



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
**MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**EXPRESS ARTICLE ON STATEMENTS MADE BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE  
ON A COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT AT THE NIB IS EXTREMELY  
MISLEADING AND UNTRUTHFUL**

The Minister of Finance, the Honourable Colm Imbert, M.P., has taken note of an extremely misleading and untruthful headline and article in the Daily Express today, regarding statements he made in the Senate yesterday regarding a recent collective agreement between the National Insurance Board (NIB) and the Public Services Association (PSA).

The Express has published a headline in bold print on Page 3 of today's paper as follows:

**“Imbert: Govt Can't Pay \$7B to NIB Workers”.**

However, the Minister never said this or anything close to this and this untruthful headline and story have created mischief and caused confusion within the NIB and the Trade Union.

For the record, the question posed to the Minister by Senator Wade Mark was as follows:

*“Can the Minister indicate when all outstanding arrears arising out of a recently concluded collective agreement between the PSA and the NIB would be paid?”*

And the answer given by the Minister was:

*“This is a complicated matter, since the collective agreement in question was not authorized by the Ministerial Committee established to monitor the conduct of wage and salary negotiations, now entitled the Human Resource Advisory Committee of Cabinet, as required by the directions given by the Minister of Finance, through the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, to the Chairman of the National Insurance Board on March 25, 2011, and is thus at*

*variance with the provisions of Section 9 of the National Insurance Act Chap. 32:01.*

*The consequences of the agreement are also far-reaching and could result in tremendous expense to taxpayers, if used as a precedent. Accordingly, the Minister of Finance is seeking advice on the matter.”*

Further, in response to a follow up question from Senator Mark, the Minister said that if the wage increase in the NIB agreement was applied to ALL workers in the PUBLIC SECTOR, it would cost taxpayers \$7 Billion.

The Express chose to mislead the public by falsely claiming that the Minister said that the cost to the NIB was \$7 Billion. In other words, according to the Express, the entire \$7 Billion was to be paid to the NIB workers. It is little wonder that NIB workers are confused about this issue today, as a direct result of the mischief of the Express.

Further, in its quest to scandalize and distort the Minister’s true statements, the Express diminished and minimized the real issue, which is that the collective agreement was unauthorized and in breach of a Ministerial directive given in 2011 under the former UNC Government.

This is highly irresponsible journalism at its worst.

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The Honourable Colm Imbert M.P.  
Minister of Finance