



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

# Debates of the House of Representatives

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5th Session – 10th Parliament (Rep.) – Volume 35 – Number 33

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**OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE WADE MARK  
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE NELA KHAN  
DEPUTY SPEAKER

**Wednesday 6th May, 2015**

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

**EDITOR: LILA RODRIGUEZ-ROBERTS**  
Telephone: 623-4494

(TYPESET BY THE HANSARD STAFF, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT PRINTER, CARONI,  
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO— 2022)



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*Leave of Absence**Wednesday, May 06, 2015***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Wednesday, May 06, 2015*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. Patrick Manning, Member of Parliament for San Fernando East, who has asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House. The hon. Winston Dookeran, Member of Parliament for Tunapuna, has asked to be excused from sittings of the House during the period May 5th to the 11th, 2015.

The leave which the Members seek is granted.

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE  
(APPOINTMENT OF)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have received communication from the President of the Senate. It is addressed:

Hon. Wade Mark  
Speaker of the House  
Office of the Speaker  
Level II  
Tower D  
Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre  
1A Wrightson Road  
Port of Spain

Dear Hon. Speaker

Appointment of a Joint Select Committee

I wish to inform you that at a sitting held on May 5, 2015, the Senate resolved as follows:

That a Bill entitled an Act to repeal and replace the Insurance Act, Chap. 84:01; to reform the law relating to insurance companies; to regulate insurance businesses and privately administered pension fund plans, and for other related purposes be referred to a Joint Select Committee comprising an

*Joint Select Committee*  
[MR. SPEAKER]

*Wednesday, May 06, 2015*

equal number of Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and that this committee be empowered to discuss the general merits of the Bill along with its details and be mandated to report by May 21, 2015.

The Senate also resolved that should the House of Representatives concur with this request, that the following Senators be appointed to serve on the Joint Select Committee:

Mr. Larry Howai

Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie

Mr. Vasant Bharath

Mrs. Helen Drayton

Dr. Dhanayshar Mahabir

Mr. Faris Al-Rawi

Accordingly, I respectfully request that you cause this matter to be brought to the attention of the House of Representatives.

Yours respectfully,

Raziah Ahmed

President of the Senate.

**MOTION OF PRIVILEGE**  
**(MINISTER OF ENERGY AND ENERGY AFFAIRS)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, on Friday, April 24, 2015, the hon. Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, raised a Motion of Privilege.

The matter concerns statements made by the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs during a sitting of the House of Representatives, which was held on Friday, April 17, 2015. The Member submitted that in response to a question posed to him, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs had given an answer that was factually inaccurate, and therefore misleading. In support of his Motion, the Member for Diego Martin West submitted that the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs committed a contempt of this House on the following four substantive grounds:

1. The Minister misled this honourable House;
2. The Minister read from a prepared text, which pointed to a wilful and deliberate intention to mislead this House;



3. The Minister knew or should have known, because of the office he holds, that the statement he was making was untrue; and
4. The Minister was wantonly reckless in his responsibility to provide accurate information to the House.

Hon. Members would know that questions are an important means by which Ministers are accountable to the House. For a Minister to provide inaccurate information in response to a question, is to act contrary to the spirit of the question process.

It is incumbent on Ministers to treat questions in a manner that is consistent with their constitutional responsibilities, and it is therefore expected that Ministers will answer questions accurately. However, while a deliberate attempt to mislead the House via the reply to a question would qualify as a contempt, it is established parliamentary practice, that if a Minister discovers that an answer furnished by him is incorrect, he is obliged to make a statement correcting his earlier response. The correction to answers to questions must be made as soon as possible. The basis for this practice is that after the initial reply is provided, it becomes public and ceases to be a matter between the Minister and the Member who has posed the question.

Hon. Members, the Chair has noted that the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs corrected his previous statement on Friday, May 1, 2015, by way of a personal explanation. It is also noteworthy that the Minister sought to make this correction at the first opportunity available to him to do so. Against this background, I rule that the matter referred to me by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West does not constitute a prima facie case of breach of privilege, warranting its referral to the Committee of Privileges.

I so rule.

**COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES  
(MEMBER FOR DIEGO MARTIN WEST)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, on Friday, April 24, 2015, the Member for Siparia and hon. Prime Minister, raised a Motion of Privilege. In support of her Motion, the Member claimed that during a debate in this House on a Motion of No Confidence in the Minister of Finance and the Economy, the hon. Leader of the Opposition and Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West committed contempt of this House.

*Committee of Privileges*  
[MR. SPEAKER]

*Wednesday, May 06, 2015*

The Member submitted that a contempt was committed on the grounds that the Member was reckless in his responsibility to provide accurate information to the House and he knew or ought to have known, because of the office he holds, that the statement he was reading was false, inaccurate and damaging.

All hon. Members are aware that Members of Parliament enjoy special privileges and immunities essential for the proper functioning of the Parliament which distinguish Members from other citizens, and affords Members rights which members of the public do not possess. As I have repeatedly stated, the most important of these is freedom of speech in parliamentary proceedings. I will continue to urge Members to take the greatest care in what they say in this honourable House, and to exercise their privilege of freedom of speech responsibly.

The privilege of freedom of speech can only be preserved if Members do not abuse it. The dignity of all hon. Members as well as this House itself can be undermined by the imprudent or careless use of privilege. However, the best protection against abuse is the self-discipline of hon. Members.

Hon. Members, it is not for me as Speaker to make a determination as to whether a contempt has been committed.

Hon. Members, I have given this matter careful and serious consideration. I have examined the *Hansard* in detail, and I am of the view that this matter warrants further investigation. In this regard, I rule that, prima facie, a sufficient case of breach of privilege has been established and I therefore refer the matter to the Committee of Privileges for full investigation and report.

I so rule.

#### **PAPERS LAID**

1. Audited Financial Statements of National Schools Dietary Services Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2011. [*The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh)*]
2. Audited Financial Statements of National Schools Dietary Services Limited for the financial year ended September 30, 2012. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]
3. Annual Financial Statements of the Seafood Industry Development Company Limited for year ended September 30, 2014. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]

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

4. One Hundred and Third Report of the Salaries Review Commission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on a Review of the Salary and other conditions of service of the Office of Registrar, Equal Opportunity Tribunal. [*The Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Nela Khan)*]
5. Report on the Parliamentary Delegation Visit to Australia for the period February 19 to 25, 2015. [*The Minister of Tobago Development (Hon. Dr. Delmon Baker)*]
6. Report of a Parliamentary Visit to the Republic of Cuba for the period February 10 to 15, 2015. [*The Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration (Hon. Dr. Rodger Samuel)*]
7. Dog Control Regulations, 2015. [*The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal)*]

**1.45 p.m.**

#### PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

##### Central Statistical Office (Macroeconomic policy)

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

Can the Prime Minister state the basis upon which the Government makes policy decisions particularly macroeconomic policy without a properly functioning Central Statistical Office?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC)**: [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, firstly let me state that the CSO has been providing macroeconomic data to the Government and the wider public on a fairly consistent basis over the past five years and indeed for decades before that. The data includes figures for the GDP, inflation, the labour market and trade statistics. There have been challenges with timelines of the labour statistics, but I have been assured by the CSO that the figures will be up-to-date by June 2015, this year.

Currently, the CSO is only one quarter behind with respect to the labour statistics. In comparison I would like to note that our labour data is still better than most of the data provided in other Caribbean jurisdictions. The data for the retail

price index is updated monthly and is currently considered robust. We have worked with the IMF to attain the highest standard. The problems with the CSO have been existing for quite some time, but the divisions have been strengthened and they produce today accurate data, and I say by June of this year even the labour statistics will be up-to-date.

The same CSO, Mr. Speaker, that supported Vision 2020 has been supporting and has supported all our policy documents, including the *Medium Term Policy Framework*.

**Dr. Rowley:** Is the Government saying that Members of the Government have been receiving CSO data under the various headings as described by the Prime Minister?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** This is the information from the line Minister, Dr. Tewarie, with respect to data being received from the CSO.

**Dr. Rowley:** You as a Member of the Government and Prime Minister, have you been receiving that data from the CSO under the various headings?

**Mr. Speaker:** Well, I do not want you to say “you”, eh, you know better than that: Hon. Prime Minister, Member for Siparia.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you. Have I personally been receiving them? As the Government we have been receiving them through the line Minister responsible for the CSO.

**Dr. Rowley:** Well since this body of data exists and the Government has been receiving it, could the Prime Minister explain why such data have not been provided to the House during the last budget debate, and since, and even before that?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will make some enquiries as to the accuracy of the statement made, that it was not provided and get back to the hon. Member.

**Dr. Rowley:** Is the Prime Minister saying that she is unaware that during the last budget debate no CSO data was presented to this House?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The Prime Minister is not—that is not my response to the question from the hon. Member.

**Medium Term Fiscal Framework  
(Details of)**

**Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*): Can the Prime Minister state whether the Government has a medium term fiscal framework? If so, can you provide this information to the House?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC)**: Yes, hon. Speaker, the Government does have a Medium Term Policy Framework. This was the document, 2011/2014. [*Prime Minister shows document*] The future document is in preparation and will be ready in time for the next national budget.

**Dr. Rowley**: Clearly, the Prime Minister did not hear the question. The question is about a fiscal framework.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC**: The Medium Term Policy Framework includes data with respect to fiscal policy.

**Dr. Rowley**: If that is so, and if what is presented there satisfies the question, was that presented to Moody's?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC**: I would think that this was presented. Indeed, when Moody's raised the issue we had indicated that in 2010 our policy framework was contained in the People's Partnership Manifesto. That Manifesto was laid in this Parliament and was adopted as Government policy framework. This information was shared by the Minister of Finance and the Economy with Moody's. Indeed, the Minister of Finance and the Economy travelled to Washington to have discussions with Moody's.

**Dr. Rowley**: Does the Prime Minister think, based on what the Prime Minister had just said, does the Prime Minister think that she is sending the right signal to the international financial markets and foreign investors given that cavalier, nonchalant and downright dismissal—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Members**: Nooo.

**Dr. Rowley**: I am putting the question to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. Can I do it in peace, Sir? I want to repeat the question in silence, please. Does the Prime Minister think that she is sending the right signal to the international financial markets and foreign investors given her cavalier, nonchalant and downright dismissive attitude? Mr. Speaker! [*Crosstalk*] I would like to complete my question, please.

**Mr. Speaker**: Is it a supplemental?

**Dr. Rowley:** I would like to complete the question I am putting to the Prime Minister—dismissive attitude and nonchalant and downright dismissive attitude to Moody's downgrade?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on 48(4). Insulting and derogatory language.

**Dr. Moonilal:** He cannot do better.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, the hon. Prime Minister.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, hon. Speaker. I think that question calls into question, the arrogance and contempt—[*Desk thumping and interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Downright arrogance.

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** This is not a debate.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, please.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** To say, in response to the question, the answer is, yes, but not with respect to the rest of the language. Yes, we are sending the right signals. And I do not believe that the hon. Member is sending the right signals with his contemptuous and arrogant behaviour and, indeed, unpatriotic behaviour to Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, before I proceed, I proceed under your caution that the Prime Minister is accusing me of being unpatriotic and I would like to know if you would accept that as parliamentary.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, but you are accusing me of being everything else.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please. Could I ask that we have respect for each other? And I will ask both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to use language that is quite acceptable and dignified in this House. I do not believe that we should be accusing any one or each other of unpatriotic behaviour. We are all citizens of this country and we are all hon. Members. I would like to suggest that if you have no further supplemental we go on to the next question.

**Dr. Rowley:** On a point of clarification, Mr. Speaker. Again, I do not want to violate any aspect to the House's Standing Orders, so on a point of clarification, is the word "nonchalant" or "dismissive" or "cavalier", unparliamentary? Just for my guidance, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** No, I have not ruled that.

**Dr. Rowley:** Well, thank you very much. So accusations about my conduct are unfounded?

**Mr. Speaker:** I have not ruled—let us continue, I have not ruled that your language is not parliamentary. I am saying, let us conduct ourselves in an environment where we respect each other.

**Dr. Rowley:** I am just seeking clarification and your guidance so that there would be no misunderstanding with respect to the nature of the proceedings and my involvement in it. [*Cell phone rings*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, whose—just a second.

**Mr. Warner:** My apologies, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Oh, I thought it was coming from outside. All right, may I ask all Members, all Members, please, because I know there is a tendency for Members to keep their phone sometimes in the normal mode. We are in the House of Representatives, may I ask all Members to put their phone either on silent or on vibrate, please, so that we would not have any future disturbances? The hon. Member for Diego Martin West.

### **Debt Management Strategy (Details of)**

**Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the hon. Prime Minister: Does the Government have a debt management strategy? If so, can you provide such information to the House?

**The Prime Minister** (**Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC**): Well, the answer is obviously, yes, hon. Speaker. We do have a debt management strategy. To provide the information I will need more time than we have, and therefore that information can be readily provided by the Minister of Finance and the Economy. So, as I say, the Minister of Finance and the Economy elaborated on this matter in the House, if I am not mistaken, on the objective of balancing the budget and eliminating deficit positions.

**Dr. Rowley:** Having been advised that there is such a strategy, did the Prime Minister and or her Government provide such strategy to Moody's before we were downgraded?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I think the answer to that is, yes. And again, the hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy is very hands-on on these matters. As I said, he expatiated on this in the Parliament, in the House on Friday and in other places, and the answer to your question is, yes.

**Dr. Rowley:** The Prime Minister thinks that this has been done. Can the Prime Minister confirm that it has been done?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, the answer is, yes, Sir.

**Dr. Rowley:** Thank you very much.

### **Moody's Investors Services (Downgrade)**

**Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*): In light of the present downgrade by Moody's Investor Services, [*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, let us have one—please, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has the House—has the floor rather, please allow him to speak in silence. [*Laughter*]

**Dr. Rowley:** I would take the House.

**Mr. Speaker:** You have the floor, and please allow him to raise his questions in silence. Continue hon. Leader.

**Dr. Rowley:** In light of the present downgrade by Moody's Investor Services, what are the implications for State Enterprises that have outstanding international debt liabilities?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** I think, well, I should not think, I should say. I would say that we have to remember that B, the grade Baa2 is still an investment grade status and we expect the implications to be minimal in the short term. Further, where bonds have already been issued, and remember this is related to bonds, where the bonds are already issued those rates have already been fixed. Any new borrowings will have to take place in the context of prevailing international market rates that are going.

**Dr. Rowley:** Does the Prime Minister anticipate any increased cost or other implications for the downgrade?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, at this time we do not expect any increased cost for the downgrade.

### **Government's Plan (Discontinued State Enterprises)**

**Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*): Can the Prime Minister tell this House, what is the likelihood that existing lines of credit for state enterprises will be discontinued and if so, what is Government's plan to keep these enterprises afloat if such a development occurs?



**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** Again, I think we want to remember that the grade that we are now in, which is the Baa2, is still an investment grade. In fact, it is far better than many countries in the world. It is still a very high grade, and therefore we do not expect these state enterprises to collapse, we do not expect that to happen.

**Dr. Rowley:** Is the Prime Minister aware that Moody's have indicated that if certain conditions prevail and certain things are not done, that further downgrade could be forthcoming? And in which case, if those things are not done, whether further downgrades are being catered for?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Hon. Speaker, we are working towards what I said, the Minister of Finance and the Economy expressed in the House, that it is cutting deficits and balancing budget. To say that we speculate that there would be further downgrades, again, it is like the sky is going to fall tomorrow; the sky will not fall down tomorrow. We are working on these matters.

In 2008/2009, in fact, this country experienced a downgrade, and your then Minister in the Ministry of Finance, I believe it was the then Minister Conrad Enill, he said it was no big thing, this happens from time to time. We take note of it and we continue to work to deal with the deficits. We inherited these deficits. And, in fact, two of the bonds in Petrotrin, which we will come to in a while, those bonds that Petrotrin now hold in their debt portfolio were bonds that were issued in 2007 and 2009, having to do with the failed gas to liquids project, and that is almost the majority of the debt of Petrotrin, hon. Speaker.

#### **Petrotrin's Borrowing Portfolio (Details of)**

**Dr. Keith Rowley (Diego Martin West):** Can the Prime Minister state what would be the approximate increased cost to Petrotrin borrowing portfolio given the recent downgrade by Moody's?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** Hon. Speaker, Members, Petrotrin's debt portfolio includes two major bonds which I just spoke of with international investors: one for US \$750 million issued in May 2007 and another one for US \$850 million issued in August 2009. These bonds constitute approximately two-thirds of Petrotrin's total debt. The bonds were issued to finance the gasoline optimization programme and the failed gas to liquids project. The coupon rate on these two bonds are fixed rates.

However, if there are new borrowings, the existing bonds, those rates are already fixed and were fixed before we came into office, the coupon rate on these,

as I say, fixed; for new borrowings, the rate would be determined by prevailing market conditions.

**2.00 p.m.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Moody's Investors Service  
(Formal Complaints or Objections to)**

**Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*): Can the Prime Minister state whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has written any formal complaints or objections to Moody's Investment Service challenging the Service's downgrading of Trinidad and Tobago, the NGC, Petrotrin and the THA?

**Mr. Speaker:** All right. Hon. Member, I think you are really speaking on behalf—and you cannot—of the hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Dr. K. Rowley:** Sorry. Sorry.

**Mr. Speaker:** So I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West at this time.  
[*Crosstalk and laughter*]

**Mr. Warner:** If you believe this is a laughing matter, go ahead.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for Chaguanas West. [*Crosstalk*] Please, please, order! Please! Please! Please, allow the Member for Chaguanas West the floor.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please.

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Can the Prime Minister state whether the Government has written any formal complaints or objections to Moody's Investment Service challenging the Service's downgrading of Trinidad and Tobago, the NGC, Petrotrin and the THA?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** The answer is, no written complaint has been made. However, the Minister of Finance and the Economy engaged in discussion with Moody and, of course, as I said in this very House, has outlined his position.

**Mr. Warner:** A supplemental. Can the Prime Minister advise if any formal complaints are expected to be made?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The hon. Minister of Finance and the Economy has not made an objection in writing but he has made his objections orally, Sir, and that, whether you see it informal or formal, a complaint has been made.

### Offshore Patrol Vessels

**Dr. Keith Rowley (Diego Martin West):** Now that the Government has placed an order for offshore patrol vessels, is the Prime Minister now of the view that significant aspects of crime-fighting involve activities at sea using patrol vessels?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** First, Mr. Speaker, the vessels that we have ordered are not offshore patrol vessels. They are not OPVs. They have a different use. The vessels ordered have a different use in maintaining law and order. So let us take that out of our minds. The OPV was a failed idea of the then government, the PNM Government. [*Desk thumping*] These coastal patrol vessels are designed to work in what is known as the Pier 2 area of operations. That extends two miles from shore to 22 miles offshore. Mr. Speaker, the OPVs were to work much further out of sea and, therefore, would not have locked down the coastal borders. These will work in a shorter—they are known as long-range patrol vessels or coastal patrol vessels, so they can lock down our maritime borders very close to shore.

Further, these vessels are coming at a far cheaper rate than anything envisaged with the failed OPVs—far cheaper; far, far, far cheaper. And so, we know that illicit drugs and weapons and so on, are sent into the area of the Gulf of Paria just off the north coast and the south coast. These coastal patrol vessels are designed to work in conjunction with interceptors to patrol our borders and close that maritime wall that has been penetrated.

Mr. Speaker, may I say also that not all the 12 vessels are coastal patrol vessels. Some of them are interceptors. Six are interceptors, four are coastal patrol vessels and two utility vessels. This is all part of a holistic national security plan. It is not about blimps in the sky ideas. We are very serious about securing our borders and these vessels will seal that maritime wall and work closely with other law enforcement agencies as we create a safe coastline for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. Rowley:** Given that it had been said that we did not need vessels offshore and that the—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please! Please!

**Dr. Rowley:**—and that the fight against crime is not on sea—it is on land—is the Prime Minister in a position to tell us now whether any of these vessels are amphibious and will be working on land? [*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Hon. Speaker, I am not sure what is the question. We are saying we will lock down the maritime borders. We have taken steps so to do. That took us a process of time in order to get to here. We had teams visiting various shipyards—the experts visiting various shipyards—making assessments with respect to what would be the best vessels to be purchased that is cost-effective. The OPVs would not have served our purpose. They were being further out at sea—much further out—and would not have suited the waters or the locking down of the borders.

Further, the statements being made that we did not need vessels, we said we did not need OPVs. [*Desk thumping*] We are very conscious, we must lock down on land and at sea and we are taking measures to deal with both, hon. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. Rowley:** Is the Prime Minister now prepared to say that she is revising her position that we did not need to be at sea and we are meant to be on land?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Hon. Speaker, I am saying we need to be on land, around our borders, at sea as well, and that is what we are working to deal with. [*Desk thumping*]

**Dr. Rowley:** In the context of what the Prime Minister has just said about new purchases and what they need to do, where does the vessel from China fit into this, and when will that vessel arrive?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The negotiations for the Chinese vessel are ongoing with respect to funding and financing of that vessel. We expect to have that vessel sometime within this year in Trinidad and Tobago. That vessel will also be one that will help us with the borders. We are getting it as a very cost-effective figure and it can also be used for training of those officers who would need to be at sea.

**Mr. Speaker:** Next question, No. 9.

**Dr. Rowley:** I thought I had—

**Mr. Speaker:** No, I think you have gone over.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You are running out of time.

**Mr. Speaker:** So let us go to No. 9 now. Time is about—

**Dr. Moonilal:** We want to get to the Motion quickly.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, please. Allow the Leader of the Opposition to speak, please.

**Dr. Rowley:** He is anxious to get to his Motion, Sir, but he will have to wait.

**Miss Mc Donald:** “Hi yah yai.”

#### **Offshore Patrol Vessels (Expectation of Arrival)**

**Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*): Can the Prime Minister state when exactly does she expect the first of the 12 offshore patrol vessels recently ordered to arrive in Trinidad and Tobago?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** I say, again, these are not offshore patrol vessels—

**Dr. Rowley:** They are land vessels then.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** They are not offshore patrol vessels. They are not OPVs. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** These are coastal patrol vessels. Mr. Speaker, let us get that very clear. And there is more than semantics in dealing with offshore patrol vessels versus the coastal patrol vessels. We expect the first of the vessels to arrive before the end of May this year, Sir.

#### **Auditor General's Legal Opinions (Approval by Attorney General)**

**Dr. Keith Rowley** (*Diego Martin West*): Can the Prime Minister state whether she is in agreement with the position taken by the Attorney General (as reported in the recent Auditor General's Report) that the Attorney General must approve all legal opinions submitted by the Legal Officer in the Auditor General's office prior to their submission to the Auditor General?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** Mr. Speaker, this matter arose in response to a letter from the Auditor General to the then Attorney General on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2013. Thereafter, the then Attorney General wrote to the

Auditor General by letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2013 and in response, the then AG drew attention to section 10(1) (f) of the Exchequer and Audit Act which provides that the Auditor General may present a case to the Attorney General for his advice, and in that regard, the Attorney General invited the Auditor General to submit any case in accordance with this section for his review. So that this was done then, pursuant to section 10(1) (f) of the Exchequer and Audit Act, under the remit of that Act.

**Dr. Rowley:** So the Prime Minister is confirming that her understanding is, as is mine, that there is not a requirement for the legal adviser to the Attorney General to first send his or her opinion to the Attorney General for approval before that advice is given to the Auditor General? Are we clear on that?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, no. That was not my reply at all—

**Dr. Rowley:** I know, but—

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** That was not my reply, Sir, and I repeat. The correspondence came first from a letter from the Auditor General to the then Attorney General. The then Attorney General wrote to the Auditor General and wrote pursuant to section 10(1)(f) of the Exchequer and Audit Act. So I repeat the statement I made earlier, Sir.

**Dr. Rowley:** I am not contesting a correspondence I have not seen. I am putting to the hon. Prime Minister a specific situation of interpretation which is, that correspondence as referred to in the Auditor General's report—I am drawing from that—that there is a position being advanced, and had been advanced under your Government, that before a legal officer to the Auditor General can submit a legal opinion to that independent office, that such an opinion ought to go to the Attorney General for his approval. I am asking the Prime Minister whether she is, in fact, in support of that position—or I will go a little further, that interpretation.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The interpretation as given is with respect to section 10(1)(f) of the Exchequer and Audit Act and I can read it for you. Look, what happened was that the Auditor General's department had recently hired an internal legal officer and the Auditor General wrote to the then Attorney General, as I indicated, and the then Attorney General responded saying: The subject head:

Re: Reconciliation of section 10(1)(f) of the Exchequer and Audit Act, Chap. 69:01 with legal advice given internally by the legal officer recently hired by the Auditor General's Department.

And the then Attorney General indicated:

Having considered section 10(1)(f) of the Exchequer and Audit Act, I am of the opinion that any advice provided by any legal officer in your department would require the prior approval of the Attorney General.

**Dr. Rowley:** The Prime Minister's explanation confuses the issue even further. If there was no issue, could the Prime Minister explain why would this issue be in the Auditor General's report? That is rhetorical. But I am asking the Prime Minister: is the Prime Minister prepared to accept any interpretation which says that before the Auditor General can be properly advised by her staff in legal opinion, that that opinion ought to be vetted and approved by the Auditor General? I am asking the Prime Minister—

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You mean by the Attorney General.

**Dr. Rowley:**—what is your position on that interpretation?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Vetted by the Auditor General or the Attorney General?

**Dr. Rowley:** By the Attorney General.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You said Auditor General, Sir.

**Dr. Rowley:** I am sorry.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Okay. Hon. Speaker, I accept that as the interpretation of the law at this time.

**Mr. Speaker:** I recognize the hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

#### **Auditor General's 2014 Report (Professional Fees Paid)**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the Prime Minister: According to the Auditor General's 2014 Report approximately \$1.9 million in professional fees have been paid out of public moneys to three persons who served as temporary government Senators, is the Prime Minister of the view that this may appear to be undue preferential treatment to persons in support of the Government?

**The Prime Minister** (**Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC**): I wonder if the Member will be so kind enough to point out where in this Auditor General's report this matter is indicated. Because I got this question just a short while ago and I have searched the report and I have been unable to locate it. Would you be kind enough to tell us on which page?

**Mr. Warner:** I would be happy to oblige, Madam Prime Minister. Under “Other Matters”, you have section 12. The three names are there.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Page?

**Mr. Warner:** Page 5, “Other Matters”.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Page?

**Mr. Warner:** I have page 5.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Page 5, in the report. Yes?

**Mr. Warner:** “Other Matters.” Can I give you my copy?

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, we have the report here.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I have the report. Okay.

Thank you very much, hon. Member. The exercise of discretion to select counsel is a matter under the portfolio of the hon. Attorney General. The selection of temporary Senators falls under the portfolio of the Prime Minister. It is important to note that these are two separate functions, hon. Speaker, and it is not unusual that where an attorney is deemed to have the competence to prosecute or to litigate in any matter, that such an attorney should be hired. It has been the practice in this Parliament before this 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament, in the other Parliaments under previous administrations, where persons have served as full-time government Senators and, in fact, received remuneration—

**Hon. Member:** And briefs.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Well, briefs and remuneration from the State. So this is not an unusual circumstance, once the competence is found for whatever is required, whether it be for legalese or for serving in the Parliament.

**Mr. Warner:** Supplemental. Prime Minister, thank you for your response, but I am not concerned with what happened before. I am concerned with what happened under this new regime that came to do better. And, Prime Minister, under Part IV—

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Part IV of what?

**Mr. Warner:**—of the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, Chap. 22:01, 24(b) says, I quote—

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Which Act is it, please?

**Mr. Warner:** All I have here: Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, Chap. 22:01, Integrity in Public Life.



**2.15 p.m.**

24(1) says:

“A person to whom this Part applies shall ensure that he performs his functions and administers the public resources for which he is responsible in an effective and efficient manner and shall—”

I go to (b):

“afford no undue preferential treatment to any group or individual;”

That is what I am referring to.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And what is the question?

**Mr. Warner:** And I am saying, of course, in the light of this—and forget what happened before—would you say that this, of course, reflects some degree of preferential treatment for these three Senators?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I am not of that view, hon. Member, and should you feel that it is being a breach of the integrity law, I am sure you know what to do.

**Mr. Speaker:** We have now reached 2.15 p.m. Thirty minutes would be now up, I now ask the Leader of the House—we can proceed?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has consented to proceed to extend the time for prime ministerial questions so that we can complete. I believe 16 questions have been filed to the hon. Prime Minister.

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

### **Fall in Oil Prices (Accountability Arrangements)**

**Mr. Jack Warner (Chaguanas West):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Prime Minister, the audited financial statements for a number of statutory authorities and state enterprises are outstanding including, but not limited to, WASA, UDeCOTT, Caribbean Airlines, eTeck, National Quarries and EMBD, given the fall in oil prices does the Prime Minister have any plan to strengthen the accountability arrangements for these and other state bodies?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister.

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** The answer is yes, Sir, and indeed these statements have been worked upon and will be made public as soon as they become available.

**Mr. Warner:** Let me say congratulations, Prime Minister. Thank you very much.

**Causeway between Port of Spain and Chaguaramas  
(Status of)**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): With respect to Government's stated intention to build a causeway between Port of Spain and Chaguaramas, could the Prime Minister state whether the Government is in possession of any feasibility study, proposal, design or estimate for the causeway and the date and author of any such report?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** In 2008, there was a preliminary investigation done for the Chaguaramas causeway. This investigation was done by AECOM and submitted on March 16, 2010. Based on this preliminary investigation, an estimated ballpark cost was given between TT \$6 billion to \$8 billion. In 2014, Nidco engaged CARITRANS, a local firm, to find a more cost effective way to provide increased access to Chaguaramas, looking at combining a causeway with widening the existing roadway. This was estimated about TT \$2 billion, plus the cost of acquiring any properties that may fall along the proposed highway.

To date, there has been no full feasibility study and solutions to provide increased access to Chaguaramas. The most recent Cabinet decision, in this regard, is to build the access to and from Chaguaramas and to hold consultations for same. So that decision was taken some time, I think it was last month, if I am not mistaken, or maybe two months ago, but it had been before the Cabinet some time before.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Warner:** Thanks again, Prime Minister. Prime Minister, do you recall that 2012, under the then Minister of Works and Transport at the time, the French Government had offered to prepare a study for an underground tunnel from Diego Martin up to the President's House? What has come of that, if anything?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I will make some enquires from the present Minister of Works and ask him to provide the information, hon. Member.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Comprehensive National Transportation Study  
(Detail of)**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Prime Minister indicate whether the Government conducted any comprehensive national transportation study since entering office and, if so, where can one obtain a copy of the document?

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC)**: Hon. Member for Chaguanas West, through you, hon. Speaker, there has been no comprehensive national transportation study since 2006. In 2002, the then Cabinet agreed to the preparation of a comprehensive national transportation study at a cost of \$18 million. In 2004, the Ministry of Works and Transport entered into a contract with Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas Incorporated of the US. This study was completed and submitted to the Ministry of Works and Transport in 2006. However, the study was not accepted by the then Ministry, and therefore, could not be sent to Cabinet for approval. My Cabinet has already approved the establishment of a transit authority, one whose mandate will be to develop a national transportation policy.

One of the initiatives my Government has undertaken thus far is the commissioning of a bus rationalization study which will determine the correct type of buses to be used on the nation's roads, and the Minister of Transport has stated that this will be sent to Cabinet shortly.

My Government is very much aware of the traffic congestion and inconveniences some of our travelling public face, however, we have done major infrastructure work across Trinidad and Tobago including the Diego Martin Highway, the Valencia Bypass, the Grand Bazaar, and Point Fortin highway which is ongoing. And, of course, hon. Member for Chaguanas West, through the hon. Speaker, would recall that together that you and I turned the sod for the construction of the Point Fortin highway. [*Desk thumping*]

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

**Mr. Warner**: Yes, Prime Minister, I do recall together you and I turned the sod. That is why I am a bit surprised I was not invited to any function to opening any part of it.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC**: Hon. Member, will you give way?

**Mr. Warner**: Oh, sure.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Certainly, I will speak with my Minister of Works and Infrastructures, that when we are opening any of these roads and so on, that he should make sure he sends you an invitation. [*Desk thumping*]

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

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you, Madam Prime Minister. I hope he is there when the next piece is opened. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I hope you are there?

**Mr. Warner:** I will be here.

#### **Elections and Boundaries Commission Report (Local Government Elections 2013)**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): With respect to the Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission on the Local Government Elections of 2013 as required by sub-rule 106(6) of the Representation of the People Act, could the Prime Minister state why her Government has withheld publication of this report and when it will be released?

**The Prime Minister** (**Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC**): Mr. Speaker, I beg to disagree with the hon. Member that the Government has withheld the report of the EBC on local government election held in 2013. That report has not been submitted to the Cabinet. The report was sent to the Ministry of Local Government on May 29, 2014 and resubmitted April 15, 2015. So the Local Government Ministry will have to bring it to Cabinet and we will lay it shortly in the Parliament.

**Mr. Warner:** Supplemental.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Warner:** Prime Minister, do you not find it mind-boggling that a year ago it was submitted to the Ministry of Local Government and one year later we are still nowhere?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I agree with you, Sir. Yes.

**Mr. Warner:** I thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Point Fortin.

**Audit of Overseas Missions  
(Cause of Delay)**

**Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon** (*Point Fortin*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The audit of overseas missions are conducted on a rotational basis, the audit of seven Trinidad and Tobago overseas missions and offices which were scheduled for audit in 2014 were not done because the Auditor General's request for Cabinet approval for overseas travel dated June 30, 2014 was not approved until January 15, 2015, can the Prime Minister state what was the cause for this six-month delay in Cabinet approval?

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Prime Minister.

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** The Note was received in fiscal 2014. It was deferred for confirmation pending submission of dates of visits and that was finalized this year, January 2015.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for Point Fortin.

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** Hon. Prime Minister, do you recognize this delay was in fact six months and to my mind the—well, I will leave out the opinion. But do you realize that the Cabinet is almost acting in contravention of section 116(6) of the Constitution, in the sense that you are almost stymieing the Auditor General in exercising his functions freely?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** No, no. You cannot be almost, eh, and almost and almost and almost stymieing. No.

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** Oh, come on, answer.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please, Member for Point Fortin.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** You know, you asked a question, let us have the, whatever to hear the reply. If you have a supplemental, I will gladly answer the supplemental, but there is no point mumbling under your breath.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there is something called the THA. For 10 years—talking about stymieing the work of the Auditor General—or more, no audited statements, and when the statements actually come now for 2006 or sometime way back when, there is a one line because they did not comply with anything within it. To say that six months these persons did not travel to overseas missions is to be stopping work of the Auditor General, I think it will be pressing it and pushing it very far. Approval was given in January 2015, this year, and therefore, I disagree with the statement that the hon. Member is making.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Point Fortin.

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** Is there any particular reason why specific missions were not allowed to be subjected to the audit at this time, and I am speaking about the UK, Costa Rica, India, Canada and Brazil?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** There is no reason. In fact, you are saying why specific ones were not allowed to be audited. It was not a question of allowing or disallowing. It was a question of finalizing dates for travel by the Auditor General and their team, of course.

#### URGENT QUESTIONS

##### Clico (Status of)

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Minister for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that Clico has been declared solvent when will Clico be returned to its shareholders? Who am I talking to?

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Leader, do you want to defer—is he here? The hon. Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy.

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and The Economy (Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh):** Mr. Speaker, in response to the answer, it was forwarded and I am trying to find the answer. Could you repeat the question, Member?

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, with the leave of the House, the Minister can—these are urgent questions. I think they are filed 20 minutes or something before. If we can ask that later in the proceedings that the Minister respond to the urgent questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Could I with the support of the House, we have questions on notice, could—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Warner:** Mr. Speaker, I have no objection whatsoever. I can wait until before tea or after tea, until Friday.

**Mr. Speaker:** All right. What is being proposed is that, and, with the leave of the House, we can go on to questions on notice and may be subsequently—[*Interruption*] you want to deal with the answers later on in the proceedings?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay. Could we agree that we will come back to urgent questions some time later on in the proceedings?

*Assent indicated.*

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, there are two questions for oral answer here. Both Ministers have asked that the answer be deferred for two weeks.

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey (La Brea):*

#### **Agricultural Development Bank (Details of)**

**119.** Could the Hon. Minister of Food Production state:

Who are the Members of the Board of Directors of the Agricultural Development Bank as well as their academic qualifications, over the period 2010 to 2014?

#### **Los Iros and Guapo Agricultural Leases (Status of)**

**120.** Could the hon. Minister of Land and Marine Resources state:

What are the reasons for the inordinate delay in the renewal of agricultural leases in the Los Iros and Guapo areas?

*Questions, by leave, deferred.*

#### ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the House, there is a matter that—you have to provide this House with six Members to treat with—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could we indicate the identity of those Members later in the proceedings as well? Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before the adjournment?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay.

**2.30 p.m.**

**MEMBER FOR DIEGO MARTIN WEST  
(CENSURE OF AND SUSPENSION FROM THE HOUSE)**

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to pilot a Motion standing in my name. I beg to move the following Motion:

*Whereas* at a sitting of the House held on May 20, 2013, the Leader of the Opposition and Member for Diego Martin West read into the records documents purporting to be emails he had received from an unidentified source;

*And whereas* the alleged emails contained a series of serious unsubstantiated allegations of criminal misconduct in public office on the part of the Prime Minister and several Cabinet Ministers;

*And whereas* these allegations were widely reported in the local and international press thereby causing irreparable damage to the reputation of those identified, the Parliament, and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago;

*And whereas* several leading authorities have submitted reports which confirm that the emails and their contents were false;

*And whereas* the foregoing reports have been in the public domain for a considerable period of time;

*And whereas* it is settled practice that any member who reads into the records of Parliament any correspondence, must take responsibility for and ownership of their contents;

*And whereas* the Leader of the Opposition has steadfastly refused to apologize to the House for his patently misleading and scandalous statements:

*Be it resolved* that this House censure the Member for Diego Martin West and Leader of the Opposition for his reckless, unsubstantiated and scandalous allegations;

*And be it further resolved* that Dr. Keith Rowley, Member for Diego Martin West and Leader of the Opposition be suspended from the service of the House for the remainder of the session.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, the Motion that has been filed that will be debated now is a Motion that speaks to character and accountability. It speaks to the issue of fitness to serve, trust and honour in Members of Parliament, Hon.



Members. It speaks to the quality of public life in Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to overstate the seriousness of the allegations brought by the Member for Diego Martin West on May 20, 2013. Those allegations, you will recall, were compared to Watergate. It is hard to think of a stronger allegation in politics than to link allegations to Watergate in the United States.

The Member for Diego Martin West spoke of high crimes in the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic, the Attorney General and other Ministers; spoke to misbehaviour in public office, spoke to the Proceeds of Crime Act. He also indicated that Members must take personal responsibility for their own conduct and their own words. Amazingly, he quoted Enoch Powell, of all people, on the issue of the right to defend, the right to defend themselves and the right not to offend. What a strange example to cite, and I will come to that later.

The Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, in my view, with a level of arrogance and contempt, identified the persons and their office—the Prime Minister, the then Attorney General, Ministers of Government, and with some level of arrogance called their names and spelt their names too, in raising these matters. He tried to assert that the email addresses that he was calling belonged to the Prime Minister, Attorney General and other Ministers of Government, and also sought to corroborate events in the public domain with those purported emails. Mr. Speaker, the Member has failed to apologize for his claims and his conduct. Today, we meet to examine that issue.

Mr. Speaker, the Member was very clear. In the limited time that we now have, I will not read in detail those purported emails but I will indicate at the outset that a content analysis of his contribution on May 20, 2013, the Member used the word “email” 95 times; 95 times referred to emails; was very clear on that; and on 20 occasions, used the word “corroboration”, so that the emails corroborate and the Member was very clear. In fact, the Member indicated—Mr. Speaker, some of us have actually read that speech over and over again to the extent where we almost memorized sections of it. The Member was very clear that he had that in his possession for six months-plus and took his time and verified those emails and then came to the House.

The Member for Diego Martin West, I will argue and I submit this afternoon that the Member for Diego Martin West let himself down, let the Parliament down, led his party down, and led the country down, by bringing unsubstantiated allegations of such a magnitude to the Parliament.

For my entire adult life, I have opposed the People’s National Movement and I will probably do that for the rest of my natural life, but deep down, there is also

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a latent respect for the role that the PNM has played in Government and Opposition. The leadership that they have given rise to. And today, I argue that the leader of the PNM let down the People's National Movement in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, Opposition is also a noble place to be and you fulfil an important constitutional, parliamentary responsibility by keeping a Government in check, by calling for accountability. And this debate could not have started at a more opportune moment, when the national community, just a few minutes ago, witnessed our new democracy in action, where the Prime Minister stood for 48 minutes and fielded 16 major questions and over 35 supplemental questions in defending her Government, her policy and her programmes. [*Desk thumping*] So the contrast could not be starker. In contrast to Members of this House who, when you bring a Motion against them, they get up, they leave, they flee. Today, the Prime Minister, under our new Standing Orders, came to the House and stood tall and responded to questions filed.

But the Opposition plays that important role, but, Mr. Speaker, it is a role that must be demonstrated with responsibility, not with recklessness. I am sure that there are Members opposite who must also feel a sense of shame that the position of the Leader of the Opposition on May 20 was, indeed, shameful and unacceptable even for their own party far less for the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. The Member has tarnished our Parliament, our country, in the eyes of fellow citizens and sadly in the eyes of citizens across the globe. Today, we meet to treat with that, with this Motion before us.

You see, Mr. Speaker, if we undermine institutions with this level of recklessness, you undermine office and institutions, you will undermine the political process, and when that process is undermined, the country goes into unrest. It is important for us as guardians of public institutions to defend its integrity, and every Member—and the Member was very clear—is free to come to the Parliament, raise accusations, raise allegations, bring with them whatever evidence they can marshal, but that must be done with responsibility.

You see, the more serious the allegation is the more burden you have to bring evidence of a quality that can stand, given the seriousness. The allegations in this matter included an allegation to conspire to commit murder and murder of a journalist. Allegations involved an allegation to pervert the course of justice in some nefarious way, seeking to get the DPP out of office. Allegations involved bugging the office of the DPP. It involved other related allegations of a nefarious nature raised by the Leader of the Opposition.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is very serious and you cannot overstate the seriousness of it. What did the hon. Prime Minister do? What did the Prime Minister do in the day? On the evening, at 6.45 p.m. on May 20, 2013, same day, the Prime Minister referred this matter to the Commissioner of Police, referred this matter to the Integrity Commission, and had an impromptu press conference as well, to indicate the action she took instantly. When the emails, the purported emails, came to the Member, the Member—and I have the emails here. The Member said he had 31 purported emails. The Member did not take the opportunity to write the Integrity Commission.

But you know, this Member was always writing the Integrity Commission. He had written the Integrity Commission on several occasions. You see, this Member had written the Integrity Commission when he had cause to write them concerning the—in the initial phase, 2010, I believe, when the Prime Minister, in moving, stayed at a locality, I believe, in Tunapuna, the Member wrote the Integrity Commission. The Integrity Commission then examined that matter and communicated to the hon. Prime Minister that the Prime Minister was not in breach of the Integrity in Public Life Act. The Member wrote the Integrity Commission, again, concerning persons at the residence of the Prime Minister, Diplomatic Centre. He forgot he wrote the Integrity Commission, they wrote back again after studying the matter to indicate that the Prime Minister did not breach the law of Trinidad and Tobago.

This Member knows well how to complain to the Integrity Commission and chose in this matter interestingly and mysteriously not to complain formally, properly, to the Registrar of the Integrity Commission on this matter. What did he do? Kept it. Then went to the President of the Republic who has no investigative power to report this matter to the former President, I believe it was—the person—to ask for the former President to act on a matter that involves an allegation of conspiring to murder. You would think that the police, given the gravity of that allegation, would be the proper and swiftest agency to act on that, assuming that the Member had in his conscience the consideration of life, but did not do that; did not do that. But waited and waited and waited and then claimed that he saw nothing.

Then on May 15, 2013, had what can only be described, at the very least, to be a very mysterious liaison, meeting, with the then Chairman of the Integrity Commission, I believe, at his home, where drinks were offered, and discussed this matter. That former Chairman indicated that he took a note, scribbled something and raised it at the Integrity Commission. But is this the conduct of a Leader of the Opposition with such serious allegations? No, it cannot be.

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But, Mr. Speaker, the Member came mere days after, on the 20th and spoke to these issues. And we remember very well recoiling in horror at hearing these purported emails and the Member was there with language and fanfare and kept saying “PM” and jokingly, whether “PM” is “Project Manager” and reading “A-N-A-N-D” and “A-N-A-N” and “S-U-R-U-J” and “who are these people”, and painting this picture of intrigue. It was a level of intrigue designed to provoke public unrest. That was his moment in the sun beginning with Enoch Powell.

Mr. Speaker, I recall Enoch Powell’s speech was called the “Rivers of Blood” and that, on May 20, 2013, was the “Rivers of Blood” speech by the Member for Diego Martin West. It was the “Rivers of Blood”, his own speech, because it was divisive, it was charged, it was intriguing, it was designed to cause public unrest. In any other country and in several countries, allegations in a national Parliament involving murdering a journalist, tapping the phone and the office of the DPP, Mr. Speaker, would have led to riots on the street, mobilizing civil society.

**Dr. Rowley:** I rise under Standing Order 48(6) where the Member in his language is accusing me of having come to this House and had taken action designed to create public unrest.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, can I clarify?

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, I await your ruling.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think that the Member is objecting to the imputation of improper motives. I ask you to not go that route and respect the—

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I will—[*Interruption*]

**2.45 p.m.**

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, with your leave. The Member has imputed to me specific action. It is not a question of not going that way. I am asking for you to have it withdrawn, please, Sir?

**Mr. Speaker:** We are dealing with a substantive Motion here, and if, for instance, the Member is going way off line, I would bring the Member back on track. I am saying, based on the objection that you have raised, I am asking the Member not to go along that path. But just remember hon. Member for Diego Martin West, what we have before us is a substantive Motion, and there is some elasticity in that regard. I would ask the hon. Member for Oropouche East do not impute improper motives to the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, please.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I will proceed. On that fateful day, the Chair, in ruling on another matter, pointed out to the Member that the Member must take responsibility for the statements he would make in the Parliament. The Member in all fairness understood that well, but continued and, I will just read from the purported emails which are already on the parliamentary record.

The Member was reading purported emails from A-N-A-N@gmail.com to other email addresses that involved an alleged conspiracy to get the whereabouts of a reporter, her movements, does she drive, does she walk. Also, in a vile way quoting obscenities in this email here. There are references to obscenities. The Member went on and on with some fanfare. Those of us in the Opposition—those of us in the Government listening to this, opposed this, and pointed out at first sight that they are wrong. They are fake. It could not be right. The Member continued and continued, but you see in reading this again, in preparation for this debate, I remember quite clearly, a line I read in *Mein Kampf*, *My Struggle*, the book on Adolf Hitler. There is a strategy that the Nazi used, called spiritual terror. In spiritual terror, what they do, is with monotonous frequency, they tell an untruth, and after a while the people start to believe. The reference they make in the book, is that you can believe hell is heaven, and heaven is hell, with a process of spiritual terror. I was reminded of the rivers of blood and spiritual terror when I read the contribution of the Member for Diego Martin West. When I read these 31 alleged emails; that was my recollection on that day.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to paint a quick introductory picture again. You see, this has happened in this country before. I draw the attention of the national community, in July 1990 something happened here. You all know. In August 1995, the Speaker of the House of Representatives was placed under house arrest. Believe it or not, in June 2002, in an 18-18 Parliament, with no Speaker elected, missiles and cocaine were found in the water tank of a former Government Minister. By August 2006, police surrounded the home of the Chief Justice in this country, to execute a warrant to search the home of the Chief Justice.

**Hon. Member:** Friday evening, too.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** It was a Friday evening, correct, Mr. Speaker—to lock up the Chief Justice. In May 2013, these fake emails came to the Parliament. I am saying, it is the same metaphorical hand that has been involved in all. There are moments in this country when very devilish, horrific moments, diabolic, shocking, brutish, evil and sinister plots occur, and this was one such time. Mr. Speaker, always—I have made the observation that when the backs of the PNM are against the wall, these devilish, brutish, shocking moments occur, when the backs of the PNM are against the wall.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 48(6), please.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I want you to take note of my time here this afternoon.

**Miss Mc Donald:** “Whey we going here?”

**Mr. Speaker:** It is a substantive Motion and there is some—[*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Mc Intosh:** Devilish and brutish—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Yes. [*Interruption*] I am on my legs, please. Hon. Member, I know that you are in full flight, but the hon. Member has objected to your language in terms of how it has been couched, and your description of the PNM as—they are Members of Parliament, and the hon. Member is taking objection. I sustain that, and I ask you to—please.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Sure. Mr. Speaker, I will move forward. In the aftermath of May 20, in the *Trinidad Guardian*, May 24, 2013, there is an article:

“Rowley assured e-mails authentic”

Mr. Speaker, and there is a quotation in the *Guardian* of that day:

“The whistle-blower who provided Opposition Leader Keith Rowley with a package of e-mails last December confirmed to Rowley the substance of the information was true...”

—and they have confirmed that. The Member was at all times convinced that the emails were authentic.

Another important point I want to make quickly, is that the Member of Parliament from reviewing the newspaper clippings on this as well, was also very clear, and the Member made that point in contribution. He made the point, that this matter was a matter for the Integrity Commission, not the police. In an article in the newspaper, Mr. Speaker, in commenting on a statement, it says here, *Trinidad Express*, July 10, 2013:

“Rowley chides CoP on emailgate statements”

He said, the Member—the Opposition Leader is quoted as saying:

“...at this point only the Integrity Commission would be able to properly investigate the matter as it could demand the electronic devices from those involved...”

The Member went on in another article that I will cite, to indicate that the police was not the correct authority—another article, July 08, 2013 now:

“ROWLEY KNOCKS TOP COP

The Opposition Leader...again insists that the Integrity Commission is the proper body to investigate Emailgate.”

The point being made here, is that the Leader of the Opposition did not take the matter to the police, and clearly was of the view that the police are not the proper authority to investigate this matter.

So, that today I am hoping that nobody comes here to tell this Parliament, wait for the police investigation, when you never thought that the police was the proper authority in the first place. The Member went on in his speech of the 20<sup>th</sup>, to indicate why the Integrity Commission was the proper authority although he did not properly refer this matter to the Integrity Commission.

Mr. Speaker, I want it clear, because the Opposition, when you pick up the talk in the public domain, paint it as if, this is something personal. I want to indicate to the Member for Diego Martin West, this is not a matter of personality. This is not a personal matter. The Member for Diego Martin West is not a victim. He is not a victim. In fact, he rose in this House and accused other people of murder, of tapping the phone and bugging the office of the DPP, based on the information he had, those were the accusations he made.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 48(6), and I seek your protection from the Member for Oropouche East, who is putting on *Hansard*, some of the most outrageous statements which I have not made in this House. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! The Member is saying that he has not said those things, [*Interruption*] therefore, the Member’s word is the Member’s honour, please.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I will move on, because I know the technique here. The Member is not a victim. We are here this afternoon—the Parliament cannot wait on a police or an integrity commission or any other body, just as the Member had a duty to come to the Parliament and bring those purported emails; he had a duty. He said he had a duty. He did not wait on the Integrity Commission, and spoke to the Chairman, did not refer the matter to the police, likewise, on this side today, we have a duty to come to the Parliament, [*Desk thumping*] to deal with this matter. So this is the domain where we must

consider the evidence that has come to the fore. Not to wait for the police. The police will take their time and do whatever they have to do. We must do what we have to do in the Parliament, [*Desk thumping*] because the Member came to the Parliament.

Then, Mr. Speaker, in looking at the content of those purported emails, they are now saying, I understand, that there is a difference between form and content.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Form and substance.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Form and substance. So the emails could be fake, but you have to look at the content of them. My God, if the email is fake, then the content does not matter. [*Desk thumping*]

You see, Mr. Speaker, I want quickly to say to this hon. Leader of the Opposition, based on what we have been doing in this House for the last six months and other Motions, this is a Member who may go in the washroom, read the writing on the wall, and come back here and draft a Motion in the Parliament. This is a Member—

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:**—who would “take ah paper blown in de air, grab de paper and write ah Motion”.

**Miss Mc Donald:** I am on my feet. Standing Order 48(6), and he is continuing along these lines, imputing improper motives. [*Continuous interruption*]

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** “Buh everything I say is offensive?”

**Mrs. Mc Intosh:** “Yuh say go in de toilet.”

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** “Buh is ah washroom, ah did not say toilet.”  
[*Laughter*]

**Miss Mc Donald:** Here is the kind of allegation that he is making.

**Mr. Speaker:** Remember this is a debate. Everybody will have a chance to respond. Continue, please.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question? I will like to get a clear ruling. [*Continuous interruption*] Are we saying—no, no, no, Mr. Speaker, I am not speaking to them. I want to ask you a question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please! Please! Please! [*Continuous interruption*] This is a debate. If Members are flouting or breaching the Standing Orders, I have



indicated this is a substantive Motion, where there is some elasticity, but if members are going overboard, and there are objections, I will rule, but it is a debate. You will have the chance to respond. I do not believe, for instance, the matter that you have objected to, can be sustained. Continue.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, form and substance, I was on the point. So I will move quickly, because, you see, I know the technique they have here today.

There is a very famous Oscar winning movie called “The Usual Suspects”, with Kevin Spacey. Kevin Spacey pretended to be a disabled person—differently abled—sat in a police station, gave the police a statement about another criminal mastermind, doing all sorts of dastardly acts, right? You know what he did? He sat in the police station and looked behind on a wall. There was a wall with postcards, internal memos, pictures, all sorts of things, and he concocted a story to blame someone else as a criminal mastermind, and then he walked out limping from the station. There is a scene on the road where his leg is straightening and straightening and straightening, and he is walking. The police suddenly looked to the wall in the station and realized every single thing he said was related to a postcard, and internal memo, a picture, a gift; this is what happened.

They brought purported emails that had some semblance of reality, because something had happened, whether the AG issued a press release, whether a Minister was removed from power—

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Whether we had a meeting or not.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Whether we had a meeting or not, you know that the day after, and then they worked backwards, Mr. Speaker. This is the same hand that put cocaine and missiles in water tank of a former Government Minister. [*Continuous desk thumping*]

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker!

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** It is the same hand.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker! Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I did not identify the hand.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Standing Order 48(6).

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** But I did not identify the hand.

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 48(6).

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** So what is this now?

**Miss Mc Donald:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 48(6).

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Why do you all not walk out on this one as well?

**Miss Mc Donald:** No, Mr. Speaker, he—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please! Please! All right.

**Miss Mc Donald:** He is accusing people—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** I hear you. I hear you. I hear you. [*Continuous interruption*] Please. Let us—I know things are waxing warm. This is a very heated debate, I am realizing it. I just ask Members to cool the temperature, bring the temperature down. The Member has objected, Member for Oropouche East, based on the accusation that you have made, of accusing the Opposition of planting cocaine in somebody's—the implication, I sustain that. Please do not go there.

**3.00 p.m.**

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, in the *Trinidad Newsday*, there is an article on May 23, 2013, “London: Rowley has price to pay”, and the Chief Secretary in Tobago said that:

“...no-confidence motion piloted by the Opposition Leader, is a ‘game changer’....

London stressed that Dr. Rowley ‘would pay the price’ if his information is wrong...”

He said:

““This is earth-shattering and must be resolved. This is the big one! This is a game-decider and at the end of this exercise there would only be one man or one woman left standing.””

Mr. Michael Harris, in another article said:

“We have been told by PNM PRO...that Dr Rowley apparently knew the whistle blower who assured him that the substance of the e-mails was true.”

So, he knew about the discrepancies.

“By the same token...if the e-mails are demonstrated to be fabrications then there can be no question that Dr Rowley should immediately resign as Leader of the Opposition, as political leader of the PNM...” [*Desk thumping*] You see, Mr. Speaker, since then, immediately, May 21, 2013, the former Attorney General received a report—it was also in the public domain—from Mr. Roger

Sealy, Information Technology Manager at the Ministry of the Attorney General who did a complete analysis with pictures and graphics and so on of everything and concluded, Mr. Speaker—this was May 23, 2013—that these messages purported to be sent to Anand and from anan@gmail.com could not be correct. These addresses do not exist, and they found 16 points of errors.

Mr. Speaker, in the content and substance that they talked about—they talked about a US person named Thomas and called Thomas Smitham into question. Thomas Smitham was not even in Trinidad and Tobago when this matter arose in those purported emails. [*Desk thumping*] They referred to an SSA operative by the name of Ganpath who they said the Government, according to the emails, was sending on a trip. This was in September. The decision to send that gentleman was in July 2013—2012, sorry. That was taken a long time ago. I have the complete file on that, Mr. Speaker. So the substance was incorrect and Mr. Sealy came to that conclusion. He said the findings illustrate that the document appears to be tampered and, therefore, the authenticity remains doubtful.

Mr. Speaker, he said that the documents were illegitimate and the origin of many of those purported emails—Mr. Speaker, do you know 29 of those emails purportedly—these fake emails—came from anan@gmail.com, which does not exist? This is the IT Manager in the Office of the Attorney General. So, okay, he is being paid by the Government and the Attorney General; let us move on.

On a correspondence to Mr. Israel B. Khan, Senior Counsel, dated July 10, 2013, Mr. John Berryhill, President and Chief Operating Officer of Berryhill Computer Forensic, a 20-year veteran of computer forensic investigations, undertook an analysis, a forensic analysis of this matter in June 2013—look how quickly we are dealing with these matters—and gave a report and concluded that the document is a poorly constructed fraud; a poorly constructed fraud; anan@gmail.com is not a valid email address. It is not possible for many years to create a Gmail account, an email address, with less than six characters and he explained the technical details, but the point he is making is that the entire bunch of purported emails are fake. It is a poorly constructed fraud.

**Mr. Speaker:** You have 10 more minutes.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I have no injury time to claim after all of that.

**Mr. Speaker:** None whatsoever. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I move on. That was John Berryhill. In a correspondence I have in my hand from Computer Law Group—I have the

correspondence in my hand—and it is signed by Jack Russo. I want to tell you this letter is signed, because they like bringing unsigned letters here. This is signed, Computer Law Group of California, United States of America, and it is delivered to the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar and it reads:

Integrity Commission versus Google Incorporated

And there is a lot of reference and so on:

Dear Madam Prime Minister,

I am pleased to confirm that Google Incorporated has provided the requested information of all emails exchanged between yourself, former Attorney General, Anand Ramlogan, for the period September 01, 2012 to September 31, 2012.

Now, I want to just remind you—[*Crosstalk*—this is September 01, 2012 to September 30. Let me just get back to the point I want to make here. This is not the fake email address, this is the real email address now: “anan” is fake, we already concluded that. Mr. Speaker, this is the real email address. They looked at the entire month of September.

This, of course, is the relevant time frame in which certain offensive emails were alleged to have been exchanged. As an interested party to those proceedings, we were duly served by Google’s attorneys with the subject emails. This would have been served on the attorneys acting for the applicant, the Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago.

I am pleased to advise—he says, Jack Russo—that there has been no match for any emails contained in the document produced by the Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Keith Rowley, which prompted the Integrity Commission’s investigations.

**Hon. Member:** Read that again.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** In the month of September—September 01 to September 30—they are saying, as an interested party, the Member of Parliament for Siparia, we were served by Google’s attorneys. They have also served the attorneys for the Integrity Commission in Trinidad and Tobago.

I am pleased to advise that there has been no match for any of the emails contained in the documents produced by the Leader of the Opposition. [*Desk thumping*]

Jack Russo,

Computer Group

And this is what they have received from Google International in the case of the Integrity Commission versus Google, where the Prime Minister was a party to that as well.

You see, Mr. Speaker, this is now Google telling us that, and it is important. They are not telling us a-n-a-n is fake, you know. We passed that already. What they are telling us is in the real email address of these people, those emails do not exist, Mr. Speaker, not one.

Mr. Speaker, in an article in the newspapers just today, *Newsday*, May 06: “No link to Moonilal in emailgate”. You know they put “meh” name in that too. My name and my correct address is there! “No link to Moonilal in emailgate”. Put my name! Google International has also confirmed that.

You see, Mr. Speaker, this is really, according to the *Express*, “D-day for Rowley” and I would just read the *Express* title there. You see, Mr. Speaker, I quoted from Jack Russo earlier. I want to quote from another letter, and we are quite prepared to give the Member for Diego Martin West signed letters on this matter. [*Desk thumping*] This is from the United States Department of Justice, Criminal Division, and Office of International Affairs. It is addressed to the head of the Central Authority Unit in Trinidad and Tobago: Request for assistance. Mr. Speaker, it reads:

In response to your Government’s request for assistance in the above-mentioned matter, enclosed is a computer disk and a certificate of authenticity from Google Incorporated. These materials may be used in investigations and prosecution of those persons and for offences for which assistance is requested.

Mr. Speaker, it says:

The computer disk contains information regarding Google accounts, anand@tstt.net; kmlapb1@gmail.com and Roodal—roodal@tstt.net.tt. Google stated:

There is no responsive information for any Google account with the email address of anan@gmail.com. Mr. Speaker, they conclude that in these matters—and they give the certificate—there is no address anan@gmail.com.

If there is no address of this, how could you have sent from this email account or receive from this email account any of the substance, any of the content purporting to be those 31 emails? How could you have done that?

So, Mr. Speaker, we have the United States Department of Justice; we have the letter and reports sent to the Integrity Commission—we have that from the United States jurisdiction from Computer Law Group, and they are just transmitting a

report from Google International. They are transmitting that. We have John Berryhill, Mr. Speaker, 20-year computer forensic expert; we have, of course, local authorities. How much more do you want?

**Mrs. Gopee-Scoon:** The police.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** What do you want again? What does the Parliament want? They want the police that they did not report the matter to. [*Desk thumping*] They did not report the matter to the police, now they want the police. You did not report the matter to the Integrity Commission, now you want the Integrity Commission. Why you did not want them before? And you have—this document was sent to the Integrity Commission. The Integrity Commission has it.

You came to the Parliament with those fake emails suggesting, insinuating with intrigue and boldness that the Prime Minister and senior Members of her Cabinet were involved in a conspiracy, criminal conspiracy, for murder; involved in a conspiracy, in touch with US diplomats—Thomas Smitham, who was not in the country at the material time—in touch with US diplomats who had not taken up duty, Mr. Smitham. We apologize to him as well for dragging his name—the Opposition Leader dragging his name in the Parliament.

So they came to the Parliament, conspiracy to commit murder, to tap the phone and bug the offices of the DPP. Mr. Speaker, there is a report—other colleagues may read it—where they did a complete test and so on and said there were no bugging devices at the Office of the DPP—conspiring to murder; bug the Office of the DPP; send away people; promote people and so on; get the DPP out of the way; undermine and pervert the course of justice. Mr. Speaker, they came with all of that and took responsibility for it.

Today, we are here to tell the Leader of the Opposition that he must now take responsibility for those fake emails. He must now take the full responsibility for that, and he must now face the consequences for his “Rivers of Blood” speech.

Mr. Speaker, there is no greater task to face us today than restoring trust in public life and public officers. [*Desk thumping*] There is no greater task. [*Desk thumping*] The behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition was appalling.

**Dr. Rowley:** Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 48(6). Mr. Speaker, at no time during my tenure in this House did I ever make a rivers of blood speech, and I would like the records to so reflect.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think he is correct.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I have described it as such. You can describe it anyhow you want. You can describe it as nonsense, foolishness, and

fake emails. I, the Member for Oropouche East, have described your speech as a “Rivers of Blood” speech.

**Mr. Speaker:** You have two minutes exactly.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, today, I want to end how I began. Today we must return trust and honour to this House. Persons who make comments—*[Interruption]*—you see, and this is what he would say, but I want to tell him that you do not declare your One Woodbrook Place in Form A, you declare it in Form B, and the Integrity in Public Life Guidelines tell you that. Mr. Speaker, if I had time, I would tell him about the guidelines.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, you do not have time. *[Laughter]*

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** But I have to wind up. If we shirk our responsibility today to take serious action against the Leader of the Opposition for his reckless, wild, callous, scandalous, devilish, brutish allegations made in this Parliament, we would have failed the next generation of parliamentarians, politicians and civil servants.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**3.15 p.m.**

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East. *[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. Colm Imbert** (*Diego Martin North/East*): Mr. Speaker, let me state at the outset that I am participating in this debate without prejudice to any action that I may take in the future and that my contribution will deal with the fact that this Motion is an abuse of process. Mr. Speaker, just as was the case in the ill-fated Motion of no confidence against the Leader of the Opposition, once again we have had a very weak and puerile contribution from the Leader of Government Business, *[Desk thumping]* which has not addressed the matter that is under consideration by this House.

Mr. Speaker, let me, for the benefit of the national population, educate the public on the provisions of our Standing Orders, because this Motion, as far as I am concerned, is completely out of order. And in our new Standing Orders, on page 34, which deals with “Suspension from the Service of the House”, and it flows into page 35, “Duration of Suspension”, the Standing Orders tell us that:

“If a Member is suspended... for”—the—“first time in a session, the suspension will be for seven (7) days;

for”—the—“second time in a session, the suspension will be for thirty(30) days; and on any subsequent occasion...for a period to last until the House orders that the Member’s suspension shall terminate or, in default...for the remainder of the session.”

But here we have a Motion which is really a thinly disguised Motion of suspension. This is not really a Motion of censure, it is disguised as that, but it is really an ill-conceived and, in my view, fraudulent Motion of suspension.

What this Motion seeks to do is to suspend the Leader of the Opposition from the service of the House for the remainder of the session, something that is not contemplated under our new Standing Orders, Mr. Speaker. It is not contemplated. Now, Mr. Speaker, I would also go into the first section of our Standing Orders, which states:

“In any matter”—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker, the usual suspects, to borrow from the terminology of my learned friend opposite, are grumbling. Could you please quieten the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West?

**Mr. Speaker:** Continue. Continue.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Well, I would really hope on this occasion you will quieten them down, they like to grumble.

Now, let us go to section 2—[*Interruption*] “Cyah” help himself. He would not be around soon anyhow. Section 2, “Interpretation and Application of Standing Orders”:

“In any matter not provided for in these Standing Orders, resort shall be had to the usage and practice of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom which shall be followed as far as they may be applicable to this House, and not inconsistent with these Standing Orders...”

As I have already indicated, our Standing Orders provide for staged suspensions, seven days, 30 days, and so on, Mr. Speaker, first offence, second offence, and so on, but the Government has decided that they would rely upon some mutated form of the old Standing Orders which allowed Members to be suspended, and I read from the old Standing Orders, page 53:

“If a Member is suspended under any provisions of this Standing Order, his suspension shall continue until it is terminated by resolution of the House.”



That is the old Standing Orders, but our new Standing Orders follow the practice in the House of Commons, and if one goes to the House of Commons one sees that the same form of words occurs in the House of Commons, firstly, for first offence, suspended for five days; second offence, ten days; third offence, 20 days, and so on.

So, in modernizing this Parliament, we adopted the practice and procedure of the House of Commons, recognizing that suspension of a Member from the Service of the House is a very, very serious matter. You are dealing with the rights of the person involved, Mr. Speaker, and the House of Commons in the United Kingdom has long moved away from this concept of indefinite suspension and suspension for the duration of the session, and has introduced something that is logical and rational that you would have staged suspensions, five days, 10 days, 20 days, and so on. But this administration wants to use its majority to abuse the practice of this Parliament to suspend the Leader of the Opposition on the eve of a general election. This House is to be dissolved, if the Prime Minister does not take the necessary action to do so before, this House will stand dissolved in the middle of next month, Mr. Speaker. In the middle of June, 16th or 17th of June. Just a month from now this House will be dissolved, but the Government, with their majority, wants to abuse process and wants to suspend the Leader of the Opposition—for how long? A month? That is what they want to do. What is the point they are trying to make, Mr. Speaker.

I am reminded, there is a Latin phrase—and I know the language of this Parliament is English, but, if you will permit me, I will read into the record this Latin phrase: “*Stultum facit fortuna quem vult perdere*”. I shall now translate: “Whom fortune wishes”—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Khan:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** What is the point of order?

**Dr. Khan:** 55(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6) and (7). Could I get a rule on that, Mr. Speaker? What the Member is saying in 55(8) relates to 55(7), (1) to (7).

**Mr. C. Imbert:** What is the point of order, Mr. Speaker? What is the point of order?

**Mr. Speaker:** You could explain?

**Dr. Khan:** The “Duration of Suspension”—

**Mr. C. Imbert:** No. No. No. Mr. Speaker, what is the point of order?

**Dr. Khan:**—is dependent upon the Speaker—

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, what is the point of order?

**Dr. Khan:** That is the point of order.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** What is the point of order?

**Dr. Khan:** Number (1), 55(1)—

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay. Please. Please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** It is not a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Please. Please. Please.

**Dr. Khan:**—speak to the duration of suspension, he is totally off.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please. Please. Please.

**Miss Mc Donald:** You do not understand your Standing Orders.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes. Please. I do not think that that matter you are trying to clarify is on a point of clarification. Let us go on. Continue, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, he should know better, he was Deputy Speaker. He knows very well that he has not raised a point of order. Now, let me move on, and I will not give way to you.

“*Stultum facit fortuna quem vult perdere*”. [*Desk thumping*] It means “Whom the gods or fortune wish to destroy they first make mad”. That is the quotation, Mr. Speaker, and it is clear to me that Members opposite have gone mad, because we have started with the—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please. I mean to say, no, you cannot—

**Mr. C. Imbert:** It is clear to me.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. No. No. No. Please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** It is clear to me.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. No. I do not think you could say Members—you cannot say hon. Members gone mad, you know that. I think you could use more elegant language, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** I will use better language. It is clear to me that Members opposite have taken leave of their senses. [*Desk thumping*] They have taken leave of their senses, because after the beating they got with that ill-fated Motion of no confidence, [*Desk thumping*] where the Member for Tobago—whatever, it is over there—was allowed to—I think it is Tobago East—was allowed to put some very

defamatory and vile allegations on the record and it served to discredit the Members opposite and to sink them even lower in their ratings, after they got those body blows from that ill-fated Motion of no confidence, they now come with this abuse of process, Mr. Speaker.

But let us move on even more, Mr. Speaker, what is the purpose of this matter before the House? As I said, it is a thinly disguised Motion of suspension, and the second resolution is what is important here:

*“Be it further resolved that Dr. Keith Rowley...be suspended from the service of the House for the remainder of the session.”*

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I have said, there is no express provision in our Standing Orders that will allow a Motion of this nature. There is no express provision. So, let us look again at—*[Interruption]* Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:**—could you get the grumblers to stop grumbling? I am asking you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think the House is quiet now.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, you tell me, yes, and then they start to grumble again.

**Mr. Speaker:** The House is quiet. The House is quiet. You proceed.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** All right. A mistake of history.

Now, let us go to the Erskine May *Parliamentary Practice, Twenty-Fourth Edition*, Mr. Speaker, and let us look at what Erskine May has to say, and we are dealing with matters from section 198 onwards—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** I do not know who you are saying please to because the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West continues to grumble. “Suspension and the salary of Members”, now it talks about the fact that after a Member is suspended, the withholding of the Member’s—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Speaker:** What page are you on?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Pardon?

**Mr. Speaker:** What page?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Oh. Page 198:

“Suspension and the Salary of Members

Since the passing of Standing Order No 45A....withholding of the Member’s salary is an automatic consequence of suspension.”

And then goes on to talk about—give examples of expulsion and so on, but, most importantly, if you look at page 200, Mr. Speaker, and this is under the heading “Procedural fairness”, and it reads as follows:

“The Joint Committee on Parliamentary Privilege drew attention to the need for procedural fairness in handling cases of Members of the House facing potential suspension and loss of reputation.”

And, Mr. Speaker—Mr. Speaker, listen, the drone that is coming from the other side, it is very difficult—the Member for Caroni East, the Member for Chaguanas East, the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West, it is a drone, and what I am about to read, Mr. Speaker, it is important that the members of the public hear what I have to say. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to control this House. I seek your protection.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yeah, the House is controlled. You continue, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** You know, as you say that, they continue to talk.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yeah, I cannot stop everybody from mumbling.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Obviously.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yeah.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** So, let us go now to page 200:

“The Joint Committee on Parliamentary Privilege drew attention to the need for procedural fairness in handling cases of Members of the House facing potential suspension...”

This is germane and relevant to the matter at hand.

“and loss of reputation.

Among the minimum requirements of fairness are for the Member accused of a contempt (which the Joint Committee recognized to be a serious matter)...”

And we are dealing here with a contempt, because the way this Motion is formulated it is accusing the Member of a contempt.

“Among the minimum requirements of fairness are for the Member accused...to be given.

- a prompt and fair statement of the precise allegations against the Member;
- adequate opportunity to take legal advice and have legal assistance throughout;
- the opportunity to be heard in person;
- the opportunity to call relevant witnesses at the appropriate time;
- the opportunity to examine other witnesses;
- the opportunity to attend meetings at which evidence is given, and to receive transcripts of evidence.

In determining a Member’s guilt or innocence, the criterion applied at all stages should be at least that the allegation is proved on the balance of probabilities.”

### **3.30 p.m.**

So what the House of Commons May’s *Parliamentary Practice* is telling us, is that in a case where a Member is facing potential suspension, these are the minimum requirements:

- “a prompt and clear statement of the...allegations...
- adequate opportunity to take legal advice...
- the opportunity to be heard in person;
- the opportunity to call...witnesses...
- the opportunity to examine other witnesses...
- the opportunity to attend meetings at which evidence is given, and to receive transcripts of evidence.”

This Motion is a complete abuse, a complete breach of the procedures outlined in May’s *Parliamentary Practice*, which is the mother of this Parliament. It is a total abuse.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at what has occurred in other Parliaments, I took the opportunity—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Member for Lopinot, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** He is really quite disgusting, Mr. Speaker. [*Interruption*]

When I look at what has occurred in the UK Parliament in terms of suspension of Members, and I had a look at the records and so on, of Members who had been suspended, there is available on the UK Commons website the record of Members who have been suspended. There is a table on the website, Table II, Members suspended from the House of Commons since 1949, and it gives you the names of the persons and it gives you the offence—disorderly conduct, et cetera, et cetera. It starts 1949, the Member Ellis Smith was suspended for five days; 1951, Sydney Silverman suspended for five days; Ron Brown, 1981, suspended for 20 days; Andrew Faulds suspended for five days in 1982, and it comes right down to 1998, Ron Brown again for damaging the mace, suspended for 20 days and so on.

As we go down, we come into the modern era and I found a particular case in the year 2002, where a person was suspended, Mr. Keith Vaz, a Labour MP was suspended in February 2002 for a period of one month based on a report from the Standard and Privileges Committee of the House of Commons. So I went to the records of the Standards and Privileges Committee, and I downloaded the Fifth Report from the Committee on Standards and Privileges, Session 2001/2002, the complaint against Mr. Keith Vaz.

Mr. Keith Vaz was suspended by the House of Commons for one month in 2002. He was suspended for making statements which, after an investigation by the Committee on Standards and Privileges lasting one year—an investigation lasting one year—where Mr. Vaz was allowed legal counsel, was allowed to bring witnesses, was allowed to cross-examine witnesses, was allowed disclosure, was allowed to see documents such as those things that the Member for Oropouche waved. Mr. Speaker, this is a kangaroo court? You want to convict somebody, but you do not even follow the basic principle of disclosure.

We do not even know if those are real documents that the Member for Oropouche was waving in his hand; we do not even know.

**Hon. Members:** Ooooh!

**Mr. C. Imbert:** We have not seen them. We have not been able to look at them, and examine them, and see whether they are relevant, and see whether they relate to the issues at hand. That is why I say I am participating in this matter without prejudice, because I have seen nothing, I have received nothing, I have not been given the opportunity to examine anything. Even as a member of the Committee of Privileges of this House, I have not been allowed to examine witnesses. I have not been allowed to call witnesses and determine the veracity of anything that is contained in this Motion.

But as I said, I went through the records of the House of Commons, and in most cases they followed the practice of five days, 10 days and so on, but in some cases, persons have been suspended for one month. What I found in each case where a person has been suspended for a significant period of time, it was after comprehensive forensic examination by the Committee of Privileges of the UK Parliament, and that is our procedure here as well. That is our procedure in this Parliament.

I am not aware of anybody in this Parliament, since this Parliament has been in existence—the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago—that has been suspended from this House for any significant period of time, from the service of the House for the duration of the session, without a process—without a process.

The only instance I am aware of, where the Member disobeyed a ruling of the Chair, engaged in disorderly conduct, disobeyed a direct order of the Chair. I heard the Member for Caroni East shout out across the floor, “What about Panday?” In that particular case, the Member for Couva North was ordered by the Speaker to desist from using his computer and refused to do so, in complete defiance of the authority of the Chair, and was suspended for disorderly conduct. That has nothing to do with this. There is no similarity. There is no nexus. There is no connection. There is absolutely no familiarity between that situation and this.

In every single case that I researched in this Parliament, any Member who is accused of a breach of privilege, breaching freedom of speech—which is what the Member for Diego Martin West is accused of, of abusing freedom of speech, a contempt of Parliament—in every case in this Parliament, the person has been allowed due process, has been allowed a right to be heard.

Even if we did not have those practices and procedures, and even if the UK Parliament had not outlined them in May’s *Parliamentary Practice*, even if that was not so, you will know, Mr. Speaker, the laws of natural justice: the right to be heard; the right for an accused person to be able to answer the charges put to them; the right to be able to see the evidence against them; the right to call witnesses; the right to cross-examine witnesses. That is basic laws of natural justice. In fact, that is the second law of natural justice, the right to be heard.

So what is going on in this Parliament today? What is going on in this Parliament today? There are no expressed provisions in the Standing Orders which allows this, because of course the Members opposite having the majority could do anything. They could suspend the Standing Orders. They could suspend every single Standing Order and suspend every single one of us. They could move

a Motion now. The Member for Oropouche could get up and say, “Because I do not like the colour of the Leader of the Opposition’s tie, I am going to suspend him for the duration of the session”. Of course they have the majority and they can do that, but that is not what happens in a decent, democratic, civilized society. [*Desk thumping*] And that is why, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** —that is why I think it is necessary to educate the national community that what is happening in this Parliament today is an abuse of the procedures of the House of Commons and it is an abuse of the procedures of this Parliament. It is a total abuse.

If the Members opposite wanted to deal with the Leader of the Opposition for statements that he made in this House, that displeased them or that they felt were inaccurate or even that they thought were reckless, if they wanted to do that, what has happened? These statements were made two years ago, and they have waited two years—one month before the House is about to automatically dissolve.

Do you know why they are doing it this way? Because they know that if this was raised as a matter of privilege and referred to the Committee of Privileges, the committee would have to have meetings; the committee would have to establish procedure; the committee would have to get a list of witnesses; they would have to call the witnesses; would have to allow cross-examination; would call for papers; would call for documents, and that could take months. They know that.

So they know that with only one month to go in the life of this Parliament, that if they followed the correct procedure and gave the Leader of the Opposition a right to be heard, as is his constitutional right, he is guaranteed due process under our Constitution. We are a democratic Republic. They know that if they went the route of Committee of Privileges, they would get nowhere, because the matter would die when the Parliament dies in June of this year—one month from now. So that is why they have come with this perverse Motion, which breaches every single law of natural justice, breaches every rule of due process, breaches every procedural rule and practice in this Parliament and in the Commonwealth. [*Desk thumping*] Do you know where this is going to take us? Where is this going to take us? I have looked to other—[*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, I am trying to speak loudly, but ooh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please; could we have your silence, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** They are like little children, you know.



I have looked at other countries, and I have looked at what other countries have done when you had situations where a government is unpopular, or a Prime Minister is unpopular, a President is unpopular, and they are facing the threat of an Opposition Leader who is now more popular than the President or the Prime Minister—[*Desk thumping*]

**Miss Mc Donald:** “Look at de polls!”

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, we all read the polls; we all read the opinion polls, whether they are done by NACTA, whether they are done by HHB, whoever they are, whether they are done by MORI, whether they are done by Ansa McAL, we are all reading the polls, and they are all saying the same thing, that the Government is unpopular and that the Leader of the Opposition is now more popular than the Prime Minister. [*Desk thumping*]

What has happened in other countries when you have these situations? What has happened? Let me give some examples now. I am going now to the country of Malaysia. Let us look at what happened in Malaysia. There is a gentleman called Anwar Ibrahim in Malaysia. What I found interesting about Anwar Ibrahim is that he joined the ruling party, moved up the political ranks very quickly. His first ministerial office was Minister of Culture in 1983. Then he went to agriculture in 1984; became Minister of Education in 1986, and then he eventually ended up becoming Minister of Finance in 1991.

“During his tenure as Finance Minister his impact was immediate; Malaysia enjoyed unprecedented prosperity and economic growth. Shortly after becoming Finance Minister, *Euro money* named him as a top four finance minister and in 1996 *Asia money* named him Finance Minister of the Year.”—and so on.

“As a deputy prime minister...in March 1998, Anwar Ibrahim was selected as the Chairman of the Development Committee of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund from March 1998 until September 1998.”—and so on and so on.

The man was named ‘Asian of the Year’ by *Newsweek* magazine, in 1998.

Of course, as Anwar Ibrahim became popular, the Prime Minister did not like that. So what happened to Mr. Anwar Ibrahim? He was arrested; he was charged for sodomy of all things; he was imprisoned; he was beaten and attempts were made to expel him from the Parliament of Malaysia.

“Anwar was arrested on 20 September, 1998. He was subsequently charged with corruption...While...in police custody...was beaten by the then Inspector General of Police, Rahim Noor. Rahim was subsequently found guilty of assault...He

made a public apology to Anwar and paid undisclosed damages. In April 1999, following a trial, Anwar was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. Two months later, he was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment..."—and so on.

And this is what is important, Mr. Speaker:

"His trial and conviction were widely discredited by the international community. Amnesty International stated that the trial... 'exposed a pattern of political manipulation of key state institutions including the police, public prosecutor's office and the judiciary' and declared Anwar a prisoner of conscience."

So that is what happened in Malaysia. When a politician became more prominent than the Prime Minister, "dey jail de man, dey beat him".

**3.45 p.m.**

So let us see what happened in Russia now. [*Crosstalk*] Yes. Meet Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Russia's freed oligarch and Putin foe. The Russian oil tycoon once presented a serious challenge—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East, your time has expired. Would you like an extension?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Of course.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** You may continue, hon. Member. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a Russian oil tycoon, once presented a serious challenge to President Vladimir Putin who threw him in jail because the man was becoming popular in Russia and presented a challenge to Vladimir Putin and was financing opposition groups in Russia—they threw him in jail for 10 years. He was charged with fraud and tax evasion. Listen to what the international groups had to say about the case. When he was convicted in 2010—[*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker—[*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** I know they cannot take it, you know. When he was convicted in December 2010, [*Laughter*] *Time* wrote about the absurdity of the charges. The court found that Khodorkovsky stole 350 million tonnes of oil, some

of which from companies which never even produced the amount of oil that he said they stole with him—meaning that he stole from them. When faced with such nonsense, it is very hard to take it seriously, Vadim Kydivim, the lead attorney for the defence said during the trial—anyone who watched this trial understands it is just a farce. So that was in Russia. Putin was faced with a very popular, very wealthy oil tycoon, trumped up charges against him, lock him up, jail him for eight years, nationalized his company, stole his company from him—Russia.

But, we do not have to go far, you know. We do not have to go very far, Mr. Speaker, because you know, the Prime Minister is a friend of the President of Venezuela. But let us see what is going on in Venezuela. It is just across the road, you know, seven miles away. [*Crosstalk*]

Antonio Ledezma, Venezuela Opposition Leader arrested. This is Reuters, February 19, 2015. Mr. Speaker, this is just two months ago, you know, they arrested the Leader of the Opposition in Venezuela.

“Venezuelan arrested Opposition Leader and Caracas...mayor Antonio Ledezma on Thursday in a move the government said was needed to halt a U.S.-backed coup plot but foes decried as tyranny.

Intelligence agents took the 59-year-old veteran politician from his office in the banking district of Caracas after breaking down doors and firing shots in the air...”

They dragged him—“out of his office as if he was a dog,” wrote opposition legislator Ismael Garcia... They broke down the doors without an arrest warrant.”

Mr. Speaker—[*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please. Please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:**—that—I know they cannot help it. That is in Venezuela, just seven miles away from Trinidad and Tobago. That took place two months ago. They arrested and jailed the Leader of the Opposition in Venezuela. Why? Because the Government of President Maduro is sinking in popularity and is finding it very hard to govern the country, and the opposition leader was becoming extremely popular, just as is taking place in Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] So they lock up the Leader of the Opposition and that is it for the politician leader. [*Crosstalk*]

**Mrs. Mc Intosh:** “Nobody want all yuh again.”

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Let us go back to Russia. They jailed the tycoon, they jailed the Russian oil tycoon who was—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Rowley:** Could you control Oropouche East. I would like to follow the debate?

**Mr. C. Imbert:** I have the same problem, you know, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes. Okay. Members, yes. I think that we should allow the Member for Diego Martin North/East to speak in silence. I myself am being disturbed. So, continue, hon. Member.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, you know in the same way they did not want the public to know that this Motion is an abuse of process, there is no precedent for it in this Parliament, in the Commonwealth, in the House of Commons. It is a breach of due process. It is a breach of natural justice. It is a breach of the procedures outlined in May's *Parliamentary Practice*. In the same way they did not want the population to know that, they do not want the population to know that the Leader of the Opposition in Venezuela has been jailed, that the Leader of the Opposition in Malaysia has been jailed. Mr. Speaker, we all know the situation in Zimbabwe in the 2002 election where the Leader of the Opposition won the election, but what happened after that? He was arrested. He was beaten. He was thrown in jail. We all know the situation in Zimbabwe, Mr. Speaker. But let me go back to Russia. Let me go back to Russia. [*Crosstalk*] Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Give him a chance to speak, please.

**Mr. C. Imbert:** “Sergei Udaltsov, leader of the socialist Left Front...”—was sentenced in Thursday—this is in 2014 to four and a half years in prison “...along with activist Leonid Razvozhayev...

Russian opposition leader...”—same opposition leader—“...has been found guilty of organizing mass rioting at a protest on the eve of Vladimir Putin's return to Kremlin in 2012, in a trial that human rights experts describe as politically motivated.

Human Rights Watch called...trial and the rest of the...case a ‘mockery of justice’ noting that an international panel of experts...including members of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, had found there...”—was no substance in any of the charges against the opposition leader in Russia.

That was one year ago. But what did they do? They lock him up, they jail him for four and a half years. They arrest the opposition leader in Venezuela. They throw Anwar Ibrahim in jail in Malaysia, Mr. Speaker. And why? You see this where is where this Government is taking this country, Mr. Speaker. This is where they are taking this country. They are so desperate. They are losing popularity.

They are sinking. [*Desk thumping*] They are sinking. You see, they do not have the courage to call a general election. As I said in the previous Motion, they are cowards. They do not want to come outside and face us on the streets in the general election of 2015. [*Crosstalk*] But, Mr. Speaker, they could run, but they cannot hide. Time is certainly longer than twine. They could jump high, they could jump low. The election is coming, Mr. Speaker, and it will come in this year 2015, whether it comes next month, whether it comes the month after that, we shall face them in the streets, Mr. Speaker. We shall face them on the election platform.

Mr. Speaker, I dismiss this entire Motion as perverse, politically motivated and a mockery of justice. [*Desk thumping*] It is a travesty! It is an abuse! It is a perversion! [*Desk thumping*] An absolute perversion! And we will not stay in this Parliament to participate in this illegality! [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

**Miss Mc Donald:** We are gone! We are gone! [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member for Tabaquite, Minister of Works and Infrastructure.

**The Minister of Works and Infrastructure (Hon. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are seeing for the second time in this Parliament, [*Crosstalk*] we are seeing—[*Crosstalk*] what you are seeing in this House today playing out is another kind of contempt for the people of this country to listen to them defend themselves on a matter that has been brought in this Parliament and which has to be defended in this Parliament. [*Desk thumping*] It is interesting that the Member for Diego Martin North/East never for one moment defended the behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition. [*Desk thumping*] It is clear, from my understanding of what he said here today, that he was seeking a way out for the Leader of the Opposition, knowing in his heart that the Leader of the Opposition is guilty based on the evidence that was presented in this House today. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, it really to me—it is really to me a sad day that someone who is portending to be a leader—I will now say pretending to be a leader—does not stand up in this House to defend himself and for the second time he runs way. [*Desk thumping*] He runs away. How can you be a leader in the country—how can you rise and want to be a Prime Minister when you are afraid to stand up to the truth that is facing you? [*Desk thumping*] It is not about outside of this House. We will deal with this matter outside of this House. But today it is inside of this House where we have a duty to come back to this House, to come back to

Parliament where the matter of the emails was raised, and we have to clear the *Hansard* and put straight the records in this country, [*Desk thumping*] and we have to do it in Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin North/East speaks about the Leader of the Opposition in Venezuela being jailed and et cetera, et cetera. It was the PNM when they were in office who tried to jail a Speaker of the House by putting her under house arrest. [*Desk thumping*] It is they who tried to jail a Chief Justice. It is they who harangued the Leader of the Opposition then in the person of Mr. Basdeo Panday. They did it! And they are coming here to talk about freedom and what have you? They have no right. They have no moral authority. No right. No moral voice to speak about those things in this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to spend too much time on it, but I just want to tell you that the Member for Diego Martin North/East misled his House in terms of his interpretation of section 55 of the Standing Orders. If you read this carefully you will see that the matter of suspension that is referred to in 55(8) really refers to (7) and is born of what happens in terms of (4)—and (1) to (4) in this particular Standing Order. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to utilize my time to do that, but let me tell you that the Member for Diego Martin North/East should go back also to Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice* 23<sup>rd</sup> Edition, chapter 9:

Where the House can always exercise its penal jurisdiction if it necessary.

That is May's *Parliamentary Practice* 23<sup>rd</sup> Edition, chapter 9. But he will conveniently not refer to Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice* in speaking about that.

Mr. Speaker, he talks about due process, and due process has to be followed. This Government has always followed due process. [*Desk thumping*] That is why it took us two years to come back here. [*Desk thumping*] Two years. Because we were not like them, coming here and presenting emails and they were judge and jury at that point in time. The Government, the Prime Minister, the former Attorney General, myself and others, we took time over the last two years to make sure that we prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that these were fraudulent emails. [*Desk thumping*] And having so proven, we have now come back here today in order we could deal with this matter where the accusations were made.

So, we followed due process in terms of finding out from what was truth from untruth, and then coming back to this Parliament to present the truth. A truth which they cannot face, Mr. Speaker. A truth which they cannot face, and they have run from it again.

Mr. Speaker, you know how disgraceful it is for the population and even for their members to be looking on saying, why is the Leader of the Opposition not defending himself? You only refuse to defend yourself when you have something to hide, and he maybe has something to hide, and they are trying to hide it. They do not want to face it. The mirror is reflecting a truth to them and they do not want to face that truth, and that is very, very, very dissatisfactory, and it is a sad day when they cannot defend themselves in the face of what they have done. You cannot just come and make accusations against people and do not expect people to come back where the accusations are made and to defend themselves and place on the table and on the *Hansard* record what is the truth on this occasion. This we have come back to do today.

Mr. Speaker, this matter under consideration has enormous implication for our democracy and for the values of responsibility and the exercise of the right of free speech in this Parliament. I will argue this afternoon that while we all value free speech within the walls of the Parliament, and while this Government has promoted free speech and supported freedom of speech in a manner in which no other government has supported inside and outside of this House, we do not accept untruths and we do not accept fabrications. [*Desk thumping*]

**4.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, there must be sanctions for violations like those. I want to place on record that all Members of the House on this side who were accused by the Leader of the Opposition, we have cooperated fully with the police and we have cooperated fully with the investigators. We have done everything they have asked of us and we have given them all the permissions that were required to go and search X, Y and Z email, to search our computers, to search our phones. Mr. Speaker, I have not even gotten back my phone yet, I have to check where it is. But the fact is, everything they asked for was given to them, all the cooperation desired. Why? Why were we not afraid to cooperate so fully? Because we know the truth. We are not a people here who are going to search for power and to try to win power by undemocratic means, not at all. That is not our way. That is not our way, Mr. Speaker.

But, they still have to explain what happened to Sadiq Baksh and that time. They still have to explain it, and that has not gone away, because I will refer to another important incident that happened in 1980/1981, again, at the time when the PNM had their backs to the wall and when they feared losing power in Trinidad and Tobago. But, I will come to that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, immediately these accusations were made, the hon. Prime Minister that very day got up in this House and said she was referring the matter to the

Commissioner of Police. But it is very interesting to me, why it is that the Leader of the Opposition did not want the police to investigate it. He kept asking for the Integrity Commission to investigate it, or an independent body. But then we saw that playing out with this secret middle of the night meeting between the Leader of the Opposition and the former Chairman of the Integrity Commission. And it therefore raises in the public space whether in fact there was some collusion and whether there was an attempt of some kind of political undermining. Mr. Speaker, it raises that in the public eye, and therefore I ask it in the House today, was there any intent through that meeting to have any collaboration to further try to remove this Government from power by illegitimate means?

Mr. Speaker, being one of the accused in this matter has caused me a lot of personal distress, has caused my family a lot of personal distress. But, I can deal with that distress, but there is a greater pain, the pain that a revered institution like this Parliament was used to defame Cabinet Ministers and a Prime Minister, by unsubstantiated accusation. The Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity even today to get up and to substantiate the very accusations he made in those emails. Because, you see, I want to go back to his *Hansard* presentation of May 20, 2013 and I quote. He said:

“And, Mr. Speaker, I took it to mean that the package that I received came from a whistle-blower, and the content of the package was a series of emails which someone, in a position to package, thought that this country should have access to, based on what was before us, what was being said to us and what it meant for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, when I saw the emails, my first reaction was to ensure that it was not frivolous and, therefore, I did not take it to my colleagues, I did not take it to the media, I did not publicize it; I wanted to be satisfied that what this whistle-blower had presented...was information that should be taken seriously, and when I was satisfied that that was so, I took the information to the Office of the President.”

So, he is saying he is satisfied that those emails were true. Today, we have proven them to be fraudulent, and yet they are trying to change the dialogue and to shift the goal post. Even though it has been proven to be fraudulent, now they are talking about substance versus form; very, very unfortunate. Mr. Speaker, it is painful that the revered institution of the Parliament was used in an attempt to defame Cabinet Ministers with unsubstantiated accusation. This is a case where [*Interruption*] the burden of proof is not on those accused, but on the accuser. We have shown that this matter, these emails were fraudulent.



Mr. Speaker, the sorrow that I have arises from the fact that one who is vying for public office is doing so using ways and means that, to say the least, are undemocratic. There are no ordinary allegations, you know. Conspiracy to murder or harm a journalist, to spy on the Office of the DPP, to remove the sitting DPP by having him made a judge. These are not ordinary allegations. These are serious allegations. The Member for Diego Martin North/East, he spent a lot of time on the matter of suspension, and I want to repeat, he misled the House with respect to his interpretation of the Standing Orders. But, listening to him, I concluded, at one moment I felt like saying, I almost felt but I concluded that the Member himself felt that the Leader of the Opposition was guilty and that some kind of sanction was needed. What he was trying to do was introduce due process in order to avoid sanctions being placed on him for his guilt.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin North/East gave it away. He said that the imminence of an impending election, on the eve of an election this should not be done. Mr. Speaker, why should the imminence of an impending election preclude this House from doing its work? That is like saying we should not make any more laws. We should not really pass laws because election is coming. Election was coming since May 25, 2010. We must continue to do our work, even if that work means censuring or suspending a Member for that kind of mischievous behaviour that took place. You know, it is interesting, I am sure my colleagues picked this up, the Member for Diego Martin North/East was debating the Standing Orders, and the relevance of the Standing Orders, and not defending the Leader of the Opposition. Note his words carefully. He was not defending the Leader of the Opposition.

It is very, very curious what happened here this afternoon. There is a statement that we all know that, "power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely". But not only does power corrupt, or have the potential to corrupt, but the desire for power can lead persons or groups of persons to engage in words, in thoughts, in activities and behaviours without any concern for the damage it could inflict or the damage it could cause to others. And sometimes this damage can go beyond defamation and slander. Such is the result at times of the desire for power. People are even capable, in this rash desire for power, to suspend reason and good judgment if they can achieve a particular end, even by undemocratic means. Mr. Speaker, they are even prepared to compromise their best human values.

The email matter raised in this Parliament, in my considered view, was part and parcel of a wider plan to undermine the legitimacy and the legitimately elected Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the People's Partnership. Mr.

Speaker, in my view the email matter was an attempt to sow seeds of doubt about the character of leading personalities in the Government, and ultimately to cause some kind of disruption in the society.

Mr. Speaker, if you note very carefully, following the email matter, there were several marches in this country, everyone who seemed to have some little grouse against the Government they were getting together and marching on the streets. Imagine the Leader of the Opposition teaming up with the trade unions and marching on the streets. There were calls to shut down the country. That is what was part and parcel of this entire email matter, to cause some kind of disruption in the society. And may I say, in a society that is peaceful, in a society that is democratic.

And those who brought these emails to Parliament, and those others, hon. Members on the other side, who blindly supported the view that the emails were authentic, are today in my mind equally guilty of perpetuating certain conditions in the minds of the people aimed at the unfair and unlawful acquisition of political power. That is what the intention is about. When you cannot convince people based upon policies and programmes, when you cannot convince people that you can lead a nation, when you cannot convince people that you have the ability to govern, and when your desire for power is so naked and so brutal, and when the desire is so strong that you so want this, Mr. Speaker, put that combination together and you get a very, very potent individual who can create destruction and create chaos in a society.

You see, the PNM, they are on the back foot. Do not let them fool us. They are on the back foot since 2010, and they are not prepared to do battle for the public mind based on their ability to lead a nation. They are not prepared to do that. Every time they have been on the back foot, they have used other kinds of means. Consumed by the lust for power they are prepared to tarnish, they are prepared to maim the character of the Prime Minister and members of her Cabinet. They are prepared to do that, and they came back here today, although all the evidence is there to show that these emails are fake they came back here today, and not for one moment are they prepared to say that the emails are fake. Despite the letters quoted by my colleague, the Member for Oropouche East, from the US Justice Department also—the right-thinking citizens of this country, they reject outright such an approach to grabbing power, and I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, they will make the PNM pay in the election of 2015. They will also reject them for this kind of behaviour and grabbing for power. [*Desk thumping*]

They will pay a hefty political price in 2015. The Leader of the Opposition and the Members on the other side, they stand accused of the kinds of behaviours I have alluded to in this grab for power, and they appear to have neither reservation nor remorse in engaging in any actions which can undermine a

legitimately elected Government. This is what this is about. From day one they gathered the forces trying to oust this Government, but we persevered, because we stand on a platform of truth and truth is never defeated. [*Desk thumping*] We stand on a platform of principles and principles are never defeated. But yet that was their approach. We have answered every allegation, we have proven even these allegations wrong in this particular case.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only important, you know, how you use power. It is not only important how you use power, more importantly is how you win power in the first place. Because there are a lot of persons who have won power but they are tyrants. They are tyrants. Face it. So, it is not important only for how you use power, but how you won power in the first place. If the means by which you win power are undemocratic, if it is based on dishonesty and it is brutally unfair, then it also portends as to how you are going both to use power and seek also to retain it.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe it is far-fetched for me to say here this afternoon, that in the undemocratic achievement of power lies the birth and perpetuation of a potent dictatorship. And, Mr. Speaker, you know what, the characterization of such dictatorial tendencies is already being seen in the person of the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, you opposed him, and look what he has done. Because he is not sure of the position of several Members on the other side, because they opposed him in the internal election and so on, what has he done to them? He has demolished their political careers. Several sitting MPs, he has demolished their political careers. Why? That is dictatorial behaviour.

That is how he will use power when he gets power, and this country better listen to me this evening. Listen to what I am telling you, because I am telling you this evening, that you have a dictator in the Leader of the Opposition. If he can treat his own who have served him and who have served their constituents faithfully for several years, and just dismiss them because his views differ from them, that is a tyrant. That is a tyrant. And the way that they are trying to win power, even internally, is a reflection of also, how he is trying to win power nationally.

#### **4.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, there is a lust for power by the Leader of the Opposition. The entire Opposition Bench though, in my view, stands accused of supporting means to win power that are frightening, to say the least. Today they had an opportunity to say how they really felt about the email. But the fact that they walked out with the Leader of the Opposition means that they are also equally guilty of

perpetuating these fake emails, the fraud that has been brought into this Parliament to accuse others of things like wanting to harm a journalist, or murder a journalist or what have you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, despite incontrovertible evidence that the emails are fake, despite the information provided by Google, despite the available reports, they hold on to their biased theory that somehow we are guilty. These are dangerous times, because we are dealing with a group of dangerous people. Dangerous times and dangerous people. Dangerous people who are holding on to untruths, but that is not the danger, you know. To hold on to an untruth is one level of danger, but a higher level of danger is when you begin to believe those untruths, because the highest level of untruth is when you begin to act out those untruths and that is the stage to which they have reached in this Parliament, Mr. Speaker. That is the stage to which they have reached.

Today, it is a matter of such untruths being held up to bring down the Prime Minister and other Members of the Cabinet and as well to try to bring down the Government. I warn, tomorrow it will not be just the Government, it will be the citizens, the citizens against whom such untruths will be directed. And the citizens of this country must reject the Leader of the Opposition, reject such leadership [*Desk thumping*] and reject the PNM for that the kind of behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, such is the impact of the lust for power. Such is the impact of the naked grab for authority. Mr. Speaker, I repeat again, they are trying to trade untruths as truth, because they have come to believe their own lies, and therein lies a dangerous mind. That is delusion. When you come to believe lies about yourself that is when you are deluded.

This entire sordid episode, sordid episode of script and camera, is evidently the product of a dangerous mind. And not only is it the product of a dangerous mind, but it is also the product of the person who has been able to convince the Leader of the Opposition that it is the truth, to the point where the Leader of the Opposition talks about corroboration. You understand how deep this thing has sunk into the psyche, how much the Leader of the Opposition is believing these very untruths.

There is nothing to suggest that the Leader of the Opposition disbelieves what he has presented, nothing to suggest that he disbelieves what he has presented. As I said, the Member for Diego Martin North/East did not defend the Leader today. Even in a reservation in terms of his statement at the beginning said, “without prejudice”. What does he mean “without prejudice”? That he can take a different position if the Leader of the Opposition is found guilty of the fake emails? Well,

the evidence is there, he is already guilty. Why is he refusing to defend the Leader of the Opposition? Do not forget it was the very Member for Diego Martin North/East that in another Parliament he lambasted the Leader of the Opposition when he was then under the direction of the Member for San Fernando East. This is why today he does not have the—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Moral fortitude.

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:**—the moral fortitude and courage or authority to defend the Leader of the Opposition because he knows what behaviour the Leader of the Oppositions is capable of. He has at one point in time, he has criticized that behaviour and vehemently so, if you go back to the *Hansard*. So this is a sordid affair of camera and script, the product of a dangerous mind.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I said that there is nothing to suggest that the Leader of the Opposition disbelieves what he has presented. One can only hope that this character flaw of gullibility is one that does not colour the entire decision-making process of the Leader of the Opposition. So even if I give him some semblance of credit or I give him some space, but, Mr. Speaker, is he so gullible that he believes all of this that he read? Did he not have advisors to tell him, look man, this thing is fake? So he just believed that. Here you have a leader or a potential Prime Minister, anything you come and tell him he will believe it and he will act upon it. Come on, that is not how you lead a country.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I entered politics in 1968, when I first campaigned for my uncle who was the Member of Parliament for Siparia. But my active politics began in October 1980, and this emailgate affair reminds me of the period of elections in 1980/1981 when the Organization for National Reconstruction, of which I was then Deputy Political Leader, came on the political scene and created a lot of interest in this country and the belief in the minds of people that you can change a government. It was a great time in the politics of the country. And the PNM were on the back foot. I remember coining a very interesting slogan that went on thousands and thousands of jerseys, “Don’t blame the Government, fire them”. Today, I say do not blame the Opposition, fire them in 2015, in the general election. [*Desk thumping*]

But, Mr. Speaker, the PNM were on the back foot and they then surfaced something, just like the Sadiq Baksh affair, they then surfaced something which became famously known as the poison letter, the Baptist letter, the poison letter. And this was a letter that made many accusations and predictions of what would have happened if there was a change of Government and if Karl Hudson-Phillips had become the Prime Minister. It was a nasty letter with a nasty intent, Mr.

Speaker. You are seeing the PNM once more behaving in the same way in this emailgate affair. It is a repetition of what they did in 1980/1981 and a repetition of the Sadiq Baksh matter. It also has come back now as emailgate. It is reincarnated as emailgate.

Mr. Speaker, I had a very good friend in that campaign. His name was Ferdie Ferreira. And Ferdie Ferreira and myself, we went all over the country and you know today, I wonder—

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, your time has expired. Would you like an extension?

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Yes, yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Member for Tabaquite be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** [*Desk thumping*] Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you. Mr. Speaker, yes, I wonder what the distinguished Ferdie Ferreira, who was then an ONR member, would have to say today if he were to honestly reflect on the poison letter in relation to this emailgate matter. And he is a man of conscience. Today, he is back in the fold of the PNM, but I ask him, reflect for a moment, does this emailgate matter not remind you of the poison letter of 1980/1981? And that cost the ONR the elections in a very serious way also, because it poisoned the minds of people. That is the same thing they are trying to do with this emailgate. But today we are more intelligent and the population is more intelligent and the population has already rejected what has been attempted here in terms of this emailgate matter.

Mr. Speaker, the whole intent is to have the population believe that the Prime Minister and some of her Cabinet Ministers are part of a criminal conspiracy. Mr. Speaker, that is serious business, you know. That is serious business. This cannot be treated as in any frivolous manner. The proponents of this accusation must face consequences. The Parliament must not be used as a convenient shield to contaminate the minds of the people to declare guilt on the part of the Members of Government referred to in the emails. The Parliament must not be used for that. Just as the Leader of the Opposition came to the Parliament and made those accusations, those accused also have the right and beyond right, a duty and responsibility to come to the Parliament as we have come today, even after two years and present what is the truth. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, there are those on the outside who are arguing that this Motion of censure is really an attack on the Leader of the Opposition, a waste of parliamentary time. Mr. Speaker, do not fall victim to the victim mentality, you know. They are trying to make out the Leader of the Opposition as a victim so that he can secure some kind of public sympathy. This is not about a victim, this is not about public sympathy, this is about a man who has come here and made false accusations, and therefore he must face up to the consequences of his action. [*Desk thumping*] This is not about victim mentality and so on. That is what the Member for Diego Martin North/East tried, you know, tried to make him out to be a victim. No, no, no, we are not going to buy that, and I urge the population not to buy that. Not at all. You will make an accusation and you cannot defend it, you must bear the consequences of your actions and words.

Mr. Speaker, this is serious business. It is on the records of the *Hansard*, and the records are there for life. The accused must be allowed to correct these records. If the accusers have evidence to the contrary, then today was the day they should have brought it, brought such evidence, not run out of the House. They should not have run out of the House. They are cowards, cowards. If they fail to do so they must now bear the full consequences of their ill-conceived behaviour. They must be censured, and notice I am saying, “they”, because they all walked out. They are all supporting the fraudulent emails.

What has occurred in this Parliament amounts to an attempt to frame a few of us, including the Prime Minister, of a conspiracy to murder or harm a journalist; more interestingly, to undermine key institutions: the Judiciary, the DPP, the media, the Parliament—three Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, can you imagine what it took to develop these emails? Can you imagine what it would have taken to do that, to sit down and to craft this thing? Listen, can you understand the malicious intent behind all of this? Can you imagine the hate that is involved in the mind of such a person? Mr. Speaker, it leads you to ask, therefore, who is or who are the real conspirators? People who have been framed have not only had to spend long years and money to defend and clear their names, but, you know, people who have been framed, even after they clear their names, they are scarred for life. When you combine hate and the lust for power, as is evidenced in these emails, you are capable of a moral transgression. And what is that moral transgression? Mr. Speaker, all our scriptural text enjoins us to do one thing: never bear false witness against another person.

**Mr. Samuel:** Never bear false witness against another person.

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Thank you, thank you Reverend Samuel, thank you. Never bear false witness. It is described as one of the worst sins, to bear false witness against another person, and that is the moral transgression that they on that side, Mr. Speaker, that is the moral transgression. It is unfortunate, very unfortunate. They who stand up and talk about morality, they who stand up and preach to little children and take them to the cinema and pretend to be someone of stature and moral character, Mr. Speaker, they are guilty of this moral transgression.

In this matter, like in so many matters, the Leader of the Opposition may escape man's law, for all you know, but he will never escape God's law, and he will never escape the law of karma, Mr. Speaker. As you sow, so shall you reap. One of the worst sins, I want to repeat, is to bear false witness against another person, because to bear false witness against another person is an act of desperation, an act of selfishness, it is an act of weakness to so do, Mr. Speaker.

One of the traditions of this Parliament is the necessity to take ownership and responsibility for what one says or what one does in the Parliament. Mr. Speaker, you have made a statement on that, I do not want to repeat it today. In fact, when the debate took place you made a statement early on that. One is expected to speak the truth—

**4.30 p.m.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, we normally would suspend at this time, but the hon. Member has eight more minutes to complete his remaining 15 minutes. Do I have the support of the House that we will go to—

**Hon. Members:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Continue, hon. Member.

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, there are those who are arguing that Parliament allows absolute freedom to say what you want or what you wish to say. Maybe that is so, but maybe it is also not so. That is a matter for continuing debate. But the Parliament does provide mechanisms to deal with Members of the House who cannot substantiate what they present in the Parliament; otherwise we will have chaos.

Self-regulated freedom of expression in the Parliament is a value which Members of Parliament must observe. A failure to do so and to perpetuate allegations that cannot be substantiated, or are proven to be false, must bear the consequences available as parliamentary sanctions. Not to apply those sanctions would lead to a kind of chaos in the wider society. Mr. Speaker, there is a saying



that the majority of the people follow the behaviour of the leader. There is a lot of truth in that, and it is therefore important that this Parliament condemn and censure behaviour and falsehoods that threaten the moral fabric of the society.

Freedom is always underpinned with responsibility. If not, there will be chaos and confusion. We have a duty, therefore, without fear or favour—and we swore—without ill-will, to ensure that truth triumphs. Mr. Speaker, I began by saying that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, but I want to tell you that the desire for power is perhaps even more dreadful.

In this Parliament we make laws, but as the one who makes the laws, we are also duty-bound to observe the laws. Not at all times can laws protect a person, Mr. Speaker. However, we particularly, as MPs, must act in obedience, not just to the law, but to moral law also. Today we are seeing an example of the use of power without regard for the moral law and the consequences in the lives of others. The use of fake emails is an abuse of power; it is an abuse of privilege, and of this, the Leader of the Opposition and all his Members are guilty.

You see, the use of power without regard for the consequences is something which must concern us all. There must always be a self-imposed limit in the way power is used, and in this case there was no such limit by the Leader of the Opposition. Therefore there must be no limit on how we censure him as a result of this.

Here is a situation where the Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to exercise the self-imposed limit, but in his usual recklessness, without validating what was presented to him, he went to the President, he had a secret meeting with the head of the Integrity Commission and then came to Parliament. He waited six months, he said! Six months! Was he really concerned, as he claims, that the life of a journalist was at risk? You are waiting six months? You say there is a plot to kill someone, and you are waiting six months, and you did not go to the police with it? You expect me to believe that? What kind of man, what kind of human being, will have—claims evidence—incontrovertible evidence that someone wants to kill someone, and you keep that to your chest? For what gain? For some political gain, Mr. Speaker? That is worse now, that you can try to rise in the misfortunes of another person. That is a low-class kind of behaviour.

**Hon. Members:** Sick mind.

**Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan:** Sick mind, Mr. Speaker. There is a theory floating around that these emails may very well have been fabricated by a demented mind with an agenda for which a gullible Leader of the Opposition got ensnared. The Leader of the Opposition must bear the consequences.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, his example is also a lesson for us. It teaches us that we should strive always to consider the possible effects in the lives of others, of the power of our thoughts, our words and our actions. And you know, in doing so, we must remember sometimes that the best use of power lies in the choice not to use it at all; that is, unless we are on a foundation of truth. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, we have had a very interesting, continuing commentary on this email matter. When the Opposition realized themselves that the emails were fake, when they witnessed the evidence piling up against them, they then tried to change the conversation—the dialogue. So then they began to talk about, it is not form, but it is substance. This is a situation where the truth is known, but the truth is being denied. You see, when one's words are repeatedly inconsistent with one's thoughts and feelings, or with the truth as it is known, one creates psychological divisions within oneself, and that is a dangerous individual, and that is the Leader of the Opposition. The consequence—you know what it is?—is a restless, vindictive mind which is guilt-ridden and in conflict with itself.

In addition, a lot of energy is expended in continuously trying to ensure that one's misrepresentation of the truth remains undiscovered. This is what is playing out in this email affair. This is what. So the Prime Minister and former AG Ramlogan, and Rambachan, and Moonilal, and Griffith, despite their certified legal documentations from the US court, they are not to be believed, but the Leader of the Opposition is to be believed. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition continues to clamour for an independent investigator. Well, is the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service not independent? He asked for the Integrity Commission. Now that the report has come to the Integrity Commission, why are you not accepting it? You see what I just said about the demented mind?

Mr. Speaker, something has to be wrong with the psychological health of a person who, despite the mountain of evidence, refuses to admit, "I made a mistake", and apologize for the mistake. The shifting of the goalposts from form to substance, to intent and what have you, is really an attempt to evade responsibility. It is an attempt to evade responsibility and blame others for the irresponsible conduct and the wrong choice of bringing these fake emails to the Parliament in the first place. It would be unusual to find someone willing to accept responsibility for the consequences of his decisions. Here, in this case, the Leader of the Opposition did not get the result he wanted, so he creates a new dialogue: blame others.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I wish to say that the Leader of the Opposition has reached a dead end. He can walk over the cliff or he can turn around and he can walk back and say, "I am sorry", and face the consequences, as he must face in

this Parliament. It is a sad moment in our politics. This is a new low to which he has brought this Parliament by his naked grab for power. The burden of proof is on him, not us.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, it is a good time for us to suspend. This sitting is now suspended until 5.15 p.m.

**4.38 p.m.:** *Sitting suspended.*

**5.15 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for Chaguanas West. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Something has to be wrong. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Peters:** No, no. “Something right.”

**Hon. Member:** Wrong chair! Wrong chair!

**Mr. J. Warner:** I am on this side, you know.

**Mr. Peters:** “Yuh on de wrong side.” Wrong side! Wrong side!

**Mr. J. Warner:** “Lemme tell yuh something” very early. I do not want to be Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Member:** “Doh say dat.”

**Mr. J. Warner:** No, no, no. I “doh” want to be Chief Whip. “So if dem guys doh come back here, I sitting dong right here. When I move from here, I will be there.” [*Points to Government side*] [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

**Mr. Peters:** “Watch meh arms! Watch meh arms!” [*Arms outstretched*]

**Mr. J. Warner:** But as I stand here and I see myself arrayed against all of you, I say once again: Chaguanas West by-election revisited. [*Laughter*] And I want to remind you also about that long and brutal by-election where, of course, I had to fight all of you and I won, handsomely—just reminding you. So, therefore, in a sense, I am not feeling any way at all awed or buoyed or frightened. I am used to this situation, and it is unfortunate I am alone on this side, but so be it.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that it is not very often I agree with the Member for Tabaquite, [*Desk thumping*] and I do not think, after today, there will be many more times either. [*Laughter*] But I had to agree with him on one thing he said, among other things, that today—he said—is a sad day. And it has to be a sad day for me but not for the reasons to which he alluded.

Mr. Speaker, as a young man, I am going to school at Presentation College, Chaguanas, living in Longdenville, walking six miles to school in the morning and six miles back home in the afternoon. And as a young man, I used to listen to Winston Mahabir, Gerard Montano, Learie Constantine, Seukeran, Simboonath Capildeo, Ashford Sinanan, and I used to hope to God that one day I want to be in the same place like them. And when I came here at first in 2010, I began to feel that way, but I must confess, shortly after it dissipated, as such. Even Hardeo Hardath, who, for 15 years never said a word in Parliament, I used to admire him for his silence. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. Member:** That is an exaggeration.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Fifteen years—and he had the best wig. But what I am a bit worried about, Mr. Speaker, is where we are heading with this Parliament. From March 26 to the present time—six weeks—and all we have spent talking about to this nation is about the Member for Diego Martin West, Keith Rowley, save one occasion, Private Members’ Day. We are not serving the people well. We are not doing it well. I “doh” understand—and I will come to it just now—how we could just spend six weeks—save one session—talking about the Leader of the Opposition: Motion, after Motion, after Motion. To what end, I ask myself? And that is why for me, it is a sad day.

It is a sad day because at the end of the day—let me jump the gun—this emailgate matter is almost two years old, save eight days; two years old. And here we are, on the eve of an election with the Parliament which is bound to be dissolved by June 17—do what you want, you are bound to dissolve it. So therefore we are 42 days away from dissolution—42 days away—and we bring a Motion to suspend the Leader of the Opposition from the House for the rest of this House, and if he is lucky, I guess he will be here for the 11<sup>th</sup> Republican Parliament.

**5.20 p.m.**

Something has to be wrong. Where is the urgency I ask myself, that we have to do this now, 42 days before the Parliament is dissolved legally, if the Prime Minister does not do it before. I repeat, this matter is two years old, Mr. Speaker, and I say to myself, something has to be fundamentally wrong.

You know, I was really worried, of course, when I heard the Member for Oropouche East said and I quote him:

“...wait for the police investigation, when you never thought...”—it is a police matter—“in the first place.”

He said so. Again, the Member for Oropouche East, the Leader of Government Business said:

“...the Parliament cannot wait on...”—anybody to adjudicate.

He continues:

“...we have a duty to come to the Parliament...we must do what we have to do...”

That was said this afternoon by the Member for Oropouche East, but he has forgotten that there is no way this Parliament has the capacity or the ability to produce any evidential matter to determine whether this emailgate is right or wrong. This Parliament cannot do that.

In fact, it was the Prime Minister who, a week after this emailgate, called a press conference and the Prime Minister referred the matter to the police and to the Integrity Commission. If she did that, why can she not wait now? She took it there, but here the Member for Oropouche East is saying, “we cyah wait. Have to do it now.” Something has to be wrong. I make the point: are you telling me that this Parliament is better qualified to investigate emailgate than the police? Well let me clear it one time, I am not. So therefore take me out of that realm entirely. But let us go back to the statement of the Member for Diego Martin West. I have his *Hansard* copy here and he said:

“This sitting today in this House, Mr. Speaker, this Parliament, is what is available to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and maybe one or two agencies outside, one of which is the Integrity Commission, and I dare say, Mr. Speaker, as I checked recently, there is no Integrity Commission in place—”

He said so, and then accuse him of not taking it to the Integrity Commission. There was a long hiatus when there was no Integrity Commission in this country.

In fact, in the same *Hansard* note, the Member for Diego Martin West says:

“And insofar as there is no Integrity Commission in place, I call on the President to immediately ensure that there is an Integrity Commission in place so that these matters can be properly investigated in short order.”

He is saying when the Commission comes in, and he hopes it comes in quickly, that this matter can be investigated in short order. But I am hearing the Member for Tabaquite saying he went in the middle of the night by the Chairman of the Integrity Commission at the time, and the Member for Oropouche East saying possibly they had drinks and so on, and a lot of speculation what took place. I do not know since when we live that way.

I heard the Member for Tabaquite making reference to the Baptist letter and what the PM tried to do and did not do in '81, and ONR would have won had it not been for the Baptist letter. I would like to ask him if he is here—what is so different, Mr. Speaker, except, of course, this one is more elevated from the Baptist letter in those days and the paid bloggers of these days. Today, they have paid bloggers undermining you left, right and centre. There are persons today who go into your email and compromise your email addresses. In fact, just this morning I changed mine for the fifth time.

**Dr. Moonilal:** The survivor?

**Mr. J. Warner:** I changed survivor. No, I am talking about the password. The password. You could do anything with survivor. Survivor is what have me here. So I changed the password for the fifth time. Mr. Speaker, I am saying: what does that have to do with the matter?

Mr. Speaker, the thing that worries me most—in fact, before I say that, the Member for Tabaquite also says that the Leader of the Opposition has reached a dead end. Either he fall over the cliff or he turns back. I wonder who has reached a dead end. When I go outside there, especially in the corridor and in Chaguanas West, a constituency which has been marginalized, has been treated in the worst possible way. All the contracts for CEPEP have been taken away. A new bus transport in Chaguanas West, but the MP cannot be riding in it at all. A highway opened in Caroni, cutting ribbon, and I am watching it on TV and I am the MP. I am the MP for Chaguanas West and I am seeing a lady called Parbatee, I am seeing the Prime Minister and the Member for Tabaquite cutting a ribbon to open a highway in my constituency [*Member beats his chest*] and I say nothing. Just earlier today, I talked about the highway to Golconda/Point Fortin, I say nothing because I know that one day I will rise above that. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to lift the bar now, and I do not think we are doing so if we are continuing relentlessly week after week with this debate.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Tabaquite also said 1981—he gave an example and he says that the PNM's back is to the wall. I want to again tell the Member for Tabaquite to disabuse himself of this belief because more and more I get the impression, more and more that it is not this side's back against the wall, but that side. In fact, if I wanted more evidence of that, what has happened for the last six weeks has confirmed what I am saying about back against the wall.

At the end of the day, is it an attempt to demonize the Member for Diego Martin West? To what avail? Is it an attempt to make here as an Opposition headless? To what extent, to what avail? In any event, I know what I am saying

here will go up in the air because whatever I say the vote is there. They have the votes and they will vote, of course, aye, and suspend him indefinitely until Parliament ends. But, Mr. Speaker, I am asking you today, look at the precedent. If that happens—if in this Parliament a Government could move a Motion to suspend the Leader of the Opposition flippantly as this one has been done, Mr. Speaker—under your watch this is happening—what prevents them from moving a Motion to suspend the entire Opposition? It might look frivolous, but based on what has happened here today, what prevents them with their numbers from moving a Motion to remove every single Member from there, and even from here though they feel I am their cousin, but from here?

Mr. Speaker, the point I am saying to you, under your watch this is taking place. It is a bad precedent and that is what has me very worried. When I talk about Simbhoonath Capildeo, Ashford Sinanan and Bengal Tiger and people like those, even Chanka Maharaj, there was a time when this House meant something. Look at the people who passed through here. Learie Constantine passed through this House. I want to go back again to, Errol Mahabir passed through this House. What are we doing today? There is no way at all these people could countenance that, and I am asking myself: “Why is it nobody does not take the Prime Minister” by herself, secretly, quietly, and tell her what she is doing is not right? Somebody has to have the guts to tell the Prime Minister, or whoever it is that advises her, the road that we are on here is not the correct one.

At the end of the day, what will be the effect, Mr. Speaker? Do you know what will happen in this country? You will see a level of polarization taking place here. Racial polarization taking place here as never before. Is this what we want? Is this what we are asking here for this country? Are we saying in other words, that it is either we and they, or PNM and PP? Are we saying that? At the end of the day, it could not be, and therefore, I am making the point again that the PNM, whether they are on their back foot or their front foot, it is wrong to do what we are doing here today. It is wrong.

The Member for Tabaquite again said that the Member for Diego Martin West is afraid to stand up to the truth. I thought that the truth is somewhere outside there which the police still have to determine, and I do not know what the urgency is. I heard the Member for Tabaquite make a statement last week that he wants the emailgate now before the elections, and I was saying to myself here, take care what you pray for you get, you know. Take care what you pray for because after emailgate is “prison-gate”, and then “Anand-gate” and a host of other gates. What is the urgency? Let the police do their work. Let the police do their work and we must not come here and try to take over the work of the police.

It is not the Member who carried it there. It was the Prime Minister who took it there. The Member for Oropouche East reminded us that it was the Prime Minister who took it to the police and the Integrity Commission, and yet today now, 42 months before you vacate office and so on and leave this House, you cannot wait. Now or never!

**Mr. Ramadhar:** 42 days.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Forty-two days I am saying. June 17<sup>th</sup>, tomorrow is 42 days. If you want one more, say 43 then.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** You said 42 months.

**Mr. J. Warner:** Forty-two months. My apology. Forty-two days. You wish was months, eh? So I am saying, therefore—I am not going to talk long, you know, because at the end of the day, I do not intend to belabour the point. The point I am making is that, what we are doing here is wrong. I am saying again, there is a sense of urgency which is suspicious and I want to make the point also that at the end of the day it seems to be a sinister move to try to put the Leader of the PNM and Member for Diego Martin West in a bad light hoping to score cheap points.

Mr. Speaker, before I sit, let me just also say what will happen. What will happen, if for some reason after he is suspended today—and I know he will be—next week the police come up with a report that says there is some substance in the emailgate, what will we do? Suppose the very same police who took it, comes next week and says we have found enough evidence to suggest to us that we have to reconsider emailgate, what happens? Why are we so precipitate? Where is the hurry? What is the hurry, gentlemen? If you could tell me, I will understand. But I sit down here, I listen to speaker after speaker, I keep asking myself: what is the urgency, what is the hurry?

In six to eight weeks' time we have to have elections in this country. The Leader of the PNM, Member for Diego Martin West, would either rise or fall on what he has done or what he has failed to do, and therefore, there is no reason for us to try to demonize him. Whether it is a Monday night forum or the Parliament, I do not think it is right. And then, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Oropouche East says that the intention here is to get the country divisive, designed to lead to riots, intriguing and so on. If that is the case, what we are doing here today is 10 times worse. It is 10 times worse. All I am asking Members is to tread carefully. Tread carefully because at the end of the day this can become very explosive, and I am saying that nobody here wants that. Nobody here wants that. We have invested too much in this country as individuals and as a collectivity to try to have this happen to us in this place.



**5.35 p.m.**

Just look at the benches today, week after week; week after week, “we talking to empty benches” and this goes all over the world. Is this how we want people to see us in this country? Week after week, empty benches on this side? “Dai wha yuh asking for?” And then you will tell me that is not your fault, that is theirs. No, it is all of us fault. What is happening here today is based on the collective effort or work of all of us, we are all guilty. And I am not asking, therefore, my final plea is let us stop, think and put some brakes on where we are going.

Mr. Speaker, gentlemen, we are not doing this country any good, we are not helping our children and our children’s children, and Mr. Speaker, I urge the other side to reconsider this Motion and please withdraw it in the national interest. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

**The Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (Hon. Errol McLeod):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There are debates in which one participates out of a sense of duty and responsibility towards the sanctity of Parliament and this, today, is one of such debates. May I advise that there are no shades of grey in this debate?

Mr. Speaker, we will recall that the Member for Diego Martin West came here almost two years ago, and the Member for Chaguanas West alluded to that; some two years ago with one of his many Motions of no confidence in the Prime Minister and the Government. The fact is that the statements made by the Opposition Leader on May 20, 2013, in relation to the purported emails and allegations against the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers were monstrous untruths, they were malicious falsehoods; they were in content incongruous with the line of evidence which only an imbecilic mind, a person with a marked degree of congenital deficiency would hope to dislodge an elected Prime Minister and impose, instead, another of dubious character.

The point has been made, Mr. Speaker, the point has been very clearly made, and while I am sure that one might even want to consider the submissions made just a while before me, one has to examine the reality of the situation with which we are faced, and one must ask the question: what kind of society are we building? This is a young nation and even at age 50, we are considered young, we are now building. What kind of society are we building?

We are today bewailing an attempt to discipline a Member who, by the things that were brought here on May 20, 2013, seemed to have been bringing this honourable House into disrepute. And on the record of Parliament are charges

made against the Prime Minister and other Members of her Government, charges that include a conspiracy to bring harm, indeed, to murder a journalist. Do we leave that like that or do we seek to correct that record? And we might appear to be somewhat precipitous in our action today, but we are close to a general election, we are close to the end of this Tenth Session of the Parliament, and if we had not sought to correct this situation two years ago, then certainly we must seek to correct it now.

In any case, the charges that were made were of such enormity that one had to go through the process of investigation and the examination of what was brought before us and so on. So it is a little bit difficult to take any suggestion that we should allow this to just go by, and that it will be forgotten perhaps. It might well be forgotten by a number of us but the record is going to be there and we have to seek to change that record.

On May 20, 2013, the Opposition Leader came into this House fully well-protected by parliamentary privilege to carry a sinister and singular politically, motivated, personal attack on government officials designed to bring down the Government and produce an early election. Why do we say this? We must remember, Mr. Speaker, as short as we are known to have memories, you will see their predictions that we would not last six months; their predictions that we would not last 12 months, not two years; we would not last three. But not only have we been surviving, we have been succeeding, and so the Leader of the Opposition and many of his directionless and opportunist confederates had to adopt a difficult plank of attack, so we blackball them. That is what they aimed to do.

Mr. Speaker, where was, at that time, the public outcry? Where was the evangelical march, almost, around the Parliament? Did anybody come around the Parliament and condemn the accusations that were being made? Did anybody drag a mannequin that they purport to be that of the Prime Minister around the country condemning this Government, this People's Partnership Government, and swearing to make this place ungovernable and at the same time, consorting, as it were, with the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition made serious allegations against Members of Government and, if you would allow me, I would take less than a minute to quote from an *Express* article by journalist Ria Taitt. The article states:

“Opposition Leader Dr. Keith Rowley yesterday...”

This would have been May 21st, I think. [*Interruption*] Yes.

“...yesterday presented a series of damning e-mails to the Parliament which, he said, implicated the Prime Minister, the Attorney General and Local Government Minister in ‘high crime’, ‘misbehaviour of public office’ and a massive cover up.”

The article continues and I quote:

“This alleged cover up involved a major conspiracy against:

- 1) the Director of Public Prosecutions
- 2) a plot to harm and discredit...

—a journalist and the journalist’s name, and:

- 3) “the payment of monies in exchange for freedom by an unnamed person.”

These are very serious allegations. How could any right-thinking individual make such damning allegations without requisite proof?

And we spent time waiting for these emails to be examined and for proof, one way or the other, to be brought back to this Parliament, and we understand that agencies—local and international—have done their examinations and they have sent their reports to the competent authorities here in Trinidad and Tobago, but what are they doing with these? These competent so-called authorities, we were unable, because of their not having the resources, they not having the expertise, to do the kind of investigation and examination that were necessary. It has been done by very reputable people in reputable well-known organizations and the report has come back. What are we waiting on?

So it could well be that we are seeing this report against the background of elections legislation that will come just now as they are seeing this report as being important in their own organization of things to affect the elections that are to come. So, on whose side are you going to drop the axe? And I think that we must come to the point where we must be mature enough to abandon the hypocrisy that too often passes in this country without examination.

You are talking here, Mr. Speaker, about persons and their reputations to take it a bit further, the reputation of the hon. Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, where is the outrage? What kind of society are we building? Is it one of different strokes for different folks? Where is Dr. Williams’ message of 1962? And he did leave us with some very powerful messages. And if one examines this carefully, one would see where we have, in fact, been developing twin personalities, we have been going in parallel but separate directions, we have been building a particular society for some and another society for others in our little Trinidad and Tobago.

One of Williams' messages was: there is no longer any mother India, no mother Africa, no mother China, only mother Trinidad and Tobago. And we have to bring all of our people in Trinidad and Tobago to recognize that we have one Trinidad and Tobago, and that we must build one all-inclusive society in Trinidad and Tobago, treating each person with the respect that we all deserve.

Or are we demonstrating that an allegation, an allegation that a Member's father is not his father and that the Member is physiologically and psychologically affected, and that is more important as a criminal offence than a charge of a conspiracy to murder a journalist? Why? We wanted to crucify a Member of this House for making statements that one might consider, at best, to have been untimely, and that is "ah big sin", that is "ah big offence", and we organized marches and prayer sessions and so on in the face of that. But here, somebody charges the head of our Government with being involved in a conspiracy to murder and we must just accept that and say nothing.

I will not accept that and say nothing, Mr. Speaker, because I see myself belonging to the salt of this Trinidad and Tobago's earth, and all of us must be treated decently, and with equity and equality.

### **5.50 p.m.**

Lucky for us in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Speaker, institutions and people around the world, are not fooled by the depths of delusions, manifested by the Leader of the Opposition and his misinformation. Despite the Member for Diego Martin West's repeated attempts, to character assassinate our beloved Prime Minister and her reputation, and that of our country, she continues to be praised. The hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar continues to be praised internationally for her leadership, and her commitment to democracy and good governance. In only her third year as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the hon. Prime Minister was awarded the 2013 Democracy Medal by the 46<sup>th</sup> World Conference of the International Association of Political Consultants. The IAPC is an organization, committed to fostering democracy globally, and awards this democracy medal to individuals or organizations, who in their independent judgment, have worked to promote and sustain the democratic process throughout the world.

Almost a year later, in October 2014, our Prime Minister was again awarded this time, the Americas award for excellence in public service. This was from the International Training Center of Officers and Leaders, Atlanta, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. The Executive Director of CIFAL, Atlanta, Chris Young, in the ceremony to present this award, described it as, and I quote:

A lifetime achievement award because those who receive it, have done work to address all eight of the millennium development goals. They being, to:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability; and
8. Global partnership for development.

Mr. Speaker, persons from around the world view the proceedings of this honourable House, technology is responsible for that essentially. We are talking about information delivered in real time, facilitated through the use of technology.

The governing of a country is serious business, and should not be taken lightly. How does an individual, particularly a well-recognized international figure, rebound from his or her reputation being dragged through the mud? Think about the hurt and the embarrassment that one causes when one falsely reports information on others.

We are honored, Mr. Speaker, that we have the strength and leadership of our Prime Minister who, notwithstanding the spiteful attacks by the Leader of the Opposition, is able to overcome these unsubstantiated claims, and continues to lead a government and a country on a very progressive path.

Mr. Speaker, imagine the Opposition Leader finding so explosive and damning emails in his mailbox, which purport criminal and corrupt activities. And what does he do? Instead of taking the emails directly to the police, there is where he ought to have gone with them, because there is a charge of a conspiracy to murder somebody. That is for the police. What did he do? Instead of taking the emails directly to the police, he gave a copy to the former President, and held on to the emails for six months. You hear that somebody is threatened by harm, harm that can result in a fatality and you ought to report that, I mean, even before you get the message, to the police. That is the competent authority to investigate that. No, you sit on it for six months, Mr. Speaker, he sat on it before making this information public. What manner of insanity is that?

Here you have a situation where allegedly threats were made against the life of an individual, and as an aspiring Prime Minister, what do you do? You hold on to this information for six months. It is only after his secret meeting with the then Chairman of the Integrity Commission, that the Leader of the Opposition decided to reveal this information. Why this honourable House? I will tell you why, because the Opposition Leader himself, perhaps, was in doubt of the information he possessed. If he was not, he would not have utilized parliamentary privilege to reveal such information—hot number, “yuh doh play politics with people’s lives”. Yes, you do not play politics with that. You sit on it for six months.

Even though the Member for Diego Martin West states that he is not the author of the concoction, which he read into Parliament’s record, the fact that he brought them to Parliament, is an act of contempt and gross disrespect of this honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, on May 20, 2013 you clearly stated as you have often done, you clearly stated that the Leader of the Opposition must take ownership of the information which he wished to have recorded in the Parliament’s *Hansard*. It is a great pity that the hon. Member was so unconcerned with the facts before he came to Parliament to make those charges. However, by coming to this honourable House with such reckless allegations, the Member for Diego Martin West has not only displayed poor judgment, but has eroded public confidence in his own trustworthiness. If the Member wishes to escape the condemnation of the decent, hard-working people of Trinidad and Tobago, he should take the first opportunity to retract his statements, and then we would not have to have gone through all of this.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that this was not the first time that the Leader of the Opposition came to this House to spew extreme statements at his perceived political enemies, in his quest for power; that is what it is. It is a quest for power. Yesterday it was his own former political leader, the hon. Member for San Fernando East. Today, it is against our hon. Prime Minister and other Government Ministers, as well. Today, it is also, against the Member for Diego Martin Central, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, the Member for Point Fortin, the Member for Arouca/Maloney, the Member for Laventille West and Member for La Brea, and God alone knows who it will be tomorrow. Some of us might ask, well, why Members of his own team? But one has to understand a little bit about the autonomy, well, the make-up of the PNM. What is the word?

**Hon. Member:** Anatomy.

**Hon. E. McLeod:** Anatomy, the anatomy of the PNM.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I will be going contrary to the rules of Parliament, if I say that the PNM is a cult, you know.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Just pronounce that properly.

**Hon. E. Mc Leod:** C-U-L-T. That is what it is. It is a cult.

**Mr. Warner:** C-O-T?

**Hon. E. Mc Leod:** C-U-L-T, Sir.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you very much. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. E. Mc Leod:** It is a cult—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** “Jack yuh heard dat like yuh talk?”

**Hon. E. Mc Leod:**—and they will go against their own, yes. They do not want to be challenged, Mr. Speaker. They cannot take that from anybody, and the institutions that we have built are considered by them, considered to be PNM institutions. The day that the PNM seems not to be in control of those institutions, they will move to mash them up. We have to understand that.

In 1973, a PNM Attorney General, and we know what was happening in 1973, after 1970, '71, '72. In 1973, their Attorney General was addressing the struggles in which organizations of the people were against the rulership by the PNM. Not just the rulership by Dr. Williams, you know. I do not think that he was the problem, but being the Leader of the PNM, I mean, he would have been identified, you know, very, very clearly, the problem. But this Attorney General, he stood in a meeting, and said that there are two powerful institutions of the people in Trinidad and Tobago, the PNM on the one hand and identified the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union as the other. He said very boldly for all to hear that they will not be allowed to coexist. One must go, and we took notice. We knew that they were coming after the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union. At that time, however, you had real men and real women who were Trinidad and Tobago supportive, and we stood up and we did not just survive, we succeeded.

Mr. Speaker, since 2010, the Member for Diego Martin West has been calling for election, and as evident in the false documents presented as emails two years ago, he has consistently lead a campaign, intended to keep the country in a constant state of fear, and panic, to undermine the efforts of this Government.

Decent and sober, and well-thinking people in Trinidad and Tobago, if they sit and reflect on what has been happening in this country over the past five years, and juxtapose what has been happening over the past five years against what had been happening for many years before we came into office, such decent and

honest people will commit themselves to ensuring that this Government goes on for another period of five years, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] I am not saying that just because I am a Member on this side. That is the reality. We have not seen so such development taking place in this country [*Desk thumping*] as we have been seeing over the past five years, Mr. Speaker. We have been doing all of this in a situation in which we had access to less funding than the PNM has had for the many years that they were there.

**Mr. Peters:** “All de problems dat dey leave behind for us to do.”

**Hon. E. Mc Leod:** Yeah, endless problems. Where every week we are opening something, every week we are donating something, every week we are contributing something. God Bless Trinidad and Tobago with the People’s Partnership Government. [*Desk thumping*]

Now, general election will soon be upon us, Mr. Speaker, despite the common rhetoric by those outside this House, this honourable House, that elections are about a popularity contest between leaders of two parties. Despite the attempts inside and outside this honourable House, by the Opposition, to destabilize this Government, the outcome of the general election will be determined by the policies presented, and which party gives a message of hope and optimism for the country, as opposed to any party—as opposed to which party, and its leader must always be in a raging state, and share negativity.

### **6.05 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, as our country continues to develop, we need leaders and parliamentarians who see opportunities for the country, as opposed to those who seek to exploit the population by preying on the naivety of some, as the Member for Diego Martin West attempted to do on May 20, 2013.

It is interesting to note that internationally certified sources have confirmed that not only are the contents of the emails false, but some of the email addresses, because of the number of characters they contain, do not and cannot exist. What else are we waiting for? What are we waiting for?

Despite the information reported by international reputable sources, the Leader of the Opposition states that the issue at hand is not whether the emails are false, he is more concerned with the contents of the emails. That point has been made by the hon. Member for Oropouche East. Oh, beg your pardon.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, your time has expired. Would you like me to make an extension?



**Hon. E. McLeod:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Member be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. E. McLeod:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition states that the issue at hand is not whether the emails are false, he is more concerned, he said, with the contents of the emails. This has already been torn to shreds by the hon. Member for Oropouche East and Leader of Government Business in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I ask again, what manner of insanity is this? Let us take this scenario, for example: a regulatory agency, knowingly prepares a report with fallacious information against organization XYZ. This matter is brought before a court of law, and organization XYZ provides documentation to substantiate that the information reported by the regulatory agency was false. What do you do in such a situation? Well, according to the Opposition Leader of this honourable House, you must ignore whether the information reported is false or not and instead focus on the content of the report. Does this make any sense, Mr. Speaker? It makes no sense. The content of the report is what makes up the report. [*Desk thumping*] So if it is proven without a doubt that the report is false, what do you say about the content?

In the ideal world of the Opposition Leader of this honourable House, the content is correct. That is what he says. This foolish ideology is supported by the Opposition Leader's statement in a *Newsday* article written by Julien Neaves dated July 11, 2013. Mr. Neaves says, and I quote:

“What still is required to be done is to determine the authenticity of the substance (of the emails) as presented. There are those who focus on its authenticity, but the content and corroborative aspect of the content will always be of interest to us...”

Mr. Speaker, the PNM's Public Relations Officer also supports this ideology. If this is the thinking of the PNM, logical thinking citizens of Trinidad and Tobago must be very worried. And when I say “very worried”, I mean very, very worried. The Opposition Leader is vying to hold the highest office in this land and, if logically, despite being presented with the relevant facts, he is unable to ascertain the truth from falsehood information—if he is unable to ascertain the truth from false information—I beg your pardon—Trinidadians and Tobagonians must be very concerned. I say this, Mr. Speaker, unapologetically because it is the same manner of thinking that even the Johnny-come-lately Seukerans of the day display.

There is a quote from Ovid, Mr. Speaker, a Roman poet, whose quote reads: “Habits change into character”. The Member for Diego Martin West has a habit of making poor decisions. It is this instance he received a package with incredulous data and sat on it for six months, and then brought it to Parliament to grandstand for the population to see.

A more recent habit of his was his flip-flopping with respect to knowing about Mr. David West’s witness statement being obligated to disclose such information to the Prime Minister and the President. If habit does, indeed, change character, then we need to be seriously mindful of the character and integrity of the Member for Diego Martin West.

Let us combine this development with warnings of the anti-democratic trend highlighted by members of a PNM constituency group recently. The *Sunday Newsday* of March 15, 2015, makes reference to the dictatorial system present within the PNM organization which is headed by the Leader of the Opposition. The article states:

“They feel that they have been slighted, abused and that their democratic rights to choose have been trampled upon...”

The article continues:

“...feelings of disenchantment and frustration were also being felt among the general membership in the constituencies of Toco/Sangre Grande, Moruga/Tableland, San Fernando West, San Fernando East, St Ann’s East, Arouca/ Maloney, Laventille West, Diego Martin Central, over the process to select candidates.”

How can a leader successfully build a nation if he or she cannot succeed within his own party?

Mr. Speaker, I support this Motion brought to censure the Member for Diego Martin West, as I believe that as parliamentarians we must all be held accountable for our actions.

In our Westminster system of government and in other parliamentary systems such as the United States Congress, Motions or resolutions of censure are time-honoured means for the Parliament to express the most serious disapproval possible about the conduct of members. As a result, the Member for Diego Martin West should not continue in his role as he should wear the punishment and be suspended to the dissolution of this Tenth Parliament for his attempt to mislead the population. I wish to commit my support in that regard.

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

**The Minister of Legal Affairs and Justice (Hon. Prakash Ramadhar):**

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me just indicate at the outset, I will not be very long in my contribution to this what I consider a very important and historic turning point in the way we do business in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

Indeed, I was moved to agree with a lot of what the Member for Chaguanas West had to say in terms of how this matter could be perceived in the wider population, and I think I would spend some little time on that. What are we dealing with here today? We are dealing with a very atrocious effort on the part of the Member for Diego Martin West, the Leader of the Opposition, to bring before the House—as many have stated here today—allegations of murder, conspiracy, allegations of interference with the Judiciary and suppression and attack on the media. There could hardly be a worse attack on a Prime Minister and senior Members of Government.

To that end, investigative institutions were triggered—one being the Integrity Commission and the other, of course, being the police—upon the request and complaint by the very hon. Prime Minister when these allegations were made in this House. I recall having spoken here on May 21, 2013, and I had to reflect on what I had said then, because at the time there was great uncertainty and grave suspicion raised, even by those who supported this Government, and I thought a turning point then had been reached that the nation will never be the same again.

The question as to the timing of this Motion is critically important to be answered here. This Motion could not have been brought before because then there would have been no response from the institutions that had been triggered. My understanding is that the report to the Integrity Commission only came very recently and that report showed unambiguously that the “emails” that were referred to could not have existed and, therefore, it was at that moment the opportunity for the Parliament to take responsibility for itself crystallized. It could not have happened before.

I, myself, Member for Chaguanas West, I am troubled by the timing because it could be perceived by those who are easily moved to believe that it is one of oppression, one of vindictiveness and other such things. But, I would ask all right-thinking citizens of the nation to help us to clear the smoke and the dust and really realize what is the truth in this matter. Can we allow horrific examples of recklessness—and that is being very charitable to the Member for Diego Martin West—to go unattended or do we now, as we have seen from the beginning of this session of Parliament, the Tenth Parliament to now, tremendous changes in the level of responsibility that is required for every Member where

consequences—and we see in the wider governance—when wrong things are done and unearthed that there are responses to it, consequences to it.

The society is maturing in a very rapid way, sometimes to the distaste of those who wished it not to improve, to see these things occurring. So that should we then—because politically it might be dangerous to bring this Motion now—say that we should avoid it altogether, give them a “bligh”? Because I, too, had very grave concerns about how it would be perceived in the wider population and, particularly, after the contribution from the Member for Tobago East that many have described in all sorts of ways, I, myself, found that almost a shameful exercise of parliamentary privilege. But what has happened from then—they now term it the “Toppin effect”—it has immunized the Member for Diego Martin West from the truth of his actions. Are we, because of that event to say that this man can do no wrong, has done no wrong, will do no wrong? Are we not to examine his actions?

Because, you see, what has happened, that singular event where he disclosed these supposed emails—and remember it was not really emails. It was some paper he got with supposed email addresses. If he really—and you know the Member for Tabaquite was very generous, because he gave the clear assumption that the Member believed what he got, but there are others who do not have that charitable interpretation. It may very well be that he did not believe the contents of that document, but because it was convenient, because it was very damaging to the Prime Minister and her Government—our Government, my Government—that he came here under the cloak of a coward to deliver it into the heart of democracy with the intent, not to strengthen it, but to destroy the very democracy that protects him and all of us under the guise of parliamentary privilege.

The very first thing, common sense would tell you, something as serious as that—we have been through this, whether you should report it to the police—you could stay home with your own lil computer and check those email addresses, send an email and see if it is alive or not! In a matter of seconds you could have done that, but you sat on it for six months.

We have all been reminded that in that six months, the members of the media, whomever they were, could have been killed. If it is that he believed for a moment it was true—and that is why for me, logically, he knew full well it could not have been true, because if as a responsible gentleman, a Member of Parliament, a former Minister and a proposer to leadership of this Government of the state of Trinidad and Tobago, of this country, then if he believed for a moment any of it was true—the first thing he would do is to protect life and limb.

**6.20 p.m.**

Having not done that, came here, and the Member for Oropouche East very colourfully put, the midnight visit to the Integrity Commission through one of its officers. But here we are, the report now having come, that we all knew from early on when the Prime Minister had spoken, that it was a fabrication, a falsehood and a fraud. What do we do now? What do we do? Do we just say, “Listen, what you did was wrong”, and go forward? Or do we send a message to all of us, including myself and every Member of Parliament, that we mark in the sand: “There are limits beyond which you will not cross”. Parliamentary privilege cannot be further abused. Many have abused it in the past, and with citizens paying the dearest price for their reputations and their names for that level of indiscretion and uncaring.

So the “Toppin effect” has to be dealt with, because since that time—and the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre spoke well on the matter—since that time there was such an outrage, and probably rightly so, on the statements that emanated. But does that mean that we should then go blind and deaf to all the other indiscretions and wrongful deeds of the Member for Diego Martin West? The answer must certainly be, no. This effort here today, whether you like it or not, is a necessary one, because to do otherwise is to really allow, in this sacred hall, the very failure in the wider society where things are done wrong and there is no consequence, and because you find favour in that person—you were right, Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, there are different strokes for different folks in the society.

I could hardly imagine a Member on this side doing such a thing without there being rampant calls throughout the length and breadth of a certain level of the society, very often very loud and very vocal and very influential in the media to call for the immediate removal and dismissal of any Member on this side, had we done it. But now we have a protective gleam, an almost Teflon coating to the Member for Diego Martin West because of the “Toppin effect”. We got to deal with this. In a way, things have, you know, in a very incredibly divine way of working itself out, that this comes now to deal with what is real and what is not.

Are we to lose reason? Are we to lose objectivity because of one statement of another? Have we forgiven what had happened on the political platform in Brazil when the most awful language was used? I heard some level of complaint but nowhere near the howls and screams having heard what the Member for Tobago East had said. But, you know, that issue of the emailgate is but one. Some have been saying that the Member for Diego Martin West is now a trafficker in criminal conspiracies. And for a leader of a party, as noble and as longstanding as

the PNM to do it, is bad enough, but with an imminent election, could we really, as a people of Trinidad and Tobago, avoid the reality? Because for whatever reason, whether you believe the propaganda put on the People's Partnership, or for whatever reason, could we really allow a person who—and I am saying very charitably—believes anything that is put to him, that takes baskets so easily and so reckless in its result and consequence to hold power? If you could fall for those things you will fall for anything, and this is before an election. This is before you are given authority. When you would imagine that you would be on your absolute best behaviour in the eyes of the population, conduct yourself in such a way—even by your conduct, as somebody just said. You know, your character is created by your actions, by then you are not yet there and you act so unceremoniously.

That is what we are really dealing with here today. We are setting right, refocusing, recalibrating the expectations of those who are given the opportunity to stand or sit in this place, for those who are given the responsibility and authority to hold political power, that they must be held to a standard that cannot fall short of what the common man expects. [*Desk thumping*] My father, today, Siew Ramadhar, it would have been his 85th birthday, he passed last year, and one of the things—and the Member for Tabaquite and Pastor Samuel said it—and my father, I grew up with that knowing that you shall bear no false witness against anyone. Absolutely not.

But when you attempt to bear false witness against a Prime Minister it is true, and of course they rose with ferocity—the Member for Port of Spain South, athletic as she is—to jump repeatedly on the query as to what the effect of that would be. You know what effect? I knew it then. I spoke of it then. It could have led to marches and riots in this nation. It could have led to an instability that we could not control, nor could we afford. They talk about Moody's and downgrade, their actions then have brought us to a position. Had we not been resilient, strong and committed to the people, that is the People's Partnership Government, that Moody's—I do not know what is the lowest rating we would have had, had they succeeded in their efforts. I am reminded you see because I have the experience from the real world.

You speak about Sadiq Baksh—Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, I was the lawyer who was called early, early that morning by a person, who I will not identify, and told that they are setting up Sadiq Baksh. They are going to put cocaine and mortars in his tank. AG, I was—incredible, I could not believe it. It could not be, not in my lovely Trinidad and Tobago. The person insisted that it was real, “This is not a joke”. I called Sadiq, he was in Canada—Mr. Warner, Member for

Chaguanas West, you know how it works—and told him. Well, I did not know he was there, but I got his number and heard he was in Canada, I called him there. He said, “Look, protect my wife and my children. Do what you have to do as a lawyer.”

I called the police in San Fernando because what had happened, I was informed that a squad had left Port of Spain to raid his home, and I knew full well if it was true and they got there first, raided and found these items, his wife, his children, and he would have been prosecuted before an election, and that is the conspiracy. I want to tell you there is more, and I will put it on record because one never knows how fragile one’s life could be when you have too much information. The names of the conspirators were given to me. They were high up in the PNM hierarchy. They are still there. They are still there up until today, after all these years. We made a severe call that solved this case, because when the cocaine in a large quantity was found and the mortars were pulled out of the tank, we all were aghast with the reality of what had happened, not what could have happened, but what had happened—guess how lucky we were. Having called the police from San Fernando and having raced down there, we got there first, and we got word that the Port of Spain police, having learned that the San Fernando police had arrived, and we invited them in, told them what had happened, to search on our behalf—that is Sadiq Baksh and his family—they could not come, and that matter was foiled.

Members, listen, I defended Dhanraj Singh. The morning he was taken in—and it is important to remember these things—I went and visited with him at Police Headquarters and he told me that they were attempting and trying to persuade him to turn a State witness, and that if he did they would not charge him for murder. He was supposed to have told the nation that he was a bad man for the then Government, he would collect money on behalf of the Prime Minister, Mr. Panday, and others, and that if he should make that public statement he would not be charged for murder. You would check my *Hansard* record, these are facts.

They took him, against the arrangements, by car. I was supposed to have gone with him directly to the court. They left surreptitiously. I ran out and I was able to see him being taken out of a car at a corner, walked right in front the court where there was a group of persons and the media, where they stopped him and there was a pause, a very awkward pause, which was on video which we saw, and he had told me it was at that point in time he was supposed to have made the statement and riots would have broken out in Port of Spain, where the city would have burnt and the Government would have fallen. These are matters of record in the courts. He is now dead.

So, I am just reflecting on those things, equally, equally. It is a reason I am building up all of these things you know, Mr. Speaker. I am not just saying these things lightly, because one on the side of the PNM is saying, “This investigation, emailgate, eh over, there is more”. Let me get to that, remember when Mr. Panday, one of two in the history of this nation who was prosecuted under the Integrity in Public Life legislation, one of two, he was convicted, sent to jail by the Chief Magistrate. Have we already forgotten the Attorney General of the day? The collusion that occurred with him, the Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago of a PNM Government having colluded with—and this is a matter of court record also—the treasurer of the PNM in a land deal that basically had the Chief Magistrate by some bodily part to control him, and it was on the basis of perceived—what shall I say? The Privy Council said it could not stand. That conviction could not stand.

We could go through all these things, have we forgotten these things? Have we forgotten, as we were reminded earlier, that a sitting Chief Justice, the highest judicial officer of this land, police landed up outside his gate on a Friday evening with car loads of officers, jeep loads with machine guns to arrest him on a Friday evening, to have the indignity of being kept in custody, possibly without bail, on trumped-up charges, because when the matter came to the court the very sole witness refused to testify. And then the Attorney General—*[Interruption]* Gentlemen. The Attorney General of the day, having refused as the officeholder of the highest judicial office—sorry—executive legal office of the nation, to appear before a commission to answer questions, we have forgotten all of these things?

So when one—you know, this theme of the PNM, that is this investigation, notwithstanding what Google has said, notwithstanding what we have gotten from the State Department of the United States of America, what we have got from all of the other institutions and common sense and the locals, and everybody says that this email is a fraud, “this investigation eh over”. I am very worried. I am very troubled, this being an election year, what next? Could we expect—because there are and we do know—the vast majority of the police officers in this country are good and decent people, but there is a core that everybody knows about. We cannot identify them directly but you see the wickedness that comes from it. Because in Dhanraj Singh’s case I could tell you too, I cross-examined the main witness for five days and at the end of which everybody in the court was laughing at this man. The evidence he gave was so concocted, it was in direct contradiction with the physical scientific forensic evidence of the scene of the crime, and Dhanraj had to go through years awaiting his murder trial—for murder Sir? The jury could not wait to acquit, but he had to go through the ordeal.



To my right, the Member for Caroni East, charged, handcuffed, one of the most well-respected and renowned doctors of the day, walked through the streets in handcuffs in Port of Spain. I was with him at the Magistrates' Court when some charitable officers, awaiting bail hearing, yes, allowed him to sit outside of the cell. An officer passed by, looked on with a sense of scorn and a smirk, within minutes an instruction was issued, "Throw him in the cell". So you understand what is happening here? Now, nobody is above the law or anything like that, but this is a man who was just charged and awaiting now process for bail. He was no risk to anyone, lawyers are with him in chatting; he was thrown into the cell with rapists and others. The stench of that smell I could still remember because I stood outside that cell with him. You remember that—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Hon. P. Ramadhar:**—Member for Caroni East.

So, if you consider me scarred or, in some way, motivated to fight against the ills of what I see of abuse and oppression, I became involved as a politician to make changes and to make changes here. The history of the Member of Caroni East is that after much—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Two years.

**Hon. P. Ramadhar:**—trial and tribulation, and tremendous resource expenditure, it turned out—you know what?—that he had been charged under an offence that was not known to law, an offence not known to law. I had the experience, also, just before an election, where there were allegations of voter padding, because I remember the headlines. I remember the photograph of the old lady with handcuffs, Sadiq Baksh's niece to be married carted off from the police station in handcuffs again to the court, right in front the clear view of the media. You could only imagine the humiliation and fear and embarrassment for a young lady and an elderly woman. They were trembling. I represented them with a small team of lawyers for something called voter padding, where the PNM Government, because there was clear political interference then, used, not just the regular police but the top cops from homicide—stopped the murder investigations, investigate voter padding, and they gave this impression it was so widespread and everything. Less than 20 were charged in the entire country, and you know what it was about, Sir? We cleared it up with the EBC.

**6.35 p.m.**

There is something called "ancestral voting", but they gave an impression that if you move and you are now living, for instance, in Chaguanas, but you were

born in Santa Cruz and you attempt to vote in Chaguanas you are guilty of voter padding. They put tremendous fear into the hearts of people.

But what was even worse than that, is that a charge that could come under the Representation of the People Act, which carried a fine, summary offence, they charged them under the Perjury Act which is an indictable offence, where you could get up to seven years jail. Then on the warrants they put "Bail to be approved by the Clerk of the Peace III". This is the highest level of Clerk of the Peace in the courts and they are only available in the courts. So when they pick you up on a Friday, you have to wait for Monday, no outside JP could give you bail on these matters. They terrorized people.

Not a single one of the persons we represented has been convicted. Indeed, all of them have been acquitted except for one. That person and her daughter confessed to it, voter padding on behalf of the PNM. It is a matter of police record and of court record. That is why I am troubled to no end when they talk about the investigations are not yet complete, having failed on their first salvo with the election on the horizon, you are right Member for Pointe-a-Pierre. Who is benefiting from this, unless there is a complete closure on this matter?

Nobody could force the police to do or to accelerate anything. All we could do is ask them to, because to leave the thing hanging really is to create that avenue for the mischief that has been created. And when we want here to get answers from you, you "lawyer it up", as we say, Member for Diego Martin North/East, to speak about process and procedure. Well I am not going to go into that. The fact is we are here; there is an open debate on this matter; you have your opportunity to defend yourself and to defend your leader, but I know the innocent stand and fight, but the guilty flee.

The innocent are those who insist on a speedy resolution of any case because they know they have truth on their side. The guilty are the ones, as a lawyer could tell you, always looking and saying, "Chief how we going? Yuh could file something? Yuh could do this, yuh could do that?" Delay it; the delays have come to an end. The results are in. Stand up now and face the music, but you run.

That is why, Member for Chaguanas West, I did not really want to speak on this. I did not believe the public perception because the politics would read well on the outside, but we need the help of all right-thinking citizens to not allow the conflagration that you fear, because I fear it too, for us to properly communicate what this is about.

This is not an abuse of anybody, taking advantage of anyone, but look at the stage that was set by the Member for Diego Martin North/East. He put now some of the most oppressive circumstances and examples of political abuse, going to Russia.

He speaks about Venezuela, which is seven miles away, but light years away from us in the way we do business and the democracy that we have always endured and enjoyed. Physical distance is no measure of the difference of our society, and what we have come to expect and will endure.

That is why it is here in the people's Parliament, under the glare of live television and on radio that this matter is being ventilated. This is not a case of a Prime Minister calling up prosecutors in Tobago and giving instructions. This is not a case of the manipulation that we all know of underhand and in the shadow of ungodliness, but you see the effect of it that I mentioned. It is in the glare of open space of the people's Parliament.

We hear about the right to be heard. You get the right to be heard and you run from the right to be heard. That is the reality we are faced with, and then go out there—I could only imagine what will be told to the media about abuse and oppression and bullying—oh my gosh, when all we want is a ventilation of issues.

You get a second chance, Sir, to explain why you did what you did, and if you apologize now I am sure the House—we are very, very humane, very understanding, very reasonable, and we take a view, but you must apologize. Do not be wrong and strong, and that is what we are faced with. It is not personal. I want to tell you, I have much admiration for the Member for Diego Martin West. I think he is an excellent orator, a tremendous performer on the political platform, but that is not enough for leadership of a nation. We need forbearance; we need wisdom; we need intelligence; we need a sense of build and not break. We need not just attack—of course that is important, but an effort to understand, to hold, to communicate, to work with and not just to destroy. That is the easy part. Leadership is much, much more.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you. I never truly appreciated it, but when you are in a position where you have to take decisions as leader of something, it is very, very, very different from when you are approaching to want to be, because everybody has an opinion, but when you have a decision to make, the entire situation and the focus and perspective changes. It is as real as that. What do we do in the circumstances?

I am not breaching conversation with the Prime Minister—expressed some level of concern about bringing it at this time, the very things that the Member for Chaguanas West spoke about, and she was very clear. It focused my mind abundantly in the moment. She says, "Have you ever been accused of murder?" It rocked my world, because we could talk all we want, but when a Prime Minister is attacked in that form and fashion, it is not just the person, but the entire democracy is attacked.

When you balance now—and somebody, I think it was the Member for Oropouche East had put it well: the more serious the allegation, the higher the level of responsibility that you take. I will forever remember, it was burned into my ear when you said—because when this thing started to unfold that day, I did not know what next to expect, but you warned the Member for Diego Martin West that you must take ownership and, “Do you understand what that means?” And yes he knew. So he took ownership. If you take ownership, you must take the responsibility. This is where the responsibility lies.

Thank you very, very much, Mr. Speaker. [*Interruption*]

**The Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration (Hon. Rodger Samuel):** Mr. Speaker, I am taken aback with what I have heard coming from Members, even on the other side. For it is important for us to really take the *Hansard* presentation of the hon. Member for Diego Martin West and clinically scrutinize it so that it will not be my words or interpretation of what he says, but it will actually be what he said. What he said then, as opposed to what is being said now or what has been said today. When we do that, Mr. Speaker, then we will be clear that something has to be wrong with individuals.

I want to draw attention to the fact—and some others may have reiterated it, but I need to—that the Motion that was raised in 2013, that attempted to put a dark shadow on the Government, on the Prime Minister and Members of the Cabinet, was no spurious or overnight attempt. But it was something based upon the content of the *Hansard* that was being planned or examined for about six months.

So it was not as if it was a mistake overnight. It was not as if I got up and then just woke up excited about something and just grabbed at it, and it is after I grabbed at it and did it, I realized I should not have done that. This was something that was properly well thought of—properly well thought out. His statements—the statements of the hon. Member—clearly defines that this is a well thought up, thought out, planned approach to casting a dark shadow on the Prime Minister and Members of the Government.

I say that because on page 102 of the *Hansard*, and I am quoting:

“Mr. Speaker, I thank you for not being the one to interrupt me, . . .”—because there was a little interruption—“because I am sure you understood where I was and with relation to the Standing Orders.”

He says:

“I was saying what I did—and I expect that that is what you understood—and a complaint from me leading a group, Mr. Speaker, to the President, was to lodge an accusation against the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that

inferences drawn from developments of information which we had at the time, based on the situation, was that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was engaged in criminal conspiracy. That accusation lay at President's House."

I want to say that this was no overnight situation. This is a plan—I want to quote it again, this is the *Hansard*, that there was:

"...an accusation against the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that inferences drawn from developments of information which we had at the time, based on the situation, was that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was engaged in criminal conspiracy."

I heard today, while the Member for Oropouche was speaking, when he alluded to this, that we were accused of planning to murder, that there was talk about "I did not say anything like that". I am quoting the *Hansard*:

"...criminal conspiracy. That accusation lay at President's House."

The Member continued:

"Mr. Speaker, sometime after that I received a package, and when I received the package it occurred to me that there were people in this country, somewhere in the country, who must have heard the Government saying how important it is in the interest of furthering transparency and accountability and ferreting out wrongdoing, that the Government promised that we will have legislation..."—and it goes on.

Then he went on to talk about his approach during the period that he had such information, and what was his mind set for six months.

In other words, "I sat with this; I read it; I perhaps meditated upon it; I regurgitated; I did everything; I ruminated."

"Mr. Speaker, when I saw the emails..."—no overnight thing—"my first reaction was to ensure that it was not frivolous..."—I had to ensure that I had facts. I had to ensure that the stuff I had in my possession was true, that it was not something that will not stand. I had to make sure that this thing was good.

"I did not take it to my colleagues..."—I kept it close to me—"I did not take it to the media, I did not publicize it; I wanted to be satisfied..."

So we are dealing with an individual, one, that is satisfied.

### **6.50 p.m.**

I want you to understand the language. An individual who was making sure that this was not frivolous—it took some time. The individual was making sure that he was satisfied with what he had. He was satisfied that what this whistle-

blower had presented to the Office of the Opposition was information that should be taken seriously. “When I was satisfied”— Mr. Speaker, that was well planned. That was well orchestrated, that was well organized. That is not an individual that is acting spurious, and you know, frivolous. You know, this is a person whose thought processes are there. They are clinically assessing everything. And when I am satisfied, I am now taking ownership of this. I took the information to the Office of the President.

Mr. Speaker, I think somehow we miss a lot of stuff because criminal conspiracy is not just some attempt to murder. There can be a conspiracy to bring down a government. There can be a conspiracy, well thought out conspiracy planned to stigmatize Members of the Government, stigmatize the Prime Minister with the intent to bring them down. That is a conspiracy. There is a conspiracy. So it is not just then accusing the Government of criminal conspiracy, but you could be in a conspiracy to accuse the Government of criminal conspiracy. You can be, and we must not take it lightly.

So six months waited. I waited and I waited and I waited, then I presented it. Mr. Speaker, that is why it is necessary to go back to what people say. It is necessary for us to understand that in his dialogue he said:

“Mr. Speaker, I have extracted this package, this prepared package.”

So in other words, I clinically read all of these things and I extracted what I wanted to extract. I am quoting:

“Mr. Speaker, I have extracted this package, this prepared package.” So it was not as if I was coming here with all that I had, all I received, but what I did is, I clinically pulled what I felt was usable.

**Mr. De Coteau:** A surgical precision.

**Hon. R. Samuel:** That is surgical. He made some incisions that was surgical and medical with precision.

“This is the body of emails which I have put in sequential order.”

Mr. Speaker, this is not some overnight affair. I have thought this out well. I have had time to assess this thing. I have thought it out well, and now I have reached the point where I can keep it no longer. It has affected me so much. I can keep it no longer, I have to let it out. I am bombarded by this thing. I have sequentially put it in order. Systematically, I laid it out. It did not appear as if the person laid it out for him, but he laid it out. Tough stuff.

“And the important thing is that they are not just emails, they are emails which, when corroborated, the known and the unknown, paints a very frightening picture, and in the limited time available to me, I want to point out and put on the Parliament record, for today and”—for—“the future...”

Mr. Speaker, you know, there are people who had argued that what we are doing here goes on record in the Parliament and on the *Hansard* for the future. He wanted to put this for the future, the hon. Member for Diego Martin West. They are saying that this is going on record. This is going on *Hansard*, but his intention was to make sure that this got on record for the future, that down the road people can look back and read and, if it is not cleared up, will always have this dark shadow on the Government and on the Prime Minister that there was time in the history of Trinidad and Tobago that a government, a Prime Minister, an Attorney General and other Members had plotted to do things which he said is a criminal conspiracy. This is dangerous. This is dangerous and that is why I am doing what I said because this was something that was carefully put together—carefully put together.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member clearly said that there were email addresses that was known to him. In a couple of instances he said:

“I do not know some of them...”

Then there are other instances he said:

“...there seems to be some kind of problem here and there...”

—with some of them. But he chose what he wanted in order to make his case and in order to say to this nation that this Government conspired.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to see this. It is important to take note of this. It is important to understand that from day one this Government, the first time there has been the kind of coalition Government in Trinidad and Tobago, has been under attack. From day one, from day one we were not supposed to have made it. From day one, it was supposed to be a six-month period. From day one we were not going to last. From day one they began to now attack every asset and every facet of this coalition to make sure that it falls. And it did not fall. We are still here, Mr. Speaker. Here comes, on this 24<sup>th</sup> hour, another conspiracy to now attempt to stigmatize the Government and to not want to clear it up.

Mr. Speaker, I really had come here today to hear the defence. I came here to hear what they would say. I came here to understand what was in the mind of the Leader of the Opposition. I wanted to understand what he will say about the reports that came out of Google. What he will say? Will he say, well look, I was

mistaken. I did not get it right. I thought I had it right—which would be the right thing to do. That is the right thing to do. Nothing is wrong with that. As a matter of fact, I believe I would respect you more if you do that because that is the right thing to do. It is easy. It is the right thing to own up when you have gone wrong because to err is human. To err is human.

Mr. Speaker, in the midst of it, I mean, when I read the *Hansard*, and I am reading the reading out of the many emails that are listed in the *Hansard*, I recognize that the Leader of the Opposition in his presentation was not saying in his presentation that whoever wrote under the email address Anan, I “doh” know who it is, said so, so, so. Whoever wrote under the email address kamlapbr whatever, that is what it is. You interpret it. He was actually saying, is Kamla, is the Attorney General. Understand, if I am not clear that these email addresses were correct, and if I am now trying to get information, then I would have approached it and said, you know, according to the email that it comes from Anan at so and so, it says so and so, and whoever this is, this is dangerous. According to the email @Kamla so, so, so it says so, so, so. But what the leader was doing, the leader was stating that the email belonged to people. He was saying it was Kamla. He was saying it was Anan. He was saying it was Suruj. So, he himself was actually saying, “all yuh” write that.

Then he alluded to the fact that there was the same issue of some reporter read or some conspiracy, he alluded that the conversation going between these emails of unknown origin, there are no names mentioned in it really, that this is alluded to some conspiracy. You know, Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of when I was a young guy—that is not too long ago—I went to watch a documentary from what they called Michel de Nostradamus. And Michel de Nostradamus was a guy who they said he saw tomorrow. What they did, they took Nostradamus’ writings and then trying to find things in history that appears to kind of link up and match what he said and then they said, Nostradamus predicted that. So there were things about Kennedy and Napoleon and all these things are based on how his quatrains were written, that he wrote that. He was predicting Napoleon and predicting this one and predicting that one and predicting that one. As a matter of fact, he reached the point where he predicted that the world would probably end in 2010. Because he said, you know, that all kinds of things would start to happen, and the bear and the eagle will fight and all kind of—and they were thinking that there was going to be this massive world war and Russia would unite with others and fight and all kinds of stuff.

Mr. Speaker, I see Nostradamus in the leader because he has read some things in emails and then tried to find things that probably happened in his mind and tried to say, well look the emails here talked about that, and there is some conspiracy, something to mess up people, something to destroy people. Some



conspiracy to take the life of some individual. It is dangerous. It is very, very dangerous. It is a detrimental kind of situation. Mr. Speaker, we talk about the law enforcement officers. We talk about the ability to do investigations in Trinidad, and I still want to congratulate, in every instance, all of the departments of law that do investigations and do research and do criminal research. I personally want to congratulate them.

Mr. Speaker, in the Leader of the Opposition's approach to his discourse he started to compare what he alluded was taking place where the whole Watergate scandal—he talked about Nixon and he encouraged us to go and read the story. You know what I did? I went back and started to look at the whole Watergate thing. I recognized that the two do not match. Then he said something that blew my mind. He said:

“Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all of those who would pay attention, go back and look at the Watergate situation, look at how the President reacted, look at how his advisors reacted, look at how the machinery of State—at the one point...the machinery of President Nixon sought to use the CIA against the FBI in an attempt to prove...the White House was not involved in the Watergate matter.”

Then he went on to say:

“Fortunately...”

So if you say fortunately, then you have to talk about what is unfortunate. It means you are on a premise of something that is not right and fortunately something else is. Listen to this, Mr. Speaker:

“Fortunately for the American people...”

—so it is not fortunate for us.

“...they have institutions that were able to persevere, to investigate, to pursue and to hold people accountable.”

In other words, immediately we are not fortunate to have institutions that would persevere, investigate, to pursue and to hold people accountable. Immediately you are casting aspersions upon law enforcement.

Mr. Speaker:

“For us here in Trinidad and Tobago...”

—not my words.

“For us here in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Speaker, our record is a sorry record.”

In other words, America could have done—they could have persevered, they could have investigated, they could have pursued to hold people accountable, but in Trinidad we have a sorry record.

“Even where we have institutions, they are either compromised or ineffective...”

The leader is accusing the system of investigators as being ineffective. And if that is the case, then why do we go to them? Why do we go?

**7.05 p.m.**

So, we are in no position—Mr. Speaker, are you hearing this? This is from a person, an individual who aspires to be the leader of a country. Okay? This is from an individual who aspires to be the Prime Minister of this country, and this individual who is the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Diego Martin West, is saying that:

Everywhere—“we have institutions, they are either compromised or ineffective, so we are in no position to pursue with dispatch in the way the Americans pursued it with Watergate.”

So we are in a bad situation.

In other words, this country is not equipped with people to do the job. This is discouraging, because I know there are people equipped to do the job. And I know we have had good, good investigators, and I know the police do their best, and I know the investigators do their best, and they have been successful in many instances. They have been successful and they continue to be successful, because they continue to pursue.

If that is the case, if what he is saying about our investigators and the institutions is right, we are in trouble, but I know we are not in trouble. I know that we have good investigators and law enforcement officers who do a remarkable job. I know that. I had tremendous experience with them, and they are good at what they do, and many of them can sometimes match foreign people, and we know that. But we cannot cast aspersions and say that our institutions are ineffective. We cannot cast aspersions and say that our institutions are compromised. Then what are you saying to the citizens of this nation. You are actually harbouring the thought that we cannot go and trust the police. You are harbouring the thought and you are declaring in the Parliament to the nation who is watching on television that if there are serious issues in this land, that the police cannot do the job. You cannot do that. You cannot. You cannot do that, and it is important for us to know that.

But, something blew my mind, when part of the Member's discourse when he says "these emails, I interpreted". In other words, it is my interpretation—this. And you know how interpretations go in life? The only thing I am concerned about, he says, "listen, I have no problem in circulating because, as I said, when I received them I was able to interpret them and corroborate them with the developments in the country"—Nostradamus. Nostradamus, the man who saw tomorrow—"so that is why I brought the Motion to the House".

Mr. Speaker, this should not be just put under the carpet, because I expect that if somebody lays a serious, or any kind of accusation against any Member of this House, and then it is proven not to be true—okay, let me go the other way first, if it is proven to be true I expect something to happen; but if it is proven not to be true I also expect something to happen. I expect there to be a balance. I expect that this House will have a balance that the same way if the accusations are true you expect a certain response from me, than if the accusations are false, I expect a certain response from you. I expect you to take a certain position. I expect you to do the right thing, because if it is true you expect me to do the right thing, one cap has to fit all. It cannot be good in one instance and not good in the other instance.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it has to be that this House, if a person says something and it is not true, just like how Members would have come back in the House and say, look, I want to correct the *Hansard*, I said so and so last week and I want to explain it, and we accept that, and we expect that kind of manliness, and I can say womanliness, to come and stand up and say, "Look, I made a mistake, I really did not do what I should have done. I did not follow the procedure", whatever it was.

Mr. Speaker, I sat here and I listened to the Member for Diego Martin North/East, and at no point in time did I hear somebody attempting to defend the entire accusation, the entire presentation, the entire issue, the entire situation that took place on May 20, 2013. To try to defend and say, "but, what he say was right". I heard a person who was saying to me as a sat here, and I am no lawyer, "all yuh cyar punish him hard, all yuh have to punish him soft. Yuh cyar move him, you have to give him a seven days or a three days". Nowhere did I hear in the discourse, what this guy said is 100 per cent correct. And the hon. Chief Secretary was right, you know. He said to the *Newsday* March 23, 2013 that:

"I think countries around the world"—I want you to listen to this, this is not an internal thing.

"I think countries around the world would view us based on how we deal with this situation. The crisis is already with us and the world is watching. We are going to be judged on how we treat with this situation," London said."

And we are attempting to treat with it today because the reports have come in, the reports from Google, the reports from the courts, they are back in, so we are attempting to treat with it today, but we are being told that we should not. The Chief Secretary is 100 per cent correct. How we deal with this, countries will assess us based on how we deal with this. It is very, very important for us to see this. Mr. Speaker, and I am not going to talk about—

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, your time has expired, would you like an extension?

**Hon. R. Samuel:** Thank you, Chair.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for Arima be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. R. Samuel:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues. Mr. Speaker, just to quote one more thing from that same news clipping, an interview with the hon. Chief Secretary. He said:

“...as things stand at present, he”—himself—“could not make a judgement call as to whether Rowley’s information is valid or is indeed a fabrication as...being claimed by Government MPs. This could only be recognised when we know what the truth is...”

This could only be recognized when we know what the truth is—and we attempted to lay the reports today, and what they did? They walked out. So, they are actually saying to this Parliament, we are not interested in hearing the report. But, we sat here for hours and heard his report, the Leader of the Opposition. We heard his report. We heard him expatiate. As a matter of fact, two days after that the leader was in San Juan and he was even lambasting me on a platform, stating that, you know, Samuel start to cry and thing because he used a certain word in the Parliament. That is all right. That is okay. And then Mr. London declared:

““This is earth-shattering and must be resolved. This is the big one! This is a game-decider and at the end of the exercise there would only be one man or one woman left standing.””

I know at the end of this exercise there will be one woman left standing. I know that. [*Desk thumping*] I know that because they have got to get to the bottom of this, and we have got to ensure that the truth comes out, because it is only the truth will set us free, and it is important for us to see that.

So, Mr. Speaker, why is it easy for the Government to be accused, but it is not right for the Government to defend itself? Why is it easy for us to sit back and take it, and when we stand up to present our defence, it is wrong. Move on. Leave it alone. Mr. Speaker, I played sport and nobody sits back and defend, defend. You have to attack. If you sit back—they say the most positive defence is a positive offence, and you have to attack. That is sport, you have to attack. The best defence is a positive offence. You have to attack. The Member for Chaguanas West will know as a big sportsman and a leader, he would know that no team sits back and defends for 90 minutes, you have to attack or else you would find yourself in trouble. He knows that. That is true.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to see that the Government—because, before everybody felt that we should just take it. We are stigmatized. We are categorized as a bunch of crooks. All over everything that is being said is against us, and we must sit back here and just take it, and then all of a sudden, the Parliament must now become neutral on emailgate.

Mr. Speaker, you saw the kind of headlines around that week. Headline, “SCANDAL”. Headline, *Newsday*, “SCANDAL”. Then you hear:

“SCANDAL broke out in the House of Representatives...”. Scandal, you know, Mr. Speaker.

“...yesterday as Opposition Leader...Keith Rowley piloted his motion of no confidence against the Government...”

—scandal! And for two years we had to sit down with this scandal over our heads awaiting the final outcome. Two years.

Mr. Speaker, “‘Emailgate’ dividing Trinidad and Tobago”, headline. Big headline. I mean, Trinidad and Tobago’s scandal all over, and one headline says, “...could Keith Rowley’s emailgate boomerang?” Headlines. I believe we need to clear this up. I believe that when the Leader of the Opposition clearly said that this nation cannot go forward until we deal with this, we will deal with this. And he declared that in his discourse, that we cannot go forward unless this is dealt with. This is what he said, and it is important for us to know that. So, he accused the Government. He said:

“But, this matter, Mr. Speaker, with all that it portends...requires urgent attention, because it may very well be that the mandate that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago received on May 24, with a proper examination and corroboration of these emails, would show that the Government sold its mandate for financial gain...”

That is a dread accusation.

“...and is in the employ of persons who use the Government mandate to protect themselves...”

Mr. Speaker, accusation upon accusation, and now, I mean in any court, if you are talking about justice, there must be a time when the defence can speak, when the accused can speak. There must be a time when the court has to say, well, now we will hear the accused. We want to hear the person to defend. Well, we have been accused and now we are defending ourselves, and we have to defend ourselves. It is important for us to do that; very much important for us to do that.

So, this has to be cleared. This has to be dealt with, and it has to be dealt with now. We must not go too long, we must not let it go too long again. We have got to put all those reports—all those reports must be published because all of their stuff was published, and if we do not do that now, we will be forever stigmatized, and history will continue to state, if it is not corrected, that this Government was involved in a criminal conspiracy.

**7.20 p.m.**

And, Mr. Speaker, my name, I will not allow my name to be written in this House accused of being part of a criminal conspiracy. That is what I was accused of. That is what has been part of this stuff. And now all of the records are being made clear. Google had said their stuff, the court had said their stuff, everybody is saying their stuff and now we must leave it alone. Leave it alone, you know, kind of pacify it, calm it down, because you are getting licks for two years now, but now that you realise that, you know, I was wrong, calm down, “nah”, I mean, calm down. If it was somebody in a home and they are getting licks for two years and they come and decide “ah going and stand up for mehself now”, you will never tell them, calm down, do not worry about that, two years passed.

No, Mr. Speaker, we have to deal with this now. We got to clear the air and I want to, I personally want to make sure that the air is clear with truth. Truth must set us free. The truth about emailgate must set us free. The truth is that what information has come out of Google is that the emails never—*[Interruption]*

**Dr. Douglas:** They never existed. Concocted in the mind—

**Hon. R. Samuel:** Mr. Speaker, I just one to say one last thing. I heard it being said, it is not necessarily the emails, but the content.

**Hon. Member:** “What next coming, boy?”

**Hon. R. Samuel:** It is not really—so if the emails are fraudulent it says that the content is fraudulent. Because you cannot say it is not about the cake, it is the content of the cake. “If it have no cake,” there is no content. [*Desk thumping*] If there is no cake there is no content. So I am just using analogies. If there is no cake there is no content. If the emails are fraud then the content follows the substance of the nothing. And I am saying that honestly, and we need as a Government to stand up. We need as a Government to stand right. We need as a Government to stand truthful. We need as a Government to let the truth speak for itself and to ensure that this stuff that has stigmatized this Government for two years is struck off the records. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Sharma:** Well said, well said. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. R. Samuel:** This cannot go down as for what it was intended, for the future that somebody down the road, if we do not put it right today, if we do not write and state, every one of those documents that came back from Google, this is what Google said, and let it be said, and lay those documents. If that is not down, the future will continue to look back and they would see us through the eyes of the Leader of the Opposition, and I do not want to be seen through those eyes. I do not, because those eyes, as the song said, “these eyes”—

**Dr. Douglas:** Evil eyes.

**Hon. R. Samuel:** These eyes do not see, they do not see.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** They see good in nothing.

**Hon. R. Samuel:** Mr. Speaker, I beg of you, I beg of this House, let us let the truth of the reports come to light. Let the nation know what Google said, what everything said and let them know that what was purported by the Member for Diego Martin West, after him clearly considering it, after meditating on it for months, after selecting emails and corroborating them, after clearly laying them, he was wrong. And today, and up to now I have not heard anybody say on that side he was wrong and he should have apologize to this House. At least apologize to the House and say look, I got this thing, I was misled.

Mr. Speaker, I have a difficulty, because if I get up one day and I see something in my mailbox and I kind of glimpse and I say, “grrr”, I am scared.

**Hon. Member:** Being set up.

**Hon. R. Samuel:** That could be a set up. That could be a real set up. I do not just take everything out of my mailbox. As a matter of fact, even from an email

standpoint I do not open every email. I will never open every email. One, some of them could be infected. I do not. And people could hack your email by just clicking on one thing—and I will teach the hon. Member for Chaguanas West how to have different levels of protection, okay. It is not just one protection, so you do not have to change your email over and over, your password.

**Mr. Warner:** I will come to your church.

**Hon. R. Samuel:** Sure. You are welcome.

**Dr. Ramadharsingh:** He needs to be saved.

**Mr. Speaker:** You have one more minute.

**Hon. R. Samuel:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I want the record put right that whatever we were accused of there needs to be an apology in this House, because it was not just accusations about this side of the House, it is the entire nation now seeing us, sceptically and looking at us funny and saying those people conspired to commit a criminal offence. Mr. Speaker, I beg of you, thank you.

**The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh):** Mr. Speaker, I will make a short contribution on this. First of all to say that this is such an important Motion brought by the Leader of Government Business in the House, and it must not be taken lightly at all, because it reflects the propensity of the People's National Movement as a whole and all the people that are in Parliament today.

You heard of the history from the Member of St. Augustine of what they had been doing over the number of years with diabolical plots and all sorts of mischievous types of misconduct to go at their political opponents and to bring their political opponents down to their knees. And here it is in glaring view of the national public that two years ago when the Member for Diego Martin West made the statements about the emails, for two years now this country has been asking questions whether these emails were true, and if it were true what has happened. And the people began to believe that the emails were true, and so it became fixed in their minds that this Government is a dirty Government, accused the hon. Prime Minister of murder.

Do you know what it means to accuse someone of conspiring to murder someone? You could imagine what would have been going through the heart of the Prime Minister when she knew that this was not true and how could someone stand in the Parliament today, at that time and say this about our Prime Minister.

**Hon. Member:** As fact.



**Hon. Dr. T. Dopeesingh:** And as a fact, and as the Member for Arima said, he had six months in which he thought about it and he thought about it and thought about it and then came out plotting during that time as how to deal with it. And he then, probably, found a way to come out and then say, knowing fully well that this was not true and it was mischievous on his part and deliberate dirtiness on his part to bring this to the House.

You know what, Mr. Speaker, could you imagine what happened around the world subsequent to the statement made by the Member for Diego Martin West. I have just some of the little clippings of some of the statements made, and it is about 14, 15 different newspapers and articles around the world, in Baltimore and in Jamaica and in the social media commenting on this issue as though something bad was happening with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and all these Ministers and the Prime Minister were plotting to do dangerous things. And in our own newspaper, the *Express*, four pages in the *Express* writing about this. On May 20 this is the article by Ria Taitt, I do not know how it is set:

“...Dr. Keith Rowley yesterday presented a series of damning e-mails to the Parliament which, he said, implicated the Prime Minister, the Attorney General and Local Government Minister in ‘high crime’”, ‘misbehaviour of public office’” and a massive cover up.”

And she began to describe the cover-up involved a major conspiracy against the Director of Public Prosecution, “the plot to harm and discredit” the reporter. I would not call the name. “The payment of moneys in exchange for freedom by an unnamed person.” And the article goes on.

Four pages, just one newspaper and the other two newspapers I do not have it with me. You could imagine what the world began to think about what is happening to this Government. And so, it is not only Trinidad and Tobago, it went on the social media, it went international.

So here it is, internationally, the dirtiness of the Member for Diego Martin West, his statements, and the plot went around the world, and for two years we have had to live with it and live with people believing that we in fact did these things. But what is important, Mr. Speaker, the Motion said that:

“*Be it...resolved* that Dr. Keith Rowley, Member for Diego Martin West and Leader of the Opposition be suspended from the service of the House for the remainder of the session.”

Mr. Speaker, I want to go further and say that the Member for Diego Martin West should resign his seat, [*Desk thumping*] and not only be suspended from the House, he should resign as Leader of the Opposition and resign his seat from the House. This is no easy assertion for one to know that something is wrong and go on to make that mischievous statement.

So, Mr. Speaker, and then comes the “spin doctor”, then comes the “spin doctor”, Member for Diego Martin North/East. The “spin doctor”, Member for Diego Martin North/East does not have anything to say to defend his leader. He could not defend him and he tried, they are depending on him alone to make a response because the Member for Diego Martin West could not get up and make a response for himself.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** He had none. He had no defence.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** He had none. Yeah. You know what he got up and started to say, he started to talk about the suspension. And he misrepresented and misled the House on section 55 of the Standing Orders. I do not want, we cannot leave this undone without responding to it. He tried to mislead the House and he spoke about Standing Order 55. And Standing Order 55 only relates to the conduct of somebody using:

“...abusive, insulting or offensive...language or...irrelevant or tedious repetition...”

Where the Speaker can determine the conduct of somebody while they are misbehaving in the House here and can suspend the person for a period of time.

So he deliberately tried to mislead the House by quoting section 55 to make it appear that the Motion here is frivolous and the Motion is of no substance. But, Mr. Speaker, section 55 does not deal with the Motion that we are dealing with here. It is the House that can make the censure. And one of my colleagues quoted from the *May's Parliamentary Practice* and a particular section which gives the House the authority to move the Motion of Censure.

So the statement made by the Member for Diego Martin North/East is of no substance. But he knew, Mr. Speaker, that suspension is important, but he tried to differentiate between a seven-day suspension, a 30-day suspension and a suspension full-time. He knew suspension was required, but he tried to see whether it was seven days or 30 days or whether it was all together, a suspension permanent from the House. So he knew, he admitted there was the issue of suspension that has to come. So he was not questioning whether the Member for Diego Martin North/East in fact alluded to the fact that the Member for Diego

Martin West had committed something wrong in the House by making these reckless statements and so on.

**7.35 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, the question that I wanted to bring about—the issues that I want to bring about—is that all over the world, for two years, people began to feel that we, in fact, did it, and we were left there to wait and wait because the due process was taking place. He had six months for the due process for himself, and we had to wait, and wait, and then all of a sudden our colleagues knew that they had not sent those types of emails; they knew fully well, but they had to exonerate themselves. But they took the due process. The hon. Prime Minister said—as soon as these statements were made in the House I remember the Prime Minister going and reporting the matter to the police immediately, and then to the Integrity Commission as well. The Member for Diego Martin West never did that. Why did he not report it to the police? Because he knew that there was nothing of substance to be investigated by the police, because he knew it was plotting on their part.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** “Dey woulda run him.”

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** Yes. And why did he not go to the Integrity Commission then? I heard the Member for Chaguanas West speaking about the Integrity Commission was not working—functioning—at that time. But he had six months, and then he had time after that. He did not go to the Integrity Commission then. He did not go to them formally at all. He met the Chairman of the Integrity Commission at night, going home by him, over drinks and then the former Chairman—he was Chairman then—brought some script and took down some information and took it to the Integrity Commission and said, “This is what has to be reported to the Integrity Commission.”

You cannot do that. If you have something substantial, you go directly to the Integrity Commission. These matters have to be done in the presence of the registrar of the Integrity Commission. Was the registrar of the Integrity Commission there that night when the Member for Diego Martin West was meeting with the Chairman of the Integrity Commission over some drinks? So he did not want to go to the police; he did not want to go to the Integrity Commission because he knew all along it was fake, it was false, it was mischievous, it was dirty in intent to make the world feel negative of our Prime Minister and the Ministers of Government and the Government. And they have a long history of it—repeated history, as was mentioned by the Member for St. Augustine—time and time again.

Mr. Speaker, I want to warn this nation tonight that do not be surprised that they will come with many more things over the next few weeks before election. So be forewarned that it is the intention of the Opposition to come and tarnish the reputation of each and every one of the Members of Government, including our Prime Minister and the Government as a whole because they have done it once, they have done it twice, they have done it three times, four times, five times. It is a history. It is repetitive and it is a modus operandi. So we must expect a barrage and an onslaught of mischief, misinformation, deliberate in intent, to damage the reputation and Members of this Government.

**Mr. McLeod:** It is in their character.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** Yes. It is in their character, it is in their DNA and we will fight that with the truth at all times.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the world now will be relieved to know the findings that we received from Google after they sent the information through the legal department, the Department of Justice in the United States. The former Attorney General had sought that the Prime Minister and himself be third party interest in that matter, and therefore the information was sent to the Integrity Commission. It is legal and the information was sent to the Members I indicated earlier on. So, therefore, the information that we have received was proper information, solid information and delivered in the proper course of justice, in the American courts. So we are not making up anything. This information we received is factual and the Motion came only after that, waiting for two years for all the information to come to Trinidad and Tobago and for us to understand the truth. We knew the truth all the time, but we waited as a patient Government, not rushing anything, allowing democracy to flourish, allowing transparency and probity in the name of justice to move on. We waited and here are the results today.

Therefore, I want to commend the Leader of the House because, Mr. Speaker, you heard—I myself passed through their dirtiness, and you heard the Member for St. Augustine speak about it. And after the Chief Magistrate in the Magistrates' Court said, "What are you having Dr. Gopeesingh in this court for? These are not charges known to law." And Mr. Martineau, who was my attorney and who is a civil attorney—a lead attorney—tears began to run from his eyes because he said to the court, "Why you have someone like Dr. Gopeesingh standing in the court, your Lordship?" The Lordship said, "Mr. Martineau, I wondered when you were going to bring this to the attention of the court." He said, "These are charges not known to law."

And you know, the wickedness of the PNM? The Prime Minister—Jack you have to wait, “your turn coming”.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please. Member for Chaguanas West, not Jack. Please.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** Member for Chaguanas West. Mr. Speaker, you know the wickedness of the PNM? The then Prime Minister said I got off on a technical thing. You know, he appealed it in the High Court and Justice Myers was the Judge, and after two days of hearing, he said, “I wonder why I allowed this injunction to come into the court.” And the same thing he came up with: “These are charges not known to law.”

**Mr. De Coteau:** “It cost yuh real money tuh clear yuh name.”

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** So my reputation was on line for two years. The Prime Minister’s reputation was on line for two years. My colleagues’ reputation was on line for two years.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** The whole Government.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** The whole Government exposed to the world.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** Moody and everybody.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** Yes, exposed to the world.

Mr. Speaker, I feel emotional about it. This is why I got up to speak about it because this is the wickedness of the PNM and this is the wickedness of the Opposition now, wanting to get at anyone standing in their way, and they want power. The Member for Tabaquite spoke about the lust for power, and they want power and they will do anything to get power. But the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago must be warned that this is a dangerous Opposition.

So, Mr. Speaker, in support of the Motion raised by the Leader of the House, I ask also—because his colleague from the Tobago House of Assembly—most people have mentioned it and I just want to quote it again, what Orville London said. Look at this here.

“Trinidad and Tobago scandal: Could Keith Rowley’s emailgate boomerang?”

This came from:

“Umesh...Varma, an associate technology professor at Campbell University in North Carolina told the *Baltimore Post-Examiner*...”

He said:

“Based on the content of the exchanges, criminal allegations were levelled against the parties by the opposition leader. Most damning among the allegations was the intention to cause grievous bodily harm to *Guardian* journalist...to bribe the Director of Public Prosecutions Roger Gaspard into accepting a position of judge, and to seek the cooperation of chief justice Ivor Archie in hatching this plan.

The big debate in the media about the purported emails is that they [*sic*] should be a forensic investigation conducted by international investigators, to which both the opposition and the government have agreed.”

These investigations have been done, Mr. Speaker, and they have been concluded. And across the world—one person wrote:

“The Great Deception – Email Gate.

Also:

“...if the emails are fake...All that will happen most likely is Dr. Rowley will have to demit office and possibly face charges or multiple charges.”

He is lucky that we are bringing a Motion of censure to censure him and just suspend him from the House. But his own colleague from Tobago, Mr. Orville London, the Chief Secretary, indicated that he should resign if his allegations prove to be false.

So, Mr. Speaker, I endorse my colleague’s Motion. I support it fully and, therefore, I also go on to say that the country should demand his resignation as Leader of the Opposition. Do not make it appear as though we are trying to get at Rowley every day. Their duty is to stay here and defend, as has been said in—and I “doh” want to bring this in. He brought another Motion against another of our colleagues without any—I mean, unsubstantiated—

**Mr. De Coteau:** Unsigned letter.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:**—saying that somebody from Barbados—unsigned letter.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** How much more basket he will take.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** So he did it once, he did it twice. How often would he do it? So this population must not feel that we are trying to get at the Member for Diego Martin West and trying to get support from the national community.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** We are fixing the system.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** This is a means of ensuring that democracy flourishes; that they must not use Parliament for adverse issues, and restoring democracy to Parliament. Therefore, I call for his resignation as Leader of the Opposition, in addition to the censure that the Member for Oropouche East has moved as Leader of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make these points and thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Before you speak, hon. Prime Minister, there is a procedural Motion that I would like the hon. Leader of the House—

**PROCEDURAL MOTION**

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House continue to sit until the completion of the Motion before us.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**MEMBER FOR DIEGO MARTIN WEST  
(CENSURE OF AND SUSPENSION FROM THE HOUSE)**

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

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had intended to really speak much earlier in this debate in order to give a response to any defence, any justification, that might have been given by Members on the other side and, of course, the Member whose conduct is today being questioned in this Parliament. That not having happened, I will respond very quickly to the comments by the Member for Diego Martin North/East because the Member for Diego Martin North/East did not, in any way defend, justify or clarify anything said with respect to these fake, fabricated emails. Instead, he attempted to create doubt in the minds of people by saying that the bringing of this Motion and the hearing of this Motion—the debate—was an abuse of process.

Hon. Speaker, I think it is very important that we clarify that. I think other Members have spoken on it a bit but it is very important that we clarify that. You see, I felt it important that I do it because I had indicated I gave instructions to the Leader of the House, the Member for Oropouche East, to bring this Motion and I would not have done so recklessly. I would not have asked for this to be brought to this House. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin North/East was, in fact, questioning your own jurisdiction and ruling because you allowed

this Motion to the filed in the House and—yes, to be filed here and to be heard in this House. So I felt it incumbent upon my good self to deal with this issue of abuse of process.

Let us start with the Constitution first of all. I am saying, before I instructed the Leader of the House to file this Motion, I would have done my research. I did my research. We would not have recklessly gone without it. And I heard Minister Rodger Samuel, the Member for Arima, speaking about, you do not open every email and you check things that you get in your box and so on. That is very important. So before instructing the Leader of the House, I did the research. Let us start with the Constitution. Section 55 of our Constitution tells us:

“Subject to the provisions of this Constitution and to the rules and Standing Orders regulating the procedure of the Senate and House of Representatives, there shall be freedom of speech in the Senate and the House of Representatives.”

Further, Mr. Speaker, the Constitution provides that this House would regulate its own procedure. This House regulates its own procedure. That is provided here. So, yes, we have freedom of speech, but that freedom of speech is regulated by the House. It cannot be that any Member could stand up here and speak anything, say anything, without checks and balances.

**7.50 p.m.**

In fact, that is how our Constitution is framed. Our Constitution in the Bill of Rights sets out very clearly what is a balancing of rights. Yes, it gives you freedom of speech, but it does not mean at 1.00 a.m. in the morning you could stand up outside somebody’s house shouting and screaming and making noise and having what you call your freedom of speech. It gives you freedom of movement, but it does not mean that you can move anywhere you like, in any numbers where you like. You have regulations to ensure that two of us do not bump each other, that two of us do not drive on the same side of the road. Yes, you have freedom of movement. You have all these, but all these freedoms, Mr. Speaker, are subject to being regulated, and this honourable House, through its Standing Orders, has provided for such regulation.

So we turn first to Standing Order 55(16). The Member for Diego Martin North/East made heavy weather of all kinds of things in Standing Order 55, and really did not go forward to deal with Standing Order 55(16). It says:

“Nothing in this Standing Order shall be taken to deprive the House of the power of proceeding against any Member according to any resolution of the House.”



So it is very, very, very clear.

“Nothing in this Standing Order shall be taken to deprive the House of the power of proceeding against any Member according to any resolution of the House.”

And today—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Ramadhar:** 55(16).

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** 55(16). Standing Order 55(16) is very clear.

So whilst the Standing Order gives provisions, as the Member pointed out, that same Standing Order 55 talks about order in the House and in committee, and it deals with specific instances where a Member is named for some kind of action in the House, in a sitting, or within the precincts and so on, that you could have suspensions for a first time seven days, a second time 30 days, subsequent occasions and so on for a period to last until the House orders that the Member’s suspension shall terminate, et cetera. But when we go to (16), it says:

“Nothing”—in here—“shall be taken to deprive the House of the power of proceeding against any Member according to any resolution of the House.”

So what it is we are doing here today is in fact asking the House to approve a resolution; that is, for the House to resolve that the Member for Diego Martin West be censured and that the Member for Diego Martin West be suspended from the service of the House for the remainder of this session. So we are well within Standing Order 55(16). [*Desk thumping*]

We go further. Standing Order 2(2) reads as follows, and this part of the Standing Order, the heading is “Interpretation and Application of Standing Orders”. Standing Order 2(2) says:

“In any matter not provided for in these Standing Orders, resort shall be had to the usage and practice of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom which shall be followed as far as they may be applicable to this House, and not inconsistent with these Standing Orders or with the practice of this House.”

So this is the interpretation. So where it is our Standing Orders may be silent on a matter, then we go to the settled practice out of the United Kingdom. The settled practice out of the United Kingdom tells us as follows—Chapter 9 of May’s *Parliamentary Practice*, 23rd Edition, tells us that the House can always exercise its penal jurisdiction as it is necessary. So here we have a clear Standing Order expressly saying nothing shall deprive this House of pursuing according to any resolution.

We have come further, hon. Speaker, with a Motion, and in the Standing Order providing for Motions we are told very clearly, “Issues for Debate”, which is Standing Order 34, it tells us:

- “(1) Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and these Standing Orders, any Member may introduce any Bill or propose any motion for debate in the House and the same shall be disposed of in accordance with these Standing Orders.”

So we can propose any Motion for debate in this House.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the matters that the Member for Diego Martin North/East tried to use to distract us from what he failed to speak about, which are the emails and the fake emails, the fabricated emails, not one word, not a single word was said and not a moment was spent on the fake emails. Not one word. And here we have a Motion, spends his time on really distorting the Standing Orders, distracting from the real issue, and the real issue here today: was the Member for Diego Martin West correct when he took responsibility?—remember on the *Hansard* record it is there. When he spoke he took responsibility, he took ownership.

Your good self, Mr. Speaker, you drew it to his attention and he said, yes, I understand your admonishment—if I am not mistaken those were his words—and he proceeded. So he took full responsibility, and that is what is the crux of the matter. That is the Motion we are here to look at, to examine. The Member for Oropouche East brought evidence such as was available, but not a word from the other side except the distraction, the red flag, the red herring that was drawn by the Member for Diego Martin North/East.

So let us be very clear that we are within the process of this House. We are here legally if you may say so, rightfully so, and especially when the matters referred to by the Member for Diego Martin West when he made his contribution on May 20, 2013, the matters referred to, these fake emails, what was said in this House I think not just rocked us sitting here, but rocked the many across the length and breadth of this country and outside. They were the most nefarious allegations that could have been made. But they were not merely allegations because the Member for Diego Martin West had said that they were authentic, that he believed these. We read some articles where he not only took responsibility, but the maker of it, or the person who gave it to him, that they were true.

So when he brought it, he came with that conviction that what he was reading in here was that I would conspire with others in my Government—with the

former Attorney General, Minister of Works and Transport, then National Security advisor former Minister Gary Griffith and Minister Moonilal—that we would all be conspiring to harm a journalist, we would be conspiring to bug the Office of the DPP. Can you remember it was this Government, my Government, when I came to Parliament and piloted the Bill which is now the Act, the Interception of Communications? [*Desk thumping*] That is what we did. The evidence that we found when we came into office was that they were busily engaged in tapping people's phones.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** The President of the Republic.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** The President of the Republic—tapping the phones of judges, of trade unionists. They were the ones, and you see when they speak—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** Private citizens.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:**—and private citizens. I was on that list too. Errol McLeod was on that list—sorry, Mr. McLeod. Many of us from on this side of the House—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** Some did not make it.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Some did not make the list, yes; did not make the grade. Some of you did not make the grade to be on that list. But so many persons, you know. I had brought that evidence and I had read out the list here, and we passed a law to prevent it. But you see, they know what they do. They know what they do, and therefore, they believed that everyone is capable of doing the same wrong things that they do. But not everyone does that, Mr. Speaker, and certainly those of us on this side have never, will never ever, attempt to tap anybody's phone, far less that of the DPP. Nobody on this side, and should I find that, that person will be gone from this Cabinet and this Government. [*Desk thumping*]

So there we are, these very serious allegations. You know, my colleague, the Member for St. Augustine, just said that people would plead guilty and perhaps ask for a reprimand, or may apologize and plead guilty, when they plead guilty, but the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East did not plead guilty, he fled. He fled guilty. [*Desk thumping*] He fled out of this Parliament. Let me remind you what others have done. For 27 hours I stayed in this Parliament along with Members here. Twenty-seven hours when a no confidence Motion was brought. You think it was easy sitting listening to things that were being said?—but we stayed and we gave our explanations, we gave our defence to those no confidence

Motions. May I remind the hon. Member for Chaguanas West that the very first no confidence Motion that came here was from the Member for Diego Martin West, and if you recall this was in April 2013, where the Member for Diego Martin West brought this Motion, “Prime Minister’s Failure to Act”, and this was the Motion standing in the Member for Diego Martin West—in his name:

*“Whereas* the private activities of the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West and former Minister of National Security have been the subject of widespread and adverse commentary, censure and inferences, both locally and internationally which were in conflict with his position as a Minister of Government; and

*Whereas* the actions and conduct of the former Minister of National Security...subject of widespread adverse commentary, censure and inferences...locally, internationally; and”—so on.

*“Whereas* the former Minister of National Security and his business partners have been linked to, or associated with, a number of alleged investigations into alleged misconduct and/or alleged criminal offences, both locally and internationally, which have attracted widespread adverse commentary, censure and inferences, both locally and internationally; and

*Whereas* in the face of the overwhelming evidence of his unsuitability as a Minister of Government, the Prime Minister did not act expeditiously with respect to the former Minister of National Security;

*Be it resolved* that this...House express...disapproval of the failure of the Prime Minister to act expeditiously to take appropriate action to protect the image and interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago which have constantly been damaged by the actions and business of the Member for Chaguanas West and former Minister of National Security.”

Hon. Member for Chaguanas West, through you, hon. Speaker, this was one of those no confidence Motions that was brought. We stayed through the Parliament, we dealt with it. It was not the first, it was not the last, and only as recently as last week, or perhaps the previous week on Private Members’ Day, a Motion brought against Sen. Larry Howai. Motions are being brought against Ministers of our Government from time to time, what did we do? We stood here, or we sat here as the case may be, we were in the Parliament, we listened—  
[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** We stayed.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, we stayed—we listened and we responded. We gave the explanations, we gave the justifications, we gave the clarifications. But those on the other side have no respect for this Parliament, have no respect for people of this country, that when it is that they have to answer, they flee, they run, they run out of the Parliament. No respect for the workings of the Parliament, and to justify that, to justify why they would not say here, they come with this nonsensical argument of abuse of process.

Mr. Speaker, what we are reading and seeing when we studied these emails as we have done—we have done that repeatedly, in fact, in order to be able to see what this was about, where was it coming from—other Members have spoken on it—when we see it, these emails, fake emails, were in effect, someone sitting today and predicting the past. Sitting today to predict the past. Some people might call it “reverse engineering”, reverse engineering because, you see, what happened there is that you sit six months later after events have transpired, and then you fabricate these emails to suit things that may have actually happened. That is predicting the past. It has already happened. So it is very easy then to try to say, “Don’t just look at these fake emails, you know. Look at the substance, look at the content.”

### **8.05 p.m.**

It is not just about the format of the emails being fake, as I say, not authentic and so on. We have dealt with that. The Leader of the House has dealt with that issue in terms of the Google documents and the other experts who have pronounced. Not a single one of the emails in the documents provided by Google for the court case of the Integrity Commission v Google, not a single one matches a single email, the fake ones, that the Member for Diego Martin West read. Not one matched. And you know what? Not even something closely resembling any of those emails, total fake, fabricated. So that is fixed.

So, you now look at the substance and think that there is something. You know, you look at a person and a person stands up because you have “ah backbone” and “yuh have ah spine, ah skeleton” or whatever it be. But if the backbone collapses or the spine collapses, the entire body collapses. So you cannot stick on to the substance or the content when the backbone or spine has collapsed. How can those things stand up on their own? [*Desk thumping*] They cannot stand on their own. So this argument, nonsensical argument, I saw being put out in the public domain about the substance or the content, you cannot have the body standing when the skeleton has collapsed, the spine, the backbone has collapsed. It cannot stand.

But I go further on the substance, you see, because they attempted to tie—the hon. Member for Diego Martin West attempted to tie that content, as I say, with events that transpired. So, for example, when it was alleged that we were attempting to tap into the DPP’s office and so on—okay?—these fake emails saying that we were going to tap the—what did we do? The first thing they said we did is that we “fix up” to send a Mr. Ganpat from the SSA, to send him to Germany. Dr. Moonilal en passant mentioned it but it is a bit more detailed than that.

Having done the research and obtained the evidence, we have discovered, yes, Mr. Ganpat did go to Germany for that period, September 02 to 13, and we also discovered—and as I said, we have all the documents here—that he went to some course that was being held by the George C. Marshall, European Center For Security Studies, Senior Executive Seminar, Germany, September 05 to 12, but the gentleman went from the 2nd, returned on the 13th, I think.

This now, that visit came about on the basis of correspondence from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Security, July 23, 2012. I think the Member for Chaguanas West might remember because the Member was then the Minister of National Security. So the Permanent Secretary writes and says we would want this gentleman to participate and then seeks a recommendation from the SSA. The director of the SSA then approves Mr. Ganpat and then it goes to the then Minister of National Security for approval. So that approval was given long before you could ever dream up these emails for September because September did not reach yet.

So they discovered in some way that Mr. Ganpat went abroad in Germany, which is a fact, but then attempted to tie it to say, well, we sent—we instructed him to go or get somebody to send him, and the decision was taken since July when the emails are now in September saying “we going to instruct to send this man away”. You see? So, again, content. Yes, so they have bits of facts. You see, predicting the past is very easy, but they did not have all the facts, you see, so they pick out one or two grains of truth but tied it into this whole wheel conspiracy. Wheel conspiracy, circling you, circling you and targeting you. That is what they did.

So the Member for Chaguanas West, when he approved the Note sent to him by his Permanent Secretary and gave the approval for Mr. Ganpat, I am sure the Member for Chaguanas West did not instruct anybody to put Ganpat out of the country because the hon. Member for Chaguanas West wanted to tap phones. I am sure that the Member will know that when he did this in July, it was not with any

intention. The man was invited by the United States for this—on a course at the George Marshall Center for studies. So again, you have, they said we want to tap phones, okay—not phones, tap the DPP’s Office.

Now, sometime there was a sweep or a search done at the DPP’s Office and there was a story—cannot find it, anyway, I remember it. [*Interruption*] Yes, about some “red ray”, infrared ray and so on. I have in my possession a report that was done by the Commissioner of Police on this matter, which is what we are trying to find again. I think I sent it to Dr. Rambachan as well, if he could locate it. Anyway, a report from the Commissioner of Police when he said clearly that there was no bugging device found in the office of the DPP. No bugging device found in the office of the DPP. So, first of all, we sent away a man because we want to bug; second now, there is a sweep or some infrared light, which I will come to in a minute, but the report from the police says no bugging device. What they said is, they found this red light but the way that red light operates, even in the police report, the police report says you must have a line of vision. So, they were alleging that the Attorney General hired some firm, security firm and so on, and this security firm had this red light on the DPP’s building.

But, you know what? The office of the Attorney General is somewhere just opposite the Red House in that Cabildo place and the office of the DPP, there is no straight line of vision. So whatever red light might have been coming, it was not coming from there. Further—[*Interruption*] It would have to bend the corner, yes, or do something else. Go up into the sky and come back down. There was no line of vision. The most important point of that is that no bugging device and no bugging was taking place there. Those are two areas of—I am saying where the content, you know, just a bit of fact but all the rest of it in a wheel conspiracy made up, fabricated, circling to target myself and other Members of my Government.

Other areas of fact, Mr. Speaker, as I said, one of the emails, they said, in an email, I said or one of us said, “call a meeting urgently”. And they said, lo and behold, the next day, there was a meeting. Mr. Speaker, how many times we hold meetings? I wonder if the hon. Member for Diego Martin West understands the number of times we hold meetings, the amount of times these meetings may be urgent or not urgent.

And, you know, in the midst of all this, eh—we want to remember and I will come back, remind me of the repeal of section 34. We will come back to that in a moment. Another area of fact mentioned already by the Leader of the House is the use of the person who was the Chargé D’affaires here for the US, Mr. Smitham.

The Member for Diego Martin West brought this man's name into the parliamentary debate saying that in the emails, we were somehow in cohorts or cahoots or whatever is the word. *[Interruption]* Yes, we were liaising with the gentleman and that, in some way, we were probably conspiring, I do not know, with it. So implicated the gentleman.

Again, you know, that obviously is not a fact. You see, when you predict the past, you use—in the future, you predict the past, “yuh get yuh things mix up”. It is true Mr. Smitham came to Trinidad and Tobago as the Chargé D'affaires but it is not true that Mr. Smitham was appointed and was in Trinidad and Tobago in September which is when the emails were being lobbied about. But when you go down after, six months later or whatever it was, then you could say, “Oh yes, you know, who is the Chargé D'affaires up there now?” Mr. Smitham. He came in November after the emails.

So, you called Smitham's name; at the time, he may well have been, at that time, the Chargé D'affaires but when the concocted emails were there, they never came forward. *[Interruption]* Thank you. This is the letter from the Commissioner of Police, the Executive Director of our National Security Council. It is addressed to Mrs. Gillian Garner. It is dated May 05. Because, you see, I wanted to get the information. And it says:

Sweeps conducted at the office of the DPP for devices.

I refer to the subject and inform that on May 24, 2013, a letter was sent to the then Minister of National Security, Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George advising him of sweeps conducted at the office of the DPP. As requested, a copy of that letter is attached.

Additionally, members of the Special Branch, Technical Surveillance Countermeasure Unit, conducted sweeps at the offices of the Director of DPP, Fifth Floor, Winsure Building, Richmond Street, Port of Spain, on May 23, 2013; April 14, 2014; October 13, 2014; March 18, 2015. It must be noted that during those sweeps, no overt or covert electronic devices were found.

So, no devices on each of these times.

The original report was May 24, 2013 addressed to then Minister of National Security, Sen. The Hon. Emmanuel George.

I refer to your letter dated May 24, 2013 on the front page article of the *Guardian* newspaper with the headline “Spy bug in DPP's office” and wish to advise that the police service did not locate any spy bug in the office of the DPP at any time in the past.



This is coming from the Commissioner of Police—did not locate. But again, the story was a newspaper story of sweeps and red lights and so on.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** And everybody believed that thing outside there.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Of course. At one point, I doubted myself. [Laughter] I doubted myself at one point because, you know, they were so convincing in the newspaper story and gave so many details. So, take some fact and then tie it up with lies and you make this wheel conspiracy against us. These are some areas of fact. Time will not permit me to go into every single one of the fake emails alleging all kinds of conspiracies on our part.

But I mentioned, we were busy, we were working. Now, in the alleged emails, there is one which says a reporter from the *Guardian* is going to be writing a story and they have called me and it deals with our boys. We have to do something. September 08, 2012, that email. Lo and behold, says the Member for Diego Martin West, lo and behold, the very next day, *Sunday Guardian*, September 09, reports Ish and Steve to walk free: Piarco cases to be dropped, enquiries scrapped. Next day. But when you are predicting the past from today, from the future— [Interruption] Yes, what you come up with is “ah Rowley-gate”. It is no longer emailgate, this is “Rowley-gate”. This whole fake scenario, fake emails, is “Rowley-gate”. [Interruption] Yes, sorry.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. PM, your 30 minutes have expired. Would you like an extension, hon. PM?

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, please, hon. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for Siparia be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you very much. I really did not realize how time passes. Mr. Speaker, I was saying—using bits of information and fact. Now, lo and behold, this story comes out, the Member says, in the *Sunday Guardian* of the 9th and then he says, well, you see, email says story in the *Guardian*, the next day, story comes out. [Interruption] Circumstantial, yes, wheel conspiracy again. But, you know, when it is—Mr. Speaker, perhaps we may not have shared that here or in the public. When that story came out, I did in fact call a meeting urgently. I convened a meeting. I think it was at 6.00 a.m. in the morning. And when I saw the implications of the story, I instructed that we

should send out a press release on this matter to indicate that we are going to repeal the nefarious section 34. [*Desk thumping*] That was on the 9th. By September 11, we took the Bill—and listen, I helped to draft the Bill with others, eh, with the former Attorney General, with CPC, Mr. Ian McIntyre and others.

**8.20 p.m.**

We took that Bill to Cabinet for approval on the 11<sup>th</sup>. So, the 9<sup>th</sup> was the Sunday, all of Monday we discussed it. Monday we worked on it and so on. So, we did have meetings. Lo and behold—call meetings? Yes, we did call a meeting, because we had work to do. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, we took it to the Cabinet. On the evening of the 11<sup>th</sup>, it was sent to this Parliament, to the Clerk, to be placed on an Order Paper for debate on the 12<sup>th</sup> in this House; September 12<sup>th</sup>. On September 12<sup>th</sup>, it was debated and passed in this House. On September 13<sup>th</sup>, the next day, it went to the Senate, debated and passed on the 13<sup>th</sup>. On September 14<sup>th</sup>, it was assented to.

So in the middle of all this fake emails, that we were so busy sending these emails up and down, to each other, trying to harm people, trying to tap people's phone—bug people's offices, trying to interfere with the Judiciary, and all the other allegations, all this fabricated. In the middle of that, and they said we were doing all of that, to do what? To save people—somebody's freedom, to pay for their freedom, which is the same Ish and Steve, with the section 34 matter.

What were we doing? That is not what we were doing. What we were doing was taking steps to repeal the section 34. So that they would not have access to any leeway, any loophole, to gain freedom without a full—without the full justice system, without the trial, and so on. So that is why now they have tied—when you look at the emails on their faces, really nothing—the fake emails, nothing there to bring it into the section 34.

You know, that section 34 is like a recurring decimal nightmare for them, and for us, I must say. We must recall how that came about. It came about in this House. We had passed that Indictable Offences (Preliminary Enquiry) Bill, here. It contained no such provision as the section 34 provision, that after 10 years, that you cannot be tried or charged for an offence. It was when it went to the Senate, where none of us were there, none of us, it changed in the Senate, to include this new part of it. It was supported by all the Members on the other side. When it came down to this House, what happened?

Usually, there is a practice, and now we know it is a wrong practice, but usually the practice is when we get Senate amendments, we tend to go forward with them, because the Senate has passed it with the required majority. Oh, and it

required a three-fifths majority by the way. So we had to get three-fifths in the Senate when it was passed. When it came back to us, we took the Senate amendments, put it to the House, and we passed them again—[*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** In good faith.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:**—in good faith. Again, the Members on this other side, including the Member for Diego Martin West, they supported it.

**Hon. Member:** And they were asking for seven years.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, they were saying seven years, [*Interruption*] and I had indicated, no, we said 10. It is only 10. So, it passed with the special majority. That was how that section 34 happened. Instantly, it was brought to my attention that this could create a loophole for persons who have been on charges, or persons who may have committed crimes, I took the decision immediately, from the 09<sup>th</sup>, when the article came out, and we read it, and saw the implications, by the 10<sup>th</sup>, by the 11<sup>th</sup>, the Bill had already been drafted, by the 12<sup>th</sup>, debated in the House and passed, by the 13<sup>th</sup>, debate in the Senate and passed. [*Desk thumping*] It was passed.

So that they have found in some way to tie up the whole section 34 matter into this wheel conspiracy here, and all these emails going back and forward had something to do with trying to get these people free. When we were here in this House and in the Senate, trying to amend the law, repeal that section, to make sure the fellas “doh go free” by virtue of that law.

**Hon. Member:** Or anybody else.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Or anyone else—to make sure that no person—they were not the only ones who had applied; many others had applied under that provision. So we took the situation in hand immediately. We dealt with it. We repealed it. I think some persons who have filed their case in the lower court, have lost the matter there in the court. They were not granted the freedom, some of them. The case has gone on, I think, the Appeal Court has ruled similarly. Well, it has the final court to go to now.

So I raised that to show that far from anything in these emails to try to free anybody, we were busy trying to make sure that no person who would have been charged would benefit from that particular section. So that is the explanation for that. There are several other issues—I think—I have how many minutes left?

**Hon. Member:** Eight more minutes.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Eight minutes, which I need to spend some moments on—yes, suspensions and—oh, this is the integrity matter, yes. Okay, the Member for Diego Martin North/East, poor thing, in a way, because, since he is the only one who spoke, that is all there is to respond to, but he went all over the world, about people who were jailed, people jailed and “throw out ah Parliament”, and he did not come right here to our own Parliament, to talk about what happened in this, not this Tenth Parliament, but in previous Parliaments when the other side, when the PNM was in Government.

I was in this Parliament, and I saw a laptop that was given to us by the Parliament. I was sitting right next to Mr. Panday, then Opposition Leader. He had a laptop on his desk—can you imagine, given to us by the Parliament itself, each MP was given one, given to him; all of us had one—using that laptop in the Parliament, and he was suspended on spot. We are talking about procedural fairness? Where was procedural fairness then?—come to talk about procedural fairness? We gave procedural fairness in this matter, that is why we did not have to give—I do not think we had to give any notice. We could have done it on the floor of the House, but we gave the notice—I gave it first publicly, in the public domain, and then we filed it on the Order Paper last Friday. There was sufficient time to prepare and come—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Ramadhar:** And the right to be heard.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:**—and you have the right to be heard. That is procedural fairness. *[Desk thumping]* Members—it is procedural fairness. That is procedural fairness, but when it was that Mr. Panday was suspended from this House, there was no procedural fairness. He was suspended on the spot out of the Parliament, from the service of this House. Mr. Speaker, that was bad enough, when you want to talk about procedural fairness; when you want to talk about having a laptop on your desk, a laptop given to you by the very Parliament.

There was another incident in this Parliament, when the Member for Fyzabad was also suspended on the floor of the House, with no procedural fairness. A matter went on complaint by the Member for Fyzabad to the Privileges Committee. He was the complainant in the matter; complainant—*[Laughter]* where he was the complainant, making a complaint against the same Member for Diego Martin West. *[Laughter]* Dr. Moonilal, the Member for Oropouche then, it was Oropouche only, or east? The Member for Oropouche was a witness in the matter. The complaint made was that the then Member for Diego Martin West, *[Laughter]* it is a serious matter, but it does bring a smile. It does bring a smile.

The Member for Diego Martin West “pelt the Member for Fyzabad with ah teacup, pelt him with ah teacup”. You had doctors’ reports, you had witnesses to the matter, and you know what happened? They came back with the report from the Privileges Committee, and they turned around and suspended the Member for Fyzabad from the House. He made the complaint, somebody “pelt him”, but he “geh pelt out ah de House. He geh pelt out.” [*Laughter and desk thumping*] Evict him and, hon. Speaker, what procedural fairness?

On the floor of the House, they amended the Motion or whatever it was. They amended the report or the Motion to say that the Member be suspended from the service of the House. I asked, can we have a division, please? And the then, hon. Speaker, he said, no. I have already heard the ayes and nays. No division was taken. None was taken, because it was important to say—and, of course, we will take a division today. We will take a division, and so we will see.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So Parliament suspensions—thank you. So you can exercise your vote, Member.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So that is the Parliament suspensions. I just have one other item—minutes? Two, five?

**Hon. Member:** Three.

**Hon. K. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Three? [*Laughter*] Three minutes. You know, the Member for Oropouche East, I think this is May 01. The hon. Member for Oropouche East asked the Member for Diego Martin West to declare, to state whether he had declared his interest in this One Woodbrook Place. He said that he is calling for an investigation into the Member for Diego Martin West, as to whether he failed to disclose a property owned by him and his spouse, at One Woodbrook Place.

The Member for Diego Martin West initially had said he had no property anywhere. He did not have that property. Then he says, now, well, you know what, I declared it on my Form A, to the Integrity Commission, but I did not declare it in the Form B, because the Form B says, you must declare land, but I do not have land, I have an apartment. Well, you see, first of all, this hon. goodly gentleman, probably has an apartment flying out in space, because the apartment is anchored down on to the ground. Let us start from there. That is just to make it—how ridiculous it is.

Suspended apartment, but you know, when you go to the guidelines form:

A guide for persons in public life and persons exercising public functions, first edition May 24, 2005.

So, this has been around since 2005, and I believe the Member has been a Member for quite some time, and would have been filling up these forms all the time. When you go to the guide, it tells you very clearly:

Details of assets of declarant, spouse and dependent children, real property.

It says: land and buildings. Under land and buildings, it gives you an example of what should be declared. It says:

Address and description of property, including land and floor areas. For example, Paradise Street, Hillview, 16,000 square feet land, two storey house.

Another example;

No. 2 Sail Road, Bel Air, 5,000 square feet apartment.

The guide tells you very clearly, you have to declare the apartment in the Form B. So the gentleman, the Member, has now admitted that he did not declare it in the Form B. Now, you know what is my issue, Mr. Speaker, as I close? We now have to wonder all of these years when he had been filing his declarations, what other properties have not been disclosed on the Form B? What other apartments, townhouse, condominiums, because all of those are required to be disclosed on the Form B, which is the form available for public scrutiny.

Mr. Speaker, with these words, I again condemn the abuse of the privilege of this House, that privilege of freedom of speech in this House, because that freedom of speech must be regulated, that should you come and bring documents to this House, bring your speech to the House, you must have it on the basis of foundation of evidence.

We have shown today, that there is no truth, no evidence whatsoever, to support either the content of the email or the format of the email, whether the form, the structure, the substance and the content. Therefore, I join with others in this House, in calling for censure of the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, and for his suspension from this honourable House.

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

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The last presenter, the hon. Prime

Minister, made a compelling argument, with pointed logic and exemplary lucidity. [*Desk thumping*] So, it has made the job of winding up this Motion, I believe, much easier than I thought.

Mr. Speaker, I would take a few minutes to respond to a couple matters raised. First, I would like to thank all Members of the House, on both sides today, for their contributions on this matter.

Today, as before, and is now a habit, the Members opposite, and the Member for Diego Martin West, faced by a Motion calling into question his judgment, calling into question, his action and his reasoning, fled. It was not the first time that the Member, on the closure of the Member for Diego Martin North/East, instructed his colleagues opposite, to leave with some drama, to leave the House.

### **8.35 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is a disrespect to the Parliament, it is a disrespect to the people of Trinidad and Tobago and it is a disrespect to their constituents who elected them to office. [*Desk thumping*] They were all elected by their constituents, by a majority, who ask that they come to this House and debate the issues, debate the Motions, the Bills, et cetera. And today, our debate, as the Prime Minister rightly said, this debate had to do with our democracy, the quality of our democracy. It may not have had to do today with education, with health, with infrastructure, but it had to do with the quality of our democracy and the quality of life in Trinidad and Tobago in a practising democracy. It called the Member for Diego Martin West to account. They left!

Mr. Speaker, they left quickly, rather quickly, but they did not go too far, I must assure you. They went all of one floor because they were snacking after they left. So, Mr. Speaker, not confronting the Government, they confronted the buffet. [*Laughter*] So, Mr. Speaker, if this is their attitude, the Parliament should not send an Order Paper to them, they should send the menu [*Laughter*] because they left the debate.

When Members of the Government went to the tea break at 4.48—it was I believe a few minutes late—some Members, regrettably, had to do without soup, had to do without other food items, because they were all gone. I say this because you are elected to come to the House to debate. I mean, they left the House and charged out. They did not leave the jurisdiction, but they went to the snack hall, and this is the disrespect for the office that they hold, it is the disrespect for the office and it is a gross disrespect.

We are here to debate this matter, and they left kicking and screaming. They did not go quietly, they left kicking and screaming. Those of you who were here and the camera saw, the Leader of the Opposition, at some time I thought he was coming across the floor to also confront us. I quickly looked to ensure it had no teacup or glass or anything available to him, because he left kicking and screaming as if he knew this was the last time he would sit in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, look at this Motion!

The Member for Diego Martin West came on May 20, 2013, 95 times used the word “email”. We came today with evidence to contradict his statement. This was a golden opportunity for him to stand and say: “Look, I have a defence. What you are saying, there are holes in your arguments. We have position A, we have position B. I verily believe that the substance was correct.” It was an opportunity to defend himself, but he could not.

The Member for Diego Martin North/East, as the Prime Minister indicated and others indicated, what did he do? He told us about Mikhail Khodorkovsky in Russia, “Sanwar” Anwar or somebody in Malaysia—[*Interruption*]

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Ibrahim.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Ibrahim in Malaysia. He told us about Maduro in Venezuela, and he came with the most ludicrous argument ever heard in a modern Parliament. He said the reason we were meeting today and proposing a resolution to suspend the Member is because the Member for Diego Martin West is becoming more popular. [*Laughter*] He was more popular than the Prime Minister that is why we assemble here today. It had nothing to do with emails.

In fact, the Member for Diego Martin North/East did not use the word “email” at all and I found it suspicious when he rose and the first thing he said was: “I was speaking without prejudice”, meaning, I am not going to speak on the Motion and I am not going to speak on emails. He stood very clear. He did not want to get his name and his words associated with these emails, so he disassociated himself immediately from the emails. [*Crosstalk*]

That is the language. [*Crosstalk*] You understand. He did, I think, an introductory course in law. He began by saying: “I am not going to talk about emails. Do not tell me anything about emails, I would deal with process”, and the Prime Minister rightly put that argument to rest, and destroyed his argument on process and procedure. But I was amazed that the Member for Diego Martin North/East would say nothing about the substantial issue of the Motion, the evidence that we have brought.



In fact, do you know what is also striking? On May 20 when the Member for Diego Martin West made those startling revelations, the Prime Minister immediately said: “Could we have copies?”, and instructed me, through the Clerk, to get copies immediately. We wanted to see: what is this you are circulating, what is this you are talking about. You know, today the Leader of the Opposition at no time asked for us to furnish him with a copy of the evidence we brought.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Because he knows we speak the truth.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** He knows it is the truth, and he is not interested in the truth. He was not interested in the truth on May 20, 2013. If he was interested in the truth, a secondary school child would have told him those email addresses cannot exist, but he was not interested in that. He was interested in intrigue. He was interested in provoking the national community to destabilize, to revolt the rivers of blood, to revolt and destabilize the democratically elected Government. Today, I call upon this Leader of the Opposition, whether or not he is prepared to denounce violence as a means of removing a constitutionally elected Government. [*Desk thumping*]

You see, the Member felt that if he raised a matter involving the Prime Minister, Attorney General and so on to murder a journalist, to bug the office of the DPP, to plot to pervert the course of justice, he would trigger social unrest. He came today as the de facto leader of SOPO. That is what the SOPO did in the 80s, the late 80s, when they provoked a situation for a radical religious group to seek power by undemocratic means, unconstitutional means.

The Member for Diego Martin West thought he would have incited the national community to come out and protest every single day and it would have led to the removal of the elected Government. [*Crosstalk*] Yes, the Dhanraj Singh matter was the same thing. Today, the Member could not stand up to defend himself. The Member for Diego Martin North/East told us about—and he carried on and on—Russia and so on.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** All over the world.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** All over the world, but would not come back home and then came to say the Member for Diego Martin West, well he is more popular. Popular what! Where? By who? For what? [*Crosstalk*] He is not popular in his own party. He said he is scared to go to Balisier House. So the Member for Diego Martin North/East, his issue was the method of execution. He said there were procedural problems, you should not use this and you should have done this, A, B and C.

The Member for Chaguanas West, as the Prime Minister rightly indicated, the first Motion of no confidence or first motion of censure to be brought against this Prime Minister was on her failure to remove the Member for Chaguanas West. That was the first thing. [*Crosstalk*] And the Member for Diego Martin North/East spoke about jailing people all over the world before elections, and how they removed Opposition Leader and tried to put them in jail. Mr. Speaker, when they were in power this is how they think. They had an Opposition Leader dragged through the court system, former Ministers of Government. The Opposition Leader was convicted and went to jail, incidentally.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Before the elections.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Before the election as well, in collusion with a PNM AG, at that time, who wired himself up to go and talk to the Chief Justice. Earlier in the proceedings I talked about these devilish and brutish and hellish activities under the PNM.

In five years, Mr. Speaker, in a few days, we will complete five years in office. Five years! [*Desk thumping*] I ask the national community, tell me once when we have sought through political or executive action to remove the Chief Justice, to bug a Minister putting on a what—spying equipment and going to talk to any officeholder? Did we put anybody under house arrest?

In fact, when we called a state of emergency, it was to reduce murder and criminal activity and to protect the citizens of this country. [*Desk thumping*] It was not a state of emergency to jail the Speaker, to lock up the Speaker of the House. They did that. You look at their track record in office, how they use executive power. You remember, Mr. Speaker, police surrounding a truck on the road from the EBC, almost locking up the truck driver, because they said the EBC was moving out important documents. Mr. Speaker, this is their track record. [*Crosstalk*] And, today, he could have rose in the House and explained himself, but he tries to portray himself as a victim. You accused the Prime Minister of plotting to commit murder and then you say, you are the victim.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** He wants pity.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** He wants pity, but nobody will pity him. We cannot stand today and feel sympathy for somebody like this or portray him as a victim when you come to the House with such serious allegations. I said in the beginning, Mr. Speaker, you cannot overstate the seriousness of the allegations and, today, you cannot overstate the false nature of those allegations, and you cannot set a precedent because we have the information now.

When we spoke, quite rightly and correctly on May 20, we did not have a report from Google International. We did not have a report from the Justice Department Criminal Division in the United States. We did not have proceedings in the court of the State of California. We could not have the report of a leading computer forensic scientist in the United States with military experience. How could we have had that on May 20 in 2013? We have it today. We were stunned as well. Many on this side as well, we were stunned to hear this. But, Mr. Speaker, we have it today, so we come back to the Parliament. The Member for Point Fortin muttering the Integrity Commission, muttering when they did not report it there, muttering about the police.

The Member for Chaguanas West spoke as well as if the Member for Diego Martin West was a victim. He is not a victim. He is not a victim. [*Crosstalk*] He is a perpetrator of false accusations, damaging accusations, on the character of the Prime Minister and Government Ministers and of the integrity of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. This made regional news, international news.

I remember in my own constituency, constituents coming to me and asking me: “So are you a party to murder the journalist, as well?” The Attorney General, Senator now, had to answer questions in London as to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago when they hear—the Prime Minister and senior Cabinet Members—the Opposition Leader saying that they are plotting to murder a journalist. This is a Prime Minister that brought legislation to the Parliament to protect journalists. [*Desk thumping*] We took the action.

The Member for Chaguanas West today well, of course, complained a few times that he has been left out of some kind of highway opening and bus transport and so on. In fact, the Member has been left out of a lot of things these days—the debate that the Chamber is proposing, I want to warn the Chamber of Commerce that they are advertising all over the place the debate of the Opposition Leader and the Prime Minister, I want to tell them this Opposition Leader could walk out on that debate too, so do not be so proud and happy and announcing. Do not be happy. You have to see it to believe it, because he may well decide that on that fateful evening when they have the debate that people will become to be critical of him, and he will walk out, and then the Member for Chaguanas West might be there as a substitute.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Chaguanas West came to defend the Member for Diego Martin West and accused us in some way of trying to demonize the Member, the PNM leader, as our strategy. When you come to the Parliament and accuse the Government of murder, that is not demonizing the

Government; that is not demonizing the Member for Siparia and the Member for Tabaquite and the Member for Oropouche East and the Attorney General. That is not demonizing, but when you come here to defend yourself and to bring the evidence to contradict that, we are seeking to demonize the Member for Diego Martin West. Mr. Speaker, what logic is that? What logic is that, Mr. Speaker?

The Member for Chaguanas West raised the issue as well that this could lead to racial polarization. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin West accused the Prime Minister and Cabinet Members of murder, perverting the course of justice. That did not lead to any racial problem, but this could lead to. This is what they are thinking, and then called names of parliamentarians before and said: “Look where we are today!”

### **8.50 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, today, we do not throw things at each other. We do not come in the Parliament with a stick and raise it against anybody, as they did in those days by those Members you were calling. We come here with a Motion to debate that the Opposition Leader fled. He fled today when confronted by the evidence. You know, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Opposition Leader would have asked us for a copy of this evidence to seek to, you know, bore a hole in it, destroy it. What? He did not ask for that. He had an option, as well, he could have stood and say, in light of the revelations, in light of these letters, which we believe to be true and authentic, I apologize to the Members of the Government for raising these matters in that way. No, he could not do that, Mr. Speaker. His contempt and arrogance would not allow him to do that, but he stood by the emails again. In leaving this way it means that he stood by them, and other Members have spoken of this type of conspiracy to work backwards. What is it? In reversed engineering, Mr. Speaker, predicting the past. I like that. Predicting the past, you know, making it up with such mystery.

In fact, you know, Mr. Speaker, Agatha Christie would blush if she comes across this type of work, you know, working backwards, like one of her mysteries. But the Leader of the Opposition has no pity, he has no remorse, he will not apologize, Mr. Speaker—no remorse. In fact, given the opportunity, I verily believe he will do it again. He will do it again. They will do it again. Mr. Speaker, not one Member opposite would stand to say, we are here to defend the leader. Yes, Mr. Speaker, not one Member stood, because the Member for Diego Martin North/East—let us be very clear—he did not come here to defend. He did not come here to defend at all, he came here to distract.

The Member for Chaguanas West raised the issue, “Why are we so hurry? The police is investigating”. The Member for Diego Martin West said he does not care about the police, the police has no—“It is not proper, it is not the proper agency to investigate this”; he says, the Integrity Commission. So, the Member for Chaguanas West says, “Well, why? Wait for the Integrity Commission.” We have the information that the Integrity Commission has. They cannot refute the findings of Google International. They cannot. They simply cannot. They can do what they want but they cannot refute that.

So, we have the information before us. You do not have to go to the Committee of Privileges, the Committee of Privileges is a subcommittee of us, of the House. So, the same document you would take to the Committee of Privileges you can take to the entire Parliament. The Committee of the whole, so to speak, this is the Committee of Privileges, it is just a smaller Committee. So, we are here to address this matter. The Integrity Commission—well, I must say to the Member for Chaguanas West, I think the Integrity Commission has their hands full at this time, not the least by matters involving the very Member for Chaguanas West, because I think there is a tribunal established, as well, to investigate, and there are several matters before the Integrity Commission right now. So, they have their hands full, we are not going to hurry. We are not going to push them, or we are not going to seek to do that, but the Parliament has a responsibility to the Parliament. We have a responsibility to the Parliament. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Chaguanas West was speaking—you know, I took a note—we do not do the work of the police, but the police do not do the work of the Member of Parliament. We do not do the work of the Integrity Commission, but the Integrity Commission cannot do the work of the Parliament, we must do our work. We must be very clear on that. So when people talk in the national community, “Well, the police investigating”, they could because the Member for Oropouche East is not investigating—but the Commissioner of Police is not doing our work either.

Statements were made, we said they were false; we got sufficient, ample evidence to suggest they were false. They have breached the rules of the Parliament. Mr. Speaker, one of the documents I quoted had a certification, a notary public in the United States—these are sworn documents, they carry serious penalties, if they themselves are not authentic. Google International submitted to court, documents certified, notarized in their jurisdiction, sent to the Integrity Commission in Trinidad and Tobago. This is not an unsigned document that you

pick up somewhere at the side of the road, somebody gave you it, it blowing in the wind and you grab it and come to Parliament and say, “Look, I have a document”.

Mr. Speaker, the Government, led by the Member for Siparia, waited and waited and waited until we have the evidence. That is why we are here. This is why the Member of Parliament for Siparia, the Prime Minister, when the evidence was in her possession she then instructed that a Motion be brought and the evidence be brought to the Parliament for the Parliament to consider. We are here today to consider it, they chose to flee. Mr. Speaker, it leaves another question, the gentleman from Diego Martin West, he left kicking and screaming.

He is proposing himself as a prime ministerial candidate—this year he will—and, Mr. Speaker, what happens when as a Prime Minister you face criticism almost every day of your life? You face criticism from the NGO community, from civil society, from labour at times, from business at times, because you cannot please everybody all the time that way. Sometimes there are criticisms launched from the international community, you face regional and international conflict. You face action that you may believe to be unjustified. What would the Member for Diego Martin West do? What would be his position? What he would do? Go and tee-off? Eh? He would flee to the golf course? That is what he would do, Mr. Speaker? But you had an example of it today. Why did you not stand in the Parliament where the people elected you? Why did you not stand here? And boasting outside, “Come outside and say this, come outside”. I dare him, come inside and say this. [*Desk thumping*] Come inside and say this.

Telling me why I do not go outside, why you do not come inside? [*Laughter*] Why you go to a PNM meeting and hide behind a few people in a red jersey, you are hiding behind them and talking, as if I could come in there and talk, but when we are in the Parliament where you can confront someone who accuse you of something, you fled. You go and hide in a PNM meeting behind five people in a red jersey, walking with five bodyguards now and hiding, Mr. Speaker, while the Parliament is the gayelle. This is where in democratic politics, this is the gayelle where you come and you launch your war of words, of ideas, of policy, of vision, your arguments, because you believe you are right. He fled, Mr. Speaker, and this is a very, very poor sign of leadership, very poor, because, in an unfortunate circumstance that the Member for Diego Martin West will, in some nightmarish situation, become Prime Minister, what do you expect to be the conduct of the Member for Diego Martin West in those circumstances?

When ordinary people stand up to you as Prime Minister and say, “Mr. Prime Minister, I disagree with your policy. I disagree with your plan”, because what is his plan? What you would do? Get chinaware? Go in the china cabinet and just pelt everybody with a teacup? That is your approach, Mr. Speaker? You would have to buy more cups. Mr. Speaker, it is a serious matter, because on more than one occasion the Member for Diego Martin West felt that he should not respect the people of Trinidad and Tobago by participating in a debate in the House. He could not respect them. You see, Mr. Speaker, the truth will chase him down. The truth will chase him. I want to tell you, when he was leaving, kicking and screaming, he said he will go outside and talk, as if you alone could go outside and talk.

Mr. Speaker, last week we were in Guaico, mammoth meeting, thousands of persons [*Desk thumping*] come out on the Monday night meeting. Monday coming we are in Diego Martin where thousands will come out. So we have the opportunity to talk as well, and we will continue to talk about this, so he can run but he cannot hide. [*Desk thumping*] The truth will find you. The Member for Diego Martin West could run how much he want, because everything we said today in the House we will say outside, and we are not scared of that.

Mr. Speaker, what he did on May 20 was not careless. It was not only careless, it was not only reckless; it was calculated to undermine the integrity of the Government, the Parliament, and to bring this country into international disrepute and to provoke civil unrest. That was the plan, civil unrest. Mr. Speaker, we are all clear here, you know. You could have checked those emails in one hour and realize they are false. Yeah. So, you come to the Parliament—this was the cocaine and missiles in the water tank. That is the same hand that put that in the water tank put those emails in his hands. Mr. Speaker, in the research something very interesting came up, when in the research he said that he did not raise it with his colleagues. He did not caucus on it. You know if you had raised that with your colleagues what they would have told you. They would have said, “Mr. Leader, you cannot go to Parliament with that. Those email addresses cannot exist, emails are not done that way”.

He did not go because he knew he would not get the support of his caucus to bring those fake emails here, so he did it alone. He came with those emails alone. In fact, he shocked Members on the Opposition Benches when he brought it. They did not know. [*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** He shocked them today.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** He shocked them today. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they had no caucus to discuss this debate, none. None. Today, while the Member for Diego Martin North/East was on his legs told us about Mikhail Khodorkovsky in Russia, a piece of paper started to move along the Bench, and it says, “Walk out after Diego Martin North/East finish”.

They did not even know they had to walk out. They did not know that, Mr. Speaker. The Member for St. Joseph and the others remained, they did not know what was happening. They were in shock. The Member for Diego Martin Central did not want to leave because he heard that people get Motions when they become popular, so he thought he was becoming popular and he would be the subject of a next Motion. Yeah, in fact, the Member for Diego Martin Central indicated that he was writing his speech, he was preparing his notes to contribute in this debate. He wanted to speak on this matter, and they sent a note because the Member for Diego Martin West will not even have the respect for this colleagues to tell them. Imagine you are in Government.

The hallmark of this Prime Minister—well, one of the hallmarks of this Prime Minister—is that she allows every Member to speak at length. When we are taking decisions, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister allows everyone to speak—“Give your voice. Tell us what you think about this”. In a matter, “remove the whip”, this hon. Prime Minister brings that level of participation of consensus building. [*Desk thumping*] When there are decisions to be taken the Prime Minister will call all Members, Cabinet, non-Cabinet, and say, “Let us get your views. Let us build consensus.” This Prime Minister will direct the Leader of the House, the Government Business, to go to the caucus and say, “Take their views on this. I want to know what everybody—what are their views”. In Cabinet, “Let us discuss”, it is open, Mr. Speaker.

Would the Member for Diego Martin West conduct his business that way? He came today and just circulated a note and say, “Walk out after Diego Martin North/East finish”. The Member for Diego Martin North/East did not know he was walking out at the end. [*Laughter*] They had no caucus on this matter. The Member for Diego Martin North/East did not know he was walking out. [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** He said so.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yeah. And he said to that effect, in all fairness to him, he said that. He took his seat after, looking around, and then the Leader of the Opposition got up and started to yell across the floor. He was yelling and hurling abuses. At some time he did not want to leave, and that is the character we were warned about by his former—[*Interruption*]



**Hon. Member:** He was howling.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yes. He was yelping, Mr. Speaker. [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, your 30 minutes is up, would you like an extension?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yes, please.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Member for Oropouche East be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** You may continue, hon. Member. [*Desk thumping*]

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, yes, he stood up here, he was yelling and howling and yelping, you see, Mr. Speaker, and then he started to get on in a frantic way. I felt if that had gone on for about 10 seconds more we may have had to suspend the House just to get order, to restore order in the House. But you did all of that but you could not sit and stand in this House in your seat and defend yourself. [*Interruption*]

**Hon. Member:** He “doh” know what the others might have said about him.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Yeah, that is the technique here, they would not stand to defend him either. [*Interruption*]

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** And they may not vote for him.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** And, Mr. Speaker, of course, he did not wait around for the vote.

I want to state to my friend from Chaguanas West, the very first act of the Member for Diego Martin West was to call for your expulsion from the Government. We did not settle down in office enough. Although the Motion came in April, 2013, as the Prime Minister said, in July 2012, one year ago, Mr. Speaker—because we have the—what you call here, the timeline, and we also have to newspaper clips. We have the newspaper clips of those times, Mr. Speaker. Look I have it here. Yeah.

**9.05 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, July 30, 2012:

“Rowley: Time to axe Jack”

But we did not settle down in office yet; still reviewing all the things we had to do, plan. Rowley say, “Time to axe Jack”, in a story in the newspaper of that time. It was the *Trinidad Guardian*:

“The Opposition is demanding the removal of Jack Warner as National Security Minister because he is ‘an embarrassment’ to the country. Opposition Leader Dr. Keith Rowley said there are matters concerning Warner which are still under investigation...Rowley has written to both the Integrity Commission about Warner’s ‘secret’ bank account and to Commissioner of Police Dwayne Gibbs calling for an investigation...”

So you see, when he wanted to investigate the Member for Chaguanas West, he wrote the Integrity Commission and the police; “he knew how to write letter then”. But when he had these fake emails, he did not know how to write the Integrity Commission and the Commissioner of Police.

And today, the Member for Chaguanas West stood in solid defence of the Member for Diego Martin West, to say, “With all the evidence we have, hold, hold, do not be too quick, wait, wait”. While this gentleman, with no evidence, wrote to the Integrity Commission and the Commissioner of Police, because he did not bring it here in the House. He went to them to say, “Dis man is an embarrassment to the country”, and then called on the Prime Minister:

“We demand that the Prime Minister...remove Jack Warner...who is a constant embarrassment to the people of Trinidad and Tobago...”

Referring to Warner, he said he was in an unacceptable position. This is what he felt of the Member for Chaguanas West, and the Member for Chaguanas West must be reminded of that.

When you vote today, keep that in your mind; when you cast your vote later in the proceedings. That that is the MO of the Member for Diego Martin West. Today he might seek your support, because you may have some alignment of interest, I do not know, the newly found family. But his very first act as Opposition Leader was to call for his removal from the Cabinet. In fact, the Prime Minister took that as well and said, “No”. There was no evidence at the time, or not enough evidence and so on. In fairness the Prime Minister stood at that time—I remember the debate on the Motion as well—and instructed the Government to give ample support to the Member for Chaguanas West. [*Desk thumping*] The Prime Minister instructed us that we must support the then Minister of the Cabinet against the Member for Diego Martin West. He got processed.

Today is a different story, Mr. Speaker. Today is a landmark day. It is a day when historians will look back and look at our record in the Parliament and would judge us. They would judge us on whether we upheld the dignity, the honour and the integrity of the Parliament today.

Mr. Speaker, the Chief Secretary in Tobago, Orville London, who I quoted earlier, indicated that if and when evidence comes to fore and it is proven that the Member for Diego Martin West was wrong, he said there will be one man or one woman left standing. Mr. Speaker, there is one woman left standing. [*Desk thumping*] The Member for Siparia is left standing. He is not even here sitting, far less standing. He has gone.

The Member for Diego Martin West will have to defend himself in the national community, because this question will not go away. We will not allow this question to go away. We will chase him down in Port of Spain. We will chase him down—the truth will chase him in Port of Spain; the truth will chase him in Point Fortin; the truth will chase him in Roxborough; the truth will chase him in Diego Martin.

On every platform we go we will have the reports from the Justice Department. We will have the reports from Google International. We will have the report from John Berryhill on our political platform, and we will take the truth, tie it around his neck—in a metaphorical sense—and we will hang him with the truth.

He believes that today is the last day we raise this matter. No, this is the first day we raise this matter. We intend to take this matter to the public, and the public must judge him. He cannot portray himself as a victim, as a poor-me-one; give me sympathy and pity, Chicken Licken. The sky is falling according to him with the Moody report. Quarrelling that the Government is involved in wild spending, while his first job he says as Prime Minister, if he becomes Prime Minister, “is to raise he own salary by 300 per cent”. Raise the salary of MPs, but he accused this Government of wild spending.

Mr. Speaker, \$25 billion for a “racket rail”. He wants to come back, and he says he wants to do a next feasibility study; that is a next \$500 million again.

I want to close by indicating—because it was raised by the Member for Diego Martin North/East as well—the abuse of the Parliament by the hon. Member for Diego Martin West involved his disclosure of these fraudulent emails. It is reprehensible and it is deserving of the strongest condemnation by this House.

[*Desk thumping*] We support this Motion of Censure and call for the immediate suspension from this House of the Member for Diego Martin West.

His conduct was irresponsible and reckless. It was irresponsible and reckless, calculated to injure and cause harm; designed to inject fear and cause panic and to destabilize the Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago. He thought he would benefit by the ensuing chaos and confusion, and he must be made to pay a dear price for the trauma that he has inflicted on the body politic in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, if you lie, you must also say goodbye. Today, the effect of this is to tell him goodbye.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not like the word.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that by his conduct, by coming here and advancing untruths—it was Shakespeare who alerted us that “what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive”. Today, he has found himself in a tangled web that he weaved, and he sought to deceive. I want to tell him today that he is the maker of his own destiny.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

*Question put.*

<i>The House divided: Ayes</i>	24	Noes	1
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AYES

Moonilal, Hon. Dr. R.

Persad-Bissessar SC, Hon. K.

McLeod, Hon. E.

Ramadharr, Hon. P.

Gopeesingh, Hon. Dr. T.

Peters, Hon. W.

Rambachan, Hon. Dr. S.

Seemungal, Hon. J.

Khan, Mrs. N.

De Coteau, Hon. C.

Cadiz, Hon. S.

Baksh, Hon. N.  
 Griffith, Hon. Dr. R.  
 Baker, Hon. Dr. D.  
 Khan, Hon. Dr. F.  
 Douglas, Hon. Dr. L.  
 Samuel, Hon. R.  
 Indarsingh, Hon. R.  
 Roopnarine, Hon. S.  
 Ramdial, Hon. R.  
 Alleyne-Toppin, Hon. V.  
 Partap, C.  
 Sharma, C.  
 Ramadharsingh, Dr. G.  
 NOES  
 Warner, J.

*Question agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That this House censure the Member for Diego Martin West and Leader of the Opposition for his reckless, unsubstantiated and scandalous allegations;

*Further resolved:*

That Dr. Keith Rowley, Member for Diego Martin West and Leader of the Opposition be suspended from the service of the House for the remainder of the session.

#### JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE

#### (Appointment to)

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, before moving for the adjournment, there is an item falling under “Motions relating to the Business or sitting of the House” that deals with the appointment of six Members from this House to sit with an equal number on a Joint Select Committee on the Insurance Bill. I think the hon. Leader of the House has to move that Motion.

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that that the House of Representatives

agree to the establishment of a Joint Select Committee to consider a Bill entitled, 'An Act to repeal and replace the Insurance Act, Chap. 84:01; to reform the law relating to insurance companies; to regulate insurance businesses and privately administered pension fund plans and for other related purposes', and agree to appointment of the following Members of the House of Representatives, and that this Committee be empowered to discuss the general merits of the Bill along with its details, and be mandated to report by May 21, 2015: Miss Marlene Mc Donald MP, Mr. Colm Imbert MP, Mr. Jairam Seemungal MP, Mr. Stephen Cadiz MP, Mrs. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan MP and Dr. Delmon Baker MP.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, a matter came up earlier concerning an Urgent Question. With the agreement of the Member for Chaguanas West, the question posed—the Minister of Finance and the Economy did indicate that they are doing the research on it, they require some more information. We have agreed on the next sitting of the House to respond to the Urgent Question, by consensus with the Member for Chaguanas West.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn to Friday 08, May 2015 at 1.30 p.m. On that day, to serve notice to Members, it is the intention of the Government to debate the Constitution (Amdt.) Bill, 2015, the Industrial Relations (Amdt.) Bill, 2015, to conclude debate on the Precursor Chemicals Bill and to conclude debate on the Motion for the adoption of the Ombudsman Report, and time permitting to look at the amendment to the trade marks legislation.

May I also add in closing, that the Members opposite are absent yet again from another sitting, and certain matters that have been on the adjournment we may have to take on another occasion.

I beg to move.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 9.20 p.m.*