

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, July 27, 1990.*

The House met at 1.43 p.m.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the hon. Member for Port-of-Spain East (Mr. Morris Marshall) has been excused from today's sitting.

**TESORO DOCUMENTS**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, at the last sitting of the House of Representatives on July 25, 1990, the hon. Member for Port-of-Spain East stated in his contribution:

" . . . I have in my possession one of the documents that was supposed to have been laid in this House that deals extensively with the question of the Tesoro matter and that it is not at this time in the library and I think that this Parliament deserves an explanation."

When documents are in the custody of the Parliament, it is the responsibility of the staff of Parliament to account for their safety. Since they do not have an audience in this House, I think it is my responsibility to respond to the request for an explanation made by the hon. Member for Port-of-Spain East.

By letter dated June 7, 1989, Dr. Barry Auguste, Permanent Secretary, directed a request to the Clerk of the House for certain documents.

By letters dated June 16 and June 28, 1989, the librarian loaned Dr. Barry Auguste two sets of documents, and the titles of these documents were listed in those two letters.

When it was brought to my attention on July 17, 1990 that the documents were loaned and not yet returned to the library, I wrote to hon. Joseph Toney, the then Acting Minister of Justice and National Security, requesting the return of the documents as early as possible.

On July 19, 1990 all the documents referred to in the letters of June 16 and 28, 1989, except one, were returned and signed for by the Acting Clerk of the House.

The outstanding document entitled, "Summary of Real Estate Properties" was received some two days later from the Ministry of Justice and National Security.

*Tesoro Documents*  
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I should like to state most emphatically and categorically that from information received from the Acting Clerk of the House and other members of staff all—and I repeat—all the documents that were loaned to Dr. Barry Auguste have been returned and none is missing.

If any Member wishes to have copies of the correspondence to which I have referred in this statement he is most welcomed.

I must draw to the attention of hon. Members concerning this very matter, an article appearing in today's *Express* newspaper on page 5 which states that:

"Opposition MP Morris Marshall told members of the House of Representatives on Wednesday night he knew for sure documents on the Tesoro bribery issue were still missing."

I have looked at the *Hansard* report with respect to the contribution of the Member for Port-of-Spain East and nowhere in his contribution did he say such a thing.

While all of this is happening, I want to indicate to hon. Members that the staff of the Parliament is experiencing great distress and the Parliament is being scandalized, to say the least, with respect to the security of documents.

I invite any Member to inspect the documents and the correspondence in the custody of the Parliament. I do hope that what I have said will put the matter to rest.

Moreover, I hope that the *Express* newspaper will avail itself of a copy of the *Hansard* report with respect to the contribution made by the Member for Port-of-Spain East and make the necessary correction. Thank you very much.

#### PAPER LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts of the Deposit Insurance Corporation for the year ended December 31, 1989. [*Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Joseph Toney)*]

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

**1.50 p.m.**

#### WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

#### Canadian Farm Labour Project

**48. Mr. Basdeo Panday** (*Couva North*) asked the Minister of Labour, Employment and Manpower Resources:

Would the hon. Minister state the names and addresses of the persons selected for the Canadian Farm Labour Project for the years 1987, 1988 and 1989?

[*Vide end of sitting for written answer.*]

**DEPOSITIONS  
(TESORO MATTER)**

**Mr. Patrick Manning** (*San Fernando East*): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday last, the hon. Minister of Labour, Employment and Manpower Resources, hon. Albert Richards, speaking in Parliament, quoted me from my deposition to the court in respect of the Tesoro hearing as having said:

"We in the PNM have nothing to hide. There were former members of the PNM who were involved in improper practices."

I have now been able to check the court records and the records show that what I said was:

"Incidentally, I think I should also make it quite clear to you, and to those present, that we in the PNM have nothing to hide. If there were former members of a PNM government who were involved in improper practices, all we . . ."

And this should be "say"

"say is let the law take its . . ."

It should be "course".

"course, investigate them, take them to the courts, if they are guilty, then the Party will act appropriately."

**The Minister of Labour, Employment and Manpower Resources (Dr. The Hon. Albert Richards)**: Mr. Speaker, the document that I have before me is the deposition of Patrick Augustus Mervyn Manning taken by defendant, Tesoro Petroleum Corporation, pursuant to the Order of the court, *etc.* It is not indicated on this document that it is a draft and there is no *errata* sheet attached to it. On page 186, line 17, states:

"Incidentally, I think I should also make it quite clear to you, to those present, that we in the PNM have nothing to hide. There were former members of PNM who were involved in improper practices."

During my contribution to the debate last Wednesday, I quoted from several depositions, including this one, which were not laid before this honourable House. On Wednesday evening, TTT chose to present only that part of my contribution in which I was reading a number of names from Mr. Mahabir's deposition. One of the individuals whose name was mentioned, telephoned me expressing his concern. Since he was never a member of the PNM Cabinet, in retrospect it might have been preferable to have glossed over his name. He is a gentleman who has served his country well over a long period of time in many different capacities and in my

*Depositions (Tesoro Matter)*  
[HON. A. RICHARDS]

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personal dealing with him, I have always found him to be a gracious and amicable gentleman.

Today's *Guardian* has an article "Martineau—I had no such discussions" in which Mr. Martineau stated:

"I wish to deny most emphatically that I was ever a party to any such discussions."

Today's *Express* "Richards: Manning shared in Tesoro Pay-offs".

Let me reiterate as I stated last Wednesday, that I was merely quoting from Mr. Mahabir's deposition which he gave on oath. I want this honourable House to know that what I stated then with respect to Mr. Manning applies to all whose names were mentioned. I therefore emphasize that what I read in Mr. Mahabir's deposition was hearsay and little, if any, credence should be attached to it.

As I stated on that occasion, a person's reputation is a very fragile thing and can be tarnished quite easily by associated guilt. Sometimes the innocent are lumped in with the guilty. Even though my quotations from the Mahabir deposition were accurate, I would like to take this opportunity to apologize to any innocent person who may have been affected adversely by, or may feel uncomfortable, as a result of my having read the deposition. I feel compelled to make the statement because despite the benefits derived from the national catharsis, it would be most regrettable if any innocent person is unjustly affected. We, on this side, believe in fair play.

Thank you.

#### **MECHANICAL RECORDING OF COURT PROCEEDINGS BILL**

Bill to provide for the mechanical recording of court proceedings and for matters incidental thereto, [*The Attorney General*]; read the first time.

#### **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Joseph Toney):** Mr. Speaker, on the last occasion we sat, last Wednesday, I intimated to the House at the adjournment that through his generosity, the hon. Member for St. Augustine has kindly consented to waive debate on the motion standing in his name on page 2 of the Order Paper, from today to the next Private Members' day, to allow us to continue debate on the motion standing in the Prime Minister's name on pages 4 and 5 of the Order Paper. We had agreed that we would continue with this motion and I think I should so inform hon. Members at this stage.

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GOVERNMENT  
(LAWSUITS re CORRUPT PRACTICES)**

[THIRD DAY]

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on motion [July 23, 1990]:*

*Question again proposed.*

**The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Margaret Hector):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the motion moved by the hon. Prime Minister because I realize that regardless of how many red herrings have been raised in this honourable House, the issue of corruption in our society is something which we have to deal with and which we cannot forgive and continue to place under the carpet.

**2.00 p.m.**

I have heard issues raised here of the cost we have incurred, the amount of money returned. I have sat here while men have tried to slander and tear down other people, but the issue today is that a society is an elongated shadow of its leaders. I ask today, where have all our heroes gone?

It was a very painful experience for me, as I sat and heard proof and evidence that men in this society whom I, as a young person, looked up to and respected, my heroes, had clay feet. No amount of posturing by anybody here can take away from the fact that in the eyes of the international community our sovereignty was known to have been easily bought and sold for the proverbial thirty pieces of silver.

I have sat in this House and heard people take issue with us and our dealings in the area of the national sovereignty of our country in respect of the Venezuelan settlement. But I ask, who has paid most disrespect to the sovereign rights of our nation on the issue that when men who have money can know the innermost secrets of our Cabinet and can decide and plan how they can manipulate and manoeuvre our leaders? Who is selling out the sovereignty of Trinidad and Tobago? Who has frittered away the national patrimony and who is it that has taken the effort to restore some sense of dignity and self-worth to us as a nation, in the light of the international community?

I wondered, could the sovereignty and safety of my country be in the hands of men who would buy and sell and barter with it just to line their own pockets? It has been a long time that there have been rumblings, and it hurts me when people who once said, "get to the bottom of the issue", have come here to this Parliament and in their true opportunistic, political style, have tried to distance themselves from the decision to get to the root of the matter.

This matter is just the top of a cancer that has eaten away at the society of Trinidad and Tobago. We often question the moral standing of our young people. But when our leaders, our heroes have fallen, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, where are the heroes for my young people to look up to in this nation? We must not allow people to come to this House and take issue on how much money we got. We have been charged in this House as being a dollars and cents Government because we try to balance the books and try to run the country as an effective business should be run. But the issue at stake is a moral issue and you cannot cover it in terms of dollars and cents.

The fact is that we have been led up a garden path by people who espouse that they are the representatives of the people; people who were given the responsibility to be the guardian of our Constitution. We have come today to the sad conclusion that we have been duped. Where do we go from here? We will have to give an answer to the children of this nation. If we as a Government did not uplift the commitment that we gave in our manifesto, where would our credibility be? Because it is well known in international circles; it is an established fact, that it is very hard to prove charges of corruption in a court because of the cunning of the people who themselves are involved in corruption.

It was very easy for everybody to say, "if you have proof, carry me to court, when they know full well that we have passed the statute limitation. Secondly they know that unless thieves fall out, they rarely speak against themselves. They know that, and they keep saying, "go to court", when they know that their tracks have been well-covered. So they can put us in a corner and dance and pander. But as I said, I rise to bring us back to the issue. It is not how much money we got; it is none of the other red herrings about parliamentary privileges. Does parliamentary privilege supersede the sovereign right of a nation and a country to be protected?

Those are not the issues at stake. The issue is that we came into a Government and the society was completely demoralized by a lack of moral and spiritual values in some of our previous leaders. When we said it, people said that we had no credibility to say it. We have come to this honourable House to take note of the fact that there was something not right in the business of the country.

We have come to say that our national patrimony was frittered away to international people because they were able to pay the right person. That, in any language, is a disgrace and a stain on our nation. Corruption, it seems, has been a way of life for many people in this country for quite a while.

At this point I must pay tribute to our sister Gene Miles, because she spoke out against corruption in the gas station racket and she paid the ultimate price that any citizen can pay.

I was thoroughly pleased and satisfied when the hon. Prime Minister decided, along with the Cabinet, that a monument would be put up. The greatest monument that we as a people can have in this country is that we impress in our hearts to preserve our democracy, because the price of democracy is eternal vigilance. I urge us in this honourable House to realize that we are called to serve our country without fear or favour and that we have come to this honourable place to live as honourable people, and our commitment to country, nation and sovereignty, must always be the guiding light that guides us in any of the decisions or the activities that we take.

This evening I must support the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro and others who today may be castigated by some, but when history is written, they will have their rightful place in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, as people who sought to help us walk with our heads high in the national community. I say, cheers to us, because we, as a small Third World nation, have taken on an international corporation and we have come out with dignity and our heads held high. I think we have blazed a trail so that other nations will be able to follow. Let this be a warning that no Government of Trinidad, either the one before, the one now or any to come, will ever be allowed to fritter away our sovereign rights and national patrimony and walk away, cover their trails and nothing be done.

Sir, it is with regret that we have had to stay so long to get to the bottom of it, but my joy and pleasure is that I am part of a Government that has said it will go through to the end and we have done it. The issue is a moral one. Our society needs leaders whose feet are not made of clay. I thank you.

**2.10 p.m.**

**The Minister of Youth, Sport, Culture and Creative Arts (Hon. Jennifer Johnson):** Mr. Speaker, in my contribution this afternoon I share with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Justice and National Security, a sense of distress with respect to some of the reactions of some of the opinion-makers following Government's announcement of the Tesoro settlement a few weeks ago. Indeed, I was deeply saddened by the commentaries, particularly those in our daily newspapers, because we have come to expect anything from our weeklies, but certainly not our daily newspapers.

When I read some of those commentaries I wondered if we as a nation had fallen into an abyss, fallen so deeply into such moral decay and I asked myself: could we ever lift ourselves out of the degradation which the 30 years of PNM rule had brought upon us? Mr. Speaker, I question whether we could do that. As I said, like my friend and colleague, I wondered.

*Lawsuits re Corrupt Practices*  
[HON. J. JOHNSON]

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At one point, I was convinced that we, as a nation, were lost to integrity, truth and morality. As it turns out, all was not lost, for there was at least one commentator who clearly showed that notwithstanding the attempts by some people to pillory the NAR for doing what every decent citizen had demanded we do, he understood what the real issue was. I should like to read it into the records from the *Sunday Express* July 22, 1990, entitled: "It is about bribery and corruption" and it was written by David Renwick.

"In the last week or so, I have watched with a kind of awed, though horrified, fascination the attempts by a variety of people..."

And I stress "variety":

"...for a variety of reasons to shift the focus of the O'Halloran bribery case away from the Tesoro Petroleum Corporation, where it rightfully belongs, on to the alleged ineptitude of the NAR Government in the handling of the settlement.

Tesoro sympathisers, opposition politicians, commentators and others have all come down on the Government's head like a tonne of bricks, ridiculing the settlement of US \$2.8 million on the Tesoro 'apology' as derisive and implying strongly, or saying outright that Selwyn Richardson and the NAR were taken to the cleaners.

Mr. Manning, the Opposition leader has even filed a 'motion of censure' against the Minister of Justice and National Security for telling the Parliament that Trinidad and Tobago had scored something akin to a 'great victory' in the matter.

Judging by this hostile reaction, an observer newly arrived from Mars might be forgiven for thinking that it was Mr. Richardson and the NAR Government who were on trial, and Mr. Richardson and the NAR Government who were accused of bribery and corruption."

Mr. Speaker, it is important because these people are opinion makers; people listen when they talk and opinions are formed. The PNM newspaper, *Trinidad Guardian* July 22, 1980 refers:

"The facts of the sordid affair . . . Richardson acquiesced to an outrageous out-of-court settlement in his Government's lawsuit with Tesoro Corporation... The Minister must resign."

Mind you, Mr. Speaker, the sordid affair, the PNM, particularly the Member for Port-of-Spain East and his colleague, the Member for San Fernando East are talking about is not the Tesoro bribery corruption matter, but the settlement. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine such a lack of sense of morality?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition comes into this House and declares, and I quote:

"The PNM has stood behind the Government in the fight against corruption and supported any legitimate action designed to root out corruption. . . "

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Perhaps the most scathing commentator has been Colm Imbert in the *Trinidad Guardian* of July 20, 1990:

"Government's agreement with Tesoro to destroy all documents in the case is beyond my comprehension."

He uses words like: "The suppression of the information."

Perhaps, Mr. Legall, the former Chairman of Tesoro—July 17:

"Like so many others I am still looking forward to reading the apology which Minister Richardson claimed Tesoro had undertaken to make to the Government."

I shall now quote from an article by Ken Ramchand of July 16:

"If as Richardson implies we accepted an out-of-court settlement from a position of strength, how come the payment so small . . ."

I now quote from an article by Mr. Padmore in the *Trinidad Guardian* of July 22, 1990. The entire article has scathing remarks attacking the Minister of Justice and National Security. He ends by saying:

"Can the Prime Minister now properly make any really serious statement on this issue in view of its Government's commitment to destroy all documents?"

Finally and perhaps the worst—perhaps this quotation takes the cake and places its author in a role which I strongly urge citizens never to emulate, but to eschew. Legall, former Chairman of Trintoc in the *Express* of July 22, 1990:

"Richardson did not level with the country or with Parliament. We have lost more than we have gained."

Mr. Speaker, that was his conclusion. Note the conclusion: "We have lost more than we have gained."

If even the brand of the politics practised by those opposite does not permit them to recognize or to give credit where credit is due, surely, the Member for San Fernando East and the Member for Couva South should acknowledge and take satisfaction in what has been achieved on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. At least, acknowledge what the NAR has done against all odds.

The major disadvantages being alluded to here is the length of time that has elapsed and the extremely high cost of litigation, particularly for a nation whose financial resources, as we all know, have been depleted by the waste and mismanagement of the previous administration.

Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that the hon. Members opposite have responded in the way they have. The current view hon. Members opposite have been continuously purporting is well known; and this view outside and inside of this Parliament is that corruption is not an issue—that is what they have been telling the people. There could be nothing more tragic than the politicians or a society holding the view that corruption is not an issue.

**2.20 p.m.**

Sadly the view has found its way into our media and is being fed to the population through the commentaries, some of which I read earlier. The Ramchands, the Legalls, the Padmores, the Imberts, the Marshalls and the Mannings are saying it is not the corruption of the nation's highest officials of the former Government that matters and which is the issue of paramount importance. What is important to them? What they are telling the people, is that the Minister of Justice and National Security handled the matter badly.

What is important to Ramchand is that the payment is too small. What is important to the PNM, the Member for San Fernando East and his newspaper is that Richardson must resign. Padmore's concern is: Can Robinson make a serious statement in view of the Government's statement to destroy documents? Still, what is important to Legall is that he is looking forward to receiving Tesoro's apology. Worse than that. What he is telling the people is that we have lost more than we have gained.

A lot has been said about the settlement. It is my view and I have said it before, and I would say it again, my humble view on the entire matter of monetary gain or loss is that if the nation had not gained one penny after the computing of the settlement and cost of litigation, it would have been worth every effort and the people of this country; would have been vindicated. It would change the course of history. The settlement has changed the course of history.

I say on behalf of my colleagues on this side, so long as this Government is in office, corruption will always be an issue because corruption destroys the leadership. Look at the hon. Leader of the Opposition, Patrick Manning. It destroys the public service; it destroys the people, it destroys the very fabric of a society and makes us less civilized. It renders the leadership ineffective, useless and self-serving. We have seen in the documents laid on the table by the hon. Prime Minister some of that uselessness and self-serving attitudes. Your leadership will

then sell your country. This is what corruption does. It will sell your country for a trip abroad, a holiday in Europe, a Mercedes Benz and even a blonde woman. That is what corruption does.

Corruption destroys the public servant on whom the public depends for the simplest of service. Some of the manifestations and the protestations that we see today, the constant marching around this very building is rooted in corruption; the corrupt practices which went unabated and unattended for many years by the regime of the Member for San Fernando East and the Member for Port-of-Spain East. Corruption destroys a people. When the Leader of the Opposition can come to this House and seek to blame and vilify the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro for doing what we had faithfully promised the electorate to do as a party then I wonder if the nation can still be rescued. I wonder if we have not lost the battle. I do not know and only time will tell.

My honourable friend from Couva South, who was part of the Government when we decided to take these proceedings, comes to this House and attacks the Government and says that we are only doing that because of elections. Was it elections in 1987?

**Mr. Ramnath:** Mr. Speaker, would the Minister indicate when the decision was taken to file this action in the district court of the United States? What was the date of that decision of Cabinet?

**Mrs. Johnson:** The decision to take this matter was a policy decision taken since the beginning of this Government. It does not matter if it was January, 1987.

**Mr. Ramnath:** On a point of order. The Minister is perpetrating a falsehood. She indicated that the decision was taken when I was a member of the Cabinet. For the benefit of the records of this House, I am trying to determine when Cabinet took that decision.

**Mrs. Johnson:** I insist that the hon. Member for Couva South was part of this Government when the decision was taken.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Mr. Speaker, the Member is misinforming the House. When that decision was taken, I was not a Member of the Cabinet.

**Mrs. Johnson:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition and Member for San Fernando East, when he had enough of the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro, also sought to bring the Prime Minister into this matter by saying what the Prime Minister did when he was in the party or what he had done before. I think it is important to read the Prime Minister's letter of resignation from the PNM. He says in his *Caribbean Man*, Selected Speeches from a Political career, 1960 to 1986:

"Resignation from the PNM: Statement to the General Council, Sunday, September 20, 1970:

For some time now I have been profoundly concerned by:

- (a) the lack of values and of a sense of direction in the public life of the country;
- (b) the vast accumulation of personal power by the Prime Minister and political leader of the party;
- (c) the abuse of that power:
  - (i) as a shield to protect political friends guilty of the gravest abuses;
  - (ii) as a refuge for those who victimize persons seeking to remedy abuses;
  - (iii) as a means of suborning party members or otherwise dominating or stultifying the party;"

This is the Prime Minister's letter of resignation.

"These factors have resulted in the failure of the party to submit to disciplinary procedures:

Ministers close to the Prime Minister who have been guilty of scandalous improprieties;

party members close to the political leader who have been involved in corrupt practices;

sustained vilification of party members like myself; and others who have sought to expose and to remedy abuses."

The point I am making is that the hon. Prime Minister long ago denounced them and denounced them specifically. He was not vague in his denunciation. He denounced them because of the corruption as a party since 1970, that they were involved in.

I go back to the point where today we see nurses protesting. No drugs, no juice, no this, no that. Corruption destroys. Where are the supplies and equipment purchased by the state for the comfort and the well-being of the sick and suffering? Where is the hospital management? Where are the supervisors? Where are the protectors? Corruption destroys.

**2.30 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I sympathize with my colleague the Minister of Health; they say "kill him", "crucify him". Corruption destroys, it permeates from the highest to the lowest and indeed the Prime Minister in this very book,  
*Caribbean Man* talks about

some of the results of corruption. I do not think I would read it into the records because the hon. Member for Point Fortin already did so. If it is one thing I am not prepared to forgive the PNM for, and the country must not forgive them for, is the unbridled corruption they encouraged and participated in in this society. Others say forgive and forget, but it has done too much to the society and it has brought us to where we are today. I urge the nation not to accept their apology, if even they come to make an apology now. What the country did on December 16, 1986, was by no mistake that they lost everything, he is there by the grace of good people on this side. It is not by any mistake that they were totally wiped out because the people of this country are not foolish and if the hon. Member for San Fernando East, the Leader of the Opposition, is of the view that people have forgotten and they have escaped, no such thing.

While we have received a settlement in excess of legal fees and the bribes received by the former high officials of the PNM, we will never know how much has been diverted from the service of the people to corrupt politicians. There is no way of quantifying it—the critical financial problems facing us, youth unemployment, are direct results of the corruption and the frittering away of our resources. The socially dispossessed people you see on the street, who knows? Perhaps it is because of their corrupt practices. The roads that need resurfacing—my hon. friend from Naparima knows about bad roads—that is also the reason. Can we quantify it? The health and social services which are now in a deplorable state, we admit, the lack of recreation and sporting facilities, these are some of the problems that have been brought about. Can we quantify what they have done to this society?

Was the Tesoro/Petroleum Company matter the only matter in which corruption was found? Was Lockheed the only aircraft company? Was Sam P. Wallace the only construction company? What about the public transport buses? The multimillion dollar generator for T&TEC, were all these part of the corruption? How do we quantify? The trail of the Minister of Justice and National Security took him from New York to London, the Netherlands/Antilles, Toronto, Switzerland. Will it now take us further? Would the trail of the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro now take us to North Carolina, Atlanta or back to New York? It is the tip of the iceberg and I say like the Prime Minister, it shall continue. So those persons who are daring us to put them in court and to go outside and talk, we want to let them know that the investigations continue.

Before I close, I want to raise one other important matter. The entire contributions of the Member for Couva North and of the Member for Port-of-Spain East were based on the Prime Minister using the privilege of Parliament to call names. One of the scathing criticisms in all of these newspapers that I read—and these people who are writing are respected people in the community—was that

the documents will be destroyed and what the public wanted to know for 20 years they would not know; everywhere you read that. How is the public going to know? It is this Parliament. This is what the Parliament is for and the people demand to know and there is no other place that they should know than right here in this Parliament. Therefore, we make no apology whatsoever for bringing to this House and laying these papers.

I said earlier that I was not sure whether this country would be able to rise above—

**Mr. Manning:** Football massive.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Football massive was a blessing to the people of this country and you will find out. What are you trying to say?

I said sometime earlier in my contribution that I wondered whether the people of this country were not lost, whether things had not gone to such a sad and sorry state that we would never be able to rise above the corruption and the immorality. I think that bringing this matter to the Parliament and giving this country our commitment, not only to proceed on matters that are outstanding, would provide an impetus for our young people, for those people in our society who stand tall and who are people of integrity to continue to hope for the best in this country. As I said, I do not know, but I sincerely hope that the revelations and the bringing to a head of this matter which has dogged us for the last 20 years would allow this country to be purged and to be washed. I hope also that those persons who were part of the destruction of our society over the many years would somehow be made to pay. I do not know how they could be made to pay but certainly I do not feel that they should be forgiven and we should all turn our backs on it. Somehow they must be made to pay for the wrongs they have done to this society.

Mr. Speaker, I support the motion and we in this Government emphasize that as long as we are on this side corruption will always be an issue and we will always be vigilant. We would not tolerate any group of persons who would want to destroy the integrity of this Government and thereby the integrity of this country.

Thank you.

**2.40 p.m.**

**The Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs and International Trade (Hon. Eden Shand):** Mr. Speaker, it was with a heavy heart that I harkened to this motion and took note of the proceedings in the matter of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago versus the Tesoro Petroleum Corporation and others. It was with a heavy heart I took note of a most distressing and scandalous sell-out of the patrimony of my country to foreign interests.

**Mr. Sudama:** Robinson is doing that every day.

**Mr. Shand:** We, of the National Alliance for Reconstruction, have been accused—and foolishly accused—of being a big business party, selling out to big business, and names like Neal and Massy have been called.

**Mr. Manning:** True or false.

**Mr. Shand:** Here we are witnessing not mere sell-out to big business but sell-out to big foreign American business.

**Mr. Sudama:** Venezuelans are all right.

**Mr. Shand:** What is even more distressing is the level of persons that were involved in the salesmanship—one former head of state; two former prime ministers; two former cabinet ministers; one former chairman of a ruling political party; one former Chairman of the state enterprise that was the subject of these corrupt dealings; a not so magnificent seven.

The heaviness that I feel in my heart and the shame that I experienced that fateful Monday when we initiated this debate was a shame not only of a political party at its highest levels indulging in that kind of behaviour, it was the shame of the betrayal of the leadership of my country regardless of what party they belong to, for in our dealings with the outside world it is my firm conviction that we should close ranks. In our dealings with the outside world, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is the dealing entity, and I do not recognize a PNM Government at that stage or a NAR Government. My Government let me down and they sold out, and that was the heaviness of the shame.

Perhaps, the biggest weight was attached to the name that I respected since I was a little boy in short pants. I refer to the "Father of our Nation", Dr. Eric Eustace Williams whose name has been called in these matters. I state categorically that I refuse to believe that Dr. Eric Williams was a thief. He may have been involved in some sort of cover-up activity, but I refuse to believe that the Father of our Nation was a thief.

I prefer to believe a version given to me by a PNM insider, that Dr. Williams was a scholarly man, a man of books and letter, a man of high ideas who did not have time for the shenanigans of material acquisition. I prefer to believe the version of this insider which says that those around him were the culprits. They stole for themselves and they stole for him without his permission. I really believe that.

Every one knows that John O'Halloran was subtitled, "The Bag Man". He was the collector of moneys of ill-gotten gains which he divvied up not for the party but for members of the party, and if he did divvy up a share for Eric Williams,

to believe that it was without his knowledge, for in his declaration of assets sometime in the 1970s there was no sign of wealth in that declaration. As a matter of fact, I was astonished to find that poor little me possessed more than Dr. Eric Williams, and it is a pity that at the time of declaration he did not clear himself once and for all of all suspicion by having other close members of his family declare at the same time.

**Mr. Hem Lee:** Precisely.

**Mr. Shand:** In this PNM insider version of O'Halloran, "the bag man", there is some interesting reading from a book entitled, "*Trinidad and Tobago—The Independence Experience 1962—1987*", edited by Professor Selwyn Ryan. In the article that bears the authorship of Professor Selwyn Ryan, entitled "Eric Williams, The PNM and Independence", on page 148 this is what he has to say about the O'Halloran phenomenon as the bag man:

"So too is Dr. Williams who must have known about O'Halloran's indiscretions."

As I said, I do not want to believe that he did—

"Whether he assumed that O'Halloran's fund-raising efforts were on behalf of the party or whether he or others were beneficiaries is an issue that people are still discussing. I have firm views on the matter, and even though one is encouraged to be frank during this Retrospective, one hesitates to libel the dead."

It is interesting that in this document which was laid in the House earlier but at our disposal only today, when one reads the script; when one reads about our exemplars being referred to in the most familiar terms by the most vulgar people; when one reads about Ellis and Boysie and Errol doing this and that—doing all the work it seems—no mention of Johnny O'Halloran doing anything at all except arranging for the collection of a \$2 million bribe; having read all of that I wondered whether these gentlemen who did all the work allowed Johnny to keep all the money.

One had to take note in these proceedings of the prevailing culture of corruption that permeated the body politic in that era, and this debate is about that. I will not be distracted by the shenanigans of the Leader of the Opposition and reduce this debate about government to government ineptitude. I am not concerned he said. We shall talk about corruption whether you like it or not.

**2.50 p.m.**

Who else can we quote on this pervasive corruption of the era? Prof. Ryan, a very respected gentleman in our society, writes about it very well.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Ask Suruj about Ryan.

**Mr. Shand:** Pardon. This is what Prof. Ryan had to say about corruption in that era. He was putting it in the mould of the PNM pledge for morality in public affairs. I quote:

"The third significant pledge made by the PNM was to establish a regime of morality and accountability in public affairs. On this score, the party failed unequivocally. The winds of corruption which began to blow within the PNM's first term, blew fiercely in the seventies and eighties, and a regime which began by promising to institute a republic of virtue ended its reign presiding over an orgy of corruption."

When we hear the high officers of the PNM affirm and re-affirm that they stand for morality in public affairs and that has always been the position of the PNM, we must look upon these utterers as hypocrites.

The Member for San Fernando East does it all the time. He did it during the course of this debate. The Member for Port-of-Spain East echoed him—"let me categorically state that the PNM stands for morality in public affairs and anti-corruption." Saying one thing and doing another. It was the Member for Point Fortin who drew to the attention of this honourable House the very ironical situation where during the gas station racket enquiry when the PNM made as if they were interested in rooting out corruption, that very year they were consummating this very dirty deal—doing one thing and saying another.

**Mr. Ramnath:** What year was that?

**Mr. Shand:** You used to be a Minister of Energy. You ought to know the history of the formation of the Tesoro Corporation. It was in 1969.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Would the Minister indicate what year the gas station racket took place?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it a point of order?

**Mr. Ramnath:** No, I thought he had given way.

**Mr. Shand:** No, I am not giving way.

**Mr. Ramnath:** In that case Sir, I will sit.

**Mr. Shand:** Mr. Speaker, I want to let this House know, my own personal testimony of corruption of the era. Prof. Ryan eloquently stated—tropical storm in the 70s became a hurricane of orgy, a hurricane of corruption—that is what he was saying by the time they demitted office.

In 1973/1974, PNM was in its heyday; oil prices turned at the end of 1973; petro-dollars flowed; money was no problem; temptation for corruption never was greater. In that year, 1973/1974, I was assigned as a public servant to the Office of the Prime Minister. I occupied an office in what used to be called "the stables", where the office of the Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister was located. In one of those offices in "the stables", the Member for San Fernando East—I used to see him chilling out there—I think he was a Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister at the time. I was on an assignment which had to do with the formation of what is now called Tanteak, but that is another story. I do remember the Member for San Fernando East as a Parliamentary Secretary and a political nonentity, very much what he is today as a matter of fact. I remember one day a senior public servant in the back there who saw me in close proximity to the Member for San Fernando East and who thought I was getting close to the party—that person who cared very much for me, pulled me aside and said: "Young man, you have just come back. Let me give you some advice. If you want to survive in Trinidad and Tobago, do not let Eric Williams fall in love with you for he once loved several."

I kept my distance and I survived, but from the distance I observed a lot at Whitehall. I observed more than the Parliamentary Secretary in the back room. I saw the comings and goings of the Cabinet; I witnessed the dictatorship of Eric Williams—not a damn dog bark; when I say cometh, he cometh; when I say goeth, he goeth. I witnessed cabinet members allowing themselves to relax only when Boysie acted as Prime Minister. Things were free and easy then. I remember it was Boysie in his capacity as Acting Prime Minister who had a lot to do with this deal. There was a stench of corruption emanating from the cabinet room of the era, and I am talking about 1973/1974. The Member for Tobago East had long got a whiff and had walked away from that stench and out into the rain.

I will share a little more with you about my personal experience of this corruption. As a result of certain activities by certain Ministers I found myself no longer occupying the back room in "the stables". For a brief period in my life, I drove a taxi, one of these taxis that service hotels. This particular hotel used the services of the Hilton Hotel. They did not have their own and I had an arrangement. At that time, it was very customary for me to be called to take foreigners to the airport, to meetings—foreign businessmen. I sat in the front of my taxi and had a front seat view of what foreigners thought of us, because I was there, sitting down, driving a taxi looking black and stupid, and they spoke. You will be shocked to know how these people spoke about Trinidad and Tobago. "It was suck eye, easy pickings" in all kinds of strange accents. It was really disgraceful, because I could not turn around and say, "well, all of us are not like that. That is the PNM doing that. No, this is my country".

**3.00 p.m.**

Another blow was struck, when in further pursuit of a living which I was trying to make, despite the efforts of the PNM against me, I found myself in New York, East 57th Street, I think it was. I went to purchase materials for a little business that I was setting up. Honest work. I work with my hands, and I went to buy some type. In the old days they used to use lead type. When I announced that I was from Trinidad, the caucasian American gentleman who was selling me the material, said, "Trinidad? Gee whiz, I know all about your country. I asked how and he said, "well, you know, I made a killing". I said, "what do you mean?" He said, "I was a shareholder of Tesoro Petroleum Corporation. Do you know, because of that company's investment in Trinidad, I made a hell of a lot of money on the stock exchange?"

I decided to do some research and I am going to share the results of that research with this House and with the nation. What was the impact of little Trinidad and Tobago on the profit-making on Wall Street? As a prelude to sharing this information with you, I would like to just read a sentence from the sworn deposition of Mr. John Rahr, which was made available to us today, where he was referring and advising the Tesoro people in San Antonio to pay the \$2 million bribe to Johnny. I quote from his testimony:

"I advised Detwiler..."

who was one of the people named in the action—

"...that in my view this would be a very good deal for Tesoro and that the \$2 million was a trifling amount in relation to the long term benefits to a small company like Tesoro."

He was a very astute financial analyst, because in 1968 he was able to calculate that a \$2 million bribe was going to bring enormous returns to the Tesoro Petroleum Corporation of San Antonio, Texas, a small unknown company which was formed only in 1964, four years prior to these shady negotiations.

In my research I got hold of the consolidated financial statements of the Tesoro Petroleum Corporation for the years 1967 to 1974. In 1968, the year prior to the acquisition of 49.9 per cent, of the assets of British Petroleum in this corporation called the Trinidad Tesoro Petroleum Company Limited, the gross income for the Tesoro Corporation was \$24.6 million. One year later, in 1969 it almost tripled to \$70.6 million—not because they did anything fantastic in the United States, but simply because they got a good corrupt deal in the Trinidad Tesoro Petroleum Corporation Limited.

Between 1968 and 1974, the income not only tripled, it multiplied itself 21 times. Whereas in 1968, prior to engaging in the Trinidad Tesoro Company, they had \$24.6 million income, in 1974, that figure was \$534.9 million. No wonder John Rahr used to be so highly paid. He could see; a great financial analyst. This is how the company used to write to their shareholders at that time, talking about their deal. This is an extract from a letter to the shareholders in the annual report of 1969. This is the year the deal was struck:

"In fiscal 1969, revenues and net earnings from sales of crude oil, natural gas and refined products, reached the highest levels in the company's history. These increases reflect Tesoro's uninterrupted growth through internal development and acquisitions, since formation of the company in 1964.

They are reporting to their shareholders, Mr. Speaker:

"In a continuing expansion programme, the company formed Trinidad Tesoro Petroleum Company Limited in a joint venture with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago which purchased the British Petroleum groups, oil and gas producing properties and undeveloped acreage in Trinidad."

In a similar letter in the annual report of 1970, a letter to the shareholders, they say as follows:

"In fiscal 1970, corporate revenues and net earnings rose again from record levels set last year. During fiscal 1970, the company enjoyed a full 12 months of income from its approximately 50 per cent equity ownership in Trinidad Tesoro Petroleum Company Limited. Management is well pleased with this operating company which is making a significant contribution to Tesoro's earnings."

So my friend from whom I bought the type in New York was laughing on his way to the bank and I was poor and scrunting, and a national of Trinidad and Tobago whose patrimony was sold out.

### **3.10 p.m.**

But perhaps the most shocking figure was the figure at the end of the financial statement for 1969, where they had to show, as an unconsolidated foreign investment, how much was invested in the Trinidad Tesoro Petroleum Company Limited. We know they paid US \$50,000—that was their investment—or 49.9 per cent of the shares, but in the statements they sent to their shareholders the figure is given as US \$2,080,000. Now we see how bribery accounting is achieved. The \$2 million bribe was added to the \$50,000, and perhaps another \$30,000 was put aside in some sinking fund for incidental purchases of silver trays, airline trips or whatever. But there it is, an investment of US \$2,080,000 shown in the books and

purported to the shareholders of the Tesoro Corporation of San Antonio, Texas, when they paid only US \$50,000.

**Mr. Humphrey:** Would the hon. Member give way?

**Mr. Shand:** I want you to speak after I take my seat.

**Mr. Humphrey:** This is a question relevant to what he is saying. Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, did the Minister in conducting his research happen to identify who the shareholders of the Tesoro Corporation, San Antonio, Texas were prior to the entering into the partnership and subsequent to the entering of the partnership?

**Mr. Shand:** No, I did not do any research into the identity of shareholders. Mr. Speaker, you will understand—having experienced corruption at close quarters at Whitehall; having heard foreigners speaking in a certain way about my country and how it was "easy pickings"; having come to the realization that we were taken for a ride in the Tesoro deal—that in 1976 when one had to make political choices I had to make a decision, not only, not to support the PNM, but to fight them until they were removed from office—this is what I did for 10 years in several ways and on various fronts. So when the Member for Couva South who, simply because a fighter was not on his particular battle-front, refers to some of us as: "Johnnies come-lately and pipsqueak politicians" I can only conclude that people like that have narrow vision; can only see themselves and not the commitment of others to remove a cancer such as the PNM was. I am indebted to the Member for Couva North for bringing to my attention a very relevant piece of text from the Constitution of our Republic.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Would the hon. Member give way to a question?

**Mr. Shand:** No. He mentioned an important preamble to our Constitution which I should quote:

"Whereas the people of Trinidad and Tobago—

- (d) recognize that men and institutions remain free only when freedom is founded upon respect for moral and spiritual values and the rule of law;"

What the Member for Couva North was drawing to our attention was a very important fact that there are moral values, spiritual values, and then there is the rule of law. If one can relate these values to systems of law, one can loosely say that we have moral law; we have spiritual and we have the law which is very common and well-known and practised outside, which is, the civil law.

I shall devote a little portion of my presentation to the question of parliamentary privilege because much has been said about the abuse of privilege  
by

Members on this side of the House during the course of this debate and heretofore. Mr. Speaker, we have a very imperfect system of law enforcement, and judgment. I should like to quote once more from Prof. Ryan on some of the problems that one encounters in the civil or normal courts with which we are familiar.

Prof. Ryan, in his article which I referred to earlier, makes reference to statements and apologies that very often come from the other side: "If you find somebody crooked, why do you not lock them up, take them to the court, etc? This is what Prof. Ryan had to say:

"Apologists for the PNM have asserted that after one year in office..."

This was at the time he was writing; it was after our first year in office.

"...the NAR has not been able to find any evidence of wrong-doing against a single Minister of the previous government. That may indeed be so, but any man who can say that there was no corruption under the PNM is 'either a fool, a knave, a crook or else does not live in the country.' It is true that no Minister has as yet been brought before a court and that no evidence has so far been adduced which can convict any Minister. This is so because no one ever issues a receipt for a corrupt payment. The former Minister of Industry and Commerce, John O'Halloran is dead and will perhaps have to answer in the court of the great beyond if indeed any such institution exists."

He referred to the Alexander Commission of Inquiry and some of the difficulties that such a commission encounters. I quote from page 149:

". . . it is going to be very difficult for that Commission to find hard evidence to prove anything since forms of corruption have become sophisticated, quasi-legalized and difficult to prove . . . but given our adversarial legal systems, it is not going to be easy to prove any allegations in a court of law.

As the royal commission on standards of conduct in public life 1974—76 under the chairmanship of Lord Salmon observed, 'corruption dealings are secretive, few if any crimes are harder to prove . . . A prosecution cannot be mounted merely on suspicion, however strong, that bribery has occurred. The burden of the prosecuting authorities is to produce clear evidence of the bribe itself.'

### **3.20 p.m.**

That is the problem we have to face. That is the problem in taking something to the civil court. Another problem is the vulnerability of that court for it is not unknown for some officers of the court to indulge in the unacceptable practice of jury and evidence tampering. That is a fact. That happens. So these people with

court house mentality who say, "Take it to court! Say that outside. I will do for you!" Those people who are quick to make those sorts of shouts know how to work the system and how to "get off."

Selwyn Ryan spoke of the court of the great beyond if such an institution exists, he said. I believe that such an institution exists. Had there not been another court, I would say: "Leave them to their maker, let them be judged spiritually by their maker". But we have another court—the high court of Parliament, the moral court. We can deliberate here in this court on the morality of our nation, the morality in public affairs and we, through a motion like this, can experience the kind of national catharsis that is required, the expiation of the heavy sins of our forebears.

In the conduct of this court, Members have been accorded parliamentary privilege and for a very good reason. Let me quote from Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice* what he says about parliamentary privilege. It is found on page 70:

"The privileges of Parliament 'are rights which are absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers.' They are enjoyed by individual Members, because the House cannot perform its functions without unimpeded use of the services of its Members . . ."

It is clear we need that to conduct the affairs of the nation.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member's speaking time has expired.

*Motion made,* That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes [*Hon. J. Toney*].

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Shand:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. I thank hon. Members for extending my time.

There we have Mr. Erskine May, the authority on parliamentary practice. I shall quote another authority on this matter of parliamentary privilege in no lesser a person than your good self Mr. Speaker. This comes from *Hansard* when you pronounced on the frivolous motion of the Leader of the Opposition, censuring the Prime Minister for calling some names that he demanded:

"The strongest safeguard against so-called abuses is self-discipline of individual Members. This means for instance that a Member should take steps before making a potentially damaging accusation against a named individual to ensure not only that evidence exists but that it comes from a normally reliable source. This does not imply that a Member needs to have evidence that would

satisfy a court but that he should act on the basis of something firmer than mere rumour or supposition."

Sworn testimony, public records are hardly rumour or supposition.

In this high court of Parliament, we the Members go about the business of discussing the affairs of the state in full view of the people, first from the public gallery and lately through the powerful medium of the television. The people want to know everything and they are entitled to full knowledge and it is the function of Members to provide as many of the facts as possible so that the population can be properly informed about their affairs. Sometimes names have to be called in the deliberations of the House if these deliberations are to be meaningfully understood. Can you imagine reading a deposition and you are saying: "Censored, censored and censored met in a restaurant in censored and discussed with censored?" It makes no sense. You cannot properly follow what has taken place with the people's affairs if things are done in that way. I can assure you and you would agree, that Members on this side of the House have taken great pains to avoid the calling of names. When they have done so, it has been usually from some document where someone else is calling the names.

Members on this side of the House do not indulge in direct accusatory behaviour. That is well known. When names have to be called and when it is in the interest of the people to know these names, they will be called. It must be remembered that what we are doing here is not judging and sentencing, we are deliberating, we are letting it all hang out there for people to listen, hear and understand. We are not here to condemn anybody, nor are we here to form holier than thou judgments, but after what I have heard and read I must form a personal judgment which I shall utter before the Leader of the Opposition departs. My judgment is that the PNM is a corrupt party and the balisier is a symbol of corruption.

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

I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition is departing at this stage, Mr. Speaker, because I was going to educate him about the anatomy of his own corrupt party. Of course he will say: "There is a new PNM, new life has been breathed into the PNM, we are getting rid of the old PNM, we have no nexus with them", not so. If he wants to take the good, he got to take the bad. Just as in the accounting profession there is such a thing as goodwill attached to the past in a firm or corporation, there is bad will attached to the past of the PNM and you cannot sever it so easily, you have to live with it today. The present PNM is founded on pillars of corruption and the Balisier House where they meet was obtained with corrupt dollars from John O'Halloran, *et al.*

In his contribution the Member for Port-of-Spain South referred to a mafia, a PNM mafia, he is correct. The PNM is not a mafia, but part of the PNM is a mafia, and that mafia is the head. There are two parts of the PNM, the head and the tail—the joint chiefs of staff and the foot soldiers; the royal pieces on the chess board and the pawns; those in the front line and those in the back line. The Members over there belong to the back line, they are foot soldiers, they are pawns. There is a ruling class in the PNM to which they do not belong. The ruling class went underground on December 16, 1986; the ruling class associated with such names as O'Halloran, Navarro, Bermudez, Montano, they rule, these follow. They went underground and they were resurging, we saw them emerging again, they were emerging recently until we had to bring this matter to this House and they ran for cover again. Do you know why they started to emerge? Because the foot soldiers had done the advance work. And who are the foot soldiers? Invariably poor, black, dependent, enslaved. And who are the rulers? Listen to the names I just called, manipulating those poor foot soldiers.

They took the Member for Port-of-Spain East away from his job as General Secretary of the party and sent him as the advance man in the East/West corridor, the foot soldier. The ruling class said okay, go and do your thing, stir up the poor black masses, let us once more get them in readiness so we could jump on their backs and go into power once more so that we can make deals like the Tesoro deal. I saw the foot soldiers in 1986, I see them every week in this Parliament. Ladies who could be my mother, I saw them going from house to house with their little baskets in their hands in St. Ann's West, Port-of-Spain East, and Laventille, telling their brethren: "Vote for PNM, if you do not vote for PNM the coolies will take over." That is what they used to say, dividing this country on the basis of race so that they could stay in power—not they, the foot soldiers are never in power—so that they can catapult these people back into power so that they can make the kinds of deals we are talking about today.

I think women of this country should object to the PNM for using members of their sex in this way, going from house to house late in the evening, walking with shoes that were laughing, asking people to adopt racial positions to vote for them and to prop them up. They have used the women just as they used Gene Miles and then hounded her to death. If the Member for Laventille, for whom I have great respect, had any sense she would let them go.

**Mrs. Donawa-McDavidson:** Mr. Speaker, could I ask to be left out of this drama please?

**Mr. Shand:** Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for this lady, I think she has a wonderful contribution to make to the affairs of state, she has a lot of experience in the deliberations of Parliament and she ought not to wish to be left out of anything.

The foot soldiers are doing their duty. The Member for Port-of-Spain East organized them early o'clock round and round this building, bringing false phony motions to this Parliament at every opportunity on Private Members' day—the poor, black, down-trodden masses do not have this. Now he is down to his antics in Port-of-Spain East putting up a health centre for the poor. For 30 years they did not put up a health centre for the poor in Port-of-Spain, but one routing on December 16, 1986 he has gone "bazodee" and is putting up all sorts of things: a food kitchen, health centre, this and that, playing politics. There are some foot soldiers who will always be fooled, those are the people who say: "I is a PNM until ah dead", you have to leave those people alone. I weep and I pray and I hope that the others will see what is happening in this country. I hope they will see what this whole corruption thing has cost us in this country, the deprivation that has resulted from corruption of the magnitude we have witnessed.

I was heartened to see the Prime Minister take \$25 million of the money we recovered to spread it around in much needed areas in the country. It is not much, admittedly, but such as it is, it would make some sort of contribution to ridding the country of some of the neglectful conditions bequeathed to us by that corrupt party. If only this deal did not take place, Mr. Speaker, do you have any idea how much money we would have had at our disposal to do the things that we want to do?.

What is the economic cost of all this corruption? The Member for Point Fortin went into admirable detail on this matter. First of all, we had the bribe. The \$2 million they put into their financial statements that they had paid for a company never got here.

### **3.40 p.m.**

If the \$25 million that we are now getting back in reparation was put on a fixed deposit at a certain interest rate which is reasonable, it would have been \$200 million, more or less, today. If they had paid the real price for the assets which is about US \$10 million instead of US \$50,000, we could have saved that money. If they did not suck the profits out of this country to the extent of about US \$300 million, we could have had that money at our disposal today. If we did not capitulate to them and paid them \$300 to \$400 million to buy them back—people who stole into our affairs, we had to buy them back—if we did not have to do that, we would have had that money at our disposal today.

If they did not get that infamous tax break in 1975 when this company was selected for favourable consideration in tax matters, if we got what was due to us by way of petroleum taxes, we would have had a lot of money at our disposal. If we did not pay them dividends—you know we used to pay them dividends too. Listen to the letter to their shareholders in fiscal 1976:

"On December 9, 1976, in an important action subsequent to the end of fiscal 1976, Trinidad Tesoro Petroleum Company Limited declared cash dividends of \$18.2 million to Tesoro bringing cumulative dividends to Tesoro from Trinidad Tesoro to \$25.9 million for the period July 1, 1974 to December 31, 1976."

That is only a two-year period—\$25.9 million in dividends. If we add that altogether you would find that this country was denied approximately or in excess of US \$1 billion because of the shady deal. Do you know what US \$1 billion can do? It can give every man, woman and child in this country seven 10-days.

I grieve for the people of Marie Road in Morvant who for 30 years could not get pipe-borne water from a government that squandered US \$60 billion and an additional US \$1 billion from their shady deals. They got pipe-borne water, not directly to their houses as yet. Phase I was completed by the self-help project that was administered by the NAR Government and the people of Marie Road and Beecham Cocoa would have had water flowing in their houses today if this corruption did not take place.

I grieve for the people of the Morvant scheme, also in my constituency. The Morvant Health Centre is closed down and people have to go all the way to Laventille to get treatment because they did not spend money to maintain it, because the money was frittered away.

I grieve for the people of Chinapoo who for years wanted a basketball court and could not get it. If we had that money we could have put down a multi-purpose hard court facility, but today plans are well afoot for achieving this, for the National Self-Help Commission recently approved and agreed in principle to assisting with that multi-purpose hard court facility in Chinapoo.

As soon as the PNM got wind of it, they immediately and without authorization sent a tractor from St. George West County Council to start to dig up the place, and they also sent one of the county council foot soldiers to start offering the people, who were willing to do this on a self-help basis, a five-days and a ten-days. That is the level of politics that they play.

I grieve for myself because I lost my COLA and 10 per cent when I needed it, but I am not angry. I am seeing my COLA and 10 per cent that I lost at work. I am seeing this money buying materials for self-help projects right across the country. It is one of the greatest successes of the NAR, and the PNM never thought of it. They said, "you all are exploiting people on this self-help project, why do you not pay them?". That is the mentality that we are dealing with.

I know that we are pursuing court matters in Canada. Maybe we will get some more returns. Maybe we will recover some of the money that was stolen from  
the

country. Maybe this will go some way to getting reparation for the people but no amount of money can really purchase relief, the emotional relief that one needs and requires having been betrayed by the highest people in the land.

I am once more indebted to the Member for Couva North for bringing to the attention of Parliament the oath of office that Members of Parliament have to take. I want to read and remind this House about the oath of office that the President of the Republic has to take. I quote:

"I ..... do swear by Almighty God that I will bear true faith and allegiance to Trinidad and Tobago ..."

Let me repeat that:

". . . I will bear true faith and allegiance to Trinidad and Tobago, and to the best of my ability preserve and defend the Constitution and the law, that I will conscientiously and impartially discharge the functions of President and will devote myself to the service and well being of the people of Trinidad and Tobago..."

The service and the well being of the people of Trinidad and Tobago; not to a foreign corporation.

Ministers of this Government and the previous Government would swear similarly:

"I ..... do swear by Almighty God that I will bear true faith and allegiance to Trinidad and Tobago and will uphold the Constitution and the law, that I will conscientiously, impartially and to the best of my ability discharge my duty as [Minister of Petroleum and Mines] and do right to all manner of people without fear or favour, affection or ill will."

That is the kind of oath that people take, and I wonder whether there are provisions in our arrangement for filing a constitutional motion against anybody who defies that oath. I do not know. I am not a lawyer.

In spite of the gravity of the sin, I have to part company with two of my colleagues who spoke today, who declared that they will never forgive what these culprits have done. My being has fought venom and bitterness and a kind of lust for vengeance because of what they have done. I do not think I can continue living with that amount of venom inside of me so I have no alternative—and I do so now—but to offer my forgiveness to these culprits and purge myself of these destructive juices. My forgiveness is there for the taking. All they have to do is to be contrite, say that they are sorry—not to me but to themselves—and they would deserve it. I forgive the dead; I forgive the living; I forgive the dying in far-off Costa Rica. It is noteworthy that the Costa Rican government has a scheme which allows for the

immediate citizenship of very rich men called the "Pensionado Scheme". I lived there. I know what I am talking about. You just have to come with a lot of money, you get refuge and you become a citizen of that country. I forgive Boysie and I wish him to die with my forgiveness.

**3.50 p.m.**

Do not mistake my forgiveness for being soft, because when those foot soldiers, those thorns start marching again; when they start mouthing slogans—we put people first—I will expose them all; I will fight them. They must not see office for under 10 years. They not only stole money, they stole slogans. It is all in the *Magnum*. They put the *Magnum* in the *Guardian* these days—"We put people first". This is where they got it. The manifesto of the People's National Movement in the last election—"We put people first". It was a successful slogan. They think by stealing the slogan they are going to succeed. That, and the face of God, they will not see. The only place they put people first is in the name of their party—People's National Movement.

We must not forget and the nation must not forget what they have done. They must not forget what they have done. We must always remember that the PNM is corrupt and the balisier is a symbol of corruption. You are wearing a symbol of corruption on your tie and when the nation sees the balisier on your tie or a pin on your lapel as the ladies wear, when they see it on the *Magnum*, when they see it on your manifesto, they will remember how corrupt you have been. The balisier is a symbol of corruption.

Thank you.

**Mr. Leo DesVignes** (*Diego Martin Central*): Mr. Speaker, every full-blooded Trinbagonian should give praise to this Government for what we have achieved in this Tesoro affair. Every person who was adopted by Trinidad and Tobago should also give praise to this Government for what we have achieved. I have spoken, even to people whom I am sure are illegal immigrants in this country, and they have given praise to this Government for what we have achieved with this Tesoro affair.

To hear the Leader of the Opposition coming to this honourable House and saying in his contribution that the issue is not corruption is unbelievable. In this *Express*, Tuesday, 24, he said:

"The issue is not corruption . . ."

**Mr. Manning:** No, no. Quote the *Hansard*, not the *Express*.

**Mr. DesVignes:** I quoted the *Express* because it says it:

*Lawsuits re Corrupt Practices*  
[MR. DESVIGNES]

Friday, July 27, 1990

"The issue is not corruption, but the Government's ineptitude in its handling of the Tesoro affair, ' Opposition Leader, Patrick Manning said in the House of Representatives yesterday."

If the issue is not corruption, tell me how much is corruption? Or how much do you have to be corrupt for it to be termed corruption?

When I listened to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, it gave me a very creepy feeling, and it seemed as though I had an illusion while he was speaking. During that illusion, it seemed as though someone had taken off a disguise which was used for committing heinous crimes, a disguise which was relentlessly sought after by the police, a disguise which usually brings shivers to any community. That person in my illusion was actually forcing on the disguise on me to see whether or not it could fit me. That person was the Leader of the Opposition.

I was getting the feeling that he was trying to shield the sins of his Government's top executives, that he was trying to shield those executives and was cunningly placing these things on the shoulders of this NAR Government. I have read the Bible and I am aware that Christ gave his life to save us from sin.

**Mr. Manning:** What is the text?

**4.00 p.m.**

**Mr. DesVignes:** Read the *Bible*. But he did not say that I should give my life to save my friend from his sins. I remember what he said was, "Your sins are now forgiven, go your way and sin no more."

So I cannot see why this honest and caring Government of the National Alliance for Reconstruction should be made to pay for the sins of the PNM. I have seen him attempting from time to time to wash his hands of the sins, and saying, "this is a new PNM". How could there be a new PNM? PNM is PNM, however you take it. What I would advise him to do is to change the name. If he so wants to wash his hands of the PNM, then change the name of the party. The letters, PNM, no longer stand for People's National Movement. As my friend said a while ago, it stands for corruption. There is no question about it. Once you associate yourself with the PNM, you are corrupt. I advise my friends, as I have been doing, that they should relinquish that association with the PNM, because PNM stands for corruption.

Today we are talking about taxpayers' money that was pilfered from this country by a gang with which the hon. Leader of the Opposition is associated. We are bringing to the attention of the population that these honourable gentlemen have abused the trust that we, the taxpayers, have placed in them when we elected them to office. They have destroyed that trust by pilfering away our hard earned

patrimony and putting it to their own personal use; money that could have provided school places for our children.

When we came into office, we found ourselves, with the hon. Minister of Education attempting to use \$39 million, stretching it all along as thin as possible, to create school places. When I say school places, I am talking about primary schools, where our toddlers leave the crib and get into, in order to put in place their foundation education.

They failed to do even that for our children. Today we are attempting to, what we call, make bread out of stone to prepare a way for our children. We are talking about moneys that should have provided sporting facilities for our youths, who today are walking the streets. Some of them are actually lost. Some of them have gone to drugs as a result of PNM's mismanagement as far as corruption is concerned. If you go through all the communities you would discover that there are no sporting facilities for them to work a sweat, to find themselves occupied and keep themselves away from trouble. As you know, exercise helps to keep the mind in focus; keeps you away from trouble. They failed to provide that facility to prevent our youths from getting into trouble.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair.*]

We are talking about taxpayers' money that should have provided homes for the homeless and shelter and care for the poor and even the dispossessed. You look at the vagrants today on the streets, it is a creation of the PNM. When they came to office, those vagrants were not there. It was as a result of the mismanagement as far as their corruption is concerned—taxpayers' money that should have been used to purchase medical equipment and drugs for our health institutions, also to promote our nurses who are now marching up and down for reclassification; moneys that should be used for better working conditions for our teachers. All this would have alleviated the suspension of our COLA and the 10 per cent cut in our salaries.

The settlement that we have accepted is a victory for this country. If we were paid one penny, that was enough to celebrate a victory for this country, however you look at it. You see, the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro has left no stone unturned to bring this affair to the surface, to expose what was happening in this country over the years. In spite of the deterrent, he insisted that he must go forward. It so happened that he is in company with an honourable gentleman, the hon. Prime Minister who said, "go forward, I am behind you."

The PNM dragged its feet on the investigations. They were playing for time. So they came here and they taunted us and they dared us to bring charges against the people, because they knew it was time that they were playing for. You see, they realized that the statute of limitations would not have given us access to our success,

so they kept on playing for time. But the Tesoro company would not have given us one penny because the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro is a good crime fighter, or that the hon. Prime Minister is a statesman. Tesoro settled because they have realized that we had a good case in spite of the statute of limitations. They realized that. There is no way they would have settled with us unless there was substantial evidence to show that something was wrong.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have brought the truth which has been denied over the years to the surface. We are sending a message to our youths of this country—we are very mindful of our youths—that they must have faith in this Government as we are very serious about their future.

#### 4.10 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have watched the hon. Members for St. Augustine, Couva South, Couva North and Tobago East—they were my idols. I listened to them on my radio at night. Every time I heard these hon. gentlemen speak, it used to give me goose pimples. I have heard them in this Parliament ranting and raving to make the population understand that the past Government had an organized gang that was only interested in themselves, but the country would not listen. Mr. Deputy Speaker, all the admiration I had for these hon. gentlemen—what I saw here on Monday and Wednesday last saddens me.

For instance, I thought the hon. Member for Couva South would have greeted the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro seeing that he has fulfilled and achieved something that he himself started, but I was saddened. I listened to the hon. Member for Couva North when he said: "This motion is bacchanal politics." He said that we are attacking people who are not Members of the House and able to defend themselves. When I heard the contributions coming from those hon. gentlemen whom I had admired over the years, I said to myself: "Oh, what would some Members do only to smell the sweet fragrance of power." This could be the only reason for their attack on the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have raised the question of the Prime Minister and the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro leaving the PNM. "They were part of that regime and they do not have the moral authority", the hon. Member of Couva South stated in the *Express* of July 24, 1990. He also questioned the moral authority of the Minister of Justice and National Security to execute action in such matters, since he claimed, Mr. Richardson defended the corruption in the heyday of the party when he served as Attorney General from 1976 to 1981.

Let us go to the *Bible*. As far as I can remember, Moses was part of Pharaoh's household. Moses was a very powerful man in Egypt. He could have taken any decisions he wanted in Pharaoh's house, but what happened? When he saw the way

Pharaoh was going, and the way the Israelites were being treated, he left and took up his sword against Pharaoh.

We should ask ourselves the questions: Is it because they were travelling on a crooked path that the hon. Member for Tobago East walked out? Why should he have stayed with them if he realized the path was crooked? It was because they were travelling on a crooked path that hon. gentlemen like Karl Hudson Phillips, Hector McClean and many others walked out, because they wanted no part of corruption or crookedness. So when they refer to these hon. gentlemen as having been part of the PNM, that to me, is irrelevant.

**Mr. Ramnath:** When did you leave the PNM?

**Mr. DesVignes:** And therefore, if something is wrong, it is wrong. As I said, once you discover that the PNM is corrupt and you stay with them, then you are corrupt. I guess this is why gentlemen like the hon. Prime Minister and others walked out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very surprised to hear the Member raising the question of getting out of the PNM or that they were hugging one another, etc. The hon. Member for Couva North was one of my idols, but I have lost that gloss I had for him because he is talking about the Drug Report which was made public. They took a decision to do that before we got into office. It was a decision collectively taken by the party that is now in Government before it got into office. It was disclosed here on Wednesday that he was also part of that Cabinet which took the decision to inform the population, but he is denying that.

**4.20 p.m.**

Are these gentlemen the gentlemen that are aspiring to be Prime Ministers, Ministers of External Affairs, Ministers of Energy and so on? Are these the gentlemen that this country would attempt to put into office to run this country's affairs? I have spoken since then to some of my constituents who have given me the assurance that they were looking at their performances—and I am talking about my constituents. I noticed that they have talked about Diego Martin East, Diego Martin West, but for some reason they kept jumping over Diego Martin Central. I challenge them to come into Diego Martin Central. *[Interruption]* Of course, you too. There are constituents in my constituency who are looking at the performances of the UNC and this Tesoro affair made them change their mind. So my bag is getting fuller and fuller all the time.

I have lost the confidence that I had in my honourable friends. I was hoping that the Member for St. Augustine would have spoken so I could then have drawn my conclusion from what he contributed because I know that he is a man of integrity, an independent man and I know that we are going to see his independence very soon

because I can guarantee he is not going to stick any nonsense inside there. I have seen him at all levels. You can count on that. I have faith in the Member for St. Augustine and I know he will not tolerate what is going on.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Are you speaking on behalf of the NAR?

**Mr. DesVignes:** No, I am speaking on behalf of my honourable friend. Even the Member for Couva South does not have the moral authority to ask me questions about that. We are looking at the situation where he is now the general secretary of the party but I am wondering, is he really the general secretary of the party or is he in control of the party? This is the feeling I am getting. I have looked at the way he manipulated the whole issue. I have looked at him. I have looked at how he orchestrated the whole issue. I know that somewhere along the line, the fate of the Member for Couva South is in jeopardy. I am sorry but as they say, how you make your bed, so you lie. Maybe the Member for Couva South deserves that. I ask the Member for Couva South, what has the Member for Couva North done to deserve that kind of treatment? And they are talking about riding on backs after he rode his back.

**Mr. Ramnath:** I think you have been allowed sufficient freedom and latitude. Let me say categorically and unequivocally that I pledge my full loyalty to the Member for Couva North as my political leader, if that will satisfy my friend. I am not too sure that he knows to whom to pledge his loyalty between Karl Hudson-Phillips and the Prime Minister. He has a difficulty.

**Mr. Robinson:** May I say that the hon. Member for Couva South similarly pledged his loyalty to me.

**Mr. Ramnath:** There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that I did so but I must confess that I was fooled.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** In the midst of this public relieve, could I draw to the attention of the public gallery that they are not to participate in this debate.

**Mr. DesVignes:** I am here to take note of this motion and I am also calling on the population to take note. It is really a motion that the people must look at. All the documents are now public and everybody can read and see for themselves. This will dispel all the untruths, all the denials we were hearing: This is not true, that is not true. It is here now and the population can see and tribute should be paid to the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro for his persistence. Tribute should also be paid to our hon. Prime Minister. He did not muzzle the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro, he gave him free rein. He said: "You go and I will give you all the support you need because we have the wolves out there. We have to bring them home."

Here we are today and I am happy to say that we have done it. We promised the population we will do it and we did it. There are lots more to come and as my friend the Member for Princes Town said, that is only the tip of the iceberg. I know that my friend, the hon. Member for San Fernando East is worried but we saved him in 1986 because we said he should not be there but at the mercy of Merle Stevens, of course, he is still there. We are not going to do it again. This time once you are involved, that is it.

I am taking note and I am calling upon the population to take note of what this Government means to this country. I said it before that we are on the right path. We have followed the path we had promised to follow and with the rallying of the population which I am sure when the gates open would rally, we would achieve the things we set out to achieve to make Trinidad and Tobago a better place to live in. Thank you.

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

**5.10 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Joseph Toney):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have been asked to take note of some court matters which occurred and the settlements of these court matters in courts in Ontario, Canada and the United States of America. I wish first of all to compliment all those who have spoken before me in this debate on this side of the House and to say that the manner in which they have put forward the issues in this matter speaks wonders for the strength and discipline of the National Alliance for Reconstruction.

Before I get into the contributions made by Members on the opposite side, I wish to pay tribute to some of the individuals whom I feel played a very important role in bringing these court matters to the stage where we have been able to extract settlement from both the Tesoro Corporation and from the son of John O'Halloran. I first pay tribute to the hon. Member for St. Augustine. It was his bravery and courage in those days that attracted me to him as a fearless spokesman and a person who would not be afraid to speak out against corrupt activities. I have noticed a lot of talk in the press and even in this honourable House, about individuals who have called names and so on, I have not been able to lay my hands on it, but I feel fairly certain when I say that the names of all those people who have been called in this very disgraceful affair have all been called by the hon. Member for St. Augustine both in and out of this House before.

I pay tribute as well to the hon. Member for Couva South. We on this side give praise where praise is due, we do not seek to play narrow partisan politics with issues that concern all of us. It was on Friday, April 27, 1979, that the hon. Member

*Lawsuits re Corrupt Practices*  
[HON. J. TONEY]

Friday, July 27, 1990

for Couva South moved the following motion in this very House. This is the substance of the motion:

*"Whereas* the Tesoro Petroleum Company has admitted before a United States congressional committee that the company has been guilty of making illegal payments to officers and/or members of Governments of foreign countries;

*And Whereas* it is popularly held that the circumstances in which the Tesoro Petroleum Company acquired a minority partnership with Government in Trinidad are somewhat dubious;

*And Whereas* the Trinidad Tesoro Petroleum Company has enjoyed since the commencement of their operations, concessions not available to any other oil company operating in Trinidad and Tobago;

*And Whereas* the Tesoro Petroleum Company has not indicated publicly which officers and/or which government(s) were involved in the illegal payment scheme;

*Be it resolved:*

That this honourable House recommend that Government appoint a commission of enquiry into the operations of Trinidad Tesoro Petroleum Company Limited with terms of reference to include whether that company has made any illegal payments to any previous or present members or officers of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago."

He moved this motion in 1979. A lot has been said about the action taken by the hon. Member for Tobago East in this matter, but later on in my presentation I would give you excerpts of what the hon. Member for Tobago East had to say in that debate.

I pay tribute to the hon. Member for St. Anns East, the hon. Minister Lincoln Myers, because you would recall that in his fight against the evil practice of corruption, he sat on the steps of the Hall of Justice for many days to attract the attention of the authorities of the day to ensure that steps were taken to allow the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee, as it was constituted at that time, to have the power to call certain people before it so that certain questions could be put to them and certain answers could be forthcoming so that we could ensure whether or not there were corrupt activities at Plipdeco.

Then of course, I have to say that the manner in which the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro has been attacked, vilified and denigrated, just goes to show that indeed we live in a very strange society, a society where, as the hon. Member for Point Fortin mentioned in his contribution, all types of attempts are made to

destroy the righteous and those who seek to ensure that in their offices, they walk the straight and narrow path.

I have not discussed the matter yet with the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro, but there is a part in my constituency where my information is that he was born, and where he did his primary school education, it is the village Salybia. I believe that his father was also the headmaster at that government primary school in that area. We have just managed through the efforts of the Ministry of Education and the National Self-help Commission, to construct a community centre in that village. I have to officially ask him, but at this moment we are seriously thinking of naming that community centre the "Selwyn Richardson Community Centre, in recognition of the efforts he has made to ensure that corrupt practices in high governmental circles in Trinidad and Tobago are brought to an end.

**5.20 p.m.**

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what can one say of the efforts of the Member for Tobago East in his capacity as hon. Prime Minister of the country?

**Mrs. Johnson:** He is a true statesman.

**Mr. Toney:** The hon. Member for Diego Martin Central could not have put it in better language, that as Prime Minister he did not in the one breath encourage the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro to continue on the trail of corruption fighting and then in a next breath put stumbling blocks in his way, but he gave him free and full rein. It is because he was given free and full rein by the hon. Prime Minister that we are in a position today to take note of these very historical settlements in courts in America and Canada.

I was hoping that I would have had the privilege of hearing the contribution of the hon. Member for St. Augustine this afternoon. The hon. Member for Couva South says that he is a brilliant man. I do not know if he is more or less brilliant than Dr. Allan Mc Kenzie.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Ask Dookeran.

**Mr. Toney:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was just looking at the *Evening News* of July 25, 1990. This is a question to the man in the street. The question is:

"Are you surprised that John Humphrey was not elected to the post of Deputy Political Leader of the UNC?"

**Mr. Ramnath:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member is grossly irrelevant. What he is saying there has no bearing on the motion.

**Mr. Toney:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think my hon. friend was not here when I began my contribution. When I began my contribution I gave extensive praise not only to the hon. Member for St. Augustine but to himself as well for the

efforts that they have made in ensuring that we are in the position that we are in today.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Do not mamaguy me.

**Mr. Toney:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will quote him later on. There was such a difference between the contribution he made this week that I will have to point out the differences.

The man-in-the street said that Humphrey was the best man. That was the man-in-the-street talking—I do not know. I do not want to get into internal matters but this is what the man-in-the street said.

Where can we start in this very murky matter? Where does one start in this debate? It is such a web of intrigue; a maze of almost unbelievable activity.

Perhaps we can begin on June 29, 1990 when the hon. Member for Otoire/Mayaro made a statement in this House on the settlement arrived at in the matter with Tesoro. Immediately thereafter, those whom it would appear did not want the Government to succeed in this matter began to show their hands. My good friend from San Fernando East informed me that he was feeling a bit tired and I know he had a very difficult week so he has asked to be excused.

In the *Trinidad Guardian* dated July 5, 1990, it states:

"Manning tells PM to call Tesoro names"

As you would know on that occasion when the hon. Minister of Justice and National Security made a statement, he did say that the Prime Minister had to make a follow-up statement. So it was on the eve of the Prime Minister making that follow-up statement—which he did not make—we had these comments, and, of course, my friend from St. Ann's West clearly pointed out that they stand for morality in public affairs. We have heard that talk so many times, only to be faced with this disgraceful course of events that have been revealed to us in this House. He called for the names. He went on to say:

"Name those who took bribes."

All this is the build up, you know. I want you to understand the sequence. The hon. Minister of Justice and National Security made a statement and then we had the build up afterwards. He called on us to call names. Then you had my good friend from Port-of-Spain East. I quote:

"Marshall wants corruption debate."

They want corruption debate and they are not here. This was on page 1 of the *Express* of Saturday, July 7, 1990 I quote:

"Member for Port of Spain East, Morris Marshall, has called for a parliamentary debate on the issue of corruption.

Speaking to the Express yesterday, Mr. Marshall said he was disappointed Prime Minister ANR Robinson did not make a statement on the Tesoro scandal.

Marshall said it was time everything came out in the open so we could get on with the business of the country.

He insisted that the People's National Movement had never sanctioned corrupt practices and will never do so."

Do you believe that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I continue:

"He said the PNM was prepared to be of utmost assistance to any individual, or institution that was serious about dealing with corruption.

Corruption is a human problem, he says stressing that it was not a party issue . . ."

This is where I take exception to the contribution made by my friend from Couva South. It was not a party issue.

"not a People's National Movement issue nor a National Alliance for Reconstruction issue but a national issue."

Hear what he goes on to say:

"Arguing that one should not seek to play narrow partisan politics on the question of corruption, he said, "They are dealing with this issue. There must be no cover up'."

That was the Member for Port-of-Spain East talking.

"All the facts must be revealed."

They are coming here now to talk about parliamentary privilege and who is abusing the parliamentary privileges. Was parliamentary privilege abused when there were so many cover-ups in the past, and this very forum of Parliament was used to launch the cover-ups? Was there a breach of parliamentary privilege on that occasion? I continue:

"In dealing with this issue there must be no cover up. All the facts must be revealed regardless of where the chips fall."

That was the Member for Port-of-Spain East talking. I want you to understand that this is not a member of the NAR.

Then we had the *Trinidad Guardian* of Wednesday, July 10, 1990:

"Explain Mr. Prime Minister."

They want explanations. Then Tesoro itself joined in the brew. On page 1 of the *Trinidad Guardian* of July 13, 1990, it states:

"Tesoro says it would have won in court."

Let me say that I am yet to meet the attorney at law or the litigant who does not make this statement—that they would have won in court.

### **5.30 p.m.**

Then of course, you had the former chairman of Tesoro who, from the documents which have been laid in this House, showed that he was also receiving remuneration from Tesoro. Mr. Ben Primus—"Tesoro Settlement—a great con job". Who did the con job on the people of Trinidad and Tobago? He is saying "Tesoro Settlement—a great con job", but the documents revealed that whilst he was chairman of Tesoro, he was also collecting a stipend from Tesoro Corporation, a foreign company. Who did the con job? He is given interviews in the *Sunday Express* and the *Sunday Guardian*.

Of course, you then had the next attempt to divert the population from the victory that this Government had achieved for Trinidad and Tobago—another red herring was put—"Court papers to be destroyed". I deliberately looked at these clippings to show you the type of strategy. My friend calls it a "mafia in the press". I would not use such strong language, but what I am saying is if one looks at the newspaper clippings on this issue, one will see that from the moment the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro made the settlement announcement in this honourable House, there was a deliberate strategy, master-minded by whom I do not know, to divert the attention of the population to issues other than that there was corruption amongst high government officials in Trinidad and Tobago.

The hon. Member for San Fernando East was not satisfied with calling names; he was getting stronger and stronger. He wants a motion of censure against the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro. Have you ever seen such audacity, such boldness and brass? The time will come when the entire population will censure him and his political party.

I am showing you the build up—what happened after the hon. Minister of Justice and National Security made his statement. There are those who said, "We lost more than we gained". This is former Trintopec chairman, George Legall. Of course, we had the revelations by the hon. Prime Minister this week.

I want to make it absolutely clear that this debate is an extremely important exercise, because it deals with a situation where our people have been deprived; our children have been wronged; generations not yet born have been ravished; and their right to a decent livelihood in Trinidad and Tobago is in

jeopardy as a result of the actions of those gentlemen whose names were called in the documents.

I want to spend some time now looking at some of the contributions that have been made. You had our good friend from San Fernando East—it is a pity he is not here—attempting to defend the indefensible. There is a saying for those of us who practise in the law courts, that if you have a case where all the evidence is stacked against you, where there is no hope of any semblance of being successful, that the honourable and decent thing to do to save the court's time is to throw yourself at the mercy of the court and seek the court's forgiveness.

Let me say that it is not that the court, when that happens, would then attempt to ridicule or humiliate you because of the position in which you find yourself. What happens is that because you look at the court as a very serious and proper forum, your esteem as a practitioner in the court rises because the court realizes that you are one who is about justice and fair play and when you have a client or a litigant who has a totally hopeless case, you submit yourself to the mercy of the court. I think my friend from Port-of-Spain South did make the point that it is my view that he lost a golden opportunity to rise in the esteem of the population of Trinidad and Tobago.

He had this photograph of the hon. Member for Tobago East with some Prime Minister and so on. Will it be said that every photograph taken of me at some point in time, that those were my close associates and one can say, show me your friends, I will tell you who you are? Is it that every photograph you take out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with individuals, at some later point in your life is going to be used to show that you were of one mind with those individuals?

**Mr. Ramnath:** In public life, yes.

**5.40 p.m.**

**Mr. Toney:** I have some photographs with the Member for Couva South. What do I do with them, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

I want to say that he cut a very sorry picture and he cut a very pathetic figure in his contribution on that occasion. You noticed the attempt to implicate the Member for Tobago East and the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro in the whole scenario, and the deputy political leader of the party, Mr. Karl Hudson-Phillips and so on. Did you notice the whole attempt to implicate everyone? I think the only person he left out was the deputy political leader of the UNC who I am told was a member of the PNM at the time.

So you notice the culture, the pursuit of Mr. Desmond Cartey's statement; "implicate everybody; all ah we tief." That is his strategy, and we must see it for

what it is. In an attempt to destroy the character of the hon. Member for Tobago East, it was said at one point in time that he took all the two-dollar bills. You have heard that story, have you not? When they could not get anything on the two-dollar bills, they said it was the fifty-dollar bills. How low can you stoop? How depraved can one's mind get, to link the Member for Tobago East with all the corrupt activities of the PNM? That is their plan.

Then they spoke about the inept manner—their rallying cry—in which the Government handled the matter. Let me say that from my understanding—and I speak now as a person who has had a bit of training in law—of a statute of limitations what happens is that the judge ought not to hear you at all, because you are statute barred. You ought not to be before the court. The judge could have easily gotten up and said, "listen, gentlemen, this case ought not to be before me. You can as well put all those papers in the dust-bin". He could have said that in this matter. Yet the evidence was so persuasive and so potent that he eventually signed a settlement order.

The statute of limitations was there. The judge was not obliged to hear the case. So that when this talk of the inept manner in which the Government handled the matter is brought to the fore, I want the critics to understand that the judge was not obliged to hear the matter; he was not obliged to sign any settlement order. The mere fact that he signed a settlement order in the matter tells me that he found that the evidence at the preliminary enquiry was of a very strong nature.

I give all commendation and praises to the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro. To get all this evidence all over the world: Toronto, Ontario, New York, London—I am told—together, after the event happened 20 years ago, and to come and put all this evidence before a judge, and tell him, "listen, I know the statute of limitations debars me but look at the evidence and see if we do not have a case", and to convince him that he has a case, I say, he ought to be praised and commended and not to be vilified, as the hon. Member for Couva South appeared to do.

The hon Member for Couva South spoke about the moral authority of the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro to spearhead this entire matter. It reminded me very strongly of the same attacks that were made on the late Gene Miles. I say this not in an attempt to attack the Member for Couva South, but I have to let him know, through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I was extremely disappointed in his contribution in this House. I was even more disappointed when I sat last night and I read his contribution when he moved this motion in 1979—extremely disappointed. I will tell you some of the things that he said in the debate of April 27, 1979:

"I think it would be unfair to say that anyone was involved in Trinidad, and since that company operates only in, I think, three other countries outside of the United States, it is possible that the payments could have been made

to persons outside of Trinidad and Tobago in those countries. However, that does not mean to say that Trinidad and Tobago could not have been included in such a payment scheme and if that was the case, it would mean that we have the responsibility to the nation to bring those persons who might be guilty before the law."

This is the hon. Member for Couva South speaking in 1979 on a motion where he is asking the Government to appoint a commission of enquiry into the operations of Trinidad Tesoro Petroleum Company Limited.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Could you give Mr. Richardson's reply to that?

**Mr. Toney:** I will tell you what Mr. Richardson said in a short while. I cannot read the entire contribution.

"I think it is clear from the report that was published in the United States Wall Street Journal that the company admitted that it had made these payments to foreign governments. Trinidad and Tobago is one of the countries in which Tesoro operates and has a very profitable operation. We should spend some time and look at the Tesoro operations in Trinidad, since that company took over with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the assets of British Petroleum in 1969."

So in one breath in 1979 he is saying, "well look here, let us have investigations on these people", but when the investigations are complete, he seeks to attack in a most venomous manner, the conduct of the hon. Member for Ortoire/Mayaro in the matter. This is how he ends the contribution:

"However, in the meantime, I should like to recommend in all honesty that the Government clear the names of people who had dealings with this company and once and for all give the country the feeling that there were no such transactions. Make it clear that we are dealing in a straightforward manner by going deeply into the operations of the company to determine whether that company did in fact make any payments."

**5.50 p.m.**

No sentiments. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you, of course, would have heard the hon. Member for Couva South this week, when he said that the Government mishandled the matter. Even though all this evidence has been collated and we have been able to jump over the statute of limitations and get the judge to sign an order, he said the Government mishandled the matter. He said: that we did not pursue the matter to determine whether there was corruption. I think it is very important that we make that extra effort sometimes to do some research before we come to the House.

When the Member for Couva South and the Member for Couva North spoke in this debate one would have gotten the impression that the hon. Member for Tobago East sat still and remained silent over the last 10 years

while these corrupt activities were taking place. In this debate of which I am speaking—when the hon. Member for Couva South moved this historic motion—there is the contribution of the Member for Tobago East where he fully supported the Member for Couva South. *[Interruption]* Why did you not get up and say it?

**Mr. Sudama:** I said the Prime Minister was a professing politician when he was on my side. I prefer to respond to this prevention of corruption debate as well as the Tesoro matter.

**Mr. Toney:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I commend the contribution by the hon. Member for Tobago East to all Members of this House and suggest that they get a copy, look at it and see that the hon. Member for Tobago East was in the vanguard to ensure that corrupt practices in high government circles be investigated and brought to an end.

I should like to quote from an editor of a newspaper. When I read what he writes these days, I wonder whether he still subscribes to those views. At that time, that gentleman was the Member for Siparia. He was so prophetic.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon Member's speaking time has expired.

*Motion made,* That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes *[Hon. W. Dookeran]*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. Toney:** Thank you kindly hon. Members. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what was said in 1979.

"It does not have to be any of us here..."

He was speaking about the question of investigations to be launched, if the Government of the day would allow the investigation.

"...It does not have to be the ULF, it should be somebody else; another generation that will come forward and start digging into the cupboards to find out what skeletons there are. If nationals of this country have been in receipt of payments from foreign companies to allow them certain special concessions and privileges, then, in my view, such nationals, whether they take \$5,000 or \$5 million, are guilty of high treason."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you know what is the penalty for high treason? They are selling out the national interest to a foreign firm. That is what they are doing and they are guilty of high treason.

"Whether it is now or 20 years from now, if such information is made public to the people of this country, I am sure the people would know how to deal with it when that time comes."

The quotation continues:

"But we hope that if anyone, however big he may be, is found to be receiving such payments, then that person would be charged for high treason. Not just receiving of illicit funds but for treason."

The gentleman to whom I am referring is Mr. Raffique Shah. As you know, he is an editor of a certain newspaper. Judging from what he now writes, I wonder if he still subscribes to these views.

My friend from Couva South asked what the Attorney General of the day said? I shall quote what the Attorney General said.

**Mr. Ramnath:** From what page are you quoting?

**Mr. Toney:** I am quoting from pages 1455 and 1456—

". . . notwithstanding that, I stand ready, willing and able to take action at any stage once proper evidence is forthcoming."

Have you found it?

**Mr. Ramnath:** Yes.

**Mr. Toney:** There is no evidence to date that any citizen of Trinidad and Tobago is involved in this scandalous affair."

This is the hon. Selwyn Richardson speaking in this debate.

**Mr. Ramnath:** My colleague shall deal with you.

**Mr. Toney:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is instructive because I have looked for it. I did not see the participation of the Member for Couva North in that debate. I do not know if he aligned himself with the sentiments of the motion or not, but he is the one who asked the hon. Member for Tobago East: What were you doing all these years? The hon. Member for Tobago East let his voice be heard in this matter raised by the Member for Couva South. There is no contribution by the Member for Couva North, but he comes here today and questions the Member for Tobago East—he remained silent all these years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, again you see the general attempt, the thinking of the upper and lower benches of the Opposition. One mind, one strategy; implicate the Member for Tobago East; let the population know that he remained silent; implicate the Member for Ortoire/Mayaro; mix them up in the callaloo. It is extremely deplorable that such a strategy should be used by the Opposition at a time when our national sovereignty is at stake. They talk about national sovereignty all the time.

My friend the hon. Member for St. Ann's West, spoke this afternoon stating that when we made our above-the-board agreement with Venezuela—they were the first ones to get up—the national sovereignty was being sold out. In a matter where the national safety of Trinidad and Tobago was completely

sold out, instead of focusing their attention on that, and laying the blame where it ought to be laid, they sought to vilify the hon. Member for Tobago East.

**6.00 p.m.**

What do you do with such honourable men? They spoke about the release of the drug report. My friend from Diego Martin Central dealt with that. We went all over the country with the manifesto which they accepted. They wrote that we changed it late and they did not know anything about it. That is what they say all the time. We explained the manifesto to the population.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Is the Member aware that a Minister of Government, a Minister in the Ministry of Industry and Enterprise wrote to the Minister of External Affairs asking that his name be cleared from allegations made in the drug report about him? A copy of that request was published in the *Trinidad Guardian*.

**Mr. Toney:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not aware of what the Member for Couva South has said.

An immediate action plan, page 5 of the manifesto—"Prepare and present to the Parliament the report of the commission of enquiry." I told the people of Toco/Manzanilla that this is what we were going to do. What am I going to tell them now; that it must be censored as a certain report was censored? Would they not turn around and say as the vast majority of the population is saying now about that report, that we are attempting to hide something? This is what people are saying about that report, the report about which you called in the distinguished and learned professor of the country and the region, Dr. Selwyn Ryan. People are saying they are trying to hide something. This is what people are saying. This is not Joseph Toney saying that. People are saying that on the streets: "I wonder what they are trying to hide. Who are they protecting?"

We made a pledge to the population and we have fulfilled that pledge. The damage that the illicit use of drugs has done and is doing to the population, especially the young population, can in no way be measured with all this talk about parliamentary privilege and so on, the use of Parliament for the release of that drug report. When one looks at the damage being done to young people as a result of that, I say that the drug report was properly released.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Could you give way to a question? Could you state whether any of those persons whose names were mentioned in the drug report have been brought to trial and if so, could you indicate what is the success ratio?

**Mr. Toney:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am in no position to answer the question posed by the Member for Couva South.

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Then we have the issue of corruption. Can one look at the whole issue of parliamentary privilege when one is dealing with the issue of corruption? Must we protect our parliamentary privileges and sit on the issue of corruption? When the critics start speaking about the use of parliamentary privilege, these are some of the questions we have to ask ourselves. As I said earlier on in my contribution, for far too long, this whole idea of parliamentary privilege has been used to hide and to sweep under the carpet the whole matter of corruption.

It is my submission that the use of parliamentary privilege must now be used to expose corruption in whatever form or fashion. This is why —

**Mr. Sudama:** Who is your leader?

**Mr. Toney:** Member for Oropouche, you had your chance to talk, why did you not get up and talk. Get up and say something, let us hear your views on the matter. Who is your leader? I do not know who is your leader.

This is why it saddens me to know that in these issues—

*[Interruption]*

*Debate ceased when Parliament was invaded by armed men.*

#### WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

#### Canadian Farm Labour Project

**48. Mr. Basdeo Panday** (*Couva North*) asked the Minister of Labour, Employment and Manpower Resources:

Would the hon. Minister state the names and addresses of the persons selected for the Canadian Farm Labour Project for the years 1987, 1988 and 1989?

**The Minister of Labour, Employment and Manpower Resources (Hon. Albert Richards):** Mr. Speaker, hereunder is the list of names as requested by the Member for Couva North.

#### APPENDIX I

#### MINISTRY OF LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER RESOURCES

#### CARIBBEAN SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' PROGRAMME—1987

#### LIST OF WORKERS WHO TRAVELLED TO CANADA

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<u>NAMES</u>	<u>ADDRESSES</u>	
		James Smith
		Samraj Sonny
		Julien Bishop
Kelvin Bhulai	Chaguanas	Kemraj Heeraman
Rawlins Indarsingh	Gasparillo	Phillip Juanetty
Sonilal Jagmohan	San Fernando	Loxtion Lessee
Ramace Soogrim	Cunupia	Cassian Liverpool
Nestor Marcano	Sangre Grande	Kissoon Mattaw
Carlos Mayers	Rio Claro	Irwin Morales
Rawle Mohammed	Tobago	Carl Gilbert
Samuel Henry	Longdenville	Jaipersad Rampersad
David Regis	San Fernando	Fred Ransome
Titus Simon	Princes Town	Ramesh Mattan
Robert Reece	Couva	Stanley Sampath
Curtis Bobb	Toco	Pramenath Boodram
Gaston Graham	Matelot	Everald Sampson
Lutchman Mahabir	Penal	Edwin Alfred
Robert Jones	Erin	Lalbeharry Attamdeo
Evans Cummings	New Grant	Franklin Beharry
Madho Mungal	Barrackpore	Jaimungal Boodram
Robert Punjabi	Scarborough	
Linton Sawyer	Couva	
Christopher Sherwood	Cedros	
Harrilal Seemungal	Couva	
Teemal Sidhoo	Penal	
Augustine Figaro	Moruga	Randolph Carvalho
Etwaroo Gannesh	Couva	Liniss Cooper
Doodol Kanhai	Barrackpore	Aaron Baptiste
Daniel Kowlessar	Couva	Rajnarine Boodoo
Richard Lee	San Fernando	Moon Kissoon
Ramdath Mahadeo	Penal	Pryar Ragoobar
John D. Morgan	Palo Seco	Larry Voisin
Ragoobar Singh	New Grant	Stanley Archibald
<del>Kinkin Rampersad</del>	Barrackpore	
Rampersad Sookram	Barrackpore	Hardase Basdeo

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Rupan Sankar	Penal	Sham Boodoo
Baliram Sankar	Couva	Oswald Cuffy
Martin Clarke	California	Ian Francis
Rambellas Mohan	Barrackpore	John Guevara
Dexter Stewart	Point Fortin	Dayaram Ramlochan
Giraraj Seunarine	Chaguanas	Hanuman Singh
Saroop Balkaran	Penal	David Sobers
Sookdeo Bhajan	Barrackpore	Felix Rodriguez
Ramnarine Bissoo	Debe	Samson Henry
Merrel Emmanuel	Diego Martin	Errol Jordan
Aurick John	Princes Town	Kenny Lorainey
Christopher Quashie	California	Mervyn Waterman
David Ramlackhan	Williamsville	Hugh Anderson
Paras Ramkissoon	Chaguanas	Theron Allan
Lester Saunders	Morvant	Burton Ayres
Angelo Woodroofe	Carapichaima	Elliott Coutou
Travis Butler	Port of Spain	David Goolcharan
		Hayden James
Cecil John	Cunupia	Deosaran Ramlal
Wayne Mc Clean	Tobago	Saron Ramsampath
Frederick Richards	Siparia	Ralph Sirju
Junior Mc Henson Williams	Tobago	Arthur Alexander
Sean Williams	Arouca	George Alexander
Anthony Shoy	Princes Town	Neville Benjamin
Devanand Balkaran	Couva	Lalchan Bhoonasar
Bhunaiswar Bally	Penal	Franklin Francois
Dean Basdeo	Debe	Sherwin Joseph
Ramraj Goordeen	Penal	Rafeek Mohammed
Balram Harnarine	Gasparillo	Sugbir Moonasar
Madan Kassie	Debe	Imtiaz Khan
Ramdath Luthawan	Morne Diablo	Teeluck Mungal
Sohan Siewkumar	Avocat	Motilal Ramcharan
Clyde Vespry	Cedros	
Martin Alleyne	Tunapuna	
Govin Balramsingh	Debe	

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Dasnath Deosingh	Couva	Michael Ransome
Steve Cottle	Laventille	Jagdeo Samaroo
Neville Marshall	Petit Valley	Peter Stephen
Ainsworth Alexander	Erin	Boyon Sudama
Radul Allemaney	Mamoral	Marlon Williams
Donovan Alleyne	Tobago	Vernon Bernard
Samaroo Basdeo	Clark Rochard PO.	Joseph Mason
Doonath Bridgemohan	Couva	Neville Knights
Reynold Davy	Port of Spain	Errol Lawrence
Krishna Deo	Couva	Anthony St. Ange
William Henry	Cunupia	Saheed Mohammed
		Chalitar Ramdass
		Narace Ramlakhan