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Debates of the House of Representatives

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**OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE WADE MARK
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE NELA KHAN
DEPUTY SPEAKER

Monday 16th September, 2013

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Leave of Absence

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 16, 2013

The House met at 10.00 a.m.

The Procedural Clerk: Hon. Members, the Speaker is unavoidably absent at today's sitting and in accordance with Standing order 5(5) the Deputy Speaker will be presiding.

PRAYERS

[MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. Dr. Lincoln Douglas, Member of Parliament for Lopinot/Bon Air West, who is currently out of the country and has asked to be excused from the sitting of the House during the period September 14—25, 2013. The leave which the Member seeks is granted.

PAPERS LAID

1. Ministerial response to the Tenth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2) on the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) Programme. [*The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal)*]
2. Annual report on the operations of the Equal Opportunity Commission for the years 2008 and 2009. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]

APPROPRIATION (FINANCIAL YEAR 2014) BILL, 2013

[Third Day]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [September 09, 2013]:
That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question again proposed.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Winston Dookeran): [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I rise to make a contribution to this debate, I would like to first of all put in context the strategy for fiscal management and economic management over the last four years into a perspective. Four years ago, we addressed the issues in the budget debate under the title of, “Facing the Issues”. The subsequent year we began by looking at

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laying the foundation. In the third year, in which the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy of today, presented the budget, it was subtitled: “Stimulating Growth and Development”. And this budget that was presented to this House last week has been titled: “Sustaining Growth”.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I raise these issues if only to show that sequencing is an important part of economic management, and many may not acknowledge that there is a trend—a trend that sequenced the budget presentation over the last four years. It was a trend that started from 2010 and the Leader of the Opposition, in his contribution, which I listened to very carefully, and subsequently read in great detail, attempted, in his contribution, to make certain assertions that cannot stand up to scrutiny with respect to this road map.

There are two fundamental premises on which he based his articulation of his response to the budget debate, one of which has to do with what he calls a solid economic situation in 2010, and asserted that the “Treasury is empty” phenomenon was, in fact, an act that generated lack of confidence. Later on in this contribution he went on to claim that the biggest achievement of the Government in its first two years—and when I was Minister of Finance, in a derisive manner—was solving the Clico issue, which was not solved.

I bring these matters back to the fore, Madam Deputy Speaker, if only to remind the House of the journey that we have travelled and the steps that we have taken in order to put this country and to put this economy back on track for the future. [*Desk thumping*]

Two nights ago I had the opportunity to look at a television documentary under the Bloomberg news channel. It had to do with the issues pertaining to the financial crisis of 2008, and it was entitled: “Five Years from the Brink”. It dealt with the former Treasury Secretary’s role, Hank Paulson, in that trying time. It looked at how the financial sector, which has manifested itself by the bursting of a bubble, first in the housing sector, rippled throughout the globe and, more specifically, to Europe.

And in that documentary, it was very clear that the events of 2008 triggered, indeed, recessionary trends in the world and, in some cases, financial instability from which we are yet to recover. They entitled it: “Five Years from the Brink”, and assessed what were the troubling decisions that had to be made at that time in order to put the global economy on a path of stability.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I raise that because when we look at the size of the problem in a global context, we found that the resources that were required from

the US Treasury to handle this matter was just over 1 per cent of the GDP. In the Caribbean and in Trinidad and Tobago, the situation was grave. At that time it was estimated that the immediate impact of the financial crisis transmitted via the Clico fiasco and the bursting of the Clico bubble, was in the order of 10 per cent of the GDP. The budget presented by the hon. Minister and the Economy in this House calculated that that figure has now moved to 13.5 per cent, and if we, indeed, were to look at the controversy surrounding the cost to the Treasury, estimated in the budget at \$19.3 billion—but some have calculated that it is nearer to \$24 billion or \$25 billion—this represents an external financial shock on the economy to the level of 18 per cent of the GDP compared to 1 per cent in the United States.

This situation had its ripple in the Caribbean region and official estimates done on this matter have suggested that the impact on the region was in the order of 17 per cent at that time—

Hon. Member: Of the GDP.

Hon. W. Dookeran: Seventeen per cent of the GDP—thank you—of the Caribbean region. I bring this to bear on the arithmetic of this debate, if only to establish that when the Leader of the Opposition says that this Government had inherited a solid financial foundation, little did he mention that for 18 months prior to this Government being put into office, there was no credible and doable solution to deal with a major financial shock affecting this country.

In addition to that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to quote from what was said at that time on the question of the finances of the economy over and above the capacity to deal with the external shock. I quote from what I had then said in the budget debate of 2010.

“Mr. Speaker, our cash balance moved from \$17.7 billion in 2008 to \$9.7 billion in 2009 and at the time when this Government came into office, it stood at \$5.4 billion. This cash balance at the end of September is estimated at \$4.3 billion.”

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is only one measurement of the state of finances, and that was really a reflection of a report that was produced on June 11, 2010, one month after the Government came into office, by the Ministry of Finance, which was entitled: “The State of our Finances and Initiatives for Future Action”.

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10.15 a.m.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition predicated his entire contribution on facts that were not real, then he can be accused of falsehood. But even if we do not wish to accuse him of falsehood, then his conclusions from the facts that have wrong assumptions had to be wrong. [*Desk thumping*] It is easy for us to forget the situation as it stood then, both in terms of the size of the external shock that had to be negotiated, and in terms of the state of the cash balances—and I am not going into the other indicators for they are the record of history.

It is in this context therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we must look at the sequencing that I referred to earlier. We had to face the issues. The incidence to which I referred and the bubble of which I made reference was only one of the many issues, but I would not use the time in this House to repeat those situations, but just to remind the population at large that this country started from below zero in terms of its financial situation and, today, we can claim that we will sustain growth in the future [*Desk thumping*] in four years. And it is in that context, that we must view the statements made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. This is where we started.

We know that it is very difficult for a politician to resist the temptation to take credit for things that he has done. But when a politician is tempted to take credit for things he has not done, then there is something fundamentally wrong with that premise, and this is what I sensed that the Member for Diego Martin West has misled himself and has perpetuated a premise upon which he has now built a case. The premise, Madam Deputy Speaker, went on to say that the legacy of the Government, of which he was a Member, was a legacy that is built on having a sense of ownership on the issues of development. That is the second premise on which his argument was based.

The Government of which he was a Member had an ownership on development in Trinidad and Tobago. I do not think anyone will deny that every Government has done what it can do to bring about development, but when at the end of your stewardship you have placed this country on a cliff that could have gone either way—and the country recognized it—[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: That is not true.

Hon. Member: You do not know about truth.

Hon. W. Dookeran:—then, Madam Deputy Speaker, how could you claim that you have a monopoly on the issues of development. And in this context, he brought forward 2020 Vision.

He did not argue that 2020 Vision was good because of its contents. He argued that it was good because of the people who participated in it [*Laughter and desk thumping*] and at no time really revealing the contents of that vision. I know as you try to build a new framework, you must look backwards, but I know in looking backwards you must not turn backwards. [*Laughter and desk thumping*] For if you try to build the future on turning backwards, then what you are telling this nation is that once you get back into office, whenever that may be, you will turn the clock back and go back to those failed policies that brought us where we are. [*Desk thumping*]

It is frightening. Madam Deputy Speaker, it is frightening to see that that is the line of thinking. I have no problem looking backwards and to see where we are, but much has happened now. We have found ourselves with a turbulent environment globally which is yet to be settled. We have found ourselves where the markets that are no longer stable as they used to be. We have found ourselves where investments are skimpy in a global scenario. We have therefore found ourselves in negotiating the turbulence of the times and, therefore, when we look backwards we must look at the method by which we can negotiate the turbulence of our times. It is in that context, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I want to refer to one other document that came out shortly after we had put the finances in the right direction, not necessarily at the appropriate levels. This document, in referring to the Trinidad and Tobago situation produced by a very reputable financial commentator firm, Oppenheimer, had this to say:

“Trinidad and Tobago—It’s the Balance Sheet.”

This was November 21, 2011, and the article argued that a strong balance sheet has allowed Trinidad and Tobago to deal with certain domestic shocks and allowed the authorities to run countercyclical fiscal policies without much fear of reprisals.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this was the outcome of our intervention and this is the result that was expressed in the budget presentation of the hon. Larry Howai, today, when he said that our position in Trinidad and Tobago is one of stability and that now we are moving to ensure that we can sustain the growth momentum, albeit small, that has emerged. [*Desk thumping*] The nation at large needs to understand that this is the road that we have travelled, and the road that they want

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us to travel has been a road that has brought us to a situation in which we have had to be on the brink and I refer to this in the global context; I refer to this also in the local context.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what therefore are the issues that we have to face up to and negotiate? What are the issues that would change the future framework for the Trinidad and Tobago economy and for its society? Many of these have been articulated in a lucid manner in the budget speech of the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy as he continues on that trek of building sustainability in our finances, and if there is one credit that should be given to the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, is that he has provided sustainability in the finances in Trinidad and Tobago over difficult times. [*Desk thumping*] The Leader of the Opposition must start from there, but there are challenges ahead.

Indeed, both premises of good finances and ownership of development are premises that will not be able to shape that future, and to claim development belongs to the PNM—and I do not like using that phrase, that development belongs to the Government of which he was a Member—is to ignore the fact that this country has indeed developed over the last 50 years in a manner that all can take credit for it. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. W. Dookeran: But what we found in the stage was a turn in that development process and we had to change the direction, the perspective and the practice of economic management in order to get to the point where we are today.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it has been said that no island is an island, and in today's world the Caribbean region is neither isolated nor insulated from the rigours of the tremors that are taking place around us. So we got to start there. We cannot go back and start from where we left off. We got to start from where we now have to go forward, and that is why I said the Member for Diego Martin West—of course, I believe a Leader of the Opposition in trying to get the office right, must provide proposals for the people, but it will be better for him and for his prospective Government to provide perspectives for the people based on the future challenges than on the past failures.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, what are some of these challenges? The first and most important one in terms of trying to navigate the future has to do with the whole question of building buffers for sustainability. The Minister in his presentation was at great pains to organize a number of measures aimed at building those buffers domestically, but we have taken a diplomatic initiative in

order to get the international community to embark on a programme of building buffers that will affect small economies and economies like those in the Caribbean. For there is no doubt what has happened in the rest of the Caribbean will affect us negatively and, therefore, building buffers is a diplomatic initiative that we have taken in the G-24 of which Trinidad and Tobago is a member; that we have taken in the IMF Councils in the World Bank forum of small states.

Today, I can tell you that in light of the efforts that we have taken to increase the awareness of reviewing what are the buffers that are available to small economies, both the World Bank and the IMF have established subcommittees of their boards to address the proposals that Trinidad and Tobago placed on the forum in those particular meetings. It is important because I do not think we want to forever claim that we cannot achieve Caribbean integration; that forever we will be in search of a regional airline.

10.30 a.m.

You cannot have a regional airline if the economic space is not sufficient to generate profitability. Therefore, you have to change the framework—the political framework in which you operate, and that leads me to the next challenge. This challenge has to do with the very troublesome issues of the stalemate that has developed in the Caribbean region. If we are looking in the future, we must know how to negotiate a new framework for Caribbean integration.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at the Heads of Government meeting of Caricom, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago announced in her remarks that the time has come to open new space for the Caribbean region, and to admit countries like the Dominican Republic and others into that space. It is based on a concept of Caribbean convergence, what I have called “integration without borders”. If we do not fix the architecture of the Caribbean region, Trinidad and Tobago will always be “spinning top in mud” for we will always be called upon to support that grouping. What we have to do is to work with them to give them a prosperity of their own, and therefore we have put forward for consideration an entire set of proposals, and I will say a little bit about it later on, on Caribbean convergence.

But, let me at this point just merely indicate that the Caribbean integration movement was anchored on the model of the European Union. That itself has now found disfavour. But when we look at the ASEAN community, which has created a convergence without formal integration, we see the benefits of that. More recently, a Pacific Alliance was established with Colombia and Chile and a number of other countries in Latin America on the notion of convergence.

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Convergence is creating economic activity without being restricted by borders, having the movement of capital and the movement of goods and the movement of services, and the establishment of institutions that will give the private sector a real chance to develop the region. How often are we going to have the private sector calling on the Government for support? It is about time the private sector be placed in a position to use their institutions for the movement of capital and goods and investment so that they can become resilient in their own right. This is how you break the deadlock of the past; this is the future, and it is in that context that we must look at that future.

There are many other issues that are relevant to the question of building that future. Today we would not get the opportunity to deal with them all, but many of them have been enunciated in the budget presentation. I will just make reference to some which found disfavour with the Leader of the Opposition. In his contribution, he raised a number of issues and cast doubt as to whether it is doable or whether it is relevant or whether it exists at all. But when you look at the budget presentation, you will see that they are all being dealt with. I think he prepared his speech before he heard what [*Laughter*] the Minister of Finance and the Economy was saying.

Dr. Moonilal: He had it written for him.

Hon. W. Dookeran: Because if he had in fact listened carefully, he would have seen measures that were put into place—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: He got set up by—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. W. Dookeran:—to deal with the role of the National Gas Company in the long-awaited CNG transformation.

He made reference to some “hairy scary” interventions taking place in Kenya and in Uganda.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as foreign Minister, I know not of the details of those interventions but of the diplomacy for those interventions. We have adopted a policy for Africa to get involved with the new-found wealth of Africa in the energy sector for which we can offer Africa a lot. [*Desk thumping*] And within recent times, we have had visits from many African countries: Kenya and Uganda included, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea included and others, who have sought from Trinidad and Tobago partnership to work with them for they have now found a new-found wealth in the oil sector, and they are to design strategies.

Therefore, when NGC got involved in making a bid for a specific project in accordance with the rules of the then Government, that cannot be a skimpy thing, that should be applauded for Trinidad and Tobago [*Desk thumping*] moving beyond its borders in order to secure the future of which we are talking about it.

I could go back to the rapid rail if I want and I agree there is need for something, but what I do recognize—and it was in the report that was done—is that the infrastructure cost at that time for the rapid rail was in the order of 50 per cent of the revenue of the country so it could not have worked.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on the issue of NGC's role which was vilified—and I have no doubt that more details will be brought forward—he did say that the situation in Venezuela is a good one and took credit for it. I think the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara said, "he cannot take credit for a course he did not do".

Mr. Roberts: Exactly! Very true! [*Laughter*]

Hon. W. Dookeran: But be jovial as it is, we know that that agreement was signed in August of 2010 by the Government by the then Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. A new agreement was signed to operationalize that agreement so that we are looking at the future. It is true that the results of that may not be immediate but when we talk about sustainability, which is what the Minister of Finance and the Economy spoke about, he is not looking at tomorrow, he is looking beyond tomorrow [*Desk thumping*] to sustain Trinidad and Tobago's economy, and it is in that context that issue was put into place.

The Leader of the Opposition said that there was, in fact, no development likely to happen in the energy sector, and he raised some concerns about some of their projects. I must admit, I did refer to those projects way back in 2010, and for various reasons those particular projects have not seen the light of day, but I have no doubt that the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs will be able to explain that to this honourable House, and to be able to say what are the new investment projects because we recognize that is where we have to go.

So when we go to Africa in search of projects, it is not pie in the sky, it is an attempt to open the space of the region, apart from the domestic space that we talk about. In fact, one of the commentaries on the budget, I believe it is PricewaterhouseCoopers, outlined in great detail all these fiscal measures, proposed changes to energy tax incentives. I just laid the information on the table without going into the details for this honourable House because they are all documented in the presentation and outlined in these commentaries.

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So to suggest that, in fact, there is nothing—in fact, what I sensed when I read the Leader of the Opposition's contribution that he spoke about everything—everything that the people have expressed some level of discontent with, and he is right, but that is not put in the context of the sequencing for change and the sustainability that we are promoting here. I think somebody said, let them talk, we shall deliver. So it all helps in the process.

State enterprise sector: a very important part of the Minister of Finance and the Economy's array of initiatives, if not new. But he went at length to talk about the private/public sector partnership now being geared to engage fully in that infrastructural development, as well as the public offerings which have had a very commendable start with First Citizens Bank. This is important.

The philosophy behind public offerings is not the same as the philosophy behind divestment. It is a philosophy that broadens the ownership to the people. [*Desk thumping*] It is a philosophy that puts into the hands of the people ownership of the economy. It is not that the PNM owns development in Trinidad and Tobago, it is the people who own development in Trinidad and Tobago [*Desk thumping*] and the policies to make that happen is what we are doing systemically. The Minister of Finance and the Economy outlined a number of other measures that will do so.

There are two very interesting developments that were reflected in the budget presentation that may have not caught the eyes of many commentators: one is the beginning of a serious tax reform, tax reform that will create sustainability in the future. While there are political costs associated with the property tax, the way it is being introduced is to provide sustainability of tax revenues in the future under the rubric of land and building taxes. It is a matter that was addressed for a few years and now we have the courage to take it on to build sustainability in the tax reform measures.

The other area has to do with a switch in priorities. You see, a budget is about a platform, it is about a priority and it is about the practice. How do you shift your priorities? It is not easy to shift priorities, especially priorities in public expenditure, but when I heard the Minister of Finance and the Economy talk about what has happened in the water sector, when I have seen in what he said that now water accessibility has increased enormously in the country, it is really a shift in our economic policy to move towards satisfying basic needs. [*Desk thumping*]

That shift in policy allowed us to maintain a level of employment, to maintain levels of transfers and to maintain allocation of resources to basic needs like water. There are other areas in which it has been done but the success in water must not be underestimated. It is a reflection of the shift—a policy shift to basic needs as opposed to institutions and buildings, but yet, you have to do certain buildings in the area of health, for that is another basic need.

So if you look carefully at the Government's shift in strategy, it is a shift in strategy to deal with the basic needs of the people in the areas like health, in areas like water and more specifically in the areas of pension.

10.45 a.m.

We may have forgotten that not only did we introduce an increased pension for old age pensioners but we introduced increased pension to public servants and all those who are contributors to the national insurance programme; and I believe I heard the Minister of Finance and the Economy committed again to the expansion of that pension plan to include the self-employed.

So what you are seeing really is a strategy unfolding where the basic needs in pension, which has to do with the support of the elderly; with the basic needs in water, which has to do with the very basic necessities of life, with the basic needs with respect to health, and at the same time, equip the population so that the population can address the challenges of the future in trying to reduce the digital divide, which is the source of poverty in most countries.

These are the issues, Madam Deputy Speaker, that were addressed in the Budget presentation and they are issues that put into context the sequencing of the strategy of which I referred to earlier and the change in priorities that has happened over time. It is in that context, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I believe that this Budget should be viewed; but there are many other elements that will be addressed in the debate.

I want to spend just a few moments on some of the issues pertaining to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Let me first say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the long-awaited committee of Parliament to deal with foreign affairs should be instituted in the next parliamentary year, for it is something that we must develop bipartisan support. It is not something that would divide this population unnecessarily and it is also something to show the link between diplomacy and economic development.

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So at the Heads of Missions Meeting, which we had earlier this year, a number of proposals were put forward, one of which is to seek the appropriate procedural approval to put into place such a joint select committee or parliamentary committee, as the rules will dictate. To do so we will be able to deal with some of the issues.

At the United Nations we have played a very significant role. It was the Leader of the Opposition who, in some previous discussions, dismissed our involvement in the international arena; not in this debate. But it was the Prime Minister who went to the United Nations three years ago—[*Interruption*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Tunapuna and Minister of Foreign Affairs has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. W. Dookeran: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I thank my colleague, the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, and Members of this House. I was about to indicate that we took a specific initiative that affects crime in the region and in the world. It has to do with the Arms Trade Treaty. The Arms Trade Treaty was initiated by the hon. Prime Minister in her first address to the General Assembly and placed on the record as a requirement. [*Desk thumping*] And I remember very well in reading the documents, that the former Minister of Foreign Affairs had passed on to me, she described small arms and ammunition as our instruments of mass destruction.

After a lot of work, led by several countries, but more so by Australia and Trinidad and Tobago, this Treaty was approved, and last week the Cabinet took a decision, by Order, to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty at the next meeting of the United Nations. A small country like ours making a big dent on international affairs, but more so making the dent in an area of concern to us. It has to do with crime because it has to do, Madam Deputy Speaker, with the unregulated trade of the flow of small arms and ammunition; and we know that is a problem that to which, we are a victim and so is the rest of the region.

So this is not diplomacy without purpose, this is diplomacy that gets to the heart of the people's problem. Today I received a note from our Ambassador in New York, outlining all the steps that will be taken on the initiative of our

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ambassadors in New York, not only to ratify entry into force but to bring about the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty in the shortest possible time.

We have embarked on the diplomacy of constructive engagement and I just want to put on the record a release that was made this morning on behalf of the Government in New York, by our New York office, on the issue of Syria, which we have been following closely and in which we have been able to outline fundamental positions wherever it is appropriate for us to so do. I believe this release captures the state of affairs; and I will put it in the record.

“Trinidad and Tobago welcomes, with relief, satisfaction and cautious optimism, news that the United States and Russia have on Saturday reached a sweeping agreement, conceived by the Russians, for Syria to surrender its stockpile of chemical weapons to international control to facilitate its destruction by mid 2014.

This agreement significantly reduces the possibility of US led military action against the Syrian regime as punishment for its alleged use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people on 21 August.

Trinidad and Tobago”—and its Prime Minister has noted—“that the agreement explicitly includes the United Nations Security Council in determining possible international action in Syria and is encouraged by the fact that Russia has maintained its opposition to military action while the Americans have said very firmly that once the Assad regime honours its obligations under the agreement there will be no military action.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago congratulates the Governments of both the United States and the Russian Federation for their commitment to peace and security in a region ravaged by war, political instability and intolerable human suffering.

At the same time, it calls on the Syrian Government to honour its obligations under the agreement which requires it to submit, within one week a comprehensive listing including names, types and quantities and location of its chemical weapons stockpile.

Trinidad and Tobago also calls for all parties to the conflict to use this agreement as a platform for solving the civil war through international mediation and other means that do not result in the continuing loss of life, destruction of property and intolerable levels of suffering on the part of the Syrian people”.

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Madam Deputy Speaker, we are actively engaged, as a small country, with our CARICOM neighbours, in forging a voice on these matters; and our voice is based on principles that are enshrined in that statement. On the issue of economic diplomacy, Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to indicate that we have been very involved in negotiating partial scope agreement, and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs initiated some of these agreements, particularly with respect to Panama—[*Desk thumping*—]—and very shortly we will be signing that agreement with them; and so too with Guatemala.

At the same time, in addition to double taxation treaties that we have had in place, we are currently negotiating double taxation treaties with the Kingdom of the Netherlands, South Korea and Botswana. We are creating opportunities for business expansion consistent with the sustainability theme of the Budget.

Let me just say a few words, Madam Deputy Speaker, again, on the issue of Caribbean integration. There are 16 institutions in the Caribbean that are involved in Caribbean integration. What has happened is that we have been able to create many bodies on different aspects of Caribbean integration but these bodies are now costing us, in Trinidad and Tobago, budgetary contribution of over \$50 million each year, in addition, to the support that is provided to the Secretariat. The entire region has been calling for a new start.

The new start would involve the rationalization of these institutions, perhaps the abandonment of some and the creation of others; but a new start has been echoed by important people like P. J. Patterson, Shridath Ramphal, the Prime Minister of St. Lucia and other very notable people who are saying that we have reached a limit to integration.

It is in that context we have taken the bold move to put for consideration of CARICOM a whole new approach for Caribbean convergence, integration without borders in which we have responded to the challenges of the current and political economy of the world. We have designed a strategy for the convergence and then we have put forward a 12-point plan rather for what I call “drilling down for development.”

11.00 a.m.

It is our view that we must tackle this issue head-on. In the same way we have tackled the finances head-on, and we have put this country on a path of comfort, in the same way that we have tackled the issues of providing basic needs and while the country is not at comfort level, it has certainly seen a direction, in the

same way we must attack the problem of the Caribbean open space and that is why this is now engaging the attention of the Caribbean leaders as they embark on a new start. For in the end, it will become beneficial to our own economy.

There is another initiative that is taking place. Madam Deputy Speaker, and the final one I would make reference to, because the theme of this budget is sustainability. That is what the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy said. Moving from facing the issues to laying the foundation to stimulating the economy, it is now sustainability of the efforts. And in the context of sustainability, the budget has proposals for the establishment of a diplomatic academy, in order to provide an opening with the University of the West Indies to build a programme of support for the diplomats of the future, not only for Trinidad and Tobago but for the region and, perhaps, beyond the region.

For we have made a substantial intervention in the Latin American context, and now available to us are resources from the Andean Development Bank, in addition to what was available to us before, as we involve in that kind of diplomacy. So opening more space is part of the sustainability, whether it be in Africa, whether it be in part of Latin America or whether it be in the more fundamental issues of training our diplomats to engage in the new diplomacy of the future, these are not steps that will bring you votes but these are steps that will bring you security in the future. [*Desk thumping*] And that is why I believe that we must understand the objective of this budget to bring about a sense of sustainability in our institutions, but there is a lot to be done. There is a lot that still has to be done.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am very fortunate. This is the 19th time that I am addressing this Parliament on a budget presentation. [*Desk thumping*] I have done so through the courtesy of the people of Chaguanas for 10 years, through the people of St. Augustine for five years and through the people of Tunapuna for four years. [*Desk thumping*] I owe my right and honour to the people of these constituencies and through them, to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

It is a little bit of nostalgia to say it again, but at each time we meet, we move this country forward, even if by one step. Last week or last two weeks ago we discussed the role of Parliament and we said that Parliament must not resist the changes that are required but must embrace the prospects for a different future. There is still much to be done. There is no doubt that we have moved from a period in which there was a lot of euphoria, into an atmosphere in which there is a lot of discontent. That too must be negotiated again. That too must be negotiated by way of direct policies to address the levels of discontent.

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I have had the benefit of looking at Trinidad and Tobago from the eyes of a researcher to the eyes of a practitioner, to the eyes of a legislator and many other eyes—eyes of a politician and I want to raise three questions that I think are vexing questions but questions that must be addressed by this nation.

I used to think that economic development was about economics. As I continued my contribution and never waived in my commitment to making these contribution, I realized that economic development was about politics, much more than economics. That is why I embarked personally on a campaign of getting the politics right. I would not say that we have got the politics right, but what I would say is that elements of getting the politics right are in place. The journey is going to be long and arduous but we must never deviate for that is where the source of the problem comes.

When we tackle the criminal situation in the country, the real issue is what is the source of power between criminal gangs and law and order-enforcing agencies? What is the source of power? When we tackle some of the issues of reform, we recognize that what is the source of political power? Is the Parliament and the rules of Parliament going to deny the will of the people?

When we look at our institutions and we realize that they have not lived up to expectations, we have to understand whether these institutions need now to be re-energized. Is the inertia in our institutions, Madam Deputy Speaker, a problem to be addressed? It has been addressed but there is much more to be done. So I have moved from the thinking that economic development is about economics—in my early days and I was passionate about it; too passionate at times, for my friends—to the view that development is about politics and I was expressive about that, perhaps, too expressive for a population not ready to understand where I was coming from, but now I realize that development is about the exercise of power in a society and that is where we must now address or minds; on the exercise of power.

And it is in that context, I hope that this Parliament will approve the policies that are put forward in order to ensure in the exercise of power which resides fundamentally in the rights of the people are not in any way retarded by the institutions of government themselves.

So in this context, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. W. Dookeran:—the inertia in our institutions—[*Interruption*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Members: Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. W. Dookeran: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am sorry, my apologies. We are facing, therefore, a real issue in law and order and crime. We know that it is difficult but we must get to the source; the source of where the power resides and tackle that. We are facing an issue of representative democracy, which is now the source of discontent. We need to tackle that with haste and more haste. We are facing an issue in which society's discontent is reflected, not by a clearly articulated journey ahead of us, or one in which we can see results immediately, and it is in that context I commend the approach for sustainability. I have no doubt that as time moves on, we will be able to move the society, but change is not instant, and change must never be resisted.

So, therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, the issue of power, politics and performance is important and I hope that this budget debate will generate a further confidence in how we handle our economic situation, how we handle our financial situation and how, at the same time, we handle bold measures to change the framework within which we are operating. This is what we are attempting to do and this is what we are sequenced to do. We must come terms to terms with the power structure in the economy.

One writer had it to say that there is a coalition which he describes as an anti-growth coalition. These may sound academic but, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think as we move forward to unlock the potential of the country, we must address some of these fundamental issues. We must, therefore, move back in order to reassess the fundamentals and not only to deal with the issues of popularity in the streets, but also to deal with the issues of securing those yet on board.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I said that this is indeed, the 19th time that I have addressed a Parliament in Trinidad and Tobago; the Parliament of the country in which I was born, the Parliament of the people with whom I live. It has been a long time. There were many moments of euphoria and there are many moments of despair.

Miss Cox: “Wha happen, yuh leaving?”

Hon. W. Dookeran: If I were to use the phrase of Arthur ANR Robinson's title of his book: *In the Midst of it All*, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have indeed been involved. I do not know what next year is going to be, but I know that I am

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here today and I know that I am saying here today, as a citizen of this country who has devoted his entire public life to the future benefit of this nation, that I am happy to be associated with this new strategy for economic sustainability and economic progress in Trinidad and Tobago. I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member for Diego Martin North/East. [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. Mc Intosh: The master. The master. “All yuh geh ready.”

Dr. Moonilal: “Yuh have ah fan club?”

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Yeah, I am his biggest fan.

Mr. Colm Imbert (*Diego Martin North/East*): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I initially was going to speak first thing this morning but deferred to the Minister of Foreign Affairs—[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: And you regret it.

Mr. C. Imbert:—and I deeply regret it—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Oh God, look at him!”

Mr. C. Imbert:—deeply regret it. I really thought that I would hear something illuminating, but usual fantasy and pie in the sky. I would not talk too much about what the honourable gentleman had to say, except that his last—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: Member.

Mr. C. Imbert:—Member, gentleman, whatever. It is not up to you, the Speaker would correct me. But the thing I notice is that his last few words sounded very much like a swan song, clearly an epitaph/epilogue, whatever you call it, at the end of a book. He is on his way. He is travelling somewhere.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Epilogue.

Mr. C. Imbert: Yes, epilogue.

The Member indicated that this was the 19th time he has addressed this honourable House in a budget debate. Well this is my 21st consecutive time. [*Desk thumping*]

Miss Cox: Consecutive.

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Mr. C. Imbert: Twenty-first consecutive time that I have addressed this Chamber in a budget. But whether it is 19 or 21 or two or three or five or 35, it really makes no difference. What we have to look at is, what has the Minister of Finance and the Economy told us in his budget statement of 2014? Does it make any sense?

Hon. Members: No!

Mr. C. Imbert: Is it a tissue of misinformation?

Dr. Rowley: Yes.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: “Um-hmm, big time.”

11.15 a.m.

How is it going to propel this country forward? Is the economic strategy of the other side working? This is what this budget debate is all about, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Minister was speaking, I took some notes. This UNC Government has a habit of being very creative with accounting. Very creative. In the *Review of the Economy* published in September 2010 by them, four months after they came into office—so it is their document—the GDP for Trinidad and Tobago, at constant prices for the year 2010, was shown to be \$91 billion. In 2011, they now decided that was looking too good, PNM was looking too good, so they got the boys to work and in the 2011 *Review of the Economy*, the GDP for 2010 was revised downwards, from \$91 billion in the 2010 review, to \$89.3 billion in the 2011 review, and they were not satisfied with that.

In 2012, in the *Review of the Economy*, they revised it further and brought it down to \$89 billion, Madam Deputy Speaker. So just by working on a computer, juggling some numbers, they managed to lose \$2 billion in constant GDP between the 2010 *Review of the Economy* and the 2012 *Review of the Economy*. But there is a reason for all of this, you know. They had to suppress the GDP number to pretend that we have economic growth. [*Desk thumping*] And it is a pretence that has been happening for the last four budget addresses.

Because the GDP was \$91 billion in 2010, they have forged the figures and brought it down to \$89 billion systematically in various documents over the last two or three years, and they are now telling us that the GDP for 2013 is \$89.25 billion at constant prices. Less than the \$91 billion in the 2010 review, but more than the adjusted figure that they have forged between 2010 and 2012. The reality is, there has been no growth in this economy since 2010, Madam Deputy Speaker.

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[*Desk thumping*] None! The GDP was \$91 billion in 2010, it is \$89.25 billion—\$1.75 billion less, and [*Mr. Dookeran indicates that he wants to respond*] “Nah, is awright”. [*Laughter*] I did not disturb you, do not disturb me. [*Crosstalk*]

You know, I hear muttering from the soon to be forgotten Member for Toco/Sangre Grande, [*Laughter*] “that misleading”. Madam Deputy Speaker, these [*Crosstalk*] figures have been taken straight out of the 2010 *Review of the Economy* published by them; the 2011 *Review of the Economy* published by them; the 2012 *Review of the Economy* published by them; and the 2013 *Review of the Economy* published by them—not out of any PNM document; out of UNC documents. So the reality is, our economy has shrunk from \$91 billion at constant prices in 2010 to \$89.25 billion in 2013. That is why—and it is obvious you are seeing it outside there. There is nothing going on in this country. People are suffering and they are no longer prepared to take “ole talk” from you. Let me give you a classic piece of “ole talk”. The Minister of Finance and the Economy made an astonishing remark on page 18 of his budget address:

“Our economy is growing...”

Well, I have already shown that is a figment of their imagination. The economy has shrunk by \$1.7 billion, constant dollars:

“Our economy is growing in the context of stable inflationary conditions; inflation of 5.6 percent is down from 2012 mainly as a result of lower food prices,...”

Now, “wha kinda crazy person wrote dat”? It is bad enough that somebody put that in the document, but for the Minister to get up here—Madam Deputy Speaker, does the Minister go to the supermarket? Does he go to the market? Does he buy his own food? How could you say that there were lower food prices in 2013? It is just not true. Anybody who has to face the supermarket will know that food prices since they have come into office have increased by leaps and bounds. I dare say over 50 per cent if you add up the increase in food prices in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, you would get an aggregate figure of 50 per cent.

Let us go to the *Review of the Economy* because you see, “politician write this document, public servant write this document”. [*Crosstalk*] No, no, I said “public servant write this document, politicians write this document”. [*Mr. Imbert holds up two booklets*] But you see what happens, the following year the politicians interfered with this, [*Mr. Imbert holds up a booklet*] So let us—and that is how you have taken out GDP from \$91 to \$89.3 to \$89.0, because it was not looking good.

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Let us go to the section on the real economy, Madam Deputy Speaker. You see they “doh geh chance” to go through this with a fine tooth comb, you know, so when it was first published it is correct. You will forged it the following year. Let us go to page 31, which deals with prices:

“...price movements in Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages, for which inflation eased”—real creative language—“from 13.8 percent in January, to 12.6 percent in June.”

And let us move on to the actual increase in food prices:

“During the six-month period,”—this is January to June 2013—“food prices increased by 11.8 percent...”

So, in the *Review of the Economy*, the technocrats in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy—the Minister obviously did not have a chance to correct this—say, food prices went up by 11.8 per cent in the first six months of this year and by the time the year is over, it will probably go up by 20 per cent. But this hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy will like to tell us on page 18 of his budget address that inflation...is down...as a result of lower food prices. People are not taking this “ole talk” any more. It is not a misprint, it is not a typographical error, it is English. You said food prices have been lower. They are not. And the whole document is like that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Listen to this:

“The economy continues to generate jobs as the unemployment rate has fallen and now hovers near full employment levels at 5.0 percent.”

Let us go to the *Review of The Economy* again. They did not have a chance to interfere with this table either. So let us go to the appendix that deals with population, labour force and employment, Appendix 12 on page 74.

The employment levels, number of persons employed in 2008: 597,700 with a participation rate of 63.5 per cent.

Participation rate, is an indicator of how many people are outside there trying to get work, and so on. A total of 597,700 persons employed, an unemployment rate of 4.6 per cent, a participation rate of 63.5 per cent.

Let us go to the end of 2012 which is the last available number in this document. Number of persons employed, 593,200; participation rate 61 per cent; unemployment rate 5.1 per cent.

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Madam Deputy Speaker, when I went to school, 597,000 was more than 593,000; [*Laughter*] 4.6 was lower than 5.1. So why is this Minister telling us that the economy continues to generate jobs? What jobs you are talking about? There are less people working now in Trinidad and Tobago than there were in 2008 under the PNM. What are you talking about? The unemployment rate was 4.6 per cent. [*Crosstalk*] I am getting the data, Mr. Leader of Government Business, from your document. This is published by you, *Review of the Economy 2013*.

As I said, they did not have a chance to interfere with it. [*Crosstalk*] Yes sure. Madam Deputy Speaker, everybody is misleading in their book. Let us go to what the private sector has to say: *Focus on Trinidad and Tobago Budget 2014*, Ernst & Young. These are not politicians, these are not PNM people. Let us see what they have to say about this budget. [*Interruption*] No, they are not, they are neutral. Let us see what they have to say, what is their view of the budget:

- “1. Deterioration in debt profile since 2008: A historical review of the country’s debt profile demonstrates that the State’s debt to GDP ratio increased measurably from 24.4% in 2008 to 44.7% in 2013 as reported by the Honourable Minister... This trend is unsustainable in the medium term and actions must be taken by the Government to rein in our country’s debt to GDP ratios to levels that are internationally acceptable.”

So it is not me saying this, you know, it is Ernst & Young saying this:

- “2. The Non-Energy Fiscal Deficit continues to rise: In 2012/13 the deficit was projected at \$35.535 billion by the Central Bank in its Economic Bulletin for July 2013, continuing to demonstrate the dependence of the country on the Petroleum sector.”

So the non-energy fiscal deficit, growing. That means our dependence on oil, growing. So all that “ole talk” about how the non-oil sector is experiencing growth, this puts paid to that piece “ah ole talk”.

- “3. Transfers and subsidies continue their growth path: ‘...these payments have increased from \$17.9 billion in 2007/8 to a projected \$29.7 billion in 2013/14.’”

So “yuh just giving more money” to state enterprises, and we will come to that in a little while.

- “4. Little improvement has been recorded in T&T’s Global Competitive Ranking: The country has fallen from 73rd out of 134 countries in 2008 to 92nd out of 148 in 2014.”

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Not me say saying that, you know.

“In 2014 the major impediments to competitiveness remain unsurprisingly ‘crime...’” “‘Inefficient Government bureaucracy’, ‘corruption’ and ‘poor work ethic in the national work force.’”

Not me saying it, it is Ernst & Young saying that the major impediment to competitiveness as determined by the international community is corruption, crime and theft.

“5. The State’s expenditure pattern continues to balloon: In 2003 the country’s expenditure budget was”—\$15 billion—“In 2013/14 it is projected to be”—\$61 billion—“continuing a worrisome trend of higher and higher Government spending patterns.”

So, I mean this is a brilliant commentary on the budget. This is not produced by the People’s National Movement, you know. This is produced by an international audit firm, Madam Deputy Speaker. And you see the kind of mess we are in? Neutral people saying this.

But this hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, very deceptive you know. He talks and he talks and smiles and he bows his head, you know, meek and mild, but does not admit what he said the last year. “And why he say before dat.” So I think it is really for me to go back to his last budget address—his budget address of 2013—and let us see what was supposed to happen in the year gone by. Let us just take a little look. I cannot spend too much time on this, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, because it is so ridiculous. But let us just take a look at what the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy told us last year in terms of what is going to happen in Trinidad and Tobago.

“For the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure...:

(1) extension of the Churchill Roosevelt Highway from Cumuto to Sangre Grande...”

“Huh, ah pass up dey de other day, I ent see nuttin going on.”

“(2) an additional access from Cocorite to Chaguaramas...”

“Ah went down Chaguaramas de other day, I ent see no work taking place.”

11.30 a.m.

I continue:

“for the Ministry of Justice: four (4) building complexes for accommodating High Courts in Trincity, Carlsen Field, Sangre Grande and Penal”—to decentralize—“the court system;”—not one!;

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“an integrated campus in Tobago...”—Never happen!

Let us go on to see what this goodly Minister promised us last year would happen in this fiscal year.

“With the appointment of our new Minister of Tourism”—who is that? Chaguanas East?—“this has changed.” You know, the whole thing, the tourism sector take off—“He has already commenced the development and implementation of a multifaceted programme to achieve the goal of making Trinidad and Tobago the number one location in the region for tourist arrivals.” [*Interruption*]

Boy, if he was so good, why has he been moved?

Hon. Member: To put Sharma.

Mr. C. Imbert: Because it was just an Anansi story, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Listen to this, ICT:

“The Government has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the current ICT infrastructure...and has decided...to close the current broadband backbone gap by using a private-public partnership for creating an open-access broadband backbone”—this is a real mouthful, you know—“wholesale provider.”

I did not hear about it in this speech. What happened to that? This is supposed to be some private-public partnership that was supposed to take place in 2013. Gone? The backbone gone? The front bone gone? Everything gone? No wonder our telecommunications, our Internet and communications infrastructure are so terrible in this country because of this kind of incompetence. What is the point of saying that you are going to close the current broadband backbone by using a private-public partnership to create open access broadband and then do nothing?

Let us go on to CNG.

“Mr. Speaker, we have developed a comprehensive business plan which will invest \$1.5 billion in converting gasoline vehicles to”—CNG—“as an alternative fuel...This business and operational model is based on a target group of approximately 90,000 vehicles, covering diesel, maxi-taxis, gasoline...”—“all kind ah thing”.

“For that reason, in order to support the CNG conversion...”—I have increased—“the price of premium gas.”

Madam Deputy Speaker, how many of those 90,000 vehicles did they convert from gasoline to CNG in the last fiscal period?

Hon. Member: Not even his own.

Mr. C. Imbert: Not even the Minister's vehicle. He did not even convert his own vehicle from gas to CNG. It is just talk, talk, talk!

Listen to this:

"Mr. Speaker, a ship repair industry represents the sixth area of our focus. We are leveraging our facilities and assets in the north-west peninsula"—Chaguaramas—"to create a hub for major ship repair...and to catalyse a maritime economy." "Nutten; nutten happen!"

Listen to this next one: agriculture—this is the Minister's speech last year:

"...the seventh area of focus is agriculture. We propose to reduce our food import bill by 5.0 per cent or just over \$2.0 billion..."

Why do they say these things? It is so foolish, Madam Deputy Speaker.

"or just over \$2.0 billion per year by 2015."

The year 2015 is just 18 months from now, you know. So, you are going to reduce our food import bill by \$2 billion, by 50 per cent, in the next 18 months? And, you know, to deal with this, they reduced VAT on food and, as they take off the VAT, all the price of food gone up because the review will show you that food prices went up since this measure where they removed VAT on food. "Price gone up!" Go in any supermarket! I know the Minister does not go, you know, but go into any supermarket!

Let us move on. Let us see what else they said. They are going to upgrade the Dwight Yorke Stadium. "They go build a national aquatic centre, a national tennis centre, a national velodrome, three multi-purpose facilities, 64 recreation grounds—all that was supposed to be done in 2013; all ah dat and den:"

We "are preparing a marketing programme for hosting international events...aimed at encouraging international sportsmen and women to come to Trinidad and Tobago, particularly during the winter months..."

How many international sportsmen and sportswomen came to Trinidad and Tobago during December gone, Madam Deputy Speaker, to utilize facilities available in Trinidad and Tobago? Not one!

Mr. Roberts: What is he talking about?

Mr. C. Imbert: Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the problem is the Minister of Sport had an opportunity to tell us how much sports tourism these thousands and thousands of international athletes that descended upon Trinidad and Tobago, obviously in disguise—they did not come through the airport, maybe they came by boat—but he had an opportunity to tell us about all these international events and these international sports persons who came in the thousands to take advantage of our facilities.

Let us move on. Let us move on.

“In fiscal 2013”—this is the Minister, hon. Larry Howai—“we shall embark on a number of”—health sector—“projects:

- new hospitals in Point Fortin, Arima, Sangre Grand and Chaguanas;”

Member for Barataria/San Juan, where is the new hospital in Point Fortin; the one in Arima, the one in Sangre Grande and Chaguanas?

Dr. Khan: Since when you can build a hospital in one year?

Mr. C. Imbert: But this is what was said. “We shall embark on a number of projects.”

Dr. Khan: The process is going on.

Mr. C. Imbert: Oh yes, you are right. Invisible. I continue:

“the National Public Health Laboratory...;

the upgrade of the San Fernando General Hospital;

a teaching hospital at Chancery Lane....” [*Crosstalk*] “Yeah, yeah, sure.”

Dr. Khan: Talk about that Chancery Lane.

Mr. C. Imbert: Madam Deputy Speaker, Chancery Lane open, man. They have patients there. They have doctors in Chancery Lane.

Let us move on. Madam Deputy Speaker, what did the Minister have to say about CEPEP last year?

Hon. Member: “Can de ole talk!”

Mr. C. Imbert: He stated!

“I shall now encourage companies to engage employees of CEPEP and URP...

The National Productivity Council...would be assigned the responsibility for managing the transition of...CEPEP and URP employees to the private sector.”

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Hmmm. Well, that is a well-kept secret, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am not aware that the National Productivity Council has done that, but perhaps it happened and we did not know.

Let us go to page 44. This is the most creative and ridiculous statement, in my opinion, bearing in mind the disaster that hit Diego Martin in the last couple days.

On page 44:

“...\$300 million is being allocated for improving drainage within Trinidad and Tobago; Port of Spain is high on the priority listing of projects.”

They have not done one inch of new drainage work in Port of Spain, Madam Deputy Speaker. not an inch!

“Transport...100 new CNG-powered buses will be added to the existing fleet...”—Not one has come!

Gambling; every year is something about gambling, Madam Deputy Speaker. Gaming industry was the same last year.

“Mr. Speaker, we intend to bring the gaming industry under more effective control...we will introduce regulations to manage the industry”—which—
“will come into effect on May 1, 2013.”

“Well, I tink dat pass. I tink so.” I think May 01, 2013 has already passed. So where are the regulations for the gambling sector, hon. Minister, that you promised us? This year you came back promising again and this time no longer will you have regulations, you are going to have consultations.

I mean, Madam Deputy Speaker, this whole budget exercise is a farce; it is a joke. The Minister just gets up and talks and if you go back to the previous one, the hon. Member for Tunapuna—I cannot leave him out, you know, if you go to the 2012 budget address, let us see what he said. You know, he tried to escape responsibility in his contribution by saying he does not know what has happened but he is sure the Minister will tell us.

When he spoke about all of these energy sector projects, Madam Deputy Speaker, in 2012, hon. Winston Dookeran:

“we...anticipate a further injection of investment of approximately US \$5 billion”—between 2012, 2013, 2004.

- (1) The Reliance Bitumen Upgrader project;
- (2) Methanol to Polypropylene project;

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- (3) Methanol to Acetic Acid project;
- (4) Maleic Anhydride project;
- (5) Melamine Derivatives project;
- (6) Solar Manufacturing complex;
- (7) National Wind Resource Assessment Programme.

Hon. Member: That is the 2011 budget?

Mr. C. Imbert: 2012. “What happen? You sleeping over there? Look, you want a copy? I will send it fuh yuh.” Let me read it over, Madam Deputy Speaker. The hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy talking about “as we look forward”. He likes to look forward:

“The Reliance Bitumen Upgrader project;
Methanol to Polypropylene project;
Methanol to Acetic Acid project;
Maleic Anhydride project;”

All these things he promised will be done in 2012. Nothing! Absolutely nothing!

I notice the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy, the new one, is now getting some sense. He is not calling out this list of projects again. What I did not tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is the same list they called out in 2011. So in 2011, they listed this; 2012, they listed this; 2013, it kind of started to disappear; 2014, it has disappeared into the ether. So all these projects that would have brought all this investment into Trinidad and Tobago, promised in 2011/2012—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: For which they praised themselves.

Mr. C. Imbert: Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker. And you know they like to praise themselves?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Love it.

Miss Cox: Love it.

Mr. C. Imbert: They love to praise themselves. You know, there is something I need to deal with. I heard the hon. Member for Tunapuna refer to some comment made by the hon. Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara, which I really did not hear because I was not really paying much attention when the hon.

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Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara was screaming. I have a problem with noise of a certain decibel, a certain pitch, a certain pitch. It is a scream. It is a kind of pitch; it is kind of hard on the ears. But I heard the Member for Tunapuna refer to a comment made by the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, the Opposition Leader, about the Loran-Manatee arrangement and apparently the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara, somewhere in his rambling discourse said, "You cannot take credit for a course that you never did". Something like that.

Well, let me tell this country what is going on with Loran-Manatee because the country needs to know. It is the greatest deception that any Government has visited on a population. By the way, I have your speaking notes. Where has he gone? There you are. I have your speaking notes and nowhere in your speaking notes do you mention the Loran-Manatee field.

Hon. Ramnarine: My speaking notes?

Mr. C. Imbert: Yes, yours. These are yours. Would you like me to quote?

Hon. Member: Send a copy.

Mr. C. Imbert: Would you like me to start?

Hon. Ramnarine: For today? How do you know it is my speaking notes?

Miss Cox: That is for when? Today?

Mr. C. Imbert: Budget 2013/2014. Snapshot of the global energy business; overview according to the IMF world economic outlook. Sound familiar?

Hon. Member: I did not write that, Sir.

Mr. C. Imbert: I see. [*Laughs*] They joke about it, Madam Deputy Speaker, not a word inside of there about the Loran-Manatee field.

Hon. Ramnarine: I do not have to write that. I have it at the top of my head.

Mr. C. Imbert: "Yeah, sure." "Doh ask me."

Mr. Roberts: "You pick up some wrong notes and say is he own."

Mr. C. Imbert: I will send it for you.

Hon. Member: Well, is yours.

Mr. Roberts: "Must be Diego Martin West."

Mr. C. Imbert: I will send it for hon. Members opposite, Madam Deputy Speaker.

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Miss Cox: “How he plan to end?”

Mr. C. Imbert: No, no, no. Let me see what he was saying at the end. He was talking about the development of cross-border fields between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

Hon. Ramnarine: I do not have to read from that.

Mr. C. Imbert: The fact of the matter is, Madam Deputy Speaker, recently there was an announcement, a big “hurrah” coming out of the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs; there is a press release from the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, September 11, 2013, “Energy Minister Kevin Ramnarine Signs Historic Agreement to Develop the Giant Loran-Manatee Cross-border Gas Field”. Noise! September 11. That was just five days ago. But you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Government has been conspicuously silent on what is really going on with this deal they have struck with Venezuela and since the Minister may not wish people to know, I think it is incumbent upon me to let the country know what is going on.

You see, the monetization of the Loran-Manatee field which straggles the border between Trinidad and Venezuela, the maritime boundary, is the subject of a unitization agreement signed by the hon. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan [*Interruption*] No, no, no. We are talking about a document, 16th day of August, 2010. I have the document here in front of me which speaks to the monetization of the gas and the distribution of the gas in approximately 75:25—“ah rounding it off”—percentage. And the whole point of these negotiations that have been taking place for years was that the gas would come to Trinidad and Tobago to be used to create feedstock for Train X for Atlantic LNG, another train, and also to provide much needed gas for the gas companies, the companies that utilize natural gas in Trinidad and Tobago.

11.45 a.m.

So all the time this thing was being negotiated under the former administration—the former Prime Minister signed various documents. The first Minister of Energy, under the UNC, signed the Unitization Agreement, which is consistent with what had happened before, so the gas will be coming to Trinidad so that we could use it in our Atlantic LNG plant—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Mc Intosh: “Doh take him on; doh worry with him. Doh worry with him.”

Mr. C. Imbert: No, I am not taking him on at all.

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Mrs. Mc Intosh: You expect to come into our honourable House and do that.

Mr. C. Imbert: Let me tell you what has really happened. Instead of the gas coming to Trinidad—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Mc Intosh: “You cyar come here and do that.”

Mr. C. Imbert:—the gas is going to Venezuela. They have sold out! Let me read now, Madam Deputy Speaker, from the *Natural Gas Daily*, September 12, 2013. Let me give you the headline: Caribbean Compromise brings hope in Caracas.” They have a picture of Trinidad’s energy Minister with his Venezuelan counterpart, and this is how it goes:

“Venezuela signed a deal with Trinidad and Tobago on Wednesday to jointly produce gas from three highly prospective offshore fields...

The news is a boon for Caracas, with initial production from the largest field, the Loran-Manatee prospect—which holds 10.25 trillion cubic feet...to be piped to and sold in Venezuela.”

Dr. Rowley: What!

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Madness!

Mr. C. Imbert: Sell out!

Dr. Rowley: Betrayal!

Mr. C. Imbert: Treason! So we have all of this gas, Madam Deputy Speaker, straddling Trinidad and Tobago. For years there have been negotiations between the countries. Trinidad and Tobago has the energy infrastructure here; it has an LNG plant already here. It would have been much cheaper—[*Crosstalk*] Madam Deputy Speaker, please.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: “Ah find so.”

Madam Deputy Speaker: Please, please. You may continue, Member, please.

Mr. C. Imbert: I know this is upsetting to him, you know. I know it is upsetting to him. Madam Deputy Speaker, listen to this:

“The deal concludes a process to unitise the gas reserves of the two countries that began in 2007 under former President Hugo Chavez—[*Interruption*]

Madam Deputy Speaker, what is wrong with them?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Members, can you please allow the Member to speak in silence so I can hear what he is saying? You may continue, Member.

Mr. C. Imbert: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

“and the rhetoric between the two countries was warm on Wednesday.

On a clear day, I can see Venezuela from my office, so you are very close to us physically—and as friends; said Trinidad Energy Minister Kevin Ramnarine, in comments broadcast”—you know they want to deny—“over PDVSA’s radio station.”

PDVSA and... Chevron will begin work on the field immediately...the gas will be commercialized within two years...Venezuela plans to build a 276 km pipeline from Loran-Manatee to Guiria...

This would connect Loran-Manatee to the delayed Mariscal Sucre gas project in the region, allowing Venezuela to become a gas exporter to neighbouring Colombia...It also raises the possibility of liquefaction trains for LNG exports when production flows increase from both Loran-Manatee and Mariscal Sucre.

This is very good news for Venezuela...the big question is how fast...PDVSA and Chevron can develop the reserves of the Loran-Manatee field?.”

They built a pipeline to Venezuela, and send all the gas to Venezuela, Madam Deputy Speaker. And that is why they will not tell us what is going on.

There was celebration in Caracas when he signed the arrangement and agreed that the initial production of the gas from that field—25 per cent of which is ours—going to Venezuela for them to deal with a deficit with their hydroelectric production, and also to allow them to develop their own LNG industry and so on, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Listen to this:

Trinidad has a long-standing project to build Train X—

That is our Atlantic Plant where the gas should come:

—but the feasibility of this project depends on the availability of enough reserves to justify the project. Monetizing the Loran-Manatee production is, without doubt, the most business-minded and fastest option for both countries.

So we in Trinidad and Tobago have been negotiating to share gas—to send gas from that field into our LNG plant into our industries, this Government decides to

send it to Venezuela. Madam Deputy Speaker, it tells me exactly what is going on in our energy sector.

Listen to this one. I heard the Minister of Foreign Affairs talk about their fantastic initiatives in Africa but, you know, he is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Madam Deputy Speaker, he is supposed to know better, you know. Listen, listen to the fact:

Following a request for proposal issued by the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation in May 2009 inviting proposals for equity participation in development of Ghana's natural gas infrastructure development programme, they received 48 proposals out of which they shortlisted and invited two consortia of which an NGC-led joint venture was one.

Following a financial due diligence done on the other, the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation settled on the NGC—this is Trinidad and Tobago—led consortia. The first phase was about transporting and processing the natural gas from the Jubilee field that commenced commercial oil production in December 2010. The processed gas will replace diesel for fuel in power plants.

In May 2010 NGC was poised to take the lead in this investment proposal in Ghana when elections were called and a new Government was sworn in.

What happened then, Madam Deputy Speaker? Let us fast-forward to July 2010.

In July 2010, President Mills, the leader of Ghana, was very concerned over the delay to get the project going and NGC's silence in that regard—so he sent his personal emissary in the form of the Minister of Energy, the hon. Joe Oteng-Adjei, to present a letter from President Mills to Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar. For reasons that are not clear—well, they are clear to me—Minister Oteng was not granted an audience with the Prime Minister and met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs instead.

Minister Rambachan received the letter from Minister Oteng-Adjei.

Although there was no official complaint from the Ghanaians, the snub of President Mills' personal emissary was surely received as an insult.

Dr. Rowley: Repeat that.

Mr. C. Imbert: Yes. The snub of the personal emissary from the President of Ghana was surely received as an insult.

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The months of May, June, July, August, 2010 went by, this great Government could not appoint a board to the National Gas Corporation, so no NGC board.

In September, President Mills of Ghana, fed up with Trinidad and Tobago's silence, appointed a natural gas development task force, headed by a Dr. Quasi Bocce, a former Minister of Finance in the Ghanaian government. Dr. Bocce immediately proceeded to deal with the Chinese and the Japanese. The Chinese, in particular, promised virtual interest-free financing at a level that no country could compete with.

The NGC Board was appointed in November 2010 and the NGC was finally approved to return to Ghana travelling there in December 2010. Seven months after the national elections in May 2010, Dr. Bocce submitted the final report to the Government of Ghana on 31st March, 2011.

And hear what he has to say about Trinidad and Tobago, the country that the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs said, "We making headway in Africa, man."

It points to the tremendous political risk we take in handing over all critical aspects of this important project to a state-owned organization, NGC Trinidad, that can so easily be held hostage to the vicissitudes of political cycles.

So you see what the Ghanaians decide? "They ent doing that again. Dey not dealing with Trinidad and Tobago", because they negotiating all the while—they figured government is a continuum.

There is an arrangement in place to negotiate a new energy project with Ghana. Government changed, the project stopped for seven months. Somewhere in the seven months, the President of Ghana got a little anxious, sent an emissary to Trinidad and Tobago to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, she decides not—the hon. Prime Minister decides she is not seeing him—and this is the end result.

It points to the tremendous political risks we take in handing over all critical aspects of this important Ghanaian project to a state-owned organization, NGC Trinidad that can so easily be held hostage to the vicissitudes of political cycles.

That is a direct quote, Madam Deputy Speaker, from the report that was given to the Ghanaian Government by this former Minister of Finance in Ghana. The bottom line is, the Ghana initiative has failed. They are giving it to somebody else because of the incompetence of hon. Members opposite.

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And I heard you quarrelling about the information I have on Loran-Manatee. “Well, deny this nah?” Deny that President Mills sent his personal emissary to meet with Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar; deny that there was a delay of seven months in moving this project forward; deny that the people in Ghana are fed up with the political shenanigans in Trinidad and Tobago and they have no intention of getting involved in this kind of risky project again, where a Government could change and the whole thing would just hang up for seven months. Deny that. Deny that. You cannot.

You see, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance and the Economy talks a lot, but he does not read his own document. Let us go to another appendix in the Minister’s *Review of the Economy*, Appendix 8—natural gas production. And let us look at natural gas production in 2008, 42,000 MMcm. What was it in 2009? Forty-two thousand MMcm. What was it in 2010? Forty-five thousand MMcm. What was it in 2011? Forty-three thousand—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Ramnarine: What time period are you quoting there?

Mr. C. Imbert: Madam Deputy Speaker, could you ask the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries not to disturb me, please?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: He is just talking.

Mr. C. Imbert: Could you ask him not to disturb me?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: He just sit down there talking.

Mr. C. Imbert: He is a guest in this House. He will have his chance to speak, unfortunately, and he will tell us why they snubbed the President of Ghana. You explain that to me. [*Crosstalk*]

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am reading from Appendix 8 of the *Review of the Economy*, and the periods are—since he has not read this document—October 2007 to September 2008; October 2008 to September 2009; October 2009 to September 2010 and so on. So let us go back to October, 2009 to September 2010; 45,000 MMcm natural gas, produced in Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East has expired.

Motion made: That the hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Miss M. Mc Donald*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. C. Imbert: Madam Deputy Speaker, we had a little sotto voce across the floor. The Member for Oropouche East was hoping I would “buss ah mark.” [Laughter] Well, you know, I had a decision to make this year. You see this—[File in hand]—all of this is malfeasance in the Ministry of Transport. I could spend an hour reading it out, you know, but I will give it to the new Minister so he could understand what he has to clean up inside of there.

Mr. Warner: Give it to *Sunshine*.

Mr. C. Imbert: *Sunshine*, no problem. [Laughter] You will get it. [Laughter] I got another document like this, twice the thickness, about malfeasance in another state enterprise, Madam Deputy Speaker. I could spend a whole hour “bussing mark”, but I think it is necessary for the population to understand what is going on in this country, and it is necessary for the Government to come clean.

Let us go back to natural gas production. The time period that I was reading is quite irrelevant, wholly irrelevant. The fact is, that in 2008, 42,000 MMcm; 2009, 42,000; 2010, 45,000; 2011, 43,000. What is happening now, October 11, 2011 to May 12, 2012 and October 2012 to May 2013—[Interruption]

Sen. Ramnarine: An eight-month period.

Mr. C. Imbert: Yes, yes, yes. What is happening? It has gone to 27,000. [Crosstalk] Yes, well you come and explain what is going on. You explain why in your document, we are doing a 12-month cycle all the time—42,000, 42,000, 45,000, 43,000, 42,000—and all of a sudden, you decide for the last two periods, you will do an eight-month cycle, 27/28. Come and explain; come and explain, Madam Deputy Speaker. You see, the energy sector in this country is in a mess.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Shambles!

Mr. C. Imbert: It is in shambles, because—I am dealing with facts.

12.00 noon

In May 2010, our oil production was 100,851 barrels a day. That was our oil production; 100,851 barrels a day, May 2010 when the Government changed. What is the oil production now, Madam Deputy Speaker? What is it? And I am reading from documents published by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. What is it, Madam Deputy Speaker? The oil production now is hovering around 80,000 barrels a day, and there was a period in this year, in 2013, where our oil production dropped to 76,000. In June of 2013 our oil production dropped to 76,000.

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If you know anything about oil, we have not had oil production that low for more than 50 years, 5-0. This oil production here of 76,000 is from the '50s and the '60s in Trinidad and Tobago, Madam Deputy Speaker. That is where they have taken this country, and every year is talk, talk, talk.

Hon. Member: And more talk.

Mr. C. Imbert: Talk, talk, talk and more talk. If you go into the record, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was looking at all the noise they were making about the discovery in the Jubilee field, Bayfield Energy. "Blue skies are coming. Better days. We are going to preserve the windfall and use it for physical development." Remember that, Madam Deputy Speaker? You remember some time ago, big announcement; the hon. Prime Minister came to the post-Cabinet press conference holding up two bottles of a black substance, saying, "This is our future; we find 48 million barrels of oil", and then you find out afterwards that it is going to take three years to develop these fields, in one case, and five years to develop the other field. [*Interruption*] And I am hearing this is not true, because they want to put spin on it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, do you know how much oil is being produced out of that field that they say will give us 48 million barrels? A hundred barrels or 200 barrels a day; and you see it is shameful for a Government to talk about a field that is producing a couple hundred barrels—hundred barrels, Madam Deputy Speaker, a day. It is shameful to talk about a field producing this minuscule quantity.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member for Point Fortin and D'Abadie/O'Meara, please.

Mr. C. Imbert:—minuscule quantity of oil, Madam Deputy Speaker, and they are boasting as if we have lost—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Manna from heaven.

Mr. C. Imbert: Madam Deputy Speaker, we have lost 20,000 barrels of oil in production over the last two years. Twenty thousand barrels a day; if you multiply that by 365 days in the year, Madam Deputy Speaker, you can do the maths yourself: 20,000 x 10 is 200,000; 20,000 x 100 is 2 million—x 3, 7 million—7 million barrels of oil per year, and it is two years this has been going on for, Madam Deputy Speaker. You are talking about over 10 million barrels of oil gone because of the incompetence of this Government, but they come and boast about a field that producing 200—all right, I will give you 800. I know it is not that.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: It is not that.

Mr. C. Imbert: Because I have the actual figures out of Petrotrin, Madam Deputy Speaker, and it is a couple of hundreds: 200, 300, but you could say 800 if you want.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: But it is not eight.

Mr. C. Imbert: They could say eight I do not mind, they have lost 10 million barrels of oil in national production, Madam Deputy Speaker, over the last three years. Actually, let us take it back to 2010, you have 2011, 2012, 2013; it is probably more like 15 million barrels of oil that have gone out of our production. At \$100 a barrel—you want me to read the maths on that one?—times 10 it is 150 million, times 100 it is US \$1.5 billion at the top end, Madam Deputy Speaker; US \$1.5 billion on which we will do our petroleum taxation. That is the opportunity that we had to tax US \$1.5 billion in oil production—thrown away by this Government, over the last three years; thrown away, thrown away.

And you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is a lot going on in Petrotrin, and the Minister—I am not saying that the Minister is involved in this one, but I would like the Minister to explain why Petrotrin is manipulating the tender process for the “bottom of the barrel project”. The Minister will know what I mean by the “bottom of the barrel project”. The Minister will know. You know when you are refining oil you have a set of stuff stuck, it is at the bottom of the barrel, and it is valuable but you need to be able to process this product in order to produce valuable fuels, gasoline and various other petroleum products, Madam Deputy Speaker, the bottom of the barrel. It is the stuff at the bottom of the barrel after you have finished doing your preliminary processing.

So after years of fooling around Petrotrin decided in June 2013 that they would invite proposals for a project to deal with the residue or the “bottom of the barrel” that Petrotrin is left with after it does its preliminary refining. So they advertised for an RFP in June of 2013, and what happened, Madam Deputy Speaker? Out of the blue, they decided to extend the closing date from August 23 to September 20, and then out of the blue they decided to extend the closing date from September 20 to December 2013. So you have a project tendered in June, tender was supposed to close in August, they decided to extend it to September because “somebody say” they want more time; “somebody say” they want more time, and then they decided to extend it from September to December because “somebody say” they want more time.

So you have a tender process, Madam Deputy Speaker, that should be finished in two months, it is now going on for six months. I “doh” have to read and spell for you. I “doh” have to read and spell; clearly they are making arrangements for some inexperienced contractor by stretching the tender process from two months to three months, to four months, to five months, to six months; clearly they are making arrangements for somebody to acquire the necessary expertise—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Member: They are so corrupt.

Mr. C. Imbert:—to be able to bid. This is classic bid-rigging, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Member: God will take care of you all, God waiting on you all.

Mr. C. Imbert: Classic bid-rigging, classic, because let me tell you who bid in June: Trinity Power, Construtora OAS, CB&I Lummus, Foster Wheeler, CALCO Construction—I “doh” know what they are doing there—GS Construction, but clearly one of their boys is not in that brew. So because one of their boys did not collect the tender documents they had to extend it to September, and because one of their boys decided that they needed more time this is why you have this constant re-advertisement and re-invitation.

These are the newspaper ads, Madam Deputy Speaker, for requests for proposal. It is clear that it is the intention of somebody to manipulate this project and the reason why, Madam Deputy Speaker, the capital cost is TT \$10 billion. What kind of international oil company puts out an advertisement, invites tenders and then extends it once, twice, three times; stretches the tender period for six months, changes the RFP, changes the qualification requirements, waters down the requirements so that some inexperienced company could come through? I would like the Minister to explain what is going on with the “bottom of the barrel project” at Petrotrin. Explain? You cannot explain. You cannot explain why you keep stretching this thing, but you could tell us things that may not be entirely correct, Madam Deputy Speaker, but you cannot explain.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, earlier on I had spoken about a ludicrous comment made by the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy in last year’s budget speech, where he said he was going to allocate \$300 million for drainage, but we have since discovered that all of the work that was allegedly done was either not done or it was done elsewhere. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, we in Diego Martin, not being constituencies represented by the UNC, we have been

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earmarked for punishment, so as a consequence, the Ministers get up and talk about all the work that they are doing—I am just looking for some photographs that you said you will allow me to use. I will find them, do not worry.

The Ministers get up and talk about, you know, they are doing so much work, they are dredging rivers, they are dredging drains, they are cleaning everything. You have a Chairman in the Diego Martin Regional Corporation, a UNC Chairman, who is constantly saying that he has cleaned 95 per cent of the drains in the region of Diego Martin, Madam Deputy Speaker—95 per cent of the drains. And then it rains for just two hours and the whole of Diego Martin is under water. The whole of Diego Martin is under water. Here are the photographs. [*Member holds up photograph*] This is a main drain through a residential area. Look at it. It is a main drain through a highly populated residential area in Petit Valley, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Dr. Rambachan: You lived there as the MP and you—

Dr. Moonilal: “You was Minister of Works.”

Mr. Roberts: “Show meh, I eh see.”

Mr. C. Imbert: Look at this, Madam Deputy Speaker. Look at this. You know how long it takes for vegetation like this to grow? About two years. This is in Majuba where you live Minister Anil Roberts.

Hon. Member: Oh!

Mr. C. Imbert: This is the drain—oh, you have a house. You have a house on Palm Avenue, you feel “ah doh” know. [*Crosstalk*] You see this drain, you see— [*Interruption*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Please! Please! Members, please. Please!

Mr. Roberts: He is putting my life at risk.

Mr. C. Imbert: But, Madam Deputy Speaker, he was a constituent. What is wrong with this man? Your name on the voters list.

Madam Deputy Speaker: This is before you, Member.

Mr. C. Imbert: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. This drain runs behind the house of the Minister of Sport in Petit Valley. This drain has not been cleaned since 2010. This is performance, UNC style.

Hon. Minister: It look like [*Inaudible*]

Mr. C. Imbert: Yeah, sure. [*Member holds up photograph*] Madam Deputy Speaker, this second photograph which you have said you will allow me to display, how long do you think that takes to grow? That is over a year. This is a section of the Diego Martin River in the Sinanan Gardens area. Look at it; trees in the river, but they will go out and tell the public—look at it, trees in the river. Look, they say they clean—this is just two you know; I have 200 photographs like this.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: By me it is worse.

Mr. C. Imbert: They say they clean every drain in Diego Martin.

Dr. Moonilal: [*Inaudible*] start taking pictures.

Mr. C. Imbert: Yeah. Madam Deputy Speaker, you remember I was thrown out of this House for displaying photographs that is why I asked your permission today. I displayed similar photographs. Ten feet of silt in the Maraval River in 2011 and 2012; this is the Diego Martin River, look at it. [*Member holds up photograph*] Shame on all of you, and then after you do not do your work where does the money go? Because I have heard some Ministers say, “But we spend money in Diego Martin”. Is it that you are not monitoring what is going on? Is it rampant “thiefing” and corruption that is taking place that you are just paying money and the contractors are not doing their work? Is that what is happening? Because I cannot believe that they could put up this charade, when they say, “We clean everything, we doh understand what is going on.” That last thing I heard was “climate change”; well, climate change make these trees grow in a month. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Rowley: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. C. Imbert: Climate change made this tree grow in a month. Madam Deputy Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: And they are bringing Venezuelans to clean it.

Mr. C. Imbert: Yes, they are bringing Venezuelans to fix it. Madam Deputy Speaker, you know, this Government really needs to do some introspection.

You know, there is such rampant misconduct; such rampant malfeasance taking place within the state sector in Trinidad. [*Member holds up photograph*] Look at this, Madam Deputy Speaker, the *Guardian*, September 12, four days ago, “Business leaders: Account for billions spent”. So it is not just the man on the street who does not understand where the money is going, business leaders want to know; account for the money spent.

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Let me go to a story that was in the newspapers recently, Madam Deputy Speaker. By the way, how many more minutes do I have?

Madam Deputy Speaker: You finish at 12.20.

Mr. C. Imbert: Oh, I have plenty time, 15 minutes. There was a very astonishing story published in the *Express*, Madam Deputy Speaker, “\$.7m BACKPAY PROBE”, and this is about the Deputy General Manager at the Public Transport Service Corporation. Now this story is very curious, and I think the public needs to know why it is so curious:

“The deputy general manager at...(PTSC) was paid a lump sum of about \$700,000 after he signed a contract on January 29, 2013, when he accepted the position, and the terms of employment were backdated to...2011.

At the time, Ishwar Jadoonanan was also employed at the...(PTSC) as its human resources manager from 2010.

As the deputy general manager,”—he—“earns a basic salary of \$51, 500...”

Madam Deputy Speaker, the man is getting about three times your salary.

“...a transport allowance of \$6,500 and a business expense allowance of \$1,500.”

Almost \$60,000 a month.

12.15 p.m

In addition to this “he is privy to a company vehicle as well as a driver...” and so on.

“The board chaired by former parliamentarian Vincent Lasse, had an emergency meeting on Monday at 8 a.m. ...to discuss the Jadoonanan matter.”

This is the same Vincent Lasse, Madam Deputy Speaker, who crossed the floor in 1997 and was warmly embraced by my friends opposite and the then Speaker decided not to declare his seat vacant. They hugged him up. They said that is true national unity. They called on all the PNM to come over and join the UNC; that was '97, when the Prime Minister was in the UNC Government of the Panday administration, but I noticed in 2013, it is wrong to cross the floor. It was right—the Member for Toco/Sangre Grande did it as well. It was right in 1996 and 1997 for persons elected on a PNM ticket to cross the floor and accept portfolios in a UNC Government. It was right then, but it is wrong now for the Member for St. Joseph to resign from the UNC; same people.

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You see, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is this kind of hypocrisy that is upsetting the population. You cannot hug up people in '96/'97 and say, oh I am so happy that you crossed the floor, and then the Speaker refuses to declare the seat vacant, and when the matter goes to court, you bring two QCs—that Government bring two English QCs—and spend a million dollars—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Yeah.

Mr. C. Imbert:—trying to deal, to prevent the seats from being declared vacant in 1997; 2013, it is wrong. They have a moral duty to declare the seat for St. Joseph vacant, but that is not it. It is just that—“look whe these fellas end up.” So, Vincent Lasse is now Chairman of PTSC.

Hon. Member: Hmm!

Mr. C. Imbert: Look at what they have discovered now. The *Express* obtained a copy of Jadoonanan’s résumé which he used to apply for the position. He does not hold a first degree—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Why?

Mr. C. Imbert:—which was a requirement for the job and so on and so on.

Former Airports Authority Chairman, Linus Rogers, pointed out—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: And PNM Senator. [*Interruption*]

Mr. C. Imbert:—yes, that was not the first time that this gentleman had been a subject of controversy. He was sent on—he used to work for the Airports Authority.

Dr. Rowley: What is his name?

Mr. C. Imbert: Jadoonanan. The board discovered—this is the PNM board in 2001 and 2002—that Jadoonanan was paying himself and other managers at the airport tax-free salaries. He was paying himself and other managers at the airport salary and allowances above that which was approved by the board. He was paid cash for accumulated vacation, but also retained the vacation and took the leave.

Hon. Member: Hmm.

Mr. C. Imbert: So they were all found to be unqualified persons placed in various managerial positions at the airport, they were all terminated; they took the Airports Authority to court; the matter was in court right up to 2010; new

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Government comes in, the Airports Authority—the new Airports Authority—is instructed, withdraw from that matter, do not pursue it, pay them, and they paid them \$8 million.

Hon. Member: Hmmm.

Mr. C. Imbert: But that is not it. I have in my possession, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is all in the public domain, so nothing is new. [*Crosstalk*] It was done by you. I checked that.

Dr. Moonilal: When? When?

Mr. C. Imbert: It was done by you. Now let us go to—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Jadoonanan.

Mr. C. Imbert:—a *Newsday* report—*Newsday*, November 19, 2002. [*Crosstalk*] It is an account of testimony at the Commission of Enquiry into the Piarco Airport scandal, and hear the report in the *Newsday* on November 19, 2002; 11 years ago.

“Several...managers employed at the Airports Authority...are not qualified to hold their positions....

some of them received cash in lieu of vacation leave...”...Well—“...at least two of them receiving both cash and vacation leave.”

Hon. Member: Theft. [*Interruption*]

Mr. C. Imbert: The CVs of the managers was read into the record, and they have a number of them, but the one—I would not call the other names, I will simply call the name of “Ishwar Jadoonanan”, same man.

“In all instances,...the men did not even have the minimum requirement for the jobs they held, which in most cases were five to seven years experience...in addition to a degree.

In the case of...”—the corporate secretary, one Mr. Khan—“he was admitted to the bar in October 2000, before being given the job Corporate Secretary...”— to the Airports Authority—in 2001.”

A fella with a couple months—a few months—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: Out of law school.

Mr. C. Imbert:—out of law school is given the job, corporate secretary, in the Airports Authority by this UNC administration. [*Crosstalk*]

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Hon. Member: Bright fella.

Mr. C. Imbert: Yeah, bright fella.

The fact of the matter is, Madam Deputy Speaker, the same gentleman, the same Ishwar Jadoonanan, who was fired from the airport in 2001/2002 because he did not have a university degree and was not qualified to be the human resource manager—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Where is he now?

Mr. C. Imbert:—at the Airports Authority—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: “Where he end up?”

Mr. C. Imbert:—he ended up as deputy general manager of the PTSC for which the post requires a university degree.

Hon. Member: My God!

Mr. C. Imbert: You know, you all cannot even get, cannot even cover your tracks. “Eleven years de fella outside there and he cyar get the degree so he could qualify for the post in PTSC. So he did it in the airport, they fire him, they ketch him.” He was not qualified—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: “And he still have no degree.”

Mr. C. Imbert:—he comes back and 11 years later—this is a report coming from the Vincent Lasse/UNC board of the PTSC [*Crosstalk*] in September.

The *Express* obtained a copy of Jadoonanan’s résumé which he used to apply for the position of deputy general manager. He does hold a first degree. September 2013. So in 2002, he did not have a first degree—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: “He is a lazy fella, boy.” [*Laughter*]

Mr. C. Imbert: No. It is absolutely mind-boggling that this UNC Government. “You put de man in de airport and he was not qualified—[*Crosstalk*] UNC—and he was not qualified. When they ketch him and they realize that he doh have a university degree, they fire him”. Eleven years later “de” man is promoted to deputy general manager of PTSC, for which a degree is required, and he still does not have a degree. [*Crosstalk*] That is Government UNC style.

And hear this one; [*Crosstalk*] the salaries—[*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Moonilal: “He cudda do a degree.”

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Mr. C. Imbert: “He cudda do a degree in 11 years if all yuh wanted to help out de man, but 11 years later he still posing as a university graduate.”

Madam Deputy Speaker, this person, this gentleman who does not have a degree is getting twice the salary of all the other managers in PTSC, [*Crosstalk*] some of whom have degrees. Some of whom are [*Crosstalk*] qualified engineers, getting twice the salary of the others. [*Crosstalk*] Sixty thousand dollars a month when you add up everything.

Hon. Member: What!

Mr. C. Imbert: Sixty thousand dollars a month. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, [*Crosstalk*] let me read into the record—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: The man has a godfather.

Mr. C. Imbert: He has a godfather. [*Crosstalk*] Section 15 of the Public Transport Service Act.

“The Corporation may appoint on such terms...as it thinks fit, a General Manager and such other...staff for the purpose of managing its...transportation services...

An annual salary in a sum that is equivalent to or exceeds the annual salary of nine thousand six hundred dollars or such greater amount as the Minister may prescribe shall not be assigned to any post...without the prior approval of the Minister.”

So the law says “you cyar pay dis man” \$51,000 unless the Minister approved in writing. And your UNC board knows; this is the Act. This is the PTSC Act. “Yuh cyar pay de man more than \$9,000 ah year without getting ministerial approval.” Which Minister—was it the Member for Fyzabad?

Hon. Member: Deviant.

Mr. C. Imbert: Was it the Senator in the other place? Which Minister—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: A deviant Minister.

Mr. C. Imbert:—activated section 15 of the PTSC Act and approved a salary of \$51,000—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: A deviant Minister.

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Mr. C. Imbert:—for this gentleman, which—I want to hear answers from the Minister. You see, the Minister of Finance and the Economy likes to be pious, you know. I want you to tell me the—you are the Corporation Sole.

Hon. Member: Hmm.

Mr. C. Imbert: I want you, Minister of Finance and the Economy, to tell me what is going on. [*Crosstalk*] Which letter?

Mr. Roberts: From the Minister who approved it. You must have that. “Yuh is a good fella.”

Mr. C. Imbert: That is for the next time.

Mr. Roberts: “Yuh doh have it?”

Mr. C. Imbert: That is for the next time.

Mr. Roberts: “Yuh disappoint me.”

Mr. C. Imbert: No, it is all right. [*Crosstalk*] “Dat is for de next time.” [*Laughter*] Madam Deputy Speaker, “I know all yuh want to buss he throat, you know, but it is all right. Ah not going to help all yuh.” [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the few minutes, in the one or two minutes left for me—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: “Buss he throat.”

Mr. C. Imbert:—the Minister—no, no. I will deal with Caribbean Airlines now.

The Minister told us that he is removing the subsidy; \$200-odd million. He did not tell us that he is giving Caribbean Airlines \$407 million in a transfer—it is on page 87 of the *Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure*—\$400 million is going to be given to Caribbean Airlines. You know how much money they gave them in 2013? A little known secret which you have kept a secret; \$527 million was given to Caribbean Airlines in 2013. You know how much money you gave them in 2012? Little known secret; \$726 million.

So, this airline when it was handed over to you, it had US \$150 million in the bank, almost a billion dollars, had to be subsidized by \$700 million in 2012, \$500 million in 2013 and you are giving them another \$400 million—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: To start.

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Mr. C. Imbert:—to start. [*Crosstalk*] It is almost \$2 billion, and the Minister has the audacity to tell us, “he take out the subsidy”, [*Crosstalk*] fares would not go down.

Go and see what is the price of a ticket to Toronto at Christmas time, Madam Deputy Speaker; \$9,000. Check the price of a ticket to Fort Lauderdale, \$5,000. Check the price of a ticket to New York, \$6,000, Madam Deputy Speaker. [*Crosstalk*] They “doh” have—that is the price in December [*Crosstalk*] if you book it now. Nine thousand dollars to get to Toronto, \$6,000 to get to New York, \$5,000 to get to Fort Lauderdale. They raise the price already. Madam Deputy Speaker, I know—I will wind up now. [*Laughter*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Please. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. C. Imbert: I will wind up now, Madam Deputy Speaker. They think people are stupid. Just last night I had some friends over and they were bemoaning the fact—they have a daughter at a university in Canada and they are bringing her down and they have to pay \$10,000 to bring this child down from Canada at Christmas time. They raise the price of the tickets already. [*Crosstalk*] Who are you trying to fool?

Madam Deputy Speaker, you see this smoke and mirrors, you see “dis ole talk, it ain’t working. That is why they get wiped out in Tobago.” That is why they get wiped out in Chaguanas and that is why they will get wiped out in local government election. The population is fed up with all of these tricks, smoke and mirrors, misinformation, half-truths and innuendoes and downright lies, Madam Deputy Speaker. I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Jack Warner (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker— [*Interruption*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: No. No. No. Member, Member, please, take your seat. Members, it is a good time for us to have some refreshment. This House is now suspended until 1.30 p.m.

12.27 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

1.30 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Jack Warner (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I was a child in Rio Claro, I asked my mother, “Where babies come from?” She said, “De

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plane bring dem.” I grew up believing honestly that the plane brought babies. Then I left Rio Claro and went to live in Todds Road, and I asked my aunt, “Where babies come from?” And my aunt told me, “De plane bring babies.”

I then went to live in Longdenville and I asked my sister, “Where babies come from?” She said, “But your aunt tell you from de plane, mommy tell you from the plane, why yuh asking me again? It come from de plane.” I grew up believing that planes brought babies, until I went to Presentation College, Chaguanas, on a scholarship, walking six miles to go to school and six miles to return home. It was there in doing biology as a student about amoeba and spirogyra and so on, I began to understand how babies were born. Mr. Speaker, the plane that brought those babies is the plane that brought this budget.

Hon. Member: Oh God!

Mr. J. Warner: This budget is a facade. It is a public relations budget, but I would have expected much more from the Minister of Finance and the Economy, because commercial bankers at least are not so gung-ho on public relations—of course, there are exceptions. When I saw an article in the *Express* that said, “Licks for Larry”, I read the article with interest, because the fact is, I wanted to find out what “de licks” was about. Having read the article, “Licks for Larry”—this is it here—[*Mr. Warner displays document*—Thursday, September 12, “Licks for Larry”, I hope the licking never stops, because if any Minister deserves licks, this Minister of Finance and the Economy does, for putting this hoax of a budget on the people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, if one were to be generous, one would say that the Minister’s budget was sloppy, because certain details were missing from the budget, but then on closer examination, one realizes that it was deliberate.

Mr. Speaker, before I forget, let me apologize for being an hour late on Friday last. I left to go to Diego Martin to look at the flood. I was called down to Bagatelle and when I reached there I saw “Bagahell”, but I will talk about that in my contribution. I was absent lunchtime because I had to carry down some lunches for the people who were marooned in Diego Martin, so my apologies. In fact, I want to also thank Ministers Fuad Khan and Ganga Singh. I went there and a woman was dragged out of a river on Mason Street. I called Minister Fuad Khan and he promptly dispatched an ambulance which took her to the hospital. Minister, thank you very much.

And Mr. Ganga Singh—the people were in a sea of water, so to speak, but they had no water to drink nor to wash their places, and Ganga Singh sent and

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came himself with truck borne water for them. At a time when a Cabinet has taken a decision not to help Jack Warner at any level, these two Ministers stood out. But I will come to that again just now, and I will talk about the Minister of Transport, Mr. Stephen Cadiz, during my contribution.

So, Mr. Speaker, I was saying that in the budget you saw a lack of proper accounting. You saw proposals which were vague. You saw a budget which showed that the Government did very little last year and had little to show for a \$50-plus billion budget that was spent. You saw proposals which were hollow and in some cases, these proposals were distortions of the facts. This morning I heard about true facts and facts are false and facts which are false; I heard that this morning. I am still to know how facts could be false and true, but more about that later.

One of the areas which I would not spend much time on is the area of CAL, which the last speaker, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, dealt with eloquently. But when a former banker comes here as Minister of Finance and the Economy and says that he removed the subsidy on CAL, Caribbean Airlines, and that no ticket prices shall be increased, he has to be Mandrake. [*Laughter*] Not even Mandrake could do that—not even Mandrake.

He said that the fuel subsidy shall be discontinued, but he said, I quote: “The ticket pricing policy would remain.” He did not say ticket prices—the ticket pricing policy shall remain. I want you to understand the semantics. Mr. Speaker, if the ticket prices are to remain, as he says, how do you cut the subsidy to CAL that does not have a cash flow, and still keep the airline flying?

When I was Minister of Transport—before they cut the Ministry—I had a serious argument with the board of the airline. Those days CAL was under the Minister of Works and Transport. I had a serious argument with the board because of the fact that I found there were certain expenses which I felt were not justified. Of course, the world now knows, the country knows, that to get at me, because I was not budging, the Ministry was cut, and CAL was taken and given to another Minister, and a Ministry of Transport was then formed.

From then to now, a kind of financial haemorrhage has gone through CAL. I am saying, therefore, whether Mandrake or not, “abracadabra” or not, you cannot tell me you will cut the fuel subsidy and the ticket prices will remain the same. What are they doing? Will the routes be cut back? Will they cut the service? Will the fleet be short staffed? Would corruption be under control? If it is at all, that would be a first for the Government. Will it be under control? How therefore would CAL be run?

As the last speaker showed, and I will not go into much detail, it was just “ol’ talk”, because they have in the accounts a sum of \$407 million for capital restructuring, but they are doing this without even getting from the board what the board’s proposals are. So you do not know what the money is for, you do not know if it is too much or too little, but you are budgeting and the board’s proposals have not come in as yet. Worse than that, they have put a figure of \$719 million for debt servicing.

Who is fooling whom? Mr. Speaker, \$1.1 billion, but semantics, and I shudder to think that I was part of that. [*Laughter*] But I will not spend time on CAL, because at the end of the day when I look at the budget I ask myself certain questions. All the rhetoric and so on and the nice, fancy, cosmetic language, what did the budget have to say on education that would give this country some hope?

Last Friday, when we were screening people for the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation, we were in Macaulay at about 6.00 p.m. having dinner in a home. Two children, no more than six years, came to me, “Mr. Warner, can I have a picture with you?” I said, “Yes, sure.” I hugged them and took a picture. Then they asked, “Mr. Warner, can you help us to go to school?” I said, “What happened to your school?” “Mr. Warner, is two weeks now we have not gone to school. We have our book bags; we have our uniform, but we doh know when school opening.” What school is this? “Union Presbyterian School.” The children do not know. So I said, “What do you all do in the day?” Their parents teach them sums and spelling and so on.

What did the budget tell those parents, those children? What hope did it give them? None. If that was an exception I did not mind, but it seems as if the Ministry of Education has something with the Presbyterian board. I went to Longdenville Presbyterian a couple months ago to a graduation. It was the first time I knew something has three halves. In that school that is over 50 years old half the children are in the school, another half is in Longdenville Government Primary School and “half home”—three halves. [*Laughter*] Three halves.

They are building a school in Cashew Gardens and their Member of Parliament is the Member for Chaguanas East whom they have never seen since election. Had it not been for television, in some cases, they never see some of their Ministers, but I am coming back with that just now. What do you tell those children? What did the budget answer those children? Nothing.

They would not even discriminate on the grounds of geography. So in the Tranquility Government School the children go to school there one week on one

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week off. Why? Because they have no furniture. Mr. Speaker, \$61 billion budget, what did it tell those children? What did it tell their parents? What hope did it give them? But we come here and we “lay-lay” our milk—to use our grandmother’s term—to fool the people.

They have a tune called *The Gambler* by Kenny Rogers. It is a tune I like very much, but there are some words in the tune particularly I crave your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, just to tell you what they say. In the chorus he sings the song:

“You got to know when to hold them”—hold the cards; you have to know when to hold the pack of cards—“You have to know when to walk away; you have to know when to run...”

Mr. Speaker, I am glad I ran. [*Laughter*] If I had not run, today my eyes would never have been opened. I gambled on this Government. They could say what they want. I heard on a platform that it was said, “Nobody put me here, you the people put me here.” All right, I would remember that 15 months from now. If I had not run, my eyes would not open.

Mr. Speaker, you know something? We come here and we hear—I listened to the Leader of the Opposition. I was not here, I was in Diego Martin, but I heard the reply, the rebuttal from my friend, the Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara. “I heard about Calder Hart. I heard about Ken Julien. [*Laughter*] I heard about Uthara Rao. The PNM are where they are because of that.

Tell the nation what you are doing for this country. They will be where the PNM are right now for the very same reason and more, because the fact is this: “We tired with Calder Hart. When they finish Calder Hart, is FIFA and Concacaf, Zurich and New York.” Thirty years I am in those organizations, not one person today has said anything about me except my people here. That is the thing. When that is finished they will come just now with the Integrity Commission. Jack Warner, of course, name listed.

I became a Member of this Parliament in 2007. “I learned in 2013, for the first time, I ain’t put some particulars on meh form of meh assets, so I will give dem, but that is the talk.” People want to know what you are doing. Forget the personality, forget the messenger, listen to the message and tell this nation what you are doing.

1.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the *Catholic News* of September 01, 2013: “Only 42 out of 74...” schools were repaired. This is the *Catholic News*.

Hon. Members: “He say he fixed all.”

Mr. J. Warner: Oh, he fixed all. Mr. Speaker, what did the budget debate tell these people here about the schools?

Hon. Members: That he is lying to us.

Mr. J. Warner: What did he tell the people in Paramin about the RC school there? What did they tell them? GDP, and you have this to do and the banker says--I will come to the banker just now, the Member for Tunapuna. No, I will come to him tomorrow at the university of Gasparillo. This is what I am talking about. The time has come to stop fooling the nation and call a spade a spade.

Mr. Speaker, I bless the day that my eyes have been opened, thanks to Chaguanas West. [*Laughter*] I had blinkers on all before, and the day I went for screening and I was rejected, in retrospect, was the best day of my life.

Schools—in this report, Mr. Speaker, listen to what the Minister says about education. Hear what he says, Mr. Speaker, about education. He said, of course, 95 per cent of the schools have been repaired. Which schools? Repaired by whom? And, Mr. Speaker, nobody knows the schools were repaired—and you checked on who got the payment, and the big contractors by the way—I have some copies of payments as late as August 20, big contractors. I know you would say that has nothing to do with here, Mr. Speaker, so at the university of Gasparillo tomorrow I will announce it. Big contractors payment, and the small contractors—the guys with \$100,000 and \$200,000 they are not paying them at all. The guys’ businesses are closing down, closing down; the schools, go get your education.

I want to get to the part where he quotes; he says, of course for the schools, 95 per cent of the schools—who is fooling whom? Yes, over the school vacation, I quote, page 43:

Over the school vacation—vacation period—repairs were undertaken on 212 schools. Of these, 196 were completed on time. This represented a 92 per cent completion rate.

Well 8 per cent [*Inaudible*] *Catholic News*—must be Catholic.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Facts are facts.

Mr. J. Warner: Who is fooling whom?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Nobody fooling anybody. Those are the facts.

Dr. Rowley: Lies.

Mr. J. Warner: You had your time, you had your time, you had your time. “I eh giving way to nothing.” You had your time, you talk, right. But I would say again, Mr. Speaker, the time has come when we have—you see the point is this, when those schools are not repaired, you blame the PNM—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Tell me.

Mr. J. Warner:—you blame the principals. At no point in time this Government wants to take blame for anything. Section 34, you blamed Volney. Resmi Ramnarine, you blamed everybody. [*Laughter*] Crime, you blamed the police. When will we assume responsibility, Mr. Speaker, for our actions? Blame the PNM. Three and a half years they are in Government, but the PNM and the principals.

Mr. Speaker, even when there was rebuttal from the Member for Diego Martin West, I will say again, I was not here for his contribution but I was here for the rebuttal. The Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara, my very, good friend, we take a beverage off and on, when the Prime Minister does not see him. [*Laughter and desk thumping*] Yes, yes, “is awright, is awright doh worry.” [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, I thought after three and a half years, I would have heard something about the Brian Lara Stadium. You saw all the money the PNM thief, how the PNM do bad, three and half years you come here for your second to last budget—this is their penultimate budget before they demit office, all of them [*Laughter*] right, and nothing about the Brian Lara Stadium. I see a figure, \$185 million to finish Brian Lara Stadium, how you get that figure, from a hat? To do what? Where it come from? And assuming it is true, after it is fixed, then what? Nothing, Calder Hart, Uthara Rao, Ken Julien—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Members: And the PNM. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

Mr. J. Warner: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was in Point Fortin, one of the best receptions I have ever received in my life was in Point Fortin yesterday. While I was there the young children were asking, telling me: “Boss when your party get in Government you will fix Mahaica Oval.” I said: “Yes.” What about the South Western Regional Complex? I said: “Yes.” They asked me, Mr. Speaker, yesterday, children asking me, why should children have to leave Point Fortin to go Mannie Ramjohn Stadium for a sports day, from Point Fortin. At one point in time Point Fortin was the cradle of youth football: Leo Bruce had twinkle toes,

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Warren Archibald, Steve David, you name them. Today, there is nothing in Point Fortin, nothing. And I thought my sports partner would tell me something about that. No, again, Uthara Rao, Ken Julien, Calder Hart and so on.

Mr. Roberts: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. J. Warner: You see. And you know something, Point Fortin at one time was the community that carried this country—this country's economy came from Point Fortin; today, nothing. I was sharing out blankets, Mr. Speaker, and mattresses and I heard on the radio at the time the Member for Arouca—
[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: Maloney.

Mr. J. Warner: Not Maloney, the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West, [*Interruption*] yes, the guy with the hat, “Dr. Goodluck”. [*Laughter*] I heard the Member, Mr. Speaker, I heard him, and he was saying—he went quite to New Orleans in his contribution. He talked about Hurricane Katrina, and right in Diego Martin, black Friday in Diego Martin, he said nothing about Diego Martin, not a clue about Diego Martin, just next door. And talk about disconnect, that is disconnect. What does New Orleans and Katrina have to do with us at this point in time? Look at Diego Martin suffering, two hours of rain, Diego Martin under water. For the very same reason they were there last year and next year they would be there for the same reason if they are still in power.

Mr. Speaker, half an hour rain fall in St. Augustine and Curepe, under water. When I was Minister of Works and Transport before they cut it and so on—you know, Mr. Speaker, the joke is, when they cut the Ministry of Works and Transport—they say new Minister of Works and Infrastructure. “Ah say wha is infrastructure?” Up to now, nobody “eh” tell me yet, you know. What is infrastructure? If I am works and infrastructure, then tell me what it is. But be that as it may, when I was Minister of Works and Transport and I had taken over from the Member for Diego Martin North/East, I had said that flooding in Port of Spain, those days are over. I had one of the best guys clean the drains in the dry season, Cadre. There is no company here in this country better than Cadre. But Cadre does not give kickback. He does not, at all. So, therefore they will not use him. But Cadre cleared the drains in Port of Spain. Cadre put a pump at the PTSC compound which pump had not been collected after one year. And by the way, they “ent” pay him for it yet.

Mr. Speaker, and you say, why flooding? You have to clean the drains and the watercourses in the dry season, and prepare for the rainy season. I have more

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pictures than the MP for Diego Martin North/East has. But I need them for the *Sunshine* tomorrow or Wednesday, because the pictures can speak for themselves. People come to the newspaper office crying tears, look at the rivers. And hear the Chairman of the corporation, Anthony Sammy, he build an ODPM centre and he has a very nice room for the media. That is it. That is it. I tell you.

The Minister from Lopinot/Bon Air West does not say a thing about that, he goes to New Orleans. The Minister, part of his portfolio is to give government grants for culture and for religious events. He does so, Mr. Speaker, with no policy, and in a most untimely manner. What did the budget tell us about that? Will there be an improvement? Will the people in Chaguanas, for Divali, who could not get any money for the past three years, get this year, especially in Felicity? Will they get? What did the budget tell them about that? Nothing, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister says, the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West, he said: “You must reject divisiveness.” So I took a quotation in the rain, “eh”, and in the mud, I pulled out a piece of paper and I put down, “you must reject divisiveness” he says. I say but, he cannot be serious. Mr. Speaker, the very epitome of divisiveness is over there. Mr. Speaker, how could you reject divisiveness? I, in better days—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Divisiveness.

Mr. J. Warner: I say divisive. It is spelt the same way. I say divisive. [*Laughter*] And I was at university just as you. [*Laughter*]

Hon. Member: You sure?

Mr. J. Warner: Mr. Speaker, well I know you. When I was over there, I told the Prime Minister privately and in groups, I said, “Prime Minister; you cannot divide the country the way you are doing by giving the key Ministries to one race, one geographical space and one religion.” Look at the cabal. Look and see what the key Ministry is, Mr. Speaker. I told her so. All of these guys parading as this Minister and that Minister, they cannot get a box drain until they beg for it. They cannot get of course a bridge until they beg for it.

When I was Minister of Works and Transport, I was about to fix Sum Sum Hill in Claxton Bay, to this day it “eh” fix yet. Mr. Speaker, when I was Minister of Works and Transport, we had to go and run a highway from Cumuto to Sangre Grande so as to ease the traffic in Valencia, it “eh” do yet. In a Cabinet meeting I said to them if you do not fix that Valencia stretch, you lose. By now, whether

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they fix it or not, they still lose. Divisiveness, Mr. Speaker. I say you cannot take URP and CEPEP and carry it down south totally. That is what it is. Talk about divisive and hear him: “You must reject divisiveness.” Who is fooling whom, Mr. Speaker? Who is fooling whom?

Mr. Speaker, two councillors. I will call their names. I will call their names. Two councillors—in fact, I would not call their names. One is Prudhomme because I got his permission to call his name. But one is Kenrick Prudhomme from the San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation.

Miss Mc Donald: “Da yuh boy.” [*Laughter*]

Mr. J. Warner: He and another one, you know who they are, went to Gasparillo to meet the present Minister of Works and Infrastructure and they asked him, they said, to fix La Canoa Road. He told them—and I will say it here and tomorrow at the university of Gasparillo, I will say much more. He told them, Mr. Speaker, he “eh go” fix the road because that road has PNM and who “eh” PNM is Jack Warner.

Hon. Members: “Da is what they say boy?”

Mr. J. Warner: Prudhomme said so.

Hon. Members: Lord, they tell me that.

Mr. J. Warner: How you mean? Wherever you see the *Sunshine* and what comes through his mouth, is true you know. Because they say is PNM, so who “eh” PNM, is Jack Warner, and then they are telling me about divisiveness. Who caused it? Who caused it, Mr. Speaker? I said before, I say again, I was misled. Who want to believe; I was misled. I thought that the excesses of the last administration, they deserved to be booted out and I worked assiduously towards that. But that did not only change Tweedledum for Tweedledee [*Laughter*] and went beyond that, Mr. Speaker, and made it worst, that today I sit and I have reams of paper this high with corruption of all form and fashion. Corruption in this country has now become institutionalized. And I Jack Warner contributed to that. And I Jack Warner must correct it, Mr. Speaker, and I will.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to my friend, the Member for Arouca/Maloney, she said, “Do not be fooled by the ILP. They are the UNC in disguise wearing a green cloak.” Yes, she said so, 11.30 p.m. and—[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: That is right.

Mr. J. Warner: She said so. The Member for Arouca/Maloney is so steeped in her red, that if she gets a soursop, she thinks it is an apple. [*Laughter*] She does not understand colours. So I will not answer her, Mr. Speaker. Let her continue to think so. But I will tell you something, the whole country going green and that includes Arouca/Maloney as well; as well.

Mr. Speaker, this is a budget for the brainless. I will tell you why. But besides the why, Mr. Speaker, let me say that never before has a budget been so disappointing to a nation as this one has been, and to hear them come one after the other, parroting, “I want to thank the Minister of Finance and the Economy for a well”—parrot after parrot, parroting. I used to be there, you know, I know how you practise and you know when you go to speak, each one of you must praise the Minister of Finance and the Economy and so on. [*Laughter*] I used to be there.

Hon. Member: And the Prime Minister, “doh forget dat”.

Mr. J. Warner: And you must also praise the Prime Minister and talk about the Prime Minister and refer to her a “astute leadership”. [*Laughter*]

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I was there for three and a half years, so I sit down here and I listen to them. I say, “Well-rehearsed, well-rehearsed.” This is the worst budget anybody has put in three years. Worst! Mr. Speaker, I want to say here and now— [*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: “All allyuh like parrot.”

Mr. J. Warner: “Yeah, I would say that, here and now, Mr. Speaker. [*Interruption and laughter*] I know I can talk for the next two days.

Hon. Member: Talk, man, talk.

Mr. J. Warner: Nothing that is said on this side will change what they have down there. In fact, sometimes I wonder if this budget is not an exercise in futility because nothing will change. Just like PR; nothing will change—no discussion.

Yesterday I was discussing this with my Chaguanas West constituents and they asked me which other constituency discussed the budget with them.

Hon. Member: Who?

Mr. J. Warner: “Ah say, me?” None! Not one! [*Laughter*] Not one. They come to represent but they have not gotten the views of the constituents. But I know when we speak here, nothing will change, Mr. Speaker. Nothing will

change! But I will talk. You know why I will talk, Mr. Speaker? I will do it for three reasons: First, out of respect and deference for your office, Sir; secondly, for the Chaguanas West constituents who have me here; and thirdly, by extension, for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. That is why I am talking here today. I do not share any optimism that what we say here will change. I heard the last speaker from Diego Martin North/East speaking and I “begin to buss one steups quietly here. Ah say, what he talkin for?”

Mr. Imbert: “Ah shouldn't talk?”

Mr. J. Warner: “Yeah, but nutten will change.” [*Laughter*]

Mr. Imbert: “Ah mustn't talk.”

Mr. J. Warner: Let us take the property tax. In fact, before I go to the property tax, Mr. Speaker, the Minister was even given kudos for reducing the deficit. Mr. Speaker, if you “eh spend de money yuh must send it back”. So you get kudos for guys who “eh spend de money”?

If I were a Minister of Finance, I would ask the Ministers to account for me; “Tell me why you send back the money. Tell me, of course, Mr. Speaker, what have you done?” I would ask my Ministers to give accountability—give an account of their stewardship and tell me why X and Y and Z was not done. But no, you come here and “you gallerying” because the deficit is reduced and the reason is, because the money was not spent.

The Member for Barataria/San Juan sent back \$400 million.

Hon. Member: What?

Hon. Member: What?

Mr. J. Warner: The Minister of Health sent back \$400 million, but children are still being born in a toilet.

Hon. Member: “Dah is why de hospital cyar build.”

Mr. J. Warner: In a toilet! He is my friend so I would not say much more. Right? Children are still being born on benches, on brown paper, but \$400 million gone back!

Mr. Speaker, the budget of this country has always been viewed as a Chamber budget—AmCham. And yesterday I took it at a different level, to a people's budget. But before I discuss with you, Mr. Speaker, what the people said yesterday I, of course, want to just refer to a few things which the Chamber said,

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which PricewaterhouseCoopers said about the budget. Allyson West of PricewaterhouseCoopers, speaking at the TT Chamber post-budget forum last Tuesday said the Minister delivered “a politically astute budget”. She went on:

He gave bad news in a palatable way.

He gave bad news and made it sound good. Allyson West continues to say:

The budget did not paint a whole picture.

That is what we are saying here. The budget deliberately did not paint a whole picture. And before I end I will tell you what an ILP budget would be like, because the promises, many of them which were made, Mr. Speaker, were not kept. Miss West said:

On the surface, the Minister could be given kudos for reducing the budget deficit.

But she said that was because of non-implementation of projects, and that was not a good sign.

Tell us these projects. Tell us what projects were not implemented. Tell us and tell us why! And that is a budget. And you come here and I sit down to hear all kinds of histrionics about the budget from the Minister that are totally unacceptable! It is not true!

Mr. Speaker, major hospitals—major projects like hospitals and highway expansion were stillborn. As Member for Chaguanas West, I was also put, as Minister of Works and Transport, I want to say for a third time, when I became that Minister, Mr. Speaker, one of the things I had under my portfolio then was to build the hospital in Point Fortin and the one in Chaguanas. Mr. Speaker, I jumped in my car, I called the Member for Point Fortin, Mrs. Gopee-Scoon; I called the mayor and staff; we made a tour in Point Fortin; we saw where the hospital should go; we argued to and fro and so on, and we agreed that in three months’ time it will start. Mr. Speaker, and then they moved me. [*Laughter*] “Hospital eh start yet.”

Miss Mc Donald: PNM area.

Mr. J. Warner: “It there last year on de books; it there again this year and I promise you, it will be there again next year.”

Mr. Speaker, in Chaguanas West, especially on the Pierre Road—connector road—the children’s hospital was to be built. It was going to cost \$120 million. That hospital was to be built by the Ministry of Works and Transport. Mr.

Speaker, a day in Cabinet “jus so, jus so, abracadabra, de hospital move from Chaguanas West to Couva. At the time I did not even know it was on a fault line, like I know now. But the price in Chaguanas West was \$120 million; in Couva it is \$1.4 billion”—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Hmmm!

Mr. J. Warner:—of which \$400 million goes for consultancy services.

Hon. Member: Wow!

Mr. J. Warner: “An I mustn’t talk? An yuh tell me I eh happy I here?” If I have to go on my knees every morning to say sorry to this country for what I have done, I will do that, but I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, I will also undo it, trust me.

Miss Mc Donald: Hmm! “It good for dem.”

Mr. J. Warner: “No, me eh care it good for who.”

Mr. Speaker, let us go on to the property tax. Why does the Government not come clean with the property tax and stop playing semantics with the people? Mr. Speaker, one of the views people share is that property tax should not go into the Consolidated Fund, but should go to the regional corporations to fund the provision of goods and services at the local level. They could see it; they could feel it; touch it. In the Consolidated Fund they “doh” know where it goes. But Mr. Speaker, that is not the point. The Government must tell the people of this country that the property tax is coming back. Tell the people that! But the Minister came and left the people in doubt with little or no details on the property tax. That was deliberate, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday in Chaguanas West, what did Stephen Kangal who is an authority on property tax say? What did he have to say? A former diplomat, Mr. Speaker—yesterday’s budget consultation. Mr. Speaker, one of the points he raised was that the Minister should have disclosed the full plan for bringing back the property taxes over the upcoming years, so that the population would have time to prepare themselves. But they did not do that because in five weeks’ time they face an election which they shall lose, and therefore to say property tax, you of course, would be endangering your election. So they put it in all kinds of fancy language. It means the same thing, Mr. Speaker. “Who dey fooling?” No one, Mr. Speaker.

Even PricewaterhouseCoopers criticized the Minister for lack of details on the industry tax. He “say four phases, eh.” The first phase is industry tax. That tax will affect the very same business that he is trying to use to stimulate the

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economy. Because you know why? The businessmen “doh” know what system will be used to calculate the tax. What is the method of valuation? They do not know. The businessmen do not know if depreciation shall be considered. They do not know if the tax would be based on the net book value of the industry. They do not know if the tax will have different levels: small business; medium sized, large and so on. They do not know! It “come” like us voting on the proportional representation. Up to yesterday, people “doh know dey boundaries. Dey doh know de name ah de new districts. Dey doh even know how de aldermen shall be selected.” And these paragons who represent the people say, “We have de vote”.

Mr. Speaker, what will happen is that businesses which are now in the process of upgrading or expanding their plant and equipment will now put a stop on it; put a hold. How could you upgrade and expand if you will be taxed on that afterwards? They do not know. And therefore what that would have is a reverse effect on the economy, Mr. Speaker. There is no certainty; there is no stability, as far as they are concerned, in the country. I am saying, the Minister’s half liners did nothing to encourage business confidence in the country.

Mr. Speaker, the CEO of Neal & Massy, named Gervase Warner, a bright guy—I am not surprised; he is a Warner—he spoke also at the Chamber breakfast forum. He was critical of the Government expenditure. He said it is wasteful. He was talking about money being spent outside the Central Tenders Board supervision. Year after year that same point being made, Mr. Speaker. He talked about 90 state enterprises and he showed where, of course, a lot of wastage is taking place.

Mr. Speaker, we inherited a place called 1 Alexander Place. When I was on that side—I say “we” because I was part of that. “Ah cyar absolve mehself from dat.” I was part of that. I must take blame too. But my eyes are open, thank God.

Mr. Speaker, when we were there, we inherited that from the PNM and we “cuss de PNM like crazy” and so on, for having this building—1 Alexander Place. They say it was for Mrs. Hazel Manning, and they are paying the landlord close to \$1 million a month’s rent. One would have thought, Mr. Speaker, that if we had this place and we were so “vex” with the PNM, we could have done two things: either terminate the contract or we could simply, of course, go and use the office.

Mr. Speaker, assuming, but not admitting, that the contract was hard to terminate, to this day the building is unoccupied. Wastage! But worse yet, Mr. Speaker, at the time the Member for Fyzabad was the Minister of Local Government, the budget to outfit that building was \$32 million, and you wake up a morning and it went to \$62 million—same building.

Dr. Rowley: To family and friend.

Mr. J. Warner: “I eh reach dere yet. Same building! And to this day it is still unoccupied. The same thing happened to Ramsaran Street in Chaguanas. All over! But I will say more about that just now.

Gervase Warner said also that too much money is being spent by way of transfers and subsidies so that the accounting records, he says, are a bit distorted. They “doh” give a real reflection of the money spent when one looks at the books. And the main thing—he asked the question: are we getting value for the money? He asked the question: do we really need so many state enterprises? Or he could easily have asked: do we need so many Ministers? Thirty-four! Thirty-four Ministers! One point three million people! As I said last week, I say again, some of them “doh even understand dey Ministry”. But I will talk about that a little later. Guys getting Ministry that is bigger—guys who never run a parlour!

Hon. Member: Ha!

Mr. J. Warner: “Those things yuh doh laugh at, yuh know. Dis is serious business. Mr. Speaker, when you become a Minister, there is no OJT, yuh know. Yuh doh have on-de-job training. Either you know or you don’t know. Mr. Speaker, if you never run a parlour, how you could run a Ministry? Some of them came there as vet, today dey veterans! [Laughter] But more about dat at the university of Gasparillo tomorrow.”

Mr. Speaker, I am saying we have an oversized Cabinet. But you know what is bad? Besides Cabinet being oversized, unwieldy and so on, there are some square pegs in round—[Interruption]

2.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

Motion made: That the hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [Dr. K. Rowley]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. J. Warner: Thank you Leader of the Opposition. Thank you Members. Tomorrow “dey go say Jack Warner is a PNM. Wha ah go do? Wha ah go do?” But today—

Mr. Peters: “I nearly say—”

Mr. J. Warner: “Nah you would never do it.”

Mr. Peters: “I woulda never do it?”

Mr. J. Warner: You would not do it. You are too close to the Member for Tabaquite. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, they talk about agriculture. We have a \$4 billion food bill but for agriculture they passed \$1.3 billion. We import some foods that we do not have to. Mr. Speaker, 97 per cent, it is said, of the bananas we consume here we import. Ninety-nine per cent of the citrus and citrus concentrates, we import. Coconut water, 90 per cent, we import.

Our School Feeding Programme that caters for 150,000 meals per day, what is the link between the School Feeding Programme and agriculture, in terms of helping the whole agricultural economy? But no, you want to take, of course, workers from here to go and work in Guyana to do Guyanese agriculture and then the Guyanese would ship back the food to Trinidad at a higher cost. All they have to do is to give the people here the land. Give them incentives. Give them, of course, the size of arable lands that they could make them productive. Give them, of course, benefits.

Make the Praedial Larceny Act realistic; and the list goes on and on. But no, you want to take people from here. We have over 67,000 acres of arable Caroni (1975) Limited lands, not one acre is cultivated; 67,000 and you are taking people from here to send to Guyana to work Guyanese land. The Jagdeo Initiative may have been good then but it is not good now. It has outlived its usefulness and if you are so bright, why “yuh doh” bring Guyanese here instead to work our land? Therefore what you have, in the spin-off effect, when you have agriculture shops, and so on, will still remain open and so on. When you do that, all these agriculture shops will close. Mr. Speaker, labour in agriculture can be a productive thing if well channelled but no thought given to that—\$1.3 billion.

Mr. Speaker, you know what is even worse? The Minister said we have 5 per cent unemployment. I say: oh Lord. The Minister have to be living in cuckoo land; cuckoo land. We have people here, young and old, with first degrees, second degrees for two years walking the road, “dey cyah get a job.” Any Saturday morning he can come to Chaguanas West from two in the morning, if he has no hangover, “eh” come to Chaguanas West and see for yourself people who are unemployed and intelligent, with degrees, and you are telling this country we have 5 per cent unemployment. Who fooling whom? And then one day later he says: “No, we have underemployment.”

I wanted to touch on the Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development, but time does not allow it because I want to tell you what our proposal for the ILP is. But I will touch the Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development who, of course, is a man who should have had—who came with a wealth of knowledge, who understood labour better than anybody else. What has gone wrong, Minister? What has gone wrong? What has happened to labour that today—forget 68 labour negotiations being fixed. So what! Sixty-eight agreements being fixed, so what! Labour outside there is still volatile, especially in the key areas like energy and so on. What is being done about that? What is being done about underemployment? What is being—you said, of course, about the NEETs in a speech which you gave to Camille Bethel on September 14, 2013:

“There is an ‘unemployable’ problem.”

...a large percentage are described as NEETs, meaning (Neither in Education, Employment or Training) and that is...worrisome.”

So they asked: what are you doing about it? What are you doing about it? It is being studied.

I could go on and on but I must tell this country what an ILP budget should be like. Mr. Speaker, if these Ministers in their Prados did not come to Chaguanas West for over a month to “gallery” and so on, up to election morning, they would have been able to do a better job. They would have been able to spend the money which had been given to them better. But no, they came to Chaguanas West for a month and just now they have to go to meet me in St. Joseph, but that is another story for tomorrow at the “University of Gasparillo.”

Mr. Speaker, an ILP government—what are some of the things that we would do? Mr. Speaker, an ILP government will seek public service reform, which will see more jobs in the country. An ILP government will offer permanent employment, especially to the young people of this country who want to have a career within the public service. An ILP government will remove contract employment, except in extraordinary cases where the skill is not available. In this way, our employees will now have permanent jobs and will have access to loans, mortgages and other facilities, which they do not have now as contract workers. Three-year contract, and if the Minister moves from transport to tourism “yuh dead.”

“As ah say tourism, yuh know,” I was angry too when Tobago voted 12-0. I was angry. I was disappointed. I really felt that we had something in the bag. And I—let me tell you something, for days and weeks—was in shock—12-0. I was in

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shock with Chaguanas West. It should have been higher but that is another story. Mr. Speaker, but I will never punish Tobago whose umbilical cord depends on tourism, whose lifeline is tourism, to put the Member for Fyzabad as tourism Minister. “Yuh kill dem dead.” What sin has Tobago committed? [*Laughter*] What sin has Tobago committed?

Miss Cox: Twelve-zero, 12-nil. That is the sin.

Mr. J. Warner: Twelve-zero. But I am waiting for Chaguanas West because in Chaguanas West, they come out with a vengeance, vindictive, fire “and thing” and so on. And each time I ask them for a favour and “dey eh give meh”, like I asked the Member for Chaguanas East—I have written to the Member for Tabaquite and to his Permanent Secretary—and I will put a full-page ad, date, what “ah write for and ting and so on.” Let the public judge for themselves.

Dr. Rambachan: Do that.

Mr. J. Warner: Let the public judge for themselves because, you see, the collective decision is not to give Jack Warner anything to make him look good. “Doh give him.”

“Housing, none; nutten! As if dey do me something.” Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, I live in one house “yuh know” I do not need six houses.

Hon. Member: Who is that?

Mr. J. Warner: Mr. Speaker, it is only one house you can live in at a time. I have no government car. I never had. I never took a loan, so I have no government car so it does not bother me. I am not doing it for me, it is for the people. So, if they think they are spiting me, you spiting Chaguanas West. But Chaguanas West eyes are opened as the rest of the country’s eyes will be opened.

So what would an ILP do? Remove contract employment. The third thing we shall do is encourage the Public Service Commission to fill all the vacancies within the public service. There are 20,000 vacancies in the public service. In the Ministry of Works alone, when I was there, there were over 5,000. When the Drainage Division was in the Ministry of Works—this is another thing, the Drainage Division, imagine you have a Ministry of Water Drainage. Roads and drains go together. You “cyah” build roads without drains. And, therefore, to separate roads and drainage is, for me, inexplicable. But in any case, there were 5,000 people who were short in that Ministry and they were doing 2012 work with 1978 staff, numerically. So fill the vacancies.

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This government of mine will develop a pan industry to market pan internationally—“Doh” pay lip service to pan—so our brothers and sisters, especially in Laventille will never be discriminated against and demeaned with CEPEP and URP and Colour Me Orange.

My government will bring back river wardens and fire wardens. We shall create pan and mas music. In housing, we shall review the lottery system to ensure that persons who applied for 20 years or more will be fairly treated.

We shall take an immediate audit of all available houses and give them out immediately. It is true the PNM built them, but give them out immediately and let the people repair their own homes. Give them small loans to do that and let them employ carpenters and masons and so on and it will generate the economy and have them create business and, therefore, the construction sector would increase. But no, there is no kickback in that.

A company owned by the manager of FCB in Chaguanas, boasting that his markup is 120 per cent. Give the houses to the people as they are. Let them fix them themselves and take a pride in what they do. We shall do that.

Our government shall distribute deeds to homeowners within three months of completion. There are homeowners today who have gotten HDC homes for over 20 years, no deed, no deed. We say three months. I remember a line in the Minister of Finance and the Economy’s budget. He said: resign today, pension tomorrow. But “alyuh resign today, not a cent tomorrow.” Right.

Mr. Speaker, we shall establish a housing agenda for emergencies such as fire and flood victims. You have to have a social agenda for emergencies. Fire victims, you give them three months. That cannot be! What happens to the fourth month or the fifth and flood victims? And, therefore, we shall have a social agenda in housing for that.

In government, we are saying we shall ask an ILP government for constitutional reform, serious constitutional reform, not the Mickey Mouse thing that taking place, and we shall ask for a government of seven years, one term only; seven years. We shall ask for local government electors to have four years, no more than two terms for local government; two terms only, one at the higher level and two at the lower level.

I was going to tell you the crime plan but all the crime plans are in the Minister’s speech, so I do not have to go over them in any case. They are all mine. But the trouble is, while they might be my plans, who will implement them?

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Who? And there are many, many more, over 100 I have here; over 100 and not a single one within there has been tried for eight months. Ask them why. Eight months! Ask them why.

Mr. Speaker, in Laventille, we shall establish an open school for the arts where students can learn to dance and sing “extempo”. They can do visual arts and so on.

Mr. Imbert: “You is the principal or what?”

Mr. J. Warner: Mr. Speaker, we shall build once and for all the home of Pan Trinbago. Pan Trinbago’s home comes close to being built nearer to election, after the election; coming to election again, it will go up [*Mr. Warner indicates motion for up*] after election [*Mr. Warner indicates motion for down*] it is down. Well we shall change that. No election; build the home for them. It is our national instrument.

We shall, of course, eliminate political control by ensuring that Ministers do not walk around with food cards to give their cousins, their aunts, and go on a river lime.

Hon. Member: Who is that person?

Mr. J. Warner: Mr. Speaker, we boast that we have 40,000 people on food cards. That should not be a boast; that should be an indictment because you should have a system to remove these people from a level of dependence. And I would talk about the “racket” in the food cards again, because right now, over 500 memos are being sent out in that Ministry of the People and Social Development. Appraisals are being given out by permanent secretaries. I said before, I say again, there are two or three permanent secretaries who are indulging in wrong, illegal practices. I am telling the permanent secretaries do not jeopardize their pensions [*Interruption*] I know who they are. There are three or four of them.

So we say again, we shall make sure that there are systems to ensure that food cards are not distributed for “limes” and fete. How much time do I have again, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Fifteen minutes.

Mr. J. Warner: Okay.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. J. Warner: Okay. Mr. Speaker, with regard to culture, we shall develop a rigorous physical education programme at the primary and secondary school

levels to give prospective sports persons with the requisite skill sets some elite sport development. We shall re-invigorate the scholarship programme in a most transparent fashion for sport so that talented students can get the best position open to them in schools all over.

Mr. Speaker, we shall upgrade all local sports facilities in every community because this has both sport and health benefits. The UTT sport programme shall also be strengthened for elite athletes throughout the country. And therefore, I should tell you, we shall cut the red tape and complete the Brian Lara Stadium and we shall not have it being the eyesore it is against one of our best sporting icons of the soil.

Mr. Speaker, in education, we shall increase the staff of guidance counsellors and these people will be specifically responsible for discipline in schools, while the teachers are left with the task of teaching. We shall bring back spiritual values in school. One of the reasons why we are where we are is because far too often people put God in the background and everything else in the foreground. We shall change that and make sure that we have in our schools spiritual values.

When I was a young boy going to school—I went to government school—long time in government schools, Mr. Speaker, we used to sing the anthem—in those days, it was *God save the Queen*—in the morning and in the afternoon. And then we had “ah thing called religious knowledge” and each religion would go to their respective people for religious knowledge. It has us where we are here today. What is so wrong about that? “We bringing it back.”

Mr. Speaker, we shall bring back school inspectors, school inspectors to evaluate teachers’ daily plan and as such to ensure that the school syllabus is completed. We shall give a budget to principals, not that pittance—a budget to principals so that they will no longer have an excuse for charging additional fees to students.

Mr. Speaker, all schools will have, of course, internet services. Do you know that in Toco/Sangre Grande, there are over 500 children who cannot go to school? No school places. But you pass a budget though for \$61 billion but 500 children cannot go to school. There are parts of Cumuto—ask the MP for Cumuto/Manzanilla—where there is no internet. What makes those children different from anybody else? Mr. Speaker, ask them. “The laptops come like a—how yuh say it long time?—like an almanac, yuh hang it on the wall”. [*Laughter*] No internet, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Member: It is true!

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Mr. J. Warner: Mr. Speaker, we shall enforce truancy laws for students who either miss school or break classes. We shall also monitor assiduously the GATE system to ensure that fly-by-night tertiary institutes do not benefit or rape the Government's investment. We shall complete an audit of all schools. Ask the Minister when last he did an audit of the schools to know where they are. What school wants repairs this year or next year? Three years from now, which school will need repairs?

Dr. Gopeesingh: I have been to 120 schools and I know where the schools are.

Mr. J. Warner: Thank you. Thank you. We shall do an audit of all schools. We shall identify upgrades and renovations so that our children would not have to stay home for weeks as those two children in Union Presbyterian School.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Union?

Mr. J. Warner: Union Presbyterian School.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Would you give way?

Mr. J. Warner: For you, yes; if it is for you.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Thank you very much.

Mr. J. Warner: Sure.

Dr. Gopeesingh: I thank the Member for Chaguanas West for giving way. You called three schools, that is: Longdenville—

Mr. J. Warner: Union.

Dr. Gopeesingh:—that school is being reconstructed now. Union Presbyterian School is in progress. The design for Macaulay is in progress. A tender is going to be put out pretty shortly for these three schools to be connected. We have repaired 196 out of the 212 schools [*Desk thumping*] and we have in fact put 713 new student support services as you are mentioning this is what you are going to do. But these things you are mentioning are all done already. Morals and values and ethics are in the primary schools already.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: And assembly prayers.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And we have 128 out of 134 secondary schools with internet service and more than 300 of the 476 primary schools with internet service. [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: “Dats old talk!”

Mr. J. Warner: You know, I thought I was helping you.

Mr. Imbert: You should not have given way.

Mr. J. Warner: But—no, I should not have given way. I should not have given way, it is true; no, but I did. Mr. Speaker, the Minister—

Mr. Imbert: You erred!

Mr. J. Warner: I erred. It is not the first time I erred. Mr. Speaker, I am saying, it may appear so, but there are still too many schools that are in need of repairs. Mr. Speaker, I showed you just now.

Dr. Gopeesingh: We are working on them.

Mr. J. Warner: What did you say? Are you saying that the archbishop is a liar? Are you saying that the archbishop is not speaking the truth?

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, I will never say that.

Mr. J. Warner: That is what he said.

Mr. Imbert: It is in the *Catholic News*!

Mr. J. Warner: That is what he said. There are schools that, Mr. Speaker, you must know, two years from now what schools need repairs—[*Crosstalk*] and when because you have to do an audit of the schools.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: It is not true!

Mr. J. Warner: “Yuh see, dai wha he ha to do.” More importantly, I am saying when that is done, children would not have to stay home for weeks or months as the case may be or be on rotation like in Tranquility. Do you know how much furniture Tranquility needs? “Why they on rotation in Tranquility?”

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yes, I know that.

Mr. J. Warner: “Yuh know that?” A rotation in the heart of Port of Spain—Eric Williams went to that school—Tranquility school—and today—how much time again, sorry? Right, five, thank you.

Mr. Speaker: You have nine more minutes.

Mr. J. Warner: Nine, thanks. Today, Eric Williams will be turning in his grave to know that in Tranquility, the children have to go one week on, one week off. [*Crosstalk*] You know everything.

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Everything, of course, is done here because people believe that it is show, it is cosmetic, because for them, politics is optics. “So yuh hear the Minister of Works and Infrastructure, he was saying, of course, 937 roads have been paved, 200 kilometres of roads have been paved.” Paved how? Paved when? They paved some last night; this morning two o’clock, they were paving some; paving roads with no drains. Roads where you can collect of course—and worse yet, Mr. Speaker, these are all local roads.

Local roads are under the ambit of local government. Which chairman or mayor or councillor you ever hear come anywhere publicly and say, “ah road is paved”? No, the Minister, he wants the fame, he wants the praise, and then next year, he gives you a glossy book like this with all the roads he paved and so on as Minister. That is not his function. Let the local government people pave the roads.

Mr. Hypolite: How come the Ministry of social development paving roads too?

Mr. J. Warner: They paving roads?

Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. J. Warner: Everything, of course, they are doing for optics. “Going down Diego Martin kissing people but yuh not giving them food, not giving dem water.” Good for the papers, Mr. Speaker, optics.

Mr. Speaker, to continue: we shall revise the curricula; establish science and maths academies for CAPE students; establish business schools for CAPE students as well. We shall develop a school of technology. As I was saying, we shall create institutes for certain subject matters for students who wish to pursue a career in those fields.

Mr. Speaker, the list can go and on and on, but the fact is, what we are saying is that there are things that can be done. When the budget is being discussed and you walk in the streets and you ask people: what is the highlight of the budget? What is the main point of the budget? What does the budget say? What is the legacy of this budget? “Dey tell yuh, ‘Volney’. Dey tell yuh, ‘Volney’.”

There is nothing there, nothing there and I must come here, right—the Minister of Finance and the Economy, I called him and I asked him for a meeting to talk about Chaguanas West. I told him I want to get a water taxi from Chaguanas to Port of Spain. We sat down there an hour, nice meeting, staff to kill, and then when I was leaving, he said, “You know, this will have to be done through the Minister of Works and Infrastructure.” I say, “God”. [*Laughter*] I say,

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“God”. So as soon as I say, “God”, he say, “well, or local government.” I say, “God.” [*Laughter*]

It means, Mr. Speaker, nothing for Chaguanas. So he put a line in this book here to say that, of course, it is being there for consideration. Yes, consideration, but when? By whom? The Member for Tabaquite has sworn that Chaguanas West will pay, he says. The Member for St. Augustine has also sworn.

Dr. Rambachan: Where and when? Where and when I swore that?

Mr. J. Warner: You swore that in Chaguanas West.

Dr. Rambachan: Where?

Mr. J. Warner: In Pierre Road.

Dr. Rambachan: Where?

Mr. J. Warner: In Pierre Road.

Dr. Rambachan: “Yuh gonna pay somebody to bring them on the platform to say that.”

Mr. J. Warner: Well, no, I will say it tomorrow and then you will give me a pre-action protocol letter.

Dr. Rambachan: “Yuh been doing that all the time; paying people up on platform to do that?”

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, please!

Hon. Member: All right. [*Inaudible*]

Mr. J. Warner: [*Laughter*] Boy!

Mr. Speaker: Just focus on the Chair.

Mr. J. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I keep forgetting that tomorrow I have another chance to speak, at Gasparillo.

Mr. Speaker, to wind up, I want to say that this budget, again, is deceptive. It is a budget for the brainless. The budget is meant to deceive. I want to make the point that as far as I am concerned, we must stop pretending that our country under this present regime is not marching towards its doom. If things continue as they are, especially in the area of corruption, we are marching towards our doom. Our survival as a country depends on us fighting this at every level. I thank you.

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to join the debate at this time on the Appropriation Bill that seeks to provide moneys for the goods and services of the people of Trinidad and Tobago for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a very interesting debate so far and several matters have been raised. It will be remiss of me if I did not seek to respond in some way to issues raised by my hon. colleagues on the other side of the House. Before I do that, I want to take the opportunity to highlight some of the matters in the budget statement which we consider significant, and for which we pledge our commitment to continue to work to ensure that the projects identified are projects that we can develop and complete.

Mr. Speaker, this morning, I think it was the Minister of Sport who made an interesting point when he indicated that a former Minister, I believe it was Minister Conrad Enill, who said several years ago, in the budget statement, all governments will highlight projects that they intend to undertake. A project—particularly large-scale projects are not projects that will be started and completed in one fiscal year.

Hon. Member: “Yuh understand!”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: But, Mr. Speaker, starting a project is not only pouring concrete on the ground and digging to put a post. It took the former administration 10 years to construct a hospital in Scarborough—10 years.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: We had to finish it!

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: And it was the Partnership Government that came and completed the construction of that hospital. [*Desk thumping*] My friends talk about indicating projects today and starting today as if you can start and complete a hospital in one year.

Mr. Imbert: “But dai wah you say.”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: As if you could start and complete a police station in one year. [*Crosstalk*] Later, I will indicate the projects we have started and the benefits of them for this country.

Mr. Speaker, the national community listened to a budget last week and when it was finished, just like the Member for Chaguanas West I believe, they were expecting a budget that would speak to “goodies”; there would be some giveaway, and they were waiting for a comment that “Look at them, they are

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reckless, throwing away the money and they doing this as election gimmick”. When they did not get that, they had to respond. They say, Okay, it was a non-event. But if it was an event, we would have still been criticized. Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Minister of Finance and the Economy [*Desk thumping*] for a most responsible [*Crosstalk*] statement to the national community—

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, Member, allow the Member to speak without interruption.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—having spoken—and, Mr. Speaker, every year is the same criticism. The Minister spoke for about two hours and 20 minutes and then people will generally say, “We did not get enough details”.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: “And 11 books laid, eh, so—”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: And 11 books laid in the House, and you would see, while every year the Member for Diego Martin North/East analyzes the budget statement, one year, we will analyze his statement every year and it will be the same thing. [*Desk thumping*] Every year, he will come and say the same thing.

Hon. Member: “Same ole, same ole, same ole!”

Mr. Imbert: You will get new stuff. [*Laughter*]

2.45 p.m.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You see, Mr. Speaker—and the Member for Chaguanas West, I want to deal really with a couple issues raised—and there is a fascinating development here today because the Member for Diego Martin North/East raised a certain matter this morning, in his contribution, and I do not know if knowingly or unknowingly it touched and concerned the Member for Chaguanas West—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: What?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—and I will speak to that in a few minutes, because it was a matter that some of us on this side had not heard before with that detail. Having heard it and doing the research as quickly as we can, we just got to the bottom of some of these matters, and you will be most interested to get the facts, which I have before me, on those matters involving the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago and the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC).

And I will raise those matters in a few minutes but, Mr. Speaker, today, you know—and I really do not have all the time. I will need 400 minutes to speak here, if I have to deal with these contributions, my own contribution, the budget,

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and so on. So some matters, I will have to deal in a headline way, raise the matter and move on because I really do not want the time to go and not deal with my own matters from the Ministry.

I do not know how to begin. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: From the start.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Is it that colleagues do not have shame? Is it they “doh” have pride? Is it they do not have—something is missing in our character when members of the PNM could come and speak about Jehue Gordon and say, on the platform a few nights ago, that he was there without food—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Hungry.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—hungry, and the Government did not treat him well. Mr. Speaker, the PNM is a party that paraded Hasely Crawford when he won his first medal, 1976. It took a UNC Government, by 1998, to give him a house. [*Desk thumping*] It took a UNC Government to name the national stadium after Hasely Crawford. [*Desk thumping*] It took a Partnership Government to make him a sports ambassador.

Mr. Speaker, in 2008 or thereabout, they had a national cricket team of this country—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Indarsingh: 2009.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—2009, going to India to represent Trinidad and Tobago and Venky’s chicken of India had the privilege to support the national flag of Trinidad and Tobago because the PNM could not give money to a national cricket team. [*Desk thumping and interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Shame, shame, shame!

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Today they talk about Jehue Gordon. Jehue Gordon, Mr. Speaker, our athlete, our hero, who has received, as the Minister of Sport has indicated to us, support from the Trinidad and Tobago Government, Mr. Speaker, he received \$200,000 on March 13, 2013, \$200,000 for his preparation.

Mr. Roberts: “But he hungry, he hungry.”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, Government paid the team that was going to Moscow a million dollars. A further \$100,000 Jehue received on July 23, 2013—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: “Buh he hungry.”

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Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—US \$6,000 paid for his therapy and massage therapy and so in London, Mr. Speaker. This is the contribution to one athlete and the Opposition Leader said he was hungry somewhere in the world.

Mr. Roberts: “We had him starving.”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You see, Mr. Speaker, they know of their sins, they know of their sins. And they come with the same level of hypocrisy in the debate. After four years the Leader of the Opposition finally, with fanfare, revealed his plan for the nation, “Vision 2030”; and having called the names of the prominent citizens that the Member for San Fernando East was able to mobilize—he did not call the name of who he mobilized to write this plan—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Not one single name.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—not one single name; but, Mr. Speaker we discovered who may have written that plan. I think the former Member of Oropouche who was in a meeting with him Sunday—[*Laughter*]—and that may be the author of “Vision 2030”. [*Laughter*]

Hon. Member: What a shame.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: I mean, to mobilize your young members in San Fernando, you bring out and dust out—[*Laughter*]—this man who was probably lost on the new highway from Debe to San Fernando, got lost and you know, you bring him out; that is the author “ah” “Vision 2030.”

Mr. Speaker, when they were in office 2003—2010—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Who is from 1913—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—2003—2010 they gave out 800 leases to Caroni workers. Today we have distributed 4,000 leases to Caroni workers. [*Desk thumping*] Four thousand; “buh we shouldn talk about dat because we boasting.” Do not talk about that.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The PNM promised a thousand.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The PNM promised that. You know what we have been busy doing in three years? We are busy implementing their own promises.

Hon. Member: Some.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: We are implementing our promises, but do you know we have to implement their promises as well?

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Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Because they never did.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: They promised the ex-Caroni workers land—
[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: That PNM had to leave behind.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—4,000 leases given out by this Government; in two weeks another ceremony to give out more.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: “And when yuh give it out they say yuh being—
[*Inaudible*]

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: And when we give it out they raise issue about division and why we are giving Caroni workers and so on. They promised it; they promised it, Mr. Speaker. I have a good one for you here, *Newsday*:

“Imbert promises end to south traffic woes”

February 2006. You need to hear this one, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Roberts: “Ah want to hear dat.”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You need to hear this one.

“Works and Transport Minister, Colm Imbert yesterday toured several areas in San Fernando in a bid to alleviate traffic...” and so on. The Minister in “assessing the traffic flow into San Fernando...announced...”—with great fanfare that this would be a thing of the past.

Hon. Member: What?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: He said we are:

“...widening the road which would ease congestion...”

Hon. Member: “Umm.”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: He said in order to do that we would have to fix the bypass at Tarouba Link Road—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: “Eh heh?”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—a roundabout will have to be built.

Mr. Roberts: What?

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Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: This is 2006. [*Laughter and interruption*] Mr. Speaker, in 2013 we opened the Tarouba Link Road and highway and roundabout. [*Desk thumping and interruption*] You promised this in 2006.

Mr. Roberts: “Talk nah.”

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You just looking like you built it.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You never built it. We had to come back, Mr. Speaker, “buh ah have a good one for you”. Mr. Speaker, they talk, we deliver. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Roberts: Oh.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The people of Tarouba know that. [*Desk thumping*] I opened a road in my constituency yesterday, Siew Trace, a 77-year-old resident cut the ribbon. He told me that road was constructed by the British colonial council. It was paved for the first time by the People’s Partnership. [*Desk thumping*] It was paved for the first time.

Mr. Speaker, hear this one, Budget Statement 2003, October—October 06, 2003. In their budget statements, they say the trunk roads expansion programme will continue and the Solomon Hochoy Highway to Point Fortin will begin in 2005. So in 2003, they are promising that by 2005 the highway to Point Fortin will begin. Mr. Speaker, they come back again in October 2004, the road network will be expanded to include the extension of the Solomon Hochoy Highway to Point Fortin.

Mr. Roberts: “Wha?”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: They come back again in 2006. October 04, 2006:

“Expansion of the highway network”—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: They have no shame.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:

—“with the construction of new highways from San Fernando to Point Fortin...”

will begin. [*Laughter*] 2006. Mr. Speaker, we did not get enough; they come back again in 2007:

“The highway system that we have planned includes a new network of highways from San Fernando...to Point Fortin;” [*Laughter*]

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Mr. Speaker, not to be undone, when they were running out of gas and “dey falling down, by 2009 , dey give us again”. They said:

“By the end of March 2010, it is expected that...”

we will begin construction on—

“the extension of the Solomon Hochoy Highway”—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Shame.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—“from San Fernando to Point Fortin;”

Mr. Roberts: Shame.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, it is the People’s Partnership [*Desk thumping*] that constructed and opened the Golconda to Debe leg of the Solomon Hochoy Highway, and is building that highway to Point Fortin. And we do that against the background, against the background of persons who are objecting. It is not smooth sailing.

Hon. Member: Cut the ribbon in Point Fortin.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Persons are complaining. There are groups with different views but we are doing it. Since 2003 you promised this. We are implementing your promise. You talk, we deliver. [*Desk thumping*] You see, Mr. Speaker, construction of this National Oncology Centre started in April 2007. Since 2007 they had been trying.

They had a contract in 2008 between Ellis Dunn and the Government, a consultancy company. They paid that consultant—contract was to terminate; it was US \$7 million; TT \$42 million consultancy, Mr. Speaker. In 2007 they started. Mr. Speaker, it is this Government that will restart the construction and complete the National Oncology Centre.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: It started.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: And we have started.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: The work has started.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Since 2007, \$42 million later, it is this Government to complete it. Mr. Speaker, they talk about building police stations. We are now constructing seven police stations with another eight to go. They talk and we—listen, we encourage them to talk, because the more they talk the more we deliver. So you talk because you could talk.

You see, Mr. Speaker, they promised everything under the sun, and Mr. Speaker, this may be “rubbing off”. You see, Mr. Speaker, this notion of promising may be “rubbing off” because we have now the advent of another political party and Mr. Speaker, the Member for Chaguanas West is a big fan of western movies. We knew that.

The Member for Chaguanas West sat in the Government and the Cabinet for three years, you see, Mr. Speaker, and over the years would have sat here and would have praised the Prime Minister and would have praised the Ministers of Finance, and had it not been for the decision of a screening committee in Rienzi Complex, the Member would have been here praising the said Government again; would have been praising the Government again, but things did not work out; so now we hear of everything that is wrong, and corruption and so on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it really would take this national community something to wake up to hear the Member for Chaguanas West condemning this Government of which he was a part for three years and of which many of us here supported him. In fact, the Member was a minister who really was at large and on several occasions the Member summoned other Cabinet Ministers to functions and meetings and sought to help people as he sought to do his job. But you see, Mr. Speaker, in the western movies there is a character who goes around in a caravan, the medicine man, and he goes around, and he has a bottle of something and goes to everybody and “he say yuh see this, this is the cure, if you take this, yuh well”. And he goes around and goes around, and some people believe that eh, some people believe that and they actually buy.

Hon. Member: For a short while.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, that happens; they buy.

Hon. Member: For a short while.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: But it is a matter of time, it is a matter of time. And I want to tell my friend from Chaguanas West, I want to tell my friend from Chaguanas West that none of us on this side is afraid. We came into office; many of us spent 10 years in opposition—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: “And yuh going out.”

Hon. R. Moonilal:—and if it is the will of the people and the will of God that we go back in the Opposition, that is fine. If you go back outside of the Parliament, “is” fine. None of us here are begging and grovelling to remain in office. We are here to do a job which we will do. So this weekly diatribe of

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coming to talk about 15 months left, 18 months left and they fight here and we will fight there and they will be out—good. One day everybody will be out. That is the nature of politics.

Hon. Member: “Whilst yuh there yuh do yuh bit.

Hon. R. Moonilal: One day everybody will be out, everybody, and we are not scared—our track record—everybody’s turn will come. I have sat in the Parliament with people now who are unwell, with persons who have gone; some in glory, some in peace, some in pieces.

Hon. Member: Trevor.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: I have seen them come, I have seen them go, I have seen some come back, Mr. Speaker. So we have no fear of that. The Member is always telling us that, you know, he won Chaguanas West; 12,662 votes, was it? Around there, and that is fine, that is fine, that is the fact. But, Mr. Speaker, the Member may do well to remember, in moments that he is not excited, that in 2010, 1,400 persons voted against the Member for Chaguanas West. Three years later 5,600 voted against the Member. That may change; “it may geh more, it may geh less”, it depends. But I want to tell the Member that none of us here are afraid and this coming every week [*Desk thumping*] and you know, “yuh going, yuh going, yuh coming, yuh coming and ah will do dis and ah will do dat and ah exposing this one”.

When the Member was on this side “we never hear about six house builling, never hear about what car renting and all these kinda thing. Now suddenly every week, you know, is some exposé about dis or dat.” So, Mr. Speaker today the Member speaking about corruption in the Government and will expose corruption and so on. Mr. Speaker, “yuh think it easy to hear that? Yuh think it easy?”

Attacking the Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara for concentrating on Calder Hart and Uthara Rao and so and so; we cannot talk about them anymore. We just cannot talk about them anymore. Forget that they happened.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I want to respond—the Member for Diego Martin North/East raised a matter involving one Ishwar Jadoonanan at the Airports Authority, and indicated that that gentleman was not qualified, was holding positions at the Airports Authority and at the PTSC. The Member raised the issue of a settlement, a court settlement at the Airports Authority and that settlement he said was for \$8 million.

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Mr. Imbert: No, I said it was reported.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: It was reported—a settlement.

Mr. Imbert: Ten of them.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: “Doh back out. Doh back out.”

Mr. Imbert: “I eh backing out.”

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You were correct.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, a quick check of the records indicated that a letter was written by the Minister of Works and Transport, dated December 07, 2010.

In this letter to Captain Varman Bajnath, chairman, Airports Authority—the Minister at that time was the hon. Member for Chaguanas West, Mr. Jack Warner, Minister. In a letter signed to the captain, the chairman, with the subject “Directions issued to the authority during the period June 28 to December 07”, one key issue here is called, “the settlement of managers terminated in 2003” and, Mr. Speaker, the Member writes:

Based on advice, I settled out of court the undermentioned cases. These matters have been pending in the courts. The employees and their settlements are as follows: Ishwar Jadoonanan, \$1.1 million—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Imbert: What, \$1.1 million?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—and other managers.

You raised that issue this morning, and to indicate to you that our records revealed that it was on the instructions of the Minister of Works and Transport on December 07, 2010, that the settlement—in fact, it states here: I settled out of court the undermentioned cases.

Hon. Member: Who was that?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The then Minister of Works and Transport. Now the then Minister of Works and Transport, the Member for Chaguanas West, may have had his own legal advice and so on in this matter, but the matter was indeed settled by decision of the Minister of Works and Transport. Mr. Speaker, I leave this there. I do not know if there is further clarification you need.

Mr. Speaker, the matter involving PTSC is a matter we are looking at now. We have asked for the record where the same manager went to PTSC—*[Interruption]*

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Who is that?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Ishwar Jadoonanan. I think he is also an operative in a political party, none that sit on this side.

Mr. Imbert: Not on this side.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You can talk for yourself. Mr. Speaker, the very manager was paid a salary in excess of what is required in law. It is the duty of the Minister to give approval for that. We are now checking on the facts to ascertain when the person started to work there and which Minister may have authorized that. So the point I make is that they talk about corruption and corruption and so on, when we look back at the record, the records are there. I do not want to get into detail on that at all, but the records are there.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Chaguanas West will come to this Parliament, I suspect, and every single week if given an opportunity to talk, will stand up and raise some matter of corruption and corruption and corruption, and will do that. I notice he is now using the famous Patrick Manning analogy, the university of Gasparillo, university of this, university of that, where you have your meetings. When the Member goes to talk in Gasparillo, he may want to discuss as well the matter of a rental of a building in Port of Spain, a building that was rented in December 2010, where the property owners were indeed the children of the Member for Chaguanas West. The role that the Ministry of Works and Transport, the then Minister, the Member for Chaguanas—I imagine everybody is listening to me now.

Hon. Member: You have to speak a little louder.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: I have to speak louder? December 30, 2010, where the Ministry of Works and Transport provided approvals for a building for rental by the Government, owned by DW Property Holdings Limited, to accommodate the Ministry of National Security—that building, that property, then owned by the son of the Member for Chaguanas West.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I raised only these two matters, and there are much, much more one can raise. Much, much more. I do not want to spend a lot of time on that, but only to say that there are about eight other matters I wanted to raise on this matter, but I really cannot because I have a lot more issues to cover.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: He will not go there today.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: I will not go there today, Mr. Speaker. I will keep all in a file and every week the Member comes to Parliament and speaks and attacks this Government on corruption, I will come with two. How they say, “swaha”, I will offer two, I will offer two, I will offer two. I will do it every single week until that stops because that holier-than-thou approach to accusing the Government [*Desk thumping*] one way or another that will stop. Because, Mr. Speaker, we could talk about all types of appliances—Mr. Speaker, we could take a lot of time. Let me move on. They want to tempt me into doing that at this time. I have a few things to say on that matter with other state companies and so on. I have the list that was made available to me, but I am just waiting on another occasion.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin West, our Leader of the Opposition, spoke and dealt with our expenditure policy, infrastructure, cast aspersions on our track record, asked where the money gone, and at the end of all of this, indicated that his plan was to reintroduce a “racket rail”. That was his plan to reintroduce a “racket rail”. And then when he dealt with crime, as the Leader of the Opposition, an alternative Prime Minister, he said he had a plan to deal with crime—put 100 more policemen on the street. That was his plan after four years, “Vision 2030”.

You see, Mr. Speaker, it is well known that the Member for Diego Martin West may be on his last days as leader of the People’s National Movement, and while his party waited for him to give some outline of their policy and failed, he will face his own battles in his movement. You see, this Government has continued in a very consistent way, our policy proposals and our plan. I think the Member for Tunapuna spoke to that. We have identified the growth poles that we will develop.

For donkey years, every Government has spoken about diversifying the economy—everybody, we diversify the economy. And sometimes if you ask people what is diversification, they do not know, but they speak about it. This year, the Minister of Finance and the Economy reported that the non-energy sector outperformed the energy sector. That is diversification.

Mr. Speaker, when we identified the growth poles from deep south, Point Fortin, La Brea, coming up to Port of Spain and put heavy industrial complex there, that is diversification. “It create the jobs, create the centres of economic activity, create employment.” The Minister mentioned in a mere few months over 1,000 persons employed in the financial services in what is called shared services—in a few months. So we are creating the jobs that go with that.

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Mr. Speaker, no one can doubt the responsibility of the Government in dealing with the economy. When we came in, we faced a crisis and that was the Clico/HCU matter. They were lost in terms of their approach and how they would deal with that crisis. But to this day, we put on record, again—they never like hearing about it, but we will have to put it back on record—that this Government has taken steps to repay to the Clico depositors, the HCU depositors, to repay their moneys. They ask: “Where the money gone, where the money gone?”

We have provided over 70,000 laptops to Form 1 students. We have raised the minimum wage from \$9 to \$12.50. Again, another promise they made years ago, never fulfilled; we increased old age pension to \$3,000 per month. We established the COSTAATT campus in Sangre Grande, the UTT education campus in Tobago. We commenced construction of the University of the West Indies at Debe, south Trinidad. We completed the Scarborough hospital. We commenced work on the children’s hospital in Couva. [*Desk thumping*] We are completing the Chancery Lane teaching hospital. This is a Government where in five years the national community will get not one, but two hospitals—in five years. When did that ever happen before?

We increased benefits for sickness, maternity protection, employment, injury, grants. We have launched the signature project, Land for the Landless. In a few weeks we gave out 100 lots of land, where we chose those persons by random selection in a televised draw. Five hundred we chose and 100 lots are ready to be distributed to persons already selected. The highway I spoke about, the Tarouba Link Road, expansion of the Couva/Preysal interchange project. We constructed the Kelly Village/Piarco bypass. We commenced construction through the Ministry of Sport the national aquatic centre, [*Desk thumping*] cycling centres.

Mr. Speaker, you know, today, water is no longer a political issue. When was the last time you saw people outside, with a pan and a bucket, in their duster protesting for water? It happened when they were in office. [*Crosstalk*] Every week—“doh sen me dere, please. Doh sen me dere. Doh sen me dere.” [*Interruption*] You remember that? You remember that, eh. [*Interruption*] Yes, because some people were cheated of their money.

Mr. Speaker, under this administration, the Navet trunk main was completed, where today [*Desk thumping*] 250,000 people have an improved water supply— [*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: A hundred million dollars less when the PNM— [*Interruption*]

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—at less money. We completed the Seven Seas desal project in Point Fortin—29,000 persons in La Brea and Point Fortin [*Desk thumping*] got an improved water supply.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Who is the MP there?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The MP there is our good friend, who asks a question on everything in the world but will not ask us about water in La Brea because he knows the answer.

Mr. Speaker, our construction programme, drainage, roads, all over—anywhere you go you will hear people say, “I see work going on. I see things happening.”

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Diego Martin Highway.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The Diego Martin Highway under construction. Valencia, we are now relocating seven persons to expand that highway construction—the Valencia Highway.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Bypass.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Bypass. Anywhere you go you will see construction, tractors at work, heavy equipment, the sale of cement which is an indicator of growth in the construction sector, we have seen growth in the construction sector. Mr. Speaker, do you know—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Private homes.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Private homes—contractors now import materials from the Dominican Republic and elsewhere because we just do not have the infrastructure material for the amount of projects that are ongoing.

Mr. Speaker, we are reversing a generation of neglect. [*Desk thumping*] They have neglected areas in this country for 50 years. Today people are getting their roads, their box drains, their grounds lit in rural communities. WASA projects, we can rattle them off now. Some of us know all of them by heart. Persons, who never got water in their lives, can today open a tap in their houses and get water under this administration. In La Horquetta/Talparo, in Couva North—in Carli Bay, is it? Never in life they got water. What was the last MP for Couva North doing? “Huh!” So, Mr. Speaker, persons who have never received water, so basic a commodity, they have it.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Mc Kai lands.

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Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Electricity—[*Interruption*] Where you need water?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Mc Kai lands.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Good!

Mr. Roberts: Ganga Singh will handle that, man.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The Member for Couva North will take a note of that. You will get the water. Ask for it, you get it. [*Crosstalk and desk thumping*].

Mr. Speaker: Member, lower your tone, please.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: So, Mr. Speaker, we have delivered. This Government in three years, these are the achievements, big mega projects, but also the small things that persons want.

Hon. Member: Police posts and so on—

3.15 p.m.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, the police post in—next week I believe—we went to visit Duncan Street in the constituency of Port of Spain, and next week Friday we are in a position to open that Duncan Street police/army post. [*Desk thumping*] This is how we operate. By October/November the police station at Piarco; police station at Arima will be opened; Arima.

Mr. Roberts: Yes, man!

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: We are delivering. They talk, we deliver. [*Desk thumping*] This is why they should talk.

I want to get to some matters now. In my own portfolio—you, know, the Member for Diego Martin West and now his tag team partner, the Member for Chaguanas West; both west, you know. The Member for Chaguanas West a recent convert to the anti-Government propaganda, has now been asking about these houses and why we are not distributing houses and so on, you know. They ask about that now.

It is no secret that when we entered office, the former administration had an expansive housing construction programme. It is not a secret. Anywhere you go you will see the landscape littered with houses and so on, colourful in some cases looking like Legoland. When we got in there our first job was to assess. There were estates such as Retrench and Wellington which were moving, the ground was moving. They went in the cane field, quickly gave orders to construct, and they built houses without proper infrastructure. It led to enormous damage to the ground, tiling on the floor, ceiling, posts and wall.

Mr. Speaker, do you know in some of those estates when we give someone a house now, you see them back in two weeks with a paper. So know, you think it is a thank you note or a thank you card “yuh getting”. It is 77 complaints needing repairs, that is it.

There is a particular unit in Wellington, the people are now quarrelling to be relocated, because the ground is moving under the house. They did not do proper infrastructure. In Golconda now, we have to build walls, about \$10 million to \$15 million in retaining walls otherwise we will lose those housing units. The people there know it. Those are the houses they produced. We had to spend over \$100 million in repairs to the housing stock to give out houses, because we have a duty.

You know it is easy for everybody, eh Member for Diego Martin West. The Member for Chaguanas West now, because he went in Port of Spain somewhere and tell me people: “Vote for me, I give you house by de hook or by de crook”. And for the first time I believed him. I believed that.

Now, they talk about giving out, give them they “go fix it”. You give somebody a defective house and a ceiling falls down and kill somebody, who is responsible for that, eh? “De ILP or de IPL? Who is responsible for dat” The State has a duty when you give someone something you sell, that you give them in a proper state.

You see, Mr. Speaker, under the former administration, they did not adhere to proper management practices and processes. We inherited that.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Was there not a whole thing up on the hill falling down?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Yes, Las Alturas on the hill, Lady Young Road—collapsed completely, \$42 million wasted. The projects—the Minister was the Member for Diego Martin West, but “ah coming” to him now.

You see, Mr. Speaker, projects and related jobs were insufficiently scoped. They were started without proper systems of management, oversight, quality controls. There was an absence of accurate and credible information. Vacant houses, that you continue to see, there is a legacy for these houses. Many of them; Mr. Speaker, these estates were being built with poor infrastructural work and an absence of waste-water facilities.

Mr. Roberts: Malabar.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Let me give you an example. Before the election of November 05, 2007 people moved into houses en masse under the former administration, without waste-water facilities, no waste-water treatment plant. Could you imagine that? You know, I will make the point here. When we say that a part of our task on entering Government was to clean up the mess left by the PNM, we mean that metaphorically, but in this case we mean this literally, “eh”. They built housing estates without waste-water treatment plants, Mr. Speaker. Places like Carlsen Field; Edinburgh, Chaguanas; La Fortune; Point Fortin; Maracas-St. Joseph; East Grove; Curepe; Pierre Road are just a few.

Hon. Member: Malabar.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, Malabar. Let me tell you what happens in Corinth Hills and Retrench in San Fernando, and in Las Alturas. The HDC pays for waste to be carted off at a daily cost of \$9,600 per development. Imagine every day the taxpayers pay \$10,000 to cart off waste because they could not plan a housing estate to scope, budget and build waste-water treatment plants, \$10,000 a day of taxpayers’ money to remove waste. So we are wasting millions of dollars doing that.

Today, Mr. Speaker, under this administration, waste-water treatment plants are being constructed in Wallerfield, Oropoune, East Grove, Maracas, Fidelis, Lion’s Gate, Carlsen Field, Ibis Gardens, Caroni Exchange, Corinth, Golconda, Glenroy, Buen Intento and elsewhere.

Throughout the landscape, this has affected 3,107 housing units that you cannot distribute otherwise every day you have to pay to remove waste, and this is what they are proud of. This is what the Member for Chaguanas West, “he say, man, give out all.” He will pass with a truck and pick up waste every day. Well, he picking up that screening now but—[*Laughter*] He will do “dat, he say”, give it out, give out, you know. Give out all.

Mr. Speaker, we have also been relocating persons who are in HDC estates that have collapsed where they have been ruled unhealthy; in Carlton Lane in San Fernando, we have relocated persons. On the Marabella train line, we have relocated. In fact, we paved the Marabella train line for the first time in memory. This Government paved it, [*Desk thumping*] under the Partnership, with Councillor Gloria Calliste leading the charge there. We paved it.

So these are some of the problems we have had, \$10,000 a day, millions of dollars to remove waste, because they did not have the foresight to construct waste-water systems in these estates. Today, “yuh know dey ask why de money go. Dey eh asking about de Brian Lara, why de money go; asking bout housing.”

If you drive to Union Hall in San Fernando, Fairfield in Princes Town, Egypt in Chaguanas and you see the housing settlements built under the People's Partnership, you will not believe you are in Trinidad. You will not believe. Persons have gone there, they think this is some private development, you know, in Miami when they see the houses that we are building now.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say under our tenure I am not hurry and hasty to build houses and distribute them and everything falls down; to put people in a house and there is no waste-water system. No! We will build. We will not come here and boast we built 10,000 houses a year and 5,000 collapse. We will build 4,000 per year, 4,500. We will distribute an average of 3,000 units per year, but those are units that will be well built and when you go there you get value for money. That is what we are concerned about. You see, Mr. Speaker, they boasted all of these years that they built house, but they never had anything to say about the quality and that is our commitment to Trinidad and Tobago.

The Opposition raised the issue of the revitalization of east Port of Spain, and you know as a Government it is very difficult to please. If you move too fast you make mistakes and everybody ask you—the Couva Hospital and the Brian Lara Stadium are two classic cases. We moved to build the Couva Hospital, somebody jump up and say it “have ah” fault line underneath there. When we discovered they said an earthquake could happen there anytime from 500 years to 2,500 years. Now, the hospital is being built for 100 years, all right? If we stop, nothing happens, “Dey say well, you do nothing.” The Brian Lara Stadium was built, \$1.1 billion—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: So far.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—of taxpayers' money, eh. That was not no other money, it is taxpayers' money; Lara Stadium \$1.1—a report suggests to us by international consultants, we need \$185 million again. Cabinet has considered that. We take our time. We are dealing with hundreds, of millions of taxpayers' dollars. You cannot rush and make decisions. The Member for Chaguanas West stands up—three years later, no Brian Lara Stadium. Now, if he had a chance everything build, you know. And everything fall down and everything might “tief” out.

Hon. Member: At what cost?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You cannot do that with public money. Mr. Speaker, on another occasion—I do not like talking if he is not here. So I will stop. I will continue with some of these examples of the troubles we faced. We suffered in silence, the troubles we faced. And you know the troubles we faced with projects,

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and management under the Member for Chaguanas West, but I will not raise those issues if he is not in the House. You see, I do not like raising those matters if he not here. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: “Dat” is for another time.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, Port of Spain city, this Government is well aware of the challenges associated with development in Port of Spain, whether it is traffic congestion, flooding, illegal vending, and so on, vagrancy, inefficient housing stock, crime rate, we are well aware. The initial projects of Port of Spain east development plan, the various projects that we will implement speak to an integrated redevelopment concept of east Port of Spain.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the Member of Parliament for Oropouche East and Minister of Housing and Urban Development has expired.

Motion made: That the hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. A. Roberts*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: You may continue, hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Thank you. [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I was dealing with the East Port of Spain redevelopment plan. It is the intention of the Government to implement the framework for sustainable development and economic feasibility in the Port of Spain area. We begin by looking at such areas as: Sea Lots, Beetham, Duncan Street, Nelson Street and environs. We have done the necessary work and will embark on a pilot project/demonstration project for the redevelopment of Port of Spain east. Our programme involves providing sustainable employment; affording residents an apparatus to be successful business persons; improved local services; improved social development programmes; the promotion of training and skills. Under our Ministry, Mr. Speaker, we propose to develop Port of Spain into various centres for sustainable development. We will plan and implement in this context a city urban regeneration programme for areas in Port of Spain.

In the block, for example, of Nelson Street, Duncan Street and Queen Street, we have 192 families currently residing in that block on a parcel of land, three acres. In order to accomplish and build out of our development programme, we propose to relocate those persons to other HDC estates in and around Port of

Spain. This will allow us to proceed on our development programme for the urban renewal of the city of Port of Spain as a major financial centre with Port of Spain east communities juxtapositioned within the city's central business district.

We also want to promote an efficient mix of housing and commercial activity which can sustain communities. We are going to embark on a construction programme to construct apartment buildings including various styles and designs for multi-family apartments. We will encourage private sector partnership to ensure a mix of commercial/financial activity in the specific areas.

Mr. Speaker, all designs and construction will involve specific frameworks for prevention of crime. We have done the appropriate surveys in this area, and will roll out this construction in 2014. A key area for us as well is in the HDC and we can make certain commitments at this stage, in that in the new year given our budgetary allocations for which we are most thankful, we expect to roll out construction starts at Eden Gardens, Couva; Trestrail, D'Abadie/O'Meara, Pineapple Smith, [*Desk thumping*] and further developments in Wellington and Princes Town.

3.30 p.m.

We expect to complete our development in Victoria Keys, Port of Spain, the small developments in Diego Martin and, of course, La Fortune, Point Fortin, our development there where we are now installing the waste water treatment plants. We can expect a very exciting year in the housing sector in 2014 where we expect to generate at least 3,000 new jobs in housing given our construction programme.

We also have under our ambit the CEPEP Programme. It is without a doubt that CEPEP has been one of the biggest successes of the administration of the People's Partnership. No community today can complain that they are not touched by the work of CEPEP. They can complain that they need further work; that they need further contractors, but no community can complain that CEPEP is not involved in their constituencies, in their various areas.

We have asked Members opposite, when they have problems, please contact the local coordinator in their region to assist them in their development work. May I add that it was under this administration that we embarked upon the CEPEP Marine Programme, which we started, that is to do cleaning up rivers, cleaning up beaches. You know, Mr. Speaker, there was a time where every week you would see various NGO groups on the beach, by the river picking up garbage and plastic and so on. You know, you do not see that anymore. You hardly see that anymore because the CEPEP Marine is working.

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Today, Mr. Speaker, it is our intention to develop a new programme within the CEPEP family and that will be the CEPEP Public Property Development Programme. We expect to start a division in CEPEP that will now work along the same framework of regions to clean and undertake very minor repairs and refurbishment to all public buildings in Trinidad and Tobago. For far too long citizens pass by and they look at a public building, whether it is a health centre, police station, school, wherever, and basic cleaning, basic repairs—police stations, for example—cannot be done and take long to be done given established systems in various Ministries.

Today the CEPEP will embark on a programme CEPEP Public Property to clean in quick time and do minor repairs on all government properties throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago so that we can feel proud when we pass by a community centre, a health centre. We expect to generate in that programme a further 3,000 jobs towards the CEPEP Programme.

In the area of the land distribution, our colleague, the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo, last evening—I think last evening we debated, on Friday, gave a very good contribution on the land and marine affairs. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo has responsibility there and we are certain that the Member will continue the work that has been started in the Land for the Landless Programme, the neighbourhood upgrade programmes throughout various settlements in Trinidad.

Mr. Speaker, under the former administration, in 10 years, they did not, and chose not to distribute Certificates of Comfort to needy, underprivileged, low-income citizens in this country—not a single Certificate of Comfort. In three years, we have distributed 1,200 Certificates of Comfort [*Desk thumping*] and in this year we expect, in one year alone, to distribute 2,000 Certificates of Comfort; to come now to the plight of persons in Farm Road, St. Joseph, Carli Bay in Couva, Wilson Road in Penal, Debe, along the train line in Ciperio Street and in Chaguanas, Endeavour, I believe; that train line. Carapo as well.

Mr. Speaker, no Government before us has distributed so many leases, so many Certificates of Comfort. No Government before us! And today, our critics ask us what we do; what is our record; what have we done? The people who have received those Certificates of Comfort they know what we have done. They trust us.

You know, they raised the issue of trust—the Member for Diego Martin West—the issue of trust, you cannot trust us. Mr. Speaker, the 4,000 persons who

got the leases, they trust us to get the leases. The Certificates of Comfort 1,200 recipients, they trust us. The persons who clamour for their road—and they got their road; they got their drainage—they trust us. The persons who want a recreation ground, a pavilion—Mr. Speaker, throughout several grounds, you are seeing now the construction of pavilions.

Hon. Member: Thirty-two.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Thirty-two grounds with stadium lighting in some cases. In some of our areas, elderly people can go in the night now and walk around and get exercise and so on. [*Desk thumping*] For the first time in life, in a particular part of my constituency, the people told me they are now confused. I said, “Why?” They said, “All the roads paved; we doh know which one to take.”

Mr. Speaker, this is Trinidad and Tobago. They are proud. They trust us. They know we have delivered. They know we have delivered and all my friends opposite, you make your request, you will be served. The Member for Tabaquite has been working with several Members of the Opposition. He has been working with them in Diego Martin, in Point Fortin, in La Brea. They have been working there on infrastructure; in Port of Spain—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Where?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The Member for Tabaquite will tell you.

Mr. Speaker, on governance; I want to make a point on governance. We spoke about infrastructure. You know, our friends opposite also come and they talk about corruption. Everything now they talk is corruption—corruption, corruption. You know, they bring what is called preliminary disclosure. Under the former administration, “it was when \$400 million gone”, then you have a corruption scandal.

Here, they come for the corruption scandal, but before a dollar gone, they say, “You know, if this happens, it will be corrupt; if that happens, it will be corrupt.” So you put a request for proposal in the newspaper and they say, “Look, corruption.” “Now, nothing happen yet, eh”. Somebody buys some trucks, they say, “Look, this person buy truck because they expect contract. Corruption!”

Everybody, “not a dollar gone”, but it is preliminary corruption. That is before you have corruption.

Hon. Member: Pre-corruption.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Pre-corruption stage.

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Under their administration, “\$300 million gone” in the Government campus. Brian Lara Stadium, well God alone knows about that. Tamana, \$500 million to study the “racket rail”.

Mr. Roberts: And they are coming back with it.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: And they are coming back with it.

Mr. Roberts: More racket.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, Calder Hart, but under this administration, you see a request for proposal in the newspaper, they say, “Look, look, look.” The Member came with that, you know, “Diego Martin West”. He said he had an RFP and this is corruption. Now, not a single cent “gone nowhere, eh” but he says that. Not a contract awarded and he comes with that. Then he comes with another one, amazing! “He say a Minister tell him that a former Minister take a billion dollars.”

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: That must be a PNM Minister.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: It had to be a PNM Minister. It had to be. That is what he comes with.

Miss Mc Donald: “Ay, come on.” I am sorry. Mr. Speaker, my apologies, but, Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 36(5).

Mr. Speaker: Overruled. Go ahead!

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: He said it. He said it just now.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The Member for Diego Martin North/East said that somebody told him that. Now that is not evidence. You cannot take that to the police. You cannot take that to Scotland Yard. You cannot take that to Scotland Bay, but that is what they come with and they try to paint the Government, increasingly, with this brush of corruption, thinking that it will stick. Mr. Speaker, under this administration, not one Member has been arrested, charged, prosecuted for any act of corruption in three and a half years. Not one!

Hon. Member: Not yet!

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Time longer than twine.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Great, but what I am saying is that none. They have made so many allegations with all types of bogus information, and always it is what will happened next, not what happened. Mr. Speaker, that is their political

strategy. Their political strategy is to convince the population that you cannot trust, but, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day our work will demonstrate whether you trust us. Our work will demonstrate that.

The Member for Chaguanas West is on that as well. Member for Chaguanas West comes, “You cannot trust them. Everybody is friend and family.” Mr. Speaker, the very first CEPEP contract given out by this Government was to the sister of the Member for Chaguanas West. The very first.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: And the second.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The very second was to the next sister of the Member for Chaguanas West. Mr. Speaker, the very third—“Well, he run out of sister so it was not there.”

I can continue. We ask MPs, all MPs to make recommendations, any time they recommend, they recommend their family, this Member for Chaguanas West, and today they come and talk about corruption and corruption and I have more. Well, I will leave that for another day. *[Interruption]* And they talk about that.

Miss Mc Donald: He is not talking about our bench.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: I was speaking to Chaguanas West. The Member for Diego Martin West, trying to raise his public profile; we passed recently a Bill here—and we are talking about governance now—to improve the quality of representation and the participation of all groups in our society at the local government level. We passed the legislation here. Mr. Speaker, do you know for that legislation to pass in the next place, the PNM had to sleep away for democracy to prevail? For democracy to prevail, they had to sleep away. If they were waking, democracy would not have prevailed. They fell asleep and they started blaming each other as to who was caught napping and who was not caught napping. They started blaming each other.

The Member for Caroni East gave a contribution before in this debate and outlined how many schools they repaired—51.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, no, repaired, I think 212.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Two hundred and twelve schools repaired. Mr. Speaker, it is known, every two years, there will be a couple schools, for one reason or another, whether bureaucracy, red tape, whatever, you will have one or two schools that will not be repaired on time to open, but the Member for Chaguanas West raised a fuss. When he was in the Government 2010, 2011, 2012—*[Interruption]*

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Hon. Member: 2013.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The same thing had happened, but he did not stand on this side and accuse the Government. He said the Minister was doing a good job. He said the Minister was doing a good job.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: That is yesterday was yesterday.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, you know, yesterday—what they say?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Was yesterday.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Was yesterday.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Today is today.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: And tomorrow might be back to yesterday, “eh”.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Caroni East gave, in our constituency, I have to speak a few minutes on my own constituency before they come and say “I doing nothing now”. The Monkey Town Government School closed in 2004. We were begging former Minister Hazel Manning; we were begging former Minister Esther Le Gendre for help. Nothing! The children of Lower Barrackpore had to go by bus five o’clock in the morning—little children like this in primary school. They went in a bus five o’clock in the morning, to go to Debe five miles away. They had to leave school early to get back into Barrackpore. We begged and we begged. Those children and their parents came to Parliament at the Red House and protested. On that day, they were joined by Winston “Gypsy” Peters, Roodal Moonilal and one Sen. Wade Mark, who joined them in protest. Under the People’s Partnership Government, the Member for Siparia, having represented those persons earlier and the Minister of Education, we opened a brand new, spanking Monkey Town Primary School.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: It started with PNM.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Everything start under the PNM.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Everything start and nothing finish!. You see, Mr. Speaker, you talk we deliver. You talked and we delivered the school; and you look throughout the landscape, roads in several areas, box drains in several areas—a lot more to be done; a lot more to be done we are sure, but we are on the right track.

I want to tell them; “you can speak how much you want about trust; you can speak how much you want, you see when the people get their goods and services

and they know that they benefited by infrastructure work, by quality service, by goods, they will trust the Government that gave them that. They will trust the Government that gave them that, and no amount of medicine man like in the old Western movies can come around and say, “I have a cure for all.”

Hon. Member: Snake oil.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Snake oil. I have a cure for everything, vote for me.

The Member for Chaguanas West came today and, for the very first time, outlined his party’s intention upon becoming the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Incidentally, he said more than the Member for Diego Martin West about becoming Government.

3.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, and the Member told us—he said every time he asks one of us to do something and we do not, that would be full-page ad the next day; full-page ad the next day. I want to ask my friends opposite: “how much full-page ad allyuh put on the papers?”

Mrs. Mc Intosh: “We cyar afford that”.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: “Yuh cyar afford that?” Okay. They cannot afford that, you know, but the Member for Chaguanas West is threatening now—“is full-page ads every day”, if the Government does not act. “Why yuh eh take de same money and go and fix de people problem instead of wasting money like this?” Mr. Speaker, but again, I tell him, we are not afraid of that; we are not afraid of that. He made statements—we have not distributed lands for agriculture. Mr. Speaker, we have distributed over 2,000 leases for agriculture, over 2,000. [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: You see, it seems as if he does not know what has happened.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: And they do not want to sit down here to hear.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC: Telling untruths.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You know, the GREEN Initiative in Caroni; large-scale farming, Mr. Speaker, is on the move. In fact, when we do the statistics, as the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo said, agriculture is now a boom sector in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago [*Desk thumping*] for the first time in ages. And, you know, “they would make statement—Government Ministers with Prado and car—all ah them driving the same car eh—driving Hummer, a Hummer—

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wherever that come from, we doh know—but they are driving that, and then condemning a Minister driving other thing, as if we should be in box cart moving around, you know.”

But, Mr. Speaker, our track record, after three years, that track record suggests that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is working, is delivering. Mr. Speaker, “we tired tell them, de more dey talk, it is de more we will deliver.”

Mr. Speaker, I just want to turn my attention to a couple issues relating to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, specifically. In the coming year, we intend to intensify our programmes for the delivery of home construction subsidies. Mr. Speaker, another 341 persons added to 1,500 persons will receive home construction subsidies under our IDB programme which supports, subsidies for persons who can afford to build their own homes, beginning with \$20,000.

We have had significant achievements at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development in our policy facilitation unit, by way of the distribution of grants, and we intend to continue that programme in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, another critical agency for us, of course, is UDeCOTT, and UDeCOTT has several outstanding projects which we expect in the new year to continue and, indeed, to complete. We continue work on the police stations. As I indicated before, Mr. Speaker, the St. Joseph Police Station will be equipped with an ID parade and viewing room. We intend to provide traffic officers for Manzanilla, Arima and St. Joseph; we intend to open the new Arima Police Station. As of August 01, it was 65 per cent completed, and the Member for Arima will be happy to know that it will be completed 100 per cent in November 2013. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Construction of the Cumuto Police Station is under way. We are now 65 per cent complete and Cumuto—where is that? Yes, Cumuto will be completed in October 2013.

Mr. Sharma: Well done.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: We expect to complete that police station. Mr. Speaker, in La Brea—my friend from La Brea—we have finished 44 per cent of the work. We expect by the second quarter, next year, to complete the La Brea station. Mr. Speaker, we have started construction of the Moruga station. We are doing work in St. Joseph and a command centre located in Maloney, near the Maloney Police Station, is being constructed.

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The Red House project is under way and we expect the completion of the refurbishment and restoration of the Red House by the second quarter of 2015, and then we will also be constructing the companion building to the Red House. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, the fit-out of the Government Campus is ongoing. Cabinet has taken all the decisions related to that, and we expect to implement a contract in the last quarter of 2013.

Mr. Speaker, new projects for UDeCOTT include Roxborough Police Station, Manzanilla, Matelot and Matura. Mr. Speaker, this one you would like to know. Mr. Speaker, in 1965—

Mr. Roberts: “Eh heh”!

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—Dr. Eric Williams—

Mr. Speaker: Members, order, please.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: In 1965, Dr. Eric Williams journeyed to Mayaro and promised the people of Mayaro a fire station, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Oh Lord!

Mrs. Khan: When was that?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: In 1965. He had what you called an Aston Martin car, an old car, Aston Martin. Mr. Speaker, he went to Mayaro and promised the people of Mayaro a fire station. Mr. Speaker, we have started the foundation work for the Mayaro Fire Station. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Roberts: On behalf of Dr. Williams.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: On behalf of Dr. Williams. They promised it in 1965. Mr. Speaker, projects for 2014 include the headquarters of the Division of Health and Services in Tobago, the Roxborough Administrative Complex, the Moriah Health Centre in Tobago, the Pan Trinbago Headquarters, the Naparima Bowl renovation and, of course, assisting the prison with various refurbishment works there.

So, the signal projects of UDeCOTT include the Couva Children’s Hospital and the Chancery Lane. Mr. Speaker, may I say in Chancery Lane, by December 2013, we intend to open it completely—the San Fernando Teaching Hospital at Chancery Lane. [*Desk thumping*] This includes, Mr. Speaker, a modern 216 teaching hospital, retrofitted and converted into a state-of-the-art hospital facility

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with paediatrics and adult wards; rooms equipped for cardiology X-ray, ultrasound equipment, pharmacy services, lecture rooms, among other services. Mr. Speaker, the Chancery Lane Hospital will be opened in December 2013.

We also have been doing extensive earthworks and roadworks on the Couva Children's Hospital. Mr. Speaker, let me just say a word about this Couva Children's Hospital. [*Crosstalk*] The Member for Chaguanas West took umbrage at the relocation of the Couva Children's Hospital from Chaguanas to Couva. The Couva Children's Hospital is designed with a burns unit, and that is being located within two minutes by air of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate to Couva. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, that children's hospital is going on a greenfield site. So, by definition, you need greater investment for infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, if we take a decision that we are not building heavy projects, heavy industrial projects, on greenfield sites, then half of Trinidad will continue to be underdeveloped, but you have to take decisions to bring heavy industry to greenfield sites, and when you go on to greenfield sites, you will have a greater capital injection for infrastructure, lighting, roads, water and telecommunication. That is normal. That is normal anywhere in the world, Mr. Speaker. But we cannot take a decision to leave large communities outside of development because we do not want to invest in infrastructure for those communities.

One day, Mr. Speaker—this is our dream and our vision—when you leave the Mount Hope Hospital and you are driving south, you will see the COSTAATT headquarters and the science city at Chaguanas, Endeavour. Minutes down the highway, you will see a children's hospital, with an overpass that goes to a car park on the western side of the highway, and you will walk over the highway into a children's hospital.

As you go down that highway, you will then get on the highway to Point Fortin, built by the Partnership, Mr. Speaker. On one side, you will see the building that is the Chancery Lane Hospital, and when you reach down further, you will see the University of the West Indies, South Campus. When you continue driving, Mr. Speaker, you will eventually pass La Brea and Point Fortin to get to our heavy industry energy sector in Point Fortin. [*Desk thumping*] That is vision; that is vision, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: And when you are driving through Port of Spain?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: And when you are driving through Port of Spain—

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: What you will see?

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Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—you will see a brand new port at Sea Lots; you will see a redevelopment project in east Port of Spain that will bring financial/commercial activity to the people of Port of Spain.

Miss Cox: What year?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: When you come back, Mr. Speaker, you will see the Invaders Bay development in Port of Spain. All of this is happening; job creation, economic activity. They are in denial. Mr. Speaker, they are in denial, and they will come every week—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Ramadhar: A fishing depot in Diego Martin.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: A fishing depot, I believe, in Diego Martin as well. That will help. Mr. Speaker, they are in denial. What they will not admit is that the Government is delivering. We delivered from box drain to the ordinary citizen, to hospitals, universities, in three and a half years—I keep repeating—three and a half years. Mr. Speaker, they can talk forever because we believe strongly that they talk, but we deliver. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The Member for Laventille East/Morvant. [*Desk thumping*]

Miss Donna Cox (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to join this budget debate. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, please.

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker—[*Crosstalk*]—I would not talk about the white Member for Fyzabad, okay? This is the Minister of Finance and the Economy's second budget statement, and this Government's fourth since assuming office. My expectation was that, by now, they would have demonstrated some evidence that they were getting better but, alas Mr. Speaker, just like the recent Cabinet reshuffle, they seem to be stuck in a paradigm which sees them glued to a worn-out strategy of spend, spend, spend, as their sole response to tackling the issues [*Desk thumping*] confronted by the population on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, before I move on, I would like to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Diego Martin West, for his sterling contribution [*Desk thumping*] and I would also like to congratulate my colleagues who contributed before me. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, the Government and the Minister had a golden opportunity to inspire a population reeling under daily dosages of wanton and unnecessary

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wastage of young lives from gruesome and chilling—a lot of stuff is happening in many communities, Mr. Speaker, and at this time, I felt that the budget debate could have dealt with that also.

Mr. Speaker, the budget presentation, which generally grips the attention of the general population, could have been used as a tool to restore some confidence in the national community, that all is not lost and there is hope and a brighter future ahead, particularly for those misguided youths of our nation.

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, that was expecting too much from this Government. Perhaps, the only redeeming aspect of this year's budget presentation is that, unlike last year, the nation has been spared from that ill-conceived, ill-advised and disgraceful display of a partisan pre-budget rally.

Mr. Speaker, what are some of the main features of this budget as presented by the Minister of Finance and the Economy? It lacks details in many critical areas, thereby making it almost impossible to appreciate, assess or analyse the particular policy prescriptions and measures outlined and, one example, is Caribbean Airlines—and property tax actually is another example that comes to mind.

Although the budget statement assumed a caption of Sustaining Growth, Securing Prosperity, a theme which depicts lofty ideals, there was not the philosophical nor the clinical underpinnings which would have defined or targeted what these ideals were, nor were there the processes to be pursued toward the realization of these ideals.

In many respects, the budget statement represents a rehash of many of the measures, policies and prescriptions of earlier budgets presented by this Government. In fact, many of the projects which were identified by the previous Minister and from previous years somehow found their way into this current budget.

The sharp increases in budgeted expenditure continues unabated, such that over the four budgets presented by this Government, expenditure has grown from \$51.5 billion in fiscal 2010/2011 to \$61.4 billion in the current year, a whopping increase of almost 20 per cent in just three years, and there appears to be no apparent concerns about the implications of this reckless spending spree for the national economy.

Mr. Speaker, this year's budget represents the sixth consecutive national budget deficit presented to the nation. But, you know, what, Mr. Speaker?

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According to the Minister of Finance and the Economy, he is committed to putting this country through another two years of budget deficit because he says, very loudly, in his budget statement, and I quote:

“The Government is successfully containing the fiscal deficit in accordance with its policy objectives and is on course to bring the fiscal account into balance by 2016.”

and cunningly attempts to disguise the impact of the deficit by expressing it as a ratio to GDP.

4.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, there is no urgency on the part of the Government to exercise fiscal prudence and discipline in the management of the country's finances. Fiscal prudence and discipline will not suit their political agenda, hence the budget routine is very predictable and static. Let me just outline what has been this Government's record in the management of the finances of this nation in the four budgets presented to date.

In 2010/2011, budget deficit of \$3.9 billion; in 2011/2012, a budget deficit of \$3.5 billion; in 2012/2013 a budget deficit of \$6.5 billion and 2013/2014, a budget deficit of \$6.3 billion. In the four budgets presented to the nation by this Government, they have racked up accumulative fiscal deficit of \$20.2 billion, equivalent to 30 per cent of the budget we are considering today.

You see, Mr. Speaker, not so long ago many of those who sit on the other side today had accused the PNM of reckless and profligate spending. The evidence shows that this Government is the most reckless that this country has ever seen in the management of this country's purse; but, Mr. Speaker, it does not stop there. As this band of merry men and women continue to pillage the nation's Treasury, what it does simultaneously is the imposition, on this current and future generation, of a debt burden which they will have to bear long after this Government would have been driven out of office.

In summary, if I am to make an assessment of this budget it will be same old, same old; nothing new, nothing that we have not heard before; very little creativity to propel the economy. If there is economic growth it will be by happenstance, subjected to the vagaries of the external marketplace for primary export products from the energy sector. This budget, the fourth of this Government, would mean that, to date, they would have spent a total of \$223.2 billion. Just to put it in context, it took the PNM seven years to spend what this

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UNC-led coalition Government took four years to spend and, by its next budget, this Government would have overhauled in five budgets what the PNM took eight years to spend.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to focus my remarks on Tobago, specifically. Permit me to first of all thank the Minister for his acknowledgement of the way in which the Tobago House of Assembly handled itself with respect to the timeliness of its budgetary submission to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Finance and the Economy. The respect for the law and its obligation is a quality for which Tobagonians are well known and it is commendable that the Minister would have publicly recognized the Chief Secretary and the Secretary of Finance for their efforts in this regard.

Unfortunately, however, Mr. Speaker, although having received the required documents from Tobago on time, and although having consulted on more than one occasion with the THA officials, the Minister appeared to have neither fully appreciated the contents of the documents, nor the subsequent oral submissions made by the THA nor the enormity of the development challenges that Tobago faces.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister boasted, in his budget statement, that Tobago would receive some \$3.309 billion or 5.3 per cent of the 2014 budget. What he tried to sweep under the carpet is the fact that the allocation to the Tobago House of Assembly, for fiscal year 2015, is actually \$2.45 billion. This is ordinarily referred to as a budgetary sleight of hand. The fact is that, contrary to the Minister's boast, the share of the national budget actually allocated to the THA is at its minimum given Tobago's well established developmental needs. It is much less than the 8 per cent that was proposed as part of their failed attempt to seduce Tobago to get their votes in January.

Indeed, the Minister, with all the smoke and mirrors at his disposal, attempted to hoodwink the people of Tobago by referring to the allocation for use in Tobago by the Member for Tobago West and his other Cabinet colleagues, even though he knows that such expenditure, in accordance with the THA Act, does not form part of the THA allocation and that the Dispute Resolution Commission's ruling speaks quite correctly to the allocations that are to be made to the THA and THA alone.

So, Mr. Speaker, the allocations to major specific projects and programmes to aid in Tobago's developments have fallen woefully short for yet another year. The case for the Assembly's scholarship programme for young people is a stark example. Given the well-known human resource capacity constraints to Tobago's

development, the Assembly requested some \$6 million to finance this programme in 2014. The Minister of Finance and the Economy allocated one million to the Assembly, an amount that cannot even cover the cost of Tobagonians already registered for the 2014 academic year—but the problem does not stop there.

Take the case of the infrastructural development at Cove that is so critical to transforming the Tobago economy. The \$2 million allocated for capital works at the business park for 2014 can hardly build a factory shell of average size. This is coming from the same Minister and the same Government that continuously proclaims the need to diversify the Tobago economy.

Mr. Speaker, despite all the rhetoric about an appropriate share of the budget for the THA, the allocation to housing for Tobago provides an excellent example of how this UNC's words are one thing, their deeds are another, and never shall the two meet. In fact, faced with the excess of 6,000 applications for public sector housing in Tobago, the allocation of \$28.4 million for all housing projects, and related activities, will result in a situation in 2014 where the Assembly has financing for the construction of a maximum of 25 houses in Tobago in the next year. Compare this with the funded provision for 2,000 units in new projects in Tobago. As a matter of fact, the Member for Oropouche East recently—just before me—spoke about these new projects in Trinidad. Where is the equity here, where, in Tobago there is only allocation financing here for 25 houses and in Trinidad the funds provided are for 2,000 units? This could never be fair.

Mr. Speaker, how does the Minister explain the meagre allocation of \$8 million to complete the Scarborough library in the face of a requirement for \$40 million for a project that is long overdue, largely because of sporadic and insufficient funding? How can \$8 million be enough to complete the Shaw Park Cultural Complex when the project's completion costs are currently estimated at \$75 million and what they got was \$8 million?

Why does the Minister believe that \$2 million is sufficient to allow the Assembly to continue to protect Tobago's heritage in the next fiscal year through the Heritage Land Trust? With which THA secretary did he consult in his effort to impose a so-called north-east Tobago growth pole plan on Tobago when the Assembly has already articulated its views in its recently updated comprehensive development plan for Tobago, a copy of which I am aware was passed on to the Minister of Finance and the Economy?

If the Minister truly cared about Tobago's young people, how does he justify his minimal allocation to Tobago's Young Professionals Programme in the face of

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a request by the THA for \$12 million? If we are to assist in a resurgence of agriculture in Tobago to contribute to the nation's food security, how does the Minister explain the meagre \$5 million allocation for agricultural access roads in Tobago? Five million dollars out of a budget of \$60 billion to develop some of the most fertile lands; and when you are talking so frequently about growing more food to bring down the food import bill. And, they want to go to Guyana to develop land to produce the same things that you failed to produce in Tobago.

How does the Minister plan to explain to hundreds of Tobago families that there is no allocation for CEPEP in Tobago for fiscal 2014? I would like the Minister of Finance and the Economy to explain that because the Member for Oropouche East just spoke about CEPEP and boasted about CEPEP in Trinidad. Why was there no allocation for CEPEP in Tobago?

How does the Minister explain away the fact that his budgetary allocation of \$19 million to URP in Tobago falls way below the \$65 million spent in fiscal 2013 and the \$70 million requested for fiscal 2014? Why, with development spending so critical to the island taking its rightful place in our country, does the allocation for the development programme represent only 19 per cent of the Assembly's stated needs? All of this in the record-breaking largest budget in the history of our country.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the Government is serious about accelerating development in Tobago, be it with a marina, an industrial sea port, an aquatic centre or with a facility for research on indigenous Tobago products for export to the world, not only would it have funded existing projects to their speedy conclusion, but they would have also taken the bold step to allow the THA, with its Baa1 credit rating, early approval to borrow on the local capital market to finance its own development.

More immediately, we would have drawn the lessons from the Prime Minister's and the Attorney General's ill-fated attempt to obstruct the THA and private investors on the Milshirv project and openly declare, once and for all, his support for the Assembly's involvement in public/private partnership project finance arrangements, just as he plans to do for state enterprises in Trinidad and with the full support, as necessary, for the central government.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is proud that in less than two weeks she has foisted on the population an ineffective version of proportional representation. Yet, the Prime Minister and her Government are prepared to studiously ignore a process in which the people of Tobago have been involved for over six years and they are begging for her engagement.

The Prime Minister is prepared to disregard her open pledge to the people of Tobago, during the Tobago House of Assembly election campaign, and it is evident that on this matter this Government is bent on ignoring the people of Tobago for exercising their democratic right to reject the most incompetent, the most corrupt and pumpkin-infested Government that this country has ever seen. I can give the Prime Minister and her collapsing raft the assurance that the people of Tobago will remain strong, resilient and focused and will not be bribed or bullied into submission.

I am confident that the Tobago House of Assembly remains ready to engage the central government at any place, and at any time, in order to bring a swift, dignified resolution to the long delayed matter of internal self-government for the people of Tobago. However, their patience is running thin and I caution this Government against continuing its devious and cynical ways in this regard.

As we listened to the Minister of Finance and the Economy make his allocation with respect to the university campus in Tobago, we wonder whether he knows that this, too, is another pumpkin patch tended only by the UNC on lands hastily acquired by the economic cabal. Would the Minister publicly express his view on the need for the THA to be respected in this and similar developmental plans for Tobago? I would like the Minister, in his response, to respond to this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, just as Tobagonians on January 21 of this year sent a powerful message to the Partnership that they had had enough, the people of Trinidad have taken heed and await their turn on October 21 to send the same message, the same Tobago message, even louder and clearer, in order to return some sense of sanity and decency to the management of the nation's affairs. [*Desk thumping*]

4.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I move to sport.

Hon. Member: "Um-hmm."

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*] is a Muslim.

Hon. Member: White on white.

Miss D. Cox: White on white.

Mr. Roberts: Jehue hungry.

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, in the budget debate—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Poor Jehue, he hungry.

Miss D. Cox:—the Minister stated that consultancy and design work is advancing rapidly for the construction of the National Aquatic Centre, the National Tennis Centre and the National Cycling Centre; all to be built in UNC areas. The Minister of Finance and the Economy also stated that these facilities will be supported by three national multipurpose sport facilities. Where would these facilities be built? I will speak about that a little later, but, Mr. Speaker, I would later speak about the neglect of the sporting facilities in the constituency of Laventille East/Morvant by this Minister of Sport.

Mr. Speaker, a perusal of the PSIP document will reveal that no provision was made for the refurbishing of any recreation ground or court in the Laventille East/Morvant area. Mr. Speaker, after numerous letters were sent to the Minister, the Minister has done no work in my constituency, and it is a shame to see the areas that this Ministry has been concentrating on. So, Mr. Speaker, if they fix 20 grounds in their area, they may fix a token in a PNM-led area as an offering, you know—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: Only one.

Miss D. Cox: Sometimes it might be one and 20 in another. Okay. Mr. Speaker, I quote from the PSIP document, pages 26 and 27, and permit me to quote:

“In 2013 preliminary construction work commenced on the six (6) national signature facilities:

- a 2500 seating capacity—National Cycle Centre...”

Where?

“at Couva

- a National Aquatic Centre to host international swimming competitions...”

Where?

“Couva

- a National Tennis Centre...Mt. Hope...
- three (3) Multipurpose Sport and Indoor Facilities”—one—“at Charleville,”—one in—“Couva”—again, one in “...Fyzabad.”

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Mr. Speaker, people who have sense could clearly understand what is happening. Page 27, I read again. Permit me to quote:

“Funds in the sum of \$20.8 million were utilised under the Development and upgrading of Recreational Grounds,”—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Only.

Miss D. Cox:—“Parks and Spaces Project, for the construction of a car park and pavilion, grading and grassing, installation of lighting and plumbing and implementation of drainage works at following locations: Mayaro, Ojoe Road Sangre Grande, Penal, Malabar, Santa Cruz, Diego Martin and Caparo.”

Mr. Speaker, you remember I said that they put in a token offering; they put in one sometimes or two when they do 20 of their areas—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: That not nice.

Miss D. Cox:—and this could never be fair. One sure way of dealing with deviant behaviour is through sports, and yet this Government wants us to believe that they are serious about crime, if you check the areas that they are concentrating on to build recreation grounds, to refurbish grounds and sporting complexes.

Mr. Speaker, this Government must not play politics with sports because in pursuit of excellence encouraged by sport—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Jehue, you hungry?

Miss D. Cox:—make us better individuals, and it encourages discipline and a drive to excellence.

Mr. Roberts: Four hundred thousand dollars—he hungry.

Miss D. Cox: Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara, you should be repentant at this time instead of laughing over there.

Hon. Member: Yeah.

Miss D. Cox: The Minister should recognize by now that sport can act as a deterrent to criminal activity and anti-social behaviour. [*Desk thumping*] Therefore, emphasis should be placed in areas where it is felt youths are at risk, not [*Crosstalk*] in UNC areas.

Mr. Roberts: “You hungry?”

Mr. Speaker: Please! Please!

Miss D. Cox: And I repeat, Mr. Speaker, emphasis should be placed in areas where it is felt that youths are at risk and not just in UNC areas, and this is what is happening right now in this country [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Sport received a whopping \$700 million, and the Auditor General's Report states that the Ministry of Sport could not account for close to \$45 million last year. What measures have been put in place to ensure proper accountability with respect to the spending of taxpayers' money in the Ministry of Sport?

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask: where has the money gone? And that is a question I would like to ask the Minister of Sport, Member of Parliament for D'Abadie/O'Meara, to answer, particularly in light of the findings of the Auditor General's Report. The hon. Minister loves to wage war against sporting organizations in this country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Roberts: "Eh heh?"

Miss D. Cox: Telling them to present audited financial statements and so on before they can get funds from his Ministry.

Hon. Member: Good!

Miss D. Cox: That is not a bad thing, but the funny thing is that if you were to apply the same logic to him he would have been out of a job on the last Cabinet reshuffle last week, Mr. Speaker, if not before. With your leave, Mr. Speaker, permit me to quote from the Auditor General's Report. On page 17 of the report we note that the Ministry of Sport could not, did not or refused to provide information to the Auditor General concerning the following:

- "i) Outstanding Commitments.
- ii) Particulars of trust and other moneys held.
- iii) Particulars of all gifts and/or donations received from agencies/entities whether monetary or in kind.
- iv) Particulars of all gifts...and/or donations..."—and so on concerning—"employees...
- v) Particulars of the total number of persons employed in contract positions and the total amount paid to such persons during the financial year.
- vi) Action taken in respect of the requirements of the Ministry of Finance relative to the preparation and submission to the Comptroller of

Accounts the personal information of employees that is required to determine their separation and pension benefits.”

Mr. Speaker, where is the transparency and accountability that was supposed to be part of the new politics promised in 2010?

Under the category of “Overpayments” on page 25 of the Auditor General’s Report, the Ministry recorded six cases of overpayment, totalling \$17,373.43, while reports received by the Auditor General recorded 16 cases totalling \$136,599.27, so a very significant and disturbing disparity indeed. Under the heading, “Individual Areas of Concern”, we have on page 45 under the subheading, “Current Transfers and Subsidies” and subhead, “Football World Cup 2014”:

“Weaknesses were noted...”

And I am quoting from the report now:

“in the verification procedures for certain payments under this vote. It did not appear that amounts submitted for reimbursement were properly verified before payment was made. Some instances noted were:

- Two payments totalling \$11,000,000.00 were seen to have been made. However, the statement provided in connection with this payment totalled \$5,611,933.25, a difference of \$5,388,066.75.
- A payment of \$2,579,920.94 was seen to be supported by an expenditure statement for \$2,449,950.94—a shortfall of \$129,970.00.”

Money unaccounted for.

- “A payment of \$992,900.00 relating to the financial year 2010 for amounts due to technical staff and others involved in the Senior Men’s National Team’s Programme was unsupported by timesheets as required by Cabinet directive. Further, the funds were reported to be used for other football programmes than the one intended. Evidence of approval for this variation was not provided. A response received from the Ministry regarding the Auditor General’s query on this matter revealed that the amount of \$992,900.00 was again paid in the financial year 2013 to defray the original amount outstanding for 2010.”

Mr. Speaker, on the same page 45, under the subheading, “Non-Profit Institutions”, we are treated to the following:

“Non-Profit Institutions

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1.144 Payments totalling \$180,737.50 were made under the Non-Profit Institutions vote as the Ministry's contribution to funeral arrangements for one individual. This is contrary to Financial Regulation 65(2) which states: 'A vote may not be applied to a purpose for which it is not intended.'"

Dr. Rowley: They buy a gold casket.

Miss D. Cox: What I would like to know is whose funeral cost \$180,737.50?

Mr. Roberts: The PNM. We bury the PNM. [*Laughter*]

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I did not know the Ministry of Sport is involved in funeral and making funeral arrangements, and burying people now. That casket had to have been made of gold and diamonds, and we would like the Minister of Sport to account for this money—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: He is there talking foolishness.

Miss D. Cox:—but this is taxpayers' money and he is over there joking. Mr. Speaker:

Four equal amounts totalling \$1,996,400.00...”—\$7,985,600—“were seen to be paid in one cheque to a company for the Taking Sports to Rural Area Project for four regions. This total exceeded the Permanent Secretary's authorised limit of \$1,000,000.00, according to the Central Tenders Board Regulation 12(1). Separate tender documents, recommendations, requests for approval and payment vouchers with similar dates and information were seen for each of the amounts. According to the vouchers seen, the payments related to ten grounds in each region—a total of 40 grounds. However, in response to the query of the Auditor General, only 17 grounds were identified.”

Dr. Rowley: “Ummm.”

Miss D. Cox: “Also, there was no evidence on the vouchers seen that work was carried out satisfactorily. Further, this expenditure related to Upgrading of Corporation Grounds and not to Non-Profit...” organizations.

So in other words, Mr. Speaker, it is said that nearly \$8 million was spent to refurbish 40 grounds, yet the Ministry of Sport could only identify 17 up to this day. Well I am sure that none was done in the constituency of Laventille East/Morvant, and I am sure some of my colleagues would be able to say that [*Crosstalk*] you know—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Neither Port of Spain North.

Hon. Member: There is none in Port of Spain.

Dr. Rowley: None in Diego Martin.

Miss D. Cox:—but yet we are talking about 40 grounds.

Mr. Speaker, on page 65 we have the following:

“The records of the Ministry revealed expenditure of \$64,672,790.00 under the Infrastructure Development Fund. However, the Financial Statement for this Fund reflected expenditure of \$52,173,756.99—a difference of \$12,499,033.01.”

So, Mr. Speaker, \$12 million apparently just disappeared in thin air.

Mr. Roberts: No! No! No! It may be owed \$12 million more.

Miss D. Cox: In a Ministry where the expenditure ballooned from just under \$29 million in 2011 to almost \$399 million in 2012, and now \$700 million, Mr. Speaker, these developments should be of concern, great concern to all of us.

What has the Minister, who is usually very boisterous—I would like to know what the Minister has to say about that.

Mr. Roberts: “Well give meh way. Look meh here.”

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about—I want to skip something here, and I want the Minister to tell us.

Mr. Roberts: Yes.

Miss D. Cox: We recently celebrated the victory of the Soca Warriors in this Chamber, but why did they have to sleep at the Helsinki International Airport in June this year during a 12-hour layover? Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that the national under-15 football team was forced to withdraw from the CONCACAF tournament in the Cayman islands. The funding for this team was late so the team was forced to withdraw. Trinidad and Tobago also withdrew from the 2013 Pan-American Junior Athletics Championships in Colombia which was held last month. Mr. Speaker, what is really happening in the Ministry of Sport?

Mr. Speaker, just last month half of the Trinidad and Tobago men’s hockey team got to the 2013 Pan-American Cup late because of the Ministry of Sport, again, late release of funds.

Mr. Roberts: No.

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, the senior national football team was stranded in St. Kitts and Nevis without money, food and shelter during its first qualifying round. They almost had to boycott a trip to Peru and Brazil because of concerns about the Ministry's late funding. They too slept at an airport in Finland during a pre-goal European tour.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know why the football coaches have not received salaries this year, and I understand that boxing coaches are the same.

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Miss D. Cox: No, I do not have the time, a little later. Mr. Speaker, I just want to find out too why it is this Government has been searching for a Minister of Sport. Last year before the reshuffle, Anthony Harford was approached to be Minister of Sport. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Roberts: "Yeah." The same one—

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, this year before the reshuffle, Brian Charles Lara was approached to be the Minister of Sport.

Dr. Rowley: They want to get rid of him bad.

Miss D. Cox: Okay. I wonder why. I wonder why. I would have liked the Minister to speak after me and tell me why. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Roberts: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I think you will continue when we have tea.

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I now ready to talk.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, I know. I think this is a good time for us to suspend for tea, and the sitting is now suspended until 5.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss D. Cox: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Member: You look lovely in white.

Hon. Member: Lovely, lovely.

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I continue with the Ministry of Sport. I spoke about the football coaches, and I understand boxing coaches have been getting problems to get their salaries. I would like some explanation for that.

In swimming, which is the Minister's pet sport—we all know—many parents have been complaining that they had to take loans to pay for their children to attend the recent junior swim meet in Dubai, the World Junior Championships. I would like to get an explanation for that, because I am hearing in the swimming fraternity, the Minister is being called “the Minister of Bovell”, not the “Minister of Swimming”. This did not come from me, this came from some concerned parents in the swimming fraternity.

The Minister needs to come clean on where the money is being spent, because there are so many organizations complaining. I do not know what the problem is, but we are seeing in the budget that \$700 million this year has been allocated to the Ministry of Sport, and we would like some more accountability in that Ministry.

This brings me to the recent success of Jehue Gordon, which the Minister wants to take credit for. I wish to remind this House that the success of all the athletes now is because of the Elite Athlete Programme, [*Desk thumping*] which was implemented by a PNM administration under a PNM Minister of Sport. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, the sporting fraternity is asking for more transparency in the operation of this Elite Athlete Programme. Who are the athletes on this programme and how much money do they receive? This is taxpayers' money being distributed here and I believe that they have a right to know.

I got a note from a parent of an athlete. I would just like to quote from this note which states that—the Minister would know who is Sean Roach. There is somebody named Sean Roach who is supposed to be the manager of Keshorn Walcott. The note states that he has been approaching promising athletes, some who are already established, or their parents, and luring them away from their existing club with the promise of money. They then fall under the Elite funding programme for promising athletes and they compete for Rebirth Athletic Club.

This club is one that the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Sport, Mr. Ashwin Creed, is affiliated to. We have the names of some of these athletes who have moved from their clubs and are now in Rebirth Club because they are being recruited into that club. Some of them are: Shakiel Waithe, a javelin thrower who has been uprooted from his school in Tobago and is now attending QRC; Jamil James from Quantum; Michelle Lee Ahye from Concorde and Elton Walcott. So the Minister may need to make a check on that.

Mr. Roberts: People are free to go to whatever club.

Miss D. Cox: This person is going around—[*Interruption*] but the problem is the Ministry of Sport’s involvement, where it is being said that they form part of the promising athletes under the Elite Athletes Programme and they are claiming funds.

Mr. Roberts: Let not your heart be troubled. No such thing exists.

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, people are asking for more transparency in this programme. I go back to Jehue Gordon’s success in Moscow, Russia, in the World Track and Field Championship. The athletes and officials went to these games and did not receive any money for food at the world games. [*Interruption*] In other words, they did not receive a per diem. What the Member for Oropouche East stated is totally different—a per diem. When you go abroad to represent Trinidad and Tobago as an athlete or an official, you are granted a per diem by the Ministry of Sport. They did not receive—

Mr. Roberts: No you are not. [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, hon. Member.

Miss D. Cox:—a per diem, so many persons went to the games without receiving any funds, particularly for that game. Jehue was successful and did well by earning a gold medal. Permit me to read from the *Newsday*, dated August 16, 2013, and the headline is as follows:

“Sport Minister Anil Roberts yesterday had one word to describe it: Wow!

Minutes after Trinidad and Tobago’s Jehue Gordon, 21, sprinted to victory in the 400 metres hurdles final at the IAAF World Track and Field Championships in Moscow, Russia, Roberts expressed elation.

‘First of all wow!’ Roberts told *Newsday*:

‘What an absolutely perfect race; brilliant execution, mental toughness, it was a thing of beauty, it was artistry in motion. What an iron-man race! What an incredible, mentally tough finish!’”

I am not so sure if the “wow” was really because he knew that he did not get any per diem to go with to have his food.

Mr. Roberts: “Stop that, nuh, you are not even misleading. Go Ahead.” [*Laughter*]

Miss D. Cox: The officials who went on that tour are indeed very upset that they too did not receive any money. I want the Minister to say that is not true.

Mr. Roberts: Are you giving way?

Miss D. Cox: The officials did not receive any per diem.

Mr. Roberts: Will you give way?

Miss D. Cox: I am aware that once you are on national duty you are supposed to receive a per diem, regardless of what lump sum the Ministry might have given you as an Elite athlete, but when you go to represent Trinidad and Tobago, that is a different category. They are supposed to be given. I am aware of that because even my cousin was on that team to Moscow.

Mr. Roberts: You are giving way?

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: “Doh give way.” [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Roberts: “Doh give way? Then you doh want an answer.”

Miss D. Cox: The Minister must treat all—I am not sure if I have the time to give way, or else I would have.

Mr. Roberts: Ten seconds.

Miss D. Cox: Ten seconds? Okay.

Mr. Roberts: It is not true that every—per diem is for the NGBs to go ahead. The Ministry funds the overall team. The Ministry paid \$1 million for all athletes and officials to go, separate and apart from the Elite funding. That is how they went. How the per diem and “ting” is divided is up for the NAAAs to decide. The Ministry gave \$1 million.

Miss D. Cox: Okay. Well, Minister, I understand that the Ministry paid for the airfare. That money went to the airfare for the group, the contingent, but they were not given a per diem. That is what took place, so the Minister needs to look into that.

Mr. Roberts: That is your choice.

Miss D. Cox: The Minister must treat all sporting bodies with the respect which they deserve. He needs to stop fighting with them, withholding money from sporting organizations because of personal conflicts, because at the end of the day it is the athletes who suffer.

Mr. Roberts: Name one.

Miss D. Cox: If it is not cricket, it is hockey, water polo—you want me to name more?—many more, Mr. Speaker. I spoke about the two searches that took

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place, I am not sure if it is because of all this talk the searches have been taking place for the Minister of Sport. You know I will welcome you at the back of me very soon it seems. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Roberts: “Yuh want meh behind yuh?” [*Laughter*]

Miss D. Cox: I would like the Minister to mend fences with sporting organizations. As I said before, the Minister needs to remember that he has a duty and responsibility to all athletes. I mentioned before that sports is for all and not some, and when the Minister spends the nation’s moneys, there must be no discrimination among sports, no discrimination among athletes, and may I also add discrimination among constituencies, which is taking place right now. [*Desk thumping*]

It is indeed our sincere hope that when the Auditor General’s Report for 2013 and beyond is released, we would not have to deal with the alarming discrepancies which we saw in the 2012 report. The Auditor General’s Report is not just for reading, it is for holding people accountable. Based on the scandalous actions which we see—I mean, I am not too sure who is at fault, it may not be the Minister, it may be persons in his Ministry and so on. But based on that report the Minister has to be held responsible. We are hoping that many people now would be held responsible, and that we must start with the Minister. That is my part on the Ministry of Sport.

Mr. Roberts: “Yuh done with me already?”

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant has expired.

Motion made: That the hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. A. Roberts*]

Question put and agreed to.

Miss D. Cox: A special thank you to the Minister of Sport for extending my time and to my other colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I move to the Flying Squad. I would like to know the status of the investigation. The new Minister of National Security needs to tell this nation if this unit existed or not. This unit which came into existence around last year, June 2012, initially met at a national security building—Matco building in Port of Spain. That is the same building that recently there was an evacuation of police officers and it is also the same building with CAPA, the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch unit of the police service, is housed.

From my recollection, every time a person goes into a national security building there is a register and they have to sign in and so on. I would like to know where this register is because that should be proof that they have been meeting at that building. That is before they moved to the east. Mr. Speaker, I have a list of members of the new Flying Squad, where they sign their names, addresses, telephone numbers in their own handwriting. Each of them signed their names and numbers when they gathered to meet. We are hearing that this squad did not exist. I just really would like to know.

Mr. Roberts: Is there a heading on the list?

Miss D. Cox: No, it just has the name, address, contact numbers basically. I mentioned before that the new Flying Squad members were on a national security helicopter called Viper II and the names of the pilots Buddy and James. I think we have more than enough information for the police who are investigating and the Police Complaints Authority, to continue this investigation because the public would like to know the status of this whole scenario with the Flying Squad. [*Desk thumping*]

I have the information also concerning when they went on surveillance with the national security helicopter. This was done on October 09, 2012, where they found marijuana fields. So if the new Flying Squad does not exist then what were they doing on national security helicopters, because there is a process? Any and everybody cannot go on a national security helicopter. They must have proper clearance and authorization.

Mr. Speaker, they went to Matelot, Gran Riviere and San Souci. These are the areas that they saw marijuana fields. I could give you the latitude and longitude of some of these fields, the areas where they covered. For example, in San Souci, longitude 10 by 9 by 61 north; latitude, 61 by 2 by 4 west. They went to Cumana; they found one field in Balandra; Toco, there were four fields, longitude 10 by 49 by 65 north, latitude 60 by 58 by 45 west; Monte Video, three fields. I was informed that this information was submitted to the then Minister of National Security who also claims not to know anything about the existence of this unit.

I have brought this. I would not read it, but if you check October 26 *Newsday* the headline: Cops destroy \$150 million in ganga in the East—it is the same information that was provided by the new Flying Squad. It is the same marijuana fields.

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Mr. Speaker, even after the exercise I understand Mr. Heerah from the National Security Operations Centre called the members of the new Flying Squad and personally thanked them for bringing this information to them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Government again to come clean with this new Flying Squad story because precious police time is being wasted by conducting investigations and they know what is happening; himself investigating himself.

I call on the new Minister of National Security not to sweep this under the carpet. He said he has an open door policy, well I would like him to receive the Police Complaints Authority which has suddenly gone quiet on this matter. Are they still in the process of investigating this new Flying Squad? Why I asked is because I have not seen any allocation in the budget for their pay because they have been clamouring for their pay.

I got a letter from one of the persons who was supposed to be involved in the new Flying Squad, and as a matter of fact there were three policemen, active policemen, policemen on active duty who were attached to this new Flying Squad because they would go out with them or have meetings with them when they were off duty.

Two of these officers are now facing disciplinary charges; they have transferred them and taken away their firearms. So if this unit did not exist then why are the policemen who were attached to the new Flying Squad, why are they being victimized if the unit was not in existence?

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to find out what is happening, I have not seen any Head or Subhead. I would like to know where this new Flying Squad—where the money would be coming from to pay them because the people of Trinidad and Tobago are anxiously awaiting the outcome of this investigation, and hopefully we should get that soon from the Police Complaints Authority.

Mr. Speaker, under the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Head 64/02/0011/22 short term employment, why are SAUTT officers on short term employment? I would like to speak on behalf of the SAUTT officers. Many of these officers are ex policemen and members of the Defence Force who resigned from their jobs and joined SAUTT and they were made special reserve policemen.

Many of the officers are owed money by this Government and they left their jobs and went straight into SAUTT, without taking their leave, and they were promised payment for all their days. This has not materialized to date. Many of

them are waiting on their ex gratia payments and these officers were promised the same salary that they were receiving in SAUTT as they are now working alongside police officers, mainly in high-risk areas.

Those who are attached to gang units, the air operations and SIA have been receiving their same salaries, but those who are on the beat with the police officers are receiving half the salary, and their salary has been cut in half, and to top this off, they are not entitled to overtime because they now have to come back in the service as special reserve officers. Okay. So some of them were soldiers, some were police; they now, in order to operate, have to come back in as special reserve officers.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Government taking advantage of these SAUTT officers? Many of them cannot afford to make ends meet because of the cut in their salaries and no overtime. I would like the Minister to explain the Government's position on this because many of them have families to take care of and this behaviour seems to be vindictive. I cannot not remind the Government about the important role SAUTT played in the fight against crime. This agency raised the bar for professional law enforcement in Trinidad and Tobago and the officers therefore must be treated fairly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little about the defence force. You know, instead of the Government coming here to bring a Bill to make soldiers police, it is time that they complete the amendments to the Defence Act which are long overdue. [*Desk thumping*].

Mr. Speaker, since the PNM's administration work was being done on the Defence Act, Justice Cross was one of the persons who made inputs into this amendment. As a matter of fact, someone came on the other side and mentioned Justice Cross' name during that debate.

Amendment to this Act should seek to give the military more independent powers so that they can complement crime fighting initiatives. The reality of the situation is that many of the persons do not trust the police and there are places that soldiers can go that police cannot go, and that is fact. If as the Government says they are using a multi-pronged approach to fighting crime, then I suggest that they do it the right way and amend the Defence Act.

Mr. Speaker, in the budgetary allocation to the defence force, I see \$52 million has been provided for the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard to improve infrastructure and purchase vessels for maritime surveillance and control. It would be remiss of me not to mention the cancellation of the OPVs here—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Ohh!

Miss D. Cox:—which would have [*Desk thumping*] greatly assisted in stemming the flow of guns and drugs into our country. Border security is a key component of national security. The coast guard is in urgent need of vessels. In last year's budget the Minister spoke about the commencement of a new naval operations plan to combat the drug trade. I would like to know what is the status of this because I have not heard anything about it so far.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke to some of the members of the defence force who live in my constituency and they stated that they are in need of vessels—not vessels, besides vessels, vehicles also. They are also in need of vehicles. The captain, Minister of National Security, must therefore ensure that the defence force acquire specialized military vehicles so that they can be more efficient in their operations.

Mr. Speaker, as I talk about vessels and vehicles, I must mention the dismantling of two important departments in the Ministry of National Security—the Strategic Project Management Office and DEFTIS, better known as Defence Transformation and Integration Secretariat. The Strategic Project Management Office was responsible for high level projects in the Ministry of National Security which included procurement of the interceptor vessels, bases to be put around Trinidad and Tobago, human resources for major programme management, helicopters, contract administration, the 360 radar, synergy between the agencies, the projects in Australia, United Kingdom, component parts of all projects, ensuring synergy from all the projects and the police communications system. These are just some of the areas that they were involved in.

There are exorbitant sums of money to be spent on equipment, vessels, helicopters, et cetera, within the national security sector. The Government in its lack of wisdom dismantled this office where individuals had the expertise to ensure proper procurement procedures, to ensure that the right equipment is bought and the right personnel are hired and that the proper contractual arrangements were made.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of National Security does not have the competence to manage major programmes and projects for the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force and the national security sector on the whole, yet this important office was dismantled. The Defence Transformation and Integration Secretariat was overseeing the Strategic Project Management Office and was responsible for the transformation of the Ministry of National Security in general. This unit was also dismantled. They cannot be serious, Mr. Speaker.

I am informed that the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force is in need of personnel. Why not accelerate the recruitment process? [*Desk thumping*] This Government has so much grandiose plans for the soldiers who do not receive overtime, but are expected to work alongside police officers who do. At least they should seek to increase the strengths so that they can continue to function more efficiently and effectively and have an opportunity for a more balanced and improved quality of life.

Mr. Hypolite: Employment.

Miss D. Cox: One of the areas that need to be addressed is that members of the defence force can leave the service from as early as the age of 45. This can be addressed in the Defence Act. They should be given the option of remaining longer in the defence force.

Hon. Member: Exactly.

Miss D. Cox: A 45-year-old person is young and can still contribute a lot in the service. Their experience and expertise are needed. So I ask the new five star general, Minister of National Security, to look into this.

Mr. Speaker, I note in the development programmes provisions are made for the purchase and refurbishment of vehicles in the fire service.

I also see the construction of Sangre Grande and Couva Fire Stations, improvement works to fire service buildings. I am advised, as we talk about infrastructure, there is one company getting most of the contracts to do work in the fire service and it reminds me of SIS. You know, we keep hearing about SIS, but when I heard about this it reminded me of that. You know, the Minister needs to look into this because I also understand that same company has divided itself and has different names doing almost everything, but all the money goes back to one company. I understand this company caters food, is involved in automobiles, in building and maintenance, you name it.

Hon. Member: A one stop shop. [*Crosstalk*]

Miss D. Cox: I understand the same company also refurbished the Chief Fire Officer's office.

Hon. Member: Are they doing security work too?

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, many contractors attached to the fire service for a number of years have had their contracts terminated within two months of the appointment of the new acting Chief Fire Officer taking up his position.

Hon. Member: “Huh.”

Miss D. Cox: I can provide names of some of these contractors actually to the Minister of National Security. And then what else can we expect from persons in authority when the Government operated and continues to operate in like manner?

Mr. Speaker, many fire officers are complaining that they lack basic amenities such as uniforms and boots. And as I say boots, I remember hearing the Minister of National Security talking about putting back on his boots, but before he does, I hope that he will ensure that members of the fire service have boots to put on. [Interruption]

Hon. Member: Government boots, left, right, left right, Government boots.

Mr. Hypolite: Corporal Griffith.

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to check out the promotion system within the fire service. Many persons have expressed dissatisfaction with this system. With regard to the upgrade and expansion of the physical facilities of the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service, I must say again that I see no provision for the rebuilding and relocating of the Belmont Fire Station which is situated by the mortuary.

Mr. Speaker, I would like an update on the rebuilding of the Fire Service Headquarters. Every year provision is made for this upgrading. So I would like to know what is the status because every year we keep looking back at the budget, we see that there is money provided for refurbishing the headquarters, but nothing seems to be happening. I am aware that the engineering department needs more space to operate at the headquarters.

I go back again to an incident that took place on November 17, 2012, where a vehicle belonging to the fire service costing \$2,236,000.38—actually it was bought for that price—went off the road in Blanchisseuse.

Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand the invoice. We keep talking about \$6.8 million, but there is an invoice which was originally put forward to the Ministry of National Security of over \$10 million. Okay. This is the actual invoice that went to the Ministry of National Security; \$10 million, I have the invoice here \$10,189,115. This was the original I am seeing. I understand that they did not even take a half day to move the fire truck, but yes there is a bill here for meals costing \$65,000.

Mr. Hypolite: That is the whole army.

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Miss D. Cox: Sixty five thousand dollars. Hygienic facilities—[*Crosstalk*] well I “doh” know what that means, I “doh” know if it is bathrooms or what but, I mean, they did not take more than a day, and yet the hygienic facilities is also \$65,000. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, supply of equipment \$7,539,000; manpower \$303,000; transportation of workers—well I “doh” know where these workers came from. “They must be fly them in.” [*Interruption*]

Mr. Hypolite: How much is that?

Miss D. Cox: One hundred thousand.

Hon. Member: Woo hoo hoo!

Mr. Hypolite: How many workers?

Miss D. Cox: Well I do not know; just transportation of workers, \$100,000. I do not know where they came from. [*Crosstalk*] Right. And this is the information on the invoice. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, we have, I mean, government officials here, this kind of expenditure, the Ministers must know what is happening. So nobody perused a document, you just send it to be paid? I do not understand this. Because I would want to know [*Crosstalk*] what meals cost \$65,000.

Hon. Member: That is half day work.

Miss D. Cox: Where these workers came from? Transport, \$100,000. Where did they come from? They flew them in from somewhere.

Mr. Hypolite: Five persons. [*Crosstalk*]

Miss D. Cox: Right. And \$10,189,000 and this is what was first presented to be paid; \$10 million of taxpayers’ money. This is ridiculous! [*Crosstalk*] This is ridiculous! [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: Yes it is.

Miss D. Cox: Regardless of where it came from.

Mr. Hypolite: They should be fired.

Miss D. Cox: Right. At the end of the day the buck stops at the Minister. At the end of the day the buck stops at the Minister. And Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara, you continue to say the Chief Fire Officer, but I will explain something to you in a little while here. Okay?

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Mr. Speaker, the Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Carl Williams was ridiculed in the public domain by the Member of Parliament for D'Abadie/O'Meara and the Attorney General.

Mr. Speaker, we must not treat our public servants like that. This is a man who spent 39 years in the fire service and served with distinction. Government officials should not tarnish his good name and tell the world that he is responsible for the fire truck fiasco. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the past Minister of National Security later admitted that he was responsible for making the arrangements for the wrecking of the fire truck, and why it is that they continue to try to blame a public official. The past Minister of National Security admitted that he made the arrangements. He did, all right.

Mr. Roberts: “Nooo”, the Cabinet signed the documents.

Miss D. Cox: Long after the Chief Fire Officer was vilified by the AG and the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Vilified?

Miss D. Cox:—then he admitted that he made the arrangements. I call on the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara to apologize and the Attorney General to apologize to the Chief Fire Officer for the embarrassment and the pains that they caused him. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, the Chief Fire Officer was offered jobs based on his skills and experience as a Chief Fire Officer and of course when these allegations were flying left, right and centre, these job offers were recinded, okay. How unfair could this be to this gentleman? And do you know what happened, Member of Parliament? The Minister of National Security—after this took place, the then Minister of National Security, after the fire truck went over, he told the fire chief that he will make the arrangements to do it.

Mr. Hypolite: Remember it was 15 metres down, eh.

Mr. Roberts: The chief signed.

Miss D. Cox: He told the fire chief he will make the arrangements concerning the wrecking of the vehicle. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, if you are an official, many persons will not stand up to the Minister. So if the Minister comes and says: “Well awright, I will make the arrangements to get it done. I will contact the people and they will send you the bill”, a lot of people would just go

ahead, all right. At the end of the day, what happens? I mean, the Government has a history of victimizing people, people are afraid. They are afraid and that is the truth, and this is not the environment that we should harness at all.

Mr. Hypolite: Remember it was 15 metres.

Miss D. Cox: So, Mr. Speaker, where in the world can a Minister of Government usurp the authority of a head of a protective service to negotiate the services of a contractor? Okay. And this is exactly what took place. The Minister took over, and this is really unfair, because when you look at all the newspaper clippings, for example, the AG stated: “Where is Carl Williams”, *Newsday*, Friday, June 28, to give the public the impression that the man is somewhere hiding. I mean, we cannot, we should not be doing these things to people, that is so unfair. A lot of things happened but we should not be doing these things to persons and do not be—you know the first thing that came out of the mouths of Government officials was, it is the Chief Fire Officer’s fault. No, we have to get the facts first.

Mr. Speaker, I am seeing the same infrastructural works taking place in the prison service year after year and I would like to know if they have hired snails to do this work. Mr. Speaker, when will the nursery at the women’s prison be completed? When will the officers’ mess be completed? When will the visitors’ room be completed in the prison service? When will the ration room be completed? Every year I am seeing money being allocated for the construction of these facilities in the prison service and nothing seems to be happening.

We would like to know what is the plan for the Carrera Prison facility, because I am seeing that upgrade work was done on the facility and yet I am hearing that the facility was supposed to be down, to be condemned or to be given to somebody else. But I would just like the Government to know that the prison service would like to retain the use of Carrera Prison. Their basic problem is that they need transport to and from the prison. They need a vessel to transport the officers and inmates, a proper vessel. I have not seen any allocation for a prison vessel which I know is of utmost importance. And many prison officers were trained to man the boats, so, Mr. Speaker, they can man their own boats. It should be noted that many of the prisoners who are at Carrera are high risk and are serving life sentences. The surroundings of the Carrera facility should have proper security.

Mr. Speaker, the remand facility at Golden Grove still needs to be refurbished. Will this happen in this financial year? This facility was built for 300 prisoners

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and I understand it now holds 1,200 prisoners. This cannot be safe for either officers or prisoners. The prison service is in need of modern security equipment. Health and safety issues need to be addressed urgently, and there must be a swift approach to modernizing the prison because we pay a lot of focus on the police service, but you know the prison service is also a crime-fighting organization and we definitely have to pay more attention to the prison service. What is the present status of the prison officers' training academy which was earmarked to be built in Golden Grove?

Mr. Speaker, and we are still awaiting the prison rules which were completed in 2010 and it is time to bring this legislation to the House which will seek to have the prison measure up to international standards in terms of correctional facilities.

Houses for prison officers. Where is the Member for Oropouche East? The Prison Officers' Association stated that they have been writing the Member for Oropouche East, the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, for a meeting because they are in need of homes for prison officers, and to date that meeting has not taken place. What is the status of the new People's Partnership prison in Santa Rosa which was built for the people of east Port of Spain? I would like to get a status on that prison. Mr. Speaker, there are serious water problems at Carrera Prison and I would like to know what the Government is doing about that? And more attention of course, I said, must be paid to the prison service.

I would like to know how much time I have. How much time do I have?

Mr. Speaker: Oh, you have just four minutes.

Miss D. Cox: Okay. Not five minutes, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: No, four minutes.

Miss D. Cox: Okay, thank you. Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk about my constituency. I stand in this House today because of the overwhelming support I have received from the constituents of Laventille East/Movant. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, this Government has been starving constituencies of vital resources, because of the notion that these constituencies did not vote for them. And I must say, I remember clearly the Members for Mayaro and Chaguanas West making statements to the effect that you know, people who do not vote for the UNC and so on, will suffer. I did not believe that they were serious, but it is serious because it is happening. Many of them "mamaguy" you, making promises which they are not fulfilling. Others do not even acknowledge your request. I mean, a blind man can see, Mr. Speaker, that this Government is taking care of their constituencies and ignoring the PNM-dominated constituencies. [*Desk thumping*]

Mrs. Mc Intosh: They are not even taking care of their constituencies.

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day they pretend that they care, right, they pretend that they care and that they love Laventille and Morvant, just because they want your votes. And as I said, most of them, I did not say all of them because one person who, when I call on would try, is the Member for Barataria/San Juan, the Minister of Health. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Peters: I “doh” help you?

Miss D. Cox: Yes, you do. Mr. Speaker, their true intentions have been unmask because they want now to show the people of Laventille East/Morvant, “dey love them and dey”—all of a sudden you love Laventille and so on because you want votes. You should have been showing Laventille you love them for the past three years. [*Crosstalk*] That is the point and that is why you should have been helping.

Mr. Peters: I will help you.

Miss D. Cox: In what way?

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, please. Please address the Chair.

Miss D. Cox: This Government would pave a token road in a constituency while they pave 25 in theirs, you know, as an offering. They call you, offering half-hearted assistance in your constituency after they have delivered in theirs.

I call on the Minister of Community Development, Member for Mayaro to build the Morvant Community Centre. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, I have written numerous letters and he is here talking there. It is time for him to shut up, Mr. Speaker. Build the community centre. Mr. Speaker, build the community centre.

Mr. Roberts: That was a bit harsh.

Miss D. Cox: The centre is of historical value because it was the first community centre that was actually built in Trinidad and Tobago and maybe the Caribbean. And of course, I ask the Member for Mayaro again for a date.

Hon. Members: Ohhh, God!

Mr. Peters: You have that. [*Crosstalk*]

Miss D. Cox: There are community centres in Laventille East/Morvant that need rebuilding. Mr. Speaker, I move to the sporting area. The Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara has not done anything in my constituency. This Minister and

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the Minister of Education, if there is an award to be given, they will be called the most promising Ministers. They will promise you, promise you, the Minister of Sport and the Minister of Education, will promise and promise and I am not seeing the delivery. [*Crosstalk*] Lower Morvant Government School is in urgent need of relocation and I would like that to be speeded up. Malick, Morvant Anglican has some serious flooding issues, Mr. Speaker. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, concerning the Malick school, there are no remedial teachers, no guidance counsellors, the basketball court and football field, because the river running between it is causing some problems.

Mr. Speaker: Ten seconds to wrap up, please.

Miss D. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Mon Repos river and the Malick river, Coconut Drive need to be refurbished, and I have been asking for that because it has been affecting houses in the area. I have written numerous letters to them.

Mr. Roberts: Right, “thank yuh, thank yuh”.

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, they are intimidating me and taking—okay. Concerning CEPEP and URP, we have not been getting anything done in our area.

Mr. Sharma: You need any tourism?

Miss D. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I want the Government to know that anything that they do for Laventille East/Morvant, it is not a favour that they have done for me but it is a favour—it is not even a favour because the people of Trinidad and Tobago deserve everything that they are supposed to get from this Government because here every creed and race find an equal place. I thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community Development, Member of Parliament for Mayaro.

The Minister of Community Development (Hon. Winston Peters): [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, thank you very kindly, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that I placed a lot of emphasis on the importance of myself but I did not know that I was that important, that the Member for Laventille East/Morvant had to go around all there just to tell me she wants a date. [*Laughter*] You did not have to work so hard. [*Laughter*] She did not have to work so hard, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished Members of this honourable House, I thank you and welcome the opportunity to contribute to this debate for the new fiscal year. The theme of this debate as you have already heard, Mr. Speaker,

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“Sustaining growth, securing prosperity”, may be contextualized to the mission of my Ministry, to transform the community sector to one which is a productive self-reliant contributor to the national development.

Mr. Speaker, permit me first to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy and the other Ministers in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy. My contribution here this afternoon will focus on the achievements of my Ministry, the Ministry of Community Development for fiscal 2013 and indeed, Mr. Speaker, to highlight just some of the achievements in my great constituency of Mayaro; the people who have, on four separate occasions, elected me to represent them in this august place. While it is not my wont to delve into any kind of political rancour with my colleagues on the other side, sometimes there are things that you just have to answer. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Indarsingh: To set the record straight.

Hon. W. Peters: Sometimes I empathize with the Opposition having been there for a number of years myself, and knowing that all they can do is talk, talk, talk and more talk. [*Crosstalk*]

Miss Cox: “Yeah, but we eh getting nuttin done.”

Hon. W. Peters: Some of the things that they say are factual, some are fictional and some are downright nonsensical. But having said all of that, Mr. Speaker, the PNM would want the people of Trinidad and Tobago and indeed the wider community to believe that the governance of Trinidad and Tobago began with the PNM.

Hon. Member: Of course.

5.45 p.m.

Hon. W. Peters: Well let me set the record straight. Long before the PNM came here in 1956, this country was governed and this country was governed well.

Mr. Imbert: Really?

Hon. W. Peters: And if I dare say, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: By the British?

Hon. W. Peters:—that the PNM came into this country and dismantled a lot of the significant institutions that could have taken this country much further.

Mr. Imbert: What, colonialism?

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Hon. W. Peters: They come here and they want people to believe that the only things that are done right in this country are the things that the PNM do—
[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: “Is true.”

Hon. W. Peters:—and the things that the PNM left in place, anybody who comes here, these things are so right that they should carry on with them. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me put some kind of paid to that because that cannot be so. As a matter of fact, if I have to lend any sort of credence to what the PNM has done to this country, I would say today that anything that goes wrong in this country, the PNM is responsible for it. The PNM comes there and they are “as pious as thou” and they are telling you about corruption. Well, let me say to you, the PNM is an institution that can be described as the “university of corruption”.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Nah!

Hon. W. Peters: Any kind of corrupt act that is going on now in this—
[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 36(5), please. I am a PNM. All right?

Hon. W. Peters: So what I have to do with that?

Miss Mc Donald: And everybody sitting here, we are all PNM. [*Interruption*]
Be careful.

Mr. Speaker: Member, I will ask you to use more elegant language because, as the Member for Port of Spain South has said, you are really tarnishing the good name and the character of every Member on the Opposition Bench. So I ask you to use more elegant language, please.

Hon. W. Peters: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, I thought that describing somebody as a university was elegant.

Mr. Speaker: No, I have ruled. You just move on.

Hon. W. Peters: All right. Well, Mr. Speaker—I can use the word “them”, but they are an institution of corruption. Is that better?

Miss Cox: Mr. Speaker, 36(5).

Miss Mc Donald: “He gone again.”

Mr. Speaker: Member, I have said to use more elegant language. The Members are objecting to what you have said. I have sustained their point of order

and I have asked you to move on, please. You may bring a substantive Motion on corruption at the appropriate time if you so desire.

Hon. W. Peters: Well, Mr. Speaker—thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Miss Cox: Move on.

Hon. W. Peters: I would not call them corrupt again but, Mr. Speaker, to say that what they have done in this country can be nothing short of dishonest. I hope that would suffice.

Mr. Speaker, they come here and they talk about Laventille. Laventille has never been governed in this country by anybody else but the PNM, whether they were in or out of government, and when they come today and talk about infrastructural disarray in Laventille, they have nobody but themselves to blame.

Hon. Member: Well said!

Hon. W. Peters: All the things that are happening in Laventille today—Mr. Speaker, as a little boy I spent a lot of time in Laventille. Maybe the Member for Laventille East/Morvant does not know that, but Mentor Alley is named after my ancestors—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: “She is yuh cousin?”

Hon. W. Peters:—and I spent a lot of time there as a little boy, and it was nothing like what it is today, Mr. Speaker. [*Crosstalk*] That was deliberately done to keep the people of Laventille subservient to the PNM.

Hon. Member: “Tell dem! Tell dem, brodder.” [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, up to this day the people of Laventille cannot get out from under the yoke of the PNM. When they are in power they take them for granted, and when they are in opposition they can find all the things that were supposed to be done for the people of Laventille then. Hypocrisy, it is, Mr. Speaker!

Mr. Sharma: “Yuh sounding good.”

Hon. W. Peters: And I am saying to you that Trinidad and Tobago is better off, and will be better off without the PNM in government. But that is not my substantive contribution here today. Like I said before, I am here to actually—[*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, please. Could I ask the Member for Port of Spain South and the temporary Leader of Government Business, if you have any

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business that you wish to discuss, please retire. But allow the Member for Mayaro and the Minister of Community Development to speak in silence. Continue, hon. Minister of Community Development.

Hon. W. Peters: Thank you very much for your protection, Mr. Speaker. But you could always know when you are making a good contribution because they become very disruptive. [*Desk thumping*] But it is okay.

Mr. Indarsingh: Well said. Well said.

Hon. W. Peters: Like I said before, Mr. Speaker, my real reason for being here is to highlight the achievements of both my Ministry and the constituency of Mayaro, and since it is—I will do it in order of priority, since the people of Mayaro are the ones who have me here in the first place. Please permit me to highlight some of the performances. And you know that we had a slogan a couple of years ago that still stands today: “Performance beats old talk anytime.” And all you could do over there is continue to carry on some old talk while we perform, perform, and more perform.

Mr. Indarsingh: And we deliver.

Hon. W. Peters: The fact is that we have so much to be proud of, which has been done in so little a time with the limited resources that we had, Mr. Speaker. And as I account to you and give you an insight into the stewardship of the past 36 months, you will get a sense of how serious the transformation of this constituency of Mayaro really is, bearing in mind that this is a constituency that was governed by the PNM for a long time. Never again!

In April or May 2010, when I began the journey to empower the constituency, I made no promise to the people of my constituency except to commit myself to the highest level of service and representation. As a matter of fact, anybody who knows me would know that when I campaigned and they asked me what are my plans for the constituency, I said, “I have absolutely no plan for your constituency. Whatever your plans are, I would ensure that they are being facilitated.” And that is the way that I govern and that is the way I believe that we should govern, because governments are facilitators and not dictators to dictate to the people what they should want.

And three years later, Mr. Speaker, I am humbled and very elated with the accomplishments undertaken in the constituency. Across many constituencies, Mayaro included, infrastructure remains one of the biggest issues of representation, and so in record time you would have witnessed the completion of

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slope stabilization. Anybody who knows that eastern part of the country would know that landslip—like landslips come in that place with a vengeance. You fix one today and one comes on the next side tomorrow.

If I was the kind of man who would bash politicians, I would say that PNM “does create dem landslip, just for you to have a lot of problems”. But that is not the case. I am just being facetious.

I have completed, in the last three years in my constituency, 28 major landslips, and this is from Biche to Fonrose, to Libertville, Agostini, Deep Ravine. [*Crosstalk*] I remember the Member for Diego Martin North/East when he was the Minister of Works and I asked him to fix landslips for me and to fix my roads in Mayaro—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: “Wha he tell yuh?”

Hon. W. Peters: He sent a letter to me—he sent a little note to me telling me, “Go back Mayaro and ketch fish—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: What!

Hon. W. Peters:—and stop bothering me about roads.

Hon. Member: What!

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, point of order— 36(5). That is entirely untrue.

Mr. Sharma: Nonsense!

Mr. Imbert: Imputing improper motives.

Miss Cox: “Where de note?”

Mr. Imbert: “Where de note?”

Mr. Sharma: I saw it. I saw it.

Mr. Speaker: I am on my legs, please. Can I have your silence? If the Member has denied the matter—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: “Produce de note.”

Mr. Speaker: The Member has denied the matter, hon. Member for Mayaro, so I would ask you not to go that route. He has denied it, and a Member’s word is—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: “But is truth.”

Mr. Speaker: Until you are able to produce the proof—[*Interruption*]

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Hon. W. Peters: I could produce a witness, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No, I am saying in the meantime, the Member has denied the matter and I would not like you to pursue that matter.

Mr. Imbert: Behave yourself!

Mr. Speaker: Okay? Cool.

Mr. Sharma: I saw “de note”.

Mr. Imbert: Untruths.

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, there are two people who know the truth—three people.

Hon. Member: “Eh heh?”

Hon. W. Peters: Me, him and God, and it is okay. So I will go ahead. But it is okay, he would not have a chance to do anything like that again because I will fix the landslips myself now and pave the roads for myself—[*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: “Yeah man. Yeah!”

Hon. W. Peters:—so I would not have to ask him anything.

Mr. Speaker, the paving of the Rio Claro town centre and the outlining roads network along Tabaquite Road—Mr. Speaker, I know he will deny this too, but on the Tabaquite Road, from Rio Claro to Jeffers Crossing, I had asked this Minister on a million occasions to fix this road for me and he never did. The last time that road was repaired was when I was in Government in 2001, and until that time I had been asking him, and anybody who lives there could tell you the dilapidated state that road was in, and now that I am back, it is not like that anymore. We have box drains on both sides of the roads.

Hon. Member: No more, no more, no more.

Miss Cox: “Yuh fix yuhself.”

Hon. W. Peters: Of course, you will fix yourself. He that does not do that is a fool. [*Desk thumping and laughter*] Let me just set the record straight, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Laventille East/Morvant just now said that I said that I would not help PNM people. Let me put the record straight.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: But you just said it.

Hon. W. Peters: I am going to record it. I am going to record what I said again, verbatim. Mr. Speaker, I said—and I continue to say it because I am a man to my word—if I have somebody who campaigns with me and who supports me and they have the same qualifications as somebody who did not support me, and there is an opening and I have anything to do with it, I am going to hire the person who supports me. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Imbert: That is not what you said.

Hon. W. Peters: I say that and I continue to say it and I would say it again. I would go up to the high heavens and say it. So if you are a PNM and you did not support me and you are qualified and I have a job, I am going to give the person who supports me. I am sorry.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: What about equity and fairness?

Hon. W. Peters: So what is unfair about that? What is unfair about that?

Hon. Member: They have the same qualifications.

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, paving of roadways across the constituency; drainage; construction work along the Tabaquite Road, for the first time residents have ever seen a box drain on their road; realignment of drainage system in Mayaro. Mr. Speaker, there was a time, if you were to go by the Mayaro market and the rain set up, the place would flood. And PNM was there for all these years—30 years at one time; nine years for a next time; five years for a next time.

And they boast that: “We have been here for 56 years”. Fifty-six years doing what? You have devastated this country because you have done absolutely nothing to help the people. Let me not say you did not do anything, because that would be unfair to you, but you could have done much more—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Indarsingh: Much more.

Hon. W. Peters:—with the resources that you had. But, Mr. Speaker, they will come here and sit down and play pious. The only reason why all these things that I am doing here had to be done in the last three years is because they were not done in the last 35 or 40 years, and that is why they had to be done now.

So when they come here, “they indicting” themselves, an indictment against the PNM’s administration, Mr. Speaker, when they come here and tell you about all the things that need to be done. They come here now telling you about recreation grounds in Laventille. “Yuh must build community centres in Morvant.” How long was the Morvant community centre devastated by fire? What have you done to it?

Mr. Sharma: Nothing.

Hon. W. Peters: I am now making plans to have these things built, but everything takes time, and what you want me to accomplish in three years, you did not do it in 25.

Mr. Speaker, how could that be fair? That cannot be fair. “They doh represent anybody.” They represent themselves. They represent O’Halloran and then they represent Calder Hart and the rest. They never represent anybody else.

Mr. Speaker, the National Roads Rehabilitation Programme was launched at the Sumairsingh recreation ground on April 11, 2012 giving effect to all these comprehensive road works in the constituency. In less than three years, the constituency, particularly the farming and fishing communities, benefited tremendously from the development and upgrade of 38 agricultural roads. Why did I have to do 38 agricultural roads in three years? It is because they were not done in 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, the ponds, Navet, Cushe, Bristol, Kernahan, Guayaguayare, et cetera; refurbishment work completed on the Mayaro market—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Very good road.

Hon. W. Peters:—at a cost of \$600,000.

Mr. Speaker, the Mayaro market, for anybody who does not live there and those of you who go to Mayaro for vacation, before the advent of 2010, you would know that place and the people who stay inside there, not a doghouse, because if you come in my doghouse you would see that it is nothing like that. So the place was left run-down, like they do all the other places where people support them. Because Mayaro is a place where they used to support the PNM but they would not support you again.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Wait.

Hon. W. Peters: You have no ground in there. Wait and see what? You would not see the light of day in Mayaro. What have you done for them? When you look at that place surrounding the market now, the car park, you would see that something is done. You would see that somebody did something to make sure that it was done properly.

Mr. Speaker, we have the Ortoire fishing facility. This facility was commissioned on December 05, 2012 at a cost of \$4 million. That is for the fishermen of Mayaro.

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We have the fish landing one of best, in Trinidad and Tobago, in Guayaguayare. We still have a little bit of work to do on it, a little bit of engineering challenge that we have there now, but to say that—this has been there all the time. Where were they? Where were they? You know, the PNM is what I considered a “yard fowl” administration.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: What?

Hon. W. Peters: Well, I will tell you what I mean by that?

Miss Cox: Mr. Speaker, 36(5), please.

Hon. W. Peters: 36(5) what?

Mr. Speaker: Member, just use more elegant language.

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I am a grass roots man, you know—

Mr. Speaker: “Yeh, yeh, yeh.”

Hon. W. Peters:—and I am not here to sugar-coat anything.

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, please. This is a dignified Chamber, and even though you are a grass roots person—

Hon. Member: “And he steupsing.”

Mr. Speaker:—that does not mean to say that we use language that is inelegant. I am just saying that if Members take objection to a description, you ought to do the decent thing, simply just restructure, recast and be more elegant in your language. That is all I am saying. Okay? Continue, hon. Member.

Hon. W. Peters: Okay, Mr. Speaker, I will not say “yard fowl”, again. “They like a chicken in yuh yard.” “Every time you cut down the place, all the time the fowl will pass there and see yuh place just as it is and they will do nothing. The day you get up and you clean everything, you see them go there and they start to scratch and condemn every single thing that you do.” Every single thing you do, Mr. Speaker, they condemn it. That is what they do. They could see nothing that si supposed to be done, but as soon as you do it, they could find some fault with it and that it why I say—but, Mr. Speaker, you do not want me to say that, so I will not say it. I am not going to say it.

The comprehensive restoration of the Biche High School which is in my constituency, for years they punished the people of Biche. They punished them,

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Mr. Speaker. Little children had to get up to go to school three o'clock in the morning because they could not—They did not want to finish the school because it was not built by them, but today they will come here and tell you how many things they started doing that we do not want to finish. Why did they not finish the Biche High School? Everybody in Biche went to the Presbyterian School which, by the way, we also refurbished. Everybody went there.

We refurbished the Presbyterian School as well, and the Biche High School is just above that and nobody got sick from the Presbyterian School. Everybody is healthy. My grandparents are from Navet. None of them got sick going to that school, but the PNM knew that they were going to get sick to go to the Biche High School, but we refurbished it. We finished it because we started it and, today, the people of Biche are more comfortable. Children could leave home at a reasonable hour to go to school and be back home at a reasonable hour, and that is what we seek to do. And for the first time—since I was a child—in Rio Claro they were talking about building a library. They have a library that is being built now and is going to be finished at the end of the year.

Dr. Gopeesingh: The new Rio Claro school.

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, the Presbyterian School in Rio Claro, a school that I went to, and at the time when I went to it, we called it CM School and, today, that school is broken down. A brand new school will be there in the next six months. You are going to see a school there. So the children are going to have their school by January to attend. What were they doing all the time that all these infrastructural works now have to be done and now they are coming to condemn you? What were they doing all the time?

So, Mr. Speaker, construction on the Mayaro library, same thing. Nothing! They did not think that Mayaro was a place that could have had a library. We are building a library complex in Mayaro. If you go there now you would see the construction is taking place. Yes, we had some snags. It was supposed to be further advanced, but you know how money is hard to come by. It was not like when they were there and had money to do whatever their mind told them to do. We do not have as much money now.

Mr. Imbert: Spending twice as much now.

Hon. W. Peters: We are spending twice as much because anybody would know that as the years go on, budgets would always be higher. You do not expect the budget now to be the same thing like when you were there. The needs, the people's needs are always higher, and you would always find that there is an

upward spiral in any budget that you do. I bet when you all come—if you ever get back in the Government it is not going to be \$61 billion budget. One of these days you may take it to \$200 billion because you are the one who started the billion-dollar budget business. You forget.

When Trinidad and Tobago used to have hundreds of millions of dollars, it is you all—and I agree because you were there and that is what you had to do. There are so many things that I want to go through here that I need to have the time to do it, but just to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that places like Union that never had a water supply, they have a water supply today. These are people that I promised that if they elected me and my Government gets into power, in the first six or eight months of our administration, Union Village in Mayaro is going to have water and, indeed, they have it.

I want to tell you something, Mr. Speaker. The PNM has embarked on a kind of tactic now, and this tactic that they have is to make people get against the Government or any other Government that is in power. Let me tell you what they do. They will come and look at a project and know that the project is going to be finished in the next two months, or the next three weeks, or what have you, and they would get their cronies to come on the project, or close by, and protest all over the place, and when they protest all over the place, the people are going to say that it is because of their protest that they got this thing done. That is not so.

I see them doing it down in Diego Martin in the flood. I watched them and I listened to the Member for Diego Martin Central. You have a flood in Diego Martin, Mr. Speaker, you do not expect to have a flood in Diego Martin and everybody—it is not a choir. The only thing that everybody performs at the same time is in a choir. If you have a problem in Diego Martin or anywhere else you have a flood, it would take time. You have to get to some people first then other people. People forget that in this country we only have 1.3 million people, you know. They think that we have about 25 billion people in this place.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: What is the point?

Hon. W. Peters: My point is that you all have a tactic that you want people to believe that we are not doing anything when something happens.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: We are not doing that.

Hon. W. Peters: So, Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you—“I doh have no time with you. Let me talk to the Speaker.” So, Mr. Speaker, all I am saying to you is that these things are not true. They tried this on me in Mayaro, you know. They

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came up there, and when they saw that the pipe work was almost finished—the Agostini pipeline which we did, by the way, that they never did, all these years—they come and start to protest by the pipeline. Three days before the pipeline was commissioned, they started to protest by it, but that is their way, that is their *modus operandi*.

But, Mr. Speaker, that is an irrelevant point. They cannot do anything about that because the people would not take them on, anyway. They are not going to see the light of day in this country, in governance. I do not care who else governs, it would not be them [*Desk thumping*] because the people of this country understand that it is a fraudulent administration. They fooled the people. How long you could fool people for? You fooled the people. You fool some people sometimes, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.

Miss Hospedales: [*Inaudible*] [*Laughter*]

Hon. W. Peters: You have fooled these people long enough. I agree with you and you are right to laugh.

Mr. Speaker, installation of mains at Begorat Trace. They probably never even heard about Begorat Trace, and these are places that never had water before. Work has also been completed in a place called Bangladesh—not the one up on the bus route, you know. We have a Bangladesh in Mayaro too. So work has been completed there. We have Bangladesh, a place that never had water. When you are going up Mayaro, a couple of months ago before we got here, Mr. Speaker, on the side of the street all you could have seen were blue barrels, black barrels, red barrels. Today, the people use them as garbage cans, nothing else; they do not have to use them to put water in again because they have a pipe-borne supply of water; thanks to this administration and my representation. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, when I asked the people of Mayaro to vote for me—and when I say Mayaro, the constituency of Mayaro—I promised the people of Rio Claro that if I am elected, one of the first things that I will do is to ensure that the health centre in Rio Claro is a 24-hour facility, because when the PNM was there they started closing it four o'clock in the afternoon—like you had to make an appointment to get sick. Now you have a 24-hour service in Rio Claro, and in a short order, what you would have is an upgrade of the Mayaro health facility to a full-fledged hospital. We have the preliminary works that have already started for that to take place, and in Rio Claro we are going to have a full-fledged hospital.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the things that we are doing. Construction on a modern port facility in Galeota that is costing \$500 million and it is geared

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towards stimulating the domestic economy of Mayaro and environs. When this port is finished, we are going to be employing at least 300 permanent workers. And while I am on that, I have been speaking to the young people of Mayaro, to tell them that these jobs are coming; to go and make themselves employable so they can in fact access the jobs that we are going to have and not complain. “Doh go and complain all over the place that you eh getting this and you eh getting dat”, when in fact you have not made yourself employable. So these are some of the things—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Hope you are not favouring your support?

Hon. W. Peters:—that we are doing.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: You are not favouring your people?

Hon. W. Peters: It is not favouring my people.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I am asking.

Hon. W. Peters: It is favouring the people of Trinidad and Tobago—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: That is not what I asked.

Hon. W. Peters:—and preferably the people of Mayaro, as long as they make themselves employable in that particular sphere of work. What is wrong with that? I see nothing wrong with that.

Mr. Sharma: [*Inaudible*] vegetarian doh deal with yard fowl.” [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: What is he talking about?

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, we would continue the expansion and transformation of Mayaro because for years Mayaro has been neglected and, as I said before, I promised the people of Mayaro proper representation, and all I am here to do is to represent the people of Mayaro.

Mr. Sharma: Well done! Well done! [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. W. Peters: And that, I will continue to do with efficiency. Construction of a new community centre where feasibility and refurbishment of the existing ones—approval has already been given for the construction of a new community complex in New Lands Village in Guayaguayare. You listened to that, Point? New community complex; brand new ones.

In the not too distant future, Mr. Speaker—as a matter of fact with the remaining two years that I have in office, I am going to work with all my might to

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ensure that the goals and objectives which I set out to achieve during my campaign of 2010, are achieved. I can say right now because I made a list that I gave out to the people of Mayaro that I am going to accomplish during the five years that I will spend in Government, and I am here to say that it is 95 per cent achieved. Most people cannot say that, but it is 95 per cent achieved.

My fire station, the Member for Oropouche—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: East.

Hon. W. Peters:—East. I have made my pronouncement on that fire station already, and so far preliminary work, I am pleased with the preliminary work. Again, it is another example. They know that the fire station is coming, but some one of them went and had a whole long petition saying that we need a fire station in Mayaro. Let me say now that your petition has no bearing on the fire station in Mayaro. If it did, we would have had a fire station in Mayaro 25 or 30 years ago when the PNM was there and had all the wherewithal to do it, and they never did it, including people who built other things all over the place and as soon as they turned their backs the thing fell down.

I know some of them who built things in Grenada, and as soon as they finished, as soon as they turned their backs, the thing in Grenada just “break” down.

Hon. Member: “The wind blow it down.”

Hon. W. Peters: They were around. They built a wall, the wall fell down.

Mr. Sharma: They were related to Imbert?

Hon. W. Peters: To who?

Mr. Sharma: They were to Imbert?

Hon. W. Peters: No, I do not know. I do not know. I do not know if they are related to my colleague. So, Mr. Speaker, those are some of the achievements of the constituency of Mayaro and what I hope to accomplish in the future.

Fundamental to the Government’s achievements of its mission to promote a process of people-centred development are seven interconnecting pillars for the sustainable development on which the overarching national policy of sustainable development has been built. Mr. Speaker, four of the seven pillars have a direct relevance to the Ministry of Community Development, and these are, namely people-centred development, poverty eradication and social justice, national and personal safety, and indeed good governance through effective representation and

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transparency and accountability. And in this context, my Ministry has continued to develop and maintain a professional and effective service and delivery system for all our clients and all our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we promote and develop, the growth of indigenous industries by providing an enabling environment for the people and implementation of the microenterprise initiative.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on this, I just want to speak about my colleague from Port of Spain North—not Port of Spain North, Laventille West. In his contribution, he said that D’ People’s Band was a failure, an abject failure.

6.15 p.m.

Let me say to you: the only people in life who do not fail are people who do nothing—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: “Like de PNM!”

Hon. W. Peters:—and I am not afraid to fail, because if Henry Ford had failed the first time he made a car or if he had seen himself as a failure, today we would have been still running around in box carts.

Hon. Member: Thomas Edison.

Hon. W. Peters: But they did not see themselves as that. Mr. Speaker, I am not a failure and I am not afraid to fail. For the edification of my colleague from Laventille West, I instituted D’ People’s Band as a poor people convenience. You see, it is an initiative where poor people would like to play mas but they cannot because of the prohibitive prices of the costumes and all the other big bands and they would want to play. So what I did? I had the Government put music on the road and I encouraged poor people, people from Laventille, to come in the band and play, exercise your creativity, make whatever costume you want and find yourself in the band, and you can play mas at the envy of the bigger bands.

Mr. Sharma: Excellent!

Hon. W. Peters: So we did it a year and it failed, but I want to tell you, given the opportunity, I will do it again. I am sure that one of these days, even if I did not do it, somebody else one of these days would do that because it is a great idea.

Mr. Speaker, just like the Grand Stand that we built up in the Savannah. A lot of the people that they say are lazy, people from Laventille, and worthless people and they are not doing anything, I got those people to build that thing in seven

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weeks. Seven weeks they worked and they worked diligently. When has the Member for Laventille West ever tried to alleviate the plights of the people in Laventille? What has he done?

Mr. Sharma: Trying to build the [*Inaudible*] house five years now.

Hon. W. Peters: Nothing, but condemned D' People's Band. They condemned the place that gave these people work for seven weeks, where they worked diligently, and I commend them for it. So that was the whole initiative behind D' People's Band. It was not something that was there—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Hypolite: It failed!

Hon. W. Peters: "It failed."

Mr. Hypolite: Miserably. [*Inaudible*]-five persons in the band.

Hon. W. Peters: It failed miserably like you. Just like you.

Mr. Speaker: Please, address the Chair.

Hon. W. Peters: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. It failed like him. [*Laughter*] Indeed, Mr. Speaker, based on these efforts, my Ministry has been able to proudly celebrate the potential of true community development.

Mr. Hypolite: "Waste ah time."

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I want my good learned friend from Laventille West to listen to this because it is also my initiative: the establishment of the Community Heroes Awards where the inaugural ceremony on July 19 saw the honouring of 12 community unsung heroes from across Trinidad and Tobago. They exist all the time. They never thought it fit to even look at the people who are heroes in their communities, but, Mr. Speaker, I did that because I am a people's person.

Mr. Sharma: Did you film it?

Hon. W. Peters: No, I did not film it.

Hon. Member: Sorry.

Hon. W. Peters: I will leave that for him to film. [*Continuous crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, please!

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I make sure that I think about people in everything that I do. And so, not only did I initiate the heroes award but also the

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declaration of Community Development Day, and Cabinet has agreed to and passed the observance of July 5 every year as Community Development Day. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, I also initiated the hosting of a mini Community Development Forum where stakeholders of village and community councils came together to look at what needs to be done to enhance the villages. Because you see, one cannot have a country unless you have a community.

Hon. Member: Sure right!

Hon. W. Peters: A community forms the basis of—a proper community forms the basis of having a proper country, and by extension a better world. I am from a small community in a place called Mayaro, and if I am here today, it is incumbent upon me to ensure that I look after the communities of this country. Because had we done that years ago, today, we may not be in the predicament that we are in with our youths, but we did not see it fit to do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we also celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Prime Minister's Best Village Competition. And earlier again, once again—I know they would want to say that the PNM put the best village together, and that is true because it is the PNM who was there. I am a product of best village and I am proud of that, and I am happy that they initiated it. But if you make a child and throw it in a garbage can, Mr. Speaker, you are not the parent, you know, you just happened to make the child, and that is what they did.

So I, with the responsibility for community development under whose purview the best village falls, found it fit to recognize and honour 20 best village icons again.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Well done! Well done! [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. W. Peters: Twenty best village icons whose invaluable work in the folk and performing arts and traditions has undoubtedly established the institution that the Prime Minister's Best Village Trophy has become. What have they done? Mr. Speaker, ask them what have they done other than to scratch and condemn everything now.

The hosting of the inaugural Community Development Forum which focused on strengthening community development functions. This forum attracted both local and regional stakeholders, participants including the indigenous people of Trinidad and Tobago, of Guyana, Suriname and Dominica. Why did we bring them? They are the first people of our Caribbean and they would know about the

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initial stages of our community, whether it was written or it was handed down to them, and if they can give us some insight of how it used to be, if one does not know where he comes from, one would not know where he is going.

Mr. Roberts: “Da’is true!” [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. W. Peters: And that is the reason for me initiating all of this. I want to be a good community development Minister.

Mr. Sharma: You are! You are!

Hon. Members: You are! [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. W. Peters: My legacy must be that I have done something for my fellow men when I get out of here. It must be nothing more than that.

Mr. Sharma: “Yuh have plenty time, doh rush!” [*Laughter*]

Hon. W. Peters: So anywhere they put me, I am going to go. In order to support citizens to contribute to the creation of resilient communities, the Ministry of Community Development promotes the opportunity for people to learn and develop their own skills and talents; reaches out to and involves those who may be excluded or disadvantaged.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Community Development is indeed one of the most important Ministries in Trinidad and Tobago because, like I said before, it is in the communities that everything else starts. That is where it all starts. You remember that it takes a village to raise a child, well that is what it is all about; it takes a community to build a country.

So, Mr. Speaker, based on this philosophy of community development, our major programmes and projects comprise the construction/refurbishment of community centres but not limited to; community education, adult education, handicraft, community action for revival and empowerment care, the Prime Minister’s Best Village Trophy Competition, and all these fall under the purview of the Ministry of Community Development. It is an important Ministry. The Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme (GAPP); the Retirees Adolescent Partnership Programme (RAPP)—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: “Doh continue that, nah.”

Hon. W. Peters: [*Laughter*] “Yuh fraid ah go down ah road—” [*Laughter*] The Community Development Fund Programme; the Export Centres Programme and Export Centres Company Limited; the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP); the Community Mediation Programme.

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Mr. Speaker, under the construction/refurbishment of community centres for fiscal 2012-2013, 20 new or refurbished community facilities were opened at: Marac, North Eastern/Duranta Gardens, Sisters Road, Malabar Phase IV, Second Caledonia—Second Caledonia—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Where is this?

Hon. W. Peters: Second Caledonia—it is not a place that is controlled by the UNC or the People’s Partnership—Mango Rose, Upper Malabar, Couva/Roystonia, Jerningham Junction, Talparo, Quarry Drive, Calvary Hill, Golconda, Tunapuna, Carapichaima, Patna/River Estate, Cunupia. Mr. Speaker, this is the holistic way in which we do things.

Hon. Sharma: Well done! Well done!

Hon. W. Peters: And you know, I am hearing—I cannot help but hear my colleague from—

Hon. Member: Port of Spain.

Hon. W. Peters: Port of Spain—

Hon. Member: South.

Hon. W. Peters:—and “is we build dat” and “is we build dat”. That is what I was alluding to a while ago when I spoke about the chicken. Everything that is good—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Khan: “Da’is de fowl chicken?”

Hon. W. Peters:—it is okay, we did that; but when you tell them that the things that are bad, they did that too, and they had an opportunity to correct all of it, because in all the governance structure in Trinidad and Tobago, they had the longest time to do anything.

Mr. Sharma: And a lot of money!

Hon. W. Peters: They have shaped the lives of many a people in Trinidad and Tobago. I exclude myself because I dropped out of the system a long, long, long time ago.

Hon. Member: “And why yuh come back?”

Hon. W. Peters: But that is exactly what I am saying because—I came back because this is my country as well as yours, and I feel to come back here and make a contribution and I think I am making a sterling one. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: Very good!

Hon. W. Peters: So, Mr. Speaker, I am saying that if it is—it figures, you know, that if everything that you do, the good thing—we build a community centre, “we do that”; yuh know “yuh say we pave a road, is we pave dai road”. All right, you do that and “you pave the road”. What is happening to my people in Laventille? They do that as well. They do that! I am telling you they do it to keep the people of Laventille subservient so that they will continue voting for PNM. [Crosstalk] But people are more intelligent today than they used to be so no longer are they going down the same road as their grandparents. They are looking for people who can do something for them.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

Motion made: That the hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [Hon. C. Sharma]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: You may continue, hon. Member.

Hon. W. Peters: Thank you kindly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Sharma: You sound like a yard cock, dey.

Hon. W. Peters: [Laughter] “Ah sound like a yard fowl. All right.” In fiscal 2014, the key infrastructural and social programmes that the Ministry will undertake include: the community centre construction and refurbishment programme that will be the driver in the completion of 19 centres that are currently ongoing; the start-up of construction of 18 new centres; the refurbishment of 17 centres at a total cost of \$85 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry currently has responsibility for 218 community facilities, three civic centres and 17 regional complexes which are frequently used for community building activities. Each type of facility has its own governance framework which gives rise to inefficiencies in the use of resources. So, my Ministry has therefore taken the initial step towards the development during this fiscal year of a single and harmonized policy framework to ensure good governance and a common system for the management of these facilities.

What do I mean by that, Mr. Speaker? We have all these community centres all over the place, when people want to use them, “dey ha to go by nani, dey ha to go by nana, dey ha to go by dey uncle, by dey grandmother, cousin, to collect de

key” or by some group that is affiliated to a political party, whichever one, and the people cannot get the right use “cause if the political party doh like you then you wouldn use the centre”. So what we are doing is ensuring that we have a managerial committee that we would, in fact, be accountable to the Government for moneys and for the management of these centres.

Mr. Speaker, we have community centres in Trinidad that, in fact, owe T&TEC \$100,000 for electricity and these centres are being used on a regular basis for all kinds of community activities.

6.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, that cannot go on, that should not be allowed to go on and under my watch, it would not be allowed to go on. And so, Mr. Speaker that is why we have to have the policy framework whereby there is a standardization for all these centres. So I am putting all the people on notice that accountability would be the key word in all of this. You would have to account for the moneys spent, and these moneys are supposed to go back into these centres for their upkeep, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this fiscal year would see the design, delivery and installation of a solar induction light system at 11 community centres in south, central and north zones.

Mr. Sharma: “You put mine already.”

Hon. W. Peters: I know. I am going to tell them that—[*Crosstalk*]—I am going to tell them because I am proud of what we have done so far. The project has been developed through the collaboration of the Ministry of Community Development, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission and managed by the National Energy Corporation. To date, Mr. Speaker, seven centres have been completed with solar induction lighting system and four are currently being undertaken.

Mr. Speaker, we are also embarking—when I went to the Ministry of Community Development, every centre that they built in this country had a different plan to build it; every single centre. So today “dey want to build a centre here, dey draw one plan; tomorrow dey want to build one there, they draw a next one.” I have taken a Note to Cabinet, it needed some sort of modification, my Note, and I am going to be taking back this Note, hence the reason it has not been implemented as yet, but I am taking it back on Thursday, whereby we are

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going to have the standardization of all community centres in Trinidad. And these centres are going to be built in such a way and the feasibility that has been done on it; it is a 30-year plan.

So when you build a centre now, we can use it 30 years into the future because they have taken population growth and all of that, Mr. Speaker, into account. And so when these centres are built, you might see a centre built today and you might find why “they build that big centre there”, but 20 years from now, 15 years from now, Mr. Speaker, that centre can accommodate the population growth; and that is why we are standardizing it.

For the cost of one community centre that they build now, that has been built, we are going to be building two and a half—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Wow!

Miss Mc Donald: “Look just leave me alone eh.”

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, whoever boasted about building community centres before, where in the world “yuh ever hear yuh builling community centres with elevator? Yuh build a community centre with an elevator?” Ninety per cent of the elevators that they have in all these community centres, none of them work because in order for these things to work, you have to maintain them.

Mr. Seemungal: Exactly.

Hon. W. Peters: And there must be a better way, Mr. Speaker. It is a waste of the money of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Crosstalk*] So Mr. Speaker, we turn to the adult education programme: The adult education programme provides educational opportunities for both out-of-school youths who have not graduated and adults who wish to participate in the programmes offered. These programmes include: introduction of occupational courses aimed at providing basic practical training to unemployed adults who are out of school.

Literacy programmes aimed at tackling literacy problems through new initiatives in education planning and development. National Examination Council, NEC courses: over 30 courses that include garment construction, food preparation, tailoring, plumbing and electrical installation. And I dare say, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the course, students are going to be awarded an NEC Level 1 certificate.

Mr. Roberts: Wow. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. W. Peters: Trainees would continue to receive up-to-date and relevant training giving them the best opportunity, skill enhancement or employment. Mr.

Speaker, over 4,300 persons have been trained in the fiscal year 2013 at a cost of approximately \$4.5 million in the Ministry's Adult Education Programme.

The Community Education Programme, CEP; Mr. Speaker, the Community Education Programme is a major component of my Ministry's portfolio for social action programmes aimed at capacity building and poverty alleviation. The overall mission and objective of this programme, Mr. Speaker, seeks to focus on the needs of householders, the unemployed, the underemployed, vulnerable, less fortunate and at risk in our society by providing the opportunity to learn a skill which can be used to improve their quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, CEP Programme consists of the following programmes: skill training in a variety of marketable skills including upholstery, garment construction, jewellery making, drapery design and construction, baking and cookery. Baking and cookery, "awright?" I hope I pronounced that right because I "ent hope all yuh rushing" to come to the class. [*Laughter*]

Hon. Member: Not cookery and PNM. [*Laughter*]

Hon. Member: Crookery and a PNM.

Hon. W. Peters: Landscaping and grow box agriculture at both the basic and advanced level: A total of 5,850 trainees have benefitted from this project in fiscal 2013. Mr. Speaker, good governance and leadership development: 82 non-governmental organizations, NGOs, were trained in good governance and leadership development aimed at enhancing capabilities and capacities of the leaders of voluntary community-based organizations.

Community awareness and sensitization: this programme serves to assist individuals and groups, in particular, in making the choice that improves their lives, and by extension, their communities. In fiscal 2013, 80 communities benefited from this initiative. The ECCL, Mr. Speaker, that is the Export Centres Company Limited, has initiated a craft research design centre that will provide a research programme for the development and delivery of indigenous material in partnership with CARIRI and UTT from January 2014, Mr. Speaker. Also, in 2014, there will be a diploma, you would be getting a diploma in handicraft.

Why are we doing all of this, Mr. Speaker? And there is another initiative that I have undertaken—and I "doh" know how you all could not see this all the time and you were there, you know. All these craft that the people are making, Mr. Speaker, "is" because maybe I am from the private sector and I am business

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oriented, but all these craft items that the people are making, we do not just want them to make them and have nothing to do, you know, so we are going to be opening outlets where the Government would purchase these things from the people at a price and sell them at these outlets for a small profit; much less than they would cost in the other stores. So it would give people—[*Desk thumping*—it would give the artisans of these crafts, the impetus to go further with their craft, Mr. Speaker. And those are some of the initiatives that we are taking.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Earn a decent income.

Hon. W. Peters: And they are going to earn a decent income. “We gonna show them where they doh have to go and look for “10 days” and “five days” and what other days” programmes of dependency and to depend on the State. “Yuh doh have to depend on the State.” Depend on the State for what? The State would provide your basic necessities but the State does not have to look after your everyday living. You can learn something. You can learn something. And I say this in a personal way.

I was born under “two sheet ah galvanize in Mayaro” and if I could do it, anybody could do it. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Well said.

Hon. W. Peters: Anybody. And if “you wondering” why I am saying this, I may not be speaking to you all in here, but I am speaking to the young people outside of here, Mr. Speaker, who would listen and who would know that not because you were born poor and underprivileged, you have to stay that way. Where you were born and how you were born is not as important as where you are in life today.

Hon. Member: That is right. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. W. Peters: You have to create that for yourself. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Where “yuh” going.

Hon. W. Peters: And how do you create that? You create that, Mr. Speaker, by learning, by learning. And education is not academic, you know. People mix up education and academics.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Yeah.

Hon. W. Peters: An academic “doh” have to be an educated man. You could be non-academic, like myself, I am non-academic but I am educated [*Desk thumping*] and I am as educated as any academic, in any country in any part of the

world. And they can be that way as well. Find something to do that is progressive, that you can make a comfortable living and not depend on anybody.

Hon. Member: “Sound like a song yuh writing.”

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister’s Best Village Trophy Competition: The Prime Minister’s Trophy Competition this year marks the 50th anniversary of this competition. It is a major social initiative reaching communities across Trinidad and Tobago and the sum of approximately \$9 million was invested in the competition and the 50th anniversary commemorative events.

During fiscal 2012/2013, 75 groups participated in the Best Village Food and Folk Fair; 70 young women in the La Reine Rivé; 162 groups in the folk show presentation; 14 groups in folk theatre; 114 communities in the clean and beautify environmental sanitation segment; 48 groups in handicraft; 54 communities in village chats; 70 groups in traditional carnival; 111 groups in village olympics and 1,000 participants in the junior best village competition. Mr. Speaker, if that is not achievement and developing communities, then I do not know what is. [*Desk thumping*]

The Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme, Mr. Speaker, or GAPP: the Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme trains and employs caregivers, ages 18 to 25, on a short-term basis, and I want to emphasize this, on a short-term basis, to look after the senior citizens from all sectors of our country. This programme commenced operation in 1998 and has increased in its relevance given our designation as an ageing society.

Mr. Speaker, in fiscal 2013, 169 students at level one participated, persons 18 to 25 years; and 279 students were trained at level two for persons aged 18 to 30 years; and 7,200 elderly persons benefited. Sixty per cent of the persons received a full certificate for level two programmes; 169 students completed four weeks practicum at institutions receiving positive recommendations from the institutions; 600 caregivers assisted the elderly in their homes as well as with medical appointments. Level two trainees received additional certificates in occupational therapy, drug administration, Alzheimer’s treatment and practicum.

How much more time do I have, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Fourteen minutes.

Hon. W. Peters: I have what?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Fourteen more minutes.

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Hon. Members: Fourteen minutes.

Hon. W. Peters: Oh, 14 minutes. Okay. I could wrap up in that time, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Member: Sing a song.

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, it is enough time to say that the Retirees Adolescent Partnership Programme (RAPP)—[*Interruption*]

Miss. Cox: Wrap up.

Hon. W. Peters:—provides the platform for learning, enhancing and monitoring. I know “yuh want me to wrap up you know, Laventille East/Morvant because you hate to hear all yuh could not do all dat” and in three short years we are doing it. Ha, ha, ha, ha. [*Interruption*] But you know what, you are going to listen because it is true and it is not propaganda, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Member: “Make her listen.”

Hon. W. Peters: And you can ask the people who benefited from it. Mr. Speaker, it is geared towards helping adolescents, especially at-risk youths, especially at risk-youths to appreciate the learning experience by providing a stimulating environment for positive social interaction. RAPP utilizes the expertise of skilled retired persons to provide support service at the community level in the area of academics assistance, sport, art, craft, music, life skills and general guidance.

6.45 p.m.

Currently, there are five RAPP Centres in operation at:

- Couva, yes.
- Belmont
- La Horquetta
- Valencia and
- Laventille.

For fiscal 2013, beneficiaries of the RAPP programme include:

- 183 Children (14 years and under)
- 149 youths (between the ages of 15 to 24)

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Mr. Speaker, women:

- 49 women
- 21 men
- 44 persons ages 60 and over
- 5 communities
- 7 NGO's
- 107 persons/households living in what we deem to be poverty.

The Community Development Fund: the fund focused on development programmes that continue to assist in the delivery of social services and infrastructure to low income and most disadvantaged sections of the population. By partnering with non-governmental and community based organizations. Mr. Speaker, 60 persons participated in the Icacos Youth Group's Tilapia Rearing Project. We established the Roxborough Police Club and Parent Body; Night Nurse/Day Activity centre, where a total of 1,000 persons benefited from this programme through the improved social life, mental and physical well-being of seniors in the community.

Under the Community Enhancement and Regeneration Programme (CERP), the sum of \$82,076 was allocated for CERP intervention.

Mr. Speaker, the Community Mediation Service Programme under the current Act, community mediation would be available as a mechanism for handling or negotiating the settlement of disputes in a wide variety of areas relating to family and civic matters. Mediation transforms a society from being violent to becoming more compassionate by talking it out, not fighting it. This is something that we should be advocating all over the country.

Miss Hospedales: This was a slogan developed by the Ministry of Social Development.

Hon. W. Peters: It is. Well, you could say anything. When you say is, are, by, good, those words were created long before we were here, but you use them, do you not? So what if you use a slogan? Nothing is wrong with using a slogan. And I think that the slogan is very apt, Mr. Speaker. [*Crosstalk*] Talk it out not fight it out. I do not care who created the slogan, as long as the slogan is a relevant one, I would use it.

Mr. Sharma: Very good.

Hon. W. Peters: Currently, Mr. Speaker, about 75 per cent of the cases managed at the mediation centres are referred from the courts. More than 80 per cent of these cases have resulted in settlements of the matters under dispute. Also noteworthy, about 70 per cent of the cases managed by the division are family-related matters, which means that the mediation programme is playing an important role in the society. So, no longer do you have to take all this time to go to court. If you have to work out something, you come to the Ministry of Community Development, mediation service and we have competent and capable trained people there who would, in fact, come to you or you come to the centres and we would work out everything for you.

- There are nine (9) service centres located at Port of Spain, Siparia, Cunupia, Arima, Point Fortin, Aranguez, Tunapuna, Thicke Village, Couva and Laventille.
- Mediation and counselling cases at Mediation Division: 5,898 persons benefited from the mediation services (1,557 males; 1,611 females (2,730 were outreaches), approximately a 5% increase of persons accessing all mediation centres from the last fiscal year.

And that is admirable.

I want to commend the people in my Ministry at the Mediation Division for doing such a wonderful job. You know, oftentimes people say that public servants do not work. Well, I want to commend them at my Ministry because they have been doing yeoman service to Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Sharma: We want to commend you. You have done a lot.

Hon. W. Peters: They are doing a good job, Mr. Speaker. Under the Community Mediation Service Division, nine mediation centres have been established, approximately 35,000 individuals received services at these centres to date.

The National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme, or NADAPP, coordinates drug abuse prevention and demand reduction initiative.

- NADAPP supports the effort of non-governmental organizations involved in the struggle to rid the nation of the scourge of drug abuse. In fiscal 2013, under the National Primary schools drug prevention initiative, NADAPP hosted and facilitated drug education events, including lectures, workshops, exhibitions and school tutors where over 12,000 students benefited from 75 primary and 19 secondary schools. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Very good. Very good.

Hon. W. Peters: I commend you, Minister, for allowing us to come to your schools with the initiative.

You see, we have to start young. You have to bend the tree while it is young, Mr. Speaker, because if you do not do that, when it is old there is nothing that you can do. It is already too late.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Straighten them out.

Hon. W. Peters: So:

- The preschool prevention initiative which sensitizes preschool managers/principals, and teachers on drug-related issues—629 persons benefited
- Under the Treatment and Rehabilitation Initiative which ensures continuous access, by drug dependent individuals to treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration services 119 persons are in receipt of services offered by treatment and rehabilitation centres which receive Government subvention totalling \$14 million; these include:

Rebirth House

Help Every Addict Live (HEAL)

120 persons benefited from walk-in (street-based services) of the OASIS Harm Reduction Centre

With the time that I have left, in conclusion, I would like to inform this House that the Ministry of Community Development recommits to fulfilling its obligation as outlined in the four pillars of the People's Partnership manifesto.

And I said at the beginning of my speech—

Hon. Member: Thank you.

Hon. W. Peters:—these are:

- (i) People-Centred Development;
- (ii) Poverty Eradication and Social Justice;
- (iii) National and Personal Security;

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- (iv) Good governance through Effective Representation, Transparency and Accountability.

My Ministry's plans/initiatives would impact positively on the socio-economic fabric of our society and assist this Government in promoting people-centred development and people's participation through the building of stronger, resilient communities.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member of Parliament for the constituency of Mayaro and as Minister of Community Development, I am ready to face the challenges of meaningful change and innovativeness. Let me say that again for the benefit of my friends on the other side who condemned D' People's Band; for meaningful change and innovativeness.

Dr. Gopeesingh: "Dey doh know dat word."

Hon. W. Peters: No.

Dr. Gopeesingh: "Dat's not in dey dictionary."

Hon. W. Peters: I am willing to confront the issues that lie ahead and to mitigate any and all the risks that may arise.

Hon. Member: I thank you. [*Laughter*]

Hon. W. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: You have three more minutes.

Hon. W. Peters:—my colleagues on the other side for giving me the opportunity to be on this side.

Hon. Member: I thank you.

Hon. W. Peters: Because had they done what they were supposed to do for the people of Trinidad and Tobago, they would not be where they are today and would remain for a very long time. [*Laughter*]

I thank you

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Kevin Ramnarine, Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Kevin Ramnarine): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It has been a very long wait for me; I have been in the House since midday. I want to first of all thank my colleagues who have spoken before me on yet another budget debate. I also want

to commend the Minister of Finance and the Economy on what is the delivery of his second budget and the fourth budget of this People's Partnership.

Forty years ago, 1973, a very significant geopolitical event was taking place in the Middle East that would have very significant ramifications and consequences for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Forty years ago Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel, that became known in history as the Yom Kippur War. Why is that significant to Trinidad and Tobago? That was October 1973. As a consequence of American support for Israel in that war the Arab League, the Arab nations launched an embargo on the western world of oil, and that caused the price of oil to quadruple between 1973 and 1974.

That ushered in a period of great economic expansion for our country that economists and historians now term the oil boom that was from 1973 to around 1982. The irony of all this, Mr. Speaker, is that 40 years later not much has changed in the Middle East. Egypt is in turmoil and Syria is in the throes of civil war. Not much has changed in the world in those 40 years. But those 40 years because of the role of the energy sector, those 40 years, Trinidad and Tobago is a much different country today in 2013, than it was in the year 1973. And I, at the age of 41, I am very much a product of that era.

Dr. Gopeesingh: “Yuh ah young man.”

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: As, of course, are many of the young people in Trinidad and Tobago today and they must know that, and I hope they are listening to me on TV. Because I have sent text messages, BBMs, Tweets and Facebook updates to thousands of people informing them that I am speaking. And that is the modality—[*Desk thumping*] by which we communicate with the world now.

Dr. Gopeesingh: The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs is speaking.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs is speaking. Mr. Speaker, the energy sector remains a mainstay of our national economy, and for the two years and three months that I have now had the responsibility for managing this country's hydrocarbon and mineral resources, I have come to have a great appreciation for the role of this sector.

I will just give some very quick statistics. The energy sector accounts for 40 per cent of real GDP. It accounts for 80—90 per cent of foreign direct investments. It accounts for 69.2 per cent of visible exports measured in terms of value. Trinidad and Tobago represents 17 per cent of BP's global volumes; 17 per cent

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of all the oil and gas produced by BP is from Trinidad and Tobago. It represents 12 per cent of the volumes produced by BG Group, another large multinational. It represents 42 per cent of all the methanol produced by Methanex, the world's largest producer of methanol. It represents 60 per cent of all the ammonia produced by PotashCorp which is PCS Nitrogen in Trinidad and Tobago. And it is home to the highest producing gas well in the world, the Savonette 4 well, which can produce at a rate of 270 million standard cubic feet of gas per day.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes when you think about the value coming from one of these large gas wells, it is probably equivalent to the economy of some small Caribbean countries in the Eastern Caribbean, and that is the dominance and importance of this sector.

It is the energy sector that had contributed, of course, to the US \$5 billion that we now have in the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund. Trinidad and Tobago is the world's six largest exporter of liquefied natural gas, and I would add that we export that natural gas to almost—some 19 countries; 45 per cent of that LNG is now going to South America.

Another little fact, we have now started to supply Tobago with natural gas at the Cove Estate. Reference was made earlier to the Cove Estate and we are commissioning the four engines at the Cove Estate on to natural gas, and once that is finished, this country would be the only one of two countries in the world, the other being Qatar, that generates all its electricity from one fuel source; natural gas. So that is the dominance of this sector as it sits in our economy.

The Minister of Finance and the Economy has predicated his revenue for fiscal 2014 on the price assumption of \$80 per barrel for oil, and that is for the Trinidad, what we call the Trinidad basket of crude, and on a natural gas price assumption of \$2.75 per MMBtu.

7.00 p.m.

The Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs is happy with these assumptions. In fact, staff at the Ministry were of the view that the \$80 is a conservative assumption; that the Minister could have even gone with \$85 per barrel and we still would have been relatively safe and far from what the actual realized price would be.

With regard, Mr. Speaker, to the oil price, the \$80 used by the Minister of Finance and the Economy in this budget is the same price that he used in the budget last year; as is the \$2.75 that he used in this budget, he used that last year. In fact, that \$2.75 has been used now for some four to five years.

For oil prices, for the period October 01, 2012 to July 31, 2013, the Trinidad basket of crudes averaged \$97.72 and the Minister had set the last budget at \$80. So, we have surpassed that \$80.

With regard to natural gas, the budget last year was set at \$2.75 per MMBtu and the price that we have realized is \$3.40, that will be for the period October 2012 to July 2013. So the prices used by the hon. Minister in the fiscal 2013 budget have been realized and surpassed.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to growth in the energy sector, for the last four consecutive quarters, the economy has recorded growth and this growth, of course, is predicated on a number of things happening in the economy. For those four quarters, the energy sector has grown for three of those four quarters. That is the third quarter of 2012, when the sector grew by 0.6 per cent; in the fourth quarter of last year, there was flat growth, meaning that there was zero per cent growth, and that was as a consequence of significant maintenance works being done by BP and BG; in the first quarter of this year, there was growth by 0.5 per cent—that is January to March; and in the second quarter, this is now April to June, we have had a growth of 1.6 per cent in the energy sector. So the sector has returned to growth.

According to the *Review of the Economy*, we expect 0.5 per cent growth in fiscal 2013—calendar 2013.

Miss Mc Donald: Thank you, Mr. Minister, through you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, could you explain what would be the position with respect to natural gas production? I am asking that question with respect to the maintenance work by bpTT.

Hon. Member: Good question.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Thank you very much, Member for Port of Spain South. I have enough material here to talk for about two days and all that material is inside here because I think it is very important that the country knows what is happening in this sector. I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak in both Houses. I will be speaking in the Senate, so what is not put on the floor here today will be put into the record of the *Hansard* in the Senate.

I will talk a bit now about the maintenance issue. Production of natural gas in the last three years, starting in late 2010, was impacted by two factors: one of those factors is maintenance. That maintenance was related mainly to the activities of BP and, to a lesser extent, BG.

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The second factor is deliverability. That is the ability of companies to supply their contracted quantities. I will speak a bit about deliverability in a bit. You see, Mr. Speaker, what happens in the energy sector today is a function of decisions that have taken place three, four, five years ago. It is similar to somebody getting a heart attack. If you get a heart attack now, it is not because of something you ate yesterday or something you ate last week. It is as a consequence of a compounded series of actions over time, and in like manner, there were decisions that should have been taken years ago that have not been taken.

I am advised—and this is a story that I must put into the *Hansard* record—that, in 2009, one of the major natural gas suppliers in this country was called to a meeting at the Crowne Plaza by the then Minister of Energy and the technocrats at the Ministry of Energy and was told that the Government of the day was going to introduce supplemental petroleum tax (SPT) on natural gas.

Now, natural gas does not attract SPT. It only attracts what we call PPT (petroleum profits tax). SPT is only applicable to oil. So this company was told that the Government's intention was to introduce SPT on natural gas. SPT is a tax which goes back to 1981. It was introduced by then Minister of Energy Errol Mahabir. That sent a signal to the entire upstream community in Trinidad and Tobago that it was going to become a more tax intensive environment and, I think, that has had a major impact on the fact that investment in the energy sector went into somewhat of a shell between the years 2009—and I have the figures, do not worry. I am a very analytical man—and 2011.

I am happy to say, Mr. Speaker, that that company—whose name I shall not call, but Members may want to infer who that company is—has now regained confidence in this economy and this country and we are now clawing back from that situation. [*Desk thumping*]

Many in the energy sector have called the period, 2002—2010, the lost decade as far as upstream is concerned. In fact, there was a time when the staff at the Ministry of Energy would tell you—because they tell me this because I go to work every day. I reach to work at eight o'clock and I leave at six/seven o'clock in the night.

Staff at the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs would tell you that there was a time when there was no full-time Minister of Energy in the Ministry of Energy and that is a fact. There was a Minister of Energy who had a portfolio of

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Minister of Public Administration and he operated from the Ministry of Public Administration. He would come to the Ministry of Energy once or twice a week to sign documents.

I am happy to report that there is now a full-time Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs and I reach to work at eight o'clock and I work 16 hours a day.

Hon. Member: Hard working.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, all the major companies currently engaged in exploration and development activities aimed at increasing gas production and their reserve base have a growth story to tell.

I want to say that two and a half years ago when I became Minister, BP, BG and BHP did not have growth stories to tell. [*Interruption*] Well, they were here and they were doing business, but they were not growing; so because you are not growing, you would leave the country? If these companies did not have growth stories, then the country did not have a growth story.

So the Leader of the Opposition painted a picture of doom and gloom for the economy and I quote the Leader of the Opposition from his *Hansard*.

“So now, in addition to the global headwinds we face, shaky commodity prices, weak local and foreign investments, weakness in major economies of our trading partners, the arrival of...shale gas...”

Let us examine his statement on weak foreign investments, Mr. Speaker, and I have the figures here from the Central Bank.

For the year 2012, provisional.

Total foreign direct investments into the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago: US \$2,527 million, that is US \$2.5 billion.

For the year 2011—and these figures were presented by the Minister of Finance and the Economy in his speech, the figures for 2012 and 2011: for the year 2011, US \$1.83 billion;

For the year 2010, US \$549 million.

So you had a movement from US \$549 million in foreign direct investment in 2010 and a jump to US \$1,832 million, or US \$1.8 billion. [*Desk thumping*] That is the period I am talking about where companies went into a mode of contraction because a signal was sent by the Ministry of Energy that SPT was going to be introduced on natural gas. Nobody is obliged to invest in Trinidad and Tobago. Capital competes globally. We have to compete for that dollar.

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I used a work for a multinational and I will tell you, you have to make a strong case to the board in the UK to get US \$1 of capital investment into Trinidad and Tobago because one must justify why that money should not go to Angola; why it should not go to Azerbaijan or to Brazil.

So, Mr. Speaker, the year 2012, US \$2.5 billion came into the economy, foreign direct investment; about 80 per cent to 90 per cent of that is coming into the energy sector. That is a fact. Those are figures from the Central Bank.

So the story on investment is not a negative story as we have heard from the other side. It is a good story. The investment is coming into the upstream, that is where people explore for, produce and develop oil and natural gas. A lot of that investment is investment which the population does not see because it is happening in the water around us. It is not akin to investment in Point Lisas or in La Brea and Point Fortin where you see it on the ground.

So what does this say, Mr. Speaker? And I will go on to quote Mr. Andy Hopwood. Who is Andy Hopwood? Andy Hopwood is the Vice-President of BP and he was here in Trinidad and Tobago in January at the Hyatt and he announced that BP was going to spend US \$6 billion in this economy in the next five years. So that, of course, is a return to confidence of one of the major companies doing business in this country. [*Desk thumping*]

I will say a bit about BP because there is an ad running on TV that BP has and they are showing their contribution to the country. Roughly 25 cents of every dollar of Government revenue comes from moneys paid to the Government by BP. It is a very significant player in the economy and the relationship between the Ministry of Finance and BP and the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and BP is a critical relationship that we must manage and manage well.

Let us look at the award of deep-water blocks in the context of investment. The Opposition Leader and probably the person who wrote the energy component of his speech—and the fingerprints of that are well known to me—are the only people who think our energy sector is in crisis. I repeat: they are the only people who think our energy sector is in crisis. To quote the Opposition Leader again:

“The biggest incentive for exploration activity is a projective, viable, sustainable and profitable market for natural gas; not fiscal tampering and reliance on spot market sales only.”

So he pours scorn on my fiscal tampering and the fiscal tampering of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and the Ministry of Finance and the Economy over the last four years.

Let us hear what the people have to say—people outside this room; very significant people in this country. Let us listen to Mr. Joel Monty Pemberton, who is the CEO of a very progressive company called Trinity Exploration. It is a company with headquarters in San Fernando and it is listed on the London Stock Exchange. It is owned by Trinidadians. It is run by Trinidadians. This is what Mr. Pemberton has to say.

“In recognizing that the hydrocarbon province in Trinidad is mature, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has introduced a progressive fiscal package to ensure that activity levels are increased and that the region remains internationally competitive. These changes will stimulate Trinity’s cash flows and improve returns on future projects, and hereby allows further investments in exploration and development. These progressive fiscal reforms endorse Trinity’s strategy and philosophy of operating and investing in Trinidad.”

That was reproduced in the Ernst & Young report on the budget, but let us hear what the Energy Chamber has to say. The Energy Chamber—and this is in the Ernst and Young report. They say that:

“The 2013-2014 national budget featured several measures aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the T&T upstream energy sector...”

Because you see, Mr. Speaker, without the upstream, without oil and gas, there is no Point Lisas and that is where the important part of the energy sector lies and that is where the risk is. The risk is in the upstream; not in the downstream because it is very risky stuff to go and explore for oil and natural gas.

So the energy sector, they, too, were happy; but let us look at what Norman Christie has to say. Who is Norman Christie? Norman Christie is the CEO of bpTT.

Norman Christie in Ernst & Young says:

“Over the last three years, fiscal changes have provided incentives for oil and gas exploration and development. These incentives have resulted in successful outcomes for the most recent bid round and have also resulted in a material increase in upstream activity as evidenced by the number of rigs now operating onshore”—and that is on land—“and offshore...”

And he puts the comparison, currently 12, that is both onshore and offshore, versus one in 2010. That is not me, that is Norman Christie. I continue:

“It is good to see a continuation of Government’s focus on improving competitiveness, attracting investments and increasing activity in the sector, all of which are required to continue to progress hydrocarbon resources.”

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I am saying that because these are comments coming from the Energy Chamber and from two very important CEOs. So, it was referred to as fiscal tampering. We have, in the last four budgets, in every budget, we have introduced incentives to make the upstream more competitive because we recognize that we have as a country had become more uncompetitive vis-à-vis the competitor countries that we compete against and we had to make that fiscal regime more competitive without compromising the Government's revenue stream. And I would explain that as I go on.

7.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the work that is in the budget, with regard to the fiscal regime, as it relates to a number of the fiscal measures, was not work that was done by the Minister of Energy in a quiet room in Tower C, it was work done by a Cabinet-appointed committee that was headed by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, that committee being appointed back in January 2013.

Mr. Speaker, the change in capital allowances provided for in this budget is revolutionary. They will apply to companies that operate in the tax royalty regime and not to companies that operate in the production-sharing contract regime. The latter, that is the production-sharing contract, their terms are fixed by their contractual terms. You cannot change what is inside a production-sharing contract.

The tax royalty system—unless it is a taxable production-sharing contract—applies to companies like BP, Petrotrin, Repsol and in some instances, EOG. A very solid assessment of these changes is provided by Ernst & Young and Members could feel free to read what the Ernst & Young report has said.

As I said, the last four budgets presented by this Government, we have not increased any taxes on the energy sector. [*Desk thumping*] We have not increased a single tax on the energy sector. We have recognized that we have to become more competitive. An assessment of the risk/reward profile of the energy sector and in particular the natural gas value chain, would reveal that risk is highest in the upstream and I found the Leader of the Opposition did not address the upstream. He addressed the downstream. The incentives of the last four budgets, therefore, seek to de-risk the upstream and companies have responded to investment.

Mr. Speaker, at present there are six rigs drilling in the waters around this country. That compares to one rig in mid-2010. I am speaking about the offshore environment, right. [*Desk thumping*] And I would list these rigs to show that they are not a figment of my imagination. One is the Seadrill West Jaya. I see Seadrill has opened an office in Port of Spain, next to Chaud and their client is BP. That is the Seadrill West Jaya. The other one is the Rowan XL II and there again is BP.

The third one is the Rowan Gorilla III. Their client is the EOG Resources. Then we have the Diamond Ocean Lexington, the client, Centrica. We have the Well Services Rig 110, client Petrotrin. We have the Bayfield slant rig, client Trinity. Those are six rigs working in the waters around this country and what we have found is that there is a natural correlation between the number of rigs working in our waters and growth in the economy.

There are two more rigs on the way. One is on the way, it is called the Seadrill West Freedom, which is on its way from Qatar to work for Repsol and an eighth rig, the Well Services Rig 152, which is currently at Brighton, will be taken by Trinity in October. So, we will move our rig count offshore from one in 2010, to eight by the end of this year, very significant.

Mr. Sharma: Eight hundred per cent increase.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, some of the incentives provided by the Minister in this budget—in this budget, the Minister of Finance and the Economy has allowed unused tax investment credits to be carried forward to the subsequent financial year. What obtained previously was a system where, under the SPT regime, oil companies could claim a tax credit against the SPT liability, computed at a rate of 20 per cent for qualifying expenditures, as it relates to development activities in mature marine fields, mature land fields and for enhanced oil recovery projects. This new measure allows for any unused tax credits to be applied to the SPT liability in the subsequent year. So you do not lose the unused tax credits.

The Minister has also accelerated the capital allowances for both exploration and for development and that is in keeping with international best practice. Again, the Ernst & Young report cites the countries in the world, Minister of Finance and the Economy, that offer the 100 per cent capital allowance for exploration; countries like Australia being among those countries that have done that.

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Last year, we harmonized the SPT rates for pre- and post-1988. There were two SPT rates in the marine area. There was a 42 per cent rate, if your licence was pre-1988. That applied to Repsol and BP, and there was an SPT rate that was for post-1988. That was 33 per cent. We have made it now 33 per cent across the board. So we have removed that discrimination in the tax regime for SPT and that has simplified the tax regime.

We also introduced last year a special SPT rate for new field developments of small pools in marine environments to incentivize companies to develop small pools of natural gas and we introduced a 40 per cent uplift for a five-year period to incentivize companies to drill in deeper horizons on land and in water.

Mr. Speaker, turning now to oil production and then I would go to natural gas production. With regard to oil production, in calendar year 2012, and that is the calendar year, this country averaged 81,700 barrels of oil per day. The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs or the Minister of Finance and the Economy, the Government, cannot be happy with that situation. Oil production has been in decline since 2006. Thus far, in calendar 2013, we have averaged 81,100 barrels of oil per day; a nominal decline, very small.

But I make that point to show that we have somewhat now bottomed out. So we have gone from 81,700 last year, to 81,100 this year and I expect us, by the end of the year, to get back close to 81,700 from last year. So it means that we have hit the bottom of the curve and we expect to bend upwards again.

This demonstrates that we have arrested the decline in oil production against great odds. I say great odds because the problem has been manifold. The central issue is not a lack of oil. Trinidad is awash with oil. The central issue, in my regard, is not what is below the ground, it is what is above the ground and I speak, of course, of infrastructure. The infrastructure that is in place to produce that oil is very old, it is decaying, and I speak specifically about Trinmar and I have said that many times here. Trinmar was left for dead. Trinmar was left for dead—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: By the PNM.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:—by the PNM Malcolm Jones administration at Petrotrin.

Mr. Sharma: Quite true.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: It was left to decay and to literally fall into the sea and there were cases where the platforms were literally leaning into the sea.

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I have asked Petrotrin and I have sought your permission, to display some photographic evidence of what I am saying. This is before and after.

Hon. Member: Oh my God.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: That is the before. [*Sen. Ramnarine displays photos*]

Mr. Cadiz: What is the before?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: The before, that is cluster 20 in Trinmar. That is before and this is after.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Show it this way too.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: This is an example of what we had to deal with at Trinmar. The problem is not what is below the ground. The oil is there. The problem is what is above the ground. Trinmar was allowed to decay and to almost fall into the sea.

[Sen. Ramnarine continues to display photos]

This is another example of before and after at Trinmar. This is after, of course, and that is before. A lot of work has been happening in Trinmar over the last three years to prepare this asset to increase its contribution to national oil production.

Mr. Sharma: PNM is really a disgrace to this country, you know.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, the production at Trinmar—and I attended the Petrotrin Long Service Awards a few nights ago. Let me congratulate all those persons who work at Petrotrin. There are people, Minister Mc Leod, who had been working at, well what was Texaco now Petrotrin, for 45 years.

Interestingly, the people who have been working in Petrotrin for 45 years, when you speak to them, they came in as apprentices into Texaco and they have been with the company for 45 years and the apprentice programme is something that Minister Karim and I are working on. We want to reintroduce the apprentice programme because, in Germany there is the lowest unemployment rate in Europe, in Germany and it is because they have found a way to match supply in the labour market, to demand and that is through the apprentice-type system—
[Interruption]

Mr. Cadiz: Journeyman.

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Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:—journeyman—where you marry people in their academic career to a company. So by the time they have graduated, they have a job waiting for them. So there is a closer match between supply and demand for labour. So we are introducing that. Cabinet recently, I think, approved that.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the Jubilee field. The announcement of this discovery was made in March 2012. It was described then as a hoax by the Opposition. Production from this field commenced on November 20, 2012. The field is now producing at a rate of approximately 600 to 800 barrels of oil per day. One well in that field—*[Interruption]* it is not producing, okay. It is producing zero.

Dr. Gopeesingh: “Doh” take her on. “Doh” take her on.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: One well in that field, the S895 well, is producing at a rate of almost 500 barrels of oil per day, making it one of the highest producing oil wells in Trinidad.

Mr. Speaker, I have brought, just for the evidence of Members, because seeing is believing, so I have asked Petrotrin to bottle. *[Sen. Ramnarine displays two bottles containing oil]* This is oil from the Jubilee field. This is heavy oil from the Jubilee field, right, *[Desk thumping]* and this is light oil from the Jubilee field. The field is producing both light crude and you could see the difference in viscosity. Light crude, of course, flows and this is the heavy “tarish” stuff from the Jubilee field. Thank you very much, Member.

Mr. Speaker, the increase in production, because of all that work that we are doing in Trinmar to improve the infrastructure, we will see an increase in production at Trinmar to 23,500 barrels of oil per day, which is an increase of about 2,000 barrels of oil per day from what obtained a few months ago. *[Desk thumping]*

The impact, of course, is that August 2013 was the highest month for oil production in the year. *[Desk thumping]* And that was due mainly to Trinmar performing better and to the increased condensate output from BP’s Immortelle and Savonette fields.

I turn now to natural gas production—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Sharma: It must have something to do with the Minister.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: “A little bit.”

Mr. Sharma: Thank you.

Mr. Roberts: What were the figures for August?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Incentivize it.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: August 2013, 83,300. The average for the year, 81,100. So we are seeing that if that trend continues, we will match back with the number from last year at the very least.

Mr. Sharma: Very good. Very good.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, natural gas production: natural gas output in 2013 has been steadied and I will give some figures, fiscal year versus fiscal year: October 2011 to July 2012, natural gas production, let us say 4.1 billion cubic feet of gas per day. For the corresponding period October 2012 to July 2013, natural gas production about 4.2 bcf per day, an increase of about 2 per cent; a small increase. But we stabilized that decline in natural gas.

If we compare calendar year to calendar now, we compare January to December 2012, January to July 2013, we compare those averages, there is an increase of 3.4 per cent. So in 2013, we are doing better, in terms of natural gas production, than in 2012. The year 2012 was a very difficult one for natural gas production and I would say that—at present, and I tried my best to make this public information but the media, only the *Business Guardian* carried it in some detail and I believe Clint Chan Tack carried it in the *Newsday*—right now we are in the middle of a major maintenance period in the sector.

As we speak, the BP Cassia B hub is down for maintenance and the Dolphin platform, BG's Dolphin platform is down for maintenance. They are down for good reason. These assets cannot work infinitely. They must be shut down at some point in time for maintenance and repair.

In the case of the Dolphin platform, that has been out there since 1996. In the case of the Cassia hub, the largest offshore installation in Trinidad and Tobago, that has been out there for 11 years. So the companies have come to us and they have said that they must take these things down for maintenance. What we have done at the Ministry, at the NGC, is that we have coordinated that with maintenance in the Point Lisas Industrial Estate. So we have told people in the Point Lisas Industrial Estate, instead of having your shutdowns all through the year, you bring your shutdowns into that window when BP and BG will be taking down those platforms.

Mr. Sharma: Very good thinking.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Right? Because it makes perfect sense.

Hon. Members: Yes.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: In that window too, Atlantic LNG Train 3 has gone down.

7.30 p.m.

But, the Government was very—both the Minister of Finance and the Economy and the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs were very concerned with the loss of natural gas production in the month of September. So we went to BP, and I went to BP at the highest level, Mr. Speaker. I went to the President of BP himself, Mr. Bob Dudley, who is incidentally coming to Trinidad in a few days' time. We told them that BP had to do something to mitigate that impact, and they came up with a bypass mechanism that allowed them to bypass production around the Cassia B hub.

BP, Mr. Speaker, is literally performing open bypass surgery on its major hub, as we speak, and they have been able to install that bypass, five days ahead of schedule, Mr. Speaker. So that is a very positive thing, and the Member for Port of Spain South asked about maintenance—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: She would not understand.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:—and we have a commitment, Member, through you, Mr. Speaker, from BP, in particular, that at the end of this Cassia hub turnaround—we call it a turnaround—that is the end of the maintenance story, and that 2014 will return to where the country was in 2010, in terms of natural gas output. So that is a positive sign for the year 2014 and for the economy.

Sticking on the topic of BP because, as I said, a very important player in the economy—twenty-five cents on every dollar of Government revenue comes from one company that employs 1,000 people, mainly Trinidadians. Mr. Speaker, in the year 2014, we expect BP to commence development of its Juniper field, and that is a field that has approximately 1.1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Production from Juniper is expected to peak at 555 MMscf of gas per day. The Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs continues to work with BP to ensure the development of the Juniper field, but I would tell you what the importance of the Juniper field is because I went to La Brea, Member, two to three weeks ago. I met the Member in Santa Flora. The fabrication yard in La Brea is very important to

Trinidad and Tobago. The former Government had ceded an industry in La Brea to fabricate platforms, and eight platforms were fabricated there between I think the year 2003 to the year 2010, and then fabrication in the fabrication yard ground to a halt. The fabrication yard, which is run by a company called TOFCO, has been ticking along with some small work.

BP has given a commitment, Mr. Speaker, that once they sanction this Juniper project, the platform that will extract the gas for this mega project, will be fabricated in La Brea in that fabrication yard. Now, the Member of Parliament for La Brea, who I always admire for his passion for his constituency, he will tell you how that fabrication yard impacts on the economy of La Brea. What I am told, Mr. Speaker, by the people from TUFCO and from BP. is that it will create 300 to 400 jobs. That is direct employment in the fabrication yard, and I am not talking about, you know, indirect machine shops, restaurants, vendors and so on.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that—so that is the Juniper project—I am giving an idea now of what is happening in the natural gas sector next year—Mr. Speaker, and the country, again, must know. BP sat on a large acreage in this country for many years. The licence for that acreage was signed in 1973. Incidentally, the year of the Yom Kippur War, and I recently asked for a copy of the licence and I got it. It is a very ancient document. The paper was brown and there were the dog-ears and so on. It was signed by Overand Padmore, who was the Minister of Petroleum and Mines back in those days—he does not look much different today than he did back then. He looks almost the same. But they had that acreage, and a large part of that acreage was unexplored for many years.

What the company decided to do, was to spend US \$265 million in the last 18 months on what they called the Ocean Bottom Cable seismic, and you will be reading about that in the newspapers. I have had three presentations on that seismic programme. I am not a geologist neither am I a geoscientist, I am a petroleum engineer, but anybody, any lay person, could look at that seismic and see what we are all seeing there.

The company is very optimistic, that is all I will say, about what they are seeing in that seismic, and they are refocusing their efforts on the Columbus Basin and on the shallow water, and the results from that seismic would propel this economy, in my humble opinion. Based on the information that I have, some of which I cannot disclose publicly because the company is a publicly listed company in London, the results from that seismic and the corresponding drilling campaign will propel this economy for at least another 10 years. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Very good, very good. Great optimism; great optimism!

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: So have no fear with regard to the oil and gas sector, but while we are doing that we must not lose sight of the fact that we have to diversify our economy, and there are signs that the diversification is taking place.

Mr. Speaker, the EOG Resources, a very lean American company, their plans next year, include the development of the Oilbird field, and they are currently completing a development project on the Osprey field.

Next year also, we expect BGTT to commence development of the Starfish field, which has reserves of 650 billion cubic feet of natural gas, and which will backfill for decline in the Dolphin field. We also expect BG to commence work on Block 5C and Block 5D.

BHP Billiton also has plans to start what they call Angostura Phase 3, which will bring on an additional 100 million standard cubic feet of gas per day. So all the companies that produce gas—because those four companies account for 98 per cent of our natural gas supply—have forward plans to bring on more reserves but, as I said, of the four, the biggest, of course, is BP. What BP does—if BP sneezes, Trinidad and Tobago catches a cold.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the downstream sector. The Leader of the Opposition made heavy weather of projects in the downstream subsector that have not materialized. He cited AUM 2, CariSal and SABIC. These projects were proposed, Mr. Speaker, by private sector entities. These are not government projects and the Government, of course, is just a facilitator.

In the case of the AUM 2, the project has been the victim of a shareholder dispute between the shareholders of Methanol Holdings Trinidad Limited—that would be Clico—and a consortium of German companies. That dispute has been ongoing now for some two years. In the case of CariSal, Mr. Speaker, the project did not happen because the investors, again, private investors, could not mobilize the requisite financing for the project, and the project was also dogged by protest from well-known environmental groups, including Dr. Kublalsingh. It is noteworthy, however, Mr. Speaker, that this project, the CariSal project, was first mentioned in a budget speech under the former PNM administration. So that project has some legacy.

In the case of the SABIC project, Mr. Speaker, both the NGC and SABIC mutually agreed to discontinue negotiations for a gas sales contract after they

could not arrive at a consensus around price and term of contract. I want to say that we always do, Mr. Speaker, what is in the best interest of Trinidad and Tobago, having weighed all the issues.

Mr. Speaker, I have looked at the history of the last 10 years in this sector. In that period, only one project that was announced has been sanctioned, started and completed in the last 10 years, and that project was the AUM 1, a project by MHTL. MHTL, of course, is a company whose destiny, right now, is in somewhat of a limbo, given the fact that Clico owns 57 per cent of MHTL but, of course, this Government is dealing with the Clico situation, and I commend the Minister of Finance and the Economy and the former Minister of Finance for the very hard decisions that they have taken on Clico. [*Desk thumping*] That project, Mr. Speaker, the AUM 1, was announced in 2003 and completed in 2010.

Mr. Speaker, landing projects in our downstream sector is not easy. Investors often change their minds for varying reasons, including the environmental conditions in the world economy or the world economic environment. The Leader of the Opposition acts as though this is new, and it is only unique to this administration. My research says otherwise. I would call out a list of projects here because we have gone through all the budget speeches for the period 2002—2010. In the period 2002—2010, under various PNM budgets and so on, several projects were announced in successive budget speeches, many of which never materialized. These projects announced by the PNM which have never materialized include: the Essar Steel project. What has happened to the Essar Steel project? The Alcoa smelter project; Alcoa went to Chatham and then they vanished; the Ansa McAl First UAN project. What has happened to that?

Mr. Sharma: PNM blight!

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: The Coffeetown Union Estate Fertilizers Limited project; the Westlake Ethylene complex. People remember the Westlake Ethylene complex?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs has expired.

Motion made: That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. Dr.T. Gopeesingh*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: So we continue with the projects, Mr. Speaker, announced by the former Government that never materialized

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because we were criticized for projects that did not materialize under this Government, and we accept that, you know; projects are sometimes the product of the environment.

Of course, there was also a project called the T-E-I-L ammonia project—Trinidad Energy Investments Limited—that also did not materialize. I think one of our current colleagues was involved, at some point in time, in that project, many years ago.

There is also the Lurgi-Bassel Gas to Polypropylene project or GETTP, announced but never materialized, and there is the Isegen Maleic Anhydride plant, again, announced by the previous government and never materialized. And, of course, Mr. Speaker, there is the mother ship of these projects, the Alutrint Smelter project where, Mr. Speaker—and the Alutrint project is a very interesting project. The more we start to unravel that project, the more we see where the acting CEO earned a salary of \$95,000 per month—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: What! Who was that?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:—in addition to a travelling allowance and an Audi A6.

Mr. Sharma: What!

Dr. Gopeesingh: Ken Julien's son.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs has no such facilities.

Mr. Roberts: Philip Julien?

Mr. Sharma: Who was that? Who was that?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: The acting CEO.

Mr. Roberts: Who was that? Philip Julien.

Hon. Member: “Call name man, call name.”

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, matters related to this project, the Alutrint Smelter project, are now the subject of an arbitration, as the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, that was brought against the Government by Sural. I will not, therefore, want to prejudice those proceedings. I will however, say, Mr. Speaker, that there is a pattern of expenditure as it relates to Alutrint that is highly questionable.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the south-west peninsula, as we just came off the topic of Alutrint. Mr. Speaker, when Dr. Moonilal spoke, he gave a very compelling picture of driving from Mount Hope all the way down to Point Fortin. And, I again, quote the Leader of the Opposition. He said:

“We take careful note of the fact and strongly reject the idea that Government has removed industrial development from the study of the south-western peninsula, with all the negative connotations that this surreptitious action holds against the people of La Brea, Vessigny and environs.”

Mr. Speaker, I do not know where he got that information from. In fact, just to be sure, I actually went and checked all the documents that were produced by the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and the Ministry of Finance and the Economy in the last three years to see if that was anywhere in any of those documents, and I was wrong and he was right, I did not find anything.

Mr. Speaker, what have we done in the south-west peninsula? We have completed the TGU power plant. Now, that power plant was started by the previous government.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Most of it was done by us.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: No, no. It was started in 2009, and it was finished in 2012. A lot of the work happened under this Government. Some work happened under your government too. That is a world-class facility. I toured that facility a few weeks ago. Mr. Speaker, we have signed the termination agreement with Alutrint for the return of lands at the Union Industrial Estate to the National Energy Corporation, which would now be made available to Mitsubishi and other investors.

And three, the NEC is—and this is an important one—currently undertaking a study that will be completed by the end of this year of the port facilities at Brighton, with the view of upgrading that port to meet the needs of Mitsubishi, and other projects planned for the Union Industrial Estate. Why is that important? Mitsubishi has said to the Government that they require a port that could accommodate post-Panamax vessels. Post-Panamax vessels require a draft or a depth of 15 metres, and that port, the draft is 12.8 metres, so we would have to dredge that Brighton—what we call Brighton berth 3, to accommodate the large ships coming from Japan to take methanol back to that country.

Mr. Sharma: Very good sign.

7.45 p.m.:

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: The Opposition Leader also speaks about, and I quote him again—that their plan is to improve the “credibility of the country within the international investing community”. Mr. Speaker, the country is very credible in the eyes of the international investing community, and I will tell you why.

1. We recorded, in 2012, the highest levels of FDI on record in the energy sector.
2. If the country did not have credibility, why did Shell pay almost US \$6 billion for Repsol’s shares of Atlantic LNGs Train I to Train 4?
3. BP’s announcement of \$6 billion in investment in this country in the next five years.
4. The fact that we have signed six deepwater production sharing contracts in the last 18 months at a value of US \$1.4 billion.
5. The NEC signing a project development agreement with Mitsubishi and Neal and Massy for an \$850 million methanol to dimethyl ether plant.

And, at six, of course:

6. BP’s investment in revolutionary seismic technologies to the tune of US \$265 million.

Mr. Speaker, there was a company that came to this country and won a block, many years ago. It was a block called Block 2ab off the coast of Manzanilla in shallow water. That company set up offices in Woodbrook and prepared themselves to invest in Trinidad and Tobago. Two years later they were frustrated that they could not sign a production sharing contract. So they won the block in the bid round and two years later they had not signed the production sharing contract. That no longer obtains.

That company, Mr. Speaker, left Trinidad in disgust. They closed down their office Woodbrook and “they gone”. Where did they go to? They went to Africa. They have since made discoveries—large discoveries—in Ghana and, most recently, in the Artic Sea. I speak of course of a company called Tullow, an Angolo Irish company which has one of the best records in the world in exploration. We, the former Government, drove that company to frustration; they left Trinidad; they went to Africa—

Mr. Roberts: “Not we, nah, dem.”

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: The former Government.

Mr. Roberts: Yes.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is an aspirant to the office of Prime Minister and what he says must, therefore, be taken very seriously. I would like the Opposition Members, when they speak, to clarify what the Leader of the Opposition meant by the following statement when he spoke about his vision for the energy sector. He referred to:

“...an appropriate restructuring to ensure that the State’s involvement with the energy sector recognizes the current dynamics of this sector and adjust ourselves to get the best advantage of the current circumstances of the 21st Century

One wonders, Mr. Speaker, what the Leader of the Opposition means by “a restructuring and rationalization of the energy sector.” I would like somebody from the Opposition—a spokesperson—to explain that to the country, please—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Member: That was written for him, Kevin. He does not understand it.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:—because it may cause people to feel rather uneasy in the state enterprise sector. I know that there was a plan that was being touted by the former Government to merge all the energy state enterprises into one. They had Mr. Malcolm Jones as the chairman of NGC and as the chairman of Petrotrin and there was a plan to merge all these state enterprises. What would be the implications for job loss if such a plan were to be implemented?

Mr. McLeod: Three thousand were going to be axed.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Three thousand were going to be axed.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the—any idea of how much time I have left?

Dr. Gopeesingh: About 23 minutes.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the Beetham water recycling plant which featured prominently in the speech by the Leader of the Opposition on Friday last. Mr. Speaker, water is life and water is also industry. In our process plants at Point Lisas, water is used as boiler feed; that is water injected into the boilers to become steam. Water is also used for cooling. Water is critical to the industrial fabric of Trinidad and Tobago. Without water there would be no Point Lisas. Without water there would be no Point-a-Pierre refinery.

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The Opposition would recall, when they were in government, the drought of 2010 which almost crippled this country. In fact, it was very severe in next door Venezuela to the point that the Guri dam water—the second largest hydroelectric dam in the world—had fallen to a record low levels where villages and towns that were flooded were suddenly reemerging. You would also recall that in those very desperate days the then Government had to rely on piping water from Caroni to Point-a-Pierre to keep the refinery going using the multi-fuel pipelines.

It is the role of Government to make five things available for industrial development. Those five things are: land, infrastructure, electricity, natural gas and water. The fact is that Point Lisas was built in the 1970s and there was no dedicated water supply assigned to Point Lisas, that is until the arrival of the Desalcott project.

So I turn now to the project being proposed by the NGC which was the subject of the Leader of the Opposition's speech. Mr. Speaker, what are the facts? The first fact is that this is an NGC project. The project is being funded and managed by the NGC and the procurement is being handled by the NGC. The NGC is not doing procurement, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of WASA. The project will utilize the existing NGC/WASA right-of-way corridor. This is much more cost-effective than the marine route. The NGC also has the financial and technical resources to manage the project. It has managed, of course, larger and more complex projects than this in the past, such as the NEO pipeline and the Cross Island Pipeline.

The Beetham project seeks, in essence, to upgrade the Beetham wastewater treatment plant to industrial standard and use that water to supply Point Lisas. This, Mr. Speaker, is a collaborative effort between two 100 per cent owned state enterprises for a project that is in the national interest and for a project which I shall demonstrate has been on the national agenda for a long time. It is, therefore, in the interest of the energy sector and in the interest of developing the country in the interest of the country's water supply.

The water currently produced, Mr. Speaker, by that facility in Beetham, is pumped into the Gulf of Paria. It is proposed, therefore, to transport this water over land to Point Lisas. The volume of water we are talking about here that is being discharged into the Gulf of Paria every day is 10 million gallons of water which can be utilized for industrial purposes. Point Lisas currently uses 23 million gallons of water. So that is almost half of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate requirement. This will free up 10 million gallons of water for domestic customers of WASA thus impacting positively on the water supply to over 200,000 people.

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Mr. Speaker, there is an MOU between WASA and the NGC that sets out the terms of the relationship between the two companies. NGC will process and transport the water which will then be sold to WASA who will then, in turn, sell that water on to the Point Lisas Industrial Estate. The request for proposals for the project was made public on September 02, 2013 not on September 09, as was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. Bidders have eight weeks to submit their tender documents. Mr. Speaker, I put those facts on the table. The NGC would be putting out a full-page ad very shortly.

Mr. Speaker, our research indicates, however, that this is not a new idea. In fact, it is an old idea. In 2006—not so long ago—a similar MOU was signed because, you see, people are saying “What is the NCS doing in water? Well, in 2006 a similar MOU was signed between the NGC, which is a 100 per cent owned subsidiary of the NGC—the two companies are the one and the same; one is a subsidiary of the other—and WASA, for a similar project. That was signed on January 06, 2006 between Mr. Prakash Saith of the NEC, and I cannot make out the signature of the gentleman from WASA, but it looks like it is the signature of somebody called Errol Grimes of WASA.

So, Mr. Speaker, the former Government had also conceptualized this project and they were going to execute the project the very way that we propose to do it. Instead of using the NGC they were using they were using the NEC. The NEC is a subsidiary of the NGC. Government has a role and a responsibility to provide water for industrial customers.

So, Mr. Speaker, furthermore, that project was approved by the Cabinet in 2007; that is the cabinet of which the Members opposite were part of. It proposed, then, to use the marine route, that is to take the water from the Beetham, down the Gulf of Paria to the Point Lisas Industrial Estate at a cost of \$698 million. It was agreed that it would be financed by the Government and that a private sector entity would be retained.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to make this point because I know my comrade, Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development would like this point. When I became Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, one of the criticisms leveled against me, immediately, was that I was going to privatize things in the energy sector because I came from the private sector. Well, sometimes, you know, things work in the opposite direction, because I have privatized not a single thing in the energy sector. In fact, we have increased the state’s ownership in the energy sector. [*Desk thumping*]

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Mr. Speaker, so this PNM concept for this water project at Beetham has entailed financing by the Government and that a private sector entity would be retained to run this water plant. What we are saying here is that the NGC will finance this, the NGC will operate it and recoup its investment at an attractive rate of return; and that the profits to be derived from that project will stay with the State through its entities—WASA and the National Gas Company. I do not know what is wrong with that.

Mr. Speaker, we currently have, I am advised, a deficit between supply and demand for water as it relates to the residential customers, but I will let Minister Ganga Singh deal with other aspects of this project. It was also stated, Mr. Speaker, that there was an incestuous relationship between the NGC and WASA and that is probably because the chairman of WASA is also the president and CEO of the NGC. I went into the Integrity in Public Life Act, section 29(1), and I read the definition of conflict of interest. In my layman's interpretation there is no conflict of interest involving Mr. Indar Maharaj being the chairman of WASA and being the CEO of the NGC.

Mr. Speaker, I would stress that Mr. Maharaj is not a director of the NGC, he is a director of WASA. This Government has a one-person-one-board policy. If we want to speak of corporate incest we may well want to consider the fact that Malcolm Jones was the chairman of Petrotrin while he was the chairman of the NGC; that Ken Julien was the chairman of e-Teck while he was also the chairman of WASA. Then we had, of course, the ubiquitous Calder Hart who was the chairman of all things: NIB, Home Mortgage Bank; UDeCOTT and so on, so that, Mr. Speaker, was a case of himself unto himself.

I would stress, too, Mr. Speaker, that the NGC and the NEC have executed projects in the past that are outside of their traditional mandates and these two examples that come to mind, one is: the multi-fuel pipeline and loading gantry at Caroni, that tank farm you see at Caroni; and the other project—"they like to talk about who paving road and who not paving road", in 1994 the NEC constructed Rivulet Road.

Mr. Speaker, Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited: you know there is a term in cricket "not a man move"? "Not a man move, Mr. Speaker." When we acquired the Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited, a little more than a month ago—I think it was August 16, 2013 at 11.24 a.m.—I got an email and I said, "Thank you, God. We have acquired 39 per cent of Phoenix Park for the people of Trinidad and Tobago [*Desk thumping*] and, Mr. Speaker, not a man move.

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Everybody in this country is an expert in energy, or an energy expert. I went to a conference once and I asked them “Why do you not refer to people as energy experts” at a conference in the UK. They said, “We do not because all the energy experts live in Trinidad.” [*Laughter*] All the energy experts live in Trinidad. I want somebody to define for me what is an energy expert. I would love a definition of “energy expert” because I am not an energy expert.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Nineteen eighty-five.

Mr. Sharma: “Yuh sounding like one.”

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: But, “not a man move”. What I mean by that is that not a single word of criticism has been levelled against the Government for the acquisition of 39 per cent of Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited from Conoco Phillips. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, in nominal terms, this is the largest ever acquisition by the Government in the energy sector. Six hundred US million dollars was paid by the NGC for those 39 per cent shares in Phoenix Park. It is the most significant acquisition by the State since 1985 when the Government, under the Chambers administration, acquired the Point-a-Pierre refinery from Texaco. Was that the year, Minister, 1985?

8.00 p.m.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: I say all this, Mr. Speaker, to put it on the *Hansard* record for the purposes of history. The NGC now owns 90 per cent of Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited. I consider this to be a significant achievement of this Government, and that acquisition did not fall into our lap. It is something that we had to bid for, it is something that we had to negotiate for with ConocoPhillips. And I am honoured, Mr. Speaker, that history will record, and *Hansard* will record of course, that this happened when I was Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, we can also feel proud of the—I have to respond to that Loran-Manatee thing too, Mr. Speaker. We can also feel very proud of the First Citizens IPO—you will tell me when I have about 10 minutes again?

Dr. Gopeesingh: Eleven minutes again.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Eleven minutes. We can also feel very proud of the First Citizens IPO which is 3.2 times oversubscribed by investors. I am in support of the position as expressed by my colleague, the Minister of Finance and

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the Economy, that that 39 per cent of Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited should find its way onto the stock exchange in the shortest time possible, and we are committed to doing that.

Mr. Speaker, it is the policy of the Government to deepen and widen participation in the local stock exchange. Our energy assets can be owned by the people of the country directly. I speak here about the doctors, the lawyers, the teachers, the policemen, the farmers, the firemen; they should all be given an opportunity to directly own Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited: the wealth, the dividends that were paid to ConocoPhillips, so that 39 per cent will now stay in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: In the hands of the people.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, I would just wind up on the ConocoPhillips issue by saying that the NGC was advised on that matter by Credit Suisse, by First Citizens Bank, and again we thank First Citizens Bank for the role they are playing in this economy, by Mr. Martin Daly and by Ernst & Young.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn, in the time that is left, to respond to the comments made by our colleague from Diego Martin North/East, who always has a way of making these comments. Last year in the budget debate, when the Minister of Finance and the Economy raised the price of premium gasoline to \$5.75 per litre, he came the following day and said that we had broken the law, and that of course was the headline in the newspaper that we had broken the law. When we got our legal opinions—because we know we had not broken the law—the legal opinions said that we had not broken the law, that the Minister of Finance and the Economy was well within his rights to raise the price of premium gasoline.

Today he comes with a story that he downloaded from the Internet, and there are dozens of stories on the Internet about this Loran-Manatee field and what happened in Caracas on September 11, last week Wednesday. But what I would say, Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to thank all the people who have worked on this over the last 10 years, and I refer to former Ministers of Energy, and, most importantly, the hard-working technocrats at the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. And I would just single out some of the people that have been advising me on this, lest it be thought that the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs is somebody who knows nothing. I always rely on the best advice in Trinidad and Tobago regardless of race, colour, class, creed and political persuasion. [*Desk thumping*]

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My advisors on this matter included Ambassador Gerald Thompson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Andrew Jupiter, advisor to the Board of the National Gas Company; the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, Mr. Selwyn Lashley, a veteran of the oil industry, he has almost 30 years; Miss Louise Poy Wing, attorney-at-law, who has written a book on cross-border negotiations. She is a lawyer in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs; she is in the public gallery right now.

And what we signed in Caracas last week was what we call “Agreed Minutes”, and I would give the history very quickly. On July 06, 2013, on the margins of the 34th Caricom Summit, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar—and I say it again for the record of history—met with Nicolás Maduro, President of Venezuela, and she impressed upon him the need to—and I single her out for her leadership at that moment—she impressed upon him the need for Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela to bring this thing to a conclusion. [*Desk thumping*]

Yes, because it had been moving around for 10 years, and President Maduro committed to send a team to Trinidad on July 23. That team came and they spent two days in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs. It was led by Vice Minister Angel González Saltron of the Ministry of Petroleum in Venezuela, and my team was led by the Permanent Secretary. They negotiated for two days and for two nights, and I said two nights because I called the Permanent Secretary one night at ten to get an update on what happened in the negotiations, and he was still in negotiations.

What we have agreed to, Mr. Speaker, is the functional structure and governance of the unit operator for the Loran-Manatee unit area, and the history of this thing as I said goes back to 2003, but what was said by the former Minister, now the Member for Diego Martin North/East, was that all our gas will be going to Venezuela. That is not true. What this document simply is, is a governance agreement between both countries as to how we will develop the Loran-Manatee unitized field, which is 10 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, of which 27 per cent resides on our side and that is our gas, and 73 per cent resides on the Venezuelan side.

There are three components to this: one is the establishment of a directing committee, which is comprised of the two Governments and the four companies involved—the four companies being two Chevron companies, because Chevron is on both sides, PDVSA which is on the Venezuelan side and BGTT which is on the Trinidad side, with Chevron being on both sides. That is the directing committee. There is a second committee called the investing committee, which is the four

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companies that will invest the money to develop this field, and, lastly, there is something called an executing entity which will be drawn from the four companies that will actually go out and do the work.

So, there has been no agreement between this country and Venezuela as to where the Venezuelan gas will go, or where the Trinidad and Tobago gas will go.

Mr. Roberts: Misinformation.

Dr. Gopeesingh: As usual.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Over the years the Venezuelans have signalled to us that they would prefer that their gas go to Guria to build an LNG complex. We have signalled to them that we think—this is a conversation that has been going on for almost 10 years—we have signalled to them that in our opinion it would make more economic sense if their gas comes to Trinidad, and those discussions will crystalize once a development plan is submitted to, what we call, the ministerial commission, which includes myself, Minister Ramirez and the permanent secretaries. And in that ministerial commission either Minister has a veto, so both Ministers must of course agree to that development concept. So we have made no decision as to whether Venezuelan gas will come here or Trinidadian gas would go there and so on—and to download something off the Internet and just read it as though this is true; it must be factual.

Hon. Member: Shame!

Hon. Member: Yeah!

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: And you see what happens is that the—
[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Just like the emails.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:—stories are written about stories on the Internet because there are so many news agencies around the world, and so many blogs and so on, so people take a story and they write a story, and they write a story on top of that, and the truth becomes mangled and lost and so on. But the fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a historic advancement for this particular field. This has never happened before in the Americas; it has happened in the North Sea, it has happened in the Middle East.

I will speak more about this in the Senate and give more detail, but in the limited time that is left to me, Mr. Speaker, I will just summarize by saying that we have achieved a lot in the last year. There has been a resurgence in offshore

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drilling. There has been an arrest in the decline of natural gas reserves, and an arrest in the decline of oil production. The discovery of one trillion cubic feet of natural gas by BP in its Savonette 4 well; the acquisition of Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited; a very successful deep-water bid round, and we have launched two more bid rounds after that: one for land and another one for deep water.

We have completed, Mr. Speaker, 80 per cent of the Galeota port phase I. We have signed, of course, the Loran-Manatee agreement that I just referred to. We have the project development agreement with Mitsubishi and Neal & Massy. We have signed six deep-water production sharing contracts worth approximately US \$1.4 billion. We have commenced production from Jubilee field as is evidenced by my sample, and we have gotten Trinmar back up to 23,500 barrels of oil per day.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot more to be done as we are restructuring the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs in this fiscal year. I close, Mr. Speaker, with the words of the American poet Robert Frost:

“The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go”—Mr. Speaker—“before I sleep.”

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

Hon. Member: Oh yes, man!

Hon. Member: Well done! Well done!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for La Brea. [*Desk thumping*] May I advise, hon. colleagues, that dinner has arrived, but please allow a quorum to be maintained so we do not have the Member for Laventille West reminding this House that we need to have 12 Members at minimum when anyone is contributing. So dinner has arrived and we are not going to break, but when Members are ready they can stream out and steam back in, but we want to maintain our quorum. Hon. Member for La Brea [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday I heard about the PNM Government and central Trinidad, and I thought, I could not let that fly because it is really and truly a wrong impression as to the governance of the PNM in central Trinidad.

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Mr. Speaker, in 1971, Tate & Lyle was thinking about packing up from Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Member: Why?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Why? Because of falling prices for sugar, falling production and falling yield; and so the then PNM Government bought 51 per cent of the shares in Tate & Lyle to secure the jobs of the sugar workers and farmers to ensure the livelihoods of those families that depended on the sugar industry. By 1975, the Government had acquired 100 per cent in Caroni, but, Mr. Speaker, we had problems in the 1970s.

Hon. Member: What is the point?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: We had unplanned cane fires. We had fallen yield in the cane fields, you had seasonal shortages of labour, and the real wage was running faster than output.

Mr. Speaker, in the 1980s we saw an escalation in the scenario; and what we found was that the production cost of Trinidad sugar in the 1980s was three times higher than the market price and substantially higher for the EEC. So what you found, Mr. Speaker, was that in 1985, under the Lomé Convention, the quota of sugar for Trinidad to supply declined from 69,000 tons to 47,300 tons. And under the US International Sugar Agreement we saw a decline in 1984 from 10,840 tons to 6,504.

Mr. Speaker, it is worth the while for us to recognize that for 30 years the sugar industry was making a loss, and that includes 1986—1991 under the NAR, and 1995—2001 under the UNC administration. That is a fact.

8.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it must be made abundantly clear that the People's National Movement had always looked at central Trinidad as part of the patrimony of Trinidad and Tobago. I go so far as to say that when they recognized the problems with the industry, they did some payments, because when they wound up Caroni they had a bill. In other words, the accumulated losses at Caroni were \$4.755 billion. That could not be a government that did not care about central.

In the package for VSEP the settlement was \$2,755,414,000. VSEP, \$741.743 million; training \$16.77 million; pension payment from 2002—2008, \$115.472 million; development of 30 residential estates, \$592.450 million; development of 17 agricultural estates, \$598.136 million. Additional to that the total cost as I

mentioned was \$2.7 billion. The additional cost of closing Caroni was \$3.3 billion. When you add up the total figure, it is of the order of \$10 billion. If a government did not care, they would not have incurred that kind of expense. [*Desk thumping*]

More than that, Mr. Speaker, after the closure of Caroni, you would remember that we had the Point Lisas Industrial Estate. That was no La Brea stronghold, or PNM stronghold, it was in central Trinidad. Why? Because we cared about all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. I thought for the record we must correct that inaccuracy and that portrayal that the PNM “eh care” about central Trinidad. As a matter of fact, we care about every person in this country, every facet of this country, and that is an undeniable fact. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Sharma: Not true.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate, for some of my colleagues opposite, that I represent every single resident, from Aripero Village to Salazar Trace, from Quarry Village to Erin, 33 villages. That would include from the unborn child to the most senior citizen.

Mr. Sharma: “Dat include yourself.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: From the richest to the poorest, from the most informed to the least informed; for those who are employed and those who are unemployed. I, like the rest of my colleagues on those PNM benches, we have a genuine interest in the welfare of every man, woman and child in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Sharma: That is not true.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: It includes those who have had their jobs terminated just for being a supporter of the People’s National Movement. It includes those young, qualified persons who were denied employment under the cover or the guise that they were over qualified, but just because they look like PNM. “Ah doh know how dey does do dat.”

Mr. Sharma: “Just how allyuh used to do it.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: It also includes those landless people who applied under the Land for the Landless Programme and had their applications overlooked because they were not strong supporters of the United National Congress.

Mr. Sharma: Nonsense, it is a lottery system.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: You keep quiet. Mr. Speaker, I would like to get your protection, please.

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We on this side also care about those citizens who are homeless, who have applied for houses under the HDC, some of them five, 10, 15 years and have not been successful.

Mr. Speaker: Allow the Member to speak in silence, please.

Dr. Rambachan: What happened under the PNM, they did not apply then?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: It seems that the allocation of houses leaves a lot to question. I know that the Minister of Housing and Urban Development has an allocation for emergency cases, because we saw it happening in other parts of the country. But I have strong objection when we have had genuine cases in my constituency, houses were destroyed by fire, and no compassion even for these people.

There is a young man from Rancho Quemado called Eddie Baird; a hog plum tree fell on his house—God alone knows why those children were not home—“and mash down de man house”. [*Crosstalk*] I wrote and asked for even a temporary shelter, none—none! These are the things that hurt. [*Crosstalk*]

We on this side are also concerned about those poor farmers who have been cultivating agricultural lands for 30 and 40 years, and had to be evicted under the guise that they are looking to put down housing and so on. But the real reason is that they were not UNC supporters. You check all those areas. Recently, we had the case in Chaguanas West whereby the PNM candidate, Avinash Singh, was cultivating potatoes for a long while, but the minute he said, listen, he was going to represent the PNM, they wanted to evict him from the land.

Dr. Rambachan: But he was squatting; he was illegal. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Those are the kinds of things that we on this side will fight tooth and nail to ensure that the rights of the poor and the underprivileged are not disregarded. We on this side also represent all the people in this country who are seeing the majority of the resources of this State being spent or being concentrated on a small section of Trinidad and Tobago—central and south-central Trinidad. That is an undisputable fact.

Mr. Roberts: Not true.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: We on this side also represent the poor people, like that lady whose picture was deliberately placed on the front page of the *Newsday* newspaper, when she was expressing her grief. As a member of the People’s National Movement, we cringe when we could see these things happening in this country. We on this side stand ready and always there to help those in need. [*Crosstalk*]

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Hon. Member: “De Government put dat picture?”

Mr. Roberts: “Yuh like what yuh see?” [*Laughter*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: This is the fourth deceptive budget of this boldfaced Government. [*Laughter*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, they have the gall to come to this Parliament and talk about—on page 56:

“...the Government continues to place great emphasis on easing the social challenges posed by poverty, social inequality and social exclusion.”

“It eh making sense.” The performance of this Government and this statement here are at variance. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: “Look yuh ting drop.”

Hon. Member: “Doh raise up.” [*Laughter*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: I am going to show where, in truth and in fact, that does not hold. On page 19, the finance Minister speaks of gross official reserves in 2013 as US \$9.4 billion, the equivalent of 12 months of import cover. The innocent person or uninformed, looking at that statement would believe that that \$9.4 billion was accumulated by this Government. The record would show that when the PNM left office in 2010, the official reserves were US \$8.6 billion or 11 month’s import cover. So it means that in 40 months they could only have added US \$0.8 billion to the foreign reserves. “Dat eh nothing to boast about.” That is nothing to boast about, because when we left we also had a healthy Heritage and Stabilisation Fund. We had low unemployment. I remember well that those on that side were talking about “make-work programme”—“make-work programme,” and that the figure was not real. “Ah wonder what making it real now?”

In addition to that, when we left office we left a country that was politically stable. I ask the question: Why is the finance Minister afraid to give credit where credit is due?

Mr. Speaker, I said last year that I was really and truly excited when I heard that the then Chief Executive or Managing Director of First Citizens Bank was going to be the next Minister of Finance and the Economy. We had a nice interaction at his office. He had invited me to his office and we exchanged some ideas, and I felt here was a man who would do justice, because before that we were hearing about the economy turning around, “and we start to get giddy”.

Hon. Member: “Take care yuh fall down.” [*Crosstalk*]

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Mr. F. Jeffrey: We heard about blue skies, but we more look like in the Amazon forest around midday—dark clouds in this country, hopelessness. [Laughter]

Mr. Roberts: “In ah green pickup.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, like a white dove falling in a pit of oil— [Interruption]

Hon. Members: Ooooh!

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—his proverbial whiteness is being challenged or compromised. He cannot show his white plumage. He cannot flex his proverbial wings. He is cramped by the oil on his proverbial wings.

Hon. Members: “Aie-yaie-yaie!” [Crosstalk]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: As I listened to the budget speech, I decided to go back and see if I could get a definition of what is a budget, because in some way or the other, from my university days doing economics, I must have missed something. So I decided to go back and look at previous finance Ministers and see, for example, what they had.

When I went back I said, “Listen, let me get a finance Minister who was a member of the United National Congress and let me get a Finance Minister who was a Member of the People’s National Movement.” Mr. Speaker, I was indeed very fortunate that in 2002 the then Minister who said he did not come to take “no vow of poverty”—the hon. Gerald Yetming.

Mr. Roberts: That was Kuei Tung. You get it wrong.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Sorry, sorry. [Crosstalk]

8.30 p.m.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: This is what he said,

A “budget is about our future, our people... every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago whether UNC, PNM or politically unaligned.

Our country’s success is heavily dependent on the unity that binds our nation together. One People, One Nation must continue to prevail if we are to take all our people forward.”

Mr. Speaker, how does that fit in with some of the comments made by the Member for Mayaro, the Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara? How does that fit in,

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Mr. Speaker, where they chastised some of their colleagues, including my constituents from Pointe-a-Pierre, right, for trying to have a level playing field? Every citizen whether UNC, PNM or politically unaligned. How this sinking ship has drifted away from the port of call! How!

Miss Hospedales: Um-hmm. True.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: This is a UNC Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, I say this because in that budget we heard about two national sporting centres, the National Aquatic Centre and the National Tennis Centre put in Couva. It makes absolutely no sense. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: You have your facts—

Dr. Rambachan: Why it makes no sense to build it there?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: It makes no sense—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Why?

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—because Couva is not the only place in Trinidad and Tobago, and we are looking to develop; everybody must enjoy it.

Mr. Indarsingh: But “yuh” just talk about Point Lisas Industrial Estate.

Dr. Rambachan: How far Couva is from La Brea? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: “Doh take dem on?”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, I would not bother with them. I would not bother with them. “Allyuh will not throw me off today.” [*Crosstalk*] You will not throw me off today. [*Crosstalk*]

I next went to December 17, 1997, Mr. Patrick Augustus Mervyn Manning, the longest serving parliamentarian in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and maybe in the Commonwealth—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rambachan: “Yuh beating up just because—”

Miss Hospedales: Excuse me.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—who was also a Minister of Finance and this is what he had to say—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Indarsingh: “Allyuh run him out of Balisier House.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—A national budget is a review of the past performance of the economy, as well as, an analysis of the local, regional and international

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environment. This analysis is to assist the Government in determining key issues and trends as it develops strategic directions for the further growth of our economy, as well as, for improving the quality of life for all of our citizens. All!

Miss Hospedales: All.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Not some. Not some. I think that we have reached the stage that we are not supposed to be drifting from that, and I think that the Minister of Finance and the Economy—I “doh” know what has happened, but this is not your budget at all. [*Interruption*]

Miss Hospedales: Lost focus.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: This is not your budget at all. This is not your budget.

Mr. Roberts: “Who budget it is?” [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Indarsingh: Tell us who wrote it. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—you see, the vindictiveness and discriminatory practices by some Government officials will only divide rather than unite this country. Spending 90 per cent of the resources in Couva, Chaguanas, Carapichaima, [*Crosstalk*] Penal, Debe and Siparia is bound to have dire consequences. Please take note because even the constituents in some of those said areas are concerned about the inequity practised by this Government. [*Interruption*]

Miss Hospedales: Yes.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Take it or leave it at your own peril. Mr. Speaker, I looked at the budget speech and I “cyar” help but ask the Minister of Finance and the Economy because Mr. Manning mentioned about a review—can any citizen outside of this Government tell us how \$58.4 billion was spent in 2012/2013? Could anybody? Can they tell us what the \$54.6 billion was spent on in 2011 or 2012?

Mr. Roberts: Yes.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: There is nothing to show for it.

Mr. Roberts: What!

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Absolutely nothing. And the Minister has skilfully avoided any explanation. Mr. Speaker, improving the quality of life for all our citizens should be the aim and objective of every Minister of Finance.

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Improve the quality of life for citizens in Penal, in Couva, Chaguanas, Siparia, do that, but for God's sake you must do the same thing for La Brea, Laventille, Port of Spain South, Point Fortin and other areas that do not support the United National Congress. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is what must happen. I am not saying for one minute "doh put anything in Couva or doh put in Penal". I am not saying that at all because they are all people of Trinidad and Tobago. They are all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. All I am saying is—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Indarsingh: Insinuating.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—it "cyar" be one way alone. "It not right. It not correct," and people outside are watching.

Dr. Rambachan: You are making a case for discrimination. That is what you are saying?

Mr. Indarsingh: You are insinuating.

Dr. Rambachan: That is what you are saying? "Come nah man."

Mr. F. Jeffrey: La Brea constituency—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rambachan: Talk about nationalism.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—was promised an upgraded Point D'Or recreation ground by the Minister of Sport.

Mr. Roberts: What!

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Yes. You answered that in a question in Parliament. You had promised that. Not a shovel of gravel has arrived on that site.

Mr. Roberts: "Doh cuss yuh know."

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, this is the very recreation ground where Augustine Logie, Anthony Rougier, Avery John, Larry and Marcus Joseph, Philbert and Pamphille Jones, Khadidra and Khadisha Debesette, Eldwin Noel, Valarie Andrews, Dennis Morgan, Selwin, Keith and Kenny Murren, this is where they learnt their skills. It hurts when you could disrespect the people of the south-west peninsula—La Brea, Palo Seco, Point Fortin, Cedros—do not develop any recreational facilities, but keep packing more and more facilities in Port of Spain. Mr. Speaker, 2015 is not far.

Hon. Member: "But how come you eh talking about the advantage over sugar cane? [*Crosstalk*]"

Mr. F. Jeffrey: There are many villages that do not have a recreation ground: [Crosstalk] Aripero Village, Cochrane Village, Dally Village, Rancho Quemado, no recreation ground. Then there are other places that have recreation grounds, but no bathroom facilities, no changing rooms. This is happening in the La Brea constituency [Crosstalk] and you could only see about “packing thing” in Port of Spain. [Crosstalk]

Hon. Member: Who was in office from 2001—2010? [Crosstalk]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, when this gentleman was speaking I gave him my attention. I want to be protected from him, please.

Mr. Speaker: Yes. I am giving you my full protection. Members, allow the Member for La Brea to speak in silence. Continue, hon. Member.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, the whole question of that cycling centre in Couva pays lip service to an Olympian, Njisane Phillip, who hails from Siparia. Ronald Dickie another top national cyclist from Palo Seco. I “doh” know what is happening in the Ministry of Sport.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the water, and when you look at the budget speech [Crosstalk] they talk so nicely about water—water for all, how much water they are supplying and so on. Let me talk about the strategic water supply plan January 04, 2008. This is what it says:

This report has a primary focus of defining the means to deliver a 24/7 water supply to the majority of the households of the country by the end of 2011.

In the *Guardian* newspaper of December 11, 2009, article written by Richard Lord, headline “Pipe 24/7 for south.” The then Minister for Public Utilities, the hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid is quoted as saying:

“...is assuring residents of areas such as San Fernando and La Brea of a significant improvement in their water supply within the next two years,” That is 2011. “And he said the Government has a comprehensive plan that would see 95 per cent of the population achieving an excellent water supply within five years”; which is by 2014...

“He said this initiative would lead to a significant improvement in the water supply to residents of San Fernando, Sobo, Vessigny, La Brea and other parts of southwest Trinidad.”

This has nothing to do with this Government. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the project is two years late. And when the Government, the PNM

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Government, demitted office the plan was well ahead of schedule. As a matter of fact, in my brochure for the election I had a 24/7 water supply in the La Brea constituency by December 31, 2011. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker, the whole question that, you know, the water supply improved, that is no achievement of this Government; no achievement. This is in fact a People's National Movement project. [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: "Oh gawd!"

Mr. F. Jeffrey: That is a fact.

Hon. Member: He "doh" know what he talking about. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, I go further because when the plan for the desalination plant for Point Fortin came up it was to supply the Union Industrial Estate with the Alutrint smelter that required water, as well as supply the residents in the south-western peninsula. Mr. Speaker, we have no aluminium smelter.

Hon. Member: We know that.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: So the question is, those places that are getting five days water, they could get seven—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Okay. Done! [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: As a matter of fact, there is enough water to give every household in the south-western peninsula a 24/7. So it "eh" no favour that this Government is doing us by giving us five days a week or four days a week as the case might be. Mr. Speaker, under a People's National Movement by this time [*Crosstalk*] they would have had a 24/7 supply. Mr. Speaker, the Minister also boasts about 969 projects in local government.

Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: The hon. Kuei Tung—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: What!

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—had warned that a budget is not merely about numbers.

Hon. Member: What it is about?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, to come and boast that they have 969 projects—I ask the question can we get a geographic distribution of the projects?

Mr. Roberts: Yes.

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Dr. Rambachan: Sure. Sure.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Could we get the value?

Mr. Roberts: Yes. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Could we know how many projects in each geographic region—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Yes.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—and the names and addresses of the contractors?

8.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, even in my own constituency we have a number of contractors and “not one of dem get contract to do any ah the paving”. Not one! Not one!

Mr. Speaker, I have been writing the Siparia Regional Corporation with limited success. And their favorite excuse is that they do not have money—June 11, 2012, “Request for Assistance”. The response I am getting from the Chief Executive Officer, Siparia Regional Corporation:

“I have been directed by the Council at its 22nd Physical Infrastructure Committee Meeting held on May 10, 2012 to inform you that the Council is unable to accede to the following due to financial constraints:

1. Letter dated January 10, 2012, requesting the construction of box drains at Black Heath and Farm Road, Aripiero and Lodge Street and Pier Road, La Brea.
2. Letter dated January 10, 2012, requesting the construction of a box drain and resurfacing of the roadway along Lane 5 and Lane 8, Vessigny.”

Mr. Roberts: You get all that box drain. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, the problem is financial constraints. And all I am saying, why not give the regional corporation the \$10 million “allyuh was trying to give the MPs and so on?”

Mr. Roberts: What?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Give them the \$10 million and let them do what they are supposed to do. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, when I mentioned that this thing, about 969 projects, this numbers game—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rambachan: Would you give way?

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Mr. F. Jeffrey:—will come to the fore, in the past, what has happened to me—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rambachan: Member, would you give way?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, I have written to the Siparia Regional Corporation about a very unsanitary situation in La Brea.

Mr. Sharma: Which part?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, a poor widow residing on Ellis Street in La Brea—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Sharma: Which side of the road?

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—where her home is adjacent to the La Brea Public Cemetery. “Ah” concrete wall, like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, separates the woman’s residence from the cemetery. Mr. Speaker, water from the cemetery is seeping under the concrete wall and entering the woman’s kitchen. I have written over two dozen letters to the regional corporation and it seems to have fallen on deaf ears. So, Mr. Speaker, if it is 969 projects you did, I beg you, make this thing your 970th.

Mr. Sharma: “It done.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, I could speak of a similar incident of a poor pensioner on High Road, La Brea, water from a drain flowing into her living room. Mr. Speaker, again I have written letters, went to the regional corporation, begging for assistance.

Mr. Sharma: Who is your councillor?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: I am glad that you mentioned that. Because the councillor—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Sharma: Useless like you.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—for the area, said that she is not helping the people there because they do not vote for her.

Mr. Sharma: Nonsense!

Mr. Roberts: “Ohhh, my God!”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: That is a fact.

Mr. Roberts: Stop making up thing “nah man”.

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Mr. Sharma: Stop making a thing of everything “nah” man.

Mr. Roberts: Come on.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, that was her response. But, Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Local Government to let Lodge Street and Victor Street be your 971st and 972nd project. [*Crosstalk*]

I come to Aripéro. There is a bridge in Ibis Circular and my constituents from Pointe-a-Pierre could bear me out on this. I have made repeated requests— [*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: In writing?

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—for the construction of that bridge, Mr. Speaker. Endless promises. To date, no bridge built. My Member of Parliament for Pointe-a-Pierre, I go down his roads some times, and watch the condition of those roads.

Mr. Sharma: How is it?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: And I thought at least—“allyuh could have treated the man better than that, but allyuh doh care.” Mr. Speaker, the condition of the roads in Paria Gardens is horrendous.

Mr. Roberts: Well exactly so, every road cannot get fix.

Mr. Sharma: Why are you exposing the man?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: You do not care about the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

Mr. Roberts: “Whaaa!”

Mr. Sharma: Why you exposing where he living. Who ask you to do that? [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, I beg, [*Crosstalk*] the Minister of Local Government to take a tour of the La Brea Village Road, Lodge and Victor Streets, the streets in Paria Gardens, Pond Road, Black Heat Avenue, Marvin Crescent, all in Aripéro, Sobo Circular, Upper Sobo and Sobo Extension, Pablito Trace— [*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: What about Cemetery street?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Upper Merrimac, Fortune McCarthy Street, Jagdeo Samuel Street, Cane and Freedom Streets in Lot 10, Larrington, Unis, Billy and Savannah Road—

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Mr. Sharma: We writing, but you talking too fast.

Mr. Roberts: Where the green pickup park?

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—and Upper Salazar Trace, La Union Road, Industry Lane, S.T.O.L Road—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Sharma: Yeah.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: First Avenue.

Mr. Sharma: Yeah.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Lime Field Road.

Mr. Sharma: Yeah.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Alexander Beach Road.

Mr. Sharma: “Hm-mmm.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Dickie Trace Extension.

Mr. Seemungal: “You know where dem road is?”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Boyac Terrace.

Mr. Roberts: What about Gray Trace?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Union Village Road. Mr. Speaker, I challenge the Minister of Local Government that all the 969 projects you had none of them is as bad as those roads I have called. That is what makes the numbers game dangerous.

I come to the boast: issued lands to 500 persons under the Land for the Landless Programme.

Mr. Seemungal: “Hm-mmm!” Let me hear you now.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, I have had hundreds of constituents who came by my office for the form and they went and dropped the form as requested. Not one “ah dem” got through. Not one.

Mr. Sharma: It is a lottery system.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, from the records we had about 249. But, Mr. Speaker, you know what is impressive, that in the run-up for the Chaguanas by-election, strange enough, a good bit of people from Chaguanas West—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Indarsingh: Ah good bit is how much?

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Mr. F. Jeffrey:—got land from the Land for the Landless Programme. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Sharma: Shameless!

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, “I eh asking him, I eh asking yuh”, I need you to tell us how indeed they have arrived at that. Mr. Speaker, we had people from Chaguanas West, for example, Felicity and Cacandee Street.

Hon. Member: What?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the Member for Chaguanas West “aint” here because he and all had referred to the fact, that under the guise of trying to get citizens’ votes they were giving out to people [*Crosstalk*] that situation.

Mr. Sharma: He give you permission?

Mr. Roberts: They were giving Certificates of comfort—[*Inaudible*] Land for the Landless.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, I come to the San Fernando to Point Fortin Highway. [*Crosstalk*] Most people in the south-western peninsula welcome the highway.

Mr. Roberts: Yes, man. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: But, Mr. Speaker, hear the questions that we are asking—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: I see a green van, is that yours?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: People are asking me, is it true that high-ranking government officials have relatives who are suppliers of aggregates for the highway?

Hon. Members: No!

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Very good, very good. Is it true that high-ranking Government officials have relatives whose trucks form part of those used by JUSAMCO?

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Okay. Is it true that the highway could have started from Point Fortin with less problems, but the Golconda end was the preferred choice so that certain relatives of high-ranking government officials can become millionaires in quick time from an early settlement?

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Hon. Members: No!

Mr. Sharma: “It have a green van, is that yours?”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Is it true that some residents in the Grant Trace/National Mining area, whose properties lie in the pathway for the highway connector road are being blackmailed to accept government valuation for their properties?

Mr. Roberts: No.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Some residents were given a list of preferred valuers by NIDCO officials—

Mr. Speaker: Member for La Brea. Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for La Brea has expired.

Motion made: That the hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. C. Sharma*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Members.

Mr. McLeod: You see you have friends across here.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Of course, I always know that, that is why I am fighting for your road. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Sharma: “Ah want a road fix in Fyzabad.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: You have to come in my area, partner. [*Laughter*] Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Parliament, in true PNM style—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: “Oh gawd oh!”

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—I care about every person, whether you are voting for me or not, every person—[*Desk thumping*] Pablito Trace is not one in my stronghold, but I care about the people there.

Hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Boodoosingh Road, is not my supporters but, Mr. Speaker, they form part of my constituency.

Mr. Sharma: What about Chinee Village?

Mr. Roberts: Who you “was” hiding from in the pickup?

Miss Mc Donald: Hush your mouth!

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Mr. F. Jeffrey: You. [*Laughter and crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, allow the Member.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, you see, what is worrying about this NIDCO valuation, residents are told—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: By whom?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: By NIDCO. They have this list of valuers that are recommended by NIDCO. The residents must go to those valuers and pay for the valuation.

Hon. Members: “Nooo!”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: And pay them for the valuation.

Mr. Sharma: Why you misleading? “Yuh misleading the House.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, when they get that valuation they are under the pretence that, “da is what dey going to get”. But Mr. Speaker what happens is that the government valuers come subsequently, and their valuations tend to be much lower than what is offered by the preferred list of valuers. And I ask a simple question, in fact, this is what is happening: why let the people go through this preferred list if your valuers have to come after? It really does not make sense.

Mr. Sharma: That is nonsense.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: And that is why it does not make sense. And you ought to stop doing that.

Mr. Sharma: Move on, move on, next point.

Hon. Member: Private treaty negotiation, Jeffrey.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, the refurbishment of seven markets.

Mr. Sharma: Which one?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: I say wow, nice, nice, nice.

Mr. Sharma: You like Siparia market?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: But where are those seven markets, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Sharma: Siparia.

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Mr. F. Jeffrey: The Minister needs to look, take a serious look at the meat market and the vegetable market in La Brea. I have never seen a more dilapidated market than those two.

Mr. Roberts: How it get so? Last year?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: The Minister boasts of refurbishing seven. You see why it is dangerous about this numbers game?

Mr. Sharma: When you “was” in Government what did you do? Nothing?

Dr. Rambachan: Tomorrow I will answer you

Mr. Sharma: When you “was” in Government, what did you do?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Member for Fyzabad, your constituents come into my office for representation, that should tell you something.

Mr. Sharma: “Yuh fixed any road for them?”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, under food production—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: Now “yuh” talking.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: The Minister of Finance and the Economy talked about the removal of VAT on 7,000 food items—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: On breadfruit too.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—and he also spoke about the MoU between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana.

9.00 p.m.

I want to refer—just give me a minute—to an article on food prices. Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: Condensed milk coming down by 10 cents.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—network of NGOs, Hazel Brown, was unusually blunt—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: Good person.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—as she—“feels”—that—“the move”—to remove VAT on the range of food items—“was just a ‘fallacy decision made without thinking it through, except for the political impact on it.’”

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Mr. Speaker, I do not know of a housewife in Trinidad and Tobago who would say that food prices went down as a result of the removal of VAT. Not one!

Mr. Sharma: Plenty say.

Hon. Member: How many he asked?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Persad of the Supermarket Association of Trinidad and Tobago virtually confirms that VAT off food prices policy has flopped, when he commented:

“...consumers were ‘almost back to square one’ and were now digging deeper into their pockets, while some have been buying less.”

Clearly, the fixed disposable income of the consuming public can only buy so much. “It eh work. It eh work”, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Sharma: What is your recommendation?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, the whole quest—you know, the PNM get licks with that, for the rising food import bill. But God is a good God. In 2011, a record for the food import bill was registered in this country—\$4.7 billion. Who was in power in 2011? “Eh? Yuh could tell meh?”

Hon. Member: People who “geh” more money so they could spend.

Hon. Member: Is the UNC.

[MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: And they are now starting to think about the prices, “Oh, you know, they producing more, yuh know, but is just the prices and so on.”

Mr. Speaker, this whole question with the MoU with Guyana—it is mind-boggling.

Mr. Roberts: Spell MoU.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, it is mind-boggling.

Mr. Roberts: Spell MoU.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: You see, Madam Deputy Speaker, while you are breaking down or you are bulldozing people’s property, Egypt Trace, Dass Trace, Pineapple Smith, you are showing that “yuh doh care” about increase in food. Those lands are some of the most fertile lands in the country. And I remember the Member for Oropouche East used to talk about agricultural lands must be for agriculture.

Miss Hospedales: Right. “Dah was just—”

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Mr. F. Jeffrey: But now they are in Government, agricultural lands shall be used for housing.

Miss Hospedales: No, but they are bulldozing it.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: And you telling “meh” you want to deal with the food import bill.

Mr. Sharma: “Where to build de houses, in de sea?”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: You look like a dumb boy, “cor I eh hearing yuh”.

Mr. Sharma: “Spell dat.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, we need to be careful about this whole question of food security for the nation. In Los Iros I have some farmers there who have serious problems. We have poor farmers who have been cultivating the lands for 20, 30 and 40 years, who have been evicted and replaced by high-ranking government officials.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me explain to you—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Members: Ohh! [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, I want your protection, please. [*Crosstalk*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Please, Members, please allow the Member for La Brea to speak in silence. You may continue, Member.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: “Stan’ up. Stan’ up and talk.”

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member for Fyzabad, please.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: This is not a mad house.

Hon. Member: We know, “dah is why—”

Hon. Member: You look like a old patient. [*Laughter*]

Miss Hospedales: This is a comedy—

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: High-ranking government officials.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, in the case of Los Iros, what happens is that you have officials from the agricultural substation who are supposed to go and visit the sites.

Mr. Sharma: They do. They do.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: What is happening, they are not going to the sites. They are staying from their offices and making their recommendations, so whether people have the buff cards or not, it does not matter. And what has happened, we have a number of lands that were used, cultivated, by the farmers, they are no longer used for farming. But what happens, we have high-ranking government officials who use the land as an amorous park.

Hon. Member: As a what?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Amorous park.

Hon. Member: Amorous.

Hon. Member: Break it down for me.

Mr. Roberts: La Brea, “behave yuhself nah man”.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: “Take care I eh see yuh dong dey.” [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Roberts: Me?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Members, please.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: “Ah saw a green van park dere. Was you?” [*Laughter*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: We need to understand that this whole question of going to Guyana to cultivate the lands down there, Madam Deputy Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Finance and the Economy had consulted with the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago.

Hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Did he consult with the National Food Crop Farmers Association?

Mr. Sharma: Yes.

Miss Hospedales: No.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, my investigation reveals that no, they were not consulted.

Mr. Sharma: “Yuh wrong.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: And there is a saying that, “what sweet in goat mouth”, you know all the rest.

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Hon. Member: No.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Because what is going to happen, it is going to backfire, because this question about going down to Guyana to farm, has nothing to do with increasing the food supply in Trinidad and Tobago or to reduce the food import bill—it has nothing to do with that—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: “Dah was a PNM proposal.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—because remember some years ago the PNM had recommended—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: Guyana.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—the same regional thing there and they were using people from Grenada and St. Vincent and so on, to do the short crops, you know, short crops like the provision and so on. Right? And I was trying to get it from the *Hansard* but I did not get it in time, and I hope that I will get it subsequently to bring it back into because, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is very clear that when the shoe is on the other foot, it hurts.

Mr. Sharma: “When de slippers.”

Mr. Roberts: One foot?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: I want to ask the Commissioner of State Lands—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: Koonoolal.

Mr. Roberts: Koonoolal.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—to check on the agricultural leases in Los Iros to find out who are those high-ranking government officials. The people in Los Iros—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: It might be a matter for the police.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—they are asking for the roads to be maintained. They are asking for an expansion of the electricity supply.

Mr. Sharma: Done!

Mr. F. Jeffrey: They are asking for the promise of 26 ponds to be realized.

Hon. Member: Good.

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Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, they are asking also for praedial larceny to be brought under control. That is what the people in Los Iros are asking for. They want to cultivate their lands; they want to do the best for Trinidad and Tobago, but they are having problems.

But more than that, before the Siparia market was opened—the old market—farmers from Los Iros used to go to the market to sell their produce. Since the new market has been opened, they no longer have access to sell at the Siparia market.

Dr. Rambachan: Wholesale or retail?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: “Ah cyar say.” Right? But they have problems and I ask for your intervention to see, for example, what could be done.

Mr. Sharma: How many of them?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: It is about 27 farmers.

Mr. Seemungal: “Write meh right away with respect to dem farmers.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, employment. You talk about creating employment, but we have a lot of people who went home who were working under CEPEP; PNM people at that.

Mr. Sharma: Oh God, Jeffrey—

Mr. F. Jeffrey: And I ask the question, Madam Deputy Speaker—
[*Interruption*]

Miss Hospedales: That is true.

Mr. Sharma: Sing a new tune.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: —you gave CEPEP contracts to your financiers, and I ask a simple question: tell me, La Brea contractors like Spence Engineering, Roger Wiggins, Shari Contractors, Bernard Despot, why were they denied CEPEP contracts? Why? I want the CEPEP Minister to tell this nation why Spence Engineering, Roger Wiggins, Bernard Despot and Shari Contractors, were denied CEPEP contracts.

Dr. Rambachan: Did they ever have the contracts?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: As a matter of fact, all the persons from the La Brea constituency who applied for CEPEP contracts must be told why they were overlooked—
[*Interruption*]

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Mr. Sharma: Okay, next question.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—and contractors like Dass from Penal could come to La Brea and have four and five teams operating. That could never be right. Because you have no contractor from La Brea operating in Penal, but Penal contractors could come into La Brea and work. It cannot be.

Mrs. Thomas: That is not right.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: It cannot be! It is morally wrong; it is economically wrong; it makes absolutely no sense! [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: Good point. Move on.

Hon. Member: Where he hired people from?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: I also find it insulting, Madam Deputy Speaker—
[*Interruption*]

Mr. Sharma: Have the people been hired from La Brea?

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—that recently we had the paving of the road from Vance River to Vessigny.

Mr. Roberts: “Dey get dat?”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Yeah.

Mr. Roberts: “Yuh luckier dan me, boy.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: But it is mystifying that we have a very large contractor, Namalco, who could also do the very said road paving, and I ask the question: why was he not invited to tender for the project?

Dr. Rambachan: Ask him where he is working for millions of dollars. Go and ask him that question.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: And the question is asked—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rambachan: Ask him what “he doing in Picton”.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—is it true that to get a contract that you have to finance or sponsor some private function of some high-ranking government official?

Mr. Roberts: No!

Hon. Member: Ask Chaguanas West.

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Thank you very much for that answer.

Mr. Roberts: “Well yuh askin.”

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister brought back the whole question of the growth poles made popular by the French economist, Francois Perroux.

Hon. Member: “Yuh treading some dangerous—

Mr. F. Jeffrey: And it sounds great on paper. Madam Deputy Speaker, on September 08, 2010 the then Minister of Finance placed growth poles on the national agenda. He mentioned five growth poles, and leaked to the House that a new industrial estate was going to be created, but not in La Brea. They also told us that the power supply from the TGU, which was designed to supply the industries on the estates, was now going to be placed on the national grid. It means that that new industrial estate is doomed before it starts.

In this budget, the Minister tells us about the completion of a cluster mapping pilot study for central Trinidad at the level of the growth poles, but the south-western growth pole cluster mapping study is still far from complete. You finished the one in Couva, but “yuh cyar finish de one in de south-western peninsula”.

One would have expected that given the high unemployment in the south-western peninsula that they would have dealt with the south-western peninsula first and go to the central growth pole that has full employment.

9.15 p.m.

I have found it offensive that the six areas of business: retail trade, agribusiness, downstream energy services, cultural and heritage tourism for central, but look at what you all gave the south-western peninsula, urban development, agriculture, fishing and tourism.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the south-western peninsula is the birthplace of the energy sector, as far back as 1857, when the first oil well was drilled in the world, near the Pitch Lake in La Brea. How come you leave out the energy services for the south-western peninsula? In Point, we have Trinmar, we have the LNG and so on, how come? But in central Trinidad they get the nice stuff and so on. Fishing, well we know it is problematic. You have those deep-sea trawlers scraping the seabed, you could hardly get fish. You have piracy on the high seas with those “gaurdias” and so on, and you want to give us fishing.

Mr. Roberts: We buying the trawlers.

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Mr. F. Jeffrey: Agriculture: “you wouldn’t even fix the roads for de farmers an dem to get access to their farms, but you want us to do agriculture. We ent serious.”

Tourism: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am came in this House and I talked about the La Brea Pitch Lake. They say it is the eighth wonder of the world. I am very serious that when you look at the state of the La Brea Pitch Lake it does not invite or entice people to want to come.

Mrs. Thomas: Member for Fyzabad, you hear that for tourism?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: I have said: make the place look presentable; prune the vegetation and make the thing exciting. But no, it is a big joke. But you are telling us, that you want to deal with tourism. Madam Deputy Speaker, do you know last year they told us that there was a port for cruise ship to come to La Brea? Strange enough, in this budget you hear nothing about the cruise ship in La Brea. Strange enough! We have nice beaches: Palo Seco, Los Iros, Erin, Vance River, Carat Shed Bay. They have no bathroom facilities, they have no water, and you are telling us about tourism. Madam Deputy Speaker, we have got to be joking.

Hon. Member: Member, where is that?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: The water taxi terminal: Madam Deputy Speaker, I must admit I was down at the San Fernando terminal and it really looks good. It is very accommodating and I want to say hats off to the Minister of Tourism.

Mr. Roberts: What?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: I give credit where credit is due.

Mr. Roberts: Yes, man. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. F. Jeffrey: But, the problem is: why do we not want to provide the water taxi for the people of Point Fortin and La Brea? Why? What is the reason? Madam Deputy Speaker, have you travelled on that road on a morning to see the bumper to bumper traffic from as far back as Rousillac and so on, to come up to San Fernando and then to go up to Port of Spain? Have you seen that?

Madam Deputy Speaker, for the year 2013, we are in the month of September, and the Z series is almost finished. It means 10,000 more vehicles are on the road. [*Crosstalk*] So what does this mean? That the constipation on the road— [*Interruption*]

Hon. Members: Constipation?

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Mr. F. Jeffrey: Yes, it is constipation because it could hardly flow. You could hardly flow on mornings. [*Laughter*] Constipation!

Hon. Member: Rub it?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Yes. “Sometimes you are on that Oropouche stretch, right, and you cyar move.” [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: Senna bush!

Hon. Member: They need some senna bush down there. Minister of Food Production?

Mr. F. Jeffrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, what we need is a multistorey car park—

Mr. Sharma: Brilliant idea.

Mr. F. Jeffrey:—in San Fernando, so that you could encourage motorists to use the water taxi and leave their vehicles in San Fernando. That will take a lot of vehicles off the road. I do not know what is the reason, what is the “keep-back” in this thing because it cannot be just a dollar and cent question. When you think about the time lost on the road, man hours lost, the drop in productivity, we need to consider that it makes sense to do something about that water taxi service. I am certain that my good friend, the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, who lives in my constituency, will travel on the water taxi if it is extended further south.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in this budget presentation, I want the hon. Minister to reflect a little bit because some of these things in the budget do not lend themselves for good governance, they do not lend themselves for nation building. What we are supposed to do is share the resources of the country equitably. That is all we are asking for, share the resources equitably. Let every part get piece of the action.

And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, as I take my seat, I trust that people like the Member for Fyzabad, who is now the Minister of Tourism, would recognize the importance of doing something about the Pitch Lake in La Brea and the beaches.

I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member for Chaguanas East and Minister of Transport.

The Minister of Transport (Hon. Stephen Cadiz): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Of course, as with all of us on this side, it gives me great pleasure in contributing to this budget, for this financial year 2014.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I recognize and acknowledge that under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, our country continues towards serious economic growth, facilitating sustainable development and maintaining very high levels of confidence in our economy by members of our society. I must also thank my colleagues in Government who have each contributed in their own way to ensuring that their efforts will lead to the economy continuing along a growth path.

Mr. Roberts: Yes, man. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. S. Cadiz: Madam Deputy Speaker, the entities which fall under the ambit of the Ministry of Tourism at present, include the Port Authority, PTSC, the Airports Authority, National Helicopter Services, VMCOTT—that is the vehicle maintenance company—Plipdeco, Licensing Division, Maritime Services Division and the Water Taxi Service that the Member for La Brea just spoke about.

I wish to assure this honourable House that I will continue with the ongoing projects and the mandate of the Ministry of Transport, notwithstanding my recent assignment to this portfolio. I also wish to thank my predecessors for having laid a solid foundation for growth and development in this sector, while ensuring that there is good governance in all the entities under my portfolio.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I sat here for the last couple days and, of course, listened to the wonderful presentation by the Minister of Finance and the Economy, and then it went downhill from there because the other side had to reply and I know that is how it works. But listening to the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, in his contribution, all he spoke about was no vision, no vision, no vision and came up with this wonderful new vision now of “Vision 2030”. Really and truly, it is time that the other sides really and truly sit and understand what this whole budget presentation means and, to sit and understand and when they listen to the contributions by us on this side and they see the progress that this country is going through, acknowledge that “nah”. If you want to make noise about something else, that is fine, but facts are facts. It is not like the other side where they talk about—what kinds of facts?

Hon. Members: True facts.

Hon. S. Cadiz: Yes. There is a term called “true facts” and then they have—I do not know. I do not know how they determine what is fact and what is not fact. But here it is that the Leader of the Opposition comes and speaks about what kind of budget is this, again no vision and, therefore, no growth, no this, no that;

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everything to him is no. Yet still, and I quote from—there is an ad that the American Chamber, excerpts from their TransForum and I quote:

We applaud this consultative approach of people-centred development and trust that Government will continue this practice which is essential to a properly functioning democracy.

That is only praise, Madam Deputy Speaker. There is nothing else other than praise for this budget. Here it is that the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin North/East reading from the Ernst & Young Report on the budget, and the only thing he could find was the statements that were made where they say, of course, you could do better. We all know that and we say that quite openly.

This budget is about an ongoing programme and, yes, you can always tweak it, you can always make it better, but he fails to even start to mention the positive remarks that were made in the Ernst & Young Report. For instance, from Norman Christie, the Regional President of bp Trinidad and Tobago:

The 2013/14 fiscal package will enhance the competitiveness of the natural gas sector. The increased investments these measures will promote will result in a larger economic pie and redound to the benefit of Trinidad and Tobago.

A very, very positive statement. But, of course, as usual, the Member for Diego Martin North/East only reads half the story all the time and, therefore, he comes up with these wild, crazy statements.

Charles Pashley of Prestige Holdings Limited:

In broad terms, the focus on infrastructural development in the budget is correct to foster growth in our economy. The Minister of Finance and the Economy should be congratulated for this.

But he forgot to read that, okay, as usual.

Then you have Mr. Norman Sabga, Chairman and Chief Executive of the Ansa McAL Group of Companies:

“We generally view the Minister’s openness with the public in the lead up to the Budget on matters expected to be contained therein as a positive and hope this trend of collaboration continues.”

Gervase Warner, President and Group CEO of Neal and Massy, and he had a number of items that he listed here:

1. I was encouraged by the Minister’s succinct and businesslike focus.

2. The Minister and the Government are to be congratulated on the improvement in the 2013 deficit incurred versus the budget.

And therefore, you have the leaders of business in Trinidad and Tobago making these comments. These are unsolicited. This is not a Government ad. This is what they say.

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Commerce, and I quote:

“The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce is generally pleased that the Minister of Finance has delivered a National Budget in a concise manner.

We commend him on listing the achievements and we are happy that he incorporated a report on the progress of government initiatives over the past year...”

And that is what this Government continues to do. We continue to report to the people, we continue to bring the information to the people in a manner in which the man in the street or the captains of industry can understand and know what we are about.

Finally, the Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago—and I must say I commend the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs who stood here this evening and debunked all of what was said on the other side there about the energy sector. Debunked all of it, and yet still they will continue to push to say you are not doing nothing, there is no growth, the economy in a bad state. Yet still you cannot get people to hire these days, but the economy is in a bad state. I want to know, how do you equate that? How do you equate full employment to a bad economy when a place like poor Grenada, 100 miles north of here, has something like 40 per cent unemployment? Those are the economies that are in trouble, not this economy.

The energy chamber: “These are positive changes to the tax regime which should encourage new and much needed investment into oil and gas production.

These measures should help in turning around declining oil production and overcoming the gas supply constraints that have characterized the last few years.”

And those last few years what they are talking about, are the last few years for that side, where they refused to put in the incentives, they refused to build the energy sector, and hence the reason it is this Government that has to come now

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and look and re-examine all the incentives to get the industry back up and running where, of course, we are going to be proud of our reserves.

9.30 p.m.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I really and truly do not want to spend too much time at all on what they say, because it is a stuck record on the other side. They come here, week after week, preaching the same ridiculous nonsense. I just sat here and listened to the Member for La Brea for the last three years. The last three years, the Member for La Brea has come here and made the same point over and over when it is his party that was in power, for however many years, and did absolutely nothing and up to now none of them on the side would ever, ever open their mouth and admit, “When we were there for 10 years, we did not light playing fields; when we were there for 10 years, we did not do this; we were there for 10 years, we did not fix the roads down in La Brea; when we were there for 10 years, we did not fix all the drainage in Chaguanas East. When we were there for 10 years, we left Laventille and Morvant exactly how we met it in 1956”. They would never ever sit down and admit that, but we know better and the people who we serve, they also know better.

But I just want to deal with a couple and correct certain statements that were made. I am not going to comment on tourism. The new Minister of Tourism, the Member for Fyzabad, will make his statements. But there was one statement that was made by the Member of Parliament for St. Ann’s East who spoke about the new marketing initiative, the Education and Awareness Programme for the Ministry of Tourism, “It is all about us”, and she quoted saying that there was a company called KV Marketing. It is not KV marketing, it is FV Marketing and FV marketing is an extremely well-respected marketing company in Trinidad and Tobago, handling some very, very large accounts in Trinidad and Tobago. So I just wanted to correct that because she asked: who is this KV? I do not even know who KV is because KV does not exist so I just wanted to make sure that that was corrected.

The Member for Diego Martin North/East, and of course his wild accusations, he stands there for his full time and makes all these crazy statements. I know the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs dealt with him with the issue of the cross-border gases. But one of the things that he spent his last two minutes or three minutes on was the issue of airfares, and the airfares going to Canada over Christmas, and how CAL, even though the Minister of Finance and the Economy

says that there will be no change in the cost of the airfares, he uses, quite cleverly, the fact that the in-season, the high season for airlines in Trinidad and Tobago is the Christmas period.

If you look at the airfares that are being quoted by CAL today, it is the same airfares that were quoted last year and probably the year before, and therefore, it is no real difference. Airfares in Trinidad and Tobago are a competitive issue, and therefore, CAL will obviously have to be extremely careful about the fares that they charge. So whether it is CAL or any other airline flying in and out of Canada or the United States or London or wherever, they have to be competitive.

So this thing that he jumps up and says, “The Minister of Finance and the Economy says that there will be no increase in airfares and look at what they charging already”. That is a normal issue; that is what he does normally and instead of coming here and misleading the public about the fares going up over Christmas, all he had to say is that I know for a fact that over Christmas, the fares do, in fact, go up. But again, that is his modus operandi, to come here and only give half the story, and “he does pelt some big stone and then as soon as he pelt the big stone, he fly out” because he knows he cannot stand up to the scrutiny, but that is a normal thing for him.

The issue of—and again, you hear them, “nothing for La Brea, nothing for Laventille East, nothing for Laventille West, nothing for Diego Martin West, nothing for Port of Spain South, nothing for Point Fortin. But I do not understand this.” When I sit and I speak with the hon. Minister for Sport, the Member of Parliament for D’Abadie/O’Meara, and he goes through the list of exactly what work has been done in what constituency, “doh matter how you preach to next door, like matchstick break in dey ears”, because they refuse to acknowledge the fact that there is work going on across the board, and whether it is in their controlled constituencies, whether it is in Tobago, it does not matter. This is a Government for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

We started off like that and we will continue in that vein, unlike those on the other side when the shoe was on the other foot—and they terrorized the constituencies that have not supported the PNM, terrorized them. And every single long-standing Member here who has experienced the PNM being in power as a parliamentarian on the opposite side, they know exactly what I am talking about, and not one of them on the other side could say anything different to that. They terrorized those constituencies that did not vote for the PNM.

So when they sit there and they say for 10 years or since 1956 when the people were in power, and you look at the condition of Laventille/Morvant, it

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really makes you wonder. But they expect the People's Partnership Government to come in now and fix everything that they refused to fix for the 50-odd years of being independent.

And really and truly, the public in this country need to sit down and assess and understand again. You need to sit and understand what is being said here in this Parliament, because those on the other side will continue to blame us, for what? For their own misgivings! To continue to blame, for what? For the bad service that they have provided for the last 50-something years? That is not for us; that is for them to go to their constituents and admit that they failed the constituents over the last 51 years.

Madam Deputy Speaker, before I go into the actual meat of the budget for the Ministry of Transport, I just want to do a very, very quick report on the issues in Chaguanas East. I want to thank the hon. Minister of Works and Infrastructure for the work that he—I know in every single constituency but I am going to speak alone about Chaguanas East today, okay. The support that the Minister has given me, the work that we have been able to do in the constituency never seen before, whether it is roads, whether it is drains, whether it is the issue of the drainage crossings on Endeavour Road and Bridle Road—those are main drainage crossings that created flooding problems for Chaguanas East. All of that we have been able to do in the tenure of the Minister of Works and Infrastructure.

Issues of the sporting grounds and sitting here next to the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara, the hon. Minister of Sport—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: I am down here, now.

Hon. S. Cadiz:—who has gone down, “ah doh know where he going after dat.” [*Laughter*] But the sporting grounds that we have been able to do a complete makeover, new pavilions being installed, and the Member for Naparima with the lighting of these grounds. Madam Deputy Speaker, when you drive down the highway at night and you look over to the eastern side of the highway in the constituency of Chaguanas East, the whole place is lit up. We must have about five or six grounds where brand new lighting has been installed. Okay, again, providing the services.

When I see the work that the hon. Minister of the Environment and Water Resources is doing as far as water mains and what have you are concerned, I mean, when I met the Member for Chaguanas East, there were extension pipes running off mains, you had streets with no mains at all. You have to run pipes from however long, hundreds of yards to the main road. Again, that is something that we are all changing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the recent storm, the twister that came through the Jerningham area on that fateful Friday; within hours, we had teams outside from the Self-Help Commission. That happened Friday evening, full evaluations were done on the Saturday, the reports went in on the Sunday, Monday the purchase orders were developed, and by Tuesday, within four days, less than four days, residents who were affected, the 12 residents that were affected by the twister got their purchase orders.

By the following Saturday, back down in my constituency and “you only hearing welding plants running and hammer pounding on a roof”—[*Desk thumping*] roofs being reinstalled. Okay? And this is through the Commission for Self-Help, and again, that is an institution that works and works extremely well, so much so that we have actually built close to 12 houses now. These are homes on people’s land that the homes are literally falling down and we have been able to arrange for the Self-Help Commission to come in.

Within two weeks, “we lay foundation, put up block walls, roof is on, plastering going on”. We are actually constructing houses within four weeks to completion—four weeks to completion. [*Interruption*] These are full two-bedroom houses, indoor plumbing, everything. I mean, really and truly, and it is hats off to the various agencies and this Government that work because every single Minister, every single, representative on this side works to ensure that this work is being carried out. So when we talk about service to the people, when we talk about delivery of service, this is what this Government is about.

In the same Ernst & Young Report, there is a quote from Warren Buffet:

“Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.”

And that is exactly what this Government is about.

This Government comes into office in 2010 creating the value for every single taxpayer’s dollar that is being spent, creating value for it. That is what—when we talk about good budgeting and a good system being put into place. We had to come in and change decades of mismanagement by those on the other side and that is not an easy task. That is taking—“like a businessman taking a very poor, sick little company” and making it into something in the space of three years. It is extremely difficult when you have a business in a condition like what we met—Government—to do that turnaround. Extremely difficult!

You have a public service that needs overhauling; you have a whole way in which you are budgeting. All of that needs overhauling and I know the Minister of Finance and the Economy is working very hard to do that, I know that the

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Minister of Public Administration is also working very hard. All of us had to do this work in our Ministries and yet still within 36 months, you have seen the change. Why and how do we see the change? Because we are seeing value for money which is spent. How do we see the change? We see it by the work that is going on outside there—work across this island, across this twin-island nation.

So it is happening, yes, everybody is going to say, “well, yuh coulda do more”. Of course, we could do more; of course we could have done it different, but the fact of the matter is we chose a path to ensure that the services are being delivered, and it is working without a doubt. So when I hear them on the other side speaking about we have no vision, “we eh no wha we doing” and no growth and making fun and jokes about the growth poles and what have you, “they could ratiray all dey want you know.” The fact of the matter is we on this side are fixing Trinidad and Tobago, and they on that side, “what they doing?” “Ratiray”; that is all they could do. Therefore, without a doubt, hats off to our Prime Minister—okay—for getting this group together to ensure that these services are being delivered.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, the issues of the Ministry of Transport and the good news is: I am going to be very short. When we look at the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, here it is that we have a commercial port, okay, that provides a whole series of services to the country, and of course, it is a container port for the majority of the goods that go through the Port of Port of Spain. It is considered a container port. The management of the authority undertook a project to create some additional 500-container ground slots with a capacity of total storage of 100,000 TEUs. TEU is a container measurement meaning 20-foot equivalent; that is how you judge the system. What has that done? By creating all this additional space, when the businessmen talk about how long and how difficult it is to clear goods from the port, by just creating this additional parking space for these containers, we have reduced the truck turnaround time from 90 minutes to 55 minutes.

So we continue to look at the inefficiencies in the port to make it a far more efficient port. So when people talk about it is taking weeks to clear containers between the Port Authority, and of course, customs and excise, we will find ways and means to ensure that it is reduced from weeks down to days. That is one of the top priorities of this Government to ensure that happens.

Then we look at the inter-island ferry service. The inter-island ferry service from all reports, the majority of people who comment on the inter-island ferry service come back with a good report. Yes, there will always be, whether it is

delay or whether there are issues regarding the serviceability of the ferries. In fact, one ferry was down for the last couple of days, and I have been told that it will be back in service tomorrow, but the fact of the matter is that we are aware. We are aware of these things and to ensure that we have an efficient service.

9.45 p.m.

We spent in the vicinity of \$4.3 million in this last year and that was a project for where? For Scarborough; okay. That is for Tobago. So when you hear them talking about we not going in any areas where the Opposition is, that is not so. We spent \$4.3 million in Scarborough which would be the relocation of the existing cruise ship terminal, the extension of the passenger waiting area, relocation of ticketing area, the ceiling of the atrium, the extension of reception area and reconfiguration of the baggage handling area and again these are things on the ferry service that we understand.

We understand that this is a service that we are providing to the nationals of this country and therefore the service has to be of an extremely high efficiency. One of the things I want to mention briefly about the ferries—the ferries right now, Madam Deputy Speaker, consume in the vicinity, if we were to be purchasing fuel at the regular retail price, we would be spending in the vicinity of \$110 million on fuel. So of course one of the things that we are going to be looking at, without a doubt, is: can we run those ferries on alternative fuel?

Can we run those ferries on LNG fuel? Can we run them on CNG fuel? And that is an exercise, this is not rocket science, these ferries are already built, they are already running ferries on LNG and CNG and we need to know exactly what it is, what it will entail and therefore we can reduce what should be, \$110 million fuel bill per annum, reduce that considerably. Of course the savings there can go into creating a better service for the ferry service to and from Tobago.

The issue of the reconstruction of a cargo ramp and a guide jetty in Port of Spain, that is being looked at right now and we expect to award a contract in the vicinity of just over \$15 million for that particular cargo ramp and jetty guide. One of the big pluses that we are going to have this year, Madam Deputy Speaker, is finally, finally the Port of Port of Spain and Plipdeco will have container scanners. Those scanners are expected to arrive here within the next couple months and we will have those container scanners up and running at both ports, which of course, are going to provide the Customs and Excise Division a very, very high level of efficiency where we are not talking about unstuffing every

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single container. The container scanners will do the job to ensure that when you say you have cricket bats in the container, it is cricket bats and not—
[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Anything else.

Hon. S. Cadiz:—“any kinda other bat; awright?” So when we look at the efficiencies on tax collection, that people are paying the proper tax when they are importing goods, of course the big plus for the container scanners will be the issue of national security and I will be speaking, having conversations with the Minister of National Security on that, to ensure that we do in fact have that as the top priority.

Trinidad and Tobago does not produce any arms other than a “phukni”, “awright”, or slingshot so everything, every single firearm has to be imported and therefore it has to come through somewhere and therefore if it is coming through any one of the commercial ports, these container scanners will help us in the detection of that illegal trade coming in here.

There is talk of the development of additional port facilities in the south-western peninsula, that is a Cabinet decision and we are looking at that right now. The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs alluded to the fact that the Panamax vessels are very, very large vessels. Can Trinidad and Tobago be used as a trans-shipment port? Because what it would entail is vessels bringing containers, these huge vessels bringing containers from Panama, offloading them in La Brea or the south-western peninsula and then of course transferring them to other areas.

So maybe the next budget presentation, La Brea would not be complaining that much, that he would have, in fact, new facilities down in La Brea, hiring people from that area.

Mr. Sharma: He might be working on a boat.

Hon. S. Cadiz: He might be working on a boat. The issue of public transport, the PTSC—and again Madam Deputy Speaker, we have an operational fleet, a core fleet of 351 buses and we run on average about 85 per cent availability and 85 per cent availability is, maybe not the figure that we would want, we would want a higher level of efficiency for the PTSC and again they have come a long way. The PTSC has done a remarkable job over the last few years in creating these efficiencies and making, finally, a bus service that we can actually be proud of.

And of course PTSC is charged with responsibility of providing a safe, reliable, affordable and economic transportation service for all the citizens of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Right now the corporation operates a total of about 148 fixed routes throughout Trinidad and Tobago from its main hub at South Quay, Port of Spain and of course the other sub depots in San Fernando, Chaguanas, Point Fortin, Sangre Grande, Arima and Tobago. What was an interesting statistic, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the ridership. In October 2012, there was a ridership of 756,119 people in that one month. In August of 2013, a year after we see a ridership of 862 plus thousand people riding on the public transport system provided by PTSC which is an increase of approximately 12 per cent. So we are seeing a 12 per cent increase in the ridership of PTSC and that is, of course, something that we are going to be working on.

I would be very proud to stand in this House one day and just say that the millionth passenger was riding on a PTSC bus for that particular month and that is a figure that we are going after. Of course, we also have the recently launched, in October of 2012, the Elderly and Differently Abled Mobile service, the ELDAMO, with 24 buses. And during a period, Madam Deputy Speaker, between January to July over 19,000 people accessed that particular service. So here it is, and it was never there before. How were these elderly people, these differently-abled people, how were they moving around? "Is by friend and family, you know."

Dr. Ramadharsingh: They were shut in.

Hon. S. Cadiz: Yeah. You could not move, you could not move around. You could not go shopping, you could not do this because you had no means of doing it. Over 19,000 people. And what a simple service, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is not rocket science. This is a Government that understands what good service is to the citizens of this country. So when we talk about value for money, that is what this Government is providing, real value for money.

Those buses operate, again, out of all the depots: Port of Spain, San Fernando, Point Fortin, Sangre Grande, Arima, Chaguanas and Tobago. So the other thing, of course is—we have the maxi-taxi school transport concessionaire system; and again that is a total, we have a total of approximately 316 maxis that are assigned to transport approximately 34,000 children. So 34,000 children a day moving around in this other service.

So you have your regular passengers on the regular, what we know as the PTSC buses. You have the ELDAMO buses moving over 19,000 people in six

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months, and then you have of course the maxi-taxi school transport system. And again every single area that is operated, every single service that is run by the PTSC, we will look towards creating greater efficiencies in the organization.

Then there is the hop-a-bus initiative which is being worked together in collaboration with the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training and that is where we have this initiative, this hop-a-bus initiative operating in the St. Augustine area, which of course is a university city; and again a very, very successful initiative at that. Then there is a whole host of new routes that we are establishing and I will say it publicly today that I am going to ask every single Member of Parliament on this side and every single Member of Parliament on that side, to submit to me any routes that they would like to see established by the PTSC. If there are any areas in their constituency that are not being serviced and may require a service there, of course we will take a very serious look at it.

So the other areas of PTSC that we will be concerned about would be the cost of running PTSC and can we realize additional sources of revenue. We are a public service, we do provide this public service and therefore we know it will not be commercially viable in its entirety but there are ways and means in which we can cut cost. There are ways and means in which we can raise revenue, for instance the wrapping of the buses for advertising. All of that is a new revenue stream for the PTSC.

The issues of concessionaire booths, et cetera, at the various bus terminuses, all of these are things that we are going to be looking at, because we need to be able to generate our own income and not constantly have to depend on the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy. So these are all things that we are going to be looking at.

Another project that we are working with the PTSC of course, is the issue of fuel and we are looking at the CNG conversion of as much of the fleet as possible. Madam Deputy Speaker, just for your information, the current annual fuel consumption of PTSC is in excess of 7,400,000 litres of fuel every single year and at an unsubsidized cost, so if you had to pay full retail price for that fuel, you would be talking about \$42 million dollars, just buying fuel for the bus fleet.

So one of the things that we are looking at doing, of course, to be able to cut cost is by doing the CNG conversion which is already happening; we have 35 brand new CNG buses that are going to be delivered in the next couple months which will be put into the system as soon as they arrive. There has been some discussion, further discussion of the mass transit system. I just want to say that the

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Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, in his contribution as the Leader of the Opposition, went on and on and on and on and on and on about this rapid rail, “racket rail” as we call it.

They fail to realize, when he talks about vision and he “talking ’bout Vision 2020 and now gone to “Vision 2030” and ah sure by next year we go be up to vision 2040”, what they fail to realize, they are the ones, who in 1968 or 1969 shut down the rail system. [*Desk thumping*] Madam Deputy Speaker, I, in my short life on this earth, I understand there are two things governments do not do, one is to dismantle an existing rail system, you do not do that, and the second thing is you do not dismantle a runway; and I think on that side they did both: digging up the runway in Tamana Park and also the removal and shut down of the Trinidad rail system to come 40 years after to ask the taxpayers for \$22 billion to build back a rail system that they shut down.

Mr. Indarsingh: Reject them.

Hon. S. Cadiz: That is how they think, you know, that is the vision for next door, that is their vision. “Mash it up, break it up, leave it, let it destroy itself and den” come back and ask the taxpayers for billions of dollars to build back something that they could have worked differently to make sure that they provided the correct service. So 2020, 2030, 2040, it is the same 20—[*Desk thumping*—they have no difference.

So do not let them fool this public. Do not let them fool the taxpayers as if they have the answer, they do not have the answer. This Government, this People’s Partnership Government, every single thing that we have said we are going to do, every single thing, we make sure that it is properly structured, et cetera, that we can get it going.

I then move on to the Airports Authority, Madam Deputy Speaker, and of course an airport—airports are the lifeblood of any island state; that is the lifeblood. You can come here by ship but the majority of people, they come through the airports. And we have the airport at Piarco which is our main airport and of course we have the ANR Robinson International Airport in Tobago.

Let me deal with Tobago first because they always say we never talk about Tobago, we “doh do nutten in Tobago.” Tobago, Tobago. The Member of Parliament for Laventille East/Morvant spent her whole contribution talking about Tobago, where the Leader of the Opposition and Member for Diego Martin West said nothing about Tobago.

Miss Cox: That is not true. That is not true.

Hon. S. Cadiz: So I do not know if it is as a result of not making mention of that then Laventille East/Morvant felt “well leh me throw in a lil ting about Tobago, so leh me spend my time talking about Tobago.” We will be fixing the ANR Robinson International Airport in Tobago. That work is going to start very, very soon and that is with the, bringing of the existing terminal building up to a much higher level than what it is now, as far as the international arrivals are concerned. There are some space constraints in Tobago and therefore we will have to find very creative ways and means of fixing that. Of course the roof has some structural issues which we will also correct immediately.

10.00 p.m.

Then there is Piarco. What are we going to be doing with Piarco? Again, airports all over the world pay for themselves; they pay for themselves. We have to find ways and means of generating enough income from these airports, where we can then take the excess revenues to develop the airports further. So what are we doing?

We have the North Aviation Business Park. There is a huge acreage north of the existing terminal building that we are going to be turning—the work has already started—that into a business park. Of course, that business park can house a whole host of different types of companies from new airport hotels and conference centre to retail business to warehousing. You name it, aviation-related services, a free trade zone area, et cetera.

Then one of the other areas that we are looking at, of course, would be the issue of airport security, which is a key issue these days and we all know that. So that is going to be upgraded. We are upgrading the fire alarm system. We are upgrading the infrastructure for the perimeter lighting, upgrading the emergency power supply, completion of architectural design works and tender documents for the renovation, as I said, of the ANR Robinson International Airport, completion of design and tender documents for roof repair in Tobago. All of that is for what? What are we doing all of that for? We are trying to create a passenger/customer satisfaction level that we could match anywhere, not only in the Caribbean, but in the western hemisphere and that, of course, with the Member for Fyzabad, with his new thrust now with tourism, all that is going to augur well for that. We have an international grade airport, both in Trinidad and in Tobago.

We have already seen the benefit of promoting Trinidad and Tobago. We have already seen we have additional Copa flights out of Panama. So we have two

flights out of Panama from Copa. We have the Apollo Group that is going to start flying in December. Then we have WestJet that started. WestJet started off with only flying in the high season and then soon they saw what the benefits of coming down to Trinidad were and they run a year-round flight now. Of course, JetBlue just announced their flights; that they are going to start their flights out of New York and Fort Lauderdale in the early part of 2014. It means that Piarco and ANR Robinson are destinations that these airlines would want to come to.

From what I understand Trinidad and Tobago, we produce here something around I think 15,000 barrels of jet fuel a day. Again, we are not promoting Piarco in particular as a transit hub where those airlines can come through Trinidad to refuel. There is a whole business there which we are going to be looking at to promote Trinidad and Tobago and, of course, every aircraft that lands here will be bringing people. That, of course, generates additional revenue streams for the tourism business.

Piarco International, what are we going to be doing about that actual terminal? We are looking at new restaurants, new duty-free shopping, consumer-friendly surroundings, additional check-in facilities, new airfreight warehousing facilities, better fiscal management of the airport, as far as collection. I understand there are issues with the receivables and what have you, out at Piarco—so proper fiscal management of the airport. Of course, maintaining our safety ratings, absolutely essential. All of that, then we would start pursuing and really and truly going after additional airlines to come through because the airplanes bring people, people go through the airport, people spend money in the airport, the concessionaires are happy and that is how the business operates.

We also have an Executive Jet Centre, which is at the old terminal. That is the south terminal of the airport. From what I gather, that is really and truly totally underutilized and we have to find creative ways and means of getting Trinidad to be an Executive Jet Centre stop. Of course, who are the people who fly in these executive jets? These are people who own businesses. These are people who are industrialists, bankers, you name it. Get them to start stopping in Trinidad and Tobago whether it is for refuelling or for whatever reason. Again that opens up the world to additional investment and what have you. So all of these things are connected by a simple airport. We can make Trinidad and Tobago into the hub, for instance, that Panama is. Panama is a huge hub for Latin America and Trinidad and Tobago should be right up there with Panama.

Dr. Rambachan: Copa Airlines.

Hon. S. Cadiz: Yes Copa started flying a new flight in the morning now.

National Helicopter Services: again I must say a company that—a net profit after tax of \$19.7 million and that is not normally associated with a state-owned company and here it is that National Helicopters is doing an excellent job down there in Couva. Of course, there is a whole host of things that they would like to do, purchase of additional aircraft and providing additional services and enhancing the current premises and what have you, they have down in Couva. I know “yuh doh like tuh hear de word Couva, Laventille West.” But the fact is, it is there providing an excellent service.

Mr. Hypolite: “Go ahead and talk yuh talk nah boy.”

Hon. S. Cadiz: Then we talk about Point Lisas—“ay-ay” another company in Couva, Plipdeco. I did not realize we had so many companies down in Couva.

Mr. Hypolite: Talk about Fyzabad, talk about Oropouche.

Hon. S. Cadiz: But here it is that we have Plipdeco. Again, Plipdeco is working every single day to improving the efficiencies of the port at Plipdeco and, therefore, all I could say is, again Plipdeco is a success story and we will continue to work with Plipdeco. We will continue to look and see what it is that Plipdeco can do for this country with port expansion, et cetera.

There are a couple of things that they have installed. They have installed a new locator and web tracker system, the implementation of a Navis 322 messaging terminal system. There is a new crane that they have purchased. I mean, Plipdeco is a port that is moving along. Again, it is in profit and, therefore, we continue. All these agencies that we speak of, Madam Deputy Speaker, once they have a revenue stream, we want to ensure that that revenue stream is maximized.

Not so good story with the Transport and Licensing Division. Again, I think the general public in Trinidad and Tobago is very much aware of the issues that surround that. I have put that down as a top priority.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

Motion made: That the hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. N. Baksh*]

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. S. Cadiz: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Yes, licensing office—I do not think there is one person in this country who deals with the licensing office who does not have a story about the licensing office and I am not going to go into the details of it. I think we all know the position. This thing has been around for a long while to be fixed and I will just confirm to this House my commitment to ensuring that in the shortest space of time, that we have a licensing office that is efficient, a licensing office that we can all be very, very proud of, and I will leave it at that.

But just to give you a couple stats on the licensing office. Last year they renewed 126,000 driving permits; they inspected over 42,000 vehicles. They provide an excellent service, or are supposed to provide, I should say, an excellent service to the country. Again, this is something—by fixing the licensing office we are going to be dealing with issues of crime. Again, every single firearm, every single kilo of illegal drugs is somehow transported at some stage, by a vehicle.

In working with the Ministry of National Security, in combatting crime all of this will augur well for us with an efficient licensing system in Trinidad and Tobago. We will be able to keep track of these people who are using vehicles, stolen vehicles, all kinds of vehicles that are not registered properly, et cetera, et cetera, and the police do not know where to find who the owner of the car is and what have you. All of that we are going to be eliminating.

The new motor vehicle authority head office is being constructed right now in Frederick Settlement in Caroni and we will report in due course on that particular construction. I have not been able, in my short time there, to do that as yet, but we will be working on that.

In fact, I had my first meeting today with the—there is the issue of the Barrington Group and the motor vehicle authority and we had that meeting this morning. Again, we are already starting to see progress there. We will commit. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago, this People's Partnership Government will commit to having a completely refurbished, a new look, first-class service, first-class facilities, fully computerized motor vehicle authority, of course, with the new motor vehicles bill that is going to be brought to the Parliament very, very soon. From what I understand today we are better than 50 per cent in going through clause by clause of that new motor vehicle authority bill and, therefore, we should have that completed soon.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I now move on to the Maritime Services Division. Again, the Maritime Services Division, their hands have been tied

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because we do not have that new shipping Act. We had a stakeholders meeting last week Wednesday, I think it was and, again, we met with the stakeholders. They have presented their side of the case. This is an ongoing consultation with the stakeholders and I think right now we have something that will be coming back to the Parliament now as a final draft and then we would take it from there.

But, of course, the Maritime Services Division, again, responsible for the disposal of wrecks and what have you, in the harbour, and there is a host of other responsibilities for the maritime services, for navigation, et cetera, et cetera. Again, all of these will be coming under the new Maritime Services Act, which will put an end to a lot of the inefficiencies in the service. We are talking about ships registry. There is a whole host of new things that we are going to be coming with; the maritime legislation.

Again this will be bringing Trinidad and Tobago into the 21st Century as far as shipping is concerned. We cannot have a new transshipment port, for instance, going up in the south-western peninsula if we do not have a properly constructed maritime legislation. All of that, we are going to be doing.

The water taxi service: we run an average ridership of about 1,800 persons a day. We are going to have to find ways and means of increasing that; whether it is new routes, whether it is a new schedule. We are going to have to find very creative ways of putting those vessels to use. When a vessel is tied up and moored for the better part of a day, it is costing money and, therefore, we have to find ways and means of making that work for us.

There have been a couple of initiatives maybe to Venezuela. There have been some sailings to Grenada. Again all of those were done by charter, so it did not cost the water taxi service anything but for its regular run of moving people north/south we have to look at those schedules. We have to look at the routes. Do we put in a Point Fortin to San Fernando, Point Fortin to Port of Spain? These are things that we are going to have to do some proper surveys with to see where it is that we can in fact improve.

Road safety: again of grave concern to the citizens of this country, the number of road deaths that we have are totally unacceptable, and the National Road Safety Council was formed and this is a grouping that is working with Government, of course, to provide the advice and what have you, for the safety on our roads. Again, with a revamped motor vehicle authority, coupled with a very hard-working National Road Safety Council, coupled with working in collaboration with the police service and the highway patrols and what have you, we are going

to start seeing a serious reduction in the number of road deaths in Trinidad and Tobago. So we look forward to that day when we are not picking up the newspapers and seeing pictures of terrible accidents on our roadways.

The Vehicle Management Corporation, VMCOTT, again, needs work and we will be working with the management of VMCOTT to bring VMCOTT into an area, of course, where they are going to be considered extremely efficient. Again, that is all part of the crime plan also in police vehicles being serviced on time and re-delivered to the various units in the police service. So we have a police service that is mobile at all times and VMCOTT plays an important part in that. We are also looking at the accountability of VMCOTT and to ensure that we are getting, again, value for money.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to assure the citizens of this country, that based on the budget that was presented here by the Minister of Finance and the Economy, this country is in extremely good hands. The economy is in extremely good hands. The naysayers on the other side—always, that is their job, their job is to say something negative, but we are not worrying about that. The people of this country see it.

They see it every single day; the leaps and bounds this country is making with the economy and that is what we have been here for the last couple of days. So I look forward to further contributions on this side. Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

10.15 p.m.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member for Couva South, and Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh): Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am extremely pleased to join this debate at this juncture, on the fourth budget presentation of the People's Partnership Government to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I have sat here over the last couple of days listening attentively to what has been said by the Opposition or those on the other side, as it relates to saying something or responding to the budget that will be able to be of assistance to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Sad to say, but it did not surprise me that nothing has come from the Opposition as it relates to what should be part of the governance framework, part of the economic development of Trinidad and

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Tobago. This is consistent with their behaviour in the House over the last three years and more so, whilst they have been in the political corridors of power in Trinidad and Tobago and, Mr. Speaker—

Hon. Member: Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget was conceptualized and formulated under the broad theme of Sustaining Growth, Securing Prosperity. It is noteworthy to understand, that when this budget was presented by the Minister of Finance and the Economy, Sen. Larry Howai, it was a budget that received what we would call overwhelming support from all the stakeholders, all the groups and all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fundamental question must be asked: what does a budget seek to achieve? It focuses on really improving the quality of life and standard of living of all the citizens of a country or a society.

I am sure that if you ask the question, whether you are better off than last year as a result of what has been presented by this administration, the answer will be an overwhelming yes, that my standard of living and my quality of life have improved under the People's Partnership Government. This overwhelming answer or response to the policies of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago did not start in 2013. In fact, this overwhelming "yes" has been present within the stakeholder grouping of this country since we assumed political power and have been dealing with the transformation of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago.

Those on the other side have attempted to paint this Government as not understanding the fundamentals of what it has to do, and what it has to pursue in relation to economic planning and economic development of this country. But what they will not tell is that they had no sense of vision, they had no sense of purpose and no sense of commitment, as it relates to economic planning and development of Trinidad and Tobago between 2002—2010.

When you examine the themes of the four budget presentations of the People's Partnership Government to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, there is a sense of cohesiveness, there is a sense of integrated planning, and there is a sense of purpose and direction as it relates to what we had to do when we came into political power in May of 2010, and what we will do as we move towards 2015 and beyond 2015.

That sense of coherence, that sense of integrated planning and connectivity, Madam Deputy Speaker, was clearly seen in the themes of the four budget

presentations of this Government. The first budget presentation in September of 2010 dealt with the issue of Facing the Issues, Turning the Economy Around. Then, the budget statement of 2012 focused on From Steady Foundation to economic Transformation concentrating on safety, jobs and investment. The 2013 budget presentation focused on Stimulating Growth, Generating Prosperity. And, of course, this budget presentation focused on the issue of Sustaining Growth, Securing Prosperity. So there is a sense of, as I said, Madam Deputy Speaker, connectivity and we understand our sense of responsibility from an economic point of view.

Miss Hospedales: Do you? Do you?

Hon. R. Indarsingh: The Member for Arouca/Maloney—

Miss Hospedales: Do you? Do you?

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—very clearly—

Mr. De Coteau: “Doh let she throw you off.”

Mr. Partap: Do not be thrown off, you know.

Mr. De Coteau: Do not be thrown off. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—at no point in time will the Member for Arouca/Maloney throw me off in relation to—[*Desk thumping and laughter*]

Mr. De Coteau: I will take her tomorrow.

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—what is my sense of purpose in this august Chamber, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This has been the hallmark as I said of the People’s Partnership Government through our distinguished leader, our distinguished Prime Minister, in relation to vision and having a sense of consistency and delivery. Delivery as it relates to ensuring that we do not get caught up in old talk, we do not get caught up in ideas and so on, but we actually are implementing and delivering as it relates to the programmes and policies of this Government.

There is a sense of hope, there is a positive future as it relates to what we have done over the last four years—three and a half years. In order to understand where you are currently and where you want to go, you must also understand from whence you came; where you came from.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the population of Trinidad and Tobago must always be reminded of the sinful wastage and corruption—[*Interruption*]

Miss Hosepdales: “Dat happening too and allyuh”—[*Inaudible*]

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—and mismanagement that the People’s National Movement inflicted upon the people of Trinidad and Tobago between the period 2002—2010. That sense of wastage, that sense of mismanagement and inefficiency, was clearly reflected in the economic indicators and statistics which prevailed at the time. And as I said, this country must never be allowed to forget that the total cash balances declined steadily from \$17.7 billion at the end of the fiscal year 2008, to \$9.7 billion at the end of fiscal year 2009. So approximately it declined by 50 per cent and a further \$5.43 billion as at May of 2010.

So you see, Madam Deputy Speaker, a movement from \$17.7 billion to \$5.43 billion in less than what we would call two years as it relates to the total government cash balances. This was primarily due to a generation of overspending and what we would term to be overheating the economy of Trinidad and Tobago at that point in time, and successive Ministers of Finance under the People’s National Movement failing to take heed of the advice that was coming from the Governor of the Central Bank as it relates to pushing Trinidad and Tobago to the edge of the cliff, or what we would term to be a slippery slope, from a financial point of view.

In simple terms, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Government’s balances in the Treasury declined substantially in 2009 and 2010. The only financial legacy of the PNM which I can recollect since I was a young man and emerged into a more mature individual, the only financial legacy I could recollect of the PNM is wild spending—

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

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—cost overruns and scandals after scandals. [*Crosstalk*] Whether it was at Lock Joint, whether it was the gas station racket, whether in the more contemporary period you would have heard of the scandals at EMBD, at UDeCOTT, WASA, Petrotrin, just to name a few. There has never been a sense of purpose and a sense of commitment to the development of Trinidad and Tobago. Anytime the PNM has been in power, there has been what we would call buoyant prices from the point of view of energy—whether it is in oil or gas—and for some reason that baffles all and sundry in this country, the PNM has always failed to really deal with the economic windfall in such a way that the people of Trinidad and Tobago will benefit across the board.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the PNM wants to rebrand itself and rebrand its image in being the Government in waiting, or the alternate Government, through

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the utterances of the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Diego Martin West. But when I heard his contribution and he focused on Vision 20—

Hon. Member: Thirty.

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—20 and then “vision 2030”, I know that the rebranding has failed miserably. [*Desk thumping*] The rebranding of the PNM and its leader has failed miserably, and all attempts to convince the population of Trinidad and Tobago that you all will be the next Government of this country have failed. In fact, you have been so visionary that you have moved that plan from 2020 to 2030.

10.30 p.m.

Miss Hospedales: And what you will say about the rebranding of your— [*Inaudible*]

Hon. R. Indarsingh: That has been the vision of you all because I think you have read the writing on the wall so that you have pushed back your aims and aspirations of attaining political power to 2030.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Vision 2020 that the Leader of the Opposition and Member for Diego Martin West focused on, I am forced to ask the question: What level of development did it bring for all the citizens and the ordinary people of Trinidad and Tobago?

He read into the record of this august House a number of noteworthy citizens of Trinidad and Tobago who, in their own right, have distinguished themselves in their respective fields and so on, in relation to what they have contributed to this country. But I cannot recollect, from a constituency point of view, for example, that the people of Couva South benefited in any tangible way from this vision of 2020 and I doubt very much that they will benefit from that vision of the “racket” rail. [*Interruption*]

That was the only idea that I heard in the “Vision 2030” pronouncement and I doubt that the constituents of Couva South will stand to benefit from what was prescribed in relation to the future of Trinidad and Tobago, PNM style.

As I said, Madam Deputy Speaker, when the PNM was in full flight, between 2002 and 2010, there was no sense of development in Indian Trail and Milton and Carolina, Balmain, Basta Hall, Phoenix Park, Windsor Park, Esperanza, Dow Village, the old and new settlement, California and Calcutta Nos. 1, 2, and 3, taking into consideration also the area of Beaucarro.

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I will have much more to say on this Vision 2020 and “Vision 2030” as opposed to what we have been able to deliver as a Government over the last three years.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Government has focused squarely and directly, in a very committed manner, in relation to people-centred development, and at no point in time anyone on the opposite side can associate this Government with any form of discrimination or victimization.

I can remember—and I can recollect very clearly—during his contribution, the Member for La Brea attempted to sow seeds of discord and divisiveness in the society by repeatedly saying and repeatedly focusing on the development that was taking place in Couva and Debe and Penal and so on; but he did not tell you that there was development which was taking place in Point Fortin and Arouca/Maloney and in Diego Martin as it relates to the Diego Martin Highway, the paving of roads on the East-West Corridor, whether it was through the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Local Government and so on.

He attempted to indicate that the Government of the day, in 1975, had intervened in relation to Caroni (1975) Limited and the Government’s purchase of 51 per cent of the assets of the then Tate & Lyle to save the jobs of the employees of Caroni (1975) Limited and also the development and well-being of the other stakeholders—the cane-farming community.

But the Member for La Brea failed to remind the population tonight that it was the PNM that took the decision—the most brutal of decisions—to close down Caroni (1975) Limited and dismantle in the most vicious of manners, an industry that had provided a sense of economic well-being, a way of life for approximately 20,000-plus individuals—taking into consideration that there were 12,000 workers at the time and more than 10,000 farmers—and how much people would have been impacted upon by the existence of the sugar industry from a direct and an indirect point of view.

He said that the reason Caroni (1975) Limited was closed down was from an economic point of view, but what he did not tell you and he did not tell the nation was that from a cost of production point of view, Caroni (1975) Limited was not only sugar, but Caroni (1975) Limited was rum, rice, citrus, aquaculture, dairy and so on. It took into consideration its rum operation, its field engineering department and Caroni (1975) Limited carried out a very important responsibility from a local government point of view in relation to the maintenance of roads,

cemeteries, playgrounds, recreation grounds and so on. All these costs were factored into the overall cost of production for a tonne of sugar.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the discrimination and victimization of the PNM as it relates to those who would have resided within the geography of the sugar industry and at that point in time, gave life and gave its support, from a political point of view, to the constituencies that were under the control of the United National Congress, the PNM carried out a political vendetta in pursuit of closing down Caroni (1975) Limited.

Miss Hospedales: That is not true.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: Member for Arouca/Maloney, I spoke previously in this House and I have a responsibility to set the record straight and remind the population and educate you because you have no sense of connection with the sugar industry. You do not understand what the sugar industry meant and what Caroni (1975) Limited meant. She is inconsequential in this debate, Madam Deputy Speaker, as it relates to the economics of the day and as it relates to what the sugar industry meant to Caroni (1975) Limited.

Their wicked ways, their sins in relation to how they dealt with even the citrus when Caroni (1975) Limited was closed—they failed to listen to all attempts to rehabilitate and offer a lifeline to millions of dollars of citrus that they allowed to rot and to wither away when today the citrus industry could have been linked probably to the school feeding programme, the prison system of Trinidad and Tobago and so on and even to the public health system in relation to what the dairy and aquaculture and citrus operations of Caroni (1975) Limited meant.

Just from that point of view, I wanted to read into the record and remind the Member for La Brea of their sense of inequality, their sense of injustice and inequity in relation to dealing with that important constituency from the point of view of Caroni (1975) Limited.

It clearly came out, too, that when the Industrial Court of Trinidad and Tobago had ruled that Caroni (1975) Limited and pronounced on the Government to engage the union in what we would call the true principles of collective bargaining and good industrial relations practices, the then Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources said, in very clear terms, that we will fire; we will go ahead; we will disregard the ruling of the Industrial Court and that shows you the high-handedness and the way that the PNM operated in relation to respecting the constitutional framework of Trinidad and Tobago, Madam Deputy Speaker.

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Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the biggest achievements of this People's Partnership Government has been its ability to stabilize the economy of Trinidad and Tobago and put it on a path of growth and development. This stabilization of the economy and this pathway of growth and development has been realized through a committed sense of dialogue and already the Minister of Finance and the Economy has made it very clear that this Government will follow through on the principles of social dialogue and listening to the stakeholders of Trinidad and Tobago as it relates to arriving where we want to go in relation to the programmes and policies.

I want to say that there has been intense dialogue, that there has been intense consultation with a number of interest groups in the lead-up to this the fourth budget presentation of the People's Partnership Government. Whilst a deficit budget was presented, the political will of the Government to reduce this deficit is being realized in 2012 and 2013 as it was in the vicinity of TT \$7.6 billion for the period 2012—2013 and the Government has signalled its intention very clearly that in 2013—2014, the deficit is projected to be in the vicinity of TT \$6.3 billion.

The economic stabilization or the financial stabilization of the economy of this country has been realized against the fallout of the global financial crisis, and against the fallout or the backdrop of the global financial crisis, the economy of Trinidad and Tobago has been able to out perform its neighbours from the point of view of the Caricom region.

Trinidad and Tobago has been, as I said, on a path of growth and I think that the Opposition needs to be very mindful and take into consideration and listen very carefully in terms of what has been happening to economies within the region. I am not referring, in this case, to Spain and Portugal and Greece and Ireland, but closer to our home and we must be prepared, in our sense of responsibility to country and nation, to examine what is happening in the economies of Jamaica, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and even closer to us in terms of Barbados. All these economies, Madam Deputy Speaker, have been showing what we would term to be signs of stress and Trinidad and Tobago has continued to ride the tide very safely because of the four years of prudent fiscal management.

10.45 p.m.

If we look at what has happened in Jamaica, Jamaica has been forced to enter into an extended fund facility with the International Monetary Fund, involving yet another national debt exchange programme, a package of increased taxes and a commitment to reduce public sector wages. That is what has happened in Jamaica.

Madam Deputy Speaker, similarly, the Government of Barbados has been forced to reinstate a bank asset tax. It has enacted a consolidated tax on personal earnings over \$50,000, from the point of view of Barbados dollars, and it has cut back on transfers to the University of the West Indies. I want those on the opposite side to take note that it has cut back—the Government of Barbados, in its last budget presentation, through its Minister of Finance, has cut back on transfers to the University of the West Indies—and, as a result of this decision, it has forced students in Barbados to fund their own tertiary education for the first time, since the first introduction of free education in Barbados. That is fundamental to note, in relation to how we have been able to manage the finances and the economy of this country.

I could recollect, very clearly, that in campaigning, those on the other side presented a sense of gloom and doom as it relates to the education programmes in Trinidad and Tobago. You all attempted to tell the population—instil a sense of fear and a sense of panic and hysteria—by saying to the national community that when they get into power—when we get into power, we will cut back on GATE; we will cut back on entitlements at UWI; we will dismantle the University of Trinidad and Tobago; we will close down the National Energy Skills Centre, and I could go on and on, in relation to your thrust from an education point of view—and that has been the furthest thing from the truth. In relation to how we have handled the education programme for the benefit of all of our young people, and all who are committed to retooling themselves in this country, that is as a result of progressive management of the finances of Trinidad and Tobago. And as I said, take note of what has happened in Jamaica, what has happened in Barbados and what is happening too in the economies of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the economic and financial delivery of this Government has been phenomenal, and it must be seen in the context of four consecutive quarters of economic growth. In spite of the state of play, which we inherited from the PNM, we have been able to ensure the payments to all depositors of Clico and CL Financial.

While citizens may not be hearing a lot as it relates to what is happening with the Hindu Credit Union depositors—in terms of the depositors and shareholders—we, as a Government, are honouring our commitment, and we are ensuring that the 147,707 persons whose liability amounts to approximately \$670 million, that all is being put in place to honour this particular commitment. Also, a committee has been established as it relates to a compassionate relief committee, which

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would look and examine on a case by case basis, the issue of those persons who are in need of an immediate refund, based on their medical nature or some other form or ground of compassion. And, again, that is people-centred focus, a Government that continues to listen and care for the ordinary citizens of the country.

From a financial point of view and an economic management point of view, we focused on the issue of the Clico Investment Fund. We said that it will be listed on the stock exchange, and that in itself has been a success story and continues to provide an investment opportunity to people with excess liquidity and so on, in relation to the generation of economic wealth.

And, again too, from the point of view of dealing with the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, the development of the country—whether it is from health, housing, education, the environment, local government and agriculture, just to name a couple of the areas—it has continued to happen on an annual basis in spite of dealing with the Clico situation; in spite of dealing with the HCU, the liabilities to contractors and also the liabilities to the workers of Trinidad and Tobago, when you all failed to settle any of the negotiation between the period 2008—2010.

Madam Deputy Speaker, having settled the financial obligations and transformed Clico from the point of view of the establishment of the Clico Investment Fund, and what has prevailed at the Hindu Credit Union Cooperative Society, we do not want to drop the ball from the point of view of economic growth and stability, because we realize that it is the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago who have to bear the burden in the context of when companies who have a great sense of economic involvement in the economy—if they go belly up, what would be the economic cost to the people of Trinidad and Tobago?

From that point of view, we as Government, are focused on the whole question of financial regulations to ensure—we want to ensure that in the future, the people of Trinidad and Tobago do not have to deal with the pain and trauma—the psychological pain and trauma—when a company or a financial entity as large as Clico or CL Financial goes under, in terms of the consequences to the people and the economy. From that point of view, the financial system of our country, Madam Deputy Speaker, is being strengthened.

In this regard, it is being clearly ruled out from the point of view of the Financial Intelligence Unit and the consequent legislation, in terms of what took place in this very said Chamber, and also the very fact that Trinidad and Tobago has been removed from the blacklist or the grey list—whichever colour you may

want to use—at a time, again, when those on the other side attempted to paint a picture of doom and gloom, panic, hysteria and fear into the citizens of this country.

I could remember, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, saying that all the financial transactions would come to a halt; the country would grind to a halt; the economy will not be able to move on. In fact, if I could recollect clearly, he said also—was alleged to have said—that credit card transactions and so on will not be able to go through, and Trinidad and Tobago will be isolated in the global community and from the point of view of the financial global community. And that is consistent, again, with their style of propaganda, and their style of attempting to mislead the population with half of the story, in relation to what this Government has been doing over the last four years—three and a half years, Madam Deputy Speaker. This financial regulation is further being reinforced through the new Insurance Bill, which has been laid in this Parliament and focuses on the whole issue of best international practice in insurance supervision.

In relation to credit unions, we as a responsible Government, and understanding what has been happening in the credit union fraternity, and being committed to a process of deep consultation with the Credit Union Movement, have laid the new Credit Union Bill, in terms of it being formulated, and the new Credit Union Bill would be laid in Parliament in 2014.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are moving, we are treating with the stability and the regulation of the economy and the finances from a holistic point of view. We must never forget, that in spite of our level of spending too, as it relates to satisfying the needs of all our citizens across the 41 constituencies of Trinidad and Tobago, the Government of the day has been able to save to the point where the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund of Trinidad and Tobago now stands at US \$5 billion.

From an inflationary point of view, we have continued to manage food prices and so on in a very responsible way; a responsible way when compared to what prevailed under the PNM because, Madam Deputy Speaker, as it stands inflation, core inflation, is hovering around 6 per cent as opposed to what it was—I could remember 13 and 14 per cent under the PNM, and food prices revolving between 25 and 30 per cent—and, today, we have what we would call employment, at 5 per cent.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are on, what we would call, a sound economic foundation and, in that regard, the only thing that those on the other

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side could say, or attempt to say, is that over the last 12 months and so on—from the point of view of the 2012/2013 fiscal presentation—we did not understand what was our responsibility; we failed to implement what was enunciated in the last budget presentation.

I just want to read into the record for the benefit of all and sundry, just to give you a snapshot of a number of initiatives under the last fiscal package, which are now part of what we would call the implementation package of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. For example, we stated from a fiscal measure point of view, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the waiver of stamp duty on the transfer of units in the Clico Investment Fund, that will take place, and it has been implemented. We indicated that there would be a waiver of stamp duty on transfer of RBL shares to Clico, that has been implemented or that project has been completed, Madam Deputy Speaker.

11.00 a.m.

We indicated, too, that there would be a 150 per cent tax deduction up to a maximum of \$3 million for corporate sponsorship as it relates to nationals in the local fashion industry; the audiovisual and video production and so on by local production companies in respect of their own production. That has been implemented.

In addition, we stated that there would be an increase in disability grant. Madam Deputy Speaker, that has been the order of the day.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the Member for Couva South and Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy has expired.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and my colleagues.

If I really go to read into the record of this House, Madam Deputy Speaker, I could spend the rest of the night talking about what has been implemented. What has been implemented, Member for Port of Spain South—because your colleagues have attempted to indicate to the national community that this is a Government by “vaps”; a Government that does not know what it is doing—the

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record is reflecting that 90 per cent of what was enunciated, from a fiscal point of view, in the last budget presentation has been completed and what has not been completed is a work in progress—

Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: —and a work of continuity.

Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: That is the purpose. That is why this particular budget presentation cannot be criticized by any as it relates to what we are doing for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. You all have to wake up to the reality as it relates to—while you engage in a lot of “ole talk and mamaguy” and propaganda and so on, this is implementation and walking the talk as it relates to what we are doing from a financial point of view.

I am not saying it you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is clearly laid out in the document of PricewaterhouseCoopers under the theme Pursuing the Dream—Growth and Diversification, Budget Memorandum 2014. So it is not the Member for Couva South parroting and saying anything here, it is an independent institution in Trinidad and Tobago pointing in the direction of what this Government has been able to achieve, over the last three and a half years, in relation to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I simply want to take the opportunity now to indicate to you that as a result of what has happened over the last three years, the constituents of Couva South have been able to realize what we would call tangible and credible benefits that signal a very clear-cut improvement in their quality of life and standard of living.

I could remember that the Member for Diego Martin West and the Leader of the Opposition, in his contribution, focused on the issue of traffic congestion and children having to wake up very early in the morning and so on to go to school. But I cannot recollect if, in their Vision 2020 policy, the PNM was concerned about the children of Biche when they closed the Biche High School deliberately. What was that vision in terms of the—what was the vision you all had for the parents and children of the Biche High School? It was a clear-cut case of spite and malice and so on simply because—I think that the only sin that was committed was that the school was built by the United National Congress Government. [*Desk thumping*] And as a result of being built by that administration, you carried out a policy of hate and vindictiveness. I doubt very much Vision 2030 will change.

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“Vision 2030”, sorry, will not change. I think that you owe the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and, more precisely, the parents and the young people of Biche an apology that will last a lifetime; last a generation in terms of what you all did there. [*Desk thumping*]

Certainly, Madam Deputy Speaker, the traffic congestion and so on, did you all take into consideration from a Vision 2020 point of view what was happening in Balmain, Preysal and so on—and Couva—on a day-to-day basis? For 20-plus years I negotiated the Balmain/Preysal/Couva turnoff and I had to spend hours in traffic; reaching late for meetings; calling people and pushing back meetings simply because your Vision 2020 did not deal with traffic congestion.

Today, in less than three and a half years I could tell you, whether you live in Preysal, Couva or Balmain or if you come into and out of Couva and Preysal, you feel that you are in what I would call an area of haven, from the point of view of traffic congestion. That traffic congestion has been eliminated simply because this Government took a decision to build a \$75 million interchange for the benefit not only of the people Central Trinidad; because there is the port of Point Lisas and there is over 4,000-plus employees who work on the Point Lisas Industrial Estate.

So the construction of that interchange had to do with a vision for national development and economic development, Madam Deputy Speaker. That is how it must be seen, not in the context of developing or building something in Couva simply for the benefit of the people of Couva and central Trinidad. In that regard, we have to look at what has happened in relation to what benefits that particular interchange has been able to bring about in the reduction of loss of man-hours, productivity and so on.

Mr. Sharma: Enormous benefits.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: Enormous; it has been tremendous—the Member for Fyzabad has recognized that. I am sure that in his tourism thrust and so on, in relation to the Sugar and Heritage Museum, he will see the benefit of that interchange down there. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to, again, from the point of view of infrastructural development and how the community of Couva South, the constituency is benefitting, show you the change that this Government—not this Government, but the people voted for. I will use the example of the Freeport/Calcutta bridge to illustrate and exemplify the change that the people voted for.

Mr. Sharma: Building bridges.

Hon. R. Indarsingh; When that bridge collapsed and was closed under the PNM, they took 23 years to rebuild that bridge.

Hon. Member: What a shame.

Hon. Member: To build a bridge?

Hon. I. Indarsingh: Twenty-three years.

Hon. Member: That is the Arima bridge or what?

Hon. R. Indarsingh: And, in less than nine months—when this bridge was closed by the engineers of the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure after doing soil tests and their sense of site visits, analysis and so on—a contract was awarded by the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, under NIDCO, to the tune of \$25 million to begin construction, or reconstruction, and slope stabilization of this bridge on the Couva river.

So, look at the difference in meeting and treating with a situation of commonality. When it collapsed under the PNM it took 23 years, under the People's Partnership Government it took nine months to start construction. But that did not end there, in terms of the approach to governance and meeting, treating and dealing with the issues and the inconvenience of the people of Freeport, Balmain, Calcutta Nos. 1, 2 and 3.

The then Minister of Works and Infrastructure, Minister Emmanuel George, and the Minister in the Ministry, Minister Stacy Roopnarine, and myself, held a number of town meetings with the communities and we arrived at a solution as it relates to dealing with the inconvenience from the point of view of the bridge being closed; and that further development took place with the paving—or should I say the road rehabilitation—of the Campden base road. The Campden base road—being a tasker road which was used by the trucks that transported canes to and from the Brechin Castle Factory—that were used for that purpose and the community said to the Government, “Rehabilitate that road, pave it, put drains and so on and we will use it by the time the bridge is being rebuilt.”

So, we were able to find \$3 million to deal with this road rehabilitation. Today, the Campden base road is part of what we would call the permanent road network within the constituency of Couva South, and the development went a further distance in relation to, again, listening to the people. The people indicated, the communities indicated, that being a tasker road it was very dark at nights—

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lonely at nights to traverse—and they wanted the road to be lit by the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission. Today, I could say through the Minister of Public Utilities and the chairman and the management of T&TEC, that that road has been lit with street lighting and today it is being used by all and sundry and, again, holistic development, holistic planning from the point of view of taking into consideration all the concerns of the people who reside in that particular community. [*Desk thumping*]

So, again, Madam Deputy Speaker, a different approach. The PNM, 23 years, and they did not take into consideration to find an alternative route and that is what the people of Trinidad and Tobago voted for in terms of change and how their problems would be tackled and how their problems would be dealt with, with the passage of time.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in addition to infrastructural development from the point of view of roads, bridges and so on for the first time—whether it is in Calcutta, Basta Hall, Windsor Park, Phoenix Park and so on—I could speak of drainage; I could speak of road paving and so on. Only last week—about two weeks ago—the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, the PURE Division, began the paving of the Mt. Pleasant to Milton Road; approximately seven kilometres. For the first time, that road is being paved in more than 30 years, I think. [*Desk thumping*]

What is important to note is that last night I was at the wake of political activist and cultural activist, the late Kunzru Chinpire and people from the area of Savonetta, Point Lisas, indicated to me—a gentleman indicated to me; he said, “MP, I am 65 years and I cannot recollect the PNM ever paving the Mt. Pleasant to Milton Junction Road. [*Interruption*]

Member for Port of Spain South, you must be prepared to listen to the truth. You must not deny the truth. Your Government simply did not find the resources to put in Couva South, Couva North, Oropouche West, East, you name it; Siparia and so on. So, you must not become so easily offended because I am saying to you, under this administration, whether in Port of Spain South, Laventille West, East, Arouca, Maloney; St. Ann’s East, “you getting road, you getting box drain, you getting light, you getting recreation grounds” and the list goes on and on. That is the difference between you all and us, you know. That is the difference. [*Desk thumping*]

11.15 p.m.

So we have to, and when we speak we have freedom of—the right to speak, and you must not want the population to not hear what you have done since 1956 as a Government.

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Mr. Seemungal: And then when they stand up to talk “they misleading” the populace.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: Member for Laventille West, whether you laugh or not, you cannot—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Hypolite: “Why yuh calling meh for, talk yuh talk and leave meh alone nah.”

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—you cannot influence the vision of this Government, you know.

Mr. Hypolite: “Talk yuh talk and leave meh alone.”

Hon. R. Indarsingh: You cannot influence the vision of this Government, right?

Mr. Hypolite: “Talk yuh talk and leave meh alone.”

Madam Deputy Speaker: Member for Laventille West, please, please. Member, I want to ask you to address the Chair, please. You may continue.

Mr. Hypolite: “I leave you alone, talk yuh talk and leave me alone.”

Hon. R. Indarsingh: But I will speak.

Mr. Hypolite: “Talk yuh talk and leave me alone.”

Hon. Member: All right.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: If you want to impose a gag order on me [*Laughter*] well—this is the place to speak.

Mr. Hypolite: “Talk yuh talk and leave my name out your mouth.”

Hon. R. Indarsingh: So, Madam Deputy Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: “I think yuh tired.”

Hon. Member: “He ent eat food you see. Go and have something to eat and come back.”

Hon. Member: He tired. He tired.

Hon. R. Indarsingh: We have to understand that from a development point of view also, the Minister of Sport—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Roberts: Yes.

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—through the Sports Company, took a policy decision to build infrastructure and recreation grounds where none was existing—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Roberts: Exactly! *[Desk thumping]*

Hon. R. Indarsingh:—and today, three pavilions are being constructed: one in Balmain, one in Beaucarro and one in Phoenix Park, to be complemented with walking tracks, to be complemented with practise nets and so on, and again bringing a sense of—and what is happening, from the point of the view of the Ministry of Sport, is not limited to Couva South, it is a policy decision again of the Government to build all these sporting facilities in the 41 constituencies of Trinidad and Tobago, *[Desk thumping]* a commitment to balance inequitable distribution in Trinidad and Tobago. *[Desk thumping]*

Hon. Member: Yes man!

Hon. R. Indarsingh: And this is further exemplified through the Ministry of Local Government. So pavilions are being constructed, recreation grounds, car parks are being paved, the issue of fencing of recreation grounds and so on. And today, the sportsmen and sportswomen of the future are being facilitated with late-night training, evening training through the lighting of recreation grounds, whether it is in Basta Hall, Lower McBean, Dow Village, Calcutta, and so on.

Sad to say, two clubs have been playing cricket, premier division cricket in Couva South—that is, the Caldrac Sports Club is playing cricket at the level of the premier division and the Calcutta Sports Club at the national league division one—the PNM never had the vision to develop the recreation grounds to give a fillip, to give an incentive, to future and budding cricketers who could probably be representing Trinidad and Tobago on the local stage, the regional stage and at the international stage, whether it is the CPL, the IPL and so on, and you all really have not had a sense of commitment to development of the sportswomen and sportsmen of Trinidad and Tobago.

It lacked not only—your vision really did not only narrow itself to economic mismanagement and so on, it extended itself to all sectors of development in Trinidad and Tobago, everywhere. In that regard, Madam Deputy Speaker, I heard also the Opposition Leader in his contribution said that there was an expanded bus service.

Hon. Member: Where?

Hon. R. Indarsingh: Vision 2020 did not bring it in Basta Hall and Esperanza and so on; under the People's Partnership Government every rural community today [*Desk thumping*] is benefiting from a rural bus service. And, again, it is facilitating the transportation of the young children, the school children, the elderly and so on in the community, and you would have heard from the Minister of Transport, the Member for Chaguanas East, of the impact that the differently abled transportation programme has been able to bring forward the physically challenged community in Trinidad and Tobago.

This is what this Government is about, and, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am of the firm conviction that this budget presentation can only lead to continued development in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] It is setting the stage for a second term of the People's Partnership Government, [*Desk thumping*] Madam Deputy Speaker. And in that regard, I am sure that the people of Trinidad and Tobago, as they said in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, they will also say an overwhelming "yes" to a 2015 budget presentation. I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Madam. Deputy Speaker: Member for Arima and Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Member: Preach to them.

The Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration (Hon. Rodger Samuel): Madam Deputy Speaker, hon. Members that are here tonight, it is indeed a privilege for me and an opportunity to contribute to this budget debate, and more so as the newly selected person, appointed person, responsible for the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration [*Desk thumping*] and as the Member of Parliament for Arima.

I want to take this opportunity to applaud the Minister of Finance and the Economy, the hon. Sen. Larry Howai, in his budget presentation for fiscal year 2013/2014. It is indeed, Madam Deputy Speaker, a budget for the people as demonstrated by the theme Sustaining Growth, Securing Prosperity, and I have all assurance that its implementation will ensure that as a nation we will continue on the steady path towards the revitalization of our economy. I also want to extend congratulations to the hon. Prime Minister for her underpinning which supports decisions made by this administration, and for her guidance during the budgetary process and all the policy-making functionalities geared towards serving the people of this nation.

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But, Madam Deputy Speaker, the vision of this Government, the People's Partnership administration, is obvious, as we peruse the allocations with the highest aspect of the allocations given to education and training, and the second highest for national security, and then health, the third. It says that:

The people of this nation can justifiably appreciate our agenda as a Government, our agenda in regards to serving the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the wealth of a nation, and this nation, just as its strengths come from the wealth and the strength of its citizens, and as our nation is dynamic and diverse, so is the economy of this nation, a dynamic and diverse one, and this budget brings out that clearly as we would appreciate it.

I consider it an honour, first and foremost, Madam Deputy Speaker, to represent the wonderful constituency of Arima, a constituency that has moved from neglect to one of development within the last three years. As a matter of fact, when we look at the constituency three years after taking office, what we find is a drastic change because of the development that is taking place. From neglect to development, and as had been reiterated before—so oftentimes people talk, but I want to say that we actually deliver. [*Desk thumping*]

Arima, Madam Deputy Speaker, words cannot be expressed that in the midst of tremendous financial wealth, in the midst of oil booms, Arima had never benefited from such blessings of Almighty God, but today when we look around Arima we would recognize that the things that we promised in 2010, all of these things are coming into fruition, and the Arima that I met and inherited in 2010 will not be the Arima that we would encounter and meet in 2015, and people would be tremendously shocked at the things that are being achieved.

And just to reiterate a little bit—before I get into dealing with the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration, which is in some ways still new, but I understand the philosophy and the purpose of the Ministry—that never in the history in Arima, the many years under former regimes, have we ever seen the amount of roads being paved over the last three years as we see in Arima at this point in time.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

When we drive through the town centre, we recognize that people are saying it is the first time all the roads are very black [*Desk thumping*] because of the resurfacing process that has taken place. And just to name a few, it is not just in

the town centre, but all through Santa Rosa and all through Pinto, and all through the other areas we have tremendous resurfacing and redevelopment taking place in Arima and environs. As a matter of fact, for so many years, and one of the former MPs, who is part of this Government can always tell you of the tremendous pressures that had happened in times past, and what he sees now in Arima is a sight for sore eyes.

When you drive along the first four miles on the Blanchisseuse Road, you would realize that we have embarked on resurfacing and redeveloping 26 miles of road [*Desk thumping*] from Arima to Blanchisseuse, and we have already completed three to four miles of roads and drains from the Y on the bypass road going north to the Blanchisseuse area. And work continues to flow as our intention and our promise in our 2010 promises to Arima, that we will now redevelop the entire Blanchisseuse Road, not just only for smooth driving and smooth movement to and from Blanchisseuse to Arima, but that we can develop it as one of the most beautiful nature sites that [*Desk thumping*] we have in that entire area.

Our purpose is to ensure that tourism will benefit from the development of the Blanchisseuse Road, and that people can come into this country and one of the first areas that they would want to go to is that entire Blanchisseuse Road area, and ensure that the nature aspects of it is experienced by people who are outside of Trinidad and Tobago, but not just people who are outside of Trinidad and Tobago but the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

I know that my colleague from Tobago will always say that, you know, “when you think about Tobago it is a closest place to paradise”, but I want you to also take a drive through the Blanchisseuse Road and then you would get to the closest place to heaven. And I just want to encourage you, that as we develop the Blanchisseuse area, that all of Trinidad and Tobago and all visitors in this country would really, really have a fantastic experience just being through Blanchisseuse.

11.30 p.m.

Not only that, enough has been said over the years with regard to how we had rebuilt the Mount Pleasant Bridge since taking office. I have to say it because it is something that we were told could not be done. This Government took upon itself the task of rebuilding and rejoining a community that had been separated for some 28 years, and though some people have been complaining and saying that there are problems on the bridge, I want to assure all of you that there are no problems on the bridge.

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For the third year, we intend to take 2,000, 3,000, 4,000 persons on the bridge, as we have done in the last two years, as we bring our programme of “Parang on the Bridge” to celebrate with the people of Mount Pleasant and Arima the effective work—and not only the reuniting of a community, seeing that parang is also something that is tremendously synonymous with Arima. So every year we take 2,000, 3,000, 4,000 people and we have an entire parang celebration on that very bridge, that brought communities together. It is something that would become indigenous, like the First People, to Arima and it will be synonymous. When you call Arima, you will then talk about Parang on the Bridge.

Mr. Speaker, so much is happening in Arima, and not only what has happened already that has outdone things that had never been done in the last nine years and 20 years and 30 years and 40 years. Just in three years I have already outdone 20 and 30 years of neglect—in three years. [*Desk thumping*] Not only that, but when we think about what is proposed in the next year—as a matter of fact for many years we had been crying out for a new police station. That is on the way and that would be finished before year end. [*Desk thumping*] Not only a new police station, but approval has been had for NIPDEC, Minister of Health, to renovate and re-establish the present facilities, with same-day surgery and all the amenities that will now help serve the people of Arima. Not only the establishment and redevelopment of the present facility as a first-class health clinic and service to Arima, but shortly the building of a new Arima hospital that we have cried out for—as my parents would have said—“donkey years”, in Arima.

That adds the icing on the cake, because Arima had been like the long lost child; people felt that nobody cared. We have had representation, but no representation at all. We have had neglect more than anything else, and now Arimians can move around and begin to realize that something is happening in a community that seemed to have been left behind, although a part of the constituency is what we call the first Royal Charter Borough. It had been experiencing tremendous neglect over the period of time.

We have made proposals to the Ministry of Sport for the redevelopment of cricket in Arima—the Larry Gomes enclosure—because we have some of the top clubs and we have produced some of the best cricketers in the world, and the enclosure had been left undone. Now the Ministry of Sport has approved the redevelopment of that facility, with lights and pavilions and everything, and that will start in the not too distant future. So much is happening, because it is important for us to look at Arima and develop Arima, as opposed to what had been happening prior to May 24, 2010.

Mr. Speaker, when we think about development and the neglect, I must say that in three years I am tremendously elated with how we were able to take a community that had been left undone and begin to feel satisfied that things are happening and development is taking place for the burgesses and for the constituents of Arima. We will continue that process.

We were able in Blanchisseuse to refurbish the entire community centre. [*Desk thumping*] Work is now being done and we have started on pavilions for the recreation ground, and not only that, but the people who cross the Miriam River had to cross on the old spring bridge that had become really dangerous after a time. We were able, through the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, to place an entirely new Bailey bridge across the Miriam River, to accommodate those folks who live beyond the river. As we continue the paving and the restructuring and the restoration of the road towards Blanchisseuse, the intent is to now develop beyond those areas, in the areas of Paria and Morne La Croix, so that that entire area would not feel neglected in any way and anymore.

Hon. Member: We are going to pave the road after the bridge too.

Hon. R. Samuel: That is right.

So development in Arima is happening. We will continue to produce and develop. We are working with the Ministry of Food Production and now the new Land and Marine Resources Ministry to help develop the entire Wallerfield area and re-establish the kind of farming and food production that ought to have been there in the first place.

I remember some years ago, around 2007, the idea was to demolish and move out all the farmers in Wallerfield and establish all kinds of cities and all kinds in towns in there. [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, it is so important for us to realize that out of Wallerfield there are tremendous things that can be produced and have been produced, and our purpose is to continue to work with the Ministry of Food Production to now re-establish and redevelop the food production and agriculture in Wallerfield and environs. That is where we are.

In my constituency alone, I have between seven and nine squatting settlements. These people have been squatting for ages. In Demerara, Maturita Triangle, in Zone Eight, in Calvary, Jonestown, and in Pinto and all of these areas, they have been squatting for generations. As a matter of fact, when I took office and began to dig into some of these areas, there are people who are there for 45 years and 50 years, generations of people on land, that are squatting. We are now working with the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources.

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We were working previously with the Housing Development Corporation, with the Land Settlement Agency and we are working with all of these agencies to find some semblance of peace for these people, so that they can have a sense of ownership, that they could have a sense of belonging, that they can then go to the banks, because they would have a certificate of comfort, and fix their homes. You have much difficulty when you are on squatting land to go and find some kind of financial assistance to help fix your home for your family and to try to do things. So we are now working to deal with all of that, so that we can bring settlement to these people and a sense of comfort and a sense of belonging to the people in these settlements.

As a matter of fact, presently we are working with a Catholic Church as they have owned the lands in what we call the Jonestown community, so that those lands could be transferred effectively and that these people can have a sense of comfort.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on Arima because, in so many instances, Arima has not been spoken for, and because it has not been spoken for there has been a tremendous sense of neglect. There are pages upon pages of work that has been done and continues to be done in Arima as we begin to now service and serve the people of Arima. Requests for further developments are intact and Arimians will see much more development as we go along.

To speak on the Ministry—before I go there, one of the things that I want to do is that in so many instances people have spoken ill of short-term programmes like URP and all these other aspects of employment. But in my constituency URP has done yeoman service. URP has been part of the process of building and helping people who are unfortunate. URP has been part of the process of helping to facilitate children with school material, and URP has been part of the process of rebuilding of homes for blind people. They have been part of the process as we continue to work and develop all of that. It is important for us to note that.

One of the things I had done on taking office is that sometimes on a morning I would get into my vehicle and I would go and look for the teams. I do not call them gangs. I would go and visit them to see what they are doing in the field. There were checks and balances. We were able to tremendously eliminate and move the ghost thing out of the system and get people to begin to function and begin to produce in URP in Arima, because of the relationship and because of the checks and balances we try to implement in the Arima aspect of URP. Now we find that things are happening and people are beginning to produce.

So I wanted to state that because oftentimes the stigma that is attached to the programme is uncalled for, even though I know that there have been difficulties in the past, yet we are working through these difficulties in my sector of the region to make sure that URP becomes a viable entity and produces and does what it sets out to achieve and do.

I consider it a tremendous honour to be representing even now the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration, which really represents the fabric of our society, a Ministry which represents every citizen in this nation. I assure all and sundry that this Ministry will never be biased and will not be biased in its operations. I want to commend the previous Minister, my predecessor, the Member for Moruga/Tableland, [*Desk thumping*] for the work that had been started in the Ministry, and the work which I intend to continue and to build upon. This is a Ministry which can make a difference in this nation. A nation, as has been stated from our anthem, that was forged from the love of liberty.

The Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration really has a mandate to champion the cause of patriotism and bring back the nation together, so that we can live and be in harmony with each other. Where we will not be divided based on ethnicity; we will not be divided based on religion; we will not be divided based on colour or different creeds, but that we will all be here as proud citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, tremendously integrated, representing the melting pot that we were designed and created to be; the melting pot that should be a tremendous example to nations around us Mr. Speaker.

We are re-energizing the spirit of unity, the spirit of pride in our beloved twin-island Republic, and the intrinsic love for one another as what we term “Trinbagonians” or citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. We as a Ministry created just one year ago to address the growing needs for a more visible demonstration of patriotism among the citizenry, a greater cohesion of the diverse culture, greater cohesion of the diverse groups, ethnicities and religions of Trinidad and Tobago, and a concerted effort to integrate the marginalized into the mainstream of our society.

11.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, so much can done to integrate our nation, and it is evident that the moral fabric of the society that once held us together as a collective and multifaceted people has been eroding over a period of time. This is ever present in our daily newspapers. It is ever present in our television news reports on crime

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and violence, child and adolescent neglect and other social ills, and it says to all of us as a nation that we need to again pull together, reunite and redevelop our social fabric so that we again can be the society that we ought to be.

Trinidad and Tobago, as a society, is quickly losing the bonding elements and mechanisms of national pride. It is losing those elements of love for our fellow brothers and sisters, and as a result of this the younger generation is being adversely affected by these harmful and destructive elements, resulting in an increasing disregard for our own heritage, resulting in an increasing disregard for our own culture, for our national resources, the environment, the laws of the land and ethnic diversity and national monuments.

Mr. Speaker, if we can only develop a sense of belonging, a sense that says that I am who I am because God has placed me here in this nation and I choose to be a good citizen of this land. Then, indeed, Mr. Speaker, quite a number of the deficiencies, quite a number of the ills that plague our society can be dealt with.

We have been granted, as a Ministry, the remit to champion diversity in every aspect of our society, and we intend to do that by forging and harnessing a greater sense of patriotism and nationalism in the minds and hearts of the nation's citizenry. This is also the view of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago documented in the National Policy Document which reads as one of the goals to "embrace the richness and beauty of our people, our peoples' great diversity to nurture a more humane and cohesive society, a Unity in Diversity"—therefore—"will inspire the harmony which is so vital to national progress."

Mr. Speaker, this ties in tremendously with the objectives and the dynamics of this budget today as we begin to now move in the direction of stability, as we begin to move in the direction of economic safety, as we develop our citizenry and as we develop our nation, to take it further and further to that place where it ought to have been so many years before.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration plays an integral role in the movement forward, and the budgetary allocations that we have been afforded obviously will be tremendously used in the dynamics of developing all of these national heritage sites and museums to ensure—because one of the things I realize, and out of the recent trip that I was fortunate to be a part of, to the beautiful nation and country of South Africa, is the appreciation for history, the appreciation for heritage, the appreciation that our young children and our citizens can understand where they have come from and a sense of belonging

based upon history, is totally infiltrated in the psyche of their citizens, and there is a sense of knowing who you are because you understand where you have come from.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we find difficult in Trinidad and Tobago is to really champion the cause for our own heritage; to champion the cause to hold on to who we are, to what we are, what belongs to us, and to ensure that we protect all of these things, so that we as a people can now move on and show the wider world and bear the interest of the wider world, to come to these shores and see the kind of blessed nation that we are in this part of the world.

But, Mr. Speaker, something struck me as I read the *Newsday*, Monday 16 September 2013, and it says quote, “Rowley:” says “Leave God out of politics”.

Hon. Member: “Ohhh!”

Hon. R. Samuel: Mr. Speaker, for someone who intends and has the aspirations to lead this country, [*Crosstalk*] to leave God out of anything, is disaster. Leaving God out of the life of this nation is trouble. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, for too long we have experienced the words of a songwriter, who is deceased now, Ras Shorty I, who emphasized that we have taken the creator out of the curriculum, that we have taken God out of everything, and now people have no respect for God anymore. He said leave God out of politics—means leave God out of the leadership of the land, leave God out of those who represent people, leave God out of politics says we are heading for disaster.

I want to emphatically say today that people of such nature who would want to take God out of the system, who would want to move God out of the society, who would want to move God out of leadership, do not deserve an opportunity to ever lead this land, until they themselves surrender to God, [*Desk thumping*] until they themselves would follow the instructions of God so that we can be a better society.

I emphatically declare that today in this House [*Crosstalk*] that if we ever take God out of our thoughts and begin to decide that God is not in charge of this land, I want to emphasize that when those that rediscovered this land—those who rediscovered this land—when they approached the shores of this land and they saw the hills, the first thing that came to mind, that those who were sailing in this direction was that they remembered that there is a creator and they thought about God. That should say a lot to all of us; the three hills that reminded them of God, and it says to us that we started on a foundation of God and we must never deviate from the foundation of God in this land.

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So, to leave God out says that we are now turning our backs on He who holds us together, and as the scripture would clearly state, it is because of him we move, and live, and have our very being. We must never, ever reach the point in this country where God is no longer respected; must never.

At the beginning of our sitting—at the beginning of our sitting—oftentimes and every time we sit, you read a prayer, acknowledging God, acknowledging the creator, and it would appear that that prayer makes no sense to many people because, you know, we say things and we do things that would go contrary to the very prayer that we read, and we say amen to.

Mr. Speaker, I had to reiterate this because we must never—and I speak to the national public—we must never—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Indarsingh: The Members inside here.

Hon. R. Samuel:—and to the Members in here, never, ever reach the point to ever think about the fact of taking God out of the politics of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] It is the creator that rules. It is God that governs and it is God who will continue to govern, but He will also be the one who will judge all mankind and we have to give an account to Him.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you, first of all for sticking to the prayer that you read at every sitting, for guiding us to remember that God is in control of this House, and that we must continue to fear Him in order to serve our nation. I want to thank you and I want to ask you never to stop because this nation needs God to take it through. I thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Mr. Collin Partap (*Cumuto/Manzanilla*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and you know, it is always a pleasure to speak after my brother from Arima, after such a sterling contribution in this House at this late hour.

Mr. Speaker, before I make my contribution I would like to congratulate the Minister of Finance and the Economy, Sen. The Hon. Larry Howai, for his second budget presentation in this House. This budget complements the performance of the People's Partnership Government over the past three years.

The economy has recorded four quarters of positive economic growth, and I am certain this budget will improve Trinidad and Tobago's macroeconomic stability by creating an environment conducive to sustaining economic growth in the future.

This budget continues on the path of reducing fiscal deficit while still funding adequately the economic and social programmes and investing in the infrastructure of this great nation of ours. Of course, let us not forget the leadership of the Prime Minister in all of these—in the budget and in her guiding the Government through what might be called perilous times at times.

Mr. Speaker, you know, some of the positive comments that the Minister of Finance and the Economy received were from the President of the Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Roger Packer, and he said:

“...the chamber sees ‘positive signs’ of economic turnaround for”—Trinidad and Tobago—“coming out of the incentives in the \$61.3 billion 2013/2014 national budget. Packer, speaking at the chamber’s post-budget breakfast forum in the Cara Suites Hotel, Claxton Bay yesterday said he was ‘very pleased with the outcome of the budget.’ ”

Also:

“The American Chamber of Industry and Commerce T&T—“(AmCham) said the review of T&T’s macroeconomic indicators was ‘positive’. ‘We commend the Government on the current level of the Heritage and Stabilisation Fund (HSF). We also find the estimates of oil and gas prices in the national budget to be reasonable in light of the current global prices,’ the group said. AmCham said Government’s thrust to developing an economy based on innovation and technology was reflected in \$9.6 billion being allocated for education and training.”

So, Mr. Speaker, all around you see positive comments for the budget that was read, but let me address some of the negative things that were said by the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Diego Martin West. He said the PNM’s average budget over its nine years in office was \$43 billion and the taxpayers got value for money.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if he has ever been around Trinidad and Tobago but I could tell you the constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla which I represent, we never saw, probably \$100 million of that \$43 billion. You know, constituencies such as Cumuto and Arima, and Couva South, and La Horquetta/Talparo, and Couva North, and Oropouche West, and Oropouche East, and Caroni Central, and I could go on and on, suffered from something called rural neglect under the PNM.

Mr. Seemungal: That is correct.

Mr. C. Partap: Rural neglect. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin West said the PNM left a proud legacy; a proud legacy he said. But the only legacy he left, that the PNM left sorry, in Cumuto Lands, Manzanilla was a legacy of doing nothing. Four hundred billion dollars over nine years and still we suffered from rural neglect.

He spoke of the much maligned Vision 2020 and now 2030. You know, he spoke about all the people who were involved in making the Vision 2020 plan, all the great things that that plan was supposed to do, but in nine years that plan did not even build one box drain in my constituency.

The constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla, which I proudly represent, has been, as I said before, the subject of rural neglect for many years. It took the Prime Minister on—well, the then Opposition Leader, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, in May 2009 to break the cycle of neglect. The developmental inoculation that we received in May 2010, and in the three years leading up to, is unprecedented.

12.00 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I will now give you a brief overview of some of the things, and you know I am just going to list them out for you, because the amount of work that was done in this constituency over the last three years have been unprecedented in the history of any Government serving at any time in Trinidad and Tobago.

Let me start in Biche, Charuma, the southern end of my constituency, and the stellar work done by Councillor Glen Ram. I will start firstly with water, because for the first time in Cuche, in Biche and in Plum Mitan, water is flowing. Water is flowing. [*Desk thumping*] And this is thanks to the People's Partnership Government. The illumination of the Plum Mitan Recreation Ground and a play park was also done. Let me get to some of the box drains. Box drains in: Settlement Trace, Plata Trace, Ramlal Trace, Lewis, O'Brien, Prudence, Aberdeen, Gonzales, Sookdeo, Kitchener, Sombrero, Lal, Boodram, Gajadhar, Kowlessar and Fitz Roads. That is just box drains.

Road paving: Borel Street, Gonzales Street, Aberdeen Street, Nancoo Street, Prince Street, Sookdeo, Hicks, Sombrero, Kitchener and O'Brien Trace. This is just one electoral district. This is not the whole constituency. Water pipes being laid and I think it is flowing now in Borel, Nancoo, Prince, Sookdeo, Hicks, Sombrero, Kitchener and O'Brien Trace.

Mr. Speaker, Plum Mitán will soon be getting their brand new community centre. [*Desk thumping*] And I know my colleague, Minister Peters, the Member for Mayaro, spoke about the opening of the Biche High School, where Councillor Ram and the former Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla, “His Excellency” Mr. Partap, they went on protest after protest, weeks after weeks to get that school opened under the PNM because it was built and never opened. It was opened under this Government, and they did not stop there. They also did the Presbyterian School which was falling apart. It was also built right down the hill.

Mr. Speaker, let me now turn my attention to Cumuto/Tamana, in the far west of the constituency. The strengthening and paving of the Ste. Marie Emmanuel Road, a road which for over 20 years—and I know Minister Jairam Seemungal, the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo used to pass on that road. It is now almost 66 per cent rehabilitated, and after this budget is passed, the other 30 per cent is to be done. That road, for years upon years, has been like a sore sticking out. Many, many residents complained bitterly about that road and yet nothing was done, nothing was done, and then you know the PNM will come and say that we did not deliver.

Mr. Seemungal: Cumuto Main Road paved.

Hon. C. Partap: Cumuto Main Road is being paved as we speak.

Mr. Seemungal: And box drains.

Hon. C. Partap: I am getting to those, I am getting to those.

Hon. Member: Let them know, let them hear all.

Hon. C. Partap: Strengthening and paving of the Cumuto Main Road from Four Roads coming down. The hon. Minister, the Member for Tabaquite, started the project there, about two weeks ago. Rehabilitation of the de Gannes and Jairasingh Roads, Dairy Trace, Mano Trace, Tulsie Trace, Ramlochan Trace, St. Louis Trace, Celestine Trace, Paradath Trace, Silver Windsor Road, La Pastora Road; the Guaico Tamana Section 2, Kassim Trace, Mappapire Road, and Heritage Trace. These are some of the roads that were left undone. And let me tell you, the PNM were in office for nine years and they also ran the council.

Mr. Seemungal: Tell them how long it was never paved.

Hon. C. Partap: Never paved.

Mr. Seemungal: Fifty years and they were in Government.

Hon. C. Partap: Never paved. And in three years look at the amount of work that was done, in three years.

Dr. Khan: Who do it?

Hon. C. Partap: We did it. The People's Partnership Government did it, [*Desk thumping*] and that is just roads. Let me start on the box drains for Cumuto/Tamana—two kilometres of box drain on the Guaico/Tamana Road, dredging of the Caura Main Road and the river, gabion baskets done in Los Armadillos and Caratal.

Miss Mc Donald: [*Inaudible*]

Hon. C. Partap: What? “Doh worry, we eh reach Diego Martin yet”, we talking about Cumuto.

Miss Mc Donald: No, no, you cannot reach there as yet.

Hon. C. Partap: Box drains in Taitt Trace, Bramble Trace, Bells Trace, Tamana Hill; the laying of water lines in Nestor, Guaico Tamana along the Cumuto Main Road, Moonlight Avenue, Taitt Trace, St. Ann's Trace— [*Interruption*]

Dr. Khan: How much pipe was that?

Hon. C. Partap: “Plenty pipe, plenty of pipe.” Electrification—and I know the Minister of Sport—of the La Tosca and Housing Village Recreational Ground—I would like to thank the Member for Naparima for all his help. The completed rehabilitation of the Upper Cumuto Recreation Ground and the Lower Cumuto Recreation Ground is going to be done by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs through NGC—the complete refurbishment of the Guaico Tamana Community Centre.

Hon. Member: Cunaripo Recreation Grounds.

Hon. C. Partap: The Cunaripo Recreation Grounds will be done also. This is just two of the electoral districts, I have three more to go. [*Crosstalk*] Three more to go.

Hon. Member: I like the Cunaripo ground.

Hon. C. Partap: The Cunaripo ground—we did the direct impact programme on the Cunaripo ground. [*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Khan: “He listening to everything yuh saying dey.” [*Laughter*]

Hon. Member: “Dats right.”

Hon. C. Partap: Let me now move on to Sangre Grande south and the area of Councillor Harris. The Guaico Tamana paved, Cunaripo Road, landslips repaired on the Cunaripo Junction, strengthening and paving of the Balka Trace and St. Louis Road. Rousseau Road, Palmiste Drive, Upper Cunapo, Angelo Trace, Ogiste Trace, Nicholas Drive, Villafana Trace, Sooklal Mahabir—that is one of the guys.

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Hon. C. Partap: I have more roads to call.

Mr. Seemungal: And if they had done half of that in their constituency—

Hon. C. Partap: Cooperative Street extension, Mc Shine Street Extension, Phipps Trace—

Miss Mc Donald: “Boy, just say all the roads, nah.” [*Laughter*]

Hon. C. Partap: “Ah calling all de roads.” [*Crosstalk*] It is hurting dem that dey hearing all of this is being done man, it hurting.” All the roads, I am going to call all the roads. But I am not done yet. You must know the level of development that is taking place under the People’s Partnership Government. That is just roads, I am going to box drains now. The Cunapo Southern Road, four kilometres of box drains. Cunaripo Road, box drain on Pine Avenue, San Louis Road, Williams Road, the Upper Cunapo Road, Middle Street, Barker Trace, Paul Street, Coal Mine, Villafana Trace, San Louis, Gajadhar, and Geeta Gardens box drains.

We come now to sport. Jogging tracks done in the San Louis Recreation Ground, construction of the pavilion through the Ministry of Local Government which will be opening soon. Pavilion upgrade of the Good Hope Recreation Ground and the Santa Ana Recreation Ground. Water lines laid: Middle Street, Cooperative Street, Nestor, Guaico Tamana, Hay Trace, Cunaripo Southern Road, Johnson Trace, Santa Ana Trace, and San Louis Road. [*Laughter*] What?

Mr. Indarsingh: We have to check back that in the budget and see how much you get. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Seemungal: And he is still complaining he did not get anything.

Hon. Member: “And he repeating it.”

Hon. C. Partap: No, no, no, these are the works that have been done. And yet there is a certain Member of this House who will say that Collin Partap never

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performed as the MP. I think there were 40 metres of road that were left undone and he highlighted that in one of his newspapers. That Collin Partap never performed. The People's Partnership Government never performed. We did all of this work but we never performed. It is all about corruption and bacchanal.

Mr. Hypolite: What about slipper drains?

Hon. C. Partap: "Ah coming dey, doh worry." Slipper drains is on this page. [*Crosstalk*] Ask and you shall get the answers. The National Commission for Self Help, they paved: Chunilal Singh Trace, de Gannes Road, Santa Ana Road, Sohan Trace. [*Crosstalk*] Bridges, look this is just three years.

Mr. Seemungal: "All yuh" have been in Government all your lives."

Hon. C. Partap: This is what was done in three years. [*Crosstalk*] Always, you knew it—

Mr. Seemungal: You never fix nothing, "nah man."

Hon. C. Partap: The Harrinanan Trace and Johnson Trace bridges, all completed. I will now go to Vega De Oropouche which is on the eastern side of the constituency. [*Crosstalk*] Rampersad Trace, road paved; Wine Factory Road, Mc Gilivary Road, Cro Cro Bar Road, and the bridge was done on Cro Cro Bar also; Ragbir Drive, Riley Land Settlement 1, Vade Road, Jangalee Road, Fishing Pond Main Road—

Dr. Khan: "Dey have Cro Cro?"

Hon. C. Partap: From the Eastern Main Road straight into Fishing Pond.

Hon. Member: Fishing Pond Road too?

Hon. C. Partap: Fishing Pond Road—

Dr. Khan: It has some good cascadoo down there.

Hon. C. Partap: Very good cascadoo and turtle watching also—

Hon. Member: And crab.

Hon. C. Partap: And crab, do not forget crab. The Morin Bay Bridge is now done so you could go straight into the beach.

Mr. Seemungal: Then enter the sluice gate.

Hon. C. Partap: The sluice—Minister Seemungal knows it man, he knows that constituency well. I would like to thank the Minister of Works and Infrastructure for starting the paving of the—

Hon. Member: Which one, this current one?

Hon. C. Partap: Yes, this current Minister of Work and Infrastructure. Not the other Minister of Works and Infrastructure that only gave me one kilometre of paved road in two years. [*Crosstalk*] Not that one. I am talking about the one that is performing for this constituency. [*Crosstalk*]

Wait, now we go to Manzanilla. [*Interruption*]

Mr. Seemungal: Yes, yes, get them updated.

Hon. C. Partap: Manzanilla, the roads that were paved: Nacknack Trace, Heart Road, Brigand Hill Trace, Kowlessar Road, Marper Farm Road,— [*Interruption*]

Mr. Seemungal: Tell them about Marper Farm. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. C. Partap: No, no, Marper Farm is on the list. It is on the list. Old Plum Road, Pleasant Drive Main Road, Pleasant Drive Road 1 and 2, Flemming Road, Dowlat Circular— [*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: Absolute nonsense!

Hon. C. Partap: Absolute nonsense, I am hearing from the Member for Port of Spain South.

Hon. Member: And they were in Government all their lives.

Hon. C. Partap: Rural neglect is being addressed and it is absolute nonsense. Rural neglect being addressed. Absolute nonsense she says. These are the people who have suffered for years upon years under the PNM Government and it is absolute nonsense. [*Desk thumping*] They do not want to hear it, right. That is all you would hear, absolute nonsense, but they will come and read a laundry list of things that they never did in their areas that they want done now. Nine years in Government but they will come and say we need to do it.

Hon. Seemungal: Take your time.

Hon. C. Partap: We need to do it. The Manzanilla fishing depot, thanks to the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo and the Minister—

Hon. Member: “He do that already?”

Hon. C. Partap: He is doing—it is being done now. The fishing depot in north Manzanilla, the fishermen now have a facility. They are going to have a facility very soon, something in which they were lacking for years, years upon years.

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[MR. PARTAP]

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The COSTAATT campus in Sangre Grande, 800 students, enrolled. Higher education for the first time in not only Cumuto/Manzanilla, but also in Toco/Sangre Grande. We opened it; Minister Griffith and I opened it not too long ago with Minister Fazal Karim. Higher education, something unheard of in this constituency and in that region, now at the doorsteps of residents and children.

The Valencia by-pass, and I know the Member for Toco/Sangre Grande will speak a little bit more on that. The Valencia by-pass which will eliminate traffic congestion going into Toco and Sangre Grande has started. And through the Ministry of Agriculture the reopening of Marper Farms, which was once the number one propagating station in the country, and they have allowed it to fall into disrepair. And now we have rebuilt it and I think there are about 100,000 plants ready for sale, soon.

Mr. Hypolite: How many recreation grounds?

Hon. C. Partap: “Wait, doh let me get started on recreation grounds you know. Doh let me get started.” And also through the OJT Programme we have 40 young people employed at the farm, in Marper Farms.

12.15 a.m.

The Cumuto police station—and I know the hon. Member, the Minister of Housing and Urban Development mentioned it—will be completed very shortly, and also the Manzanilla police station will follow. Early childhood centres in Maharaj Hill and Lower Cumuto opened. [*Interruption*] No, well, I was now going to health. The new Sangre Grande hospital will be started very soon; it is going to start.

Hon. Member: Enhanced health facilities.

Mr. C. Partap: Enhanced health facilities in Coryal, in Biche, and I know the Minister is going to come down when he gives the sporting equipment, to open.

Dr. Khan: “Tell them what it is ah would bring. Tell dem what it is—de two spin cycles and ting.”

Mr. C. Partap: I should not have announced it. But, yes, work is being done at a pace never seen before in Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Hon. Member: “Port of Spain South want some too.”

Mr. C. Partap: “What you say?” The Member for Port of Spain South needs some also?

Miss Mc Donald: “Ah tell yuh doh call my name.” Do not call my name!
[*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker: Member for Port of Spain South! Please, please!

Mr. C. Partap: Tourism, we are looking at a tourism proposal to be sent to the new Minister of Tourism, which will include the opening up of the Tamana Caves; the redevelopment of the Fishing Pond boardwalk.

Hon. Member: Yes, yes. “Dah is de crab-watching ting?”

Mr. C. Partap: Yes, turtle watching. These are some of the works that are being done in the constituency, and they are saying that there is no delivery on this side—no delivery. They are saying—the other Member saying that MPs are a waste, but look at the work that was done in this constituency [*Desk thumping*] through the People’s Partnership Government. Development taking pace—
[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Place at pace.

Mr. C. Partap:—at pace.

Dr. Khan: “Tell dem bout yuh little stint in National Security.”

Mr. C. Partap: No, I already spoke about those two police stations. [*Crosstalk*] And we have two more years to go. When we are finished with that constituency we will have no work to be done in the second term.

Hon. Member: Sit down and relax.

Mr. C. Partap: But, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, this is some of the work that was done under the People’s Partnership Government. Rural neglect is a thing of the past in Cumuto/Manzanilla, and we are continuing to work with the Ministers through the Ministries to get more, because there is more work to be done. This is just a few that I have highlighted. We have a lot more work to be done in the constituency. The Caigual Roads, Marquis Road, continuing of the Cumuto Main Road—it is a big constituency. To go from one end to the other takes you about 45 minutes.

Mr. Seemungal: “Tell dem de size of it. Yuh border my constituency.”

Mr. C. Partap: I border Jairam’s constituency; I border the Member for Arima; I border the Member for Toco/Sangre Grande; I border the Member for Mayaro.

Dr. Khan: How you up in Caigual Road?

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Mr. C. Partap: No, that is part of the constituency.

Dr. Khan: Serious?

Mr. C. Partap: Yes. Caigual 1 and 2.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is just some of the work that the People's Partnership Government has done, [*Interruption*] and we are continuing to work at a pace, and I know the local government election is coming up.

Hon. Member: "And we winning that."

Mr. C. Partap: And we will be victorious. I have no doubt about it. The work speaks for itself.

Dr. Griffith: "We taking all eight."

Mr. C. Partap: All eight; four on my side and four on the side of Toco/Sangre Grande.

Hon. Member: Eight is enough.

Mr. C. Partap: Eight is enough. So with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, with no more takers at this hour, [*Laughter*] I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to later in this very day, September 17, 2013 at 10.30 a.m. and we will continue our debate on the Appropriation Bill, 2013.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 12.19 a.m.