



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Debates of the House of Representatives

5th Session – 10th Parliament (Rep.) – Volume 36 – Number 38

**OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)**

THE HONOURABLE BRIGID ANNISSETTE-GEORGE
SPEAKER

THE HONOURABLE ESMOND FORDE
DEPUTY SPEAKER

Friday 22nd May, 2015

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Friday, May 22, 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 Mr. Patrick Manning, Member of Parliament for San Fernando East and Dr. Amery Browne, Member of Parliament for Diego Martin Central. They have both asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House.

The leave which the Members seek is granted.

PAPER LAID

1. One Hundred and Fourth Report of the Salaries Review Commission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on a review of the salary and other conditions of service for the offices of Coroner and Coroner (appointed on Contract), Judiciary. [*The Deputy Speaker (Hon. Nela Khan)*]

URGENT QUESTIONS

Zika Virus
(Preventative Measures)

Mr. Jack Warner (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Health:

Given yesterday's media release by the Ministry of Health placing the country on alert for a new mosquito-borne disease, the Zika virus, could the Minister advise on the preventative measures being taken by the Ministry?

The Minister of Health (Hon. Dr. Fuad Khan): Mr. Speaker, could I have your permission to read the answer since it is a very technical thing the Member asked?

Mr. Speaker: You have two minutes.

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: Two minutes. Mr. Speaker, the Zika virus is called the ZIKV virus as compared to the Chik-v virus, and one might start to call the dengue virus the "Den-v" virus. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, this is not a new virus. It has been around since 1947. It was isolated from the rhesus monkey in

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the Zika forest of Uganda. The clinical symptoms are: mild headaches and maculopapular rash—and I know the Member knows what that is—fever, malaise, conjunctivitis, arthralgia, joint pains, eye pains, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, it lasts around five to seven days but it is not a fatal illness and it is similar to that of the Chik-v and the dengue virus. It is brought on by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. So it is like one size fits all. Once you attack the breeding grounds of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito you will cover all these viral illnesses.

You see, it is a very simple thing to prevent the illnesses by attacking the breeding grounds. One has to make sure that the surroundings are clear of any stagnant water on any breeding grounds and the Ministry of Health is going—in the preventative measures, seeing that this, through the Insect Vector Control system, is occurring throughout the country.

We are also educating the population on the Chik-v, ZIKV and dengue virus, because of all these viruses, Mr. Speaker, the dengue virus is the most deadly, fatal dengue hemorrhagic fever. So really and truly, we are really attacking the dengue virus by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. So preventative measures are put in place and education of the population is done through advertisements, radio ads, TV ads, et cetera.

At the end of the day this is the most we can do. It is up to the population to protect themselves making sure that their surroundings are clean, making sure that there is no stagnant water and the local government bodies must make sure that the drains are flowing.

**Tobago Regional Health Authority
(Corneal Transplants)**

Mr. Jack Warner (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health:

In light of recent media reports of undocumented corneal transplants within the Tobago Regional Health Authority, could the Minister advise whether this matter will be investigated?

The Minister of Health (Hon. Dr. Fuad Khan): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad the Member asked that because it has been investigated and I have an answer. Mr. Speaker, I need to read this one, this is highly technical. [*Laughter*] It is, it is. If you want me to talk about RNA, DNA and genomes and thing and anti-bodies—

Mr. Speaker: You have two minutes, eh.

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: Could I get an extension, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: No, no extension.

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: All right, good. [*Laughter*] The Human Tissue Transplant Act was passed by the United National Congress in 2001. [*Desk thumping*] It covers all of these transplants. But I specifically want to speak about the human corneal transplant that is occurring in Tobago. Human tissue transplantation has been used for many years as the treatment for various diseases. Corneal tissue transplantation is no exception. When it comes to corneal transplant surgery, there are strict international laws that govern the process with regards to harvesting the tissue, screening the tissue, using the tissue and monitoring after implantation. Only registered tissue banks can carry out this process and these institutions undergo inspection and revalidation on a regular basis.

The eye bank that is used in Tobago is called International Sight Restoration; it is from Tampa, Florida. It is the only eye bank in the United States to boast of certified ISO Class 5, 7 and 8 Clean Rooms, et cetera. The International Sight Restoration Eye Bank is dedicated to the procurement of ocular tissue, which is eye tissue, in the United States. The ISR, which is the eye bank, distributes ocular tissue to US surgeons and has the largest international programme in the United States of America. It exports over 4,000 corneas annually in over 50 countries.

This eye bank has implemented a robust quality assurance programme to ensure the highest quality in tissue recovery, processing and distribution. ISR is a non-profit organization licensed in the State of Florida and with the Agency of Health Care Administration, registered with the Food & Drug Administration, and accredited with the Eye Bank Association of America.

The consent process for eye surgery is very robust and takes place over several visits with the patient and the family. During the process, it is explained that there are various exclusion criteria to become a donor, including age, previous and concurrent medical conditions, medications and previous surgery, to name a few. Following this consenting period, patients have to sign documents that are witnessed and are asked to carry a donor card as evidence of having given informed consent.

Also, where the donor tissue is to be harvested upon the death of a patient (as in the case with corneal tissue), the family members are again contacted to check that the patient has not changed their mind about donating and that the family is still comfortable with relatives' wishes. Only at this point is the tissue harvested; consent and harvesting, Mr. Speaker.

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It is processed by making sure that there are no signs of infection such as HIV, hepatitis, syphilis, et cetera, or any structural defect of the cornea itself. Providing that it passes these inspections it is then kept frozen, which is cryostorage, until needed for use.

Upon request for the cornea, it is defrosted and checked as above. On passing this inspection, it is defrosted and stored in a liquid medium. The liquid medium in which corneas are stored will inhibit the growth of bacteria and fungus and contain nutrients to keep the cells in viable condition for two weeks.

All tissues used by THA were less than a week old. It is sent by cold chain air freight to the receiving surgeons for transplantation. Only certified and registered surgeons with the tissue eye bank will be given that tissue.

Before transplantation, again, there is a detailed consent process with the recipient done over two to three sessions. They are informed of the details of the surgery, the risks and benefits of both surgery and having a transplanting donor—

Mr. Speaker: Time is up, if you can just wind up please.

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: This is something that is serious, you know.

Mr. Speaker: I have given you an extra minute. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: Mr. Speaker, could I move a Motion—

Hon. Members: No, no, no.

Hon Dr. F. Khan: —for extension of my time. [*Interruption*] Wait, wait, wait. I want to put it to the vote. I want to put it to the vote.

Mr. Speaker: All right, please, please, please. Both of us cannot be on our legs at the same time. I think your two minutes are up and I gave you an extra minute to wind up. I now call on the hon. Member for Chaguanas West, if he has any supplemental. [*Crosstalk*] You asked for what? How many more minutes would you like?

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: About one.

Mr. Speaker: You would like one minute?

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: Please.

Mr. Speaker: Members are you inclined to give the hon. Member—

Hon. Members: Nooo!

Miss Ramdial: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: All right, one minute, continue. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: At surgery, the surgery is done—I just taught you all what it could do, eh. Mr. Speaker, the surgery is done by a team of experienced surgeons in operating theatre under sterile conditions, and thank God, Tobago, thanks to the UNC Government you have the Scarborough Hospital to do the transplant surgery. And had we not developed that hospital, Mr. Speaker, transplant would not be done. Basically, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Member for Chaguanas West if he has to have his corneal transplant done to see proper, politically, he can go to Tobago. Thank you. [*Laughter and desk thumping*]

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Moonilal: Supplemental.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: You cannot ask a supplemental.

Dr. Moonilal: How yuh mean I cyah ask ah supplemental? [*Crosstalk*] Supplemental, Minister could you—[*Crosstalk*] Mr. Speaker, please.

Mr. Speaker: Please.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, given the—

Mr. Imbert: You have all the information.

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, Members. Yes, yes, continue.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, given the very important matter raised by the Member for Chaguanas West, could the Minister give any further information as to the occurrence of the incidence of this problem in relation to the situation in Tobago, and whether or not there is any prior history of this type of activity?

Hon. Dr. F. Khan: Mr. Speaker, could I answer by saying, thank you, Minister. The problem of conjunctival problems is very high in Tobago. It has never been done before. Only the last two years we have had a great cataract surgery being done in the new hospital that the People's Partnership opened and also corneal transplant has been done in Trinidad, never in Tobago and there is a high incidence of eye problems and eye diseases in Tobago, and the people of Tobago are extremely happy that they are getting transplantation in Tobago rather than coming to Trinidad. [*Desk thumping*]

Earthquakes
(Changes to Emergency Response Plan)

Miss Donna Cox (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of National Security:

Given the fact that we have experienced two earthquakes for this week and 130 seismic events for the year with varying magnitudes, can the Minister state whether there have been any recent changes to the emergency response plan in the event of an earthquake of a large magnitude?

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): I would have to read this. This is a technical answer. Mr. Speaker, in response we have been informed by the Ministry of National Security that all agencies have been placed on alert based upon information from the Seismic Research Centre and information over the last year and the agencies have been asked to update their emergency plan and there is an increase in the public education campaigns both issued by the Seismic Research Centre and the ODPM.

1.45 p.m.

A simulation exercise, which involves mini-drills, will be carried out by the disaster units under the regional corporations. We have also been working with teams in Tobago and conducting similar activities. The ODPM, which has key responsibility in this area, has committed to a wider span for public education and alert programmes. So that in direct response to the question: yes, we have been accelerating emergency response policy planning in the event of any further problem.

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, questions for written response. I rise on question 135 to the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs—for circulation. I would like to find out what is the status of that question, please.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government Business, question 135.

Miss Mc Donald: It was due since the 17th of April.

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, to whom that question is posed—135—we do not have the answer in written form today to prepare, but I will ask that it be deferred for two weeks.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: Mr. Speaker, I stand on the same Standing Order to enquire about my question, 133. It has been pending for several weeks, and no answer.

Hon. Member: “All yuh now reach!” [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please! Please! Please!

Mrs. Mc Intosh: No answer.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple answers that we believe had been circulated to Members. I do not know if they got them. Certainly, I think we gave some answers already that are here. I will have to clarify with the Clerk later in the proceedings because we had circulated a couple answers here. The Members were not in the House, so I do not know if they got it in their mail or where.

Mrs. Mc Intosh: No.

Dr. R. Moonilal: You all did not get anything home?

Mrs. Mc Intosh: No, nothing.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Okay. Well, then, we will have to look and see, Mr. Speaker. We will clarify it later in the proceedings.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Chaguanas West, and then the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Mr. Warner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for written answer, some of them more than two months ago: question number 98, question number 108, question number 109, question number 122, 123, 124, 125, 131—

Hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Speaker: Please, please.

Mr. Warner:—and questions 144, 145, 147 and 148. Over 12 questions, Mr. Speaker, no answer.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, we will seek to answer some of these questions. We had circulated last week—Mr. Speaker, the Member for Chaguanas West takes off at 4.30. We will try today to see if we can get a couple of these questions answered before he takes off at 4.30. Because, Mr. Speaker, we had the answers last week after 4.30 when he left. I would have to check to see if they were circulated. Because when the Members are not here, the questions have to go to their house or wherever; their mailing address. So we will have to ensure

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whether you got it. A couple of these were circulated. Is the Member for Chaguanas West saying he did not receive at his home or at his office, the answers that he is saying—all of them? Have you received them at home or at your office?

Mr. Warner: Mr. Speaker, I am saying, I have not received 13 answers to 13 questions, neither here, nor in my home, nor in heaven. [*Laughter*]

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, I do not know where else the Member may be, between home—“ah” sure out of three, he is at two and not three. But we will have to check, if his address has changed and so on because there are some we have circulated. So I “doh” know, between home, work, house, hell, heaven, where he has been. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, please. The hon. Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

Miss Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on question number 146 which was due over a month ago and I have not received the written answer.

Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, we will check on this, too, because the problem here, Mr. Speaker, I want to say for the record, is that answers have come. We have sought to circulate. The Members are not here, then they reappear. After three/four weeks they appear and ask, and we have to check with the Clerk now to see when they were submitted, whether they were sent to the Members’ office or house or wherever. The Members are saying that whatever was circulated they have not received either at their house or at their office, or wherever they have their official address, so we will have to check on that, Mr. Speaker. Had they been in the House and we circulated questions and answers, you would have received it on your desk.

DEFINITE URGENT MATTER

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

Integrity Commission (Inability to Investigate)

Mr. Jack Warner (*Chaguanas West*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 17 of the House of Representatives, I hereby seek your leave to move the Adjournment of the House at today’s sitting for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent, public importance, namely, the cloud of doubt hanging over the Integrity Commission’s ability to independently investigate matters referred to it.

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Mr. Speaker, the matter is definite because the recent resignations reported in the media have brought into question the ability of the commission to independently investigate matters referred to it. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, please.

Mr. J. Warner: The matter, Mr. Speaker, is also definite because section 5(2) of the Integrity in Public Life Act, Chap. 22:01 states:

“...the Commission—

(a) shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority”—in the performance of its functions.

Mr. Speaker, the matter is urgent because the Integrity Commission is charged with the responsibility of supervising and monitoring the standards of ethical conduct prescribed by Parliament to be observed by persons in public office. It is also urgent because the Integrity Commission has a number of other investigations ongoing that may also be brought into question.

Mr. Speaker, the matter is of public importance because the Integrity Commission is the principal body charged with the responsibility of monitoring and investigating conduct, practices and procedures by persons in public life which are dishonest and/or corrupt. Therefore, if the ability of the Integrity Commission to effectively and impartially investigate matters referred to it is questioned by the public, the overall loss of this public confidence in this constitutionally-established institution is a strike to the heart of our nation’s ability to hold public officers to account.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, after careful consideration of this submission, I am of the view that it does not qualify under Standing Order 17. I wish to advise the hon. Member for Chaguanas West that if he so desires, he may submit the matter for debate under Standing Order 35.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Strategic Partnership on Heavy Oil Development

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Kevin Ramnarine): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the draft energy

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policy of the Government states that “the country must aspire to capture value while taking into consideration the need for the energy sector to be competitive and to continue to attract capital investment. Good governance, best practice in health, safety and the environment, transparency, innovation and support for local content are also key to ensuring the long-term sustainability and development of the country.”

With respect to that policy direction, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise that Cabinet has agreed to the grant of TT \$4.5 million to the University of Trinidad and Tobago for two research projects. These projects are:

- (1) A Techno-economic Analysis of Heavy Oil in Trinidad and Tobago; and
- (2) A Techno-economic Analysis of Carbon Management in Trinidad and Tobago through coupled enhanced oil recovery and Geological Storage.

Mr. Speaker, the Techno-economic Analysis of Heavy Oil is in keeping with government policy to increase oil production as it seeks to evaluate and unlock the huge potential of our heavy oil resources in Trinidad and Tobago. At the Heavy Oil Technology Conference in Alberta in July 2010, Professor Richard Dawe, Dr. Raffie Hosein and Wayne Bertrand stated that this country had an estimated 1.5 billion barrels of heavy oil in place on land and a further 3.6 billion barrels offshore in the Gulf of Paria.

This is a significant resource. The use of Enhanced Oil Recovery to produce heavy oil in this country has never been fully realized and we believe that this has significant potential to increase both oil production and oil reserves. It is expected that both the land-based 3D seismic and the Ocean Bottom Cable 3D seismic survey, both acquired by Petrotrin in 2011 and 2014, respectively, will be very valuable in planning future investments in Enhanced Oil Recovery projects.

The Techno-economic Analysis of Heavy Oil in Trinidad and Tobago will establish an up-to-date, fully defined heavy oil inventory which will be used to create a development plan for future oil production. Conventional heavy oil recovery involves steam flooding which incurs high cost due to inefficiencies such as heat loss. Instead, this project will investigate new technologies that have come to the fore in recent years, which can potentially increase efficiencies of processes and improve recovery factors of hydrocarbons.

Most of our identified heavy oil resources are located in acreage in the south western peninsula and in Trinmar. This initiative will therefore lend to the future economic development of the south-western peninsula which is in keeping with

broader government policy of the south-western peninsula as a strategic growth pole. This project is expected to cost just over TT \$3 million.

The second project addresses two critical issues in Trinidad and Tobago. The first issue is the emissions of high levels of carbon dioxide, and the second is the potential usage of that carbon dioxide for enhanced oil recovery projects. The marriage of those two ideas is something which has been touted for a while.

Based on a study undertaken by the University of Trinidad and Tobago in 2010, Trinidad and Tobago, due to its small population and low carbon efficiency, has the second highest per capita greenhouse emissions in the world, after Qatar, and is the second highest producer per unit of GDP after Uzbekistan. This, of course, is due to our high level of industrialization and small population.

The study stated that this country produces over 53 million tons of greenhouse emissions annually, with 80 per cent of that coming from the petrochemical and power generation sector, and 6 per cent coming from the transportation sector. In an effort to reduce this country's carbon footprint and to increase production of hydrocarbons, UTT's project objectives will include as follows:

1. An updated inventory of Trinidad and Tobago's carbon dioxide emissions in the industrial sector.
2. Screening of all potential reservoirs that can be used to accommodate and store carbon dioxide.
3. Simulation of selected reservoirs to investigate the effects of carbon dioxide injection on Trinidad and Tobago's oil production in spent fields.
4. Economic life cycle analyses of various carbon dioxide sequestration and/or carbon dioxide enhanced oil recovery projects.
5. Quantification of the potential reduction of carbon dioxide emissions in Trinidad and Tobago through this technology.

Mr. Speaker, it is proposed that the project will focus its study on the carbon dioxide emissions that emanate from the ammonia plants located in the Point Lisas Industrial Estate and target use of this by-product in enhanced oil recovery techniques in onshore fields in south Trinidad. The estimated cost of the second project is approximately TT \$1.5 million.

Traditional recovery methods can leave between 60 per cent to 90 per cent of the oil originally in place trapped in the reservoir. Application of carbon dioxide enhanced oil recovery technology can recover a further 10 to 30 per cent of the

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remaining resource. These two projects are critical to the Trinidad and Tobago economy and their outcomes will feature prominently in the future of this country's energy sector in the future.

The UTT will be collaborating with the University of Texas at Austin on these projects. Funding for these two projects will come from provisions in production-sharing contracts which mandate that money be set aside on an annual basis by oil companies for research and development. Mr. Speaker, we have signed a significant amount of those production-sharing contracts in the last four years.

It should be noted that this money that has been set aside for research and development has never been used for its main purpose, and therefore, these are the first two oil and gas research and development projects to be funded from this allocation. This is, therefore, a historic achievement for the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and we are pleased to partner with the University of Trinidad and Tobago. The Ministry is also currently considering funding other R&D projects from other universities.

It is also the mandate of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs, to the UTT, that these projects be integrated with the wider industry to enable application in the field.

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, our policy and strategy is to utilize the country's energy assets, whether they be in deep water, or in the form of heavy oil for the national benefit, so that in the coming years we can look forward to a period of unprecedented and unparalleled social development.

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

GAMBLING (GAMING AND BETTING) CONTROL BILL, 2015

Bill to provide for the regulation and control of gaming and betting and matters related thereto [*The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy*]; read the first time.

Motion made: That the next stage be taken at the next sitting of the House on Wednesday, May 27, 2015. [*Hon. R. Indarsingh*]

Question put and agreed to.

PETROTRIN'S SOUTH WEST SOLDADO PROJECT

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

Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon (*Point Fortin*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*] I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Whereas the 2011 State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual effected by the Government calls for strict monitoring of state agencies by monitoring agents which include in the case of Petrotrin, the Minister of Finance as Corporate Sole and the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs and the Chairman and Board of Directors and the President;

And whereas recent allegations of impropriety with Petrotrin's South West Soldado Project involving the illegal advance payment of US \$1.25 million was not in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract;

And whereas on failure of the contract there was a transfer of US \$750,000 into two private bank accounts at Scotiabank, Maraval;

And whereas the matter was raised in the budget debate of September 2013, evoking no response by the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs;

And whereas a contract of approximately US \$50 million could only be approved by the Chairman and Board of Directors;

And whereas several Board Members voiced their concerns to the award of the contract;

Be it resolved that the Government immediately order an investigation into this contractual arrangement;

And be it further resolved that the matter of the misdirected state funds into private bank accounts be immediately brought to the attention of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service for investigation;

And be it further resolved that the current Chairman and Board Members be suspended from office pending the outcome of the investigation of the failed South West Soldado Project;

And be it further resolved that this matter be referred to the Joint Select Committee on Energy Affairs for investigation and report.

I beg to move.

Mr. Speaker: No. You finish your presentation?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Oh, I am so sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: You beg to move at the end of it.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Sorry. I am so sorry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing my Motion. I would also like to thank the Member for Chaguanas West for his role in this House since the dictatorial removal of our leader, the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West—and I can say still, the next Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago—and I also thank the Member for giving way to the Opposition to be able to present this Motion.

Mr. Speaker, this Motion seeks to deal with corruption specific to Petrotrin and the dealings involved in the South West Soldado field, but it is systematic of the corruption in this country and the corruption of our democracy in a Government which, like a dictatorship, is prepared to remove all of the oppositions, and such were the rantings of the Members of this Government. Yesterday it was the Opposition Leader, then it was the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, and tomorrow, if I can believe the words of the Member for Oropuche, it will be all of us on this side. All we are doing, Mr. Speaker, is protesting this corrupt dictatorship by boycotting this Parliament, and that is all we have been doing.

Fortunately for us, the people of Trinidad and Tobago are really accustomed to having free and fair elections and this is the greatest legacy of the PNM, and although then we see them attempting through the Parliament at times to tamper with the process and to further their political objectives, it has not worked.

Dr. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 46(1). I have not heard Soldado or Salado, or whatever the word is.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Oh, I have said it. I have said it. We have shown them in Tobago in 2013, and Trinidad in October of the same year. The people of Trinidad and Tobago have revolted to their objectives and we expect to run them out. Run-off or no run-off, we will run them out. [*Desk thumping*] So the boycott of Parliament does not mean that we are not representing our constituents. We are in fact giving them their highest form of representation that we can and, that is, to show the undemocratic and “tyrantist” trends that we see before us.

Mr. Speaker, you know the irony. The irony of all of this is that the UNC Government boycotted this Parliament. If you recall 18/18—[*Interruption*]

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, I rise on 53(e), please. I would like to hear what the Member is saying.

Dr. Moonilal: And 48(1).

Mr. Speaker: Well in terms of 53, I uphold that Standing Order. Please allow the Member to speak in silence. That other Standing Order that you referred to, I am still following the Member. She has now started. Continue, hon. Member.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the public and you, of course, that the UNC Government, this very same Government, boycotted the Parliament. You remember 18/18. They boycotted the Parliament for about a year and they refused to appoint a Speaker, and then they went all the way to the Privy Council to ensure that they got their salaries. They were making no joke about their salaries. So who is being hypocritical in all of this? [*Desk thumping*] They are being very two-faced.

Mr. Speaker, you would know—I will remind you—that I think it was the Member for Chaguanas West who paid their salaries, and I do not even know if they have ever paid him back. You paid their salaries. The very people you have fed, they came back to stab you. You realized that is what has happened. So they come in all forms, dressed nicely, serving the people on one hand, and this Motion today is about corruption, blind corruption. It is about robbing state enterprises like the National Gas Company, the National Energy Company and, of course, Petrotrin and the South West Soldado—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Moonilal: Standing Orders 48(6) 48(4), 48(1). I mean, imputing improper motives. This is about Soldado or whatever.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: That is right. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: I think when she spoke about robbing, she was talking about the stated companies. Let us continue, please.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you. I am talking about the state enterprises—[*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Khan: Mr. Speaker, can I just say something?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: I am moving on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Please.

Dr. Khan: The Member for Chaguanas West never paid my salary—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Sit down!

Dr. Khan:—and I would like the Member for Point Fortin to retract that statement.

Mr. Imbert: What Standing Order you standing up on?

Dr. Khan: My Standing Order. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please! The Member is objecting to what you have said about the Member for Chaguanas West paying his salary. He said he has never been paid. So you could be guided.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Mr. Speaker, he did not call a Standing Order, but at the same time—okay, the Member for Barataria/San Juan may not have been paid by the Member for Chaguanas West. We will leave it like that, but many of them on that side their salaries were paid. They made no joke about their salaries being paid.

So I move on to the actual project, the South West Soldado reactivation project, and it is that oil and gas exploration and production operations have been going on in Soldado from as far as the 1950s, but the South West Soldado reactivation project was conceived by the last PNM administration with a view to identify opportunities for production increases in Trinmar's Soldado fields. You would know then, that there are several projects of various sizes and so on associated with the overall reactivation project, and there are all kinds of activities associated with it.

So the circumstances surrounding this failed project—I think it has been ventilated pretty much in the press over a full series—in the *Express*, that is—by what I could only call outstanding investigative journalism; but there were repercussions to that and I will come to that. But before that, the matter had been raised by me in this very House in the Appropriation Bill 2013, the financial year 2014, on September 17, 2013. I certainly at that time had minimal information but, notwithstanding, given the apparent gravity of the situation, I thought I will bring it to the House to see if I can invoke some response from the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs.

So I can go to the *Hansard* and there it was on the Appropriation Bill and I will read:

“And there is a particular incident that came to my attention over a barge and let me tell you about that, Mr. Speaker. I think the name of it might have been the eagle or something, but there was this barge being leased from a long-standing company in Marabella, I would not call the name, a company of good reputation. So that when this Government came in they were not satisfied, for whatever reasons, and they wanted the contract re-tendered.

They wanted to level the playing field, so they sent out these tenders far and wide and at the end of the process, they ended up with a barge in Mexico.

They left Trinidad”—where the contract existed—“with no problems, and went out and tendered for a barge in Mexico. Anyway, after the contract had been signed, the principals in Mexico requested, for whatever reason, that moneys be paid up front. This was a departure from the terms and conditions of the contract. Notwithstanding, the board gave the approval—as I said it is a departure from the contract—for moneys to be paid up front.

The next thing is that the board was advised that the barge had gone to Turkey;...” Some—“...moneys have been paid up front, the barge is now in Turkey. So the board decided that they will send their members, Ram and Khan, Khan and Ram—I think Ram is the one who really tried to get me out of the house in Point Fortin—but of course they sent Ram and Khan, first class of course”—la de da—“...they”—may have—“had a stopover in Greece, but they sent them to check on the barge in Turkey;”—and—“this is under this Government.

So they got to Turkey and guess what? No barge was found; so”—the—“contract”—had been—“signed, they sent money outside of the contract, spent a lot of money”—to—“go to Turkey and there is no barge. So after all this wastage they wound up right in the position that they were in which is using barge services from Trinidad and my information”—is—“...that they are probably going to get involved with the same company but of course the arrangements are becoming a little more twisted and a little bit more convoluted. And the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs really should have come to the House and reported on this. It”—just—“does not sound right.”

But of course, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs felt that there was no obligation to respond, and I feel that for the very least if he knew nothing he should have investigated it and brought the matter to conclusion by a full investigation and he should have reported it to the police. And if I may cut to the chase, I would like to confirm to my greatest consternation that the requirement for the vessel services being obviously necessary to the project, Petrotrin proceeded to contract the very same vessel, the Eagle II, the very same specs. Nothing changed, but the agent and the contract price changed. So I am told, same vessel, same services, same specs, but, of course, the contract is now almost double the price and the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs must give reasons for that.

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Mr. Speaker, I have been told that what pervades in Petrotrin now is an environment that facilitates deal making in large and in small contracts, and I could go. For instance, if you are driving down to the south you would notice on the right when you get to Petrotrin, there are several large fields of lilies, and I will you tell you, cleaning of those fields had been done time immemorial traditionally by a few men in a pirogue. So they will go about with their pirogue cleaning lilies, but with this new dispensation they took away the contract from the small man and they gave it to a millionaire for hundreds of thousands of dollars. So these small men are replaced by men with backhoes instead of the men with the pirogues for much more money, and to top it all off the people with the backhoe damaged the shoreline and, you know, they do not care about the environment. Petrotrin does not. So this is just showing the type of culture that exists at Petrotrin. It is a culture of waste, and they are quite merciless in how they approach things.

But to go to the actual project which details I have given before from since the Appropriation Bill in September 2013, there are several disturbing issues about this contract; one of them being a failed shipyard expedition to the US involving three Petrotrin managers, and along with them, in tow, a potential bidder for the very same project. So there they are, going to seek advice and chat with some energy service people, but Petrotrin and the bidder are all staying at the same hotel—I believe it was the Marriott, coincidentally— and they all travelled on the aircraft and so on.

2.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, no kind of terms of reference to guide the mission at all. I mean, these are very unusual circumstances for a state enterprise to operate in this manner with a bidder in tow with company executives. So that is one disturbing factor.

And then there were some very ad hoc approaches surrounding the selection of a shortlist of candidates, including unsolicited clients and with subsequent offers by this particular firm, Maritima Marecsa of Mexico and Margon of Houston. Margon, I can tell you, for instance, he was shortlisted but in our estimation, Margon was always an unworthy client and Petrotrin knew that because they, themselves, sought the Dun and Bradstreet credit report, and that report clearly showed that Margon had no capacity at all to enter into a contract of this nature. The entire Margon board was made up of a man and his wife. They had no yard, no equipment. They borrowed a room to hold the meeting and they

never did any such work as they were proposing to do, and word has it that they have since filed for bankruptcy. So these are the people who were shortlisted by Petrotrin.

And, of course, another—well, they were not shortlisted, but another bidder, SIS, could not have been left out of the picture, they would not be left out of this contract. So this infamous firm, they were in a joint bid along with a company called SML, and SML, I will tell you, one of the directors is a Mr. Jeff Clark. I will talk to him later. But SIS/SML, I am just telling you as one of the bidders, they were not successful, but Mr. Jeff Clark, somehow or the other, he seems to have some kind of political connection, I would say, because here he is involved with SIS in a joint venture. But at the same time—[*Crosstalk*] Yes, he is a director of SML and in a joint venture with SIS. So he found himself subsequently—this Mr. Jeff Clarke—entwined with Maritima of Mexico. When SIS/SML did not get the contract, he then joined forces as an agent of Maritima of Mexico. But I will speak later about Mr. Clarke. But this is all very alarming.

But you know, the Margon issue, what I do not understand is: how could they have even reached to be shortlisted when they did not even have the minimum required capital necessary which is US \$20 million; they could not give Petrotrin any of the financial statements that were required and they had a series of claims against them, one of them being by the IRS? Yet still, these people had been shortlisted by Petrotrin. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, they were the ones who were, in fact, visited by the Petrotrin team.

But anyway, Maritima Marecsa won the contract and the unbelievable thing about Maritima Marecsa, they entered the contract, they appeared on Petrotrin's doorstep at 10 o'clock late on a Sunday night with an unsolicited offer. They like to talk about who in "dey duster and nightie and putting on Cutex", well, at 10.00 o'clock on a Sunday, "yuh ironing yuh clothes, yuh in yuh duster and yuh nightie, yuh finish put on yuh Cutex" and there it is, Maritima is now emailing at 10 o'clock in night to Steve Baldeosingh of Petrotrin. How do they know to email to Mr. Steve Baldeosingh who was the Vice-President? Heaven knows but they did. This unsolicited bidder, Maritima.

Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that—would you believe—he was introduced to the company by the Chairman of Petrotrin and I will come to that. Mr. Speaker, you would not believe in two days after that Sunday night, they made it on the shortlist in just two days. There were several concerns by the board but there was strong support, as I understand, by the Chairman for this company. And just for the sake of evidence, I want to read from the actual email which was sent by—

Dr. Moonilal: Emails?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: An email, the letter of introduction sent Sunday October 09, 10.00 p.m. to Steve Baldeosingh and copied to the very officials from Petrotrin. How did he know all of them? I do not know. Awah, Steve, Daniel, Dexter, Latchman.

Mr. Steve Baldeosingh,

By means of this message, we would like to introduce our company Maritima. We are a production service company: processing, disposal and well testing by means of specialized floating production vessels. We also own and operate special dynamic service vessels.

Of course, they did not own. It was proven that they do not own any such vessels.

We will appreciate the opportunity to introduce ourselves and would like to be considered for opportunities to work with Trinmar. Please find ourselves introducing our company, et cetera.

There you are, Mr. Speaker, they knew who to write to, an unsolicited bidder for this contract.

I will tell what is further disappointing. Maritima's entrance at 10.00 p.m.

"...chairman Lindsay Gillette, at a committee meeting of the board..."

And I am quoting here from the *Express*, March 21 and it says:

"...chairman Lindsay Gillette, at a committee meeting of the board, is reported to have complained about the messy setback and revealed there was a Mexican company with equipment that could do the South West Soldado job, according to sources on the Petrotrin board."

So here we are, the Chairman of Petrotrin introducing to his fellow board directors, Maritima, who eventually became the successful contractor. Mr. Speaker, and:

"A former director..."—then who—"said there was 'general agreement'..."—and—"that the oil giant should pursue discussions"—this is Petrotrin—"with the Gillette-mentioned Mexican firm."

And of course, we all know, two days later, Maritima was on the shortlist.

Mr. Speaker, in the discussions which had followed at Petrotrin in the evaluation process, Maritima did emerge as the runaway winner and they were given top scores in almost every category, and they, of course, claimed their

ability to deliver on time and the legal compliance on the important criteria of non-performance and so on. And this is the same company that failed in the end. Maritima, that offer was red-flagged long before the ink dried on the contract. Throughout the bid process, there were concerns by the board of directors and company officials as well. Mr. Steve Baldeosingh indicated there were concerns; chairman Gillette, however, defended. He urged Petrotrin's management to reach a final decision—this is Mr. Gillette—as soon as possible. Former director, Khemran Jokhoo, he also had concerns as well.

Another former director, Krishendath Ramoutar complained that the directors were being asked to make a decision on a \$300 million contract with grossly inadequate information, and he took issue with it. And for an investment such as this, a review of the financial statements would have been helpful, noting the directors should have been provided with due diligence information on the preferred bidder. He also questioned why it would take Maritima eight months to mobilize when the company had already built mobile offshore production.

But Hassanali, the President of the committee and the facilitator, perhaps, in all of this, advised that Maritima's facility was currently in service for another client, et cetera. So that there were reservations on the board but for the most part, Gillette had countered all claims. And I do not know and that is why I am of the view that he may have been a mastermind in all of this. This is my view. So, Mr. Speaker, that was the issue of the shortlisting of candidates for the contract.

Another issue was the matter of the breach of contract and here we have an illegal transfer of US \$1.25 million—TT \$8 million of taxpayers' money—outside of the terms and conditions of the South West Soldado contract paying an upfront commission. So here we have a case of Petrotrin breaching its own rules. A total disregard for policy, process and procedure. And in that contract, what was provided for was a commissioning fee and that commissioning fee was to be paid only after the vessel arrived in Trinidad and Tobago and was certified fit for service, not what was obtained which was the mobilization fee under delegated authority. That is what happened. The contract never provided for that. So that, in fact, the payment of this upfront fee was an absolute breach of contract.

What the Petrotrin officials were allowed to do was to negotiate a reduction in rates and not a prepayment. Some members of the negotiation team are claiming that they knew nothing about this mobilization fee but the President knew, and I will come to that later on. So they even duped the VP Finance into signing the document, into actually paying because you needed two Vice-Presidents to sign

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the document. Sharifa Ali-Baksh, very honest lady, but she was duped into signing the contract as well. But I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, it was a sweetheart of a deal.

And in the end of it all, when Maritima responded pertaining to the reduction in rates, they said—this is Maritima:

Further, these rates reflect the use of reasonable land spaces within Petrotrin's facility for storage of equipment, spares and materials needed for our operations at no cost to the company.

So, Mr. Speaker, a sweetheart of a deal for Maritima who really did not fit the bill, did not qualify.

Then, of course, I was able to get information on the audit exercise pertaining to this advance payment of the commissioning fee. Within the audit—and I have copies of correspondence by the audit team—Mr. Dexter Daniel, he is just a mere functionary in Petrotrin who wears a Rolex watch, anyway and that is just an aside. A functionary in Petrotrin but he is the acting manager, projects. And Mr. Speaker, I am quoting from the audit enquiry into this affair with Mr. Dexter Daniel, and it goes like this:

Approval is now requested to pay this commissioning fee in advance of the facility being commissioned and this request is being made in light of the discussion considered as the mobilization fee during negotiations with Marecsa.

However, when—they made reference—the audit committee—to Petrotrin's financial authority, tenders and contract for services, item B9 and it is that such advance payments can only be approved by a line VP after consultation with the VP, Finance, evidence of which must be in writing. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, there was no such evidence in writing of any such alterations at all. In fact, internal audit in Petrotrin was told by a Trinmar employee that an advance payment was made to contract Maritima Marecsa contrary to the conditions specified in the contract for the provision of temporary offshore production and compression facilities. So it is very clear, someone in the organization said it was made contrary to it.

No documentary evidence which was required—according to Petrotrin's rules on advance payments, no documented evidence was provided to internal audit to prove that Petrotrin had agreed to pay the commissioning fee as a mobilization fee. Dexter Daniel was unable to provide minutes of the negotiations as well.

Another, legal counsel, Vade Chadie told internal audit that he had prepared the memorandum on instructions from Mr. Daniel. I am telling you, a mere functionary. He went on to say that he had on three occasions said that the payment of the advance fee was an alteration of the contract and that this should be stated in the memorandum. However, Mr. Daniel prepared the memorandum exactly as it was and presented to the two VPs and duped it. This is from audited report, a clear variation of the contract which Mr. Dexter Daniel breached.

And, in fact, another, Andre Hosein, senior legal counsel, then wrote:

Gentlemen, the advance payment that was approved is clearly an amendment to the contract as it changes what was contained in the bid form. Please provide me with all the relevant documentation, et cetera.

Mr. Daniel then went on to say that no minutes were taken at that meeting where that decision was taken. Another person who was present, Mr. Awah, said that he cannot recall any early payment discussion. So what it is? End result is: absolutely no records and it was found out that one Mr. Ramjit told the audit committee: Petrotrin acted in good faith by making the advance payment as it was promised to the contractor in return for lowering of the daily rate, that no one at Petrotrin stood to gain financially from the advance payment to Marecsa.

Very, very, very, unorthodox, but that is what obtains there at Petrotrin. That is the manner in which this Gillette-controlled board and Petrotrin's Khalid Hassanali executive controls and manages Petrotrin.

2.30 p.m.

Another major issue was the transfer of US \$750,000 into two bank accounts in Scotiabank, Maraval. Circumstances are that Maritima failed in its contract performance and its Director General, Gabriel Delgado was instructed to return the sum of US \$750,000 to two Scotiabank accounts. One in the name of SML, and I talked about SML being a joint bidder with SIS, but \$100,000—after the failed contract, is now being deposited into SML's account, a failed bidder—and then another US \$650,000 to an unnamed account. To this day, we still do not know, in Trinidad and Tobago, why state funds, US \$650,000, have been paid to an unnamed account in Scotiabank. We still do not know and the Government has said nothing and the \$100,000 into an account of SML, a failed bidder.

Mr. Delgado, as it turned out, claimed that those instructions were given by Mr. Clark who was better known as the agent. Mr. Speaker, two years later, here we are. None of the monitoring agents in Petrotrin, the Chairman and the Board,

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the President, the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the line Minister, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, none of these people have been able to say anything to the public, all hush mouth, all pussyfooting and a matter of theft of public funds. That is what this is, nothing more than theft of public funds, but I will deal with these monitoring agents later.

Mr. Speaker, what has this Government done about this theft and this breach of contract? It is only about a month ago and I may be wrong, five weeks or so, that the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs launched an internal investigation. But what is an internal investigation worth? What is an internal investigation worth? Here we have a board that appears to be implicated, a chairman, a president, some VPs and some functionaries implicated and the Minister has said that they will do their own investigation. What are we going to get out of that? They are investigating themselves. What is the worth of the report? We may never get findings anyway. It is all a game of pretence.

Because you had the investigation into the oil spill. We have got no results from that. All we know is that six functionaries were fired. Six functionaries fired, yet Mr. Mado Bachan who had been on suspension, the VP Refining, I believe, on suspension for maybe six weeks or more, he ended up with a package of \$6 million, an ex gratia payment, plus his pension benefits and his pension beginning from that time and we never knew the results of that investigation. We know six small men went home. The big man went home scot-free, \$6 million as an ex gratia payment.

I will tell you, Petrotrin has been having losses since the 2012 report and, of course, the 2013 and the six-month report since then have also shown tremendous losses as well. But there they are—and there are some other people who have recently gotten million-dollar payoffs as well but I cannot go into that now.

As I am saying, we cannot trust these investigations because we have not heard about this oil spill investigation. Then, of course, there was the Pricewaterhouse investigation on the B6 line, the EMA investigation into the Sealine 10. In fact, a Pricewaterhouse investigation, why was Petrotrin giving an investigation to Pricewaterhouse, when in fact one of the members of the board was a senior member of Pricewaterhouse? Why would you give them the contract? So I am asking about the EMA investigation as well into the Sealine 10. We have gotten no results from that as well.

What about the Carmona-appointed committee of these 10 professionals on that same oil spill? Mr. Speaker, we have gotten nothing on that. So why should

we then rely on these investigations by the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs? It has just been a litany of reports but no results and no reporting to the public.

Mr. Speaker, for what I believe is a fraudulent affair, it is evidently so, the police should have been called in a long time now; they should have been. It took the OWTU. It was the OWTU who took it to the police. I have here, on Tuesday, April 21, a *Newsday* report.

The police have begun an investigation into allegations of corruption among top officials responsible for this project.

And there was a long meeting, I understand, and they called for the removal of top Petrotrin Chairman, Lindsay Gillette, President Khalid Hassanali and, of course, the executive Dexter Daniel. That is April 21.

You know, Mr. Speaker, a few days later, only a few days later, after, of course, this Motion was made; after, of course, the series of investigations by Camini Marajh of the *Express* and after this OWTU report to the police, then Petrotrin goes to the cops. So it was in a Radhica Sookraj *Guardian* report, April 26:

Petrotrin has handed over—they are now all high and mighty now—to police all records of payment—this is after the OWTU has taken it in—connected to the South West Soldado development deal. A senior Petrotrin official is alleged to have pushed through the deal.

This is what we are getting from the *Guardian*.

A senior Petrotrin official is alleged to have pushed through the deal, breaching Petrotrin's own rules and contract requirements by paying the up-front commissioning fee of \$1.25 million.

So it appears then that senior Petrotrin official is Dexter Daniel. He is the hangman. He is the fall guy when in fact we all know the evidence is there, Mr. Hassanali knew all about this and I believe the chairman also knew as well. This is Petrotrin:

In the circumstances, we will be grateful if you can address this matter at your earliest convenience.

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When they should have gone to the police since May 2012. In 2013, I brought it to this House. It did not go to the police then. Two years later, now you are telling me—after OWTU sends the report to the police—now:

In the circumstances we would be grateful if you can address this matter at your earliest convenience. We stand ready to provide you with any and all of the information concerning this issue.

So they are ready to throw him under the bus, Dexter Daniel. Mr. Speaker, this is what he had to say, Petrotrin had on their web site:

Clark—they are now talking about Clark, Jeff Clark—who is alleged to have registered Sterling Marine Limited, SML, the reported beneficiary of US \$100,000 is not and never was an agent or representative of Petrotrin.

So that is on the letter signed by Khalid Hassanali. I really want to know where this money is and whether Scotiabank has been questioned about this unnamed account. How can that be? It is obviously a spurious transaction. There is something called a suspicious transaction report. Did Scotiabank complete that? Is the FIU investigating this? Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and the Economy has to tell us, because really all of these transactions cannot, cannot, cannot, cannot withstand scrutiny.

Mr. Speaker, during Prime Minister's Question Time I also put a question to the Prime Minister. I asked her directly:

What steps, if any, and if not yet taken, the Government intends to take regarding allegations of impropriety at Petrotrin and the South West Development Project?

I spoke about the two remittances, and so on. The Prime Minister, in order to deflect from the question before her—and you can go back to the *Hansard*, it is all there—began by questioning, this is two years later, the veracity of the statements made in the press and then declared that Petrotrin was dealing with the issue, two years later, fraud. People taking taxpayers' money and putting it into unnamed accounts. It was being dealt with via diplomatic channels. That is what the Prime Minister had to say. Calling here the Mexican Embassy into all of this and through legal channels and Petrotrin and Bankers Insurance associates. They are dealing with Bankers Insurance through the legal channels, and I will come to Bankers Insurance as well because he has to go home too, that chairman there.

Of course, the Prime Minister went on to confuse the issue. Maybe she herself was confused, because she is always advised and she began talking about Jeff

Clark. I never asked anything about Mr. Jeff Clark. I never asked the Prime Minister about that. She then started talking about Jeff Clark, whether he is the middleman in the transaction and saying that Petrotrin had no dealings with Mr. Clark and she repeated that assertion over and over, no dealings with Mr. Clark. And then she went on in that same question period, that the funds are being—I asked her whether the funds are being held in abeyance at Scotiabank, pending the outcome of investigations. She said in her response, the funds are being held by Bankers Insurance. It is a bond.

So the Prime Minister was either confused or was trying to say that—or showing, seemingly saying—the bond and the deposit into the account are one and the same, which we all know cannot be so. The bond is in case you need to go there; in case there is trouble we go to the bond, like in this case. And the money in the account is another matter. But she chose not to respond to that. But you know, she is always advised and it is always upheaval after upheaval, wrong information and so on. But these facts are very easy to disaggregate and I am sure the public has, and if they did not before, they know now. Right? So she did not address the question of stolen money. Here she was talking about Jeff Clark's non-involvement. And it begs the question whether this is just another attempt by the Prime Minister, head of this UNC Government, to protect wrongdoing. Right? And that has become the hallmark of her stewardship.

Dr. Moonilal: “Mr. Speaker, apart from a headache, yuh hear what she saying?”

Mr. Speaker: Yeah. I think you should not reflect on a Member in that way.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Okay.

Mr. Speaker: You know that is wrong and if you want to raise the conduct of the Prime Minister, come with a substantive Motion. You have until 2.46 p.m., please.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: I am nearly finished?

Mr. Speaker: Yeah, you are finished because the mover of a Motion gets her or his entire 45 minutes.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: That is fine, okay.

Mr. Speaker: We do not interrupt them.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Mr. Speaker, there is every evidence to show that there was a relationship between Petrotrin and Jeff Clark. There is email correspondence. I have the email here as well.

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Gentlemen, please see attached for your review acceptance. Jeff—not Jeffrey, you know, not Mr. Clark or not Mr. Jeffrey Clark—called to say he would get confirmation on award in 15 minutes and it would be sent to Stephen. Both him and Gabriel is okay.

First-name basis, Mr. Speaker. They knew Jeff Clark and there is the evidence of it too as well.

I want to talk about Mr. Neil Gosine, the Gopaul tanker dealer man. He too was wrapped up all in this deal, the Chairman of NP. His brokerage firm, Comprehensive Insurance Brokers Limited, they in fact got to underwrite the performance bond, US \$1.964 million and to date Petrotrin has failed to obtain liquidated damages under this bond on the failure of the contract. Mr. Speaker, that is when friends and buddies get involved but he is a friend and buddy of Mr. Gillette and there is no question about that because Vance Gabriel, the CEO of Bankers, was on record as saying that every time he goes to one of their offices he sees the other one, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I have more on that, but let me tell you, there was a newspaper report saying that Mr. Gosine is in the dark about all of this. And then, of course, we got a letter from the failed Chairman of the FCB saying, that is his attorney, claiming that he knows nothing and so on, when Mr. Vance Gabriel the CEO said he presided over the entire thing. He called in to his office. So, therefore, Mr. Neil Gosine lied about the entire thing. He knew.

Mr. Speaker: We cannot use that word.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: It was a fabrication by Mr. Neil Gosine. He arranged to prepare the bond himself. He is not a bystander in this thing at all. He is a willing participant and therefore he is not fit to be Chairman of NP.

And worst at all, there was another breach by Petrotrin, because Bankers should never have been allowed to underwrite the bond, because it was in violation of Petrotrin's investment rating requirements for approved financial institutions and the minimum required rating was an AMBAT A rating and disqualifies Bankers Insurance. But, Mr. Speaker, friends and family. That is all I can tell you, friends and family.

So the strict monitoring how much more time, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Two minutes.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Two minutes? What I want to say is under this strict monitoring state agencies manual, all of them have failed, all of the monitoring

agencies. So that, one of the things is, this is a very sordid tale. It is very shameful. It is very filthy. It is dishonourable and sleazy. This, I would like referred to the Joint Select Committee on Energy Affairs for investigation and report.

Our new Standing Orders provide for it. I would be failing in my duty. On behalf of this Opposition I am asking to have this matter of these serious irregularities, including fraud with regard to South West, be brought before the committee urgently and within this Session, which ends on June 17. We can meet every day on this committee. The entire project is lined at state's expense and the many violations and breaches and incidents must be investigated.

Mr. Speaker, pending the outcome by the police it is my view, and I am sure it is the view of the public, that the Chairman and the Board of Directors and the President of Petrotrin ought to step down whilst these allegations of fraud are being investigated.

2.45 p.m.

Somebody has this definite link between the Chairman and the president, Mr. Jeff Clark, Mr. Dexter Daniel, Mr. Neil Gosine. There is a link with all of them, and therefore, I think somebody has to pay the price. I think we have to look for the underlying factor in all of this, who was the mastermind behind all of this, and I think it is very, very clear.

Mr. Gillette comes to us, you know, at the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee meeting, and he is very smooth talking. He can tell you all about the whistleblowing policy and the fraud policies of Petrotrin; all about that whistleblowing policy—whistleblowing policy in Petrotrin, but what does he do? Sends the pre-action protocol letters to the *Express* and to Camini Marajh for speaking the truth, and for investigating independently, doing the work that the press is required to do; excellent work in favour of the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, but that is not good enough for them, pre-action protocols for them. So there is a defined link, and we expect that these members will be suspended pending the investigation and, of course, the matter will go to the Energy Committee for investigation as well.

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

Mr. Speaker: You can now beg to move.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Mr. Speaker: This Motion requires a seconder.

Miss Mc Donald: I beg to second the Motion, and I reserve the right to speak.

Question proposed.

The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Kevin Ramnarine): [*Desk thumping*] Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me start off first by thanking the Member of Parliament for Point Fortin for bringing this matter to Parliament, so it allows us to ventilate some of the facts on the matter, and to clear up some of the issues that have been in the public domain.

Mr. Speaker, this matter goes back to the South West Soldado Project, which was initiated in the year 2011. The Member spoke about the PNM putting plans and so on in place for the build-up to that South West Soldado Project, and that may be true, but the project itself started in the year 2011, upon this Government coming into office. The project was as a result of the fact that we had a decline. We had a marked decline in oil production in Trinmar between the years 2002 and 2010. There was a strategy to begin the reversal of that decline in oil production at Trinmar, at the heart of that strategy was the South West Soldado Project.

The issues related to this particular Motion have been well ventilated in the media for the last three months, in a series of articles by the *Sunday Express*. While we respect the right of the Member to bring this Motion to Parliament, the Motion itself is now largely irrelevant in terms of what the Motion is asking the House to resolve to do.

The matter was reported to the police on April 17, 2015. The matter has also been—Petrotrin has also engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers to conduct a forensic audit of these allegations. Let me say, there is no director on Petrotrin's board that is an employee of PricewaterhouseCoopers, or is a past employee of PricewaterhouseCoopers. The person that she was, most likely, referring to was Mr. Peter Inglefield who was a director on the board of Petrotrin but he has since left the board of Petrotrin some two—could be two or more years. So there is no person on the board of Petrotrin who has a relationship with PricewaterhouseCoopers; Mr. Inglefield having left. Therefore, the company has engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers to conduct a forensic audit of the allegations that have been made.

On the issue of the report to the police, she has asked, why was this not reported two years ago when it was raised in Parliament? The specific issue that has come to the fore in the year 2015 is the issue of the alleged illegal wire

transfers. Knowledge of that only came to my attention and to the attention of persons at Petrotrin on March 08, 2015, when it formed part of the first, in the series of articles by Camini Marajh. We are now into article 11, and we may go on into 25 and 26 and maybe 300, but that was the first time that information related to that alleged illegal wire transfer, between one Delgado and one Clarke, came to the attention of persons in the Government, and persons at Petrotrin. That matter has been reported to the police, and the police are conducting their investigations.

Mr. Speaker, let me, first of all, say up front it is not my—I have not come to the House today to defend Petrotrin. I have come to the House today to simply put on the table the facts of the matter and to say that where allegations of wrongdoing have come to our attention, we have taken action [*Desk thumping*] to investigate those allegations of wrongdoing.

With specific regard to the PricewaterhouseCoopers forensic investigation into these allegations, the person who has engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers is vice-chairman of the board of Petrotrin, Mr. Aleem Hosein, and not the chairman of Petrotrin who has recused himself from this matter because he is named in these articles by Camini Marajh. Mr. Hosein is a very well respected member of the energy fraternity, the energy community in Trinidad and Tobago.

But what is strange about this Motion, Mr. Speaker, is while, on the one hand, the PNM tells us, “Do not debate emailgate. Do not debate it. Wait for the police to finish their investigation”, they come to the House today and they come to debate the Marecsa issue, [*Desk thumping*] while the police, of course, are still conducting their investigations. So in the emailgate matter, they want to wait on the police. In this matter, they want to come to the Parliament and cast judgment and arrive at conclusions with respect to this particular matter.

Most of the presentation by the Member came from the Camini Marajh articles in the *Express*, and one or two pieces of information that she may have gotten here and there, that, to me, speaks about the duality. She spoke about Rolex watches and so on, as though, I mean, it is a crime to own “ah watch”. It speaks, therefore, to the duality and the bipolarity of the PNM, which we have been subjected to in the Parliament, [*Desk thumping*] in both Houses for the last five years.

Mr. Speaker, in the matter of the procurement Bill, it came out very evident. In the Senate where I am from, they voted for the procurement Bill, I mean, “All in favour, say aye”, and the ayes had it. When that Bill came to the House of

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Representatives, they voted against the procurement Bill. So it shows the bipolarity that they, you know—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: Schizophrenia!

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Yes, yes, that sort of schizophrenic type of behaviour in terms of policy.

Miss Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, please, Standing Order 48(6). [*Interruption*] He is referring to us, come on. No? You find I look stupid?

Mr. Speaker: Please! Please! Please! Please! I hope that you are not referring to Members on the other side as being schizophrenic. You are not doing so?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: No, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Because the Member would be objecting, and I would uphold that. Apart from that, you may continue, please.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, Petrotrin is very important to the national economy of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, this debate is relevant from that point of view that we discussed the importance of the company and if there are allegations made against the company, we intend to investigate those allegations.

That report from PricewaterhouseCoopers will be submitted to the vice-chairman of Petrotrin, Mr. Hosein, in June 2015. I have instructed Mr. Hosein that once he receives a copy of that report from PricewaterhouseCoopers, he is to supply myself with a copy, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs with a copy, and the Minister of Finance and the Economy as Corporation Sole with a copy of that report. If the PricewaterhouseCoopers forensic audit revealed that there is wrongdoing in Petrotrin, or that there is wrongdoing or the law has been broken anywhere, we will take the necessary action to correct that wrongdoing. That is what differentiates this Government from what obtained between 2002 and 2010.

Mr. Speaker, I will give you—Petrotrin contributes—last year Petrotrin contributed \$4 billion in SPT, PPT, royalty, petroleum impost. My friend from Diego Martin North/East is very familiar with the fiscal system—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Yes, I am.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine:—to the coffers of Trinidad and Tobago, and that forms a part of government revenue, and it informs, therefore, government expenditure. Expenditure is very important. When we talk about taking action

against wrongdoing—I read in the *Express* newspaper of May 20, 2015, an article by one Dr. Winford James, is it?

Hon. Member: Yes.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Dr. Winford James, and this is what he had to say about the THA. The THA is relevant to Petrotrin because the THA's expenditure comes from the Consolidated Fund. The Consolidated Fund gets its money from payments of SPT, PPT, royalty, petroleum impost and so, from companies like Petrotrin. He goes on to say—*Express*, May 20, 2015:

“Public servants who worked/work in the Budgets section of the THA will tell you that this is a PNM thing.”

He is speaking about the missing \$910 million from the 2006 Auditor General Report. I see my colleague from Tobago West has just arrived. He goes on to say—this is Dr. James, he says:

“It did not happen under Arthur NR Robinson (the first chairman)”—of the THA—“or Jeff Davidson, or Lennox Denoon, or Hochoy Charles. But it is happening under...the current Chief Secretary, Orville London. When errors were found under his predecessors”—ANR Robinson, Jeff Davidson, Lennox Denoon and so on—“timely corrective steps were taken to satisfy good practice and enforce compliance.”

The point I am making is that in this particular matter, we have taken action. The matter has been reported to the police and we have taken action. We have engaged PwC not to do an audit, but to do a forensic investigation. I will read into the *Hansard* shortly, the terms, the scope of that investigation. So, Mr. Speaker, action has been taken and if there is wrongdoing, and it is brought to the surface by these investigations, those persons who have done wrong must face the courts, and must face the justice system.

In this particular matter, as was pointed out by PricewaterhouseCoopers actually, and by the Member for Point Fortin, there are three issues. The first issue is the integrity of the procurement process at Petrotrin that led to the award to Maresca, that is the name of the company, Marecsa. The second issue is the issue of the payment of US \$1.25 million to Marecsa by Petrotrin. The third issue is the alleged wire transfers of—and I say wire “transfers”, plural, of US \$750,000 from one Delgado to one Jeff Clark. Those were the—that forms the basis of the March 08, 2015 article by Camini Marajh.

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I wanted to make a point with regard to the award of that contract. The decision of the board of Petrotrin to award that contract took place on March 06, 2012. Mr. Khalid Hassanali—so March 06, 2012, the board of Petrotrin takes a decision to award this contract to this Mexican company called Marecsa. Khalid Hassanali begins to act as president of Petrotrin on March 01, 2012. Mr. Ken Allum went on pre-retirement leave on February 29, 2012. I even checked that it was a leap year, 29 days in February. Mr. Allum goes on pre-retirement leave and Mr. Hassanali begins to act as president.

So by the time the contract is awarded, the board takes the decision to award the contract, Mr. Hassanali who formed a significant part of the presentation of the Member for Point Fortin, was acting president of this company for five days.

3.00 p.m.

I went back into the records of Petrotrin as the company has provided us with, and the board note that makes the recommendation to the board finance and tenders committee—this is the recommendation coming from the management to the subcommittee of the board called the board finance and tenders committee—that board note was signed by Mr. Ken Allum, President of Petrotrin, and it was supported by Ken Allum and recommended by Steve Baldeosingh, Vice-President, E&P; both gentlemen have since retired.

So the point I am making is that the build-up to the board's decision that decided to award this contract—whether rightly or wrongly—had its precedent before Hassanali. Hassanali was president for five days leading up to that decision, and it would have involved persons going back as far as Mr. Allum and Mr. Baldeosingh, both gentlemen now comfortably retired and have left Petrotrin.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, I am here to say the facts and those are facts. I am not here to defend anyone. I again stress that if it is that there is wrongdoing, be it inside Petrotrin or between Mr. Delgado and Mr. Clark—and incidentally, in the first article written by Miss Marajh back on March 08, 2015, it goes on to say:

“Delgado, who identified Clark as the point man who issued the instruction to repay the money, said it was his understanding Clark was...”

This is Delgado speaking to Camini Marajh, and this is an article published in the *Express* of March 08, 2015. Delgado is reported by Camini Maharaj as saying that he was of the view that Clark was acting on behalf of Petrotrin. This is Delgado the Mexican guy saying that Clark is acting on behalf of Petrotrin.

What I was given in our own investigations in the Ministry—this is a letter that is dated April 19, 2012. So the board would have taken a decision to award the contract on March 06, 2012. One month later, Delgado writes a letter dated April 19, 2012 to Mr. Dexter Daniel, and this is the letter:

“By this media we are notifying that Mr. Jeffrey Clark from today will be the local contact for the Tender 11.10321477—Provision of temporary offshore process and compression facility.”

And he gives Mr. Clark's contact information and so on.

So by this letter in 2012, Delgado is saying, Clark is my representative in Trinidad and Tobago, and in this column here Delgado is now saying that he was of the view that Clark was acting on behalf of Petrotrin. So, I am not saying who is right and who is wrong, I am saying that Mr. Delgado in the course of this investigation has questions to answer.

Mr. Speaker, the Member of Parliament for Point Fortin went on to speak about the state enterprise monitoring manual and the role of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and the role of Corporation Sole and so on. Let me say that the role of a line Ministry, as my colleague, the Member for Caroni East would often counsel me, is to provide policy direction and strategic direction, and the latter flows from the former, the strategy flows from the policy. A Minister is not responsible for granular operational issues in state enterprises. That is the remit of the board of directors as per the Companies Act of 1995. The board directs the management of the company in terms of the affairs of the company.

A Minister, Mr. Speaker, cannot be omnipresent and omnipotent. As we are in the Parliament right now, somebody might be stealing a pump from somewhere in Los Bajos; somebody might be stealing a piece of pipe from somewhere in Parrylands. Should the Minister be held responsible for that? Mr. Speaker, if somebody turns a valve in the wrong direction in the refinery and shuts down a process, who is to be held responsible for that? A company has an organizational structure and responsibility flows from the bottom to the top and back down again.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition who is not here today, he shed some light in this matter of the role of the line Minister in the Las Alturas matter. With regard to the Las Alturas matter, Dr. Rowley, Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West said:

Unlike Dr. Moonilal, I do not micromanage. I do not know what board decisions were taken and I was party to no discussion.

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So we have there Dr. Rowley speaking about his role—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: The Member of Parliament.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: The Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West—with regard to the Las Alturas matter.

The other issue with regard to the payment of the US \$1.25 million which has been deemed to be illegal or not part of the contract, that is not a matter that I have come to Parliament to adjudicate on or to form a judgment on. There are two investigations that are taking place, and I would allow those two investigations to proceed and to arrive at their own conclusion. That matter of the advance payment of US \$1.25 million will form part of the scope of those investigations. And, Mr. Speaker, the same can be said of the illegal wire transfer which will also form part of the investigations that would take place between PwC and those companies.

Mr. Speaker, the Member of Parliament for Point Fortin brought the Prime Minister into this debate, and she had asked the Prime Minister two questions under “Prime Minister’s Questions” in the month of March and in the month of April. I just want to read exactly what the Prime Minister said. The Prime Minister said on April 17, 2015 she said:

However, to avoid any doubt regarding the previous answer on Petrotrin and Marecsa, let me clarify that Petrotrin has categorically denied that Mr. Jeff Clark is not and has never been an agent of Petrotrin nor has Petrotrin ever authorized Mr. Clark to act on its behalf for return, recovery or direction of any of its funds to any destination accounts regarding Petrotrin and Marecsa.

And that was the Prime Minister. So, I just wanted to put that on the record that the Prime Minister had indicated, as she was advised by my good self, and I was advised by Petrotrin, that this Mr. Jeff Clark has never been an agent of Petrotrin, has never been authorized to act on behalf of Petrotrin.

The other matter which I want to place on the record is the Member of Parliament also brought into the debate the issue of Super Industrial Services (SIS), and SIS’s name was mentioned by Camini Marajh in relation to the South West Soldado Project. My information is that SIS has since sent a pre-action protocol letter to the *Express* with regard to that particular allegation, and SIS has informed the *Express* that they were never part of that procurement procedure process with regard to the procurement for this offshore barge facility. So, again, that is something I want to put on the record with regard to what was raised by the Member of Parliament for Point Fortin.

With regard to the board of Petrotrin itself, when this matter was approved by the board of Petrotrin, there were not several directors who dissented. Initially, three directors had issues and there was an internal audit. There was an audit done with regard to those issues that were raised by those directors. Those directors were: Jokhoo, Inglefield and Ramoutar. When the matter came back to the board, I am advised that Mr. Jokhoo and Mr. Inglefield, they were happy with what was presented to them and Mr. Ramoutar remained with his minority opinion. So the matter was approved by the majority of the board of Petrotrin on March 06, 2006. So, it was not several members of the board—sorry, it was 2012.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Member goes on to talk about: “calling on the Parliament to resolve that the Government immediately order an investigation into this contractual arrangement”, that already has been done. The matter has been reported to the police, and I could tell you the police has started their investigation. We call on the police to conclude their investigation in a timely manner so that we would not have to wait an inordinate length of time as is the case with the emailgate investigation. And, of course, PwC as I mentioned, has also been engaged by Petrotrin and that investigation by PwC is going to be a forensic audit into the allegations that have been raised.

Mr. Speaker, the Member of Parliament went on to also ask that the board of Petrotrin be suspended. Of course, this is the Member of Parliament for Point Fortin asking the Parliament to exercise a power that the Parliament simply does not have. The appointment or the disappointment of a board of directors is, of course, a matter for Corporation Sole acting on the direction of Cabinet. There are also members of that board—I want to say this for the record—the Petrotrin board—in fact, half of the board were not directors in the company when this matter was taking place in the year 2012. There are also members of the board who were not on the board at that point in time. But if the Member is asking for the board of Petrotrin to be suspended because of allegations of wrongdoing and, as I said, the allegations will be investigated and we will get the report from PwC in June 2015.

I cannot say when the police will arrive at a conclusion with respect to their report: but what about the T&TEC board under the PNM where allegations, serious allegations, were made with regard to the Street Lighting Project and that was brought to the attention of the Senate back in, I think it was 2009 by then Opposition Senator, Wade Mark? What about the allegations of wrongdoing? Why did the PNM not call for the suspension of the Board of T&TEC when serious allegations were made by the UNC Opposition in the Senate against Mr. Devanand

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Ramlal and T&TEC with regard to millions of dollars of questionable expenditure around the Street Lighting Project? No call was made for the suspension then of the board of T&TEC.

Why was there not a call for the suspension of the board of the EMBD when there were major allegations against one Uthara Rao who I understand cannot be found—parts unknown—where he took out insurance policies in his name with Clico to make matters worse, using \$50 million of taxpayers' money? Why was there not a call for the suspension then of Uthara Rao and the EMBD? And, of course, what about Calder Hart and the UDeCOTT board? Why was there not a call for the suspension of the UDeCOTT board under Calder Hart? And, of course, the one I find most interesting is the e Teck board under Prof. Ken Julien with regard to a US \$5 million payment.

You know, the Member for Point Fortin was talking about US \$1.25 million. This is US \$5 million, but one dollar of public funds misappropriated is wrong. This is TT \$32 million that was paid to a company called Bamboo Networks—is it, Dr. Gopeesingh?—Bamboo Networks Limited and that money was paid to Bamboo Networks Limited against the advice of the Ministry of Finance.

When the Ministry of Finance told the e Teck board, you cannot pay that money, they went to their line Minister, and the line Minister took a note to Cabinet, and the then Cabinet approved that a \$5 million payment be made to a company called Bamboo Networks Limited and, of course, that money cannot be found. What is worse is that an investigation done by e Teck—[*Interruption*]

Mrs. Mc Donald: Mr. Speaker, I rise on 48(1) please, 48(1). [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: I know the Member is making reference to a particular provision of the Motion. Continue, please.

3.15 p.m.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, I was dealing with one of the recitals in the Motion that calls for the suspension of a board, and I think the broad principle that the Member for Point Fortin was trying to achieve was that boards should be reprimanded or suspended if there are allegations of wrongdoing. So, I am simply putting on the record other issues, other incidents where boards have been found or allegations have been made, and I am saying with regard to e Teck, \$5 million, because, you see, e Teck is linked to Petrotrin. The link is that e Teck, as far as I know, receives moneys, and so on, from the central government, and Petrotrin is the major taxpayer of the country, but the US

\$5 million paid to this Bamboo Networks Limited has since vanished and an investigation done by e TecK, and that investigation was done by a private company called Gains Faith Investment Consultants. That investigation was into this company called Bamboo Networks Limited. It says—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Indarsingh: Who was the line Minister?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Who was the line Minister?

Mr. Indarsingh: Who was moved?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: And nobody was moved.

It says that:

Bamboo Networks Limited (BNL) no longer exists. BNL no longer exists as a registered or operating company. Action against BNL or local entities may draw no results.

And that was the conclusion of the investigation, and it spoke to this mysterious “Mr. Kim”. Somebody called Mr. Kim, I remember a famous song—

Mr. Peters: “Who de hell is Kim?”

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: “Gypsy” just reminded me with a line saying, “Who de hell is Kim?” spoke to a famous and nefarious “Mr. Kim” as a person of interest in this matter. I know the Office of the Attorney General has since taken action with regard to this Bamboo Networks Limited matter and the Board of e TecK. *[Interruption]*

Dr. Gopeesingh: And what has the DPP done?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: And what has the DPP done?

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, PricewaterhouseCoopers, highly respected company, globally, in terms of accounting, in terms of corporate advice—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Gopeesingh: Auditing.

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

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs be extended by 15 minutes.

Question put and agreed to.

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

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, as I said, PwC has been engaged and I promise to read the terms of the scope of the PwC forensic audit into the *Hansard*. I am reading from a letter from PricewaterhouseCoopers, to Mr. Aleem Hosein, Deputy Chairman, Petrotrin, and that letter is dated April 29, 2015. PwC proposes two phases to the investigation, the first phase is mandatory and the second phase is optional. With regard to phase one: “Investigation of Allegations in Newspaper Publications”:

“We will utilize a combined team of local PwC forensic investigators together with limited involvement...of a Subject Matter Expert...from PwC’s Canada firm. We will approve our work by focusing on three main areas of concern identified in the newspaper publications. Allegations of non-compliance with Petrotrin’s internal procurement process, allegation of unauthorized payment of an advanced sum of money”—and thirdly—“allegations of theft/misappropriation of public funds.

The procedures of this Phase will include but are not limited to:

- a. Determination whether the Invitation to Bid was supported by a duly executed business needs identification process;
- b. Analyze and obtain an understanding of Petrotrin’s procurement policies and procedures and conduct a gap analysis on the aforementioned contract award;
- c. Determine whether unsolicited offers for the provision of a—Mobile Offshore Processing Unit—MOPU affected the business needs identification or procurement process in any way;
- d. Conduct background checks on the following persons and entity:
 - Mr. Jeffrey Clark;
 - Gabriel Delgado...
 - Marecsa.
- e. Determine whether there was a legitimate business reason, appropriate authorization and supporting documentation for the payment of one

million, two hundred and fifty thousand dollars”—US—“to the selected bidder, Maritima De Ecologia...;

- f. Determine whether appropriate action was taken by Petrotrin to recover funds due to the Company on termination of the contract with Marecsa;
- g. Determine whether funds due to Petrotrin on termination of contract with Marecsa was misappropriated by any person;
- h. Conduct interviews with Petrotrin's Internal Audit and Legal staff to determine if they encountered resistance from Senior Management and any other person(s) in the conduct of the audit; and”—finally—
- “i Conduct interviews with other Petrotrin staff and/or any...relevant person(s) to determine if there were irregularities in the award of the aforementioned contract which could be construed as a criminal offence, misconduct in public office or any other potential office; and determine the identities of such person(s).”

Phase II of the project, which, as I said, is optional, would entail, “Conduct further investigation to support criminal and/or civil litigation, if applicable”, and I will not read out the entire terms of phase II, but phase II is essentially going to take the investigation, if need be, to a different level. We have indicated that the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, the Minister of Finance and the Economy, and the respective Permanent Secretaries would like to be supplied with copies of that report when that report is finished in the month of June. Because, Mr. Speaker, if there is a cloud hanging over Petrotrin it is important we remove that cloud, and if there are allegations against Petrotrin it is important that we deal with those allegations.

A lot has been written in the newspapers and I am not the person to make a judgment as to whether what is written in the newspapers is accurate. It may be accurate, it may be inaccurate, and I have not come to the Parliament today to make any judgments with regard to this particular matter. A couple of issues were raised that I thought should be corrected on the *Hansard* with regard to Mr. Hassanali, and so on, and I thought I would correct those issues. But this Government has taken action, as the Prime Minister has always indicated, whenever allegations of wrongdoing have come to the fore, whenever evidence of wrongdoing has surfaced, we have taken action across the board.

I want to say, you know, with regard to the NCE—because there was mention made of the National Energy Corporation. I was given a newspaper clipping from

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the *Newsday* of September 09, 2003—because there is a lot of noise being made about the National Energy Corporation and the FCB with regard to the \$60 million wire fraud. We have recovered 58 per cent of the money. We have taken legal action around the world—Boston, Antigua, Dubai—and we will recover the entire sum of money. We will recover the money that is in Dubai. But I got a newspaper clipping because, you see, people tend to give you things and give you information. It was reported, Mr. Speaker, in the *Newsday* of September 09, 2003 that there was a fraudulent wire transfer involving TSTT's bank account in Scotiabank—this is the *Newsday*, 2003.

TSTT, Mr. Speaker, as you know, is owned 51 per cent by the State through NEL, and therefore it is in the national interest that we know what is happening with TSTT, and I have spoken to the line Minister about this. So there was a fraud and that was involving US \$4.2 million of TSTT's money sitting in Scotiabank, and, to this day, we have never—the then Government never went to the public to explain what happened. We are now seeking—Minister Baksh is now seeking a full explanation as to where the investigation has reached in TSTT, and so on, but that is totally opposite to what happened on the NEC matter. I went to a post-Cabinet press conference on November 10, 2011, and I put all the facts on the table and I explained the strategy that we were going to use to recover the money.

So, the actions taken by this Government when wrongdoing is discovered, or when allegations are made, are diametrically opposite to what obtained in the period 2002—2010. When we look at what is happening with the THA it is very frightening, and this is the 2006 financial year the Auditor General is speaking about—2006. So God alone knows what happened in the THA between 2007 and 2015. Dr. Winford James is saying that this never happened under ANR Robinson, it never happened under Lennox Denoon, it never happened under Hochoy Charles; this is a phenomenon of the PNM—this is Winford James, this is not me. I am saying that we are here talking about the misappropriation of, or the alleged misappropriation of US \$1.25 million. Dr. Gopeesingh might multiply it by 6.4 and give me the TT number. [*Laughter*] But we are talking about missing \$910 million.

You know what \$910 million could do, Mr. Speaker? We could buy an MRI. We could buy some equipment for the Oncology Centre. So, there are serious questions hanging over the THA, as there are serious question marks hanging over Petrotrin, and I am saying that it is a general policy and practice of this administration that whenever wrongdoing or allegations of wrongdoing come into

the public light that we treat with it; in this matter we are taking the Pricewaterhouse investigation very seriously. We are leaving them to do their work. It is a forensic investigation. It is going to look at the procurement process that took place in Petrotrin that led up to the award of that contract. They will look at whether the \$1.25 million prepayment was legal or illegal, or contractual or not contractual, and they will examine who is this Jeff Clark, and who is this Delgado, and who is this Maresca, and so on.

I put on the record, as Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, that if wrongdoing is unearthed by PricewaterhouseCoopers—I cannot speak for when the police will finish their report because we are still waiting on the emailgate report, and so on—if evidence of wrongdoing is unearthed, that we will treat with. We will treat with it as we have treated with evidence of wrongdoing in the past.

So, Mr. Speaker, Petrotrin is very important to the national economy. The South West Soldado Project promises to bring on an incremental 4,800 barrels of oil per day by the end of the year 2016. For that to happen, significant infrastructural work has to happen because there has been a total neglect of Trinmar for a long time, and it happened because, I think, there was a strategy to neglect Trinmar. And while Trinmar was being neglected, billions and billions and billions—we are talking about US \$1.25 million here. I am talking about billions and billions of TT dollars, US dollars, was flowing into the World GTL project, and I never heard anybody call, on that side, for the Malcolm Jones-led PNM-appointed board of Petrotrin to be suspended.

An issue is also being made in the public domain about the age of Mr. Hassanali. Mr. Hassanali is 61 years old and he is the President of Petrotrin, and issues are being made that he is over the retirement age, and so on, but how old was Malcolm Jones in the year 2010? Could anybody tell me how old Malcolm—he certainly was not 61 in the year 2010—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Khan: A hundred?

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: I “doh” know if he was 100 years old, as the Minister of Health is alluding to. But because there was a neglect of Trinmar, a focus on the refinery, Petrotrin ran up two bonds. Petrotrin went to the international market and borrowed, in the first case, US \$750 million bond; in the second case, US \$850 million bond, and those two bonds now have become very onerous. One of those two bonds requires what is called a bullet payment by the year 2019—that is just four years. That means the entire principle of the bond has to be repaid by Petrotrin, \$850 million in the year 2019, putting tremendous stress on the company, and this is a legacy of South West Soldado, of Trinmar.

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That entire Trinmar apparatus infrastructure was neglected for 10 years in favour of the Gasoline Optimization Programme where the cost went—400 per cent cost overrun in favour of the World GTL debacle. Up to recently there was a meeting at the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, and, again, the option was put out to us to sell the plant as scrap iron. And yet still, there was no—I mean, I am yet to see, and colleagues will correct me if I am wrong, I am yet to see a single investigative report done on the World GTL project. In that matter, the persons involved, a gentleman called David Loring—I want to put names to some of these people involving World GTL because we are talking about audacity here—having run Petrotrin into a hole, Mr. Loring had the audacity to go to court and sue Petrotrin for—what it is? —almost US \$2 billion exposure, and it was under this Government that we took on Mr. Loring and his colleagues and we won that World GTL matter. [*Desk thumping*] I think it was in a court in New York.

3.30 p.m.

And recently the Government scored another victory from a project that was a PNM legacy project, that is the Sural project, where one “Dr. Reverie”, or “Revero”, or something like that, I do not know if anybody knows his name, took us to court for US \$120 million, and lost, and the court awarded cost, and the legal counsel for the PNM, Mr. Al-Rawi, says that it could be appealed. Well, we consulted lawyers as to whether that could be appealed and they said that the probability of that being appealed and being successful is probably .001—very, very rare. It has to be extremely obvious that there has been—[*Interruption*]

And the same Mr. Julien involved in the bamboo network, the same Mr. Julien who recommended World GTL to Petrotrin, testified on behalf of Sural. This is a man who got a Trinity Cross, testified on behalf of Sural.

Hon. Member: Against the country

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Against the country.

So, Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up, I would like to summarize by saying that allegations have been made, 11 articles have been written, a private Motion has been brought to Parliament, the Prime Minister has been questioned in Prime Minister's Question Time on this matter. The Central Criminal Matter in this entire Marecsa issue only came to our attention in March 2015, and it was treated with, it was reported to the police on April 17, 2015 by Petrotrin and PwC has been engaged—a very reputable firm—to conduct not an audit, but a forensic

investigation into the allegations of wrongdoing, and if evidence surfaces that there is wrongdoing, we would take action, unlike what obtained in the past, and that is the modus operandi therefore of this Government going forward.

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

Terrence Deyalsingh (*St. Joseph*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to enter this debate, and I want to start by thanking the Member for Point Fortin, the hon. Paula Gopee-Scoon, for bringing such a timely Motion.

Mr. Speaker, you would think that the PNM transferred the moneys from Petrotrin to JP Morgan in Texas and then transferred it back to the Bank of Nova Scotia in Trinidad because the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs must have said PNM—spent 75 per cent of his time dwelling on the PNM—because when you have no defence the only thing you can do is to attack the person, and that is what he did. You would imagine that this was a PNM board, it was a PNM Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs—

Hon. Member: A PNM country.

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: And there we go. But, the hon. Minister misses the salient points. Mr. Speaker, this Soldado saga has been serialized over 12 weeks. It speaks of graft, it speaks of corruption, it speaks of lies, it speaks of squandermania, it speaks of “tiefing”, it speaks of bobol, it speaks of deception, it speaks of double-crossing and it speaks of gross wastage.

Mr. Speaker, all our institutions in Trinidad and Tobago are now under attack. All our institutions have been brought into disrepute, institutions both high and low, lofty and not so lofty. And this institutional failure is both now chronic and acute, and the Soldado saga speaks of a failure of a state enterprise, a jewel in a crown where the state enterprise failed to protect its assets that they hold on trust for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago; that they hold on trust for the doubles vendor, the roti maker, the taxi driver, the professional class and the business person. It speaks of a Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs which is clueless and rudderless, and it speaks to a Cabinet that is absent without leave, and I will show a direct link between this saga, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs and the Cabinet. Because, it was the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs who himself said—

Dr. Gopeesingh: Mr. Speaker, 48(6), he is casting aspersion on the Cabinet which all of us are Members of Cabinet.

Dr. Moonilal: He is a little rusty as he now come back.

Mr. Speaker: Member, I will guide you, and you know you cannot do that. Right? So, please be guided.

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: It was this Minister who said that the board is appointed by the Corporation Sole who reports to the Cabinet. That is where I was going. So, if there is board failure, the blame ultimately rests with the Cabinet. That is the point I was trying to make.

Mr. Speaker, this nauseating failure at Petrotrin comes on the heels of the NEC which the Minister spoke about, \$60 million; FCB IPO; the theft between FCB and NEC; insider trading at TCL, and because of institutional failure the Minister made a very startling recommendation today, and we have to take pause in this country and stop this rot where people have lost faith in institutions, both public and private. I am flabbergasted—to use the words of Mr. Ventor—to hear that PwC is going to conduct a forensic audit into Petrotrin.

Mr. Speaker, the name of Peter Inglefield has been raised as being a former board member of Petrotrin. Such was my shock, I said let me google the name Peter Inglefield, and when you google Peter Inglefield, a Peter R. Inglefield comes up as a partner in PricewaterhouseCoopers. Is it the same Peter Inglefield who was on the board of Petrotrin?

Hon. Member: He is retired.

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: There is something called conflict of interest, there is something called ethics. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: He retired.

Mr. Speaker: Please! Please!

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: It cannot be right. [*Interruption*] And I am not speaking to you, I am speaking to the hon. Speaker, and I am speaking to Mr. Winston Dookeran, the Member of Parliament for St. Augustine and the Member of Parliament for San Fernando West. Ethics will dictate that even if you are a retired member of a board and you are currently investigating that same board, when you were a member, ethics will dictate that you recuse yourself. And I want to hear what is the position of ICATT on this. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Members, please! Everybody will have a chance to speak, but you cannot be interrupting. [*Interruption*] Please! Please! Allow the Member to speak in peace. Continue, please!

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: It is not a matter if he is on the board. Was he on the board of Petrotrin? Was Mr. Peter Inglefield on the board of Petrotrin? And is it the same Mr. Peter Inglefield, associate with PwC, that is now conducting a forensic audit into this saga?

And if in Trinidad and Tobago we cannot see something is wrong, then heaven help us. That is called institutional failure. It is called conflict of interest, and it is the same conflict of interest when Mr. Neil Gosine as chairman of NP, the marketing arm also associated with Comprehensive Insurance Brokers Limited, a possible banker that floated this thing? Hon. Members, something has to be wrong with that. You cannot tell me that that is good corporate governance. It cannot be.

I am calling for some opinion by civil society to tell me whether the correct entity to do this forensic audit is PwC? Tell me. If I am wrong, so be it. But, let us go back to those heady days of 2010 when our first Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs was the Member for San Fernando West, because you see we have to understand something, because I will read into the *Hansard* a publication of July 10, 2013 very soon. It was the Member for San Fernando West who was unceremoniously moved as the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs to make way for the current Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs; and the current Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs said his number one priority was to boost oil production. He went across the length and breadth of Trinidad. Mr. Lindsay Gillette said he would turn around Petrotrin in six months.

So it is the number one priority to boost oil production. Let us look at the oil production figures: 2010, 98.25—98,000; 2011, a decline by 6.44 per cent to 91.92; 2012, declined by 11.08 per cent to 81.73; 2013, further decline to 81.28; and 2014, 81.1. This is after five years where it was this Government's position that increasing, not reducing, oil production is their number one priority.

Mr. Speaker, I am not even going to go to the Camini Marajh thing, you raised that. I am going to use your own words:

“Sen The Honourable

Kevin Ramnarine

Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs

2012 Energy Conference

Jubilee Discovery - Cluster 6, Soldado”

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And I quote:

“Last March”—2012—“Petrotrin announced the discovery in its Soldado acreage which represented its largest discovery over the last decade, with a current volumetric estimates of 48 million barrels of recoverable oil, including reserves of light oil, not previously encountered in the area.”

And this is the statement. This is not Camini Marajh. These are the words of this Minister whose number one priority is to increase oil production.

“The company expects to place the wells on production within approximately 12 months as...the Development Plan for...Jubilee discovery.”

Twelve months. This is in 2012, and I just called out the production figures. The production figures for 2012, 81.73. So, if he found the 48 million barrels of oil, you would expect something to show up in the 2013 figures. But did the 2013 figures go up? No, they went down. Did it show up in 2014? No, it went down. [Interruption] “Doh tell me it takes seven years”. Your Minister said in 12 months. Those were his words, 12 months. No, no, the impression being given and the hon. Prime Minister said God is a “Trini”, with the Jubilee discovery. Forty-eight million barrels of oil, you get the impression that this country is now awash in oil. It reminds me of an old show called the “Beverly Hillbillies” where old man Clampett went in his backyard to plant some yam, put a hoe down in the ground, a fork, and oil just spurted up. Right? That is the impression that you were getting, and all of us would benefit from this, and Ma Clampett and Pa Clampett went into Beverly Hills with Elly May and Jethro, and Mr. Drysdale, the greedy banker got all the money. Same thing with this. This is the Beverly Hillbillies again in 2015, and the Clampetts are running the oil industry. Where is this bounty of oil, Sir, 48 million barrels of oil? Where is it?

“South West Soldado...Development Project”

These are the words of the Minister, not Camini Marajh.

“The South West Soldado re-activation project is expected to be a major boost in increasing the country’s declining production levels. The project would include the re-activation of 40 wells.”

Mr. Speaker, the production figures do not show anything. Oil production, again, is going down, the wrong direction. But to compound matters, this Minister loves to use lofty words. He comes in the Parliament again today, in the face of declining production levels, makes a speech, and hear the words, “historic achievement”—this is today, eh.

“Mr. Speaker, our policy and strategy is to utilize the country’s energy assets, whether they be in deepwater, or in the form of heavy oil for the national benefit...in the coming years we can look forward to a period of unprecedented and unparalleled social development.”

Those are the words of the Minister.

3.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, this Government makes the most outrageous statements, and not Camini Maharaj.

“Jubilee oil...unlikely for next budget”

Wednesday, April 04, 2012, the same year of this Soldado thing, 2012. This is what the Minister says:

“Revenue from Government’s Jubilee discovery oil find would not be in hand in time to fund the upcoming 2012-2013 budget...”

And then the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, Dr. Keith Rowley, called this whole Jubilee thing a hoax. And it turned out to be a hoax because not one barrel of oil has flowed—not a barrel, not a teacup, not a centilitre, not a millimetre—but you cannot measure oil in millimetre—not a barrel of oil has flowed from Jubilee. It was a hoax, but these are the words of the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. He said he hopes Dr. Rowley will eat his words in 12 months’ time. It goes on:

“Saying he was a petroleum engineer...”

Which we can—I do not know. Are you a petroleum engineer?

Mr. Peters: Talk to the Speaker.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Mr. Speaker:

“Saying he was a petroleum engineer, Ramnarine added: “It’s not a hoax...We look forward to Dr. Rowley’s comments in 12 months’ time when we begin production.”

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Cite the article.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Article, Wednesday, April 04, 2012, *Guardian*. You are quoted as saying:

“We look forward to Dr. Rowley’s comments in 12 months’ time when we begin production.”

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Mr. Speaker, production has not begun. We are in 2015. We are in three years later.

Sen. The Hon. K. Ramnarine: Production has begun.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Production has begun, but where are your figures? Let us go now to this.

“Jubilee discovery

...Sean Douglas, Friday, March 30, 2012”

A find, 48 million barrels of oil:

“The find comes after UK firm Bayfield Energy, found a 32-million barrel deposit on March 13 at Galeota, even as TT moves to shore up last year’s modest production of 84,000...to levels such as the 144,000”—expected—“in 2015.”

“She said”—this is the Prime Minister, that—“the...find will bring increased tax revenue...to the State, to bolster many developmental projects.”

It goes on. A Petrotrin official—Mr. Speaker, hear the outrageous statements they make just to fool the population. Petrotrin official, he said:

“He said those wells could produce up to 700,000 bpd.”

Our current production is 81,000, but they are predicting that Jubilee will give us 700,000 barrels per day. I think it was the Member for Oropouche West who coined the phrase in this Parliament, “if you lie you must say goodbye.” It was not he who coined that phrase?—“if you lie you must say goodbye.”

Dr. Moonilal: That is for Rowley.

Mr. Deyalsingh: The Member for Oropouche East, sorry. Where is this 700,000 barrel—

“Jubilee discovery

...Sean Douglas, Friday, March 30, 2012.”

And it goes on:

“Although full development usually takes between three and five years, we intend to commence production of the wells that have already been drilled within”—when—“the next 12 months.”

Every statement coming out of Petrotrin, and the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs and the hon. Prime Minister speaks to this windfall production in hundreds of thousands of barrels within 12 months of March/April 2012. And what I have shown is our oil production figures have been going down, not up; not even up by a thousand barrels. That is the hon. Prime Minister.

But, Mr. Speaker, this Motion specifically deals with this fee, that the Clampetts and Mr. Drysdale got their hands on. The only thing that was mobilized in that fee were conmen and crooks. That was what was mobilized, conmen and crooks. Pre-action protocols to the media. What was not mobilized, what was static, what was stationary was the conscience of people at Petrotrin. Nobody had a conscience to stop this.

The people charged with protecting and monetizing our state assets were asleep. What was mobilized was \$1.25 million belonging to taxi drivers that found its way in JP Morgan in Texas and a significant portion back to Bank of Nova Scotia in Maraval. That was what was mobilized: greed, “tiefing”, was mobilized. And you want to talk about PNM. Where is the \$34 million paid to Mr. Daniell of EBeam. To do what? Nothing. But if you want to go down that route we can, but I would not, I want to stay focused on this, Petrotrin, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, remember I said earlier that a lot of this blame has to be put on the doorsteps of the Cabinet, and I will explain why now. The Minister spoke about the decision, and Mr. Peter Burke is on record as saying that the decision over this project was made by a round robin, meaning, they were telephoned. It was not a board meeting where you sat down, go through the pros and cons, analyze, argue; a round robin. And he goes on to say, a round robin is not the best way to get board approval on a contract as it short-circuited the decision-making process for debate and board oversight.

So you have board oversight failure at Petrotrin. But what is the role of Cabinet in this, Mr. Speaker? I say, the hon. Prime Minister and her Cabinet have to share responsibility for this. It was the Member who said, the hon. Minister who said, that the Corporation Sole is responsible for the boards and the Corporation Sole reports, to whom?—the Cabinet. And who is in charge of the Cabinet? The hon. Prime Minister.

So in 2012, picture this, you have a runaway board, you have a decision to invest these moneys being made by round robin, not by a board meeting where you sit down around a table, round robin. I call you up, I call you up, you do not

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have any documents in front of you, you cannot inspect documents, you cannot interrogate documents. This is a round-robin decision. But hear where the big failure comes in now.

The energy subcommittee of the Cabinet, the advisory committee to the Cabinet, in the year 2012, Mr. Speaker, do you know how many times that committee met? Twice. Twice. Failure at the Cabinet level. You have failure at the board level, you now have failure at the Cabinet level where the energy subcommittee which advises Cabinet met twice. In 2011, they met five times. In 2010, they met once. Who was minding the store? It was the Clampetts, Elly May and Jethro. They are in charge of the oil, just like in Beverly Hillbillies.

Mr. Speaker, this speaks of total negligence from the Cabinet come down. And this is the evidence to show it. And if people want to know how I know the energy subcommittee only met twice—because I see nobody raising objection—it is on the *Hansard*.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Standing Order 48(6), the word “negligence” subscribes—
[*Crosstalk*]

Miss Mc Donald: It is weak.

Dr. Gopeesingh: No, it is not weak.

Mr. Imbert: Sit down.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Standing Order 48(6):

“...improper motive to any Member of either House.”

Mr. Imbert: Stop wasting time.

Miss Mc Donald: Oh, please, that is a stretch, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. Gopeesingh: It is not a stretch. Negligence is a strong word in the legal—

Miss Mc Donald: “Ahh.” It is a strong word in Government—

Mr. Speaker: Okay, I will view that and I will rule on that in a short while. Continue, please.

Mr. Deyalsingh: It speaks to a lack of Cabinet oversight.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Right, okay, better.

Mr. Deyalsingh: Absolutely no Cabinet oversight, and that is why the responsibility for this lies not only at the door of Petrotrin, it lies at the door of the

Ministry of Energy, it lies at the door of Cabinet, including the hon. Prime Minister. That is where everybody was asleep, everybody asleep.

Mr. Speaker, what are some of the questions to be asked out of this Soldado affair? Why did Petrotrin ignore its own procurement policies and rules, to allow Marecsa to submit a bid when they were not even on the list of original bidders? Is that called bid rigging? Remember the airport and we are paying a price for that up to yesterday? Who authorized the bypass? Who authorized that bypass, Dexter Daniel? And why? Why did Petrotrin pay a mobilization fee when the contract did not call for one? And I am to believe that PricewaterhouseCoopers could be an impartial auditor in all of this. I have serious questions to ask about, again, the role of PricewaterhouseCoopers in all of this. How did that \$1.25 million, and a serious chunk of it get into two private accounts in Bank of Nova Scotia? Who are the beneficiaries of those accounts? Who, who? And what is the role of the Corporation Sole, the hon. Prime Minister, in all of this?

You know, Mr. Speaker, while I cast no aspersions on the capability of the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs or the erstwhile directors of Petrotrin, but when oil was \$100 a barrel Mr. Gillette said, it will not remain there, the projected will not go beyond or below \$80 a barrel. The Soldado field, the Jubilee discovery, black gold, Mr. Speaker, black gold. Just go in your backyard, take a piece of pipe, ram it down there and oil will spurt up. At 48 million barrels, each of us are entitled to 45 barrels of oil. Where is my 45? The Clampetts did that. "God is ah Trini." Black gold will flow through the streets, right? "God is ah Trini." The windfall would not be wasted. But what do we have today? The windfall has been wasted because we have been downgraded by Moody's, and the only windfall is for the television stations that received voices, ads for voices. That is where the windfall is going.

I still cannot get four prosthetic legs for my constituents after a year and a half of begging, but the media is awash with voices ads, ads for voices. People cannot get water in Trinidad and Tobago, but the windfall will not be wasted, right? But I suppose the Government is standing back and waiting because "God is ah Trini".

Mr. Speaker, if it is all these projections were right, do you think the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs would not have gone to Cumuto/Manzanilla where he is walking to take the place of Mr. Partap and make a big sound and dance about it? He would have been in Cumuto in the forest, in the roadways by the gas station there, the Unipet gas station, there making noise, right?—but he has not done so. He has not done so. I will tell you something, Mr.

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Speaker, poor little people, hon. Minister, are still waiting for the revenue from this promised oil gold, oil rush. “We still waiting” to see milk and honey flowing on the pavements.

4.00 p.m.

“We waiting” for water in our taps. That is what “we waiting” for. “I waiting for meh prosthetic legs.”

Hon. Member: “Eh heh? No problem.”

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: But what has happened? Our oil and gas revenues have gone into a private bank account in Scotiabank. That is what is happening.

Mr. Speaker, let us go back to the modus operandi of the Ministers of Energy. Remember I started my contribution drawing a parallel between the Member for San Fernando West, who was the first Minister of Energy, to show you—not in my words, but why people are afraid to talk the truth when it comes to oil production in Trinidad and Tobago. And it explains the desperation of a Minister of Energy who said a boost in oil production was his number one priority. I refer to a Business Magazine printout, *Trinidad Express*, July 10, 2012, under the headline: “Twenty Trinmar wells to boost oil production.” It starts up:

“‘Energy Insider’ readers will know the desperate desire of Kevin Ramnarine, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, to halt and reverse the inexorable decline of Trinidad and Tobago’s crude oil production.”

I go into the article, Mr. Speaker.

“The Minister”—this is Mr. Ramnarine—Senator Ramnarine—“has said in the past that Petrotrin, whose crude output in April amounted to 34,537 barrels both on and offshore...(if you count the oil lifted by the Lease Operators...) has indicated to him that it could be producing—

Mr. Speaker: The speaking time of the hon. Member has expired. Would you like to guide the Chair?

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: I would like my extension, please, Sir.

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

Question put and agreed to.

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

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: Thank you. So, Mr. Speaker, Petrotrin was indicating to him that it could be producing as much as 64,000 barrels per day by 2014. This is Petrotrin alone, eh, telling Minister Ramnarine this. But listen to the next line:

“When it gave that figure,”—meaning Petrotrin—“the state company must have been trying to impress a new Minister (Ramnarine has only recently taken over from Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan)...”

And listen to this, Mr. Speaker:

“and there is obviously no way in the world it will get there within a two-year period, no matter how successful its efforts in SWS and elsewhere in Trinmar...”

So Petrotrin, by their own admission here, was giving false information, according to them, to please a new Minister, and they are saying, tongue in cheek, they would never have done that if the Member for Parliament for San Fernando West was the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. Not my words. This did not come from the DPP. This is published in the *Express*. They come and they make statements; they thump their desks only in hindsight to be caught. This is reckless behaviour. Absolutely reckless behaviour!

Mr. Speaker, Trinmar's oil production, January 10 to April 2015, when you draw a straight line through that graph to get the average, Trinmar's oil production has flat-lined. In other words, it is going nowhere. The patient is dead. There is no brain activity, which is the best way to describe some of the utterances made about oil production. No brain activity, whether it is Jubilee, whether it is Soldado, whether it is Bayfield—none. And this is why the hon. Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West, who should be here, called this whole thing a hoax—a total hoax. This 48 million barrels of oil. He called it a hoax on April 02, 2012; all the things to do from a hoax.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the hon. Minister, of all the questions arising out of Soldado, Marecsa, was Petrotrin's internal audit not picking up these things all the time? You said it only came to your attention when? May 08—whenever. But the question is: where was Petrotrin's internal audit? Where was it? Mr. Speaker, because of our failed energy policy, whether it is oil or gas—because under this Government oil production has gone down. We are not producing one barrel a day more in 2010 versus 2014. Not one barrel a day more!

So energy production is going down. Gas production—Point Lisas, those plants are producing at what—90 per cent capacity? Ninety-five per cent

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capacity? Right? Now, that might sound good to the layperson, but you would know, people in the industry will tell you, because margins are so thin that even a 1 per cent drop in capacity translates into millions and millions of dollars of losses. So it is probably 75 per cent. What is the real figure? We will never get the real figure from this Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. We will never get the real figure.

The Minister has failed to boost oil production. The Minister has failed to renegotiate the long-term contracts coming to an end between 2015 and 2018, and our future is at stake. Moody's has already downgraded us, blaming several things: lack of data; CSO has been emasculated and destroyed; no macroeconomic planning. What does that speak to? Who are you going to blame for that one? Who are you blaming for that one?—and no diversification of the economy. But when you make these lofty statements: “God is ah Trini; we find 48 million barrels of oil”, it sends the wrong signals to our international partners. We are already a pariah in the international energy industry because we do not honour contracts. You may say otherwise, but our information is that Trinidad and Tobago, between 2010 and 2015, is not seen in the international and global energy industry as a reliable partner. We are not seen as that.

Mr. Cadiz: “You talking nonsense.”

Miss Mc Donald: “He talkin nonsense?” That is unparliamentary!

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: We are not seen as that.

Mr. Cadiz: He is talking nonsense.

Mr. Speaker: No, no, please, “yuh car say that.”

Miss Mc Donald: And—

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, please, Member for Port of Spain South. You cannot say that, Member for Chaguanas East. The Member cannot be speaking that.

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: So, Mr. Speaker, this Motion today is a very timely one. We do not expect the board of Petrotrin to go. We will ask for it, but we have to stop this rot of institutional failure in Trinidad and Tobago at the board level, at every single level. One of the main issues people talk about—outside of crime, unemployment—is institutional failure, and we are seeing that with the resignations of people like Peter Burke, Peter Inglefield and Mr. Jokhoo. We are

seeing it with resignations from the Integrity Commission. No institution in Trinidad and Tobago now is standing tall and proud—none—including the Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: No, “yuh car talk about de Parliament.”

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: I apologize, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: “Doh talk about de Parliament.”

Mr. T. Deyalsingh: I withdraw it.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I close, the only thing that would satisfy us on this side is not a forensic audit by PwC, but an independent audit or a full-blown commission of enquiry so that people like Mr. Inglefield, Mr. Jokhoo and Mr. Burke can give evidence as to who authorized the payment of US \$1.25 million. Why did Petrotrin bypass their own procurement laws? Who authorized a mobilization fee when the contract called for no mobilization fee? And let us trace those moneys from Petrotrin to JP Morgan in Texas and back to the Bank of Nova Scotia in Trinidad and Tobago. That is the only thing that would satisfy us on this side.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development (Hon. Errol Mc Leod): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am advised that Peter Inglefield retired from PwC in June of 2010 and that he was appointed to the board of Petrotrin in November of 2010, and that PwC did work with Petrotrin prior to June 2010 when Mr. Inglefield would have been retired in June of 2010.

I am also advised that the Jubilee field is on production. Two wells are currently on production and contracts have been awarded for an 8-inch and a 10-inch line—two lines—to facilitate production from two other fields. And may I also advise—and I say this one from a bit of common sense and some experience—that if the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs would have said, at all, that we were going to realize a production of 700,000 barrels of oil per day, then he may have been making an error—a serious error.

Mr. Deyalsingh: I never said he said. I said Petrotrin said it. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. E. Mc Leod: And I am told now that the Minister never said that. Because our infrastructure cannot handle 700,000. I mean, that is a lot of oil—

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700,000 barrels per day. Petrotrin would not have said that either, Mr. Speaker.
[*Crosstalk*]

However, Mr. Speaker, the Motion raised by the Member for Point Fortin, in my understanding, deals with the question of governance; it deals with alleged wrongdoing; it raises questions about malfeasance and it talks to the neglect of Trinmar, and this side, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, spoke to that neglect of Trinmar in a situation in which quite extensive expenditure was being incurred in areas in which we had very little, or no experience at all, such as the world gas-to-liquids investment.

4.15 p.m.

My brief contribution in this debate, Mr. Speaker, would stick to our having expended vast sums of money and other resources controlled by Petrotrin on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and the charge that some \$1.25 million was wrongly invested, there is the suggestion that there has been wrongdoing in the exercise of the board's responsibility and that perhaps this Government ought to be blamed for what happened there.

The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs has defended the position of the Government and he has responded to the call for appropriate action to be taken against those who might be guilty of the offence identified in the Motion, those who are guilty whether it be at the board level or the management level of Petrotrin. The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs said that already measures have been put in place to deal with whatever the occurrences at Petrotrin might have been, and I understand him to be saying essentially, that wherever there is wrongdoing, wherever we might find that persons with responsibility and authority have gone outside of the authority and done things that are inimical to the better interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, then appropriate action as recommended by the investigators will be taken.

I support the position articulated by the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs as I speak against the Motion that has been raised by the hon. Member for Point Fortin, in the sense that the measures that we are looking for have already been initiated by the Board of Petrotrin under the instructions of the hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. So this Motion, Mr. Speaker, brought by the Member for Point Fortin in relation to allegations of impropriety, insofar as Petrotrin's South West Soldado Project, is really nothing new to the PNM, nothing new to the other side. And for us to understand the problem, the production problem that we might have today, especially insofar as Trinmar is concerned, is

for us to understand, is for us to know what had been happening at Trinmar before the advent of this Government coming with the responsibility for oil production and our processing and all of that. Trinmar's operations were being systematically shut down by the board and the Government that existed prior to 2010.

I know it. I was there. The union which has forced this perhaps to be where it is now—and I support that position—the union complained about that systematic shutting down of Trinmar and a committee was established to observe and to examine and to make recommendations and so on, and this Government has acted on some of those recommendations and we have been trying to bring Trinmar back up to the position that it would have realized. I mean, a mere five years before that board, that Malcolm Jones board, had set out to do what it was doing. Under the former Government and board, there had been wanton and reckless use of Petrotrin's resources which the Member for Point Fortin and the Member for St. Joseph really seem to want to deny.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs indicated publicly that the alleged impropriety at Petrotrin's South West Soldado Project is under investigation and that we should perhaps give that investigation an opportunity to prove so many things that are being charged. The Member for Point Fortin is calling for the chairman and board members to be suspended pending the outcome of the investigation. It is only fair that we respect the investigative process and wait on the outcome of that investigation before making drastic decisions.

When we examine acts of impropriety under the PNM chairmen, board members, corrupt contractual arrangements and misdirected state funds into private bank accounts, there are numerous instances that come to mind. I am not saying that the Member for Point Fortin does not have the right to raise issues of alleged impropriety. Each one of us has that right whether such impropriety is at the state enterprise or in any other area of our national operations. What I am speaking about, Mr. Speaker, is the audacity of the Member to stand here and to chastise this Government as the PNM has done for the past five years whenever alleged wrongdoing occurs. The investigation is going to point to whoever is wrong, and certainly we will support their paying whatever penalties that will be identified.

Mr. Speaker, it is necessary for us to examine ourselves and our actions before we begin to point fingers. Let us take, for example, the conduct of former chairmen and board members including some Ministers, former Government Ministers, what action was taken against these individuals? What investigations were conducted?

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Today, the Member for Point Fortin, like the Member for Chaguanas West, stand in this House—quite often—holier than thou, and point fingers at those on this side of the House. The PNM-led Petrotrin board and the failed gas-to-liquids plant in 2006/2007 immediately comes to mind, and a lawsuit filed by the State on behalf of Petrotrin against former Petrotrin chairman Malcolm Jones for mismanagement by the payment of some US \$190.4 million toward the construction of the GTL plant in Pointe-a-Pierre and that in the excess of the cost of its construction.

Mr. Speaker, I got some information myself which tells me that the construction of the world gas-to-liquids plant started in January 2007. The cost estimated in 2007 was US \$160 million, the equivalent of TT \$1.027 billion; expenditure to date on the construction of that plant was US \$400 million, TT \$2.568 billion; an estimate of additional cost for completion ranged in the sum of US \$120 million; expenses incurred in the post-receivership period US \$55.5 million. It is a lot of money and I do not know—well I certainly do not have it. Trinmar in 2006/2007 was producing somewhere in the area of 34,000/35,000 barrels of oil per day, and with the systematic shutting down of Trinmar we got down to less than 20,000 barrels of oil per day.

Now, if an exercise was done to measure how much we would have lost from 35,000 barrels per day down to less than 20,000 barrels per day over a the period of how many years—we will find that the \$355 million, let us say 350. Just now, let me catch my breath on these figures—we will find that the \$366,001,662 that had been expended over the period that I mentioned earlier on gas to liquids, we would have been able to do the kind of refurbishment and the remedial works, platforms, compressors and the building of a new transfer line from the platforms to shore. We would have expended necessary sums of money to bring Trinmar up to a level that today we would have been realizing a higher level of production than we now have.

You see, if you did not invest in important work-over and other production programmes five years up the road, today you would be realizing the result of natural declines. The wells will naturally decline if you do not do the kind of work-over programmes and so on that will be necessary, and if you are not prospecting for new oils, if you are not getting deeper into reservoirs and so on, you certainly will come down to levels such as the Member for St. Joseph was identifying.

On September 26, 2006, the board of Petrotrin approved a joint and several guarantees to cover any construction cost overruns which made either Petrotrin or

GTL liable in the event one party failed to deliver its side of the bargain. No board exercising care—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister. I think it is a good time for us to pause and have some tea. This sitting is now suspended until 5.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Hon. E. McLeod: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry I am a little bit—[*Laughter*]

When we took the tea break, Mr. Speaker, I was on to the World GTL Plant and I was trying to establish the point that a lot of money, which should have been spent on Trinmar's operations was instead spent on a plant for particular interests, and with a technology which Mr. Loring—Mr. Loring was essentially walking around with a bottle of diesel, really well-refined diesel, and was boasting about the clarity of that diesel and inviting people to have a sip of it, and indeed, some people tasted it.

And Loring and they did not spend one cent; it was Trinidad and Tobago's resources, again, for particular interests.

—interests which found itself in Ghana when we thought that they would have been selling the expertise that we quite often boast about, our having been in the industry for a considerable length of time. When we thought that Trinidad and Tobago's interest was being established in Ghana, instead it was the interest of a few persons with themselves, with years of experience, there having led—substantially led for quite a while, the development of our own petroleum sector. And I think that some of them are still there in Ghana and they were really bad-mouthing Trinidad and Tobago, and describing this Government as a Government that would be alien to Ghanaian interest. But I do not want to go down that road, Mr. Speaker, because that says something about us that we could not really be proud about at all.

In April 2005, an agreement was signed with HCP Architects Limited and this is another case of their going off on an excursion of expending Trinidad and Tobago's resources in areas that we were not too sure about and in some areas that were totally unnecessary. They signed an agreement with HCP Architects Limited for the provision of architectural and engineering consultancy services for the design of Petrotrin's new corporate headquarters. We would have heard in this House that "yuh going down the highway after you have passed Gasparillo and

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you look on the right and you see ah kind of infrastructure with a lot of steel criss-crossing each other”, and for the engineering consultancy services, we expended \$75 million.

One year later, based on board approval and changes to the project scope, the building budget for Petrotrin’s corporate headquarters increased from that \$75 million to \$250 million.

Mr. Sharma: Say that again.

Hon. E. McLeod: Seventy-five million dollars was for the engineering consultancy services. Yeah, develop the scope and so on, all of the drawings, \$75 million. And one year later, they made changes to the project scope and the budget for the building then moved to \$250 million. Again, in June 2007, due to changes in the scope again, the board increased funding for the new corporate headquarters from \$250 million to \$365 million. Yes, Petrotrin. See, they were making money that time.

In December 2012, Petrotrin board—and one might say this is our board—agreed in principle with the implementation of a termination plan to halt the construction of the new corporate headquarters and tender for build/own/operate/transfer; that kind of arrangement. This time it is a BOOT arrangement, and up to that point of termination, approximately \$200 million were already spent on the project. That is what you see standing outside there. And then based on an evaluation, a little bit earlier in December—conducted in December 2011, it was determined that the estimated cost to complete Petrotrin’s new corporate headquarters at that time was \$450 million.

For years, Petrotrin had been talking about installing a coker; they had been talking about expenses for a new alky and other associated plants and they would have taken a lot less than \$440 million to do some of that work that would have improved our position in the market. But we wanted a fancier building and Petrotrin does have a fancy administration building, eh, but they find that it “geh old”. It is like somebody determining that she has worn this dress on three or four occasions already, why do I go the fifth time, you know. [*Crosstalk*] That is plenty. But that happens when you are propelling your own interest and you use other people’s resources to do that. It takes a particular kind of thinking to engage in that kind of way.

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

Hon. E. McLeod: Yes, thanks very much.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development be extended by 15 minutes.

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. E. McLeod: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a long list of questionable expenses and dealings but I do not think I will bother to deal with all of that. But I could not allow mention of T&TEC, important as it is in the energy sector, to escape a comment or two. The hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs spoke to the T&TEC street lighting programme. The corruption—bad word—all of the malfeasance and so on that had gone on were more than just the street lighting programme.

T&TEC was engaged in warehousing, not on electrical and other construction materials as much as it would have been involved in some warehousing that had absolutely nothing to do with electricity, but for the owner of such warehousing facilities, and that owner being Chairman of T&TEC at that time, and I know that a ring of corrupt operators existed. I mean there is still one of them who was on that board—a board led by one Mr. Ramlal. Another one who is in the insurance business and who would have done every single thing that he would have been advised to do by Mr. Ramlal.

There were many instances of T&TEC appearing in the press charged, as it was charged then under Mr. Ramlal, with activities that were alien really to our presenting this country with a utility provider about which we could have been proud. And that T&TEC—the story would have gone back a number of years, you know. Some of us might remember that in 1995, there was a measure of insider trading in which the then Chairman of T&TEC and treasurer of the People's National Movement was involved very seriously. I am trying to remember his name—Monteil.

5.15 p.m.

The pension plan, at that time the most outstanding pension plan in the country, was managed by a committee, the chairman of which was also the Chairman of T&TEC, the commission. And they decided one day to sell particular assets belonging to the workers' pension funds—assets in profitable operating companies. They interfered with that portfolio and sold to themselves—their having a firm at that time named Vivica—some \$200 million worth of workers' pension plan assets. And, as you might be aware, Mr. Speaker, it is only members

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of the pension plans themselves who are respected and accepted as representatives in their own interest, except if they are bringing in a representative who is a lawyer.

So, the union organized members of the pension plan and we engaged lawyers who were prepared to represent those workers and the interest of the pension plans. I recall having to intervene myself as leader of the workers at that time and we hired the services of Allan Alexander SC and one Kamla Persad-Bissessar of Siparia, and we fought that battle and we got judgment in the interest of the workers and their pension plan, to the extent that Vivica and Monteil and they were made to return \$190 million of the \$200 million that they had taken.

So that, when we saw people like that—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Rambachan: What is the name again?

Hon. E. Mc Leod: Andre Monteil. When we saw people like that being put on boards and on important committees where their reach will carry them to workers and the country's money, and so on, we quite often become very, very, very disturbed. And it is difficult, certainly it is difficult for me, to sit here and listen to Members of the PNM Opposition identifying malfeasance during the tenure of this Government, when they would have done absolutely nothing. Even when it was brought officially to their attention, they do absolutely nothing against malfeasance committed by persons who are in their realm.

So, Mr. Speaker, I decided that I will not relate all of these issues except to remind Members of this House of the same Monteil acquiring \$110 million of HMB shares—that is the what, the Home Mortgage Bank?—and at that time, with Calder Hart as NIB chairman buying back the \$110 million in shares giving a former PNM treasurer \$20 million profit.

In March 2007, Monteil's company, Stone Street Capital, bought Home Mortgage Bank shares for \$110 million, while Monteil was chairman of the bank and in November 2008, the NIB, headed by Calder Hart, repurchased 43.5 per cent of HMB shares from Stone Street Capital at a cost of \$130 million. "It not easy".

My colleague, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs spoke about Uthara Rao and I particularly like to hear the Member for Couva South relate the stories about Uthara Rao. He says it with a kind of—you know.

Mr. Speaker, PNM hired SNC-Lavalin—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: You have three more minutes, hon. Member.

Hon. E. McLeod:—in 2009 to provide project management services to the Ultra-Low Sulphur Diesel Project at Petrotrin. The contract signed on July 29, 2009 increased from \$42 million to \$102 million, with approved variation due to delays and the overall cost of the Ultra-Low Sulphur Diesel Project increased from US \$350 million to \$425 million. Mr. Speaker, that is so much money, so much money, that could have done so much, so that today Trinmar could be realizing a production of a targeted 48,000 barrels a day. At the prices that prevailed over the past couple of years, if Trinmar was developed upon and it was realizing a production of 48,000 barrels per day, Mr. Speaker, check the amount of revenue that had been forgone, in addition to the amount that has been spent on the overruns at low sulphur and the WTL and all of that.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that I have contributed something to this debate today, and I will just like to reiterate the advice that the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs has given this House, that he has instructed the board at Petrotrin to engage in the kind of investigation that will see us, if not recovering the money that has gone, that will see us recovering an attitude that will have us committed to ensuring the improvement of our state enterprises in all areas of our operation, and thereby contributing more to the further development of this country than has so far been realized. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, I know but I have been advised—and you have to advise me, if my advisory is proper—I have been advised you have been given the power to conclude the debate. Is that a fact?

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak now.

Mr. Speaker: No, no, I am asking whether you have been—well, after you speak the debate remains open.

Mr. Imbert: Exactly, so I wish to speak.

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

Mr. Colm Imbert (*Diego Martin North/East*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not come in town last. I am well aware that under the new Standing Orders the Government can—*[Interruption]* I am not being rude to anybody except you. The Government has the authority now to adjourn the Parliament at 6.00 p.m. on Private Members' Day, under the new Standing Orders. There was no limitation

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before. Previously, the Government could have adjourned on Private Members' Day at 2 o'clock, if they wanted to. [*Interruption*] You could waive the Standing Orders. You wanted to do that, with respect to this Motion but you failed.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the event that the Government may exercise its option to adjourn the Parliament at 6.00 p.m. I am exercising my right to speak. I did not come in town last, Mr. Speaker. Because if I chose to say that I was winding up the Motion, this being the last Private Members' Day before the Parliament is dissolved on June 17, I would never have had an opportunity to speak in this debate because all the Government would have had to do was the Member for Oropouche East would get up and talk until 6.00 p.m. and then adjourn the Parliament and that would be the end of the Opposition's contribution to this Motion. So I did not come in town last.

So, let me deal with the Motion. [*Interruption and crosstalk*] Such foolishness. Now, it seems to me that Members opposite have forgotten what the Motion says. The last several Government speakers, including the Minister, seem to have totally forgotten what this Motion says. So, I think it is incumbent on me, especially the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, seems to have been totally oblivious to this Motion. Let me read into the record what the Motion says:

“Whereas the 2011 State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual effected by the Government calls for strict monitoring of state agencies by monitoring agents which include in the case of Petrotrin, the Minister of Finance...and Minister of Energy...and the Chairman and Board of Directors and the President;

And whereas recent allegations of impropriety with Petrotrin's South West Soldado Project involving the illegal advance payment of US \$1.25 million”—or approximately TT \$8 million—“was not in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract;

And whereas on failure of the contract there was a transfer of US \$750,000”—which would be about TT \$4 1/2 million—“into two private bank accounts at Scotiabank, Maraval;

And whereas the matter was raised in the budget debate of September 2013, evoking no response by the Minister of Energy...;

And whereas a contract of approximately US \$50 million”—which would be in excess of TT \$300 million...—“could only be approved by the Chairman and Board of Directors;

And whereas several Board Members voiced their concerns to the award of the contract;

Be it resolved that the Government immediately order an investigation into this contractual arrangement;

And be it further resolved that the matter of the misdirected state funds into private bank accounts be immediately brought to the attention of the...Police...

And be it further resolved that the current Chairman and Board...be suspended from office pending the outcome of the investigation...;

And be it further resolved that this matter be referred to the Joint Select Committee on Energy..."

5.30 p.m.

In the contribution from the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, and the contribution from the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, they studiously avoided all of these issues, Mr. Speaker—spent all their time talking about things that happened in some previous period, did not deal with the issues. Therefore, it is necessary for me, once again, to bring some sanity to this Parliament, [*Laughter*] to deal with the issues here.

Let us see what the Minister said. What did the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs say? This was repeated in his misguided contribution, this was repeated by Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development; that there is an investigation into this matter and whoever is guilty of some offence will be punished—that is essentially what the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs said; that he does not want to talk about it because, you know, there is an investigation; he does not want to pre-empt anything. So “he not talking about it. He not dealing with the issue”, and whoever is guilty will be punished.

He spoke also about the \$60 million—[*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, could you quieten them down—I mean, what is wrong with them?

Mr. Speaker: Yes. Please! Please! Allow the Member to speak, please!

Mr. C. Imbert: “Ah doh know” when next in this Session, [*Laughter*] in this Session, I will be back in this place. I can assure you I will be back in the next Session, [*Laughter*] that is for sure. I am certain I will back in the next Session, but I am not sure about when I will be back in this Session. So you quieten them down for me, please?

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So, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs also said that same thing was done in the matter with the disappearance of the \$60 million from the National Energy Corporation. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is that the board of Petrotrin has been aware of this matter since 2012, and when the Minister said that this matter only came to the attention, his attention, he alleges, in March of 2015, and he further alleged this matter only came to the attention of the board of Petrotrin in March 2015, the Minister was not speaking the truth. I will prove it, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*] No, I am not giving way to you.

The Minister alleged, this matter only came to the attention of the board of Petrotrin in March 2015. I put into the record in that statement he was not speaking the truth. To prove that he was not speaking the truth, I will now read from the internal audit report of Petrotrin, this was in 2012. In 2012, I will read—these are the findings of an internal audit in Petrotrin, Part 1:

Advanced payment of commissioning fee; invoice submitted by Marecse for advance payment; Marecsa sent an invoice by fax dated March 26, 2012, to Petrotrin for payment of a commissioning fee of US \$1.25 million—

—and it goes on to speak about the details of this request for this advanced payment of TT \$8 million. A memorandum dated July 31, 2012, entitled:

Request for approval, advanced payment for commissioning fee, for temporary offshore production facility for West and South West Soldado, was submitted for approval to the vice-president, E&P—Exploration and Production—vice-president, finance by Dexter Daniel, acting manager, projects.

In that memo:

Mr. Daniel requested approval of the advanced payment for the fee of TT \$8 million to Marecsa. The justification was, it is pertinent to note that Petrotrin entered into negotiations with Marecsa, and was able to secure a significant reduction in rates, which will save Petrotrin the sum of \$11,628,000,000 and so on and so on.

That is the justification Mr. Daniel gave, that Marecsa had agreed to reduce its rates, which would save Petrotrin a lot of money:

Approval is now requested to pay this commissioning fee in advance of the facility being commissioned. This request is being made in light of the matters discussed, as a mobilization fee during negotiations with Marecsa.

It goes on to talk about it:

In accordance with Petrotrin's financial authorities' tenders and contract for services, item "B IX", such advanced payment on contract invoices for works and services not yet received, can be made in consultation with the vice-president, finance.

But, the point being made by internal audit department is that, when you are making an advanced payment, according to Petrotrin's rules, it must be in accordance with the contract, and what the contract said, under the heading commissioning and decommissioning fees, is:

That single lump sum payment for commissioning, payable only when the contractor has completed commissioning and test run, and Petrotrin has certified the facility, for the commencement of the services.

The audit department went on to say:

It is clear, therefore, that the contract specifies that the commissioning fee, \$8 million will be paid to the contractor only when the facility has been certified.

It goes on to say, further, that there was a big argument about who was responsible for this:

Mr. Daniel told internal audit that the memo was prepared by Vade Chadee, legal counsel. Mr. Chadee told audit he had prepared the memo on instruction from Mr. Daniel.

So Daniel blamed Chadee; Chadee blamed Daniel. He went on to say:

That on three occasions he had said that the payment of the advance fee—this is the lawyer, Petrotrin's lawyer—was an alteration of the contract, and this should be stated in the memorandum.

All of this communication was taking place in 2012, and this is being reported to the board, because board member Ramoutar then gets involved, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Ramoutar is complaining about what is going on because this matter is being reported by internal audit to the board. So how could the Minister come in this Parliament and say—[*Interruption*]

Sen. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, a point of clarification. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. C. Imbert: No, no, no, no, I am got giving way to you. [*Crosstalk*] I am not giving way to you. [*Crosstalk*] I am got giving way. [*Crosstalk*] I am not giving way. No. You see, the Members on the other side feel they can come in

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this Parliament and say anything. “Dey say integrity commission clear you, when it is not true.” [Laughter] “Yuh say yuh exonerated, when it is not true. Yuh say de board did not know, when it is not true. Yuh feel yuh could say anything yuh want.”

So, Mr. Speaker—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: “Yuh say yuh tellin de truth.”

Mr. C. Imbert: Yeah, right, I am reading from documents here, where Mr. Ramoutar of the board was querying all of this, Mr. Speaker, director Ramoutar—and this is an extract of the minutes of the Finance and Tenders Committee of March 2012. [*Interruption*] I am hearing muttering in the back. I am hearing muttering in the front. Could you control the Members of the other side, please?

Mr. Speaker: Please! Members, Members, allow the Member to speak in peace; silence.

Mr. C. Imbert: Thank you very much. “Ah know ah have 23 minutes to go, yuh know. Ah see 22 minutes and 15 seconds.”

Mr. Speaker: Please!

Mr. C. Imbert: So—[*Interruption*] I do not need anything from you. Now, the following is an extract of the minutes of the Finance and Tenders Committee of the board meeting of March 2012:

Mr. Daniel informed members that, following the approval of the board, a reduction had been negotiated with the preferred bidder—talking about savings over the two-year period of \$11 million.

That is “ah joke”, Mr. Speaker. “Dat is de skull dey come with: dat dey go save \$88 million or \$60 million”, whatever it is, when, in fact, the man “tief de money. It is ah joke, de whole thing is ah set-up”. You could see it—the reason given for pushing through this whole thing is these imaginary savings of US \$11 million. So let me repeat this:

Mr. Daniel informed members following the approval of the board, a reduction had been negotiated with the preferred bidder, amounting in savings over the two-year period of approximately US—million dollars.

They go on to talk about how wonderful this whole thing is, that they have negotiated a reduction in rates with the contractor, and this will save TT \$70 million:

Director Ramoutar, board member, enquired as to what recourse was available to Petrotrin, if the facility was not operational on time in September. Daniel

said the contract gave the contractor 250 days to have the facility operational, and beyond that time, liquidated damages would apply.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me go back to what I said earlier. The contract was clear, and I would like to know why the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, a former president of the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union, could not see the malfeasance that took place here. And said he is uncomfortable to be in this Parliament to be listening about malfeasance under the present UNC Government. Look at what happened here. "Dey lied to de board, and dey tell de board" that this is going to save the company \$70 million. So go ahead and sign the contract with this crooked contractor, and as a result an advanced payment of \$8 million was wired to somebody, and \$4 million ended up in a private bank account in Scotiabank in Maraval.

I would think, any self-respecting Cabinet Minister would be interested in that. And if you look at the Motion it speaks to the board. Why does it speak to the board? Because it is alleged that when directors of Petrotrin queried the qualifications of this particular contractor, because they were concerned about it, they wanted to know more about this contractor, because when you do your due diligence, there was a Dun & Bradstreet done on the company by Petrotrin, which indicated that the company comprised of three people. It was in rented premises. It had no track record. It had no assets. It had no experience. This is a Dun & Bradstreet Report available to Petrotrin.

So directors of the board were querying, why are we pushing through this contract, when there are so many questions about this contractor? And the allegation is that the chairman of Petrotrin, Lindsay Gillette, is the one who persuaded the board to go ahead, because there was an announcement—listen to the trail of events, Mr. Speaker. There was an announcement back in—way back in 2012, where you had—remember the Prime Minister holding up these two bottles?

Hon. Members: Yes!

Mr. C. Imbert: You know, black gold, and the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs starring in it, man. "He have ah bottle in he han' too, or he handing ah bottle to de Prime Minister. Ah looking at de photograph right here."

In March 30, 2012, black gold, man, better times are coming, and they will use the money from this fantastic oil find in Soldado to pave the streets of Trinidad and Tobago, this is the humour in this, you know. "Dey say dat" this fantastic oil find will allow increased revenues to Trinidad and Tobago, and they

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are not going to waste “de money”, as was done in the past, and use it for road paving. “Dai’s wat dey say. Not ah drop of oil, Mr. Speaker, [*Laughter*] not ah drop of oil. One set ah old talk.”

So, the chairman is telling the board, when board members like Ramoutar and Inglefield and Jokhoo, are raising legitimate questions, as to “why yuh pushing through dis ting”; and what about the capacity of this company; and what about its track record; and what about the Dun & Bradstreet Report on them, which shows that this is a paper company? It is alleged the chairman, Lindsay Gillette, told them, “Look, we under pressure here, you know. De Prime Minister said dat oil will be flowing from Soldado, and we go use dat money to pave de streets of Trinidad and Tobago. So, look leh we get on with dis eh, because I under pressure”.

If you read these articles in the newspaper, that is the gist of the allegation thrown at the feet of the chairman of Petrotrin. So you had members of the board raising legitimate queries, and the chairman of the board saying, “Ayeh, I under political pressure, eh, because dey say dey strike oil in 2012, and we eh produce nuttin yet. So let us get on wid dis, because we need to do dis”.

Then another question is raised about the capacity of the company, and where is its vessel? And why is it taking so long to mobilize this vessel? It is alleged that the then acting president of Petrotrin, Mr. Hassanali, said that Maritimer’s facility was currently in service for another client. So you have both the chairman being accused of fraudulently encouraging the board to go ahead with the award of contract to this paper company, and the president, Mr. Hassanali, trying to explain it all away, by saying the reason why they will take so long to mobilize is because their equipment is in use with another company for another client. It turns out, the company had no assets. It has no equipment; has no vessel; has no track record; has no money; has no premises; a three-person company, Mr. Speaker.

This is what this is all about, and this has been in the public domain since 2013, because if you also go to the Motion itself, what does it say? It says, that this matter:

“And whereas the matter was raised in the budget debate of September 2013, evoking no response by the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs;”

But the Minister comes in this House today, and said, and these are his words, I took it down, Mr. Speaker: He only found out about this thing in March of this year and Petrotrin only find out about this thing in March.

Hon. Ramnarine: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 44(8).

5.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: That would be after the contribution of the hon. Member.

Mr. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker—look anyhow, excuse them, they just do not know any better. I did not come in town last, you know. You will speak when I am finished, not before. You had your chance. So, Mr. Speaker, let me speak to you.

So, the Minister is saying he did not know anything about this since March 2015. He said Petrotrin did not know anything about it until March 2015, but let us go to the budget debate. I am going to read into the record the *Hansard* budget debate of September 17, 2013. It is better I repeat it so that people would understand, because the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development get up and talk. He is an oil man, he is supposed to be concerned about these matters. Listen to what was said in the budget debate of September 2013.

There is a particular incident that came to my attention over a barge. And it goes on. This is the Member for Point Fortin speaking about the fact that they tendered for a barge in Mexico after the contract had been signed. The principals in Mexico requested that money be paid up front. All of this was said in 2013. The same thing they are talking about here, you know, but the Minister is telling us, he does not know anything about that and Petrotrin does not know anything about that.

I am reading into the record, Mr. Speaker, an audit report of 2012. So, you are going to tell me that members of the board of Petrotrin querying the advance payment to this company since 2012—the matter was raised in the budget debate of 2013, but this Government is pretending it does not know anything about it and it only came to its attention, and they sent it to the police. What is the date you send it? I took that down as well. I think April 17, 2015. Who do you think you are trying to fool?

The Member for Point Fortin filed this Motion prior to April 17, 2015. Is when the Motion was filed, when you realized what was going on, then you start to do something about it. That is what went on! [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: How yuh shouting so man? This is yuh last speech.

Hon. C. Imbert: I have a matter on the adjournment, this is not my last speech. [*Laughter*] So, anyway, Mr. Speaker, what I need Members opposite to tell us, this has been outside there for a couple years well.

It is just like the NEC matter. The NEC theft took place in 2011. Almost four years ago, a man walked into FCB—almost four years ago—pretended to be under this UNC Government. In September 2011 an individual walks into the First Citizens Bank—the CEO of FCB at the time is the Minister of Finance and the Economy and the chairman of NEC at the time is the same Minister of Finance and the Economy today—someone walks into a bank, almost four years ago and misappropriated \$60 million.

Mr. Speaker, the source of funds legislation and the paper trail and all the documentation with respect to wire transfers have been in effect for years. All of us who have to engage in transfers of funds, we know that. If we go to a bank and we have to receive funds or we have to pay for something or we have to send a wire, we have to fill out a form, source of funds. Almost four years ago \$60 million disappears from a state enterprise account, taxpayers' money, and the Minister would come into this Parliament and try and give us the impression that four years later, "Dey ent get back de money yet. Dey still missing about \$25 million ah de money." The matter was only publicized because the Leader of the Opposition brought it out on a political platform in 2015. You are trying to tell me that four years later that is good progress? [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, please.

Mr. C. Imbert: So, what would be the time frame with this investigation into Petrotrin? "They tief \$60 million from NEC in 2011". They still cannot find out who do it. They said the man was captured on the security camera, you know, on the footage, you know—the fellow who walks in there and "tief" the \$60 million his image is captured on the video recording in the bank, but they cannot find him. The person who prepared the transfer and forged the signatures is known, but they cannot find him. The person who facilitated the money out of NEC's account into various accounts all over the world, they are known, but they cannot find them. Four years later, they have all this information, they cannot find them. They do not know who do it.

Nobody knows who stole \$60 million of taxpayers' money from the National Energy Corporation, and you are telling me that in April 2015, you have started a forensic investigation into what? It is obvious, you do not need to be a forensic accountant. To investigate what? It is just like you have a photographic record of

the guy who walks into the bank and “tief” the \$60 million. You need help to figure out who that is! In this particular case, it is clear that the request for the advance payment was made fraudulently. You need to have a forensic investigation to figure that out, where the rules state that you cannot make an advance payment of this magnitude unless it is in the contract. The contract does not say so. You have to figure this out!

I heard today that these people got paid off and they get all kind of golden handshake—\$6 million and they going home. That is what I heard today, that people who are culpable in all of this, Mr. Speaker, instead of being disciplined, instead of being taken before the police, instead of the Fraud Squad being brought in to deal with them, they are going home with \$6 million. That is what I am hearing. It reminds me, Mr. Speaker, remember the person at National Quarries—the person who falsified their CV and got a golden handshake of, how much?—it is \$800,000 or something like that—this is the modus operandi of this Government.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this is a Government in denial, you know. You are in total denial. This is a serious matter. If you really think that you can minimize this whole thing by saying it is only US \$1 million or it is \$8 million or PNM do it too and look what Malcom Jones do, if you feel that that strategy will work, you are dreaming. You are in dreamland. The time for that long gone.

You know what people want to see—somebody stole \$8 million out of Petrotrin, it reached in a private bank account, they say the chairman involved, Mr. Gillette; they say the president involved, Mr. Hassanali; they say the two of them facilitated the corrupt award of a contract to this company; they say Mr. Daniel manipulated the process, misled people, demanded this payment be made without it being in the contract—all of this has been in the records of the state enterprises since 2012.

What I want the Government to tell me is when this audit report went to the people in Petrotrin, what was done? Three years ago, what happened when the audit report went and these serious questions were raised about the impropriety of this payment of US \$1.25 million? What kind of system is this Minister running and this Government running that US \$1.25 million—TT \$8 million—can be stolen from a state enterprise under your nose and you do not know. I heard the Minister say: what it is he say? That you steal some nuts and bolts in the oilfield, in where? In Palo Seco. That is a false analogy. We are talking about the internal

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audit department of Petrotrin. We are talking about the board of Petrotrin; we are talking about serious allegations of impropriety against the chairman and the president of Petrotrin.

It is alleged that they facilitated this corrupt transaction. It is alleged that other senior officials in Petrotrin facilitated this corrupt transaction. What we do not want to hear from you, hon. Members on the other side, is that you feel uncomfortable hearing about malfeasance under your watch. You really think malfeasance is not taking place under your watch? And then the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs is saying: "I do not want to talk about that because of an investigation". You show that the period of time you take to do an investigation is four years.

Let me also say that the Motion speaks about the suspension of the board and chairman. What amazes me about this Government is the lengths they would go to protect individuals that they are friendly with. If it was not bad enough that \$8 million walked out of Petrotrin and walked into somebody's private bank account, and then the company went bankrupt—they breached the contract and you cannot get back the money—if that was not bad enough and that money was paid based on misrepresentation. If that was not—[*Interruption*]

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

Mr. C. Imbert: Certainly.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. C. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if that was not bad enough, here we have another one of the boys, Mr. Neil Gosine of NP fame—the famous individual who participated in the contract—do you remember this when we first came in, the \$40 million transport contract to Gopaul and Company?

Mr. Deyalsingh: And that is why they moved Carolyn. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. C. Imbert: Yes, and it is alleged that the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, the current Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, owes his position to the fact that the previous Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, Minister Seepersad-Bachan had the audacity to call for an investigation into that \$40 million corrupt contract at NP.

Mr. Deyalsingh: "She geh she throat buss!"

Mr. C. Imbert: Yes. And was summarily removed and replaced by the current hon. Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs. It is alleged. But, more importantly, the said Neil Gosine in charge of NP involved in that \$40 million Gopaul scandal, one of the first scandals to hit this UNC administration that the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre is so uncomfortable hearing about malfeasance in his administration—well it hit you in 2010, as soon as you come in—but the same Neil Gosine, what is he saying? Mr. Gosine is saying he is the one who is involved in the issuing of the performance bond for this corrupt contract.

What is going on with this performance bond? What is going on? Bankers Insurance, the underwriter in a contentious \$12 million legal claim has refused to pay Petrotrin any money. The company has instead accused the state-owned oil giant and brokerage firm, Comprehensive Insurance Brokers Limited, of misrepresenting significant facts relating to the financial strength and capabilities of its Mexican client and contractor Maritima De Ecologia S.A de C.V also known as Marecsa.

Now, what does all this mean? What does it mean? It means \$8 million of taxpayers' money stolen from Petrotrin sent to a private bank account in Maraval, the company then folds up. The performance bond provided by Bankers Insurance via Consolidated Insurance Brokers Limited of which one of the primary officials is the infamous Mr. Neil Gosine of NP Gopaul corrupt contract fame. And what does Mr. Gosine say? "I ent paying. Ah not paying because you misrepresented"—sorry, Bankers Insurance is telling Consolidated Insurance: "We ent paying because you, Consolidated Insurance run by Mr. Gosine, misrepresented the financial capacity and track record of this corrupt contractor."

What is the bottom line? Mr. Speaker, \$8 million of taxpayers' money stolen from Petrotrin, because of misrepresentation by senior officials in Petrotrin, because of alleged manipulation by the chairman and president of Petrotrin, a performance bond issued by Bankers Insurance through Consolidated Insurance Brokers Limited run by Neil Gosine— [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, Please.

Mr. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, you see, when you get into the meat of the matter—\$8 million stolen, the chairman of Petrotrin and the president of Petrotrin accused of being involved—money goes into a private bank account in Maraval, the performance bond turns out to be worthless because Bankers Insurance, the insurance company, says they are not paying because the brokerage company run by one of their favoured people misrepresented the facts. Those are the facts.

6.00 p.m.

Mr. C. Imbert: That is what is going on in this country, and I am ashamed that a former president of the oilfields workers would think that these kinds of things make him uncomfortable—"he doh want to hear dat". Mr. Speaker, let us look at the performance as well of Petrotrin, and, you know, these figures come to the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs.

Dr. Moonilal: It is six o'clock.

Mr. C. Imbert: It is not to say, Mr. Speaker, that—you could adjourn anytime you want—it is not to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs is not aware of these things, you know, because if you look at the consolidated financial statements—*[Interruption]* It is all right, you could adjourn any time you want, "I cool". If you look at the consolidated financial statements of the Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited for 2014, and you go to their profit and loss statement, what do you see? You see that Petrotrin lost two—this is the audited accounts—Petrotrin lost \$201 million for the year 2014, Mr. Speaker.

Miss Mc Donald: How much it was?

Mr. C. Imbert: Two hundred and one million dollars, they lose. Now, 2014, for the year ending September 30, 2014, Petrotrin lost \$201 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I went to the *Review of the Economy 2014* because I was intrigued to see how could Petrotrin lose \$200 million in a year when oil prices were at an all-time high, so I went to the *Review of the Economy 2014*, published by this administration, and what did I see? I saw, Mr. Speaker, that there was an average price for West Texas Intermediate (WTI) between October 2013 and June 2014 of \$99. *[Crosstalk]*

Mr. Ramnarine: Petrotrin does not sell crude.

Mr. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, I am hearing mutterings across the road there.

Hon. Member: They "doh" sell crude.

Mr. Imbert: But who owns Trinmar? *[Crosstalk]*

Mr. Speaker, you see, they feel they could fool people, you know. Trinmar is a wholly owned subsidiary of Petrotrin. In 2014, Trinmar's production was 22,000 barrels of oil per day at oil prices averaging \$99. Now, how is this possible—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Moonilal: “Enough ah this, yes.”

Mr. C. Imbert: What? A point of order? [*Laughter*] You think you could catch me. As I said, Mr. Speaker, “I did not come in town last”. [*Laughter*] So, you have a year, financial year 2014, oil prices averaging \$99 but Petrotrin losing \$200 million. [*Interruption*]

Hon. Member: How much crude is produced?

Mr. C. Imbert: I just told you, Trinmar is 22,000 barrels, Mr. Speaker, and that is just Trinmar production, you also have Petrotrin’s production.

Since, Mr. Speaker, hon. Members opposite do not know anything, I think I will educate them. In that year, Trinmar’s production 21,000 barrels per day and Petrotrin 22,000 barrels per day. In fact, more than half of our oil production comes from there, to tell you the lack of knowledge on that side. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please. Please.

Mr. C. Imbert: So, Mr. Speaker, you have a situation where Petrotrin, under this brilliant board, and under this brilliant president, managed to lose \$200 million in a year when oil prices were averaged over \$90 a barrel—brilliant. Brilliant administration you have inside of there, and the reason why you would keep them there, the reason why you are keeping them “fellas, dem fellas” who managed to lose \$200 million in a year when oil prices were almost averaged \$100 is because you are not interested in efficiency.

You have an audit report going to the Board of Petrotrin, or the tenders committee of Petrotrin in 2012; it talks about serious manipulation of procedure inside Petrotrin resulting in an illegal payment of \$8 million to persons unknown. You are not interested. It is the same chairman. It is the same president. I heard the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs try to excuse it away by saying that Mr. Hassanali had only been president of Petrotrin for five days when this contract award was made. But the allegation is that the contract award turned on information coming from the said Mr. Hassanali that the company had the necessary equipment and it was not available because it was being used by another client. How much time do I have, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: You have until ten past six.

Mr. C. Imbert: Oh, thank you so much. So I have another six minutes, very nice.

Dr. Moonilal: You are welcome.

Mr. C. Imbert: You could adjourn anytime you want; I have said what I have to say.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish the Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development, with all his knowledge and institutional memory, would explain to us why Petrotrin was importing bitumen from Barbados in 2014. Why Trinidad and Tobago—I want the Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development, with all his knowledge about the oil industry, tell me why Trinidad and Tobago, an oil-producing country, was importing bitumen? And look where they are importing it from—Barbados. Barbados does not produce oil in any sufficient quantity, but Trinidad and Tobago, under this brilliant board and chair of Petrotrin, and this brilliant president who managed to convince the other members of the board that all was well and nice with this contract to this corrupt company, importing bitumen from Barbados in 2014.

The Prime Minister in 2012 holding up two canisters of black gold, that oil will flow, that gold will pave the streets of Trinidad and Tobago. In 2012, that is what was going on in this country. But in 2014, the same black gold that was supposed to be flowing out of Soldado and paving the streets of Trinidad and Tobago with gold, we had to import bitumen. What a shame. What a scandal. What an embarrassment, importing bitumen from Barbados. It is a disgrace, Mr. Speaker.

Let us see what else. Let us see what this same Petrotrin is telling us. I have here, Mr. Speaker, a report from statements made at a conference, the Trinidad and Tobago Energy Conference at the Hyatt, January 28, 2013, where the said Mr. Hassanali, together with the Vice-President for Exploration and Production, Mr. Khan, said:

As a result of additional efforts by Petrotrin through Trinmar, he expects Trinmar to end the year 2013 with a production rate of 25,000 barrels.

I would expect the Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development to talk about that. Do not tell us what happened in the ancient past. Tell us why in 2013 the President of Petrotrin, your favourite son, Mr. Hassanali, and the Vice-President for E&P at Petrotrin, Mr. Khan, said that because of the wonderful things that are being done under this UNC administration, Trinmar's production was going to go up from 22,000 barrels a day, which it was then, to 25,000 barrels a day by the end of 2013. Talk about that, because, Mr. Speaker, I have the March 2015 figures, and at the end of March 2015, Trinmar's production was 21,746 barrels per day.

So what happened? They come in the Energy Conference, this brilliant board, this brilliant president, who are accused of manipulating tenders to allow \$8 million of taxpayers' money to be stolen; they come in 2013, they say they "go" boost production in Trinmar, what happens? "Dey ent boost no production." They allowed \$8 million of taxpayers' money to be stolen.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask this Government, in the few remaining hours and minutes available to it, the few remaining hours and minutes available to it—these are serious allegations. It is alleged that the chairman and the president of Petrotrin conspired to manipulate the tender process to allow the award of a \$300 million contract to a corrupt company, which has since proven to be worthless, and \$8 million, as a consequence, has been stolen. And the performance bond put up by bankers is now turning out to be worthless because of misrepresentation by the insurance broker, which is run by another favourite son of this UNC Government.

I would ask that the Minister, instead of telling us about what happened in 2002, and what happened in 2003 and 2004, tell us what happened in 2012 when the audit department reported that this contract was corrupt. Tell us what happened in 2013 when Trinmar's production did not achieve the desired results. Tell us what happened in 2014 when with an oil price of \$100, Petrotrin lost \$200 million. Tell us what you are doing about the serious allegations of corruption which you have not answered with respect to the involvement of the chairman of Petrotrin, the president of Petrotrin, the audit—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Your time is up.

Mr. C. Imbert: I am up, Mr. Speaker. I want the Government to deal with the issues and stop hiding, "ducking" and running from serious allegations of corruption. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Oropouche East. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I stand to contribute in this debate. You see, Mr. Speaker, like the Member for Diego Martin North/East, "I did not come to town yesterday either". [*Desk thumping*] My good friend from Diego Martin North/East seized the opportunity to speak earlier, although earmarked to wind up this debate—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Imbert: Earmarked by who?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—because, Mr. Speaker, the Member felt that if he spoke before me and the House adjourned at six o'clock he will push me out and I will not be able to speak on this Motion.

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So, I wanted to tell the Member that recognizing, Mr. Speaker—I would use a nice word—his strategy, I, of course, consulted my Standing Orders, and he would be happy to learn in his last day in the House that Standing Order 15 says:

“However, on Private Members’ Day, except with the agreements of the Whips representing each of the parties in Opposition to the Government, the House shall not be adjourned earlier than 6.00 p.m.”

So you need agreement to adjourn earlier than 6.00 p.m., you do not need agreement to adjourn later than 6.00 p.m.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me build my case that my friend thought he could have denied me today, and I allowed him to speak after 6.00 because I am very much aware that today could be the last full contribution that this Member gives to Parliament. Today could well be the last day he disturbs the *Hansard* staff, and I say “disturb” in a nice way, in a kind way, because, Mr. Speaker, with the days and weeks and the months ahead, it may well be that the Member for Diego Martin North/East will also be transferred to another party and another candidate.
[*Desk thumping*]

So, I did not have the heart to stop him with 10 minutes to go; having come to the House in 1991 as an elected Member I could not stop him with 10 minutes to go to complete his full and last contribution in the House. Mr. Speaker, if I said—[*Interruption*] Full contribution. Mr. Speaker, if I say he would be sorely missed it would not be the truth, [*Laughter*] but we will proceed without him, and I am sure he can participate in those CPA annual meetings, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, following this Motion on the debate you would feel, if someone would be listening to this debate, they would feel that the argument today over stolen money, money taken by fraud, and so on, these moneys and the argument today is that the Government officers, the Government Ministers, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, or some Members associated on this side are guilty of some offence, having heard Members of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, in the case before us today something has gone wrong, and the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs indicated that there is a full-scale investigation on, a police investigation on; and, Mr. Speaker, the identities of persons who may have committed any offence can and will be known. But, Mr. Speaker, hearing the Opposition today you think it is Members here, you know. You actually think “is one ah we gone in”—what?—FCB or Scotia—somewhere—“and de camera pick we up going in to defraud.” Mr. Speaker, the way they convey this message you would think it is somebody sitting here.

Mr. Speaker, this case, and the case with the NEC that they raised earlier, involve, and may well involve international skilled conmen, fraudsters who are transnational in their operations, conmen, men of great talent, unbelievably great talent and connections and networks involved in fraud.

6.15 p.m.

The Member for Chaguanas West, in his previous incarnation, would know about international transactions and so on. Mr. Speaker, the NEC matter came to light. I heard my friend today saying the Opposition Leader went on the platform recently and “buss de mark” and the NEC matter came into the public domain because of the Opposition Leader. Clearly, the Attorney General is affecting him in Diego Martin North/East. Clearly. The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs holds up a piece of paper two days ago, I think it was. Was it? He held up the *Express* of November 12, 2011, in which Kevin Ramnarine, Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs went to a post- Cabinet press conference and indicated to the nation that fraudsters were at work.

Mr. Imbert: And then what?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—the police and the other authorities are investigating that matter—

Dr. Gopeesingh: They recovered money.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—and they have recovered—this is the only Government in Trinidad and Tobago which recovered money fraudulently taken. [*Desk thumping*] Yes, out of how much, \$61 million, I think?

Hon. Ramnarine: Sixty million.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Sixty million, we have recovered \$30 million more or less. [*Interruption*]

No other Government, in fact, those professionals in forensic accounting, and law, and so on, tell me. They say this is the first time ever a Government has chased down fraudsters and recovered taxpayers' money. [*Desk thumping*] This Government. It is in that NEC matter. The only money outstanding now is moneys in Dubai and there is a court matter ongoing in Dubai, and then the taxpayer may well end up with 100 per cent of its money back, under this administration.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs in November 2011 held up the newspaper and say, “look, something went wrong.” You know, the Opposition Leader today—well, he is not here, I see a purse on his seat. He is not here. [*Laughter*]

Hon. Member: A purse?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: There is a purse on his seat.

Miss Mc Donald: “You have ah ting with purse and”— [*Inaudible*]

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, I am not talking about duster, and nightie and so on from the former Minister of Finance on Old Year's Day. That hurts me, that affects me anytime I raise that. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Leader raised the matter on a platform, clearly he had nothing new. So, he had nothing new to say, so dig up now, dig up, dig up and find this thing in 2011—Kevin Ramnarine raised the matter as Senator—comes with it and the Opposition voices, new, new, it new.

Mr. Speaker, we dealt with that since November 2011. On this matter with Soldado before us now on this private Motion, the Member for Point Fortin came after a substantial absence from the House, returned today and raised this Motion, and then I am sure she had other pressing business, and left. I am sure there is some competing—something that is a bigger priority than hearing Members of Parliament speak on the Motion that you move. [*Interruption*] You moved your Motion and Members are responding, and this habit with monotonous frequency to file Motion and run away. File Motion, run away. You file Motion of no confidence, you gone; you file Motion on this, you gone.

You filed a Motion on Soldado; okay we are here, we are debating, the Minister is here, other Members; they gone. Not even the respect for the House to sit down and listen to a Motion that you have filed. So, they filed the Motion, and the Motion is based 99.9 per cent on 12 newspaper articles. Well, thank God for that newspaper article. Thank God for that.

Hon. Member: What about the audit report?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: The audit report is stated in the newspaper.

Mr. Imbert: No, no, no.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker—please, you had your chance. You deal with Garvin Nicholas now, forget—[*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Point Fortin raised the matter, 99.9 per cent in the newspaper. The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs raised the matters, indicated when, how and why these matters came to the fore, and I was very troubled today, you know, Member of the Opposition, it began with the Member for Point Fortin. You know, they have no fear, they have no qualms about calling

everybody's name in Parliament, man, Tom, Dick, Harrilal, anybody. They have a problem with Gopaul, they have a problem with Seepaul, they have a problem with Mootilal, they have a problem with Lalla, they have a problem with Kallco, they have a problem with Moonilal, they have a problem with "Kunilal", they have a problem with everything. They stand up in this Parliament and call business people's name and criminalize and demonize businessmen with impunity. [*Interruption*]

And I only hope today that those businessmen, their families, their relatives, their friends are listening to this debate, to see, God forbid, what awaits them. Because even the Opposition you can identify and target and demonize businessmen, what would you do if you are in Government? What will happen to Seepaul, and Gopaul, and Saran and Baran?

Hon. Member: They will send the tax man, the VAT man, the policeman.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: They will send the tax man, the VAT man, the policeman, yes. [*Interruption*]

Yeah, Mr. Speaker, this poor Mr. Inglefield, I understand he is trying to run the Queen's Park Club now, gone and retired himself running Queen's Park Club, trying his best to help out sports and thing, called his name here. Dragged him in the mud. These are citizens, hard-working citizens.

You know, the Member for St. Joseph, in a "lil" while, he will put on a red jersey and go by these same people's house and beg for vote. They would put on a red jersey and go by Ramhit family and beg for vote. Well, beg for other things too, but for vote. They would put on their clothes and go by the house of all the people they are talking about and beg for vote and other things too.

And they are talking, Mr. Speaker, as if these people who are businessmen and so on are not citizens, They do not work hard, they do not sacrifice, they do not pay their tax. They pay tax. They pay tax so that we could be here. That is why they pay tax, Mr. Speaker. But you know, this country—anyway, I do not want to get too much into that, but the country will wake up and sense what is happening here by the criminalization and demonization of the business community, particularly contractors going after, with a certain intensity.

And then my friend talking about losses at Petrotrin in fiscal 2014. Petrotrin lost how much? Two hundred and something million dollars and so on. Mr. Speaker, I am informed that in 2009 Petrotrin lost—I have to ask if this is true, eh,

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because this thing is bewildering—\$846 million; 2009, Petrotrin lost \$846 million, and they come today talking about \$200 million, 2014—\$846 million taxpayer's money.

Dr. Gopeesingh: And in 2008 the price of oil was \$146.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: And in 2008 the price of oil was what? One hundred and forty-six dollars a barrel, 2009? Mr. Speaker, another \$167 million lost in 2010, and they coming to talk today about loss of Petrotrin.

Mr. Speaker, I live in San Fernando, and when I go up and down on the highway now I see this shell of a building by Petrotrin there [*Interruption*] it is like a crab-looking reptile of some sort. And I understand \$450 million gone there to put up 16 posts, hook up with a piece of iron—\$450 million, Petrotrin, gas to liquids thing; \$500 million for a study for the “racket rail”, and today with the Soldado thing—I want to come back to that because that is the problem here. The *Su* was how much, \$60 million? That was the boat that never float.

And let me tell you something, God forbid they come back in office, is more *Su*, is more gas to liquids, is more “racket rail”, is more smelter. Mr. Speaker, there is a river somewhere in Maraval, it bend [*Laughter*] and somebody wanted it straighten out.

Hon. Member: Alyuh talking bout Naipaul or what?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: There is a bend in the river. There is a “Naipaulian” similarity in Diego Martin of a bend in the river. [*Laughter*] That is a problem the Integrity Commission is now dealing with, but I do not want to say too much with the Integrity Commission because—

Mr. Imbert: They have a commission? [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, you know, earlier today—well, you raised. The Member for Diego Martin North/East raised it. The Member for Chaguanas also, the Member for Diego Martin North/East raised it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my friend the Member for Diego Martin North/East, Mayweather is the champion. There are some people who did not like the decision. Whether the decision is unanimous, whether it is by consensus, whether it is by split decision, whether it is by knockout, it is a decision. [*Desk thumping*] It is a decision, Mr. Speaker. We have information on a decision, officially.

Mr. Imbert: Are you sure? Are you sure?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You could grim, you could grudge, you could moan, you could groan, there is a decision of the Integrity Commission, and—

Mr. Imbert: For real.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin North/East is accustomed with the Court of Appeal and now the Privy Council, he has so many matters there. He will know that there is a panel—*[Interruption]*—No, you are not a lawyer there, you are a defendant there.

Mr. Speaker, he knows that in any judicial tribunal you have an uneven number. If there is a judgment from the Court of Appeal or the Privy Council, a judge, a justice may have a dissenting opinion, generally they write that as well in the judgment. Nothing is wrong with a dissenting opinion, you could have that. By the end of the day you have a judgment and you can appeal how much you want. But they are trying to deny the Prime Minister, Ministers and the Government that the Integrity Commission has dealt with the matter. If one man vex and get up and gone home, so be it. Not everybody agrees on everything in the world. We do not.

So, Mr. Speaker, to raise that issue as if this is some weapon that just got in their hands, they are clawing on by their nails, and I want to tell my friend the Member for Diego Martin North/East, we have a nail clipper to deal with him. We have the nail clipper. *[Desk thumping]* They are clawing on by their nails.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs also raised, I imagine, the issue of the NEC, but they are in 2002. Again, I want to make reference to that, 2002 to 2003, massive fraud at TSTT, and this one we never heard about. You know what is amazing about this, 2003 and 2002, massive fraud at TSTT, and that one, believe it or not, we never heard about that one, where millions of dollars was stolen, taxpayers' money gone and to this day TSTT never accounted to the taxpayers. The then Government never accounted.

Mr. Speaker, it was reported in 2003 that there was a fraudulent wire transfer involving TSTT bank account in Scotiabank. It was to the tune of about TT \$3 million, a bit more. The then Government never informed the public or the Parliament about this. They never informed the people, they never informed the public nor Parliament about a \$4.2 million fraud at TSTT in September 2003, and today we ask them, where that \$4 million gone? Who account for that? Did we get back four cents? No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the recent one we raised as well, in the Soldado matter, investigations are ongoing, police, Petrotrin has forensic investigations; TSTT

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2003 money gone, never come back. There is another one, Mr. Speaker, involving e TecK. Was it e TecK?

Hon. Member: Bamboo.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: And Bamboo, a company called e TecK, a company called Bamboo.

Mr. Speaker, a conman out of, I think Korea, the name was Kim, and when we heard that we said, with respect, "Who the hell is Kim?"

Dr. Gopeesingh: What about the Korean company Haji?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, Bamboo came in and con them. How much it was?—31—

Mr. Cadiz: Thirty five million dollars.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Thirty five million dollars of taxpayers' money gone. It gone with evolving technologies and Bamboo Networks Limited.

Mr. Speaker, you know what is fascinating about that one? Is that their own Government through the Minister in the Ministry of Finance, one Christine Sahadeo, well, she was referred to affectionately as "Putna", but that was with love. Affectionately, the Couva North member at that time called her "Putna". Mr. Speaker—but, you do not know what that means, so you do not know.

Mr. Speaker, what it means? What it means? [*Interruption*] But what it means, you do not know.

Hon. Member: You have to tell him about the "Kahaani".

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: I will give him the "Kahaani", I will give him the story on a next time.

Mr. Speaker, Minister Sahadeo warned e TecK not to get involved with Bamboo, they had poor financial management, a poor state of their finances, lack of proper management structure, a short track record. Do not get involved with them. She wrote them. You know, Mr. Speaker, they did not take on the Minister in the Ministry of Finance. They did not do that. [*Interruption*] No, she warned them in December 2004, in 2005 in May, the Member for Diego Martin North/East sat in a Cabinet of the PNM and approved a \$30 million investment between e TecK and Bamboo. The Member for Diego Martin North/East sat in the Cabinet. We have the Cabinet Minute, I think it was May 05, 2005.

Sat there, and \$30 million of taxpayers' money "gone, just gone, just disappear. Bamboo take it and gone". To this day you cannot find Bamboo, Mr.

Speaker, and the Cabinet passed that decision, you know. I want to say something, as much as they try to connect Soldado—because the Member for Point Fortin made the point—I think we should get back to the Member for Point Fortin who is absent here, today.

6.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker the Member said, and the Member for Diego Martin North/East, I think he echoed that sentiment, that the Cabinet has responsibility for the state enterprises and if something goes wrong in Petrotrin it is the Minister and the Cabinet. But you know, the Cabinet has no approval for Soldado, we do not approve these things, the board of Petrotrin does that.

In the case of the Bamboo, \$30 million gone, you know, they had Cabinet approval for that investment. The Member for Diego Martin West was there, the Member for Diego Martin North/East was there, in 2005. Imagine they approved a fraud, Cabinet approved the fraud. As bad as it is with Soldado here, is it \$9 million? How much million is it there? As bad as it is, \$8 million, bad, that did not come to Cabinet for Cabinet to approve that.

The NEC matter is a clear matter of fraudsters, international fraudsters and they are dealing with that. You know, the Bamboo investment came to Cabinet in which a PNM Cabinet approved a fake company to invest with a fake company, in which a PNM Minister warned a PNM-controlled company, do not invest with these people. [*Crosstalk*] The Member for Port of Spain South was not there. I did not say you, eh. I deliberately did not say you. You were not on the compound then. Member for Port of Spain South, you were not on the compound then, you came by in 2007. In 2005, the Member for Diego Martin North/East was there, the Member for Diego Martin West was there. Who else was there? [*Crosstalk*] Nobody else. The Member for San Fernando East was chairman. Thirty million dollars, a Cabinet-approved fraud took place in May 2005.

Miss Mc Donald: No, Mr. Speaker, 48(6). What is a “Cabinet-approved fraud”? No, no, I am on my feet, I am on my feet, 48(6). [*Crosstalk and laughter*]

Mr. Speaker: I think that the language, you could use more elegant language, please.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Let me endeavour. Cabinet approved a decision between e Teck and a fraudulent company by the name of Bamboo that led, Mr. Speaker, to the theft of TT \$30 million of taxpayers' money left, because Cabinet approved a transaction between e Teck and a fraudulent and fake company called

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Bamboo in which the record reveals that a PNM Junior Minister of Finance actually warned e Teck about that. Mr. Speaker, we have not received 30 cents from that Bamboo Networks Limited. In fact, we got bamboo, to be honest. The only thing we get is bamboo.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask those who are talking today, who will pay for the Bamboo investment? The NEC matter, we are dealing with that. We got \$30 million back. In fact, we got the entire Bamboo investment back on NEC, we have more to get from Dubai now. I want to ask the colleagues opposite, who is going to pay for that TSTT \$4 million defraud in 2003? Who is going to return the \$30 million from the Bamboo deal that Cabinet approved? Who is to be held accountable? Is it the same man who went and testified against the interest of Trinidad and Tobago in the Sural matter?

A man went and testified against the interest of his own—the land of his birth, he went and testified against the interest of. I would have used a nice Hindi term that the Member for Tabaquite could understand, but nobody else will. There is “Dharti Mata”, his own earth. It is the earth that he was born on, Fyzabad, he went and testified against the very earth that gave rise to him. I will say he is unpatriotic. I think most people can understand that. [*Crosstalk*] I depend on the Presbyterian to help me out here.

Mr. Speaker, this is the state of play. So today, when the Member comes with a Motion on this matter, and the Motion calls to suspend the board of directors, get rid of the board of directors. Let me read this, because I was taken aback by this.

“...the current chairman and board members...be suspended from office pending the outcome...”

Who did they suspend from e Teck? Who did they suspend from TSTT?

Hon. Member: Kim.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Kim? Where was Kim? And I mean to be conned by somebody named Kim is a double crime. That is a double crime for somebody named Kim to con you. Mr. Speaker, who did they suspend? When the gas-to-liquids, \$450 million gone, who did they suspend? When the Brian Lara moved from \$375 million to \$1.2 billion, who did you suspend?

Hon. Member: Million-dollar flag.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You put up the million-dollar flag. No, that was a joke for them, and they come today and ask this Government, where police

investigating internal forensic audit, suspend, suspend the chairman, suspend the board, get everybody out, because the \$8 million we cannot account for.

Mr. Speaker, a hallmark of this debate today is a point made by the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs which is worth repeating. Under the administration of the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, anytime, anytime a matter comes to the fore, and that matter, Mr. Speaker, suggests wrongdoing, this Prime Minister instantly, I do not think she wastes a minute, sends matters to the hands of the police, the Integrity Commission and proper authorities to investigate. [*Desk thumping*]

You see, Mr. Speaker, any Government in this country, whether it is PNM, whether it is UNC, I say with love, if 41 priests come in this House and take over the House and they all become MPs, within two months you will hear some talk of corruption, any Government come into power. It is not the issue of when wrongdoing arises. It is not the issue of wrongdoing. You will always have allegations of wrongdoing. Some authentic, some not. It is not the issue of what arise, it is the issue of what do you do when they arise.

I heard Barack Obama, the President of the United States making this point a few months ago on television and this is a very important point. He said, every administration will have examples of wrongdoing; every administration. It is the nature. Some things will happen and may not be right. He said, do not judge him and do not judge us that a wrongdoing occurs, judge us by what did we do when it came to our attention. [*Desk thumping*] That is what you judge.

And today, the LifeSport matter is a matter before the police and other authorities. This Soldado matter is before the authorities. When this fake email business came here, the Prime Minister wasted no time and sent it to the police and the Integrity Commission and anybody she could find, investigate, because her hands were always clean. And she knew it. What happened when they were in office? TSTT 2003, if I did not tell you that today you did not know. You did not know of \$4 million defrauded from TSTT if we did not tell you today, you did not know. What happened when the Bamboo, \$30 million gone.

I want a press conference by a PNM Minister who announces that we were defrauded \$30 million by Bamboo and we are working to get back the money. You know what happened, Mr. Speaker, they sweep it under the carpet, they sweep it, they sweep it. So it happened and they say look here, boys, we were conned, \$30 million gone, just stay quiet long enough. A next five to 10 years somebody might figure it out. I am asking the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs in his comprehensive research preparation, which is well known for him,

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look at the record and see if any Minister of the PNM Government in 2008, in any public statement or in any parliamentary statement went to the public and said, ladies and gentlemen we were conned out of \$30 million. No, that is not the modus operandi. We came to the national community with the NEC matter in November 2011. Sen. Ramnarine went to the Cabinet press conference and said listen, something has happened here, we lost \$60 million by international fraudsters and we are working to get it back.

Mr. Speaker, that separates administrations. That separates how we move. That separates how we take a position on this matter. Because I want to say, the Member for Chaguanas West is never here at this time so he would not hear me, at least in the Chamber, he is always talking about corruption this and corruption that and the other, when any wrongdoing is reported, allegations made. In the same Gopaul matter that my friend was calling earlier, all the time, whole evening is Gopaul, that is the subject of an investigation.

There were matters before—Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you, poor me, they reported me to the Integrity Commission too. They reported me, Opposition Members, to the Integrity Commission over the sale of a piece of land somewhere. [*Crosstalk*] You know, I was waiting for the next platform to say it, but I could say it now, I was really waiting for a next platform. They went and reported me, me, to the Integrity Commission for a sale, an HDC land purchase. You know, the Integrity Commission sent their letter, beautiful letter, nicely worded, there is no further action to be taken, insufficient, no grounds.

Mr. Speaker, they do that all the time, but I imagine nobody walked out at that time, because that is the next thing happening in this country. Once you do not like it you walk out. Once you do not like something, walk out, pick up your bat and ball and go. Nobody walked out on the Integrity Commission that time when they said nothing was wrong with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and so on.

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

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members the question is that the speaking time of the hon. Minister of Housing and Urban Development be extended by 15 minutes.

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, I may not need 15 minutes, but I really wanted to record my very deep concern on this matter and the tenor of the debate that had been developing earlier today. And I wanted to clarify before I close, that the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs has been accused here, today, of not speaking the truth on a matter of his knowledge of this Soldado matter and the Members opposite have brought some type of information, again, we do not know if that information is authentic, because the problem we have here is people could get up and read anything in this Parliament and they say, email from this one to that one. The Member for Point Fortin read something purporting to be emails, eh, again.

Mr. Speaker, what we have to do, go by Google Incorporated again to find out if that is correct. Every time somebody do that we cannot go by Google. We cannot call the Justice Department to go and investigate. So the Member said something about, when knowledge came of that matter and so on.

For the record, Sen. Ramnarine, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, indicated that he first learnt of the alleged wire transfers in March 2015, the alleged wire transfers when it was reported in the press. And Petrotrin and its management only knew of the illegal wire transfer in the same news story. And they brought all types—you see, Mr. Speaker, when you catch them they bring all kind of paper and hold up and say, internal this, internal that, this story, the minute of this meeting, of that meeting. Mr. Speaker, what will we do, do a lie detector test now to find out if those pieces of documents are authentic? We cannot. We go on people's word, they are hon. Members of this House. You are called honourable.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take too much time but to indicate that this Motion is vexatious, it is null and void. It is absolutely vacuous to the extreme. Action has been taken—in the resolutions, what you are asking the House to do, we have already done. This matter has already—an investigation has already begun into this matter. The matter has already been brought to the attention of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. So what you are asking for has already been done. There is no further matter.

So, Mr. Speaker, on that note I would like to end my contribution.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House—

Mr. Imbert: I know you would do that.

Adjournment

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Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—do now adjourn to Wednesday, May 27, 2015, at 1.30 p.m., and to serve a strong notice on the Opposition that in the event that they may be on the compound we intend to complete our debate on the Ombudsman Report, continue debate on the cyber legislation, continue to debate on the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill, 2015 and companion Constitutional (Amendment) Bill, 2015, and begin debate, Mr. Speaker, on the Gambling (Gaming and Betting) Control Bill, 2015. It will be a long day on Wednesday 27, if Members, if they decide to show up, but if they do not show up I serve my notice. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

6.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, before putting the question on the Motion for the adjournment, there is a matter in the name of the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East—in fact, several, but I have been advised that he will only be raising one matter today, and I now call on the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East. [*Desk thumping*]

Emailgate Allegations

Mr. Colm Imbert (*Diego Martin North/East*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, approximately two weeks ago, or was it three?—I am not certain of the date, but it does not really matter—the Government moved a Motion to suspend the Member for Diego Martin West from the service of this House based on allegations made that the probe into emailgate had been completed, and that the Government and the various actors in the Government who had been implicated, had been exonerated.

Mr. Speaker, subsequent to that, a press release was issued by the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions and I think it is necessary to give some context. You see, in the emailgate matter an allegation was made that the presence of a device, or presence of infrared radiation which would indicate the presence of listening equipment, was found in the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and it is a fact that the police have since confirmed that a sweep of the DPP's office did indicate the presence of infrared radiation in the conference room that could come from a listening device. So as a consequence of the fact that the Director of Public Prosecutions had been mentioned in this emailgate matter, the responsibility for making public statements had been delegated to the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions.

So I am putting it in context because some members of the public do not understand why the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions is speaking rather

than the Director of Public Prosecutions. It is because the Director of Public Prosecutions has withdrawn himself from making public statements on the matter in deference to the fact that he has been mentioned in this whole matter; quite a proper thing to do.

Now, the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions issued a statement not too long ago, and it was by way of a press release and it is headed as follows:

“Investigations into the e-mail disclosures in the House of Representatives between May 20 and May 24...”

Through various reports in the electronic and print media, it has become obvious that certain correspondence from the United States (US) Department of Justice, sent to the police investigative team through the Central Authority, has found its way into the hands of parties who are not members of the investigative or advising prosecutorial teams. While the articles are numerous, the following excerpts are instructive.

At Page A3 of the T&T Guardian of Saturday, May 9th 2015, Richard Lord reports that the honourable Prime Minister said—and he quotes, that the Prime Minister—““had a duty to myself and the members of my Government to have that record cleared in the Parliament, because now is when we got evidence from independent sources. We got the evidence through court processes from Google, the Integrity Commission and the US Justice Department”.

In another report at page 4 of the Daily Express of Thursday May 7, 2015, Ms. Ria Taitt reported as follows:

‘Moonilal cited the number of authorities which said the e-mails were false. These included a report from an IT specialist in the Attorney General’s Department, Mr....Sealy, a report from John Berryhill, which called the document a ‘poorly constructed fraud’, Jack Russo, of the Computer Law Group; in the case of the Integrity Commission versus Google, and the Report of the Justice Department to the head of the Central Authority.’”

And I would like to repeat that:

“Moonilal cited a number of authorities”—including the report of the Justice Department to the head of the Central Authority.

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“Further, the following is an excerpt from a Page 3 report in the T&T Newsday of Monday April 27th...written by Andre Bagoo, who reported in reference to the Honourable Prime Minister:

‘She said the latest disclosures of records to the Integrity Commission concurred with a report by John Berryhill...They also concurred with disclosures to the Police Service done through the US Justice Department.’”

And it goes on.

“Mr. Bagoo ascribed the following words to the...Prime Minister:

‘These sources have showed us there is no substance,’—to the emails.

“In the Daily Express of Friday 8th May...at Page 5”—[*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Please, please.

Mr. C. Imbert:—what is wrong with them? Especially the one with the funny hat.

Mr. Speaker: Yeah, “doh take him on”.

Mr. C. Imbert: What is wrong with the one with the funny hat? “I eh takin him on.”

“In the Daily Express of Friday 8th May, 2015...reporter Anna Ramdass recited the full text of a letter, dated January 29, 2015, from Acting Director of the United States Department of Justice to Mr...Kowlessar, head of the Central Authority.

This letter and its annexures, the product of a warrant obtained by the US Department of Justice, were sent to the Police Investigative Team.”

And this is the important point, Mr. Speaker:

“It is apparent from the contents of this letter that it should not have found its way into the public domain, since information garnered by way of compliance with requests for Mutual Legal Assistance, must be used by the receiving State, only in the investigation and prosecution of persons and offence for which assistance has been requested and granted.

It is the standard practice as it is universally accepted that in those matters to use this information otherwise is only permissible with the...approval or authorisation of the US Department of Justice.

I am seized with information which clearly indicates that no such approval or authorisation came from the US Department of Justice. Therefore, the use of this information in the public”—domain)—“without the permission of one’s international partner is especially disturbing and dangerous, since such action violates what is to be expected by way of international co-operation and...it attracts question marks as to our ability to honour our international legal obligations...”

Now, what is the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions saying? She is saying that the Leader of Government Business, the Prime Minister, quoted from a document sent to the Central Authority in Trinidad and Tobago which resides in the office of the Attorney General, without permission from the United States Department of Justice. That is what the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions is saying. And what amazes me is that the Prime Minister and the Leader of Government Business did not understand they were not authorized to quote from these documents that are associated with an ongoing police investigation. And the point the Deputy Director was making was that it attracts questions as to our ability to honour our international legal obligations. You see, when we entered into the Mutual Assistance Treaty, we, as a country, promised that we would not do this kind of thing. But I saw the Prime Minister and the Leader of Government Business waving the documents! I saw it on public platforms, the alleged letter from the Department of Justice! It is shameful that people would engage in such action. It is shameful!

What the Deputy Director also said was that there were allegations made that the Prime Minister had been cleared of all the accusations in the emailgate matter, and this is what the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions said:

“While it true that after receipt of the information from the Department of Justice, the police...did send a report to the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Glen Hackett, it is not true that such report cleared Mr. Anand Ramlogan and Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar in respect of this investigation.”

That is what the Deputy Director is saying, that the Prime Minister came into this House, with other Members of the Government, and said that they were cleared and the Deputy Director is saying—I am just repeating what is said in this document.

Mr. Speaker: Your 10 minutes are up.

Mr. C. Imbert: Fifteen minutes.

Mr. Speaker: No, it is only 10 minutes. [*Crosstalk*] No, no. I will give him a minute.

Mr. C. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And since the Members opposite knew that the documents did not clear the Prime Minister, the suspension of the Leader of the Opposition is totally ultra vires, void and illegal [*Desk thumping*] and this country should be ashamed! They came into this Parliament and they told untruths, Mr. Speaker! And I demand the reinstatement of the Leader of the Opposition! [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: The honourable—

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, that is the biggest piece of hypocrisy this Parliament has ever heard in its life! [*Desk thumping*] He is demanding that we reinstate the Leader of the Opposition when they forced the Member for Chaguanas West to withdraw his Motion to rescind the Leader of the Opposition's suspension. [*Crosstalk*] They forced the Member for Chaguanas West—

Mr. Speaker: Please, please, please.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—to remove his Motion, which, if voted on, would rescind the suspension, but come today with a Motion on the DPP and asking to rescind the suspension. What a piece of hypocrisy! [*Desk thumping*] What a piece of—Mr. Speaker, I am flabbergasted, to use that word. I could not believe my ears! But you tell the Member for Chaguanas West, withdraw his Motion to rescind suspension and come today and say rescind—

Mr. Speaker, let me get quickly to this matter, the matter of the Deputy DPP. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, please.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, this vacuous, ill-fated and ill-advised Motion, the last Motion that the Member for Diego Martin North/East will face, and put—his last stance in this Parliament—implications of recent—

Mr. Speaker, I want to put on record the response of the Attorney-at-law Mr. Israel Khan to Miss Joan Honore-Paul, dated May 19, 2015, which is a response to her statement. He says:

Dear Miss Honore-Paul.

I act on behalf of my client—

Mr. Speaker, it would be too long to read in 10 minutes and I will just get to the point:

My client is also the subject of an investigation by the Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago in connection with those matters.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to tell her:

In your release you had publicly complained that certain correspondence from the United States Department of Justice—

My friend read that. He says:

It is passing strange that you would choose the forum of a public media release to register your concern. You will be aware that the responsible Minister under the Mutual Legal Assistance legislation is the Attorney General and one would have correctly assumed your concerns would have been properly and discreetly addressed to him by suitable correspondence, instead of the public remonstrating and urging those concerned who should obviously know better...

He says:

May I remind you, Miss Honore-Paul—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Please.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: May I remind you of the dicta of hon. Mr. Justice Bereaux, as he then was—

And he said in the case and so on:

In this regard the words, ‘subject to 72(2) of the Constitution’ placed on the Director a duty to keep the Attorney General informed of major and important matters.

Mr. Speaker, the Deputy DPP had a duty, if she was so concerned, to report that to the Attorney General—

Hon. Member: That is right. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—not to issue a judgment in public. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Speaker: Please, please.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Mr. Speaker, the lawyer continued:

It would appear that you have singled out my client—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Member for Diego Martin North/East, please!

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—that you have singled out my client, the Prime Minister, for public criticism. Furthermore, in your media release you took the opportunity to gratuitously update the public on certain matters. May I remind you that it is the Police Service of Trinidad and Tobago alone that has the responsibility for investigating allegations of criminal conduct, not the DPP. The constitutional powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions do not extend to investigating crimes. Your statements have been made outside of your constitutional remit, since to date no charges have been laid and there are no pending criminal proceedings. The public interest does not require you to issue any warnings about the interference with the public perception before the institution of criminal proceedings. Your sensitivity to public commentary about these alleged emails is indeed curious.

And he quotes at length from hon. Madame Justice Lucky, quoting Lord Chief Justice Lord Phillips in a case I cannot quote. That is too long. He continues:

Moreover, the Director of Public Prosecutions cannot instruct the police to lay any charges. He can only request and advise them. It follows therefore, that it is a matter for the police and the police alone to update the public on the investigations. [*Desk thumping*]

7.00 p.m.

It is not the matter for the DPP.

Likewise your office having no remit over the activities of the independent Integrity Commission, it is the sole purview of that body, if it sees fit, to inform the public of the progress of this investigation. It is a matter of grave concern that you have arrogated onto yourself the right to speak for an independent Commission established under the Constitution over which your office has no jurisdiction.

By your statements, you have trespassed on the constitutional and/or legal remit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the Integrity Commission, and under the thin guise of public interest have arrogated onto your good self the right to comment publicly on the investigations of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Additionally, my client is also concerned about your statement about the United States Department of Justice.

The Member for Diego Martin North/East raised that. How many more minutes, Sir?

Mr. Speaker: You have until 7.06 p.m.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Six good minutes. Mr. Speaker, six good minutes. And in reference to the Department of Justice, Mr. Khan says and I quote again:

If your complaint about treaty obligations has any bona fides, one would not expect the view of the United States Department of Justice to be publicly revealed.

Mr. Speaker, this is the DPP, acting, who says the United States Department of Justice being of the view that the application was supported by evidence which met the required level of probable cause, applied for and received a warrant in the United States of America. The Deputy DPP is stating in the public this. He says:

One would expect the view of the US Department of Justice would not be publicly revealed. Even if so, one would have expected the Central Authority to have made this fact public.

Madam—he says—you appear to be guilty of the very indiscretion that you have so strongly complained of by publishing that particular fact. More importantly, however, the impression that quite possibly would be left in the minds of the public by your statement is that there was, in the view of the US Department of Justice, enough evidence of culpability on the part of my client to apply for a warrant. That statement is a damning indictment on my client who is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty.

The wide and sensational publicity given to this statement is extremely prejudicial to my client and is reckless, and is irresponsible, and is an abuse of your constitutional office.

He says:

Furthermore, my client is similarly concerned with the following statement made by you, in which you said and I quote:

The investigation necessarily includes an examination of events outside of the four corners of the purported email correspondence.

Mr. Speaker, four corners of an email. [*Crosstalk*] He goes on:

Clearly, you have given life to these allegations outside of the alleged emails from whence they came and we have assumed that they may be true even before ascertaining the veracity of the source.

The alleged emails.

Emailgate Allegations
[HON. DR. R. MOONILAL]

Friday, May 22, 2015

Mr. Speaker, look at what is happening. The former Deputy Chairman of the Integrity Commission is now speaking about what? Form and substance. Speaking about form and substance. Sen. Al-Rawi speaking about form and substance, Keith Rowley speaking about form and substance, the Deputy DPP talking about outside of the four corners of the email.

This is the second press release issued by your good self in this matter.

And he quotes an issue raised when the police raised the matter.

In that press release you had to say, at that time, there was no suggestion by your examination of events outside the four corners—et cetera, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, he says and I quote:

It is simply confounding and irrational to say the least to investigate allegations contained in an unauthenticated series of documents in order to verify and authenticate the very said documents.

They are trying to say now, in layman language, the email is fake, but let us see if the substance is true. If the emails themselves are fake, you cannot base substance on a fake document. [*Desk thumping*] You cannot. He ends by saying:

It is a fair-minded observer would come to the inescapable conclusion that you appear to be biased against my client, and that you have taken into account irrelevant political and other considerations when you decided to release your statement.

In the circumstances, I demand that you forthwith recuse yourself from any involvement in this investigation and any prosecution arising out of any investigation.

Mr. Speaker, the Deputy DPP in this matter must recuse herself from any participation in this matter. [*Desk thumping*] The lawyer also says that an appropriate complaint will be sent to the Judicial and Legal Service Commission on this matter. One minute again, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I want to put on record this [*Member waves a document*] for the Parliament, because the Member for Diego Martin North/East based his Motion on public statements made by the DPP and the impact on the status of the emailgate probe. But how do you know the status of the emailgate probe? You do not know that.

Mr. Imbert: Ventour say so.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: You are a Member of Parliament, you do not know that.

Mr. Imbert: Ventour say it—[*Interruption*]

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: Ventour told you that privately?

Mr. Imbert: No.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: No, but he is saying now Ventour told him something. So, Mr. Speaker, I do not know if Ventour told him privately that. So I want to connect the dots and move on.

Mr. Imbert: Time up.

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: I want to move and connect the dots. One minute left. I want to say in closing and in wrapping up that this may be more diabolical than we think if the Deputy DPP is stepping out of her bounds, and I want to echo the words of the Attorney General and to tell her that she must bat in her crease.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: Before putting the question, I have received communication from the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, MP, Member for Siparia, who has asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the Member seeks is granted.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 7.07 p.m.