



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

# Debates of the House of Representatives

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5th Session – 10th Parliament (Rep.) – Volume 36 – Number 37

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**OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE WADE MARK  
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE NELA KHAN  
DEPUTY SPEAKER

**Wednesday 20th May, 2015**

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

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**THE  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
OFFICIAL REPORT  
IN THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO WHICH OPENED ON JUNE 18, 2010**

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**SESSION 2014—2015**

**VOLUME 36**

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Wednesday, May 20, 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 following Members: Mr. Patrick Manning, Member for Parliament for San Fernando East, has asked to be excused for today's sitting of the House; Mr. NiLeung Hypolite, Member of Parliament for Laventille West, has asked to be excused from sittings of the House during the period May 20 to 25, 2015 and Dr. Amery Browne, Member of Parliament for Diego Martin Central, has asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the Members seek is granted.

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Annual Administrative Report of the Port of Spain Corporation for the fiscal year 2012 to 2013. [*The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal)*]
2. Annual Administrative Report of the Chaguanas Borough Corporation for the period October 2010 to September 2011. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
3. Annual Administrative Report of the Chaguanas Borough Corporation for the period October 2011 to September 2012. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
4. Annual Administrative Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company Limited for the year ended September 30, 2010. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
5. Annual Administrative Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company Limited for the year ended September 30, 2011. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
6. Annual Administrative Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company Limited for the year ended September 30, 2012. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]

7. Annual Administrative Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company Limited for the year ended September 30, 2013. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
8. Annual Administrative Report of the Export-Import Bank of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (EXIMBANK) for the year 2013. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
9. Annual Administrative Report of the Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited for the fiscal year 2013. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
10. Annual Administrative Report of the Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board of Trinidad and Tobago (CCIB) for the period 2008 to 2009. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
11. Annual Administrative Report of the Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board of Trinidad and Tobago (CCIB) for the period 2009 to 2010. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
12. Annual Administrative Report of the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) for the fiscal year 2009. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
13. Annual Administrative Report of the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) for the fiscal year 2013. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
14. Annual Administrative Report of the Caroni (1975) Limited for the fiscal year 2008. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
15. Annual Administrative Report of the Caroni (1975) Limited for the fiscal year 2009. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
16. Annual Administrative Report of the Caroni (1975) Limited for the fiscal year 2010. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
17. Annual Administrative Report of the Caroni (1975) Limited for the fiscal year 2011. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
18. Annual Administrative Report of the Caroni (1975) Limited for the fiscal year 2012. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
19. Annual Administrative Report of the Caroni (1975) Limited for the fiscal year 2013. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
20. Annual Administrative Report of the First Citizens Bank Limited for the fiscal year 2014. [*The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh)*]

21. Annual Audited Financial Statements of the Government Human Resource Services Company Limited for the year ended September 30, 2014. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]  
*To be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.*
22. Annual Administrative Report of the Ministry of Justice for the fiscal year 2013. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
23. Annual Administrative Report of the Ministry of National Security for fiscal year 2012. [*Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal*]
24. Annual Administrative Report of the National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST) for fiscal year 2013. [*The Minister of Science and Technology (Hon. Dr. Rupert Griffith)*]
25. Annual Administrative Report of the Public Service Commission for the year 2013. [*The Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Nela Khan)*]
26. International Child Abduction (Amendment) Order, 2015. [*The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Winston Dookeran)*]

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT**

**(Presentation)**

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

**Insurance Bill, 2015**

The Interim Report of the Joint Select Committee on the Insurance Bill, 2015.

**URGENT QUESTIONS**

**US Department of Justice**

**(Express Approval)**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Attorney General:

Given recent statements by the Prime Minister in relation to the “emailgate” investigation, could the hon. Attorney General state the date on which the Central Authority obtained express approval from the US Department of Justice to release to the public or any interested party any information or evidence obtained under the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Treaty?

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Attorney General, to indicate to the hon. Member opposite, asking this question, that the United States agencies transmit

*Urgent Questions*  
[HON. DR. R. MOONILAL]

*Wednesday, May 20, 2015*

information to the Trinidad and Tobago police via the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Treaty, and they are transmitted through the Central Authority to the Trinidad and Tobago police. There is no issue of permission to release anything in the public or information of that sort.

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

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am asking about a date, a date? Does the AG have a start date?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, the Urgent Questions asked for a date on which the Authority obtained express approval to release to the public or interested party. There is no issue of a date to release information. Information is transmitted from the United States Agency to the Central Authority that transfer it on to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. There is no date for releasing information or giving the public, or any agency, information. They merely transmit it pursuant to the law.

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

**Mr. Warner:** So, therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General—since it went to the police—would not be aware of the contents of this document?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** The Attorney General plays no part in the transmitting of documents via the mutual assistance treaty. It moves from the United States Department of Justice or related agencies to the Trinidad and Tobago police via the Central Authority.

### **Couva Children's Hospital Project (Details of)**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Housing and Urban Development:

Given the recent announcement by the Minister of Health that the Couva Children's Hospital project cost an estimated \$1.5 billion, could the Minister advise whether this expenditure also includes the cost of construction of a hotel, a guest house or residence, and a shopping mall on the site?

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, may I first say that I wanted to be very clear from the Member for Chaguanas West that this is indeed an urgent question.

**Mr. Warner:** Very urgent.



**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Okay. The answer is, no.

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

**Mr. Warner:** Supplemental. Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the answer no is to what? Could the Minister advise—the answer is no, he will not advise, or he cannot advise? That is what I am asking.

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, the estimated \$1.5 billion is for the construction of the hospital; it is not a construction of a hotel, and guest house, and residence and centre of excellence, and malls and so on.

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

**Mr. Warner:** Can I ask one more supplemental?

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr. Warner:** Then, can you say what it is for?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** It is for the construction and outfitting of the Couva Children's Hospital.

#### **Couva Children's Hospital (Cost Overruns)**

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the Minister of Housing and Urban Development:

In light of the announcement of \$1.5 billion expenditure on the Couva Children's Hospital, could the Minister please state whether there have been cost overruns on the project and provide the initial estimated cost of the project and its projected cost upon completion?

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, as the Member and Parliament are aware, we are constructing the 230-bed hospital, burns unit, training centre for 30 students at a site in Couva, the Couva Children's Hospital, as it is commonly referred to.

This is the first children's hospital of its kind that will also hold a burns unit, given the proximity to the Point Lisas Industrial Estate. We anticipate that works will be completed substantially in June/July of this year, and commissioning of that facility can begin in June/July 2015.

Mr. Speaker, to date there have been no cost overruns, and the project will be completed within cost, and we anticipate before the scheduled date. The hospital,

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[HON. DR. R. MOONILAL]

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Mr. Speaker, also has emergency rooms and a helipad, and that constitutes the initial budget for the project. So that we do not anticipate that there will be any cost overruns, and there are none so far, and we expect to finish within the completion time on or before October 2015.

Mr. Speaker, may I also add that the MRI centre and equipment that we have secured for this facility are among the best in the western hemisphere, and includes state-of-the-art technology. I am also pleased to announce that in the initial cost, we also provide for the digital technology that will create the first digital hospital in the Caribbean. [*Desk thumping*]

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

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard the Member say that there will be a burns care unit at the hospital, is that similar to the oncology centre?

**Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:** No, the oncology centre has a completely different profile, but the burns unit will cater much more for industrial accidents of that nature and, of course, it is in close proximity within two miles or so of the Point Lisas Industrial Estate. Why it was located there, Mr. Speaker: given the ambitious and courageous project of the Partnership Government to construct the Point Fortin Highway—the highway extends from San Fernando to Point Fortin— [*Desk thumping*] it is anticipated that via ground and air you will be within 30/40 minutes maximum in the event of an industrial accident in the southern peninsula or at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate.

### **National Energy Corporation (Steps taken)**

**Mr. Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Finance and the Economy:

In light of the recent revelation that in September 2011 a \$60 million wire transfer fraud occurred at the National Energy Corporation through its bankers, FCB, could the Minister outline the steps that have been taken since the incident occurred to investigate the matter and recover the funds?

**The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs (Sen. the Hon. Kevin Ramnarine):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me first of all start off by thanking the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West for filing this urgent question because it gives an opportunity to bring the information and the facts with regard to this matter to the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, of course, these matters have been—and, Mr. Speaker, in the

interest of accuracy and in the interest of giving all the facts, the answer would be a bit lengthy, so I put that up front. Mr. Speaker, as you know recently there has been major media coverage, and it has also reached the political platform, about a matter involving the illegal wire transfer of moneys from National Energy Corporation's bank account at First Citizens Bank, Point Lisas, in September 2011.

**1.45 p.m.**

However, Mr. Speaker, in looking at the question filed by the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West he refers to a recent revelation. I wish to inform the Parliament that this is not new news and this is not a recent revelation. In fact, the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West was a Member of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago when, at a post-Cabinet press conference on November 10, 2011, I addressed the entire media fraternity and the country and—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** You have two minutes and I think you should answer the question directly.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:**—reported this matter to the national media. It was carried on the front page of the *Express* newspaper on November 11, 2011. So this is not a recent revelation; neither was it a state secret. But I will go into the steps that have been taken so far, and I do not think two minutes will—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Well, you will have to circulate the rest of the answer.

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** I may have to circulate the answer. But, with regard to the recovery of moneys from Steadroy C.O. Benjamin & Co. of Antigua, West Indies, on Thursday, October 6, 2011, FCB returned to National Energy's bank account the sum of US \$4.6 million that was fraudulently transferred to the named recipient, Steadroy C.O. Benjamin & Co. of Antigua. National Energy was informed by FCB that the said sum had not reached the recipient's bank account with RBTT Caribbean Bank Limited, which allowed for FCB to recover the full sum.

With regard to the recovery of moneys from Andrew James Thomas Newman Incorporated in Dubai, both National Energy and FCB sought the assistance of the Trinidad and Tobago Central Bank to recover the moneys from the recipient, Andrew James Thomas Newman Incorporated. Subsequently, National Energy sought the assistance of the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the assistance of the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission to the United

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Kingdom to intervene on National Energy's behalf for the recovery of funds via diplomatic channels.

In October 2011, some four years ago, National Energy engaged the services of the law firm, Ince & Co. Middle East LLP to seek its interest in the proceedings in Dubai to have the money returned to its account. Criminal charges were brought against the recipient in Dubai, Andrew James Thomas Newman for money laundering in May 2014. That is a year ago. This was after the public prosecutor received a report in January 2014 from the committee, which had been appointed to investigate the matter in May 2013, two years ago. Civil proceedings were also brought by National Energy in Dubai against the recipient there. The civil matter in Dubai is ongoing.

On November 17, 2014 the court in Dubai issued a judgment against the accused and sentenced him to three years in prison. The public prosecutor advised that the decision to return the funds must be taken by Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates.

Following the advice of its Dubai attorneys, in April 2015, National Energy sought the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to liaise with the United Arab Emirates, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in an attempt to use diplomatic channels to have the money returned.

FCB, First Citizens Bank, is also assisting by communicating with the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago.

With regard to the recovery of moneys from Central International Company, LLC, Bank of America, Boston USA, in October 2011, four years ago, FCB engaged the services of the law firm Looney & Grassman LLP, based in Boston to represent its interest in the court action brought by FCB against the recipient in Boston and its bankers. NEC was represented in that matter by Cohan Rasnick and Myerson, LLP of Boston.

The decision was taken in 2012, some three years ago, to adopt mediation proceedings. In 2013, National Energy recovered US \$912,593 of the money illegally wire-transferred to Boston. And that equated to 73 per cent of that money.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot more information that I could read into the *Hansard* record with regard to this matter, but I will be willing to circulate this very lengthy statement for the benefit of the Parliament. Well, I wish to put on the record a couple points in my winding-up, and that is, that this matter was not a

state secret. This matter was a matter which was ventilated at a post-Cabinet press conference four years ago and that significant steps have been taken by both FCB and the National Energy Corporation to recover these moneys, and we feel confident that we will be able to recover those moneys that are currently frozen in Dubai.

And the final point I wish to make is that, the matter was reported to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and to the FIU. It was reported to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service on September 30, 2011 and the matter is still before the Police Service of Trinidad and Tobago. This, Mr. Speaker, concludes my answer. [*Desk thumping*]

**Mr. Warner:** Supplemental. Minister would you say that the initial error, the transfer, was it FCB's error or NEC's or both?

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** Mr. Speaker, with regard to that question, given that the matter is a subject of an ongoing investigation and it is the subject of legal action being taken in another jurisdiction, and who knows there may be other legal action being taken here in Trinidad and Tobago, I do not want to arrive at a judgment as to where the blame resides. What I will state are the facts that have been stated in the public domain and it is that the illegal wire transfers, and there were three of them, originated from the Point Lisas branch of the First Citizens Bank with regard to the NEC account there.

**Mr. Warner:** Has NEC taken any steps to prevent a reoccurrence of this matter?

**Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:** Steps have been taken, new procedures were put in place almost immediately. In terms of giving details as to what those steps are, one of those steps is that the wire transfers above a certain amount—and I do not want to give the actual amount right now for fear of being inaccurate—wire transfers above a certain amount, and it is a lot smaller, must have the direct authorization of the President of the company.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you.

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, we will ask that we defer the first question, I believe, to the Minister of Food Production, and the other Ministers are in place to respond.

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

**Agricultural Development Bank  
(Board of Directors)**

- 119.** Could the hon. Minister of Land and Marine Resources 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?

*Question, by leave, deferred.*

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

- 120.** **Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*) on behalf of Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey (*La Brea*) asked the hon. Minister of Land and Marine Resources:

Could the Minister state, what are the reasons for the inordinate delay in the renewal of agricultural leases in the Los Iros and Guapo areas?

**The Minister of Land and Marine Resources (Hon. Jairam Seemungal):**  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, the question is: What are the reasons for the inordinate delay in the renewal of agricultural leases in the Los Iros and Guapo areas?

Mr. Speaker, to the contrary, there has been no inordinate delay in the issuance of leases in these particular areas. There are three main areas that fall under the Los Iros or the Guapo area, which are:

- The Guapo Land Settlement;
- Guapo Lands;
- Los Iros Lands; and.
- The Cocal Ann Wells State Lands.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources, when formed in December 2013, had the task of reviewing all state lands which includes, the residential portfolio, the commercial portfolio, and the agriculture portfolio. One of the problems that the Ministry of Land and Marine Resources and for the Commissioner of State Lands office, in particular, have always faced, was that of manpower resources. With the limited manpower resources that we have, we have had to review the state lands renewal of over 20,000 applicants, many of whom were leases that expired some 15, 20 and 30 years ago. In these three main areas, which is the Guapo area, the Guapo estate has 75 parcels and of these, 21 parcels expired eight years ago. Eleven parcels expired some 20 years ago and one parcel expired 22 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, the challenge in having these not renewed for a very lengthy period of time is the records as to who are the new occupants or bringing the new occupants within the realm of agriculture and bringing the parcel within the parameters of cultivation that is up to 80 per cent for renewal. It is a big difference between issuance of lands for the first time and that of renewing of leases.

With respect to renewing of leases, the parcel has to be at least 75 to 80 percent cultivated. For new leases, the Commissioner has been very flexible, in that the lands can be up to 30 per cent cultivated with a programme of development which shows that the land can come into cultivation up to 80 per cent within the first five years. The Guapo Estate itself, the process is ongoing with respect to those applicants whose lease has expired and they are in the process, right now, at the Commissioner's office reviewing to see who can be renewed in this particular estate.

With respect to the RE, the state land in Los Iros, that is the RE Road state land project. There are 149 parcels in that particular project. Of this, 65 of them have valid leases. Cabinet has approved 21 parcels which are being executed at the Chief State Solicitor's office, and the remainder, 62 parcels are not tenanted and these parcels are being looked at by way of advertising so that we can then put the new farmers in these particular areas.

With respect to the Ann Wells Estate in the Guapo area, the Ann Wells Estate, the problem with the Ann Wells Estate is that there has been no approved survey plan for the purpose of the registration. One of the criteria by the Ministry of Legal Affairs is that you must have an approved survey plan for the purpose of regularization; if not, the lease itself will not be able to be executed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister thanks for your reply. I just wanted to know, given your Government's speed for getting things done these days, when can you say all these problems would be resolved?

**Hon. J. Seemungal:** That is a very, very good question, Mr. Speaker. I am certain that it will be completed within the next five years when we return. Over the next two months will be difficult, [*Desk thumping*] but I am sure that when we return all of these leases will be executed.

**Arima Secondary School  
(Details of)**

**151. Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*) asked the Minister of Education:

Could the Minister state:

- a) Who was the selected contractor, the cost and the duration for the renovation works at the Arima Secondary School?
- b) What was the cost and the duration for the renovation works at the Arima Secondary School?
- c) Who was the said contractor for the extension works for the Arima Secondary School, the cost of the said works and the durations of same?

**The Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Crosstalk*] The Arima Senior Secondary School was one of the schools—

**Mr. Speaker:** All right, just one minute. [*Crosstalk*] Yes, I know that this Question—but at the end of it I will just make an observation. Continue please.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** Yes, the Arima Central Secondary School is one of the numerous schools in the country which had been undergoing rapid dilapidation. In fact, 80 per cent, when we came into Government, 80 per cent of our schools were more than 50 years of age, and Arima Central Secondary is one that needed serious reconstruction and renovation.

So it came to our attention that the school needed some help very quickly and so we decided to embark during the summer holiday last year to deal with the numerous areas of concern within the school. Such extensive work, serious extensive work needed to be done so we broke down into five different areas, and the EFCL tendered for the five different areas hoping to get the job done within the seven weeks during the vacation period.

The names of the contractors that did the renovation work are as follows: For one part, Ultra Lift Company, contract sum was, \$1,182,500; for the second part, Price Master Company Limited, for \$1,467,250; the third part, D'Abadie Discount Hardware Limited, \$1,818,100; the fourth part, \$1 million, that is by Kallco; and the fifth part by Kallco, \$1,705,850.



**2.00 p.m.**

So the total for all the major renovation works during that vacation period was \$8,314,700. Most of it was completed during the vacation period. Some work needed to be done subsequent to that but they did it on weekends and on public holidays. So that is the answer for one part. And I have here numerous areas of work that needed to be done: bird proofing, air conditioning, polishing floors, thirty doors, 450 square metres of drywall partitions, et cetera; 300 metres of handrail, power receptacles, 17/20 square metres of tiling, et cetera. You want that?

**Mr. Warner:** No, I do not want that.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** All right. Okay. Well, such was the extensive—I have about seven pages of the work that had to be done that came up to the \$8 million, and I have the details of every aspect of it and the cost for every aspect of the job that was done.

The next part is: the principal and the Parent/Teachers' Association wanted an extra wing of the school to be constructed. In fact, it is almost like a new school—a big school again, secondary school. They wanted three buildings to be done. They wanted the old existing building which was termite-ridden to be demolished and construction of two blocks, two-storey buildings, housing auditorium, music room, biology laboratory, physics laboratory, chemistry laboratory and integrated science laboratory.

The type of contract that was done was a design/build contract according to the FIDIC Yellow Book.

The tender procedure was a selective competitive tendering, I am advised. The tender period opened on October 10, 2014 and closed on October 27, 2014—17 days. The companies invited were: Ramhit & Sons; Kallco, Fidel Chaves Industry and Maintenance Company; Shambrins General Contractors. Three out of the four contractors that made submissions were not found to be substantially responsive after the technical evaluation. The only substantially responsive contractor was Mootilal Ramhit & Sons. The tendered price was \$32,422,232.35, but I believe the negotiation went on and they reduced it down to \$31,797,232.35. Work has already started and the expected completion of that construction was about eight months.

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

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister, for your detailed response. But in your first answer you said there were five contractors and you gave the names of the five—

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** Five different jobs. [*Seated*]

**Mr. Warner:** Yes, five different jobs. And you said one was Price Master, one was D'Abadie Discount Hardware, one was Kallco, another was Kallco. Minister, are you aware that those four companies belong to one man?

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** No, I am not aware.

**Mr. Warner:** Kallco?

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** I am not aware. These were the tenders that were submitted to the EFCL. [*Seated*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Could you rise and respond?

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** Sorry. I am not aware of who are the directors of these companies. That is the matter that EFCL has. I am not aware of that statement that you made.

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

**Mr. Warner:** Okay, Mr. Minister. I am sending you the directors—later tonight I will send you all the directors.

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** Right, okay.

**Mr. Warner:** Next question. You said, of course, that the contractor for the extension was Ramhit & Sons and the charge was \$31 million. Is this Mootilal Ramhit & Sons?

**Hon. Dr. T. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you.

### **National Heritage Chaguanas (Details of)**

**152. Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*) asked the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development:

- A. In view of the present national concerns over the sale/lease of state lands from the national heritage at Chaguaramas, can the Minister state how much money has been paid to Ross Advertising to date and the purpose?

- B. Can the Minister advise how much money has been spent on legal fees to date and the amount received by each beneficiary?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development.

**The Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to carry out its mandate, the CDA developed a business strategy involving a number of things. One was to develop a master plan to guide the strategic development and growth of the peninsula. Another was to attract investors for specific investment projects. Another was to review the business operations and processes in order to ensure balanced sustainable development of the Chaguaramas peninsula. Another involved strengthening the organization itself. Another involved embracing the needs and aspirations of the nearby communities to pursue a strategy of inclusive development, and also to establish a new relationship with stakeholders to gain buy-in for the development and for the commercial utilization of the natural resources and built assets on the peninsula.

To achieve these objectives, the Chaguaramas Development Authority engaged Ross Advertising to develop and coordinate the Authority's rebranding, communication and marketing initiatives. The Authority has paid \$8,057,600.93 to Ross Advertising, broken down as follows:

- Administrative, \$162,952.28
- Rebranding, \$221,538.24
- Media advertising, \$4,322,617.25; and
- Events, which were turnkey operations, \$3,350,493.16, making the total that I mentioned.

Expenditure in the area of media advertising, as you would know, Mr. Speaker, involves payments to various newspapers, television and radio stations on which the advertising firm derives a percentage. Through this initiative the following objectives were achieved: communication on the development thrust and plans for Chaguaramas and the vision of what Chaguaramas could be; development and implementation of a new logo that embodies the new role and aspirations of the CDA. It helped to build awareness of opportunities for investment jobs and entrepreneurship in Chaguaramas and it helped to build the confidence of stakeholders and investors. It communicated and helped to build awareness of the purpose, objectives and benefits of the master development plan.

It was necessary for the CDA to retain the services of an advertising agency to assist with its rebranding, marketing and advertising initiatives as it is currently in the process of developing an internal marketing and communications department to assist in these areas. However, these are not yet fully operational.

To date, the strategy pursued by the Authority has resulted in secured investments totalling just over TT \$2 billion in the non-energy sector, as part of the development thrust for Chaguaramas and as part of the diversification thrust for the country. In addition, between the experience of visitors to Chaguaramas in their thousands on a regular basis, and the information through advertising of what is being done at Chaguaramas and where development is headed, we have been able to address the misinformation propaganda and outright sabotage of the development plans for the Chaguaramas area.

There was a question on legal fees? Did you ask that already?

**Mr. Warner:** It is still there.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** On the legal fees, \$3,635,646.54 was the cost of legal fees. I am personally reluctant to read out the names of the law firms, but given the need to answer the question transparently I will mention the names: Amirah Rahaman, total, \$56,666.66; Ashmead Ali & Company, total, \$1,496,754.88; Dalton's, total, \$50,000; Devesh Maharaj and Associates, total, \$112,233.50; Girwar & Deonarine, \$22,000; Gregory Carter-Amore, \$19,010; Jason K. Mootoo, total, \$468,000; Michael A. A. Quamina, total, \$70,000; Pollonais & Blanc, total, \$245,981.50; Reginald T. A. Armour, Senior Counsel, \$990,000; Rishi A. Dass, total, \$20,000; Russell Martineau SC, total \$85,000.

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

**Mr. Warner:** Supplemental. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, with regard to the advertising agency and the laudable work it did, I am not asking about that. I am asking you, what was the tendering process to choose an advertising agency. And for (b)—

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** No, that was not the question. [*Seated*]

**Mr. Warner:** No, but you see, I say here: Can the Minister say how much money has been paid to Ross Advertising and the purpose. And I am asking, therefore—[*Interruption*] Minister, was there a tendering process to select the advertising agency?

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** I really do not know. I do not know what was the process. I just got the information.

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

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** Mr. Speaker, I assume that there was a tendering process because that is normally how the CDA does things. The question you asked on the tendering process was asked on another question and I have the information for you. But I do not have the issue on that.

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

**Mr. Warner:** Same question, Mr. Speaker; same question (b): Does the CDA have a legal team of its own?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** No, it does not have a legal team of its own but the legal company that handles most of the matters related to leases is Ashmead Ali & Company. Many of the lawyers who were mentioned there were for specific projects or specific instances in which legal advice was needed.

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

**Chaguaramas Development Authority  
(Details of Guave Road Rehabilitation Project)**

**153. Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*) asked the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development:

With respect to the Chaguaramas Development Authority for the Guave Road Rehabilitation Project, can the Minister state:

- a. how much money has been approved;
- b. the contractor; and
- c. the procurement policy used for selection?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development.  
[*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development (Sen. The Hon. Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie):** Cabinet approved expenditure of TT \$32,702,028.81 for the rehabilitation of 1.2 kilometres of existing roadway, widening of the roadway to two lanes, including the construction of tram and cycle track on

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the inner perimeter of Guave Road roadway, and ancillary works on September 03, 2014.

Following a competitive bidding process in which six companies submitted bids, the contract for the rehabilitation of Guave Road, including construction of a tram cycle and track was awarded to Kallco Limited at the same cost mentioned in the Cabinet approval. Kallco was the lowest bidder and the second bid was \$46 million—second lowest.

The policy and procedure used for selection is in accordance with the CDA's tendering policy. Seven letters of invitation were issued on July 11, 2014 by the office of the corporate secretary and tender packages were available for collection from the CDA head office from July 14, 2014. Site visit: A mandatory site visit was conducted on July 17, 2014 at 9.00 a. m. by the CDA. Evaluation was conducted by a competent in-house team and was completed on August 12, 2014. The closing date for submission of the tenders was August 04.

The criterion for evaluation: examination to check whether the bidders had submitted all the documents and information required by the bidding document; ensuring a bid security of \$20,000 in the form of a bank guarantee or a draft. The tender was a one-envelope evaluation process consisting of a combined technical proposal and a cost of services weighted at 70 and 30 percent respectively.

If the proponent did not obtain a minimum score of 50 per cent, their firm was disqualified from advancing to be further evaluated on the cost proposed. No bid was disqualified in the first round.

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

The technical criteria include experience, 25 points; resources, 10 points; methodology, 25 points; corporate social responsibility plan, 10 points; that constitutes 70, and the cost score, 30 per cent. Negotiations took place on August 25, 2014, between Arvin Kalloo, Managing Director of Kallco Limited, and Tricia Dyer, Corporate Secretary of the CDA for the execution and determination of the final contract.

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

**Mr. Warner:** With regard to Kallco, that lucky contractor, will you say that his work to date is on schedule up to now at this point?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:** I am not sure of the details to give—what can I say—a clear answer, but I think that there have been some delays on the project because of WASA lines that had to be removed—were they WASA?

**Hon. Member:** And T&TEC.

**Sen. The Hon. Dr. B. Tewarie:**—and T&TEC lines that had to be removed. I think that there is a delay.

#### ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have granted leave to the hon. Prime Minister to make a personal explanation, however I seek your leave to revert to this item of business later in the proceedings. Do I have your leave?

*Assent indicated.*

#### WASTE RECYCLING BILL, 2015

Bill to provide for the establishment of a Waste Recycling Management Authority and a Resource Recovery Fund to facilitate the efficient coordination of the implementation of a waste recycling system that would protect human health and the environment and matters related thereto [*The Minister of the Environment and Water Resources*]; read a first time.

*Motion made:* That the next stage be taken at a later stage of the proceedings. [*Sen. The Hon. G. Singh*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE

#### **Insurance Bill, 2015** **(Extension of time)**

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transport.

**The Minister of Transport (Hon. Stephen Cadiz):** Mr. Speaker, having regard to the interim report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Insurance Bill, 2015, I beg to move that the committee be granted an extension of one week in order to complete its work and to submit a final report by May 28, 2015.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**WASTE RECYCLING BILL, 2015.**

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister of the Environment and Water Resources.

**The Minister of the Environment and Water Resources (Sen. The Hon. Ganga Singh):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] I beg to move:

That a Bill to provide for the establishment of a Waste Recycling Management Authority and a Resource Recovery Fund to facilitate the efficient coordination of the implementation of a waste recycling system that would protect human health and the environment and matters related thereto, be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, waste is a problem that plagues all societies, and Trinidad and Tobago is no different. T&T, as a small twin-island state with a fragile ecosystem and competing land uses, is plagued with a series of solid waste management issues and the problems associated with improper waste management.

The phenomenal growth in waste production in Trinidad and Tobago, brought about by our increasing standard of living, has unfortunately not been mirrored by the advancements in waste management. There exist no segregation of garbage, very little reuse and recycling of waste, limited landfill capacities, weak legislative and management systems, high costs and a lack of education of the general public relating to alternative waste management such as recycling.

Mr. Speaker, the statistics for waste generation in Trinidad and Tobago are alarming. According to statistics on solid waste generation, the generation rate of garbage for the city of Port of Spain is 1.54 kilograms per inhabitant per day. Every month we dump 50 million plastic bottles and one million glass bottles. That is, 600 million plastic bottles and 12 million glass bottles each year. The average person generates approximately four pounds or 2.2 kilograms of waste per day, which amounts to 1,548 tons of waste reaching waste disposal sites per day. According to SWMCOL the average lifespan for a landfill is 20 years, however most of the waste disposal sites in Trinidad and Tobago have been in operation since the 1960s. And, Mr. Speaker, I will go on to detail those nine landfill sites and the state of those sites later in my presentation.

The problem here is that we generate a great deal of waste, which has to be disposed somewhere and in a manner that will not have adverse effects on our environment. About 95 per cent of all domestic, commercial, institutional and industrial waste are disposed of at municipal dump sites, making landfill the



primary means of waste disposal in Trinidad and Tobago. A close look at landfills and dumps in both islands will show heaps of grass cuttings, food waste, plastic containers, old microwaves, car batteries and even hazardous waste since there is no segregation of waste in households. This results in unsafe conditions on-site as well as the potential for ground water infiltration, oceanic contamination, bad odours, water quality contamination and the release of hazardous gases into the atmosphere. Apart from this, large quantities of waste are also improperly disposed of and, as a result, pollute our streets, drains, rivers, beaches and other environs.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the Beetham Landfill site which accounts for 65 per cent of this country's waste will reach its capacity within the next few years, thus an alternative site or method of disposal will have to be considered. Apart from this availability of land, landfill sites selection is hampered by public concerns about the environment, property value and nuisance problems. Let us face it, nobody wants a landfill in their neighbourhood. Not in my backyard.

Hazardous waste is also a category of waste that is increasing in Trinidad and Tobago and is becoming more and more difficult to dispose of. Most people haphazardly dispose of batteries, fluorescent lights, needles, cell phones, radios, computers and even television sets via municipal waste disposal systems, being completely unaware of the fact that they contain hazardous substances like toxic mercury, cadmium, nickel, arsenic and lead.

Mr. Speaker, I had initial discussions with the Minister of Science and Technology, and it is arising out of those discussions we intend to have a specific programme to deal with the question of e-waste in the same way, as I will indicate later on, we will deal with the beverage containers.

Mr. Speaker, one of ways to address this issue of management of hazardous waste is through the introduction of product stewardship. This concept follows a premise that manufacturers themselves are responsible and required to pay for collecting, recycling and disposing of designated products after their consumers are through with them. Product stewardship designed to encourage manufacturers to create less toxic products, and reducing package waste is well established in countries in Europe, Canada, Japan, South Korea and several states in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, many types of waste generated such as glass, plastic, tyres and e-waste have the capacity to be recycled into useful products. Organic waste can be composted and used for agriculture and landscaping rather than being discarded. I

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was told only yesterday, in the other place, that the spouse of one of our Senators got up early to go down to Mayaro to collect sargasso weed in order to utilize it as composting for fertilization of their family garden. So efforts to divert waste from dumps and landfills have been embarked upon by private companies, a minimal number of communities and non-governmental organizations mainly in the form of recycling initiatives.

These initiatives have had very little impact on our waste management systems due to the lack of legal supporting frameworks, costs involved, lack of education and an alarmingly increasing rate of waste generation over the years. For some communities, this dilemma has already reached crisis levels, for others the crisis still looms in the future. In any case, the problems associated with solid waste generation and management will not disappear and without action they are likely to become worse; therefore we need to prolong the lifespans of our landfills. One way of doing this is by implementing the proper landfilling practices as we mentioned earlier. The other way is to reduce the amount of waste that reaches the landfills through recycling.

Analysis has shown that well over 80 per cent of residential waste is recyclable and that the residential stream represents two-thirds of overall waste generated in Trinidad and Tobago, thus the solution to waste management issues must be initiated now. We are already late in that initiation process. A system of waste management that incorporates the principles of the four Rs—reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink—it looks at the aspect of waste diversion with different waste types and processes required for special collection, transportation and final disposal identified.

Mr. Speaker, this Government, cognizant of its environmental responsibilities, has moved swiftly to develop an integrated comprehensive National Waste Recycling Policy which was approved by the Cabinet in February 2015, and we are now, today, bringing legislation to deal with waste management which will result in the establishment of a Waste Recycling Management Authority.

### **2.30 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, but whilst we engage in the policy position and in the drafting of legislation, there was action. Parallel with this Government's initiation of policy and legislative measures, we sought to initiate a number of pilot programmes that would set the platform and guide recycling and resource recovery initiatives. Non-governmental organizations supported by the Green Fund have successfully demonstrated beverage container segregation in public spaces, and have

experience in educating the public about recycling.

The “National Beverage Containers Cleanup Project” which was started in 2014 and aimed at removing all indiscriminately disposed beverage containers from the environment. It was a collaborative effort between the Environmental Management Authority, the CEPEP Company Limited, the Solid Waste Management Company Limited and the Institute of Marine Affairs. The IMA was responsible for training and data analysis. The project collected close to 1,000 tonnes of beverage containers from across the country between April and December 2014. Our administration, the People’s Partnership administration, through this project, has invested in machinery and equipment for undertaking resource recovery, plastic shredders, tyre shredders—[*Interruption*]

The learning from this project revealed that the public is keenly interested in what is taking place with the indiscriminate disposal for waste and has been enquiring about how they could get involved. This is an indicator of the public’s positive attitude towards recycling initiatives aimed at improving the quality of their environment. There is widespread public interest in getting involved in the proper disposal of beverage containers once an avenue is provided for their engagement. Improper disposal of tyres is also a menace that plagues the environment, contributing to flooding and providing a site for the breeding of mosquitoes that leads to ailments such as dengue fever and more recently, the chikungunya virus.

Mr. Speaker, it was proposed—and being implemented—that a new supported pilot project be embarked upon to engage the public in sorting and collecting recyclable solid waste from their homes and offices and dropping them off at designated public collection sites. The EMA will soon initiate the recyclable solid waste collection project. The primary objective is to prepare the country for the passage of the EMA solid waste rules and this Waste Recycling Management Authority Bill.

The project shall establish drop-off collection sites and depots for sorting. Additionally, tyres and e-waste from the public will be collected, thus reducing the number of tyres and e-waste entering the environment, creating physical and health hazards. Primary and secondary schools across the country will also be engaged in the collection initiative. This should engender an attitude of conservation and will encourage the public to sort recyclable waste and return to established collection depots. A clean-up component will also be embarked upon concurrently with the collection depots to continue to maintain a clean

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environment and also to provide an indicator of whether the public's attitude to littering has changed.

This initiative will be underpinned by a national education programme with respect to waste management, waste reduction and recycling. I understand that the EMA will offer an environmental seal to private sector companies that voluntarily participate in this programme. Yet, in all of this, we must recognize that the people of Trinidad and Tobago can and must play an integral role in cleaning up Trinidad and Tobago by taking responsibility for the waste we generate.

It is expected that this project will result in a significant reduction in the amount of recyclable solid waste inclusive of beverage containers, e-waste and tyres in public spaces, and thereby result in an improvement of the overall health of the environment and a reduction of flooding, diseases and unsightly aesthetics. It is our hope, Mr. Speaker, that this project will foster a change in attitudes to littering and move towards that of conservation and recycling—the result being improved social well-being and an increased sense of ownership and responsibility for one's surroundings.

So, it is this precursor to the Waste Recycling Management Authority Bill—it is a practical precursor to the Waste Recycling Management Authority Bill and provides a necessary practical model for the kind of management and systems to be introduced prior to the Waste Recycling Management Authority legislation being put in place and also post. So it provides a kind of model and a paradigm for implementation down the road. So at this stage, I would like to deal with this Waste Recycling Management Authority Bill, which is to provide for efficient coordination and implementation of our waste recycling system.

In the National Waste Recycling Policy passed by Cabinet in 2015, one would appreciate and the policy speaks about the administrative silos that take place within the public sector, and therefore it gives rise to gaps in the management of the solid waste management system. At page 5, it states and I quote:

“The administrative framework for waste management in Trinidad and Tobago is therefore complex with two Ministries (Local Government; and the Environment and Water Resources); one (1) state limited liability company (SWMCOL); one (1) statutory authority (EMA) and the THA all having responsibility for waste management. There is no clear delineation of function and a lack of coordination, leading to confusion as to which entity has lead responsibility for waste management in the country. The situation has resulted in duplication of efforts and wastage of resources as well as the creation of

administrative and management gaps in the system when none of the entities take responsibility for certain functions.”

So, it is an administrative malady, it is an abdication of responsibility in a real sense; it is an over-capacity in the landfills; it is a series of management issues that we need to deal with. And the panacea being suggested is the development of a waste management, a waste recycling management authority, in order to surmount the threshold in order to deal with the issues at hand.

Mr. Speaker, the Waste Recycling Management Authority will have the following functions:

- i. to “develop and execute policies and programmes for the efficient and cost effective implementation of an integrated waste management system that emphasises waste recycling, with beverage containers being the first waste stream to be addressed followed by other waste streams which pose harm to the environment;”

Already—and I will deal with it later on in my presentation—we have before Cabinet a waste stream of tyres. Then, we will deal with e-waste, then we have to deal with medical waste. Each will have its own subset of regulations and a management plan.

- ii. “implement provisions under national laws and regulations governing waste management;
- iii. make recommendations for the rationalisation of policies, laws, regulations and administrative arrangements for the management of waste in Trinidad and Tobago;
- iv. “establish”—and—“administer”—a—“Resource Recovery Fund...The fund will be financed via the deposition fees, tipping fees, disposal taxes, penalties and fees, and other fiscal measures established in relation to the...Waste Recycling Policy and from external sources such as multilateral donor agencies and Governments;
- v. collaborate with relevant government agencies and stakeholders for”—the—“management of waste;
- vi. assist each municipal corporation, borough and city of Trinidad and Tobago and the Tobago House of Assembly with the establishment and implementation of appropriate management arrangements for waste management including the development of area-specific waste

management strategies and plans that focus on recycling;

- vii. establish multi-stakeholder management committees as required to coordinate and facilitate the management of area-specific waste management strategies and plans. These would include representatives of all...the government agencies with responsibilities for waste management as well as other key stakeholders from civil society and the private sector;”

So, area-specific. The area specific with the sargasso seaweed is area-specific to Mayaro and Manzanilla and perhaps Tobago also. So that therefore, there will be waste management plans specific to that;

- viii. “collaborate with existing national committees with responsibilities and interests relevant to waste management;
- ix. strengthen structures and mechanisms for effective inter-agency and inter-sectoral communication, collaboration and coordination.”

Mr. Speaker, in order to provide the necessary policy guidelines on the roles and functions of the Waste Recycling Management Authority for the drafting of the enabling legislative framework, the Government has also approved a National Waste Recycling Policy, which I referred to previously. Mr. Speaker, the objectives of this policy are:

- (i) “Protection of human health and environment
- (ii) Maximization of resource use efficiency and value recovery from wastes
- (iii) Reduction by 60% of the quantity of waste requiring final disposal by the year 2020, based on a 2010 baseline”—in the waste characterization study
- (iv) “Minimization of litter
- (v) Creation of a culture of waste minimization
- (vi) Enhancement of economic development by the creation of novel business opportunities in the reduction, collection, handling and recycling of waste”—and—
- (vii) “Creation of a culture of shared responsibility for waste management among government, producers, distributors and consumers”

Mr. Speaker, one of the major policy directives contained in the draft National Waste Recycling Policy includes:

- the establishment of—“a priority list of products and materials that can be reused and recycled;”—and
- the establishment of “return/deposit systems where feasible for recyclable and reusable materials (e.g. paper, plastic, metals, rubber, organics) and products (e.g. beverage containers, car batteries, tyres, electronic equipment)

**2.45 p.m.**

Secondly, for the establishment of a system of kerbside source separation of recyclable and reusable materials ensuring that there are adequate design standards for tamper-proof disposal bins.

Thirdly, to encourage household composting where practical, by providing 50 per cent of the cost of one composting bin per household, with the expenditure being sourced from the Resource Recovery Fund.

Fourthly, establish a network of waste-collection centres and materials recovery facilities to allow the public to drop off recyclable and reusable materials, that is bulk or toxic in nature and which would make kerbside pickup impractical.

Fifthly, to establish a phased prohibition of the landfilling of recyclable and reusable materials and products that have been listed and are being managed under the national system for waste recycling.

Six, encourage product substitution by providing fiscal incentives such as tax breaks, removal of import duty and value added tax on products composed of at least 70 per cent recyclable material.

Seven, provide grants from the Resource Recovery Fund, for the development of novel products and materials made of recycled materials.

Mr. Speaker, you have a lot of mats for kitchens that can be utilized from recycled materials. When we come into the area of the shredding of tyres, we can see there are a series of products that can be created from the recycled tyre material.

Eight, provide tax breaks on equipment to be used for the establishment of recycling plants.

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Nine, provide incentives to encourage local small business development, in the refurbishment and marketing of used products, such as computers, cell phones, televisions, refrigerators, stoves, washing machines and other household appliances and electronics, to extend their usability and life.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we are taking a very holistic approach to this concept of recycling and reuse. I envisage that once the Bill is enacted, and the regulations that accompany this Bill,—which would be laid and which are in the final stages before the Legislative Review Committee—are laid in the Parliament for negative resolution, the Waste Recycling Authority would then as a matter of priority, address the vexing issue of the environmentally sound management of waste tyres.

Mr. Speaker, this is a car crazy country. It is estimated that approximately 800,000 used tyres are generated in this country on an annual basis. Discarded tyres represent a range of environmental and public health risks. In Trinidad and Tobago waste tyres routinely end up in our watercourses, blocking natural flow and contribute to the annual problem of flooding. Waste tyres provide a suitable habitat for disease-carrying vectors, such as mosquitoes and also create a significant fire risk. The problems associated with the disposal of old tyres are associated with their enduring durable and bulky nature. Some of the problems that have been identified by SWMCOL, associated with landfilling of waste tyres, include scrapped tyres in landfills do not deteriorate and provide breeding grounds for mosquitoes and rodents.

The bulky nature of the tyres threatens the design life of the landfill site. Burning practices by salvagers, for the recovery of copper wire, exacerbate fire episodes when they spread to an area where tyres are landfilled, which is compounded by the harmful emissions of dioxins when the tyres burn. Buried tyres keep returning to the landfill surface, as the buried waste deteriorates, thus creating problems.

Given the health and environmental issues, Mr. Speaker, associated with the disposal of waste tyres, it is critical that an immediate short-term solution be determined for the environmentally sound disposal of waste tyres. Soon, within the week, within this week I will present, for the consideration of Cabinet, a proposal that I believe will be the most practical and immediate solution to the problem of the disposal of waste tyres—the use of the waste tyres in road paving through its use in the manufacture of rubberized asphalt. [*Desk thumping*]



Mr. Speaker, against that background of what we are doing practically, and what we are doing in the policy measure, and now we have translated the National Environment Policy and the Waste Recycling Policy into a concrete measure and crystalized into legislation, it is timely now that I move to the legislation.

**Hon. Member:** Ganga, you have 14 minutes.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Forty?

**Hon. Member:** One-four.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was here in my last incarnation, and so I was accustomed to 75 minutes. [*Laughter*] Nevertheless, and then in the other place, 60 minutes, but nevertheless, I will compress my presentation. I will abide by the new Standing Orders, I have to.

Mr. Speaker, the Waste Recycling Bill, 2015 comprises of eight parts and 34 clauses. It is not a lengthy Bill. It consists of six sections and treats—in Part I, the preliminary stage—mainly with the definitions of the terms used in the Bill, and the objects of the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, the objects of the Bill are quite clear, very, very, clear. Part II, deals with establishment and organization of the Waste Recycling Management Authority, and comprises of nine sections and provides for the incorporation of the Waste Recycling Management Authority as a body corporate. Mr. Speaker, in clause 7 of the Bill it says:

“There is hereby established a body corporate to be known as “the Waste Recycling Management Authority” which shall be governed by a Board of Directors consisting of the persons appointed in accordance with this section.

The President shall appoint —

- (a) a Chairman; and
- (b) eleven other members drawn from the following disciplines and groups, namely:
  - (i) waste management;
  - (ii) environmental;
  - (iii) health;

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- (iv) engineering;
- (v) business;
- (vi) manufacturing;
- (vii) public administration;
- (viii) economics;
- (ix) law;
- (x) non-profit environmental and non-governmental organisations;”
- (xi) Representatives of “the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers’ Association; and”
- (xii) A representative of—“the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce.”

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note the incorporation of not only members from the business and manufacturing sector, but in addition to members and representation from the business and manufacturing sector, there is stated specifically, the representation of the Manufacturers’ Association and the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, this arose out of significant consultation with members of the manufacturing sector, members of the chamber of commerce and all the players in the space, in the public space in Trinidad and Tobago, dealing with the manufacture of products, dealing with the manufacture of beverage containers.

We have had continuous consultations with representatives from Ansa McAl, Blue Waters and Pepsi, the Supermarkets Association, Nestle, Caribbean Bottlers Limited, Coca Cola, SM Jaleel, the TTMA, chambers of commerce. Throughout that consultative process, we have been able to come up with the Beverage Containers Regulations, which will subsequently be laid in the Parliament.

I say this because we are continuously engaged in this process, and there is a meeting scheduled for Friday morning with these participants to further enhance the Beverage Containers Regulations, in order for there to be that kind of public sector/private sector partnership, in the disposal and recycling of waste in this country. I want to commend all members of the various teams, Mr. Speaker, for the manner in which they have participated. They recognized the threat that the

beverage containers pose to the environment, and all the manufacturers, all the importers have participated in this process.

Out of that process, there evolved the necessity for a larger waste recycling authority, because the Beverage Containers Bill, you will recall, Mr. Speaker, when it came, we recognized that there was a conceptual flaw in it and that, therefore, there was need for a larger waste recycling authority, and where the beverage container will be but a subset of the larger waste recycling activity required in Trinidad and Tobago.

So what will emerge out of this is that the Beverage Containers Regulations—regulations dealing with beverage containers—is a work completed with public sector/private sector participation. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will indicate all those who participated, but I have indicated the corporate enterprise, but it is the personnel that makes policy. I want to thank all those, and we will continue the collaboration and stakeholder consultation with them on that aspect. So, therefore, at the level of the body corporate, we have included the private sector, and gave significant element and significant say to the private sector in this Bill.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, Part III deals with the functions and powers of the Authority. Part IV deals with finances, which deals with the—Part V deals with the Resource Recovery Fund. Now, this is a new innovation in the context of waste management in this country. This consists of six sections Mr. Speaker. This part of the Bill provides for the establishment of a resource recovery fund, which will be independent from the operational finances of the Authority. The resources of the fund are to be used specifically, for operating deposit refund systems and other incentives to encourage recycling. The fund would be a trust fund, governed by a five-member board of trustees, whose membership would be drawn from the board of directors of the Authority, and include the members from the business and manufacturing sector.

So throughout the process, you have that public sector/private sector partnership in order to deal with this whole question of waste recycling and management in the country.

The establishment—there will also be a trust fund which would address the concerns of the private sector, about the economic impact of the proliferation of importers of international brands. So what you have in this country, you have people who manufacture products here, but you have people who also import. So there is a parallel system, and with the deposit refund system, we will be able to

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deal with that.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides for the establishment and general governance of the Resource Recovery Fund. The provisions in the Bill have been drafted in a manner that will allow for the future development of a deposit refund system, for other recyclable materials such as waste tyres, used car batteries, et cetera.

**3.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, you would be aware that in this country you could have your education, you could have the enforcement, you could deal with the economics and you could justify the existence of the education—the awareness and the economics—but if you do not have enforcement then there is no follow-through. A good example of that is that everybody takes note of the breathalyser now, because not only are the fines punitive, but there is enforcement.

As part of the enforcement process, I want to thank the Minister of National Security and the Commissioner of Police for extending the enforcement arm of the EMA in providing a larger complement of environmental police to deal with the pollution, [*Desk thumping*] to deal with the noise levels and to deal with general enforcement in the country. One of the reasons why the moratorium on hunting, which will end in October, has been successful, it is because of enforcement. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, so compliance is required and you would have the authorized officers, and they would be required to take a warrant to go into people's premises for inspections and so on. So that you need a warrant to gain entry, and it provides all the natural justice requirements so to do.

**Mr. Speaker:** You have three more minutes, hon. Minister.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Okay, thank you. I am guided, Mr. Speaker. So, I am dealing with this issue of the question of enforcement. If you seek redress then the appropriate appellate body is the Environmental Commission. So that appeals from this legislation will go towards the Environmental Commission.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the compliance allows for, that if you breach the regulations, you have in clause 39(4)—if you breach the regulations, then you can be fined up to \$5 million and with imprisonment up to two years. So that the environment, there is a significant focus on the environment. There is a gap in our system, and we are now dealing with the governance architecture for dealing with the coordination of the recycling and the waste management and recycling in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, this is much-needed legislation. It is legislation that is much needed and, as I have indicated, we have already started several pilot projects as to how this model will emerge. So with these few words, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (Hon. Ramona Ramdial):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to present on the Waste Recycling Bill. Mr. Speaker, we generate too much waste in our little country, too much, and the SWMCOL report in 2011 reported that the average person generates approximately four pounds of waste per day. This amounts to approximately 1,000 tonnes of waste that reaches the landfill sites per day. Apart from this, large quantities of waste are also improperly disposed of and, as a result, pollute our streets, drains, rivers, beaches and other areas.

The most common disposal method of solid waste is the landfilling method. In Trinidad and Tobago, this is our main method of final disposal. In light of this, the lifespan of a landfill—there is a certain amount of capacity that a landfill can accommodate and, therefore, there is a lifespan for accepting waste. The Beetham Landfill accounts for 65 per cent of this country's waste and it will reach its capacity within the next few years; thus an alternative site or method would have to be considered soon.

Trinidad and Tobago implemented a National Integrated Waste Management System Policy which would incorporate all the component parts to establish a waste system that moves all waste from generation source to final disposal. So, under the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, we have begun to incorporate an integrated approach to waste disposal.

Mr. Speaker, waste management incorporates the principles of the four Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink. In light of this, I want to make reference to a programme that aired on cable not too long ago, which caused some concern nationally in Trinidad and Tobago here, and that TV programme is called NatGeo, where they speak and comment on different countries around the world with respect to the environment and waste disposal and all of that.

They mentioned in that report and they based their comments on a World Bank report which reported, of course, that in Trinidad and Tobago an individual produces at least 32 pounds of waste per day based on the GDP per capita of our

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country. That information was totally wrong, untrue, coming from that particular source on that TV programme that aired on cable. Of course, it caused a little panic here in Trinidad and Tobago, but I understand that the Ministry of Local Government and SWMCOL soon corrected that piece of misinformation and, as I said earlier, according to the SWMCOL report of 2011, an individual produces four pounds of waste per day.

It is still too much, as I have said earlier, but definitely that false reporting, I want to dispel that and use, of course, this Parliament to dispel that piece of information that put us in a negative light with respect to dealing with our waste disposal and, of course, programmes to incorporate and to integrate a waste recycling and waste disposal approach.

So, Mr. Speaker, against this backdrop, because for many, many years before during the previous regime's time as the Government, they totally ignored the environment, and I make no bones about that. They ignored putting in and implementing proper projects and plans; they ignored the fact that environmental legislation was needed in every sector to regulate and manage waste and, therefore, with the People's Partnership Government coming into power in 2010, our leader and our Prime Minister had the vision for the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources and for that, I must commend the hon. Prime Minister this afternoon for her future [*Desk thumping*] and forward-thinking approach with respect to the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources and, therefore, this Waste Recycling Bill has been long overdue, long in coming.

I want to reiterate the importance of the environment and environmental sustainability to the well-being of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, as my line Minister reiterated earlier, this Bill consists of eight parts and 34 clauses. Part I, the preliminary part consists of six clauses and that treats mainly with the definition of the terms used in the Bill and the objects of the Bill.

Part II—Establishment and Organization of the Waste Recycling Management Authority, and that consists of nine clauses and provides for the incorporation of the Waste Recycling Management Authority as a body corporate; the appointment, composition and revocation of the appointment of members of the board of directors of the Authority to conduct meetings of the board of directors; appointment of personnel of the Authority including a managing director and a corporate secretary; appointment of a committee, working groups and advisory council. In this regard, it is to be noted that this provision provides for the appointment of the Beverage Container Advisory Committee under the Beverage Container Regulations, the composition of which has been the subject of

numerous consultations with stakeholders. As my line Minister said earlier, these are still ongoing.

The last part, Mr. Speaker, Part VI deals with the annual reporting to the Minister and through the Minister to the Parliament on the actions of the Authority to implement the National Waste Recycling Programme and financial statements.

Part III of the Bill deals with the functions and powers of the Authority. It consists of three clauses, and this part of the Bill will provide for the general functions and the powers of the Authority as well as the procedure for the revision of the National Waste Recycling Policy.

Part IV deals with the finances and that consists of four clauses and provides for financial accountability and transparency of the operational finances of the Authority. It includes provisions for borrowing, financial reporting, investment of moneys, auditing of the Authority's accounts by the Auditor General by virtue of the designation of the financing of the Authority as public accounts for the purpose of section 116 of the Constitution and, of course, the submission of estimates.

Part V of the Bill talks about the Resource Recovery Fund which is a very important aspect of the Bill and, of course, later on with the implementation of it moving forward. This part of the Bill consists of six clauses and it provides for the establishment of a Resource Recovery Fund which would be independent from the operational finances of the Authority. The resources of the fund are to be used specifically for operating deposit refund systems and other incentives to encourage recycling. This fund would be a trust fund governed by a five-member board of trustees whose membership would be drawn from the board of directors of the Authority and include the members from the business and the manufacturing sector.

The establishment of the trust fund would address the concerns of the private sector about the economic impacts of the proliferation of importers of international brands. The details on how this issue would be addressed would be further elaborated when the Beverage Containers Regulations are presented to the LRC.

This Bill provides for the establishment and the general governance of the Resource Recovery Fund. The provisions in the Bill have, therefore, been drafted in a manner that would allow for the future development of a deposit refund system for other recyclable material such as waste tyres, used car batteries, et

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cetera. So, Mr. Speaker, it is just not confined to the beverage container, but to other types of waste later on.

Part VI of the Bill, of course, incorporates compliance and enforcement. This consists of two clauses and it provides for the appointment of authorized officers that would be responsible for the enforcement of the provisions of the Bill. This part of the Bill also treats with entry into premises for inspections and the conditions under which a warrant should be sought to gain entry.

The regulations part empowers the Minister with responsibility for the environment to make regulations. It is under these provisions that the Beverage Container Bill will be effected. It is to be noted that this part of the Bill has been drafted in a manner that would allow the Minister to create regulations to manage other recyclable waste streams.

The last part of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, speaks to the miscellaneous component of the Bill and, of course, the most critical provision contained in this part of the Bill is the extension of the appellate jurisdiction of the Environmental Commission to adjudicate appeals of decisions made by the Waste Recycling Authority.

**3.15 p.m.**

So, Mr. Speaker, it is a very comprehensive Bill, of course, easily understood by all those who intend to, of course, be part of it and be part of the structure in moving forward in dealing with waste disposal in Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, against this backdrop under which, or where we have brought the Bill, we have to talk about the policy that drove us into this piece of legislation, and I speak about, of course, the National Waste Recycling Policy which, of course, Government has approved.

The objectives of this policy are: the protection of human health and the environment; the maximization of resources used, efficiency and value recovery from waste; reduction by 60 per cent of the quantity of waste requiring final disposal by the year 2020 based on the 2010 baseline in the waste characterization study; the minimization of litter; the creation of a culture of waste minimization; the enhancement of economic development by the creation of novel business opportunities in the reduction, collection, handling and recycling of waste; the creation of a culture of shared responsibility for waste management among Government, producers, distributors, and consumers.



Mr. Speaker, some of the major policy directives in the draft policy contain, or speak of, establishing a priority list of products and materials that can be reused and recycled to establish a return or deposit systems, where feasible, for recyclable and reusable materials, for example: paper, plastic, metals, rubber and organics, and products, for example: beverage containers, car batteries, tyres and electronic equipment; to also establish a system for kerbside source separation of recyclable and reusable materials, ensuring there are adequate design standards for tamper-proof disposal bins; to also encourage household composting, where practical, by providing 50 per cent of the cost of one composting bin per household with the expenditure being sourced from the Resource Recovery Fund; to establish a network of waste collection centres, materials, recovery facilities, to allow the public to drop off recyclable and reusable materials that its bulk or toxic nature makes kerbside pickup impractical.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time in our society we have a lot of the NGOs doing this work for us. And I want to make reference to Plastikeep and other NGOs who have been engaging the public and engaging schools across Trinidad and Tobago in trying to create that culture of recycling. The policy also speaks to: establishing a phased prohibition of the landfilling of recyclable and reusable materials and products, which have been listed and being managed under the national system for waste recycling; to encourage product substitution by providing fiscal incentives, such as tax breaks, removal of import duty and value added tax on products composed of at least 70 per cent of recycled materials. Mr. Speaker, these are some of the incentives as a Government that we would be encouraging the citizens to participate in.

The policy also speaks to providing grants from the Resource Recovery Fund for the development of novel products and materials made of recycled materials; to provide tax breaks on equipment to be used for the establishment of recycling plants; to provide incentives to encourage local small business development in the refurbishment and marketing of used products, such as computers, cell phones, televisions, refrigerators, stoves, washing machines, and other household appliances, and electronics to extend their usability in life.

Mr. Speaker, a little bit about e-waste. When we look at our global partners we see that India now has, of course, created a huge revenue return from recycling in India. It accounts for 60 per cent of their economy with respect to, you know, encouraging the recycling of e-waste. It is a very, very big business in India—of course, we want to encourage that same type of culture here in the Caribbean, and, particularly, in Trinidad and Tobago. I also know that there are a lot of NGOs

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engaged in e-waste collection throughout Trinidad and Tobago and it will take a little time, but by creating this culture and providing the enabling environment for our citizens we can really see that happening in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, I want to reiterate the importance of this Bill because, as it is, in Trinidad and Tobago, SWMCOL, under the Ministry of Local Government, they manage the three landfill sites; those are: the Beetham, Forres Park and Guanapo areas; and, of course, the privately managed Guapo landfill. They all demonstrate a significant amount of recyclable materials which were, of course, disposed in four major landfills in Trinidad and Tobago.

A breakdown of the materials, or the type of waste, of course, goes like this: organics, 32 per cent in the Beetham landfill; 22.4 per cent in Forres Park, 21.7 per cent in Guanapo, and 10.5 per cent in Guapo. It is very interesting because when you compare the organic waste to that of the beverage containers, textiles, plastics—with the plastics, the stats for the plastics: 16.0 per cent in the Beetham landfill, 26 per cent in Forres Park, 19.1 per cent in Guanapo, and 17 per cent in Guapo.

Metals also account for a large part of that.

Glass—as you know, we have Carib Glass in Trinidad and Tobago and, therefore, they are responsible for recycling the glass, and there are other entities also. Paper is extremely high: 21.4 per cent at the Beetham landfill, 31.7 per cent at Forres Park, Guanapo 18 per cent, and in Guapo 18.7 per cent. So, it can, therefore, be concluded, Mr. Speaker, that the reuse of such recyclable materials would have significant positive impacts on the capacity of the existing landfills to meet the final waste disposal needs of the country.

Mr. Speaker, the Waste Recycling Management Authority will have the following functions—and I know Minister Singh spoke about it earlier but I would, just quickly, summarize it as we move forward: one, to develop and execute policies and programmes for the efficient and cost-effective implementation of an integrated waste management system that emphasizes waste recycling with beverage containers being the first waste stream to be addressed, followed by other waste streams which pose harm to the environment.

Why beverage containers, Mr. Speaker?—because we have also identified that it is one of the major causes of flooding during the rainy season in Trinidad and Tobago. These beverage containers get stuck under drains, they block the river's mouth, channels along the river course; they are very, very, of course, obstructive,

and during the rainy season we see, of course, these beverage containers causing that flooding, especially in settlement areas, in areas where it is densely populated. In urban areas we see that the prevalence of these beverage containers in the environment cause flooding throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the collaboration between the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources and the CEPEP Company Limited for engaging and embarking upon a massive island-wide clean-up over the past year. I think we are into our second cycle to, of course, rid the environment of these beverage containers, and it has proven to be very, very successful. Last year, during the rainy season, there was a decrease in, you know, flooding in certain areas. As the Member of Parliament for Couva North, I can speak on that because in my constituency there was a decrease in flooding along the Couva Main Road and in other areas.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend that initiative between the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources and the CEPEP Company Limited, and to endorse that sort of practice that would hopefully lead to a culture within our population here in Trinidad and Tobago to continue to clean up the environment by, of course, collecting these beverage containers. When this Bill is implemented it would, of course, provide an incentive to the population to further maintain that sort of activity within our country.

Mr. Speaker, secondly, to implement provisions under national laws and regulations governing waste management. Thirdly, to make recommendations for the rationalization of policies, laws, regulations, and administrative arrangements for the management of waste in Trinidad and Tobago; to establish and administer a resource recovery fund, which I spoke of early, to collaborate with the relevant government agencies and other stakeholders for the management of waste; to assist each municipal corporation, borough and city of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Tobago House of Assembly, with the establishment and implementation of appropriate management arrangements for waste management, including the development of area-specific waste management strategies and plans that focus on recycling.

Also, to establish a multi-stakeholder management committee to coordinate and facilitate the management of area-specific waste management strategies and plans—these would include representatives of all of the government agencies with responsibility for waste management, as well as other key stakeholders from civil and the private sector; to collaborate with existing national committees, Mr.

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Speaker, with responsibilities and interest relevant to waste management and to strengthen structures and mechanisms for effective inter-agency and inter-sectoral communication, collaboration and coordination.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are very confident that this Bill is going to prove to be very uplifting to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, for want of a better word, in terms of putting together a structure—the start of putting together a viable structure with respect to waste recycling and waste disposal in Trinidad and Tobago. With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the citizens of our country that the People’s Partnership Government will continue to put and to serve in the best interest of the citizens of this country.

I want to also say that in 2010, when we took office under the leadership of our Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, one of the driving factors for the young people of this country was, of course, when we stood on our platform we promised the scrapping of the smelters, of course; and everybody knew of the negative impact of not one smelter, but three smelters, was going to have in Trinidad and Tobago—the impact of that, and the negative environmental impact on our country and our people. Therefore, with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to strongly suggest that this Government is all about environmental sustainability, creating a green economy, partnering with our regional neighbours of Barbados and Jamaica, who have implemented so much environmental legislation and projects and plans that deal with environmental sustainability.

We intend to partner with the region, because as a small-island developing state we are very much at risk with respect to climate change, and we have laid the climate change policy during our tenure. We are going on to lay this Bill, we are dealing with the Beverage Container Bill, later on, that would result from this parent Bill being laid here today and being debated. Therefore, with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure that the future of our country is in very good hands with the People’s Partnership Government. Thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

#### ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

**Mr. Speaker:** Before I recognize the Member for Chaguanas West, I did indicate to the honourable House that I have granted leave to the hon. Prime Minister to make a personal explanation. At this time, I call on the hon. Prime Minister. [*Desk thumping*]

**3.30 p.m.**

**Integrity Commission's Investigation  
(Alleged Email Affair)**

**The Prime Minister (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar SC):** Thank you very much, hon. Speaker.

Today, May 20, 2015, marks exactly the date two years ago, May 20, 2013, when the Member for Diego Martin West piloted a Motion of no confidence in this very House against me. That was just one of a number of no confidence Motions brought by the Opposition against me and other Members of my Government. We have stood here and answered every allegation. We have never wavered in our commitment to accountability and transparency. That Motion of no confidence was timed, in some senses as far as they were concerned, well-timed, because it was on the eve of our third anniversary of the election of the People's Partnership Government.

The Motion was based on a document which the Member for Diego Martin West claimed to have received in his mailbox six months prior to bringing it before this honourable House. That document, the Member said, contained 31 emails which he alleged were exchanged between the former Attorney General, other senior Cabinet Members, including the Member for Tabaquite, the Member for Oropouche East, the former Minister of National Security and myself.

The no confidence Motion was a very sharp and dangerous dagger, aimed at the very heart of the Government with such surgical and political precision. It was clear that it could be a move to destabilize my Government. Indeed, had it succeeded, I would have been forced to resign as Prime Minister.

The Member for Diego Martin West prosecuted a case against me and other Members of my Cabinet in this honourable House and, therefore, in the court of public opinion—his only evidence being the contents of those alleged emails. The Member also insinuated we were attempting to manipulate the justice system by having the DPP removed from office by offering a judicial appointment and planning to use corrupt proceeds of criminal activity.

I sat right here, as did so many others and those looking on through the national systems. We sat in shock, we sat in disbelief and horror as the Member for Diego Martin West made these most serious allegations against us. We sat and we listened as a treacherous tale was constructed about a criminal conspiracy

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being hatched by the duly elected Government of our country. Mr. Speaker, some wondered how a man with aspirations to lead our country could abuse his position in the Parliament and his office in such a manner.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the Member for Diego Martin West, on hearing the seriousness of the allegations I took swift action. [*Desk thumping*] I did not wait six months to act. I immediately rejected those emails as fraudulent, fake and fictitious, and on that same day, that dreadful day, I referred the matter to the Commissioner of Police for investigation forthwith, and I had also learnt by then that the Integrity Commission was already seized of the matter through the Member for Diego Martin West on that day.

I understood the effect these disclosures would have, not only on the population, but on the international image of our country. The Member for Diego Martin West read into the record of this House the contents of those alleged emails.

These outrageous, false and scandalous allegations sent a chill down the spine of the body politic of Trinidad and Tobago. No one could believe that a person who aspires to be this country's Prime Minister would be so reckless and irresponsible as to put on the record of the Parliament such a serious matter without any corroboration or any enquiry from the relevant authorities. Any reasonable person would then have assumed that the Member for Diego Martin West would have done so, would have done his due diligence, would have checked the authenticity of the documents, and would have been satisfied that it had crossed the minimum reasonable threshold of independent verification.

Hon. Speaker, since these statements were made in this honourable House, there has been a cloud over our country and my Government. The allegations have caused a sense of fear and suspicion to take root among some members of the population, and rightly so, having regard to the seriousness of the allegations and from the person from whom they came.

Given the obvious intent of the statements, and the effect it had on this country, I consider it my duty at the first opportunity I have had to inform this honourable House and the nation about the contents of a letter my lawyers received yesterday, dated May 19, 2015, from the Integrity Commission.

In that letter, the captioned "Investigation into alleged email affair by the Integrity Commission", the Registrar stated and I quote:

...the Commission, pursuant to section 34(6) of the Act is satisfied that there

are no or insufficient grounds for continuing the investigation into the above matter and accordingly this investigation is hereby terminated.

Mr. Speaker, you may recall that Google Incorporated filed a sworn declaration in the California courts, in a case filed by the former Attorney General, confirming that the purported emails and email account anan@gmail.com did not exist and were therefore fake. Instead of apologizing or withdrawing allegations, the Member responded by saying the former Attorney General had cleared himself and declared, “Himself onto himself”, he cried. “We must await the outcome of the investigation by the independent Integrity Commission.” That was the chant then from the Members on the other side.

The one thing that I remember, one thing I think that the Member and I agree upon is that the Integrity Commission is an independent institution. Therefore I understood his persistence and burning desire to have the matter investigated by such an independent body. The Integrity Commission is established under sections 138 and 139 of the Constitution. Its members, the commissioners, as set out in the Integrity in Public Life Act, are appointed by the President, after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister. Appointed by the President, Leader of the Opposition, consultation having took place by the President.

This commission that has deliberated on this matter and sent the letter to my lawyers is chaired by retired Court of Appeal judge, Mr. Justice Zainool Hosein, whose tenure in the Judiciary spanned approximately 15 years. The Deputy Chairman is retired Justice Mr. Sebastian Ventour who served as a judge of the Supreme Court for 14 years. The other members appointed by His Excellency include Mr. Pete London, accountant, Dr. Shelly-Ann Lalchan, surgeon, and Mr. Deonarine Jaggernaut, a petroleum and environmental engineer. These are the members of this independent commission appointed by the President.

Today there is an attempt by some to question the integrity of the Integrity Commission. That is why I thought I would spend a moment to explain the establishment of the commission under the Constitution, the manner in which they are appointed and to remind ourselves of the members who comprise that commission which sent us this letter. So we also want to remember that the Member has repeatedly expressed a clear preference for an investigation by the Integrity Commission over that of the police service.

In an article entitled, I quote: “Rowley knocks top cop”—in the *Trinidad Express* of July 08, 2013, the Member insisted that the Integrity Commission was the proper body in law to investigate this matter. This was repeated several times by

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the same Member and by others and carried in the media. We have here May 20, 2013, where the Member said:

I call on the Integrity Commission to discharge its responsibility...

It goes on, May 20, 2013; July 08, 2013; July 10, 2013; July 17, 2013, June 19, 2013. Then there is within this very House in his own contribution, the Member again said that the Integrity Commission was the best body to investigate this matter.

If you remember, the repetition of this call for the Integrity Commission to be the body to investigate this matter appeared to be a campaign for the Integrity Commission to conduct this investigation instead of the police service. The Member's first step, indeed, was to invite His Excellency President George Maxwell Richards to refer the matter to the Integrity Commission, and that came from his own words. The former President he said sent the documents to the Integrity Commission, and later it was revealed that the Member for Diego Martin West had held a secret meeting with the then Chairman, Ken Gordon, at his home in the dead of night, on the eve of this Motion of no confidence back in 2013.

Well you know, his impatience then to have this matter brought before the Integrity Commission, that he had to meet in the dead of night—there is an old saying, “be careful what you ask for, because you might get it”—be careful what you ask for, you might get it. Permit me to quote from the Member for Diego Martin West's contribution in this very House on May 22, 2013, during the debate on the no confidence Motion. I quote from the *Hansard*:

“So it went to the President.”

This is the Member for Diego Martin West speaking.

“It is my understanding and my confirmation that the President, after his own deliberation, on his own volition, sent it to the Integrity Commission. Why the Integrity Commission? The Integrity Commission, Mr. Speaker, is the location in this country where certain persons, by the office they hold, fall under the power of that body of the Constitution, whereas other citizens are not.”

Continuing from the *Hansard* of the Member for Diego Martin West:

“The only people in this country who fall under the Integrity Commission are office holders who hold certain offices. And if they misconduct themselves, this commission is there to intervene on behalf of the State.”

He continues:



“Mr. Speaker, let me just read for you to remind you the power of the Integrity Commission...”

I have left out what he read on the powers which come out of the Integrity in Public Life Act.

Then he continues:

“And when something comes to me that points to serious high crimes in the Office of Trinidad and Tobago, I have a duty to ensure that the best investigation is attached to that office under oath.”

He continues:

“Mr. Speaker, I want to remind you that I said that the Integrity Commission has that power superior to police investigation, and the investigator of the commission has the power to virtually command the cooperation from any person in any investigation.”

The Member continued:

Once a person is designated an investigating officer of the Integrity Commission, that person carries the tremendous power that this Parliament gives that office.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Integrity Commission did in fact use its vast powers under the Integrity in Public Life Act to investigate the matter. They sued Google Incorporated in the Supreme Court in California. They asked for unrestricted access to our email accounts for the relevant period. They did not confine themselves to emails that were exchanged, alone, but their request to Google was in fact much wider, they wanted to access everything in our accounts for the month of September.

The former AG and I overrode the advice given to us by our American lawyers on this issue, and we waived all legal rights under the data protection and privacy laws in the United States, and we granted the Integrity Commission full access to our email accounts on every email sent and/or received in the month of September 2012. The alleged emails were for 2012. What was the result?

Google tendered sworn affidavit evidence in March 2015 to the Integrity Commission before the hon. Mr. Justice Wilhelm H Ulric in the northern district of California, California Supreme Court, confirming in effect that none of these emails that were read out by the Member for Diego Martin West had ever been sent or received by our accounts. In other words, there was not a single match. [*Desk thumping*] They simply did not exist and they were a complete fabrication.

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This mirrored the result in the legal action taken by the former AG against Google in the Superior Court of the State of California. That case resulted in an affidavit being filed before her Honour Justice Patricia M Lucas on April 21, 2014. In that affidavit, which I referred to earlier, and which the Member for Diego Martin West refused to accept as clear and cogent evidence, Google's official custodian of records, Mr. Chaingwun confirmed that there was no email accounts such as anan@gmail.com.

Mr. Speaker, I think it should be noted that this was the primary email account of the vast majority of the alleged emails, and that document was supposedly sent from this fake, non-existent email address. Further, the custodian indicated that after diligent searches and enquiries were made of both kamlapb1@gmail.com, which is my email address, and anand@TSTT.net.tt, the email address of the former Attorney General, Google certified, in effect, that none of the offensive emails were found to have been sent from or received by these two email accounts.

So, Mr. Speaker, any statement that only the addresses of the emails were found to be false, is unsustainable, because the search went further than just to check alleged email addresses whether they were true, or whether they existed or not. They went further; it included a search of the email accounts held by me and the targeted Ministers of all emails sent and/or received in the month of September 2012.

At every stage of this investigation, we have been cooperative. We, the Ministers and myself, have been cleared of wrongdoing. The response from the Member has been far from apologetic, and they seek to maintain repulsive accusations and repeat them ad nauseam in an attempt to perpetuate the conspiracy theory which the Integrity Commission and Google have dismissed and rejected in effect.

**3.45 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, they can continue to shift the goalpost all they want. The only goal they will score is an own goal. [*Desk thumping*] They will continue to revert to events that predated the fake emails and rely upon them as evidence that there was substance in the emails. You know, Mr. Speaker, I had spoken of predicting the past from your position here in the future, reverse engineering.

Mr. Speaker, there is a circular, it highlights a kind of political desperation, and I think that might be because the very deputy political leader of the PNM and Chief Secretary of the THA, Mr. Orville London, who is on record as saying that

there are game changers and there are game deciders, and this is a game changer, and at the end of the exercise there is going to be one man or one woman left standing. [*Desk thumping*]

If, according to Dr. Orville London, Google says now that the emails were bogus, then Dr. Rowley has no other option in the words of the THA Chief Secretary, but to resign. Mr. Michael Harris also wrote a commentary on March 8, where he stated:

“...should the conclusions of the report indicate that contents of the e-mails were not authentic, then, apart from any criminal proceedings which may be instituted, the Leader of the Opposition should immediately resign from his position in the party and seat in Parliament.”

Mr. Speaker, there are some people in this country, however, who do not expect the Leader of the Opposition to resign after these findings. We need to note that anyone can sit and construct a threat of emails to capture and reflect events that have already occurred and you can do that ex post facto, or after the fact. You then turn around and you point to the similarity of the events and the emails, so that they feed off each other to create the rather tendentious foundation for a conspiracy theory.

This will not help the Member as the truth will now bow to speculation and hype. It should be noted that at no time did the Member direct his concerns to the police service of Trinidad and Tobago. Had I not referred this matter to the police service and demanded an urgent police investigation, the Member was quite content to allow the Integrity Commission to deal with this matter, such was his faith, and confidence, in the independence and competence of the Integrity Commission.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen editorials written by Mark Fraser, published. *Express*, August 25, 2014 states:

“...Dr. Rowley made clear his lack of faith and trust in the capacity of the overstressed and under-resourced T&T police to carry out the “Emailgate” investigations. It was, he insisted, a matter properly to be undertaken by the Integrity Commission, when that body would have equipped itself with expert legal help.”

Mr. Speaker, I will repeat the words of the Member for Diego Martin West, and I quote:

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“...I have a duty to ensure that the best investigation is attached to that office under oath.”

Speaking of the Integrity Commission. The PNM’s own PRO, Sen. Faris Al-Rawi, is also quoted in the *Trinidad Express* as far back as July 17, 2013 saying, the Integrity Commission was the best suited to do the investigation. [*Desk thumping*]

This has been their chant throughout. Today, of course, as we would expect, they will sing a different tune as they continue to shift the goalpost. No investigation will be good enough unless it supports the ridiculous assertions made by the Member against it. Even the best possible investigation which he has been advocating and urging for will not suffice now because the outcome does not support their ultimate goal of bringing down my Government. [*Desk thumping*]

What they are suggesting is akin to performing a post-mortem on a corpse that does not exist. They are now attempting to attack the integrity of the Integrity Commission, and are now saying they want to find out the parameters of what they did and did not do, and details must be disclosed, when this was the very commission that they begged for, and repeatedly called for as being the best thing since sliced bread. And here it is now they want to know the parameters and what they did, and what were the findings and so on, attacking the integrity of the Integrity Commission.

Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of this: when you speak of the content and the form—there is water contained in this glass, [*Holds up glass*] the glass is a form which holds the water; if you take away the glass there is no water. [*Desk thumping*] There can be no substance and content without emails and the emails have now been proven to be false and fake. These fake emails have caused me great personal distress and anguish, as I cherish and jealously guard my character, reputation and trust that I have built with the people of this nation during my 30 years of public service. [*Desk thumping*] This treacherous and evil plan was designed to destroy me and members of my Government, but it has been said that the truth will ultimately prevail where there is pain to bring it to light, and thankfully today, those pains that we bore for two years have borne fruit. The truth has come out. [*Desk thumping*]

The determination by the Integrity Commission was long awaited. I am happy that my colleagues and I have been vindicated by this ruling of the Integrity Commission. It confirms what we knew and have been saying all along: emailgate was a dangerous, political strategy that was doomed to fail because there was absolutely no truth to it. Emailgate is reminiscent of something far worse, the

malicious planting of cocaine and missiles in a Minister's water tank [*Desk thumping*] which has been under investigation by the TT Police Service for 13 years and has not come to a conclusion.

It was a sinister and terrible political tactic designed to inflict maximum damage, pain and suffering for political gain, and it was yet another attempt to seek political power at any and all cost, and to put party and power before country, and to show the character of the persons making such statements. This latest victory adds to a growing list of independent voices which have undermined the credibility of the accusations made by the Member for Diego Martin West, called "emailgate accusations".

These independent voices include forensic investigative reports from local and foreign respected analysts, a sworn affidavit from Google in response to a case filed by the former Attorney General. The recent evidence from Google in response to a case filed by the Integrity Commission in the California Supreme Court, and the letter which inadvertently, the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions has in effect verified—I think it was Dr. Moonilal who read from that letter—that it is indeed a letter sent by the US Department of Justice, which also in effect found that the address "anan@gmail.com" does not exist.

And on top of all of that we now have the words of the Integrity Commission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, [*Desk thumping*] the very same Integrity Commission in which Dr. Rowley has placed his utmost trust and confidence in the abilities, competence and independence. They have now joined with these other independent voices to in effect say that the emails are fake and there is nothing left to investigate.

Mr. Speaker, my life is like an open book, I have absolutely nothing to hide. I have always said that my heart is pure and my hands are clean. [*Desk thumping*] It is often said power comes with awesome responsibility. As MPs we all shoulder a responsibility to be true and faithful to this honourable sacred Chamber, by ensuring what is said within these hallowed walls is not said out of spite, malice and vindictiveness, but the genuine desire to enlighten and serve our constituents and our country. These fraudulent and fictitious emails, produced by no less a person than the Member for Diego Martin West, represented an ominous, dangerous and terrifying day in the history of our Parliament and nation.

Some would say that the Member was not simply careless, but that he was reckless and irresponsible. Some would say that he failed and/or refused to take any meaningful steps to verify the documents which he claims to have received in

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his mailbox, which contradicts his statement that he took the time to verify the authenticity before bringing them to this House. This reckless indifference and flippant disregard for the truth reveals a person who was hell-bent on foisting a criminal conspiracy theory on the population in an effort to damage and destabilize the duly elected Government in the pursuit of power.

Mr. Speaker, they are persisting and proceeding to try to detonate a political bomb. They did not spare a moment's thought for the trauma and stress it would cause, they did not spare a moment's thought for the violation of the sanctity of the Parliament, and therefore the letter from the Integrity Commission also vindicates the action taken by this House [*Desk thumping*] when suspending the Member for Diego Martin West. At no moment did they pause for a moment of detached reflection to think about the negative impact this would have on a country's image and reputation. What would people think of a country run by a Prime Minister and Government involved in the alleged nefarious activities that the Member for Diego Martin West indicated in this House.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is that after the Member for Diego Martin West succeeded, the Member for San Fernando East, he did not think the People's Partnership would remain united and strong enough to run the full course. That is why the Opposition as a whole they have brought so many Motions of no confidence, and they keep demanding that I call early elections every month since we assumed office in 2010. We must understand and the Member for Diego Martin West must understand that with power there must come humility and grace. There must not be arrogance and greed. On May 24, 2010 I was very humbled that the people of my country chose me to lead them and I will continue to abide by my oath and always put my country and my people first. [*Desk thumping*]

I believe we have a duty to say that the conduct was irresponsible, reckless, calculated to injure and harm, designed to inject fear and hysteria and panic in an effort to destabilize the Government. I was put, Mr. Speaker, in a very invidious and unenviable position of having to disprove my guilt, instead of being given the benefit of the presumption of innocence. I was forced to prove my innocence. I was forced to prove my innocence, but I always say, God is great, and we thank God that there were external agencies involved, and therefore whose independence cannot be questioned, that they were involved, that we were able to get evidence from Google Incorporated and others in order to prove innocence in this matter. [*Desk thumping*] Today we stand vindicated by the very institution in which the Member for Diego Martin West said that he had the greatest

confidence, and that is the Integrity Commission.

Mr. Speaker, with your leave we will lay a copy of that letter for the *Hansard* record in the Parliament, just as the emails were read into the *Hansard* record, Mr. Speaker, with your leave. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the police will conclude their investigations shortly into this matter, and I know that would be yet another confirmation of the fact that there has been no wrongdoing on my part or on the part of any of those whom I continue to lead. That will be another clearance from yet another institution.

Mr. Speaker, the Member cannot be accused of the criminal charge of wasting police time because he never made a complaint to the police. I was the one who made the complaint to the police, not him, because I always knew the documents from which he read were bogus. Again, I expect them to try once again to shift the goalpost. I think they do not even realize that they have already scored an own goal, and they do not even realize that they shifted that goalpost so far that they are no longer on the football field and they are out of the game. [*Desk thumping*] The game is over.

The Member for Chaguanas West likes my analogy, the game is over. [*Interruption*] That game is over, and with that game being over, I will close just with a bit of humour. You know, there was somebody when I was growing up we would read in our books and so on, about the tale of Humpty Dumpty, the nursery rhyme. So, Humpty Dumpty sat upon the wall, so they climbed up on their high wall, Mr. Speaker, and from their perch they continued to attack us with respect to these emailgate allegations and to continue to stir up the fear that members of my Government and myself were involved in criminal conspiracy—up on that high wall.

#### **4.00 p.m.**

They attempted to climb down when they boycotted the Parliament and then certainly, you know, come back in, they attempted to climb over. Mr. Speaker, with the knockout punch coming from none other than the very distinguished and independent Integrity Commission, Humpty Dumpty fell off the wall [*Desk thumping*] and, Mr. Speaker, all the Opposition's horses and all the Opposition's men can never put Humpty Dumpty together again. [*Desk thumping*]

I quote, Mr. Speaker, from Sir Winston Churchill who said:

“The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it. Ignorance may deride it. But in the end, there it is.”

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Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand here today and say, “there it is”. There is the truth which has been brought to light despite the attacks waged upon it by a malicious mind. The real conspiracy, Mr. Speaker, I say, has been exposed and the Member must now do the decent and honourable thing, and heed the advice of his own MPs, his own Deputy Political Leader, and tender his resignation as Leader of the Opposition and as MP for Diego Martin West, forthwith. [*Desk thumping*]

As Dr. Moonilal said, when we closed the debate the last time—and I will not use inappropriate parliamentary—as Dr. Moonilal said, those who speak an untruth they must say goodbye, they must say goodbye. I thank you very much. [*Desk thumping*]

#### WASTE RECYCLING BILL, 2015

**Mr. Jack Warner** (*Chaguanas West*): That applause was for me? [*Laughter*] Mr. Speaker, give me a few seconds to just catch my breath. [*Laughter*] I am overwhelmed and I still do not know under what Standing Order the Prime Minister spoke, but you could help me.

I must say, I want some time to make a few points to the Hon. Minister of the Environment and Water Resources, because, Minister, I want to warn you. There seems to be a kind of haste in the preparation of Bills, turning sods, painting hospitals, kissing babies and so on. And that is reflected in this Bill. Now, I did not propose to talk on the Bill, Mr. Speaker, because the Bill by its intention is a good Bill. But by what you have here, Mr. Minister, it is difficult to implement, and I will tell you why. I will give you four reasons why, Mr. Minister. I would not take 45 minutes to give you that.

In the first case, Mr. Speaker, on page 4 of the Bill, clause 7(9). I would hope that the President of the Republic, if it is whom you are referring to here, has more important things to do than to, of course, agree on the remuneration and allowances of directors, of board members. You cannot ask a country’s President—as you read here—that he must determine the stipend of board members. What has happened to all the other boards? Has that been the precedent for Petrotrin; for NEC; for WASA? How this is different? What makes this different? How does this qualify to be different? And therefore I hope that you consider this very seriously because this has to be an oversight.

Mr. Minister, if you go to page 8, clause 17(b):



“require the payment of charges and fees under such circumstances as may be prescribed;”

I would have thought, Mr. Minister, the experiences of the past two weeks, three weeks, two months, I will go back to NEC, NGC and so on, would have allowed you to steer far from this. Mr. Minister, what you are saying here, I read again:

“The Authority shall have power to—

- (b) require the payment of charges and fees under such circumstances as may be prescribed;”

Prescribed by whom, Mr. Minister? By whom? By the board itself? By the Corporation Sole? I do not know. But all I am asking you, based on our past experience in these last few months, I ask you, for God’s sake, reconsider this clause.

And 17(d):

“employ consultants, experts and advisors from national, regional and international organizations;”

Mr. Minister, you have to say, of course, experts with the relevant expertise in X, Y and B, because the fact is, if it is as what it is, you give them a kind of open-ended authority by which they can again abuse the power they have here. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge that this be considered.

But, Mr. Speaker, what caught me, and I mean, what caught me is on page 12, clause 31(5). I know of late this is a mistake that you all make all the time, you know. Page 5, clause 31(5):

“The financial year of the Fund shall be 1st October to 31st September...”

Mr. Minister, September does not even have 31 days. I have seen this happen again in a letter that came from away last week, right? I as a little boy know, April, June and November, and so on, that little phrase and so on, 30 days in September. Where you get 31 days from? And I say again, I recall that mistake being made in a letter from overseas that was corrected subsequently. And therefore I ask you again to look at this.

And let me say this, Mr. Speaker, while I am on my legs, if I may use a term, a big thumping of the desk was made when the Minister said that recycled tyres shall be used in the paving of roads.

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Mr. Minister, in 2011, two contractors came to the Ministry of Works, and in those days it was Transport, and experimented with that, four years ago. So all this thumping and so, but four years later nothing has been done. And you take a Note to Cabinet this week to get this approval knowing full well that four years from now, in any case, you would not be there four years from now—right?—this would not be done either. The fact is, these things have been there, and I am saying here, four years ago. So before you thump the desk and so on, let me tell you that this is not correct.

Mr. Speaker, on page 13, clause 33(6), and, you know, I heard outside in coming in people talking about this Bill. And they say that one of the things you have to do, all the garbage and waste you talked about and so on, people outside saying that there is more waste inside of here than out there, you know. And therefore, I do not know if it is true, they say so. But I am seeing that in the Bill to cover that, right?—but that is an aside.

Mr. Speaker, page 13, clause 33(6)—I am glad you can take it in good spirit. Clause 33(6) (a), (b) and (c) tells you what the authorized officer will do after the warrant has been executed and after he has seized all the different elements and so on. And it says here, he shall give:

“a written notice specifying the –

- (a) date and time of the execution of the warrant;
- (b) identity of the person who executed the warrant; and
- (c) things seized under the warrant.”

Mr. Speaker, suppose he refuses to do that, then what? What are the consequences here? [*Crosstalk*] There are so many—[*Crosstalk*]—“ahhh”, thank you for agreeing with me.

**Hon. G. Singh:** There is a compliance.

**Mr. J. Warner:** I am happy when you tell me, because I am saying, if there is a compliance it must be put here. Because the fact is you are giving him some duties here to do, but you are not saying what will happen if he fails to do them.

And then, last—because I said I am not taking much time at all on this—last, because this Bill, I will say again, by its very nature and intent, is a good Bill, but there are some flaws which have to be corrected, particularly, September 31. But I saw nothing here about litter wardens. And litter wardens, that post will, of course, be abandoned or they will be incorporated? What happened to the litter

wardens in the context of this Bill? We have litter wardens in this country. Every corporation has litter wardens. So what happened to them in the context of this Bill? This Bill did not say that, Mr. Speaker, and therefore when the Minister is winding up I would like him to answer those questions.

Mr. Speaker, you see me, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of the Environment and Water Resources (Sen. The Hon. Ganga Singh):** [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister of State in the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, hon. Ramona Ramdial, for her contribution.

I also want to thank the hon. Member for Chaguanas, who shares the constituency with me as caretaker in Chaguanas West, for his contribution.

**Dr. Khan:** His sterling contribution.

**Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member indicated that the President—this is a Statutory Authority and, like other Statutory Authorities, the President executes the instruments of appointment. But the President in this case, as in other cases of Statutory Authorities, is based on the Cabinet. So the Cabinet makes the decision, it is forwarded to the President for execution and he then reviews the qualification of the various members and if he is satisfied that it is in accordance with the legislation he then appoints the relevant members.

I thought that the Member may have been concerned about the—Similarly, it is Cabinet that establishes the allowances and remuneration of board members. The Member would know that there are categories of boards: board A, B, C and so on. They attract different remuneration and allowances depending upon what the Corporation Sole decides. Given the nature, tenure and workload of the board, then they determine the category. So that, therefore, it is similar, appointment and the remuneration and allowances decided.

Now, the Member raised the point about charges as may be prescribed. The regulation will prescribe what charges and fees. And this is not a Bill that will provide an impost, it is a Bill that will have clear charges and the regulation will provide for a schedule of those charges so they will be prescribed by virtue of regulations.

The third issue that the Member raised deals with the question of expertise and relevance of expertise. Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill dealing with the Waste Recycling Management Authority and the expertise as they seek will be expertise that—and consultancy, which is already taking place, will be relevant in the area

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of waste management or any area that is appropriate for the furtherance of the objects of this Bill.

I think that the Member indicated that he is very pleased with the objects of the Bill. But I want to take the opportunity to remind him that:

“The objects of this Act are to—

- (a) promote and encourage the recovery of waste through recycling and reuse;
- (b) develop and implement a deposit-refund system and other systems to encourage waste recovery;
- (c) enhance economic development through the promotion of business opportunities in the reduction, collection, handling and recycling of waste;
- (d) promote a culture of waste minimization; and
- (e) encourage manufacturers, producers, distributors and consumers to take responsibility for the waste they generate.

So the hon. Member has no problem. He has some problem with the mechanics, and I agree that September date is a wrong date and that, therefore, the 31st is certainly a typo.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member spoke about the utilization of rubberized asphalt as a mechanism to provide for the environmentally sound disposal of tyres in Trinidad and Tobago. It was something that he made reference to. I think what he said, four years ago and it is not yet implemented. Mr. Speaker, in piloting the Bill I indicated something like 800,000 used tyres on an annual basis in this country and that there has to be a mechanism to utilize that, and that recycling is an appropriate mechanism.

**4.15 p.m.**

When the Member indicated it was brought to his attention—any asphalt producer in this country can, in fact, utilize the crumb rubber and blend it into the process of asphalt blending and make it usable on the roads. The use—and I am surprised that the Member did not implement that because the rubberized asphalt has several competitive advantages over conventional asphalt, and I intend to indicate to the hon. Member, it is a pity that in 2011—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Warner:** “Yuh gettin help. Yuh gettin coachin.”

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Well, I am always available for learning.

**Mr. Warner:** Chaguanas West.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, so the rubberized, modified asphalt has several competitive advantages over conventional asphalt. The rubberized asphalt resists and reduces reflective cracking because of its elastic properties and antioxidant properties. So that, therefore, the rubberized asphalt can effectively absorb energy, stretch and move with the underlying pavements rather than crack from stresses. Rubber-modified asphalt also exhibits anti-ageing effects as a result of antioxidants contained in scrap tyres which are processed into crumb rubber modifier, using rubber-modified asphalt.

So rubberized asphalt extends the life of roads and reduces maintenance costs as it minimizes the impact of ageing and cracking. Roads paved with conventional asphalt require some maintenance every few years. Because of the resistance to cracking and ageing exhibited by rubber-modified asphalt, roads paved in rubber-modified asphalt application generally experience longer service lives before maintenance is required.

We go on, Mr. Speaker. So rubberized asphalt decreases the cost of construction. It saves initial capital construction costs; it has a lower specific gravity. Road surfaces made from rubber-modified asphalt are less thick, as much as 50 per cent less than conventional asphalt roads. And we have a problem in this country where the roads are paved and they are sometimes paved higher than the pavements and then you have the equipment that removes the asphalt, and then you have repaving again.

So what we are seeking to do is, on an annual basis, utilize the crumb rubber that will come from the 800,000 tyres that are disposed of annually, recycle it and reuse it in the rubberized asphalt. And perhaps the hon. Member ought to have utilized the mechanism when he had the opportunity in 2011, to engage the services of Lake Asphalt and engage the services also of the Ministry that he had responsibility for, to explore the feasibility of manufacturing rubber-modified asphalt in his Agua Santa plant.

All that was required was an additional appliance for some \$4.2 million that would have allowed the Agua Santa plant, headed by the—within the ambit of the Ministry of Works to be part of that. And that, therefore, whereas the idea would have been mooted in 2011, we have now crystalized a policy decision and the translation of that policy decision with clear mechanisms for it to work. Lake

Asphalt and also the Agua Santa plant under the Ministry of Works, to deal with that.

So I want to tell the Member that the 800,000 tyres on an annual basis can now be utilized, in that sense, to be worked into the rubberized asphalt. It will mean, of course, that less asphalt will be used but it will allow for a smoother—well, not smoother—much more silent roads, greater traction and longer wear. So that is another innovation that we would be bringing that is environmentally sound and friendly.

The hon. Member spoke about litter wardens. Education, awareness, enforcement and punitive sanctions are what is required. Litter wardens have been in existence since the 1980s. I recall the then Minister of Health, Kamaluddin “Chach” Mohammed, piloting legislation dealing with litter wardens, but since the 1980s it has not worked. In fact, the throwing of garbage outside, in the streets, it is only because of the effectiveness of CEPEP we have clean roadsides. It is the effectiveness of CEPEP. A lot of the fires that have started in this dry season are the result of the flicking of cigarette butts—

**Mr. Warner:** Will you give way?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Sure.

**Mr. Warner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. Minister, are you saying then, that litter wardens—they shall, of course, be abolished, literally?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** No. What I am saying is that you have a mechanism, you have to analyze why that mechanism has not worked, and that, therefore, part of the problem, whilst there is education, there is awareness and there is the mechanism of litter wardens, the fact of the matter is that there is no enforcement and the sanctions, as a result, if there is enforcement, are much too small to make an impact.

I want to go back to the DUI—driving under the influence. Why is that working? The enforcement on a weekend basis—you read in the newspapers. The punitive sanctions associated with the fines—

**Mr. Cadiz:** Twenty-two thousand dollars.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Twenty-two thousand dollars, my colleague, the Minister of Transport has indicated. So that people pay attention. They pay attention. So you build education, you build awareness, you have enforcement and you have punitive sanctions that follow.

**Mr. Warner:** And you will have litter wardens.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Therefore, the necessity is that you must have litter wardens, but you have to give them the necessary punitive sanctions and increase in fines in order to do that, and then you continue the education awareness in schools and so on. But you must have the punitive sanction. Education without enforcement goes from one ear through to the other.

So the continuation of litter wardens—and I know you started also, traffic wardens and they have blossomed since your demission.

**Mr. Warner:** Under me, yes.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I have an excellent relationship with the hon. Member for Chaguanas West.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Same space.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Yes, we share the political space. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Warner:** Very nicely, very nicely.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Cohabit.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** I would not take it so far. [*Laughter*]

**Mr. Warner:** Ah, boy, I tell you.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, this legislation, dealing with the area of enforcement, is very important because the enforcement component in the Bill allows for the enforcement officers to attend only by—and enter premises, as the hon. Member of Couva North indicated, only by way of warrant. So that, therefore, all the due process requirements are fulfilled in order to deal with this piece of legislation.

The other issue the hon. Member spoke about is the difficulty in implementation. My history of involvement in the public sector has been a history of effective implementation, [*Desk thumping*] whether it is TTPost, which I saw a colleague in the gallery, Mr. Atwell and Mr. Emmanuel George and that team of persons. We took it from idea, to concept, to fruition and the TTPost, at the time in the initial stage, was regarded by the World Bank as a model for small-island developing states. [*Desk thumping*]

We took the Water and Sewerage Authority—and you will be very familiar, hon. Member for Chaguanas West, as to how I occupied that position as CEO. We took that organization that was moribund, that was in inertia, that was stagnated,

that was regarded by the previous administration—the leader of that previous administration, Mr. Patrick Manning, the hon. Prime Minister then—as a \$27 billion headache—\$27 billion headache! And we took that organization, galvanized that organization, made investments of \$1.3 billion, and even in the face of this harsh dry season, we have been able to ensure that the people in this country have water.

**Mr. Warner:** Please, last time. Last time, I swear to you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I swear, last time. But what will be the consequences if those guys who issue the warrants do not comply with A, B and C and they just simply say: “So be it”? What are the consequences, Minister?

**Hon. Member:** Do not bother him again.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** No, I am fine for the interruption. I mean, I just want you to be clear because we share the same political space. The fact of the matter is that if they contravene, they would be subjected to a fine of \$250,000. So that, therefore, if they contravene—

**Mr. Warner:** What page?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** I know it off the top of my head, but I have a few minutes, so I will get back to the page.

**Dr. Khan:** “He leaving just now, yuh know.”

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** I do not want him to interrupt my thought—with respect. I will come back to that. So there is a fine of \$250,000. So you have a situation—I was dealing with the issue of implementation. So we took a \$27 billion headache and translated it into a winning public sector organization. In the MORI polls it has one of the highest levels of satisfaction. [*Desk thumping*]

So that, therefore, when I take a small body like this, institute it with the appropriate personnel, galvanize it and inspire it with proper leadership, implementation will not be a problem.

**Mr. Warner:** But you would not be there. [*Crosstalk*]

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** You know, Mr. Speaker, the Member is trying to be prophetic, but Harbance Kumar once pronounced upon us and Harbance Kumar is no longer pronouncing. [*Laughter*]

**Hon. Member:** That was the end of his world.

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, let me direct my comments to you and I will indicate to the Member the relevant sections at the break. We are engaged in



an enterprise to bring change. We are engaged in an enterprise to galvanize all the competing authorities and focusing them—coordinating them; focusing them—to bring about change in the environment in the society. This is an environmentally sound piece of legislation. It is legislation that will intervene in the environment and bring change, and we must, of course, ensure that the continuation of this programme will allow—

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I think it is a good time for us to pause and we will have tea at this time. This sitting is now suspended until 5.00 p.m.

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

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

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister of the Environment and Water Resources.  
[*Desk thumping*]

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just before the tea break, I was making the point that this administration is very strong on implementation. When you look at the spectrum of the delivery Ministries, the hon. Member for Caroni East in education, the Member for Tabaquite in roads and infrastructure, and when you see the amount of roads and bridges and infrastructure that the hon. Member for Tabaquite has built during his tenure as Minister of Works and Infrastructure, you will understand the strength of this administration in delivery and implementation. Similarly in Caroni East, similarly my good friend, the Minister of Health.

There are so many areas across the spectrum in education, in housing, in labour. There were over 90-something collective agreements, [*Interruption*] 130 collective agreements, I am reminded. So, implementation is our strength and that is why, Mr. Speaker, we are in a position where we are today, that we can go to the people and say it to them, “One good term deserves another”. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, in dealing with the issue and the point raised by the hon. Member for Chaguanas West, I am advised that where you have situations where employees do not comply with the requirements, there exist remedies in law and that, therefore, the \$2,000 fine is for those who are in conflict of interest in accordance with clause 39(4).

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Minister has expired. Would you like an extension, hon. Minister?

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** I would be grateful, hon. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Minister of the Environment and Water Resources be extended by 15 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

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

**Sen. The Hon. G. Singh:** Thank you hon. Speaker, and thank you hon. Members of the Lower House. Mr. Speaker, Friday, May 22, we join with the rest of the world in celebrating International Day for Biological Diversity, or alternatively stated World Biodiversity Day. Biodiversity is the variety of all forms of life along with the interactions that they may have with each other and in a particular ecosystem. These interactions create communities and systems, and those systems provide goods and services such as oxygen production, pollination, pest control, food production and carbon storage. Biodiversity also serves as the foundation of many spiritual, recreational and cultural benefits. We depend on nature for our survival and it provides a daily lifeline for billions. Simply put, we cannot exist without biodiversity.

Currently, we are pursuing initiatives to preserve the biodiversity in this country. We have initiatives for institutional change, where we are providing initiatives for the environmentally sound management of our forest and protected areas through a project entitled "Improving Forests and Protected Area Management in Trinidad and Tobago". Some of the project's objectives include making improvement to the legal and institutional arrangements for protected area management in Trinidad and Tobago, along with making improvements to infrastructure for biodiversity conservation and forest restoration in our country.

Mr. Speaker, recently Cabinet approved a minerals policy, and in that minerals policy they provided for a rehabilitation bond that will allow, in the aftermath of quarrying and in the production of aggregate, for a significant increase in the bond so as to justify the economic cost of replanting the forests in areas that have been quarried, and now there is also a specific performance bond which is of significant value also. So that there continues, in every area, focused attention with rehabilitation and with increasing the forest cover in our country.

Much has been said about the two-year moratorium on hunting which will come to an end in October, but we are now in a position to indicate that the density count of the wildlife in collaboration with the University of the West

Indies is completed. It is sad to say, Mr. Speaker, that there was very little cooperation from the Department of the Natural Resources and the Environment in Tobago to do the density count in Tobago. The EMA had hurdles too to surmount because of the lack of cooperation in the density count of animals in Tobago.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we are far advanced in drafting of legislation and institutional change to move the Forestry Department from a 113-year-old department of the public service into another forest-protected area and wildlife conservation authority, and that too is being given priority by this administration. We are pretty far advanced and we continue to have stakeholder meetings in which you have representation across the public sector, and very vocal representation by the NUGFW and the PSA in these stakeholder meetings. This legislation will move the Forestry Department from a department of the public service into a statutory authority and will be able to have an expanded network to look after parks, watershed areas and the whole forestry areas with a different kind and a different mode of management, and a different culture of management in that organization which will emerge from that department.

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the biodiversity approach, we recently designated five sea turtles as environmentally sensitive species. There are now seven species of turtles left in the world, five of which live in our waters and/or return to our shores to lay their eggs—the leatherback, the green, olive ridley, the hawksbill and the loggerhead. The leatherback is the best known of the local sea turtle species. Trinidad’s population of nesting females is one of the three largest in the world, and the beaches of the north-east coast of Trinidad are the best managed and monitored on the island. When the leatherback turtles come to nest in our waters we have local stewardship of a global asset and, therefore, every attempt must be made to protect these turtles in their nesting period and also to allow for their return to the sea and the return of their hatchlings.

Under the IMA we have a pilot hatchery project that we can take the eggs, and the eggs are then hatched and then the turtles return to the sea. Mr. Speaker, when you look at this animal that is related to the dinosaurs, that has not evolved significantly over the years, you recognize when I make the statement “local stewardship of a global asset”, there are communities within the north-east coast that survive as a result of these turtles, and it pains me to see on social media people jumping on the backs of these turtles as they lay their eggs. I call upon citizens of the national community to take action against all persons so doing, take citizen action.

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We have enforcement, but as soon as the officers leave, whether it is close to midnight, then they engage in other activity, driving on the shore, driving on the sand where the turtles are laying their eggs, standing on their backs while they are laying. We must get away from this kind of predatory behaviour that exists in the society, and it goes back to the notion that enforcement and heavy fines is what is required whilst you build education and awareness. Education and awareness is insufficient.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you look at this Bill, you place this Bill in the context of what we are doing in other areas of the environment, and now we are entering the waste recycling mainstream and the next step then will be the beverage container which we are doing in collaboration with the stakeholders. Friday morning, Mr. Speaker, I have a meeting with the stakeholders from all the manufacturing and importing sectors of this country who engage in that beverage container importation. We are working out the last details of the Beverage Container Regulations which will accompany this Bill at a later stage, and I want to thank those members of the private sector, the TTMA, the beverage manufacturers in Coca Cola, SM Jaleel, Caribbean Bottlers, the bottled water, Blue Waters and all the others who participated, the Supermarket Association. All the stakeholders have come together to ensure that we get it right with respect to this piece of regulation which will be implemented as a subset. Similarly we are going to do the same thing for tyres, for e-waste and hazardous waste.

Mr. Speaker, it is our intention to call all the private hospitals—because if you drive along Monroe Road you will see a bin right next to a health provider and you will see hazardous waste on the side of the road. So we have to move away from that. I do not know the contents of that bin, but certainly it is not in keeping with acceptable disposal practices in the context of hazardous waste in the hospital sector. So it is our intention to deal with the private hospitals to bring them together as we deal with medical waste as an element. So every area is getting attention and we are ramping up as we proceed.

So, we understand the contextual framework of this Waste Recycling Management Authority, and we recognize the need for coordination, and we recognize the need to protect human health and that is why this matter is before this House.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.*

**5.15 p.m.**

*House in Committee.*

**Mr. G. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, we have circulated three amendments to the Bill.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, we have them. Yes, so we are proposing that we deal with these clauses in groups of four. When we have an amendment, we pause and we go on to another and then when we reach clauses, let us say 8, we go to clauses 8 to 15, and then we do it in parts thereafter.

*Clauses 1 to 4 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 5.*

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

**Mr. G. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, I want to crave your indulgence in the insertion of an amendment:

“Insert after the word “directions”, the words “in writing,”

So it would read:

“The Minister may give the Authority specific and general directions in writing, with respect to the performance of its functions.”

**Dr. Moonilal:** Put a comma after “writing”.

*Question put and agreed to.*

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

*Clause 6 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 7.*

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

**Mr. G. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, the amendment as circulated:

“Delete after the word “Tobago”, the words “is absent”.

*Question put and agreed to.*

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

*Clauses 8 to 15 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clauses 16 to 18 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clauses 19 to 26 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clauses 27 to 30 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 31.*

*Question proposed:* That clause 31 stand part of the Bill.

**Mr. G. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, clause 31(5) be amended as circulated:

“Delete after the words “October to”, the word “31<sup>st</sup>” and substitute the word “30<sup>th</sup>”.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 31, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clauses 32 and 33 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clauses 34 to 39 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

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

*House resumed.*

*Bill reported, with amendments, read the third time and passed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** The next item, Mr. Speaker, is I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. Before I continue with that line, let me say that Friday 22nd is, indeed, the fourth Friday of the month and pursuant to our Standing Orders, it is the Friday reserved for Private Members’ Day. The practice in this Parliament has been that Members of the Opposition and Chief Whip would rise and on record serve notice as to the business that we will be dealing with on Private Members’ Day.

Mr. Speaker, to this day and to this time, I have not received in writing indication or notification from the Member for Port of Spain South as to whether Members of the Opposition have confirmed to return to work or whether they are still off the job. Mr. Speaker, I am depending—regrettably, I must depend on reading the newspapers to get some insight as to what and where the Opposition is

*Adjournment*

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coming from. Mr. Speaker, not even a fake email was forthcoming. [*Laughter*]

**5.30 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, through third party, I have uncovered information that it is the intention of the Opposition to re-emerge on Friday 22nd, and to debate a Private Motion filed by the Member for Point Fortin, on the assumption that the Member for Point Fortin will also be here to pilot that Motion.

Mr. Speaker, it is not our aim to be accused at all of trying to escape accountability, and trying to escape responsibility and, therefore, if the Opposition would want to resurface on Friday 22nd, for the Government to account, for the Government to take responsibility and account for any area of Government, we are most happy, willing and able to do so. [*Desk thumping*] But, as I said, I have been in touch with my secretary at the Ministry about 15 minutes ago, and I have received no correspondence.

Having said that, the Members—the Government is prepared to meet on Friday 22nd, Private Members' Day, to debate the Motion from the Member for Point Fortin. However, in the advent that Members of the Opposition do not show up, I want to serve notice, that on that day, we will continue debate on the Industrial Relations (Amdt.) Bill, and we will complete debate on the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Report from the Ombudsman. We will conclude these two pieces of business, so that Members of the Parliament, members of staff, members of the security service and so on, are not coming to the Parliament and wasting their precious time and energy.

So, in the event that the Opposition appears, we will be prepared to debate the Motion by the Member for Point Fortin. If it is that they do not appear on the day, which we cannot, you know, predict at this time, we will continue with government business on Friday 22nd at 1.30 p.m.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to clarify that to state, again, there are Motions on the adjournment. I do not know if they can or have lapsed, but the relevant Ministers are no longer prepared to come to the Parliament to wait for the adjournment, to deal with Motions on the adjournment, since there is no guarantee that Members of the Opposition who abdicated their responsibility, will find the wisdom to resurface.

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So that I am serving this notice, very important, Mr. Speaker, for the record, because I am also being told that other—the Members who have been absent for the last month, are now filing Motions on the adjournment. They can file what they want, but they cannot have the Government coming here, while they are absent, to respond to their Motions on the adjournment. If they file, they are welcome to, but the Ministers cannot be coming every week, on Motions on the adjournment, and Opposition Members have abdicated, and have fled the precincts, and will not represent their constituents. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 5.33 p.m.*