that were flowing between the port and Intercontinental, senior counsel looked at it, and he said to me as Minister, because I was not taking my own legal advice, or taking any advice from my colleagues on the other side, senior counsel said, it appears to me from the correspondence that has flowed, there is an 18-month contract. Once I got that, I understood what the reality was, but they were now on a month to month, 18-month contract. So, we decided to go and find another vessel, and at the first opportunity engage in a proper procurement process. The *Galicia* was not happy with that, the people, and they decided to pull the rug when my colleague came in. And my colleague has had to grapple with that in the public interest, and all other things that he has had to grapple to.

So, I stand here in his proud support today, Madam Speaker. And I would have thought that the UNC, Members of Parliament in this House, recognizing the very serious issues that face us, starting with the economy, which they put on a nose dive for the reasons I have stated. They emptied the Treasury. The Green Fund, and they—

**Mr. Deyalsingh:** NGC.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Yes. Well, NGC they wiped out \$16 billion, but the Green Fund and the, what is the other fund? [*Interruption*] No, man.

**Hon. Member:** Say anything.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** They went and they pledged those.

**Hon. Member:** Business levy.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Yes, the business levy, they pledged those. They pawned them as we “does” say and borrow the money and “dem”, and they spend out that too. Max out the overdraft. All of that they did. And I would have thought they would have come here today to discuss improving the economy, the life blood of this country. The economic life blood of this country. “But dey eh bothering with dat.” We have issues of



crime. We are trying to fix the police service. We are dealing now with the appointment and the process concerning the appointment of the commissioner. They had an opportunity to participate on that, and look what they did today? They do not want anything good for Trinidad and Tobago. They feel that the people suffering will be ascribed to us, and therefore all they are about to do is create mayhem.

This Motion is an attempt to create mayhem. [*Desk thumping*] But the FIU told us, this morning, that within the last two years, they saw a—and I am quoting them—significant increase in the number, 851 suspicious transactions, and the quantity of money around those transactions, totalled, I think, about three hundred and fifty something million dollars. The figure escapes me now, but a substantial increase. No, 28, I think. Yes. So that there are things happening in the economy, people are trying to move money, and people are watching. I would have thought they would have raised those issues in a Motion so we could have discussed them. But they do not want that. They do not want that at all.

So, Madam Speaker, there is a lot more to be said, but I think I want to ask the Member for Tabaquite, one question. I heard him ask the Minister, in my view, facetiously, about some contact, some company. I want to ask the member and the public of Trinidad and Tobago, one question about a company. The company is called.

**Hon. Member:** Make up names.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** Yeah, make up name. Well, the Member for Tabaquite—

**Madam Speaker:** Hon, Member for Laventille West, your speaking time is now spent.

**Hon. F. Hinds:** I thank you, Madam Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Barry Padarath (Princes Town):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to be able to contribute to the Motion before the House, brought by the Member for Tabaquite, at a very appropriate juncture in our nation's history.

Madam Speaker, when we look and we heard the contribution by the Member for Laventille West, it is best summarized in one quip, and that is, "balisier before boat". [*Desk thumping*] They have put the interest of their party ahead of the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] You see, Madam Speaker, and I mean this with no disrespect, but there is a quote that says, "Dead man tells no tales." And the Member for Laventille West, his contribution reminded me of a David Rudder song which spoke about a "Madman's Rant". [*Laughter*] But it also reminded me of a quotation of former Prime Minister,

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Patrick Manning, who was also a former leader of the People's National Movement. You see, when I listen to the contribution of the Member for Laventille West, one thing instantly came to my mind, and that was during the time that the Member served under the Patrick Manning administration, Mr. Manning would often make reference to one of his own Members who he described as a "charlatan in a three-piece suit."

**Hon. Members:** "Oh, aaaah."

**Mr. Karim:** Who is that? Who is that?

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Madam Speaker, we heard much that was said about corruption, we heard much that was said about the UNC style of doing things. You know, Madam Speaker, I want to remind Members opposite about the PNM style of doing things, and we do not have to look very far, you know. If we look at July 11, 2017, prime example of PNM waste, mismanagement and corruption, and who was at the centre—

**Madam Speaker:** Member, your voice.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam.

**Madam Speaker:** Maybe, yes, you could.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** When we look, who was at the centre of some of those allegations that made its way into the public domain on July 11, 2017?

Madam Speaker, we were told that a document surfaced in the public domain that spoke about PTSC contracts, not in the hundreds of thousands, spoken about the Member for Laventille West. But in the millions of dollars of taxpayers' money. [*Desk thumping*] And the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West was the one that we are advised, advised PTSC, that even though there were no contracts that were awarded, pay it anyway. You know, Madam Speaker, what they stopped short of saying? The said pay it anyway, and they stopped short of saying, pay it anyway because they are PNM people. [*Desk thumping*] That is what they stopped short of saying. So do not come here to lecture us today, and sanctimonious about corruption, and how you are supporting the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The people of Trinidad and Tobago in two and a half years have seen through each and every one of you. The people of Trinidad and Tobago understand what you are about.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Speaker, a point of order, 48(6). I am advised that the Member for Port of Spain North did no such thing. Did not do anything improper with respect to contracts. I will ask the Member to withdraw that.

**Madam Speaker:** Member, I believe whatever the Member says he takes responsibility for, so.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. We heard much about the Member's ranting about the Piarco International Airport under the Panday administration. You know, Madam Speaker, I want to ask a very serious question here today. A contract for over \$140 million has been awarded, sole select tender, we are advised, for contracted to do work on the Diego Martin stadium. I want to ask today, who is that contractor? Does that contractor play golf every morning in Moka with a particular big man, because he is a small man? Those are some of the questions that we must ask ourselves, Madam Speaker, if we really want to be advocates of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, the Member for Laventille West parroted something that was said by the hon. Minister of Works and Transport, speaking about the Member for Couva North and Couva South, writing about box drain. *[Interruption]* You know, Madam Speaker, when—

**Madam Speaker:** Member, I have heard at least three times, a Member suck their teeth. I cannot decide who Member it is, but that is totally unparliamentary. Okay! Please continue.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. Parroted by the Member for Laventille West, the Minister of Works and Transport sought to introduce a matter about box drains, where the Members for Couva North and Couva South, wrote enquiring about a particular contractor. Madam, I want to raise that very letter that the Minister spoke about. You see, I have a copy of the letter. And when you come you must come good. You must come with facts, and do not just tell piece of the story, tell the whole story. *[Desk thumping]*

*[Mr. Hinds leaves the Chamber]*

**Ms. Ramdial:** "He running."

**Mr. B. Padarath:** And that is why you will run, but you cannot hide.

**5.45 p.m.**

Madam Speaker, October 11, 2014, MP Indarsingh wrote this to then Minister Surujrattan Rambachan, now Member for Tabaquite. And in the letter he says:

Dear Minister,

Would you please investigate the matter to bring resolution.

Madam Speaker, I have a copy of the letter here, October 11, 2014, MP Indarsingh

wrote asking for the matter to be investigated. The Member never asked for payments to be made. But you see, that is the impression that they want to give to the population of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, the Member for Laventille West, and I thought it was really laughable, eh, coming from the Member for Laventille West, I thought it was really laughable. The Member said Nicole Dyer-Griffith fired, Gary Griffith fired. The Member himself, the Member for Laventille West, fired as the Minister of Works and Transport under Dr. Keith Rowley. The Member himself, the Member for Laventille West fired for incompetence as the Minister of Public Utilities under Prime Minister, Dr. Keith Rowley. The Prime Minister tells this country that he has confidence in all of his Ministers. You know what, you know what he has to say about the Member for Laventille West by firing him twice and demoting him to a junior Ministry, Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister by his own admissions, through his own actions has said, the Member for Laventille West is a complete waste of time and I do not want you in my Government. And that is essentially what he has said.

But, Madam Speaker, when we look at the pattern in Government and the Member for Laventille West said, let us look at what is the UNC's history; let us look at what the Member for Siparia's history in Government; let us see what is the PNM's pattern of Government. You see, Madam, when you fail at law you start to speak economics like the Attorney General. When you fail at Works and Transport like Minister Sinanan, you start speaking about sex suits.

**Mr. Young:** On a point of order, 48(4), offensive and insulting language about a Member of the House. [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Speaker:** Please continue, Member.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. [*Desk thumping*] And I must thank the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West because it gave me an opportunity to breathe, but I really want you all to hear this one. You see, when you fail at tourism you say you know nothing about sports. [*Desk thumping*] When you fail at analytics you start speaking about refugees. Madam Speaker, this Government and this Minister is on trial today, but each and every single one of them is on trial, because they too have contributed to the collapse of the sea and the air bridge.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister would have indicated to this country just a few weeks ago that he had confidence in all of his Ministers. One day later after promoting the Member for Diego Martin Central to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, he had to fire him. But, Madam Speaker, I want to go

through some of the patterns of behaviour in this Government. You see the Member for Laventille West spoke about Piarco, he danced all around different issues under the 2010/2015 administration of then Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar. You know, I remember it was the Member for Port of Spain South who took issue with the shoes and the dress and the clothes of Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar. But not any one of them can stand in Kamla Persad-Bissessar's shoes far less for her dress. [*Crosstalk*]

But I will tell you this, Madam Speaker, what was spent under this Government? What was spent under this PNM Government? You saw \$5 billion down the drain in Petrotrin; you saw \$100 million in A&V. Let us hear a little bit more about that. What is the Minister's role in all of that, Member for Laventille West? What is the Prime Minister's role in all of that, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker, you know the Member for Tabaquite made a very interesting point earlier and I really wish to congratulate the Member for Tabaquite. You know why, Madam Speaker, because the Motion brought by the Member for Tabaquite represents the pulse of the people of Trinidad and Tobago today. The pulse of anger, the pulse of frustration, the pulse of totally giving up on this Government. The Motion before us is absolutely relevant and if you ask any layman, far less for those who represent organizations and stakeholders in the sea bridge issue, they will tell you that Rohan Sinanan and I will fix my grammar, whether it is, has or have, he definitely have to go. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Speaker, today, Government, especially the Tobago MPs, the Member for Tobago East and the Member for Tobago West must say whether or not they stand in defence of their party or whether or not they stand in defence of their country; that will determine who are the true patriots, Madam Speaker. You know when I heard the hon. Minister of Works and Transport it told me that the hon. Minister has a complex and it is called the Jearlean John complex. You see, Madam, Jearlean John offered the hon. Minister during the Easter vacation some words of advice, and we were told that the Minister and others believe that the Tobagonians can do like Jesus and walk on water. But you see, I will repeat the words and the advice of Jearlean John to the hon. Ministers and those opposite when she say they too need Jesus. Jesus must take the wheel. You see, that is the level of frustration our citizens have reached in this country. They do not have faith in their Government and therefore today they are looking for faith in the Holy word. I say to them, like I say to those in Trinidad, the UNC is here, we are ready and prepared and sooner rather than later we will relieve you of the pain and suffering [*Desk thumping*] of a PNM Government.

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Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister is yet to tell us what comprehensive tangible plan has been put in place that will have a long-term effect, because we are not only looking at the short-term effects, you are looking at the long-term. So we first started off with the *Superfast Galicia*, then we went to the fiasco with the *Ocean Flower*, in-between there came the *Cabo Star* and then we have the *Galleons Passage*. Minister Rohan Sinanan we are told should be renamed Rohan “FedEx” Sinanan, because instead of ministerial duties the Minister is up and down between Miami to Trinidad bringing to and fro equipment and Lord knows what else.

Now, Madam Speaker, we have seen in this country and that is where Immigration and Customs and Excise is very important. You cannot have a Minister of Government interfering in the operationalizing issues that are affecting any state enterprise and Ministry. And that is where the Member for Oropouche East speaks about a ministerial overreach. We can see where it has reached today. It has reached at the doorstep of the Minister of Works and Transport. But what is the track record of this Minister?

This Minister became the Minister of Works and Transport I believe on October 31, 2016. And let us not remember the fiasco surrounding the issues related to the Toco highway. Let us not forget the flooding fiasco in south Trinidad that took days to see any assistance from the State or the Minister. Let us see what has been the track record in terms of real tangible project. This Minister is not known for road works, you know. This Minister is the road patching Minister. This Minister is not about works and transport, you know, this Minister is about Colonel Sanders providing KFC as you wait to take your plane ride when they pay for a boat ride. That is the legacy. You know, Madam Speaker, when I raise the issue about the track record and the competence of the hon. Minister of Works and Transport, just a few weeks ago I raised in this very House the issue of the self-help commission. And I will show you how I will tie the both in.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes. I would like you to tie it in very quickly, okay, please.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. [*Crosstalk*] Madam, we are speaking about the track record of the Minister.

**Madam Speaker:** No, no. We are not speaking about the track record of the Minister according to this, right. We are talking about the sea bridge, okay. So if you are talking about the Minister and the track record, relate it to this please.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. Madam, I will move on from that point and there will be another opportunity to show up the other inefficiencies of the Minister.

But, Madam Speaker, I want you to throw your mind back, sitting right here at position 47 as the Member for Princes Town, I remembered when the Member for Tobago East took issue with the words of the Member for Couva North as it relates to the suffering of Tobagonians because supplies were not reaching to Tobago as fast as it should have, because of the issues related to the sea bridge. And the hon. Member shouted across the floor. The hon. Member said, “Nobody in Tobago is suffering, get it right”. Well, I believe that the whole country got it right, because the Minister, the Member for Tobago East signed her political death warrant when she made that comment. You see, the hon. Minister and Member for Tobago East, not realizing the frustration imposed by the hon. Minister for Works and Transport on the plight of the people of Tobago, thought that she was representing the fuse and the feelings of Tobagonians.

You know, Madam, from the Tobago Chamber of Commerce to civil society organizations, to associations representing suppliers and so on, they have come out in total condemnation against the Member for Tobago East for those words. Well, their real issue is not with the Member for Tobago East, the real issue is with the Minister for Works and Transport. And the same amount of anger and frustration that they feel towards the Member for Tobago East, they feel towards the Minister because they understand where the real power lies.

You know, Madam, I heard, beating their chest, I heard the Member for Laventille West speaking about, listen we support our Minister because this Minister is a good Minister and he is the Deputy Political Leader of the party. Madam, if this Minister of Works and Transport really had the support of the Members of his Government, the Prime Minister would not find himself absent from the Chamber today. Not one minute of the Prime Minister’s time has been found to add support and that in itself is an indictment. Because the Prime Minister acknowledges the failure of the Minister, but we heard on election night, he praised Rohan Sinanan, how great thou art. And that is the price that members of Tobago and the Tobagonian people have to face. That is the price they have to face, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, with your permission I want to read for you an excerpt that says the:

“President of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Commerce, Demi John Cruickshank, is calling for the resignation of members of the Port Authority Board, declaring it as ‘utter foolishness’”—together with the Minister.

“It is clear that the Port Authority Board is incompetent”—and we agree—

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“and”—is—“not capable of carrying out the functions that they are required to carry out, and I think strongly that the Port Authority members on that board should all hand in their resignations as of today...because this is utter foolishness and to see we have to get Parliamentarians to now sit and select a boat to go back and give themselves it to vet, makes no sense in our book,’ said Cruickshank.”

Madam, this is not the Member for Siparia saying this. This is not the Member for Princes Town saying this, this is not the Member for Oropouche East saying this, these are the words of the main stakeholders of the industry that have been affected by the woes of the sea bridge collapse.

Madam, you are not talking about one month, you know; you are not talking two months; you are not talking about six months; this has been almost one year. We have come full circle, almost one year when the same matters that were raised by Demi John Cruickshank, Reginald Dumas, Martin Daly and several others have raised in the public domain. Madam Speaker, it goes on:

“Cruickshank position follows last Thursday’s revelation by Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister Stuart Young that the tender process engaged in by the Port over the last”—few—“weeks has failed to source a ferry for the sea bridge.

Speaking at last Thursday’s post-Cabinet news conference at the Diplomatic Centre, St Ann’s, Young said Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley has mandated a four-member Cabinet sub-committee, which includes Young, Finance Minister Colm Imbert, Public Utilities Minister Robert Le Hunte and Tourism Minister Shamfa Cudjoe...”

You know, Madam, I heard the Member for Oropouche East attempt to give the Member for Laventille West an opportunity to indicate whether or not he is conflicted in this matter and today I want to ask the Member for Laventille West: Is the Member for Laventille West conflicted in this matter because he has a relative who is employed and works in the interest of NIDCO. And, Madam Speaker, when we start to connect the dots and piece this puzzle together, you will see who has interest where and what are the reasons for these interest.

**Madam Speaker:** Leader of the House.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Madam, we have discussed it and, Madam, I am willing to let me him complete.

**Madam Speaker:** So we sit till—



**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Yes, until he completes.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes. Thank you. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. Madam, through you to the hon. Attorney General, I need no advice from him on law or anything else. You can start spinning on economics since you already failed at law. I want to quote further for what Cruickshank had to say. She said:

“We have been patient”—[*Crosstalk*]—“and what we did is put our trust in the Government that the Government will do the right thing...”

**Madam Speaker:** Order! [*Madam Speaker stands*]

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. Madam, further it says:

“We have been patient, and what we did is put our trust in the Government that the Government will do the right thing. It has been going close to a year now and we are having this serious problem with inter-island transportation, especially the ferry system.”

Further, Madam, it says:

“It is clear that somebody in Trinidad is not understanding or somebody just doesn’t care what is happening with the economy and the business sector in Tobago.”

Madam, I want to repeat that point. Cruickshank representing the Tobago Chamber of Commerce says:

“It is clear that somebody in Trinidad is not understanding or somebody just doesn’t care what is happening with the economy and the business sector in Tobago.”

Madam Speaker, and they want to know why this Motion has been brought. You see, we are answering this question raised by the Tobago Chamber of Commerce with this Motion, because we know at whose doorstep it falls at.

“The Tobago economy depends on the movement of people between Trinidad and Tobago, primarily by the sea bridge and to have this operation in limbo so long, is an indictment on the Government as they clearly do not understand the serious and negative impact that this is having on the economy, he said.”

Madam, if you would allow me to turn to the words:

“...of the Chamber’s Inter-island Transport Committee”—head—“Dianne

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Hadad, noting Young's statements, wondered, 'where does that leave Tobago?'"

She said:

"We were promised that the fast ferry issue was going to be resolved... the T&T Spirit is down in Chaguaramas, the T&T Express is limping and taking close to five hours to do a one-way journey. We were promised a fast ferry by July this year, we are now heading into December and there is no fast ferry."

"More importantly, there is no communication with us from the Port management..."

So, Madam, while they have raised all the issues associated with the sea bridge woes, they are also saying, but listen all this is happening and we are not hearing from the Minister of Works and Transport; we are not hearing from the Minister of Tourism; we are not hearing from any of the government stakeholders, so therefore what are we to do. So really they are operating in a vacuum and that continues to remain today. And that is why the Member for Oropouche East says, we have to depend, just like Tobagonians and many others, on what?—A tweet from the Member for Diego Martin West to tell us whether—

**Mr. Imbert:** West?

**Mr. B. Padarath:** The boat is in Honolulu—Diego Martin East, sorry.

**Mr. Imbert:** North.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Whether the boat is in Mexico, whether it is in Honolulu, it still represents your incompetence whether you are from North/East or West. [*Crosstalk*] It does not change the fact that the people think you are incompetent, Member for Diego Martin North/East. [*Desk thumping*] But, Madam, more importantly, when the member, Dianne Hadad, the Chairman of the Inter-island Ferry says:

"More importantly, there is no communication with us from the Port management..."

So, Madam, even if the politicians are not speaking, a gag order of some sort, apparently has been placed on the Port Authority. And we have seen this gag order since you know when, Madam Speaker, since Charmaine Lewis was removed.

**Madam Speaker:** Member, remember this is about the Minister of Works and

Transport and adverse comments related to the Minister of Works and Transport. So I think you need to bring what your contribution is in line with that.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Sure, Madam. Madam, with respect to the port management, with respect to the Inter-island Ferry Association, with respect to the Tobago Chamber of Commerce, the common thread that binds them all together is reflected in what is said in this Motion and that is, they have no faith and no confidence in the ability of the Minister of Works and Transport. That is the fundamental point, Madam. It is very easy to follow, but you see what I am getting at is that these views are not only the views reflected by the UNC, but most importantly we must reflect the views of the stakeholders in this industry as it relates to the Member and the Minister for Works and Transport.

You see, Madam, whether or not this Motion finds success or whether or not it fails today, we have done our duty to the public and to the people of Trinidad and Tobago because we are reflecting a voice and a common chorus that has started almost one year ago to where we are today, and that is Rohan Sinanan is a total incompetent Minister of Works and Transport.

**Madam Speaker:** Minister.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Sorry, Madam.

**Madam Speaker:** Do not call people by their first name. Thank you.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Minister. Madam, but we must also look at some of the issues with respect to leadership and providing leadership on this issue. And again, the Minister has been devoid of providing real tangible leadership on this issue as it relates to the communication, but also as it relates to ensuring that Tobago gets what Tobago deserves. And you know, I heard that from several speakers when we first came in here in the budget of 2015/2016: Tobago will get what Tobago deserves. Is this what Tobago deserves? Is this your way—you spoke about the Tobago love. Is this the Tobago love, hon. Minister? You see, when we speak about leadership it must also tell us as head the Government, Prime Minister, Member of Diego Martin West, what is the Member for Diego Martin West's position as it relates to the hon. Minister who has been brought into question with respect to this particular Motion.

Madam, I wish to quote from a *Newsday* article, Tuesday 20 March, 2018, by the Leader of the Opposition, Kamla Persad-Bissessar. She said that:

“...the collapse of the sea bridge is a betrayal which was even more tragic because Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley is Tobagonian. She was speaking

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with the media at a reception”—following the inauguration of—“President Paula-Mae Weekes...

She said the people of Tobago were suffering tremendously through no fault of their own, but it was worse with the sitting Prime Minister being a Tobagonian. “It is like a betrayal of the people of TT...”

**Madam Speaker:** Your original 30 minutes are now spent. You are entitled to 15 more minutes to proceed. Now, remember this is not about the Prime Minister.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. And she went on to say:

“...who had great expectations and great hope in a son of their island.”

You know, Madam, as I bring the point together, I am reminded and the reason why we cannot just take the Minister of Works and Transport by himself in a silo, that it is an indictment on the Prime Minister and others, because the Prime Minister assured us before the general election of 2015 that he will choose the best persons to run Ministries; he will choose the best persons to be Members of Parliament; he will choose the best persons to be Ministers, and therefore, Madam, if this is the best according to the Member for Oropouche East, I would not like to see what is the worst. You see, the hon. Leader of the Opposition went on to say:

“‘It is a tragedy of the highest order.’ She condemned Government’s handling of the sea bridge and questioned why it got rid of the Super Fast Galicia before a new vessel had been acquired.”

Madam, moving away from that point for just a moment, in terms of not only an indictment on Minister Sinanan as Minister of Works and Transport and the leadership of Prime Minister Dr. Rowley and Members of this team, I wish to turn to an issue that has been raised by successive speakers, but continues to be the fundamental question in this entire debate that is yet to be answered. The Member for Laventille West jumped left, the Member for Laventille West jumped right, he jumped up, he jumped down but the question remained. Now I know the circus is in town, but, Madam, the question remained after the contribution of the Member for Laventille West.

We are told that on the day that this Charter Party is signed the Charterers shall cause to be issued to the owners an irrevocable standby letter of credit, in the amount of how much, US \$3 million, over TT \$25 million, substantially. And it forms the Appendix to this document that I hold in my hand. While we speak and

we acknowledge the incompetence of Minister Sinanan as the Minister of Works and Transport, supported by all stakeholders in this industry, what they will not get away with, Madam Speaker, coming out from today's debate, is who authorized US \$3 million for this company as a guarantee for credit. And that is the question they have not answered.

So whether the Member for Diego Martin North/East wants to be known as North/East and West, whatever the Member for Laventille West wants to jump left or right, all the semantics we have seen in this House today, Madam, it remains with one fundamental question, and that question remains at the doorstep of the Minister of Works and Transport. And I will tell you this, hon. Minister, through the Chair, Madam, we will do whatever it takes legally to get to the bottom of this situation as it relates to whether or not you had a role, together with Prime Minister and others, to ensure that this company received a line of credit while it did not provide the service to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

You know, Madam, I will end and conclude with the way in which I started. And there are a number of other questions that really need to be answered and I know that my colleagues will deal with some of those substantial issues. But you see, Madam, when we on this side had a Prime Minister, it was a Prime Minister who dealt frontally with issues and the Member of Laventille West spoke about the Member for Siparia having to deal with Minister after Minister and so on. But I want to congratulate the Member for Siparia, because she was known as a real Prime Minister. She was not known as Prime Minister pavement man. That is not what our Prime Minister stood for. The Prime Minister dealt frontally with issues related to Ministers who had questions of integrity as it is related to what, public life interest.

And, Madam Speaker, with the swirling amount of accusations and allegations and questions that remain in the public domain at the doorsteps of the Minister of Works and Transport, today we are left with more questions than answers. And they can run but they cannot hide and I sound warning to them, one of their Members already tried hiding from me, the Member for Diego Martin Central and he saw his political demise. [*Crosstalk*] Today, I sound warning as we stand on sacred ground, right here in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, [*Laughter*] as surely as night follows day—

**Madam Speaker:** Order! Order! [*Laughter*]

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Surely as night follows day—

**Madam Speaker:** Just now, just now. [*Crosstalk*]

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**Mr. B. Padarath:** You know, Madam Speaker, I could understand why the Member for Laventille West is getting a little bothered. You see, there is a Canadian citizen looking for him right now—[*Desk thumping*] and the Canadian citizen is looking for the Cayenne Porsche that rolled over his foot, but we will deal with that inside and outside of the Parliament.

You see, I am not afraid of any one of them. We can deal with any one of them, any time, any place, anywhere, on any topic and the Member for Laventille West can run, but he cannot hide. And if I do not deal with it inside of this House and reveal the truth, the scandals and deception of the Member for Laventille West and others, Madam Speaker—[*Interruption*]

**Madam Speaker:** This is not the issue of the debate.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Madam Speaker—

**Madam Speaker:** No! No! No! [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Hinds:** Madam Speaker— [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Princes Town, I realize you might have been distracted. This matter is not about the Member for Laventille West. He is not the subject of this debate. While you may be entitled to respond to things he said, he is not the subject now. So could you get back on track, you have a few more minutes left.

**Mr. B. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. Madam, our arguments today that were put forward by the Member for Tabaquite, the Member for Oropouche East and myself remain very relevant to the psyche of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. We are here acting in their interest. There is no defence and you cannot defend the indefensible and any attempt to do that, to sanitize the Minister of Works and Transport from the allegations and the rumours that swirl around the Minister, Madam, we will stand in defence of the people of Trinidad and Tobago while you choose party over people of Trinidad and Tobago. Madam, I thank you.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis):** At last. Thank you very kindly, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn and Madam Speaker, let me say that on the resumption we will deal with Bill No. 1 on the current Order Paper, which is an Act to make jurisdiction for criminal matters and we will also deal with the amendments that have come from the Senate, which are in the Appendices, which

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are attached to this Order Paper. Thank you very kindly, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** In accordance with Standing Order 11 and 12(1), this House now stands adjourned to Friday 04 May, 2018, at 1.30 p.m.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*