

Leave of Absence

Friday, January 26, 1996

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 26, 1996

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Member for Arouca South (Mrs Camille Robinson-Regis) has communicated with me and leave of absence has been granted to her from today's sitting.

PAPER LAID

1. The Shop (Opening Hours) (Amendment) Order, 1996.

[The Minister of Planning and Development (Hon. Trevor Sudama)]

SPIRITUAL BAPTISTS (SHOUTERS) LIBERATION DAY

The Prime Minister (Hon. Basdeo Panday): Mr. Speaker, the Shouters, the practitioners of the Spiritual Baptist faith, was formed some time prior to 1917. It was a new religion in the Colony at the time and because of the manner in which the men and women practised their faith, numerous complaints reached the Government about "disturbance of the peace" by *inter alia*, shouting, ringing of bells and chanting by the "Shouters". Thus on November 28, 1917 an Ordinance was passed in the Colony, which made illegal the activities of the Shouters.

The Ordinance entitled "An Ordinance to render illegal indulgence in the practices of the body known as the Shouters" prohibited; *inter alia*:

- (i) any person to hold or take part in or to attend any Shouters' meeting never to be held in any part of the Colony indoors or in the open air at any time of day or night;
- (ii) any Shouters' house to be erected or maintained or to shut up any person in any Shouters' house for the purpose of initiating such person into the ceremonies of the Shouters.

The Ordinance also made it lawful for any party of members of the Constabulary Force to enter, without a warrant, at any time of the day or night

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any house, estate, land or place in or on which the officer may have good grounds to believe or suspect that any Shouters' meeting was being held.

The existence of the above law thus stigmatized the followers and believers of the faith and served to drive the religion underground.

The Shouters' Prohibition Ordinance was repealed on March 30, 1951 because of the tremendous struggle of the leaders of the faith at that time, including the Rev. Griffith. This however, allowed the practitioners of the religion the freedom to practise their religion without fear of reprisals.

Since then the "Shouters" have made numerous requests for a symbol which would represent their triumph over the adversity which they faced in the past. This symbol was to be a public holiday on March 30, the day commemorating the removal of prohibitions on the Spiritual Baptists (Shouters) Movement.

Under the previous administration, Cabinet by Minute No. 477 of March 26, 1992 agreed that the entire question of public holidays be referred to a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament. The Members of the Joint Select Committee were appointed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on December 14 and 20, 1994 respectively. I need not bore you with the composition of the Members of that Committee.

However, the Committee recommended, *inter alia*, that Government declare March 30 a public festival, to commemorate the lifting of the prohibitions on the Spiritual Baptists (Shouters) Movement.

The United National Congress at the time in Opposition, was of the view that a public holiday should have been granted to the Spiritual Baptists (Shouters) of Trinidad and Tobago and in the period preceding the 1995 general elections had promised that, if elected, they would grant a public holiday.

In keeping with that promise the Prime Minister met on Friday, January 19, 1996 with the Council of Elders of the Spiritual Baptists (Shouters) of Trinidad and Tobago at which time the question of the designation of a public holiday was discussed—the holiday to be known as "Spiritual Baptists (Shouters) Liberation Day" and that the day be March 30. Other representations made at the meeting are to be taken up with the respective line Ministries and I shall indicate what those are later on. The Prime Minister also met with the Inter Religious Organization (IRO) on Monday last when the opportunity was taken to solicit the views of the members of that Organization on the matter. The IRO had no objection to the designation of the public holiday and also indicated that membership in the IRO

was open to the Spiritual Baptists (Shouters) of Trinidad and Tobago upon application.

I wish to inform this honourable House that Cabinet by Minute No. 212 of January 25, 1996 agreed as follows:

- (a) in accordance with the provisions of section 4 of the Public Holidays and Festivals Act, Chap. 15:05, that:
 - (i) the schedule to the said Act be amended by the deletion of Easter Monday from the public holidays (specified therein);
 - (ii) commencing in 1996, March 30 of each year be appointed a Public Holiday to be known as Spiritual Baptists Liberation Shouters' Day, in recognition of the repeal of the 1917 Shouters Prohibition Ordinance on March 30, 1951. [*Desk thumping*]

The other matters raised, as I had indicated, on that occasion with the elders of the Spiritual Baptists Shouters Movement was that lands be leased to members of the Spiritual Baptist faith for the erection of schools and other facilities and that the buildings that were previously made available for the Spiritual Baptist faith be now granted to them. [*Desk thumping*]

1.40 p.m

I do not know what my Friends are clapping about, I said these were representations made to the Prime Minister.

3. During the period March 1—March 31 each year, the Spiritual Baptist community be given access to all Government media for the promotion and education of their faith. [*Clapping from the public gallery*]
4. That the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Education in combination, design and introduce such programmes that will inform and educate the children of the nation on the aspects of the Spiritual Baptists Shouters' beliefs and practices and in particular, the history and significance of the liberation day. [*Applause and desk thumping*].
5. They also made a request that, through the office of the Post Master General under the auspices of the relevant ministries, a series of stamps be issued which commemorate the said liberation day. [*Applause from public gallery*]

Further requests included that the—

Mr. Speaker: It is necessary to indicate to the strangers in our midst, that notwithstanding any applause that may come from Members of the House, it is not permissible for the audience in the public gallery to join in the applause however commendable what is being said.

Hon. B. Panday: Thank you kindly, Sir.

6. By public declaration from the office of the Prime Minister, all employees be advised of the right of members of the faith to freely wear garments as are deemed the requirement of their religion. In particular, head wraps as worn by the female members of the Spiritual Baptist community.
7. That the table of precedence of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago be revised to reflect the inclusion of the Spiritual Baptists of Trinidad and Tobago.
8. That the representatives of the Spiritual Baptist community be invited to participate in a meaningful way in such organizations which deal with the social planning and development of the nation.
9. That the Spiritual Baptist faith be allocated such subventions as are available for development and execution of social services programmes for the Spiritual Baptist faith.
10. That annual subventions currently granted to various organizations of the Spiritual Baptist faith be increased.
11. That in recognition of Reverend Archbishop Elton George Griffith, they propose that Woodford Square be renamed after him for his contribution to the Spiritual Baptist faith in the repealing of the Shouters Prohibition Ordinance.

Mr. Speaker, I emphasize that these were matters—except for the holiday which has been agreed upon—raised by the elders and I indicated to them that the Government will, through its line ministries engage in discussions with the movement to see if by discussions, some arrangements can be made to accommodate the Baptist movement on these requests that have been made by them.

Thank you kindly, Sir. *[Applause and desk thumping]*

Mr. Bereaux: Mr. Speaker, I just want to congratulate the Member for Couva North, on the clear and concise statement of his Government's policy. He gave

\$20 million to the members of his union as a backpay and has given a holiday to the Shouters' Baptists. I thank him for that.

Miss Nicholson: Sit down! You are jealous.

Hon. B. Panday: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Member is misleading the House. This Government did no such thing whatsoever, the payments made to Caroni were by agreement with the former Government.

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION (WASA)

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Ganga Singh): Mr. Speaker, on the authority of Cabinet, I wish to apprise this honourable House and the national community on the status of the private sector participation in the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA). In keeping with our party's election promises to revisit the interim operating agreement which was signed on Wednesday, November 1, 1995 just five days before the general election, Cabinet at its meeting on December 7, 1995 agreed, *inter alia*, to the appointment of a ministerial committee to consider private sector participation in the Water and Sewerage Authority. In my previous statement on Friday, December 8, 1995, I advised of the composition of this ministerial committee.

Mr. Speaker, as hon. Members are fully aware, concerns were expressed and continue to be expressed over the circumstances under which this Agreement was signed a mere five days before polling day. We on this side of the House share that concern and maintain that policy determination with respect to a sector as essential as water and wastewater, or any other sector for that matter, necessitates adherence to principles of transparency, openness, adequate public information and discussions before commitments with far-reaching implications for the country and its people are made.

We maintained and we still do, that with the signed Severn Trent\Wimpey Agreement, there clearly was much left to be desired with respect to openness and public information in the whole approach adopted for moving this sector towards viability and an improved level of service for the country. That unwillingness to bring the people of the country into the decision-making process was a signature hallmark of the former regime. All their transactions in the utility sector were shrouded in mystery, and provided fertile ground for rumours and speculation.

That old political culture of governance is no more. The Government of national unity proceeds on the basis of transparency, openness and freedom of information.

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The ministerial committee met on nine occasions and in its deliberations interviewed the following persons/organizations:

1. chairman of the special negotiating team;
2. the acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance;
3. the chairman and senior executives of WASA;
4. the local representative of Lyonnaise Des Eaux in his personal capacity (Lyonnaise Des Eaux was the second highest ranked preferred proposer); and
5. representatives of Severn Trent/Wimpey.

The committee invited the relevant recognized unions and interviewed the National Union of Government and Federated Workers. It also considered and took note of the relevant reports, events, conditionalities of the multilateral loans; public concern on the whole issue of foreign and private participation in an essential service and a host of other factors.

Essentially, members of the ministerial committee were supplied with the following reports:

1. Task Force's report to review the production, supply and deliverability of water in Trinidad and Tobago;
2. Reconstituted Water Task Force's report to review and monitor the process for the selection of a private sector operator;
3. The request for proposals;
4. Evaluation Committee's report;
5. Special Negotiating Team's report;
6. Report of the sub-committee of special negotiating team which visited Severn Trent's UK office; and
7. The interim operating arrangement.

The ministerial committee noted the terms and conditionalities of several multilateral loans which have been negotiated such as the Water Sector Institutional Strengthening Project for US\$25 million funded by the World Bank, and the Beetham Sewerage Facilities Rehabilitation Project for US\$10 million

funded by the Caribbean Development Bank. The committee also noted the policy letter dated July 4, 1994 attached to the proposed medium-term rehabilitation programme loan of about US\$60 million. A total amounting to TT\$570 million.

One of the significant conditions of these loans is that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is required to appoint an experienced international firm to manage the water and wastewater services of the Water and Sewerage Authority.

1.50 p.m.

The Interim Operating Agreement, including its 15 annexes, was executed on November 1, 1995. The IOA places obligations on all three signatory parties. They are, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, WASA and the Trinidad and Tobago Water Services Limited. The latter is a special purpose company established and incorporated in Trinidad and Tobago by Severn Trent and Wimpey for the purposes of implementing the IOA.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that I had itemized the key features of the Agreement in this honourable House on the last occasion. These are as follows:

- No increase in tariffs during the period of the IOA.
- No mandatory reduction in staffing during the period of the IOA.
- Operational turnaround within three years after the commencement of the IOA.
- 61.4 per cent of the total management fee of US \$9 million is payable only on the achievement of specific performance targets which have been agreed upon and form an integral part of the Agreement.
- The Government of Trinidad and Tobago assumption of all liabilities and obligations of WASA existing or accrued due and payable at the effective date of the IOA.
- Establishment of an in-house specialist procurement unit within WASA and an external special unit within TTWS which will function as a purchasing unit.

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- Establishment of a government-appointed consultative committee comprising one government representative as chairman, two WASA representatives, and two TTWS representatives to monitor and facilitate continuous consultation on implementation of the IOA.
- A loan from the operator to WASA of up to TT \$450 million to fund the cash shortfall incurred over the three-year period of the IOA.
- The IOA also provides for the cessation of obligations in the event that the agreement does not become effective within six months after the execution date of November 1, 1995; that is, at the end of April, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of the deliberations several issues were raised and the ministerial committee focused *inter alia* on five major issues:

- (i) whether transparency was observed in the selection process;
- (ii) whether a substantial portion of management fees of US \$9,083,210. should be tied to the achievement of specific performance targets greater than the negotiated figure of 61.4 per cent;
- (iii) whether the establishment and operation of a procurement unit was the most appropriate and efficient system to adopt; and
- (iv) the full extent of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago's obligations to guarantee loans provided under the IOA.

The ministerial committee also considered whether local management capability existed to manage the turnaround of WASA and whether the local private sector had the opportunity to participate in the bidding process.

Mr. Speaker, the ministerial committee noted the following:

- (i) Transparency in the Selection Process:

In order to ensure that a bid solicitation from prospective proposers was carried out in an objective, open and transparent manner and in accordance with set criteria, the ministerial committee examined the whole selection process. Briefly, 21 expressions of interest were received in response to a press advertisement which was placed in both local and foreign print media including the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times*. No local private sector organization participated in the bidding process. At the completion of the prequalification exercise, five international operators were selected to submit proposals:

- Anglian Water International (UK);
- Lyonnaise Des Eaux (France):
- Sair International (France);
- Severn Trent Water International (with Wimpey) (UK);
- Thames Water International (UK)

Proposers were required to submit proposals in three separate mandatory envelopes, that is, Technical, Financial and Supplementary. The ministerial committee was satisfied that the selection process was transparent with respect to the Technical and Financial proposals, and there were clearly prescribed criteria for evaluation and scoring points with respect to these two envelopes.

However, with respect to the evaluation of the Supplementary proposal—envelope 3—the ministerial committee noted and questioned the lack of prescribed criteria for evaluation. This lack of prescribed criteria for the third envelope introduced an element of subjectivity, this mitigated against transparency in the selection process.

(ii) Financial Arrangements:

The request for proposal documents highlighted the funding requirements and terms and conditions. Briefly, prior to the beginning of the IOA, all WASA's existing liabilities, including accounts payable, are to be assumed by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. WASA's financing shortfall appearing during the course of the IOA was expected to be fulfilled by a loan from the operator to WASA. Should this loan be insufficient to cover WASA's financing shortfall, WASA is to have access to a revolving back-up facility to be arranged for WASA by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The loan up to a maximum of \$450 million, being provided by Severn Trent/Wimpey, although not expressly guaranteed by Government, in fact, removes any financial risks to Severn Trent/Wimpey with respect to the repayment of the loan interest and the principal, which ultimately ensures that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has the liability for the loan. This method of securing the loan is certainly equivalent to a government guarantee.

Furthermore, the funding agreement requires the establishment of a separate government guaranteed overdraft facility on behalf of WASA to meet short-term fluctuations in the working capital needs of WASA. This facility is to be capped at TT \$30 million.

(iii) Procurement Unit:

The IOA contract envisages the establishment of an in-house specialist procurement unit within WASA and an external special unit within TTWS which will function as a purchasing unit.

(iv) Management Contract:

The IOA with TTWS is a three-year management contract and does not allow for equity participation of sale of assets. Neither does it guarantee TTWS any long-term concession. It also allows for termination of contract if the operator does not perform efficiently.

Having considered all the issues involved, the ministerial committee was faced with three options:

- Option 1 - to repudiate the agreement;
- Option 2 - to implement the agreement in its current form;
- Option 3 - to renegotiate certain elements of the agreement.

Option 1:

The ministerial committee considered the implications of repudiating the agreement signed on November 1, 1995. Apart from the possibility of lengthy and costly litigation there could be serious financial implications touching on investment flows from multi-lateral and other financial institutions into the country. Further, there would be the need to restart the process of seeking a new operator and all its consequential implications and delays. During this process the situation which required the intervention of an operator in the first place would be further exacerbated and further hardship would be placed on the population.

Mr. Speaker, following the execution of the IOA on November 1, 1995, and in accordance with clause 8. 1 of the Agreement, WASA has in fact authorized the mobilization of TTWS resources in Trinidad and Tobago to begin the transitional agreements. Consequently, WASA has already made a number of payments to TTWS accessing and utilizing World Bank funding:

Advance Mobilization Fee	-	US \$392,685
Pre-Project Preparation Payments	-	US \$583,056.

2.00 p.m.

Transitional payments amounting to US \$396,663 and an Invoice of US \$252,663 are still outstanding.

Options 2 and 3—Renegotiation

The Ministerial Committee, in discussions with Severn Trent/Wimpey, introduced new proposals not previously included or considered under the existing IOA. These new proposals were:

- (i) Provision of a Hardship Relief Programme: This is a proposal to provide for a relief of hardship related to payment of water and sewerage rates initially targeted at one of the most vulnerable sections of the community, i.e. old age pensioners and recipients of social assistance.
- (ii) Emphasis on a Customer Service Approach;
- (iii) A new system to reduce Customer Payment Problems;
- (iv) Dry Season Management Programme;
- (v) Adequate Supplies to the South West Region;
- (vi) Maintenance of Standpipes; and
- (vii) Proper procedures be provided to allow for open scrutiny of the Procurement Unit.

The Ministerial Committee secured the Agreement of Severn Trent/Wimpey to these new proposals which would amount to a fairly significant improvement to the existing agreement.

Cabinet has taken a decision to appoint a team comprising officials of the Ministry of Public Utilities, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Legal Affairs and Counterpart Consultants to the Ministry of Public Utilities to concretize these new terms with Severn Trent/Wimpey.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side are fully committed to open Government. We want to assure the population that matters of national importance which require policy determination would be fully articulated before the national community

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prior to commitments being made. Mr. Speaker, we are also extremely concerned with the present water situation in the country which will certainly get worse if immediate remedial measures are not taken. More than 70 per cent of the population receive inadequate supplies. There are many areas in this country which do not even receive weekly supplies. This is an untenable and unacceptable situation. My Government recognises that measures must be introduced to address these fundamental problems and steps be taken, in the short term, to improve and implement an equitable water distribution system. My Government sees a time frame of about three years to bring about a fundamental change in the water sector.

Having regard to all the circumstances and subject to the insertion of the new terms which I have outlined, my Government has decided to implement the Interim Operating Agreement. My Government will ensure that there is a strong monitoring regime so that the terms and conditions of this management contract are fulfilled.

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

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, before we go to the next item, for the avoidance of doubt, I simply want to indicate to hon. Members that we are on the item of Statements by Ministers, and the intervention by the Member for La Brea in the statement which he made was not, in fact, regular—

Mr. Sudama: Totally out of order.

Mr. Speaker:—which provoked the honourable Prime Minister to rise on what he termed a point of order, was improper, and I want to indicate that under the item headed Statements by Ministers, it is only the Ministers who will be permitted to make statements. Thank you.

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Are you rising to question my ruling?

Mr. Manning: No Sir, I have never questioned the ruling of the Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: What is the point on which you got up?

Mr. Manning: I would like to ask a question of the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it to question what I just said?

Mr. Manning: It is to ask a question of the Speaker.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the honourable Prime Minister rose a few minutes ago on a point of order. The practice that has been established by you since you have taken the Chair is that whenever someone rises on a point of order the—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: I have been at pains to point out that what the Member for La Brea did is not regular, and anything that followed on that goes the same way.

Mr. Manning: Is also not regular.

Mr. Valley: Mr. Speaker, just for my own clarification in helping me to direct my Members—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Would you please take your seat, I am on my legs. Could we move to the next item, please.

UNITARY STATE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Mr. Patrick Manning (*San Fernando East*): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to move the following Motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED that this honourable House reaffirm its commitment to the Unitary State of Trinidad and Tobago.

This Motion has come up for debate in this Parliament at a time when the search for proper arrangements to govern the conduct of affairs in Tobago is in an advanced state of evolution and, indeed, continuing. Mr. Speaker, it has come up at a time when, in the international community, integration movements of all types are developing and continuing to develop. Further, Mr. Speaker, the search for proper arrangements in Trinidad and Tobago in respect of the relationship between Tobago and Trinidad, is a search that is reflected elsewhere in the world as integration movements develop.

Permit me, Mr. Speaker, to draw your attention to the fact that many of these integration movements begin and have begun essentially in the economic sphere, with a clear statement of intent in many instances to take it beyond the economic, the political integration being the final and most advanced stage of the integration process.

Mr. Speaker, one of the best examples of that process is the movement taking place in Europe at this time, and it is a long process of necessity, the way it has happened in Europe. It does not necessarily have to be as long elsewhere, but the

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way it has happened in Europe, makes it not only a long process, but an examination of that process itself and the various stages through which the process has gone would suggest that arriving at final agreements on this matter is not easy.

In the case of Europe we have had the European Common Market, an economic integration process, and not too long ago, after so many years of the Common Market, the Maastricht treaty was signed which has taken that process into a new phase. Eventually, Mr. Speaker, and I am in no position to say—I do not think anybody is in a position to say how long it will take—but eventually, what is sought by the Governments and countries involved in that process is a political union. Today the European union, at 320 million people, is one of the largest movements in the world.

2.10 p.m.

The developments in the Soviet Union appear to go contrary to that. *[Interruption]* I seek your protection, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members on the Government Benches, the Member for San Fernando East is on his legs and is asking for the protection of the Chair. It is not right that one should interrupt the Member during the course of his presentation which could possibly have the effect of putting him off. I would ask hon. Members to refrain from interrupting the contribution of the hon. Member. Thank you.

Mr. Manning: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker for your protection. You are absolutely right. The intent of the intervention is to put the Member for San Fernando East off, but hon. Members opposite will understand that that is a time-worn trick, that those of us who have spent some considerable time in here can easily handle and dispose of. It is entirely to no avail. I asked your protection to ensure that the dignity of this Parliament does not continue to be undermined by hon. Members opposite. I thank you kindly for your protection.

The Soviet Union and the developments arising out of the break-up of the Soviet Union appear to go counter to the integration processes that have been taking place in several parts of the world. In the case of the Soviet Union, I want to draw the attention of hon. Members to the fact that the break-up of the Soviet Union has been a consequence of a breakdown of communism there and elsewhere in the world. In fact, it was as a result of a rejection of a particular political process as the countries which formerly were part of that union sought to

identify a different kind of political relationship, even as they recognised that the economic process is the best area in which they can start and the area in which, as it were, the lubrication of that process can easily be effected.

The upshot of that is the Commonwealth of Independent States, again an economic association. I have no doubt that over time it is entirely possible, and perhaps very likely, having regard to what is taking place all around the world, that we can see those countries coming together in the deepening of their arrangements as they give effect to the recognition that it is in the interest of their peoples to have a much closer association among the 15 states that are involved.

Not too far from home, in South America, we have the MERCOSUR arrangement, which, again, is economic in nature, involving as it does, the countries at the southern cone of South America. But the framers of that movement hold as one of their major objectives over time—the process is not necessarily a quick one; it is a slow process—the logical culmination of those efforts to be a political association of some kind.

Important in all of this will be the history of the countries that are involved and the history of their past association as they seek to identify the kind of political arrangement that will be appropriate in their circumstances as they seek to foster the integration movement, all of which is merely a vehicle for improving the standard of living and attaining an appropriate standard of living to which all their populations aspire.

We have the Andean Pact which is the same thing. We have also the Central American Common Market. Closer to home, involving Trinidad and Tobago, is the Association of Caribbean States in which we, while in Government, had the great pleasure of playing an important role in its formation. Even as we involve ourselves in the humble beginnings of the Association of Caribbean States, we know that the desire of those who have been the architects of this Association in the first instance, is eventually a political desire as we seek to achieve all that I have indicated in respect of other parts of the world; similar integration movements in similar circumstances.

In 1991, an initiative was announced by us which involved economic and eventually political association—and in this instance it was expressly stated, political association—between Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Guyana. That approach came about because of a recognition of the advantages to be gained by the respective populations involved. We are small countries. Trinidad and Tobago

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is a country merely of 1.4 million people and countries that are significantly larger than ours have accepted the fact that notwithstanding their size, notwithstanding the resources that they possess, human and otherwise, there are still major advantages to be gained as they expand the size of their populations to an even greater extent by association with other countries, and as they seek to expand the range of resources that are available to the collective population. The synergies that are involved are not lost on the political leaders of those movements, and therefore, they move in that direction.

The trend worldwide today is towards integration rather than separation. There are some instances around the world in which movements towards separation have taken place. I draw your attention to the very long war that took place when Biafra, one of the states of Nigeria, sought to secede from the Nigerian Federation. The Nigerian government, in its wisdom, took the view that not only was the movement illegal, but that if Biafra secedes, it was not going to affect just Biafra itself, but all the people of Nigeria. Therefore, a war was fought, the federal government taking military steps in the case of Nigeria to ensure that there was no fragmentation of that movement, but rather that the geographic area and the resources associated with that geographic area, are resources that are available, not just to the people of Biafra, but continue to be available to all the people of the state of Nigeria.

I need not go into the details of the formation of the states of India and Pakistan and what that has led to over time. Secession movements around the world are movements that have turned out to be very controversial; to be very divisive and are movements that have led to great suffering in some instances among the populations that find themselves, whether they are willing participants or not, in that situation largely as a result of the activities of some politicians.

So as we look at the model, as we continue our journey to find an appropriate arrangement that will govern the conduct of relations between Tobago and Trinidad, as we seek to find an arrangement that more closely approximates the aspirations of the people of Tobago and the people of Trinidad, we ought to take cognisance of all these developments around the world.

2.20 p.m.

In the case of Trinidad and Tobago it is not difficult to demonstrate that secession, the separation of Tobago from Trinidad, is not going to benefit anybody, and least of all the people of Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, for 10 years discussions took place at the level of the United Nations in respect of new arrangements to govern the conduct of the laws of the state. It culminated in the establishment of new laws for the sea bed and how that area is to be legally administered. In 1982—I think the city was Caracas—after 10 years of discussions, a new treaty was signed involving new arrangements for the law of the sea. Among other things, it puts certain countries in a position to benefit from the fact that they are not single territories but comprise a number of islands. Trinidad and Tobago is one of those; and in our case, it was not just a question of Trinidad and a question of Tobago. There were also a number of islands found in the general area which, based on the nature of the treaty that was signed, had implications for the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone associated with an archipelagic state as Trinidad and Tobago.

Arising out of that agreement, Trinidad and Tobago became an archipelagic state; that is to say, whereas in the past, the territorial sea for Trinidad and Tobago was measured from the coastline of Tobago and from the coastline of Trinidad; on the basis of the new arrangements that have been arrived at—this new United Nations' treaty—the territorial sea is now measured from a baseline that is determined by drawing a line that includes the outermost islands associated with Trinidad and Tobago. Darien Rock, which is a rock off the Southeast coast has had the effect of moving that baseline seaward, therefore expanding the size of the territorial sea, thereby expanding the size of the exclusive economic zone from which that territorial sea limit is determined.

We are now an archipelagic state and one of the reasons this is so significant to us is that there are resources on the sea bed that extend to a 200-mile limit which determines the extent of our exclusive economic zone. Even if the resources there today have not been fully identified or quantified, or even if the technology that is required to fully exploit those resources is not fully developed, we have the question of future generations which all governments, parliamentarians and people who have responsibility for governing the conduct of political and other affairs of any state, cannot afford to ignore.

So, as we declared Trinidad and Tobago an archipelagic state, and took steps to effect that by the Territorial Sea Act Chap. 1:51 [*Interruption*] It is a different Act, Mr. Speaker.

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As we took steps to implement that Act, in fact, we took advantage of the symbiotic relationship that exists where Tobago and Trinidad come together not just for the benefit of Trinidad or of Tobago, but for the mutual benefit of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. It is most important.

If, therefore, Tobago were to secede from Trinidad, or Trinidad to secede from Tobago for that matter, one of the immediate effects of that would be that the archipelagic state is impaired—it might still be archipelagic, but we would have to look into those details—but certainly the extent of the exclusive economic zone would be considerably reduced in size; and if the size of the zone is reduced to that extent, the resources that would have been available to an archipelagic state of Trinidad and Tobago would be seriously curtailed. It would in due course, have implications for the development of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

It is therefore desirable to have an association between Trinidad and Tobago if only for economic reasons and if only for the fact that those economics, in due course, could assume a larger and larger level of significance and importance in the quality of life and the standard of living of the people of both Trinidad and of Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I have not gone into—and I do not propose to go into—some of the dangers associated with a secession movement, not to mention the fact that one now has to delineate what would be waters for Tobago and what would be waters for Trinidad; the arguments that surround that; the time it would take and so forth. I do not need to go into it at this time, suffice it to say that it is in the mutual interest of the people of both Tobago and Trinidad to stay together and to ensure that we continue in some kind of political association. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, having agreed on the advantages of that political association, one of the things we now have to consider is what would be the nature of that association. In determining the nature of that association, one cannot do it purely on economic considerations. There are significant social considerations involved in that such as the historical antecedents.

In the same way that the United States of America came together in a particular arrangement, based on the history of the individual states; in the same way that the Commonwealth of Independent States—the successor organization

to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic came together against a certain background—the demise of communism and so forth; in the very same way the nature of the association between Tobago and Trinidad cannot afford to ignore the social antecedents. I make the point at this stage, but it would, in fact, be developed by some of the other Members on this side who would make a contribution in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, it is generally accepted that the highest form of political integration is the unitary state. That is generally accepted, but it is not the only form of political integration. One could have a federation—and federations exist all around; the United States of America is a federation; Canada is a federation—but there is one thing that is common to federations; that is, effectively, you are dealing with "independent" states. Whether they went independent and reverted or however they arrived at it, effectively there is a high level of autonomy within the states themselves and a general agreement that it is in their interest to have a federal government which—because of the way they perceive their own national interest—would be authorized to discharge certain functions on their behalf. One of the simplest forms right now is the arrangement in Australia.

2.30 p.m.

The states in Australia got together—they are all independent states—and decided to set up a federal government in their interest because they felt that the federal arrangement was the best arrangement to discharge some of their functions. In the case of Australia, it started off essentially as a national security; external defence and foreign affairs. That is, perhaps, one of the simplest forms of a federation.

What is important is not just the fact that the states have agreed to do that, but having agreed the states also recognized that such an agreement carries with it an obligation to fund the operations of the federal government. Most important. And that is one of the reasons why the federal approach to an association between Tobago and Trinidad is not an approach that is relevant at this time. In very rough terms, Tobago raises—and there are those who will argue the figure—about \$50 million in revenue per year, and the expenditure on Tobago on an annual basis is of the order of \$500 million. That is the general expenditure and revenue pattern.

If Tobago sought to move immediately into a federal arrangement with Trinidad and Tobago what will happen immediately is that Tobago will have to raise its own revenue by whatever means to deal with its domestic situation and to

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make enough of a contribution to the funding of the operations of the federal government. And that is not all. It will call for a government in Tobago, a government in Trinidad and a federal government between Trinidad and Tobago. It is cumbersome, bureaucratic, and I dare say that we on this side do not believe that such an arrangement will meet with the aspirations of the people of Tobago and the people of Trinidad.

Last year when we held discussions with the Tobago House of Assembly we inserted a certain clause in the agreement which was agreed between both sides; a clause that recognized that in due course—it was never our intention to ensure that Tobago stay the way it is—Tobago can become self-sufficient financially. Therefore, we put in an arrangement in the law itself to take care of that eventuality and to ensure that Tobago is able to access excess funds and spend it in a way that it considers appropriate.

We would have moved at a more rapid pace to accelerate the day on which Tobago arrived at that position. Sadly, in the budget for 1996 we saw a reversal of that trend where the allocation in 1996 is lower on the development programme than the allocation for 1995. Therefore, it brings us to the unitary state.

I draw attention of hon. Members to the fact that while Trinidad and Tobago is a unitary state the Constitution does not expressly call it that. The Constitution sets out the essential elements of the association and it is those elements that identify Trinidad and Tobago as a unitary state. There are many models of a unitary state that could be used. The model that we consider most appropriate—and the search for it continues—for Trinidad and Tobago must take into account the views of the people of Tobago, the views of the people of Trinidad and Tobago [*Desk thumping*] and the aspirations of the people of Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the hon. Member for Tobago East was thumping his desk.

Miss Nicholson: He was cheering you.

Mr. P. Manning: He is entitled to do it. I certainly do not begrudge him and that is fine. There is an argument that I am sure he is going to raise but then, there are others on our side who will deal with the argument when it comes up. Let me not anticipate the hon. Members.

Mr. Speaker, a particular model. I wish to raise a question with you, and with hon. Members. Exactly who is a Tobagonian and exactly who is a Trinidadian? A person who was born in Tobago, lived 10 years in Tobago, now lives five years in Trinidad, what is he or she? Tobagonian or Trinidadian?

Mr. Panday: Trinboganian.

Mr. P. Manning: A Trinidadian? Somebody born in Trinidad, not a Trinidadian. The hon. Member for Couva South seems to have a special interest in what is taking place in the PNM. Perhaps, he will be well advised to restrict his immediate concern to what takes place in his own party as he will see in due course. *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to give some advice to the hon. Member for Couva South. One has to await the evening before determining how splendid the day has been. If I were him I would not talk so soon.

Somebody born in Trinidad, living in Trinidad 20 years, posted to work in Tobago by one of the agencies and having worked in Tobago for 10 years and being properly integrated in the economic and social life of Tobago, what is he or she? Trinidadian or Tobagonian? What happens to someone, who spent 20 years of his or her life in Tobago, and 20 years in Trinidad. Living in Tobago, born in Trinidad, what is he? The point I am making is—

Mr. Robinson: Stop talking to your deputy.

Mr. Speaker: Members, it may be necessary to protect the speaker. Please.

Mr. P. Manning: When we are dealing with the hon. Member for Oropouche, I assure you that I do not need your protection. He is trying to determine the paternity of the hon. Member for Diego Martin West, but at least, he knows who his father is.

Mr. Sudama: Do you know who is your father?

Mr. P. Manning: If you want a lively debate today, you will get it. What is that person? 20 years in Trinidad, 20 years in Tobago, born in Trinidad now living in Tobago, what is that person, a Tobagonian or a Trinidadian? I raise the question in this way because there are many people either born in Trinidad or born in Tobago who find themselves in a situation where they cannot determine whether they are a Trinidadian or a Tobagonian. In effect, it does not matter and it does not matter because Trinidad and Tobago today, is a unitary state. It is a

social consideration and I do not know there is an answer to the question. It is one of the social considerations to which reference was made that must be taken into account as one seeks to find an answer.

2.40 p.m.

Trinidad and Tobago has been associated since 1889, over 100 years as a unitary state. Within that period of time there has been intermarriage, travel, descendants of persons born in one island living in the next to the point where there is a significant body of opinion; and people who have ties to Tobago who live in Trinidad today. What happens between Trinidad and Tobago affects them.

In that search for an appropriate arrangement, acknowledging as we have done, that a unitary state is perhaps the purest form that we could find—there are various models of unitary state—in 1977 this matter formed the subject of a debate in this Parliament. I remember, Mr. Speaker, that you were present even though regrettably you had already taken your leave of us.

Mr. Maharaj: Regrettable for whom?

Mr. P. Manning: Regrettable for him.

Arising out of the deliberations designed to bring a new arrangement between Trinidad and Tobago, in 1978, this Parliament approved House Paper No. 6, 1978 in which the Parliament adopted a position. I think you voted for it, Mr. Speaker. It was a unanimous decision of the Parliament. Arising out of the policy position that was espoused in this House Paper, the legal draftsmen got to work and produced a Bill which was also approved by Parliament in 1980 as Act No. 37.

Miss Nicholson: What happened in between?

Mr. P. Manning: Mr. Speaker we could go through all the steps in between. I am just coming to the final conclusion. I am trying to reduce the foreplay and get to the knob of the matter.

In 1980 this Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, in seeking to give effect to the wishes of the Parliament itself as espoused in House Paper No. 6 of 1978, considered a draft bill and unanimously approved that item of legislation.

Mr. Robinson: Not unanimously.

Mr. P. Manning: You voted for it. Did you vote against it? You will have your chance. He walked out. He did not vote for; he did not vote against. Those

who were present in the Parliament voted unanimously for it. That is what unanimous means in the context of this Parliament. If the hon. Member for Tobago East felt that he should have walked out, then of course at least his behaviour is consistent. When he is unable to deal with a matter he just walks away from it. I hope the hon. Member for Couva North takes note of that particular quality.

As far as the Members of Parliament who sat at that time were concerned and I was one of them and you were, Mr. Speaker, the Parliament agreed unanimously to the legislation. There was not one dissenting voice. Parliament agreed unanimously that Act No. 37 of 1980, imperfect as it might have been, was supposed to be one that gave effect to the provisions of House Paper No. 6 of 1978. I am sure that at least one hon. Member opposite—because I can hear the grumbling from here—may want to contest that view. As you know, facts are stubborn things. They do not go away. The records of Parliament show that the House Paper was passed unanimously and so was the Bill that gave effect to the provisions of House Paper No. 6, Act No. 37 of 1980.

Even when that Act was passed—and you would remember the circumstances under which it was passed—there was the view that it might not have been perfect. One could never be sure because of the intricacies of this issue. It might not have been perfect but there was a determination on the part of Parliament at the time to put it in operation and if problems arose, then it would have been revisited. We can always seek to modify the provisions in the Act that give rise to any particular difficulty of one kind or the next. That was my understanding of it. That was the approach of the government and Parliament of which you and I were integral parts.

It was not long before problems began to develop in the operation of that particular piece of legislation. The crux of the matter was that section (1) of the Act—for the benefit of hon. Members may I place into the record—was the part of the Act that caused the trouble. It reads as follows:

“The Assembly shall formulate and implement policy on all matters referred to it by the Minister. . .”

There were those who took the view that by this provision in the legislation the formulation and implementation of policy went outside of any other consideration that may operate in Trinidad and Tobago. It gave the Assembly complete autonomy. If that were correct it would have fundamentally altered the

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arrangements by which Trinidad and Tobago are associated and it would have flown in the face of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago.

May I just read the Constitution in two important sections that are relevant to the matter under consideration. Section 75 (1) states:

“There shall be a Cabinet for Trinidad and Tobago which shall have the general direction and control of the government of Trinidad and Tobago and shall be collectively responsible therefor to Parliament.”

It makes two fundamental points; firstly, that the Cabinet has responsibility for all of Trinidad and Tobago, and secondly, that there is a check and balance on the executive authority that the framers of the Constitution considered appropriate and necessary to the extent that the Cabinet is responsible to Parliament. That is the rule.

Section 79 (1) takes it a step further. It states:

“The President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, may, by directions in writing, assign to the Prime Minister or any other Minister responsibility for any business of the government of Trinidad and Tobago, including the administration of any department of Government.”

In other words under the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago a Cabinet is established with responsibility for Trinidad and Tobago and ministers of that Cabinet have a responsibility, in the context of Cabinet government, for the discharge of functions assigned to them in Trinidad and Tobago. Any law that is formulated in this Parliament is done so within the context of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. That is to say that the Constitution is a set of rules and regulations on which we are all agreed and by which Trinidad and Tobago is governed. No law, unless it deliberately seeks to change the constitutional provision, can be superior to the Constitution. Instead any law unless it is done in a certain way is formulated and considered by this Parliament in the context of the constitutional arrangements.

2.50 p.m.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, to ascribe to section 21(1), “The Assembly shall formulate and implement policy on all matters”, a role that goes outside of the role contemplated for the Cabinet and for Ministers under sections 75 and 79 of

the Constitution, is to do violence to the Constitution and, in fact, in the system under which we operate, it is not so. The law is formulated in the context of the Constitution.

There were those who argued otherwise. That was the area which gave rise to all the confusion. What we sought to do, therefore, in the new arrangements which were negotiated between the Central Government and the House of the Assembly, last year, was to clarify this position. We clarified the position and removed all doubt in the execution of those functions. By section 16 of the new law that has been agreed between the House of Assembly and the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago—with your leave Mr. Speaker, I will just refer to the specific provision. *[Interruption]* Instead of the Minister of Planning and Development seeking to interfere with the Leader of the Opposition, I strongly suggest that he continues to interfere with the Minister of Finance as they try to work out who is responsible for what on that side. Just leave me alone, please! *[Interruption]* He can hardly protect himself.

It is clarified in section 16, as follows:

“Within the framework of national policy and subject to Part III, subsections (2), (3) and (4), the Assembly shall, in relation to Tobago, be responsible for the formulation and implementation of policy in respect of the following functions.”

And it spells them out—finance, economic planning, the environment, maintenance of infrastructure, community service, and so forth.

One of the major achievements of this draft bill was to clarify that position. As one who had had responsibility for administering Tobago at one time, I found that the interpretation of sections 21(1) and (2) of the Tobago House of Assembly Act, No. 37 of 1980, was a major source of conflict and that any revisiting of this issue—

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

Motion made, The hon. Member’s speaking time be extended by 30 minutes.
[Mr. K. Valley]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. P. Manning: Mr. Speaker, we sought to clarify the areas of doubt and to remove areas of unnecessary conflict in the arrangement. We thought that section

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21 was the most important area to be addressed in the first instance and we sought to clarify it and to put it in the law in a most definitive way which leaves no area for confusion, absolutely no doubt, in what is intended in terms of the responsibilities of Tobago and Trinidad.

Some take the other view—that section 21 gave complete control of policy implementation to the House of Assembly. But to do that would have amended the unitary state and would have introduced into it a fundamental element of federation, and with that would have come the responsibility to fund their own operations and to make some contribution to the Federal Government. If that were so, the law would have been most imperfect because it then would have meant that we would have needed to set up another tier of government—a federal arrangement that would look to oversee Trinidad and Tobago. It could not have been that even though there were those who were arguing it. We sought to update the arrangement to clarify that position and we did it by way of section 16.

We also sought, in negotiating those arrangements with the Assembly, to give effect to a view that had been expressed from time to time by a number of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago resident in Tobago, that there was a level of insecurity experienced by them because of an arrangement that at the drop of a hat could be ignored or changed by any government. So, it was not one item of legislation that we contemplated—there were two pieces. One was an amendment to the Constitution itself—not to change what the Constitution says in that sense, but to add to it.

The Constitution (Amdt.) Bill that had been drafted contemplated three things. One is that it would have entrenched in the Constitution the Tobago House of Assembly itself. The argument was that there was an Assembly, but that any government could come 10, 15 or 20 years down the road and by a stroke of the pen just remove it. We put it in the Constitution in such a way to make it entrenched, that is to say, that while it can be enacted into the law by a simple majority of the Parliament, to change it once it had become law required a special majority, which I daresay neither we at the time had, nor the coalition government of today has. They do not have the special majority and would not be able to change it like that. It would have entrenched in the Constitution, therefore, the Tobago House of Assembly as an entity and as an instrument for the proper management and administration of the affairs of Tobago.

3.00 p.m.

It did two other things, Mr. Speaker. It would have entrenched in the Constitution the Tobago Development Fund—not in the law, it is there in the law—which was designed to give the people who live in Tobago the security that several have indicated was a part of their aspiration. It was the Tobago Development Fund. Finally, an innovation in terms of the relationship between Tobago and Trinidad, the establishment of an Executive Council. All three formed part of a draft amendment to the Constitution establishing the House of Assembly, the Executive Council—which has certain functions under the law—and establishing the Tobago Development Fund. All these arose out of discussions at various levels, and particularly, in negotiations between the technical teams which had been set up by the Central Government and the Tobago House of Assembly, and eventually by the political teams which took over from the technical teams and sought to negotiate the arrangement to finality.

Our approach was to go as far as we possibly could, while preserving the Unitary State of Trinidad and Tobago. The Unitary State was the basic model. It started off that way. Many countries are going to take hundreds of years to get there. We are already there. It is our view that that was the best arrangement, the least cumbersome arrangement and the most efficient arrangement, notwithstanding all its inefficiencies. Therefore, the existence and preservation of the Unitary State were fundamental to the discussions that were held between the Central Government last year and the Tobago House of Assembly. We entrenched the Assembly, the Tobago Development Fund and the Executive Council.

The law itself is an example of what can be achieved when people sit around a table with a common goal, with sincerity and determination to arrive at an acceptable solution. That is our view. It is a model of that. While I am saying that, I acknowledge that even this law is not perfect. Mr. Speaker, you are a legal practitioner and you understand that any group of people, however well intentioned, who sit and draft laws always run the risk of over-looking or not properly understanding something or it might be imperfect drafting. Whatever it is, we recognized those possibilities and therefore, we, then representing the Central Government together with the House of Assembly—which incidentally is not controlled by the PNM, it is controlled by another party—sat around the table with a determination to once and for all, and as best as we could, remove some of the constraints and impediments that confronted the citizens of Trinidad and

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Tobago, resident in Tobago, as they sought to conduct their affairs. There are some administrative measures which are also associated with it.

If we on this side say that we are proud of what was achieved, it would be an understatement. We thought we had gone very far. In fact, we thought we had virtually gone to the limit. There are different models of a unitary state and it is always possible for someone to get up and say, well, you should have done this or that, instead of this. Fine! One can feel free to do so. The model that we have arrived at is one that is built on the law; Act No. 37 of 1980, which itself, as I had demonstrated earlier, arose from the collective wisdom of the Parliament of that day and was an expression of the will of the people of Trinidad and Tobago as expressed in their Parliament. We had Act No. 37 and we sought to build on that. In doing that, we took into account all the areas that had been a subject of controversy in the administration of the Act as it exists today.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to place into the records our concept of the Unitary State model that is being espoused. As I said before, the constitutional amendment entrenches the House of Assembly and it changes the way the Assembly is administered. It will now provide the Assembly with a presiding officer for Tobago, just as you are the presiding officer of the Parliament, as opposed to the former situation where there was only a Chairman of the Assembly. A presiding officer and a deputy presiding officer are now provided. At the same time, since an Executive Council is established, the law as we have drafted it contemplates the existence of a Chief Secretary—an Executive Council headed by a Chief Secretary. Of course, there is a Deputy Chief Secretary and the law goes on to say that the Executive Council shall comprise of a Chief Secretary, a Deputy Chief Secretary and no more than five other secretaries.

It has also removed a problem that we have today in the existing Assembly, where there is only one member of the PNM and he is in a political party different from the other members of the Assembly. One of the difficulties he has in the conduct of the people's business in Tobago, is that if he moves a Motion in the Assembly, he has nobody to second it. Therefore, he is unable to properly articulate, by way of resolutions and motions, points of view of the people of Tobago. To that extent the people of Tobago's interests are prejudiced in having other sides of the story heard.

The law now sets up a Chief Secretary and a minority leader. The minority leader is the person who commands the support of the majority of persons in

Opposition to those who run the Assembly. He is entitled to advise His Excellency, The President, to appoint one Councillor. It is a chamber of elected and nominated members. In the case of the minority leader, he can appoint one to deal with that problem. In the case of the Chief Secretary who is the majority leader, he can appoint three. So it is an Assembly of 12 elected people and four councillors, as they are called, nominated either by the Chief Secretary or by the minority leader.

There is also a Clerk of the Assembly, just as we have a Clerk of the House. There is a Chief Executive Officer who effectively has the function of a permanent secretary, and I am sure he would be in the same range as a permanent secretary, who is the accounting officer for the Assembly. It goes further because the whole question of dignity, stature and status is important in giving full effect to the aspirations of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago resident in Tobago. Therefore, while the salary, as we agreed in the law, of the Chief Secretary is set at the level of the salary of a Minister, and it was so even under the existing law, we took it a step further and provided the Chief Secretary with an official residence in lieu of a housing allowance, and an official car in lieu of a travelling allowance. At the same time, we have set the salaries of the secretaries at a level equivalent to that of a parliamentary secretary.

What that does immediately, Mr. Speaker, is to make the level of remuneration attractive enough so that some of the best brains available could see their way to making their services available at the level of the Assembly itself. It deals with another problem. I can say that following the drafting of the Act and its publication—and we have discussed it with people in different parts of Tobago—we found that those two provisions were particularly attractive to a number of persons who would have liked to make their contribution at that level, but who felt constrained from doing so, because of the remuneration levels. There were practicalities associated with it and they thought that the remuneration levels were not sufficiently attractive to deal with some of the commitments they had and from which they could not extricate themselves.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the law goes on to talk about how one is appointed and a number of other things. Another problem which arose is the method of contact between the Central Government and the Assembly itself. If the Assembly is to be made aware of Government's policy who does that? Does the Minister, who has overall responsibility under the Constitution, communicate with the

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Secretary? If that happens, one can get divergence with any point of view. There could be conflict between the view of the Minister and the view of the Secretary himself as to what Government's policy might be.

Therefore, the official line of communication was through the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister can convey Government's policy directly to the Chief Secretary who is head of the Executive Council which is the integral constitutional instrument of the Assembly. In that way there can be no doubt. More than that, the official contact between the Assembly and the Government is the Chief Secretary talking to the Prime Minister. In that way one can remove any possibility of doubt and confusion on the other side. We have removed an area that has been the subject of controversy and some considerable amount of confusion by putting into the law, such as we have drafted and agreed upon between the Government and the House of Assembly, that the official lines of contact will be the Chief Secretary dealing directly with the Prime Minister.

Also, recognizing that one is administering a place, there is a Constitution, Ministers have a responsibility and so forth, we also put into the law a clause that said, nothing in this law will prevent a Minister, or a Secretary for that matter, from dealing directly with each other. In other words, while policy is established, a Secretary and a minister can communicate, as part of what we consider an essential process in the proper administration of Tobago. If doubt arises, it falls to the Chief Secretary communicating with the Prime Minister to clarify. More than that, we have also put into the law a provision that devolves a collective responsibility on the Executive Council, in the same way that there is a collective responsibility of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago—a collective responsibility. The view that is espoused by any secretary is the view of the Executive Council of the Assembly, Secretaries cannot go off on their own as the hon. Minister of St. Augustine is prone to do from time to time, and articulate policy that may or may not be consistent with the policy of the Cabinet or the policy of the Executive Council of which he or she forms an essential part.

So that one will very well understand that we have sought to remove many of the constraints, many of the impediments that had given rise to controversy and conflict in the past. It also establishes the term of the Assembly for four years and a period of time during which an election has to be called after the dissolution of the Assembly. It also clarified the position in respect of the legislative functions of the Assembly. The Assembly was authorized to make bye-laws under this piece of legislation and that the bye-laws must be in support of and not in

derogation of any law existing in Trinidad and Tobago. There are bye-laws and therefore the Assembly cannot run off on its own and make law that goes counter to the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.

Even so, a provision has been put in place that the Assembly must publish in the *Gazette*, within 21 days, the particular bye-law and that the Parliament must consider it, subject to negative resolution of Parliament, within a 30-day period—30 days from the day of publication; a maximum of 51 days. In that way, if any conflict arises between Government policy or any existing law in the country and the bye-law that is articulated by the Tobago House of Assembly, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, as opposed to the Cabinet, will have a say on the matter and an opportunity to adjudicate on it. If the Parliament does not agree to the bye-law then the bye-law cannot stand; the Parliament is supreme. That supreme authority of the Parliament, evolving on it from the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago, talks about bye-elections, many of which one can familiarize oneself, in due course.

With respect to the functions of the Assembly we have dealt essentially with them. It is important to say that whereas in Act No. 37 of 1980, section 21 (1) and (2), some functions are made directly to the Assembly and the other functions are being made to the responsibility of the Assembly, if those things are referred to them. What we have done in that particular arrangement was to accord all to the Assembly, clarifying the position that it all takes place within the framework of national policy.

Another contentious area was the role of state enterprises and statutory boards. Before we get to that, let me just come back to the question of policy formulation. The law expressly states that the House of Assembly will have no jurisdiction in matters of national security or foreign affairs. It expressly states that the Assembly is free to make submissions to the Prime Minister in respect of any matter of policy that the Assembly considers important. It also includes areas for which the Assembly does not have a direct responsibility. So that even in areas of national security or foreign policy, there is the opportunity for the Assembly or the Executive Council to make available its news to the Central Government. The door is open in the law to allow that to happen. So that the Central Government will not only discuss the matter with the Assembly, but that the Central Government is free to take the views of the Assembly into account in the formulation of national policy. There was no restriction whatsoever on the

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Assembly in making recommendations to the Central Government in the formulation of national policy. That is very important also, Mr. Speaker.

In respect of state enterprises and public utilities the mechanism that we arrived at is as follows:

- (1) If any function has to be discharged in Tobago by a state enterprise or a public utility, discussions must take place between the particular body and the Assembly, and any agreement arrived at is reduced to writing.

In that way, there is no doubt, as the deliberations would be reduced to writing.

- (2) If there is an agreement the Assembly has a monetary responsibility in terms of the execution of the responsibilities of any state enterprise or any public utility in Tobago.

So if the Assembly is unhappy over the way something is being done members can easily talk with the state enterprise and they can discuss it, or one can go directly to the Prime Minister who is the Minister to administer the law.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to finance, all revenues raised and collected in Tobago are paid into the Tobago Development Fund and they are to be considered by the Assembly as an advance on the annual allocation to the fund as approved by the Parliament. So that immediately as the year begins, there is a stream of revenue that is available to the Assembly, whatever it may be. More than that, whereas funds of the previous year, under the Audit and Exchequer Ordinance should be paid back to the Treasury, this law supersedes that and allows the Assembly to keep those moneys. If the moneys the Assembly raises and keeps directly in the fund is in excess of the annual allocation to Tobago under the budget, then the Assembly is authorized to keep a certain percentage of that to be spent on approved development projects. It foresees a day where Tobago would become self-sufficient and there are mechanisms in place to treat with that.

3.20 p.m

As we go through the various elements of this draft Bill, we see that a conscious and determined effort was made both by the Central Government of the day and by the House of Assembly which still exists, to come to terms with this problem. But we recognize something else, that the framers of the law, however lofty and noble the ideals that were used as a basis for drafting the law, the success of the administration of that law depends on a level of goodwill existing between those who run the Assembly and those who run the Central Government.

We place on record some of the basic elements of the draft law that we had negotiated and agreed to with the Assembly. I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, and in fact, it is our intention that as the debate proceeds that other Members on this side will deal in more detail with some aspects, in particular, the various models of unitary statehood. This is the model we used. We took it as far as we could go, we carried it to the limit. We felt to go beyond what was in this law, was in fact to impinge on the constitution and unitary state concept and to raise some other fundamental questions which we felt were either not relevant at this time, or which we were not authorized to do.

Mr. Speaker, it was necessary to raise this matter at this time because of some of the public utterances which we have heard from some of the Members opposite. We do not know, we have no idea what the Government's policy is. We had confidently expected that as the new Government took office, finding as they would have, signed agreements between the Central Government and the House of Assembly that the Government would have moved to implement the arrangement. Clearly, that does not appear to be on the cards and what we would like to find out in this debate, is exactly what is the Government's policy on this matter . Thank you.

Seconded by Mr. K. Valley

Question proposed.

Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj (Couva South): Mr. Speaker, I think all of us must feel very sad this afternoon to see the Leader of the Opposition suffering from such delusions that he still thinks that he is Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] And he still thinks that probably he is Leader of the PNM. But, the Leader of the Opposition has come to this House and he has stated that he has decided to bring this Motion because of some utterances from the other side and he does not know what Government's policy is in respect of Tobago. One can sympathize with the problems that he is having now with his leadership. He has not produced in his contribution any instance of any utterance which would have given the impression to anyone, especially a reasonable thinking person, that there was any question of Tobago or anyone advocating Tobago seceding from Trinidad and Tobago.

What has made things worse, is that he has got up brazen-faced in this House, referred to House Paper No. 6 of 1978 and quite deliberately left out the action which the Government took to frustrate the implementation of the

recommendation of this House and of the national community with respect to Tobago. Why would the Leader of the Opposition refuse to tell this House and the national community that after this joint select committee sat, that the PNM administration of the day appointed Mr. Lionel Seemungal, Queens Counsel, to draft a bill to implement the decisions of that select committee and the PNM's Cabinet overthrew that decision—decided to reject the decision of the Parliament and of the national community and decided to impose its wish on the people of Tobago?

What we have seen here today is the PNM's contempt for the people of Tobago. We have seen that the PNM is prepared to treat the people of Tobago and continue to treat them as political footballs. We have seen that the PNM is not prepared to give to the people of Trinidad and Tobago and the people of Tobago a structure of government which, in effect, would provide internal self-government for Tobago as decided by the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. I thought that he would have come to this House and apologized to this Parliament and to the people of Trinidad and Tobago for betraying the confidence of the Parliament and the people, but instead he has come here to perpetrate this contempt which he has for the people of Tobago, and wants to reduce the people of Tobago as not being part of Trinidad and Tobago.

Before I go into some aspects of this matter, I would like to deal with some of the matters that the Leader of the Opposition has raised. He talked about that draft bill. Let it be understood and let it be known that that draft bill was an election issue in 1995, and so were the contents. That draft bill was not discussed with the Opposition in Parliament, neither was it discussed with the people of Trinidad and Tobago. It was in effect, a part of the election ploy to try to hoodwink and fool the people of Tobago, and the people of Tobago and of Trinidad have rejected the terms of that Bill, because it is not a good arrangement for the people of Tobago. Therefore, when the Leader of the Opposition and Member for San Fernando East gets up in this House, he must know that was a proposal, not a law. He is in Opposition, he is not the Prime Minister. That was a proposal. He wanted it to become law. He did not even have it proposed in the Parliament. He got it approved at his Cabinet meeting, then sent it to the House and came here that afternoon. I will never forget that afternoon when he got up at 1.45 p.m on October 6, 1995, a few days before his Cabinet had approved this draft bill and sent it to the Parliament. He got up and announced that it is the view—I will read it:

3.30 p.m.

“Within the last three years, not only have several Members of this House passed away, but this, together with other developments, have served to reduce the Government’s working majority in this House of Representatives.

It is the view of the Prime Minister that the current configuration of Parliament reduces the Government’s flexibility in conducting the nation’s business to unacceptable levels. Accordingly, I have today advised His Excellency, the President, to dissolve Parliament immediately on the conclusion of this sitting. *[Applause].*”

Having decided that, he was going to use the contents of this draft bill as an election ploy; he gave to the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago a reason for calling the general election when he really wanted to try to hoodwink the people of Tobago. *[Desk Thumping]*. He could run but he cannot hide. *[Desk Thumping]* What he has done has caught up with him—the man on his left and the man on his right; deputies are not essential—and it has caused a tremor in his party in which he is afraid to face a convention of his own party. A leader without a party behind him.

Hon. Member: You could hide but you cannot run.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and Member for San Fernando East, talks about our having to search to find some sort of formula which will govern the arrangement for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. That formula has already been found. The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago has found that; internal self-government for Tobago. It is only a matter of implementing that decision. That is what it needs. This Government of national unity has taken that decision and a committee was appointed to review all the documents pertinent to the matter of constitutional and legislative arrangements for internal self-government for Tobago and to prepare a draft bill to give appropriate effect to the joint select committee report of both Houses of Parliament printed as House Paper No. 6 of 1978.

Miss Nicholson: Which we will do.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, this Government of national unity would give to the people of Tobago internal self-government and would stop any government from using the people of Tobago as a political football. *[Desk Thumping]*

I could not understand why the Member for San Fernando East travelled all over the world and talked about Europe, the Andean Pact, and things which are happening in Russia when—he quoted it - he knows what the people of Trinidad and Tobago have decided for the people of Tobago.

In an attempt to support what he is saying he quoted section 75 of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago which states:

“There shall be a Cabinet for Trinidad and Tobago which shall have the general direction and control of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and shall be collectively responsible therefor to Parliament.”

I cannot understand how relevant that is, when what the joint select committee found and what was recommended was that there be devolution of powers, decentralization of powers, so that Tobago can, in effect, participate in the decision-making of government. *[Desk Thumping]*

The issue in this matter, really, is not a unitary state of Trinidad and Tobago because there is no doubt that there is a unitary state of Trinidad and Tobago, and there is no one who is advocating that there should not be a unitary state of Trinidad and Tobago.

What has been happening is that the PNM has been trying to give that impression to the people of Trinidad and Tobago in order to attempt to deny the people of Tobago the right to self-determination. *[Desk Thumping]*

What is important—read the Constitution—is not section 75. Unless he read from the back, he must start from the beginning. I know he went to Hong Kong but he must start from the beginning. Section 1 of the Constitution states:

“The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago shall be a sovereign democratic state.”

Miss Nicholson: That is it.

Mr. Robinson: The first law.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: What is important is, that there must be democracy for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. In this context, what does that envisage? National integration; people being involved in the decision-making process of government; promotion of better services for all the people; promotion of representative government and participatory democracy; promotion of liberty, equality, welfare and justice. That is what decentralization does, and that is what the people of Tobago have been asking for.

I do not understand the PNM! It is prepared to advocate decentralization of the health service in order to make the people of Trinidad and Tobago get a better health service but it is not prepared to decentralize the powers of central government in order to give the people of Tobago a better deal.

Miss Nicholson: True.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, what the hon. Member for San Fernando East has done in quoting section 75 of the Constitution is, with the greatest respect to him, to really express his ignorance of the matters in question. A constitution is not cast in stone, he has said that before. A constitution is flexible - there are certain basic features—in order to meet the needs of the people. That has happened all over the world. The American Constitution has been amended several times. This country has amended its Constitution several times. There are certain safeguards in our Constitution which cannot be amended willy-nilly by a simple majority. The section the Member quoted—section 75—of the Cabinet having the direction and control of governing the people of Trinidad and Tobago does not prevent the Cabinet from delegating functions. It does not

As a matter of fact, section 75 is one of the sections which is not entrenched. I have looked at section 53 which deals with how the Constitution can be amended or altered. Section 54 (1) does not mention that section 75 needs a two-thirds majority. In respect of the other sections which need other majorities, it does not mention it.

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for Couva South for giving way.

What I have just explained that talks about the provisions of the draft bill, particularly the powers under clause 16 of that bill, in fact constitutes a delegation of ministerial authority.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, I did not want to deal with that aspect. Devolution of powers does not mean just creating a post and giving a man a car. Devolution of powers means something much more fundamental than that. It means that the people will have a say and there would be matters which they can determine for themselves subject to the overriding consideration of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

3.40 p.m.

So that, to merely give people the decision-making process by creating a Secretary who will be able to talk to the Prime Minister, and giving him a car and creating some post, that is not decentralization. We must look at the pit, the core, the substance of the matter which is that Tobago is entitled to have internal self-government. One can have that. Internal self-government would not mean that Tobago would have a different national security policy. It is subject to the policy of the Central Government. Tobago can have internal self-government even though there is a central state which is responsible for certain matters.

Mr. Speaker, I really do not know how the hon. Leader of the Opposition can tell this House that the 1980 Tobago House of Assembly Bill was passed unanimously. As a matter of fact, if all the Members of the House did not vote for the Bill, it was not a unanimous vote on the Bill. Unanimous means all—all the Members of the House. He should have explained that the context in which that Bill was drafted was that the PNM had rejected the Seemungal draft and attempted to impose its wishes on the people of Tobago by passing that Bill. That is the context in which the Bill was passed. But I shall go to the chronology of this matter in order to demonstrate what has happened in these matters. I was just trying to respond to some of the things that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said.

There is no question of federal structure. I do not know how a federal structure comes into this, but the important thing is not the unitary state, because there are many unitary states in which the leaders have been dictators. Haiti (Papa Doc). The concept of the state is not important. What is important is whether you are going to have the exercise of powers to give people their democratic rights. Mussolini—head of a unitary state; Hitler—head of a unitary state.

Miss Nicholson: That is a little Hitler you see sitting down there.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: I know we have Hitler around us, but what is important is that Trinidad and Tobago remains a sovereign democratic state. It is in that context, Mr. Speaker, that I seek leave to amend this Motion which reads “Be It Resolved that this Honourable House reaffirm its commitment to the Unitary State of Trinidad and Tobago.” I would ask to insert after the word “Tobago”-

“subject to section 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago which clearly and expressly prescribes that the Republic

of Trinidad and Tobago shall be a sovereign and democratic state.”[*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Robinson: Stop Hitler!

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: Because we want to make sure that Hitler is stopped.

Hon. Member: I believe you should be looking in a mirror to do that.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: So, Mr. Speaker, I do not know how the hon. Leader of the Opposition can be so politically blind, when he looks on this side and sees a Government which represents the people of Trinidad and Tobago, to think that there could be any question of anyone seceding from Trinidad and Tobago. This is a Government of national unity! [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Imbert: He has more votes than you, you know.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: Well, I could understand why he was politically blind because he called an election when the party was not prepared for an election, so it is probably a political disease which the hon. Leader of the Opposition has.

Mr. Panday: Political glaucoma! [*Laughter*]

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: Mr. Speaker, I would like to put on the record some of the matters contained in House Paper No. 6 of 1978. I notice that the hon. Leader of the Opposition just referred to it. At page 8 under Internal Self-Government for Tobago, after quoting the Resolution which was referred to the Committee, it stated in part-

“Proper and necessary steps should be taken to accord to the People of Tobago Internal Self-Government in 1977 in such measure as will not be contradictory to the Constitutional reality of the independent Unitary State of Trinidad and Tobago.

The thrust and focus of any measure to accord Tobago internal self-government must be in the sphere of the greatest possible measure of participation by the people acting through their representative institutions in the policy and implementation processes. This can be achieved for example by devolution of governmental functions.”

That is what the people of Tobago have been asking for. Effective devolution of powers; and that is what this Report is talking about. That is what the PNM did not want to give to the people of Tobago. Can the Member say why his PNM

administration rejected the Seemungal draft? Has he given any explanation, when his government appointed Mr. Lionel Seemungal Q.C., to draft a law to give effect to this, his government—

Mr. Robinson: Unilaterally!

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: —unilaterally refused to accept it, and rejected it. He did not give any explanation here today. He left it out, and the reason is that he knows that his government is guilty of not wanting to give to the people of Tobago what was decided by the Parliament and the national consensus in Trinidad and Tobago; and his administration, in effect, was party to denying the people of Tobago of that justice. Mr. Speaker, at page 8 it goes into greater detail about the kind of services which should be decentralised in order to give effect to the wishes of the people of Tobago, and the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, in order to appreciate the wickedness and brutality of the PNM to the people of Tobago, it is important that we put in true perspective what we are doing here today by examining the political history of the relationship of Trinidad and Tobago over the last few years. In order to demonstrate how it is that the PNM has consistently been reluctant and has refused to implement measures in which there will be true decentralisation of powers to effect internal self-government in Tobago, we have to look at that history.

Mr. Speaker, in 1898 the Imperial Parliament, by the Trinidad and Tobago Act, united the Colonies of Trinidad and Tobago, by making Tobago a Ward of the united Colony of Trinidad and Tobago. Tobago became a Ward of Trinidad and Tobago and it is important to note it did not become a Ward of Trinidad. It is the misconception that Tobago was a Ward of Trinidad and not a Ward of Trinidad and Tobago which has always put Tobago in a dependency syndrome. It was such that Tobago was always regarded as a dependency of Trinidad.

3.50 p.m.

I think that impediment is still in the eyes, in the feet, in the bodies, in the action of the Members on the other side, that Tobago is not a dependant of Trinidad; Tobago is part and parcel of Trinidad and Tobago.

The clamour and the fight of the people of Tobago for the right for internal self-government was obviously in accordance with the fundamental human rights as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Rights and the International

Covenant and Civil and Political Rights, of which this country has been a party and still remains a party, and that is the right of peoples to self-determination.

That clamour for the fight of Tobago getting that kind of autonomy has produced a case which was argued. I want to give in brief a summary of the matters which were argued so that we will understand what were the issues, and what are the issues, involved in this matter. The political case for internal self-government for Tobago was argued on the basis that there was the failure of the colonial solution of 1898. The Premier of Trinidad and Tobago admitted this in his address to the legislative council on June 7, 1957, when he said, "Tobago exchanged the neglect of the United Kingdom imperialism for the neglect of Trinidad imperialism."

Dr. Williams admitted on that occasion that Tobago had to pay a price for its union with Trinidad which it ought never to have paid. The people of Tobago never accepted that colonial solution in 1898. The PNM Government, although it was a small attempt, decided to set up what was called, the Ministry of Tobago Affairs, in order to try to tell the people of Tobago that it was giving them internal self-government or giving them justice.

The Ministry of Tobago Affairs was introduced in 1957. Yes, it was a step in the right direction, but it was dependent upon party politics and it depended upon the grace of the political leader and the party in power. When the PNM lost the elections in 1986, the Ministry of Tobago Affairs was dismantled. It left the island without any kind of structure of government. That was one of the ways in which the PNM administration continued and decided to show that it can punish the people of Tobago; it can treat the people of Tobago with contempt. It was showing that it had power and the Tobago people were dependent on Trinidad and they were not part of Trinidad and Tobago. That is what the Leader of the Opposition is trying to preach in this Motion, division of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, instead of promoting unity of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. *[Desk thumping]*.

The other argument put forward is that there was need for a permanent structure of government independent of party politics. It must be recognized that the people of Tobago need a structure of government which would not depend upon the vagaries of party politics. Therefore, there must be a structure in which the people of Tobago would have security so that they would know that it is not dependent upon which politician is in power; which minister is the Minister of Tobago Affairs; how the Prime Minister thinks about an election at a particular

time. They must have a structure which will give them security of the individual and that is guaranteed to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

The political case also was that there was need for a representative and democratic structure of government in Tobago. Representative government must involve people participating in government. As a matter of fact, democracy is based on the fact that there would be representative government. Without representative government there can be no democracy. That is why the amendment is so important, that it is subject to recognizing that Trinidad and Tobago remains a democratic Republic.

If we have a structure of government in Tobago in which the elected representatives of the people of Tobago can be excluded from the decision-making process and there can be a complete refusal to consult with the representatives of Tobago, then there is no real democracy. It is in that context the political case had been made that there was need to look at the Tobago structure, and that structure was a special case which needed internal self-government.

On the economic side, it has been argued as part of the economic case, if I use that expression, that because of the geographical separation of Trinidad from Tobago, that Tobago does not automatically benefit from development which occurs in Trinidad. For example, exploitation of productive resources in Trinidad will not create employment opportunities in Tobago. Employment opportunities created in Trinidad do not and would not provide jobs for persons resident in Tobago unless those residents also accept migration or family separation. Jobs taken up in Trinidad do not generate income in Tobago except by way of remittance. Expansion of industry in Trinidad does not spawn service industries in Tobago. No workers' housing, no plant maintenance and repair, no haulage and transport services will develop in the smaller island as a result of the industrial expansion in the larger.

With the political and economic cases being advocated and given the other constraints which flowed from the fact of the separation of Trinidad and Tobago by sea, it is in that context that it was recognized that Tobago is a special case and Tobago, as a special part of Trinidad and Tobago, should be given internal self-government.

When one therefore looks at this history, one sees that it is in this context that the people of Trinidad and Tobago and the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago

decided that there would be a joint select committee to look at the whole question of the relationship of Trinidad and Tobago and to make recommendations in respect of a machinery, an arrangement, which will govern the relations of Trinidad and Tobago.

4.00 p.m.

The Members who served on this Special Select Committee were C. A. Thomasos, Mr. Kamalludin Mohammed, Mr. George Chambers, Mr. Overand Padmore, Mr. Raffique Shah and Mr. A. N. R. Robinson.

Mr. Speaker, in 1978 both Houses of the Parliament accepted the resolution to the effect that,

Be it resolved,

That this House was of the opinion that all proper and necessary steps must be taken to accord to the people of Tobago internal self-government in 1977 in such measure that would not be contradictory to the constitutional reality of the independent unitary state of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Committee was empowered to get the views of the majority of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. So it sat and it came up with a report. The report of the Joint Select Committee was unanimously accepted by both Houses of Parliament. That was the report which stated that there should be internal self-government for Tobago.

What happened after that? As I mentioned, Mr. Lionel Seemungal was retained by that Government for a specific mission; to prepare a draft bill to give effect to House Paper No. 6 of 1978. That was the report of the Joint Select Committee.

Mr. Speaker, much time, money and energy were spent in drafting that bill which was given to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Cabinet unilaterally rejected it. The Parliament, and the people, decided on a course for Tobago and the Government agreed to have a bill drafted to implement that decision. However, when the time came to deliver to the people of Tobago the Government backed down and decided unilaterally to reject the bill.

Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of dictatorship tendencies that the PNM is coloured with. That is the kind of dictatorship which the PNM, in the last administration, demonstrated.

Mr. Panday: Which the Member for Tobago West cannot stand.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: I agree, which the hon. Member for Diego Martin West cannot tolerate.

Miss Nicholson: Because he is from Tobago.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: Yes, because he is from Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, a more undemocratic action of a government cannot be thought of than when the Parliament and the people decide on a measure, and the Cabinet just rejects it arbitrarily. The last administration was part and parcel of that rejection also.

What the last administration should have done was to implement that decision. The leader of the last administration, as Prime Minister, now Leader of the Opposition, wanted to fire the Commissioner of Police even though there is a Constitution. He did not care about the law. He wanted to fire the Commissioner of Police willy-nilly; just like that.

It was the Prime Minister, now Leader of the Opposition, who wanted to abolish the service commissions—the safeguards in our Constitution—to insulate the Government from the police service; the teaching service and the public service. He wanted to control and be an Idi Amin. Idi Amin was head of a unitary state.

Mr. Speaker, it was the then Prime Minister, now Leader of the Opposition, who even attempted to abolish appeals to the Privy Council. He wanted to remove then Speaker of the House of Representatives so he created a state of emergency. He is the father of the nation and the father of the PNM. He is the person who now says, "If I go, the whole PNM goes". He is the man who went to La Brea, as Prime Minister and told the people who were complaining about water, "Silver and gold have I not, but what I have I give to thee".

Mr. Speaker, we are not surprised. No one in this country would be surprised. The people of Trinidad have spoken; that is why the PNM would not see the corridors of power and government for years to come. No matter how much he promised his members 30 or 90 days or one year, every time they get their salaries at the end of the month they would say that the Leader of the Opposition was responsible for them not only getting salaries as Minister, but also not being able to be in government in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, after the PNM arbitrarily rejected the Seemungal draft bill what did they do in typical PNM style? They drafted a bill which resulted in this Tobago House of Assembly Act in 1980. They rushed it through Parliament with

a simple majority and said that is what the people of Tobago deserve. They knew, and it has been recognized, that that is not what the people of Tobago deserve.

The Hyatali Constitution Commission in its report in 1987, in reference to the Tobago House of Assembly Act emphasized and stated that. I did not hear the Leader of the Opposition talk about that today. He travelled all over the world. There was a political leader in Trinidad and Tobago, an ex-Prime Minister, who took people on a journey all over the world when he had something to say, and his members used to say, "You could have said that in three minutes". I think what happened to the Member for San Fernando East is that he really wants to follow in the footsteps of Dr. Eric Williams.

Mr. Speaker: The Speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar]

Question put and agreed to.

4.10 p.m.

Mr. R. L. Maharaj: I am indebted to the hon. Members for allowing me extra time.

I was saying that the Hyatali Commission expressed its view—I thought I was going to see heat in the Parliament today. The hon. Member for San Fernando East seems to be talking about so much heat these days. Probably he is reserving it for the streets. Heat in the Parliament, heat in the streets. I know the hon. Member for San Fernando East would resort to anything. I am sure he would agree. We sympathize with him. We saw the effects of the pressures he is undergoing.

The Hyatali Commission Report stated:

“(383) The Act fell short of giving full effect to the resolution referred to the Committee in relation to Tobago as expressed in House Paper No. 6, of 1978 which stated:”

“Proper and necessary steps should be taken to accord to the people of Tobago Internal Self-Government in 1977 in such measure as will not be contradictory to the Constitutional reality of the Independent Unitary State of Trinidad and Tobago...”.

Here is a very powerful independent commission headed by a former Chief Justice, Sir Isaac Hyatali and consisting of the present Chief Justice, Mr. Michael de La Bastide, and several other distinguished persons including persons like Dr. Selwyn Ryan, stating that the 1980 Act did not implement the decision of the Parliament in House Paper No. 6 of 1978.

Today, the Leader of the Opposition said that a Bill was passed unanimously to give effect to that resolution. That was incorrect. The Member has tried to mislead the House. I think he should get up and apologize to the country and to the House. I know the hon. Member for San Fernando East said one can challenge his views that is okay, but do not challenge his authority. I wonder how the Members on his right and on his left can sit next to him.

The Hyatali Commission, in its report further observed that the 1980 Act which the PNM stated was going to give internal self-government to the people in Tobago, was going to decentralize governmental powers in Tobago. That Commission went on to say that the Act failed to foster harmonious relations between Trinidad and Tobago and created major problems. It identified as part of the problem section 21 of the Act. The Commission noted the absence of constitutional guarantees in respect of the Tobago House of Assembly and recommended that a chapter be inserted in the Constitution to deal exclusively with Tobago. Not an amendment, not an addition, to say that the Tobago House of Assembly is an entity and it cannot be abolished. That is not what it means. It means that the Tobago House of Assembly and the people of Tobago should have true decentralization of powers.

When the PNM Government took office in 1992, the Cabinet appointed a committee to treat with the legislative arrangements and reform in the relationship between Trinidad and Tobago. Those are the two Bills to which the Cabinet agreed in October 1995. During the period 1992 and 1995, when these draft bills were being prepared, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago did not effectively consult the people of Tobago and the elected representatives of the people of Tobago. The PNM decided that they had a chance that they could have possibly gotten the people of Tobago to agree with them, to see if they could have fooled them by saying they were really giving them internal self-government.

Mr. Speaker, those two bills fell short of the recommendations of the joint select committee, and the people of Trinidad and Tobago recognized that, because, those two bills only dealt with superficial matters and did not deal with the pith and substance of the matter, that is, truly decentralizing power so that the

people of Tobago would have a say in the major matters which concerned them. Those two bills which the Leader of the Opposition spoke about this afternoon in this House are evidence of a continuing breach of faith by the PNM with the Parliament and the national consensus of the people of Trinidad and Tobago on the Tobago issue.

It is the view of this administration that enough is enough. The people of Tobago have waited too long; they have been fooled by the PNM; they must enjoy security and they must not be subjected to the promotion of their security by political parties only at election time. The people of Tobago need such a structure that the concept of Trinidad and Tobago, being a sovereign democratic state, would be implemented.

I see nothing in the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago which can constitutionally prevent a Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago passing legislation which would give effect to the resolution and the findings of the joint select committee as contained in House Paper No. 6 of 1978.

In House Paper No. 6 of 1978 at page 8, there is the view expressed by the committee and I quote:

“The preponderance of opinion therefore favoured some form of governmental structure with appropriate Constitutional and/or other legislative safeguards to ensure its permanence. Such a structure should be designed to remove the deficiencies referred to above and to achieve the following objectives:—

- (a) the effective co-ordination of the various services of the Central Government in Tobago;
- (b) promotion of liaison and co-operation with the Elected Body in Tobago and to institute and maintain consultation with that Body especially with respect to budgetary proposals for the development programme as well as the operation of state-owned enterprises which serve Tobago—viz. sea and air communications;
- (c) policy formulation and implementation by the people through the democratic process in terms of the functions herein described.”

4.20 p.m.

Section 1 of the Constitution envisages that the state of Trinidad and Tobago with its three arms, the Executive, Legislative and Judicial must function as a

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sovereign democratic state for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore it envisages that in respect of the people of Tobago, although it has sovereign powers it would exercise them in a democratic way in order to ensure that the people of Tobago are treated democratically. [*Thumping of desks*]

That is the importance of the amendment. The failure of the Motion is the continued feeling of that side of the House that it must not exercise powers so that the people of Tobago would have their democratic rights. That has been the problem with the PNM.

This Constitution permits a situation in Tobago where there can be machinery or a structure of government that would have powers that any country with internal self-government would have, but yet it can be subjected to the national Parliament. This Constitution provides a machinery whereby, even if a machinery is set up in Tobago, whatever the people decide, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago can have a veto over it because there is provision for specified majority.

To give the impression that asking for internal self-government for Tobago would mean a collapse, destruction and undermining of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago is a total untruth. This Constitution expressly provides that its provisions can be altered. When the Leader of the Opposition talked about amending the Constitution, he said that he was not talking about taking away what was there but his proposal was to add. Alteration of the Constitution includes taking away from it and adding to it. This Constitution provides for provisions to be inserted to meet the needs and demands of our society to ensure that the rights guaranteed in the Constitution should be enjoyed by all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. That is why this Constitution in its preamble on which it is based expressly states:

“(c) have asserted their belief in a democratic society in which all persons may, to the extent of their capacity, play some part in the institutions of the national life and thus develop and maintain due respect for lawfully constituted authority;”

This Constitution therefore presupposes that not only the people of Trinidad, but also the people of Tobago would have a machinery whereby they could play an important part in the development of Trinidad and Tobago. This has nothing to do with seceding. On the contrary, they will be playing a part and promoting national integration so that they will be part of those important decisions of national life.

The preamble of the Constitution also states at (b):

“ . . . that the operation of the economic system should result in the material resources of the community being so distributed as to subserve the common good,”

Common good includes the people of Tobago. The PNM has been alienating the people of Tobago from the governmental process.

We on this side of the House do not see any problem. For this reason this administration has appointed a committee which I mentioned before comprising these individuals: Justice Guaya Persaud, Chairman of the Law Commission; Mr. Ian Mc Intyre, an acting senior official in the Ministry of Legal Affairs; Sen. Deborah Moore-Miggins, an attorney-at-law; Dr. John Prince, Director of Economics and Research Science and Tertiary Education at the office of the Prime Minister and Miss Rita Portillo, Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration and Information. This committee has been requested to submit its proposal within eight weeks following the date of its inaugural meeting.

One sees that this administration has decided immediately that the people of Tobago must have in their favour the implementation of the constitutional arrangement which was decided for them by this House, Parliament and the national community. When it is said that under our Constitution to even contemplate giving the people of Tobago such powers which may be construed as too great powers in administration, we are not really levelling with them. Tobago must not be considered in the same position as a regional corporation. It is a special arrangement and therefore the people of Tobago must be entitled under our Constitution to have the arrangements which they have deserved for such a long time but were denied by the previous administration.

In closing, the mover of this Motion has not demonstrated any basis for anyone even contemplating that there could be any justification for any move to secede Tobago from Trinidad. He has not levelled with the national community. He has misled this House and withheld material information in order to try to bolster his Motion. He has introduced this Motion in an attempt to spread his policy of division. We on this side of this House are acting in furtherance of our principles of a government of national unity. He has decided that he will win alone or lose alone and decided not to stretch his hand for national unity so that the people of Trinidad and Tobago can go forward. We are committed to a

government of national unity so that the people of Trinidad and Tobago would have a better say than under any administration which the PNM has led.

Mr. Ganga Singh: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the amendment moved by the Member for Couva South and reserve my right to speak at a later stage of the debate.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, there is a proposed amendment by the hon. Member for Couva South which is as follows:

“subject to section 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago which clearly and expressly prescribes that the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago shall be a sovereign and democratic state”

to be added at the end of the Motion.

Hon. Members are free to speak on the propose amendment as well as the original Motion.

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds (*Laventille East/Morvant*): Mr. Speaker, as the Motion before this House suggests, we on this side are totally for, and wish to reaffirm our commitment to the unitary state that is Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker: The sitting of the House is suspended until 5.00 p.m.

4.31 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed*

Mr. F. Hinds: Mr. Speaker, before we took the adjournment, I was making it quite clear that I wish to reaffirm, along with Members on this side, our commitment to the unitary state that is Trinidad and Tobago.

Based on all that I have heard and read, I am of the considered opinion that both the Member for Tobago West and the Member for Tobago East fully support this position. In fact, the hon. Member for Tobago East is on record in this House as expressing this position as far back as 1977. What, however, the Member argued for then—and, surprisingly, I still hear utterances of it today from the other side—was self-government or self-determination.

As I listened to the contribution of the Member for Couva South, I asked myself repeatedly: What is the difference; if any exists, between self-government, self-determination and devolution? I asked myself further: With all that the last administration has done to allow the citizens of our lovely sister isle to participate

in the decision making of their own affairs, how on God's earth could that be regarded as being inconsistent with offering, permitting or extending self-government?

To my mind, the establishment of the Tobago House of Assembly is the epitome of self-government. In that arrangement, an elective body is able to make decisions and implement programmes for the benefit of the people of Tobago. I am of the considered opinion that this call for self-government was properly resolved at least by 1980 when the Tobago House of Assembly was put in place. Though this honourable House has not yet had an opportunity to see the contents of the draft bill which was discussed with the House of Assembly only recently as we came to the end of the term of our administration, the proposals we made went even further. This is why Members would have discovered that there was broad agreement from the persons concerned at the House of Assembly for the proposals we made.

ADJOURNMENT

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar): Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I beg to move that this honourable House do now adjourn to Monday, January 29, 1996 at 1.30 p.m.

On that day we intend to take the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order, 1996, with modifications, as set out in the Supplemental Order Paper for today.

Shortage of Water (La Brea)

Mr. Hedwige Bereaux (La Brea): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity of bringing, on the Motion on the Adjournment, the question of the grossly inadequate water supply being experienced by the residents of the constituency of La Brea.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a woeful shortage of water in Trinidad and Tobago and one recognizes that regardless of the responsibility, the present situation in respect of water in the constituency of La Brea has worsened considerably over the past two months.

I want to read a letter dated December 1, 1995, from me to the hon. Minister of Public Utilities. It says:

“... of Sobo Village, La Brea and Lower Vessigny Village ... have been experiencing severe water shortage for the past four (4) weeks. Several calls to WASA San Fernando have failed to remedy the situation.”

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I again wrote to the Minister on January 5 and said:

“The villages of Point D’or, La Brea, Sobo, La Brea, Vessigny and Vance River are continuing to experience severe water shortage. Water reached Sobo Junction on Christmas Eve but higher areas are still without water.”

On December 15, 1995, I received a letter from the hon. Minister—and I understand the letter was circularized to all Members of Parliament—in which he asked for the various Members of Parliament to indicate the areas of the worst water and electricity problems in their constituencies so that he would be able to do something about it. That is why, but for other matters which have happened, I really would not have brought this matter to him today. I recognize that he is a new Minister and that the water problem in Trinidad and Tobago has been endemic.

5.10 p.m.

If the Member for Oropouche would like to speak, they would have to make him Minister of Finance or the Minister of Public Utilities.

I realize that the water situation in Trinidad and Tobago has been endemic. What has exacerbated the situation, is that there are some areas, particularly in La Brea, where the non-supply of water has nothing to do with the lack of water in the line, it has to do with the negligence of persons handling the distribution and that is why I have brought it to the attention of the hon. Minister. Under the previous administration we got water even though it was once a week. On the main road in La Brea there is water, but even though there is water throughout the week, one cannot get water in the large village of Point D’or. It points clearly to the fact that the turncocks are not doing their jobs. When the hon. Ministers opposite, who are responsible for administering their various ministries, pay no attention to the fact that certain people may not be doing their jobs, I am concerned. They cannot tell me it is because of what happened under the PNM. They went before the electorate and sought to present themselves to be competent. I am calling on them to exercise this competence.

For instance, Mr. Speaker, all during the Christmas holidays there was no water in Point D’or, La Brea and in Vessigny. I am bringing this matter here today because when I wrote to the Minister of Public Utilities and indicated that there were problems in the village of Vessigny, the Minister came to my constituency.

Hon. Member: Very good. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. H. Bereaux: Mr. Speaker, as I said, he came to my constituency and contacted my constituents—apparently he was trying to do it without my knowledge. *[Interruption]* To add to it, he went into Vessigny Village and said he would try to get them a 36—hour supply of water—and I thank him for that—*[Desk thumping]* although his promise never materialized. But more important than that, after he left, activists of the NAR came in and started going around to persons resident in Vessigny and telling them, if they join the UNC—*[Interruption]**[Desk thumping]* Activists of the UNC—*[Interruption]* Well it is the same, the UNC/NAR. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Gentlemen, the Member for La Brea has not asked for my protection, obviously because he thinks he can take care of the situation, but I do think he ought to be given an easier passage.

Mr. Maharaj: We do apologise for that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. H. Bereaux: I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Activists of the UNC followed the hon. Minister and they told the constituents that if they joined the UNC they would get water. The important thing about it is that they were collecting \$10.00 to join. *[Interruption]*

There are areas such as the Sobo Extension, although there is water pretty regularly, about 1/2 mile away in one area, because of the improper and negligent manner in which the turncocks are operating there is no distribution, for weeks there is that problem. I am bringing this matter to this honourable House because I hear rumblings in my constituency, concerns being expressed by persons who are not getting water and have to pay water rates, not having the protection until March 31, 1996, which was allegedly given by the hon. Minister. They are claiming that they are going to have do something about it. I have been trying to restrain them. *[Interruption]* I am, therefore, asking the hon. Minister to use his good office to ensure that at least the persons who have the job to open the turncock, do it.

On a previous occasion, about a year ago, this same problem occurred and WASA stationed a person in La Brea who saw to the regular opening of the water in the various areas and they got water. It is not a lack of supply. There is water available to give a minimum supply once a week to the persons in La Brea, Vessigny and Sobo. When they make a joke of what I am saying, they are going to cause problems. For instance, the PNM Government of Trinidad and Tobago spent \$61 million to put down a proper system called the St. Patrick Waterworks

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System. There are four tanks and a 16' line and there is water in that area from Siparia to Erin going back to Buenos Ayres. But there are new lines and a number of leaks have been found on the transmission line, not the distribution line. When I drive along the Siparia/Erin Road, I see water on the road and none in the taps of my constituents.

Hon. Member: What is the history of that?

Mr. H. Bereaux: Do not ask me about the history, I am telling you about the true facts. For instance, just the opening of the turncock in Bennette Village will allow the people to get water. But an administration that refuses to deal with the persons involved cannot expect to have anybody respect them. What I am hearing also, in some cases, is that they are diverting water to some of their own constituencies. *[Interruption]* Well, where is it now?

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: We are not getting any in Siparia.

Mr. H. Bereaux: You are not getting in Siparia? Well I am speaking for you also. If your colleague will allow and ensure that the people do their job we would not have that problem. I am saying, and I am expecting that the Minister of Public Utilities will keep good his promise—having given him a list of all the villages with an inadequate supply of water in the La Brea constituency by letter dated January 8, 1996—to do a number of things, and in particular, to ensure that there is some ease to the water situation in the La Brea constituency.

5.20 p.m.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Ganga Singh): Mr. Speaker, today I stand in this honourable House to respond to the Member for La Brea with great reluctance and some embarrassment. I feel a great deal of shame for the Member for La Brea, having regard to the timing of this Motion. His party was in power for 33 years and 10 months; he sat in the benches here for three years and 10 months and saw his political leader change six Ministers of Public Utilities within that period and sedated with the trappings of power he stayed quiet; he said nothing about the people and the constituents of La Brea.

Mr. Speaker, during the period of his last term in office several questions were being asked about water by the Members for Caroni East, Princes Town, Siparia, Chaguanas, Couva South and there were certain stoic responses given by the Government of which he was part. I want to put on record the systemic,

structural and managerial problems which we have inherited, and we on this side are going to show the Member how this Government is going to deal with it.

Between 90 to 95 per cent of the areas of South West Trinidad depend on a potable supply of water from the Caroni Water Treatment Plant. For over two years now there has been an average daily flow rate of 22 million gallons of potable water being delivered to both South and Central Trinidad. From this 22 million gallons of potable water 10 million gallons is used by the Point Lisas Industrial Estate, six million gallons for domestic uses in Central Trinidad and the rest approximately six million gallons for South West, Trinidad. This institutionalized day and night flow from Caroni has resulted in a very rigid water schedule to be developed, so as to equally distribute potable water to all parts of South West, Trinidad. As a consequence the South West region receives a very irregular and limited supply of water.

Moreover, due to this short water supply, many areas of South West Trinidad have been experiencing very low water pressures and sometimes no water at all.

Critical areas: La Brea, this area consists of six major villages from Otaheite to Vance River inclusive of all side streets and sub-villages. Currently and during the past regime there existed a schedule of a water supply once every ten to twelve days. During his term in office this is what existed and this is what continues to exist, and one will see the measures we intend to take to alleviate this problem. This short duration of the water supply cannot adequately service the La Brea constituency because it is densely populated with numerous villages and sub-villages.

The constituency: Parts of the Oropouche constituency have been without a proper pipe-borne supply of water for many years. This is mostly due to the inadequacy of the distribution system in areas such as Gopee Trace, Suchit Trace, Debe Trace, San Francique and environs. Also, with the present short water supply duration from the Caroni treatment plant, the extremity of these areas cannot be adequately served.

The St. Patrick water supply system was put in service in its entirety during August, 1995. The system is required to service from Thick Village in Point Fortin, that is, the S.S. Erin Road from Siparia to Erin, along the Cap-de-Ville Road and the Southern Main Road to Point Fortin proper, including all side streets. The present stringent water schedule, as indicated, requires that this system be serviced from Sunday to Wednesday from 7.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. from Caroni via the Thick Village Booster Station.

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As a result, the extremity of the system receives very low water pressures and sometimes no water pressure at all. A constant supply of water from the Caroni water treatment plant can alleviate this critical problem. Furthermore, a constant water supply from Caroni for a period of 24 to 30 hours with a reasonably adequate fluent pressure to South West Trinidad can solve the immediate water supply problems at La Brea.

Mr. Speaker, briefly the major factors affecting the water supply to the areas within the constituency of La Brea are:

1. Reduction in the production of treated water from Caroni/Arena Water Treatment Plant. This source of supply has been further affected by the low levels of rainfall during the 1995 rainy season.
2. Under-sized transmission and distribution mains. Prevalent in the La Brea constituency are a number of undersized and encrusted mains which affect the timeliness and reliability of supply to areas within the constituency.
3. Leaks in the transmission and distribution system.

Proposed measures:

Immediate relief measure—one must understand, we in this Government put things within a holistic framework. To bring about an immediate relief to the affected residents, not only in the constituency of La Brea but throughout the country, the following measures will be implemented by the Water and Sewerage Authority:

1. Introduce early in February, 1996, a nationwide water trucking programme in collaboration with the Ministries of Local Government and Works and Transport in an effort to upgrade the level of service to consumers. This programme will deliver to:
 - (a) Areas where there are pipelines but WASA cannot provide a water supply;
 - (b) Areas beyond WASA's distribution system, that is, outside the quarter mile radius from the nearest standpipe that are normally supplied by the regional corporations during the dry season. The constituency of La Brea is scheduled to receive from this programme 236 trips of water per week for the next four months of 1996 at a cost of \$23,600.00 per week. Community groups will be assisted in monitoring the delivery of supplies of water to the residents of La Brea.

2. We intend to redistribute the available potable supply from the Caroni water treatment plant to address problems being experienced at the extremities of the distribution system in South West Trinidad, including the constituency of La Brea. In the immediate term within 10 days, adjustments will be made to the Caroni/Arena transmission systems. This measure is intended to overcome the deficiencies of inadequate transmission capacities of the pipelines in the La Brea and other areas which will allow customers to enjoy an improved water supply. Schedules are being designed and maintenance of the schedules would be ensured through the vigilance by contact with community groups.

5.30 p.m.

3. Repairs to leaks and transmission. The Water and Sewerage Authority has on stream a leaks correction programme with adequate funding. This project can reduce the level of leakages in the system thereby making more water available for distribution within the next five months.

Medium to long-term measures—In order to bring about long-term improvement in the supply of water, not only to the constituency of La Brea, but to the entire southern region, the authority is continuing in 1996 the mains replacement programme under its emergency plan. There are 81 projects utilizing 50 kilometres of ductile pipe iron and 40 kilometres of pvc pipe. These projects are located throughout Trinidad and Tobago in areas that have been experiencing water supply deficiencies. This programme is scheduled to commence within the next month.

Particular attention is being paid to the Point Fortin pipeline. This project involves the laying of a 30-inch pipeline including a booster pump station and service reservoirs from La Romain to South Oropouche, and a branch line to the La Brea Industrial Estate.

The first phase to La Brea is estimated to cost \$110 million. Approximately 5 kilometres of this pipeline was laid in 1992 at a cost of \$6 million from La Romain to St. Mary South Oropouche. The completion of Phase 1 of the project is scheduled for June 1977.

Of course, one will recognize there is need for funding and the hon. Member for La Brea has gone on record as saying in the *Sunday Express* of January 21, 1996: “MP threatens to block foreign \$\$” and I quote:

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“La Brea MP Hedwige Bereaux has vowed to lobby world financial centres to block ‘every last grain’ of financial assistance to this country if the government were to halt the La Brea/Brighton Industrial Estate.”

Now he is complaining about the turncocks, but he is appearing to be, in my humble view, Mr. Speaker, as a stopcock to financial flows to this country. *[Laughter]* And if the Member intends to operate as a stopcock MP, then we will have significant problems in completing the pipeline connections to his constituency.

Part of our programme to optimize and engage the existing water supply is to refurbish the Caroni water treatment plant which has a design capacity of 60 million gallons of water per day. Due to lack of proper maintenance, this 15-year-old plant is now very inefficient. Efforts are being made to upgrade it with the objectives of increasing the capacity of the plant and improving the reliability of the equipment. This project will increase the throughput of the plant from 60—72 million gallons of water per day during the rainy season. The dry season production of 60 million gallons per day will remain unaffected as this is serviced by the storage capacity at the Arena reservoir.

The complete refurbishment of the Caroni treatment plant involves the construction of an additional sedimentation basin; construction of an additional filter; upgrading of the chemical handling facilities; upgrading of the sludge handling facilities; replacement of the raw water pumps and high head pumps. The upgraded Caroni plant will deliver an additional 12 million gallons of water per day to the distribution system, all of which is scheduled for consumers in South and Central Trinidad of which La Brea is part.

Due to the growing demand for industrial water, especially in the South west region, a more stable arrangement for a permanent water supply is being planned. Four potential sources have been identified.

1. The Chickland/Caparo flood control project;
2. The San Fernando wastewater reclamation project;
3. The Beetham wastewater reclamation project; and
4. The South Oropouche flood control project.

I wish to inform this House that discussions have been initiated with industrialists at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate with a view to these companies playing a leading role in initiating the Beetham wastewater reclamation project.

This project proposes to treat 20 million gallons of water per day at the Beetham wastewater treatment plant and transport it to the Point Lisas Industrial Estate, which will then be served with industrial water (grey water) from the Beetham wastewater treatment plant. Between seven and 12 million gallons of potable water per day can then be diverted from the Point Lisas estate to domestic consumers in Central and South Trinidad and the Industrial Estate at La Brea.

The estimated cost of the treatment facility and the pipeline from the Beetham estate to Point Lisas is projected to be \$83 million.

I hope that the hon. Member for La Brea has a change of mind and he has no intention of constipating this project, or blocking it in any way.

This is the extent of the remedial action we have taken, and we will solicit the Member's assistance in allowing a free flow of funding to these projects and to others.

Thank you.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, may I contribute to this Motion?

Mr. Speaker: No.

Miss Nicholson: You all are not even educating the boy.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.37 p.m.