The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from the hon. Pennelope Beckles, Member of Parliament for Arima, requesting leave of absence for the period August 30 to September 05, 2007. Also from the hon. Camille Robinson-Regis, Member of Parliament for Arouca South, for the period August 27 to 30, 2007. The leave, which these Members seek, is granted.

APPROPRIATION BILL
(BUDGET)
[Sixth Day]

Hon. P. Manning: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House thus now resolve itself into Finance Committee to continue consideration of the clauses of the Appropriation Bill, 2008, as well as the estimates.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: I must ask all strangers in the public and press gallery to leave the Chamber. After the deliberation of the Finance Committee, then you will be told when to return. So, would you please now leave the Chamber?

1.37 p.m.: Finance Committee resumed its deliberations.

3.55 p.m.: House resumed after Finance Committee.

Question put and agreed to, That the Bill be reported to the House.

House resumed.

Bill reported, without amendment, read the third time and passed.

DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID (DNA) BILL

Joint Select Committee Report
(Adoction)

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move the adoption of the Report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on a Bill entitled the Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Bill, 2006.
Mr. Speaker, at a sitting held on Friday, February 09, 2007 in the House of Representatives and at a similar sitting of the Senate on Tuesday, February 13, 2007, a Bill entitled the Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Bill, 2006 was referred to a Joint Select Committee of Parliament for consideration and report. The Members of the Committee were as follows: myself, the Member for Diego Martin East; Mr. Hedwige Bereaux; Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds; Dr. Adesh Nanan; Miss Gillian Lucky; Mr. John Jeremie SC; Mr. Martin Joseph; Ms. Christine Kangaloo; Dr. Tim Gopeesingh; and Ms. Angela Cropper.

Mr. Speaker, in order to complete our mandate, the committee met successfully on five separate occasions and we also had some informal meetings. The Committee undertook a clause by clause examination of the Bill and on completion, reported the identified issues and the areas of the Bill which needed re-working to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel.

As a result, a re-drafted Bill was prepared and issued for inclusion in the printing of the Committee’s final report which has been circulated to hon. Members. Having completed its mandate, a draft report of the Committee’s work was prepared and circulated to Members to which all Members agreed, and I wish to reiterate, that every single Member of this Committee, including Dr. Adesh Nanan, has agreed with its recommendations which is really remarkable. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all Members of this House and the other place who participated, for their co-operation and the spirit of collaboration that was a feature of our meetings. In fact, it is probably a record that you have a Committee, meeting to deal with a Bill as controversial as this one, that got unanimous support from every single Member, including the Opposition. The Report was laid in the House of Representatives and will be dealt with in the Senate in due course.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to offer special thanks to all Members of the Joint Select Committee, to the various technocrats from Chief Parliamentary Counsel’s Office, to the technocrats from the Ministry of National Security and the Forensic Science Centre in particular, who sat with us throughout our deliberations and I would just give the Members a brief idea of what we did.

If you go to the Report itself at page 5, the report indicates that there were some concerns regarding the constitutional implications, if DNA samples are to be obtained from all members of the protective services for the creation of a protective services DNA databank. There were also concerns about the question of a DNA Board and whether that Board should replace the custodian. There were concerns about their
accreditation of the Forensic Science Centre and other approved DNA testing laboratories. There were issues with respect to differentiation between a suspect, a victim, other persons involved, a child or a period which samples would be kept by the Forensic Science Centre.

4.00 p.m.

This was as a result of a commitment given by the hon. Prime Minister to Members opposite with respect to DNA testing of members of the protective services. We have listened and complied in this particular case:

"'protective services database means an index which contains DNA profiles derived from officers of the Protective Services under sections 10(2) and 12;"

Another feature I will just like to highlight is the manner in which samples are to be taken. On page 65 of the report, which is going into the redrafted Bill itself, speaks to the procedure for the taking of samples and it makes it now a mandatory requirement by law that officers of the protective services shall give non-intimate samples. So by clause 12 the requirement for the creation of a DNA database for members of the protective services is created.

"An officer of the Protective Services shall give a non-intimate sample."

It was a commitment given by the hon. Prime Minister to the Members opposite, based on a request from them.

In terms of consent, page 67 of the report gives the information on how samples are to be obtained with consent. We spent some time on this in terms of due process. For example, if you go to clause 14(4):

"Where an authorization is given and it is proposed that an intimate sample shall be taken in pursuance of the authorization, a police officer shall seek the consent of the suspect and before he gives his consent the police officer:

(a) show him a copy of the authorization...
(b) inform him that if he consents, the sample may be the subject of a search;
(c) advise that if he does not respond within a period of two hours after the request is made, he is deemed to have refused to consent to the taking of the sample;"
So we have put in quite elaborate procedures in terms of due process, because the last thing you want to happen is that this Bill is struck down because there is some irregularity or lacuna that will offend some constitutional right of a person.

Page 69 deals with sampling and the procedure for obtaining sampling. Again, we spent a lot of time on that. To protect persons, if you go to page 73 in clause 30 it states:

"(1) A police officer shall ensure that between the time when he takes a non-intimate sample or collects an intimate sample and the time of delivery to a forensic DNA laboratory, the package containing the sample is properly stored.

(2) The police officer shall deliver the package to a forensic DNA laboratory immediately or as soon as reasonably practicable from the date on which he takes or collects it...

(3) A person who receives the package at a forensic DNA laboratory...shall ensure that the package is properly sealed, labelled and identifiable both by him and the police officer who delivers the package."

We went into a lot of details in terms of the integrity of the taking, storage, custody of samples, the protection of persons and the entire process itself.

At the request of the Opposition Members of the Joint Select Committee, we agreed to the creation of a DNA board. The view was that the custodian was insufficient to ensure the integrity of the process. So we agreed to the creation of a board and that is contained in Part XI. It is a new part called the DNA Board and it speaks to the appointment:

"the DNA Board’...shall be appointed by the President.”

They are highly qualified people: A forensic scientist, a human geneticist and so on.

The purpose of the DNA Board is to:

"(a) monitor the accreditation process of any laboratory which seeks accreditation and approval as a forensic DNA laboratory; and

(b) ensure that all approved forensic DNA laboratories maintain their accreditation status."

That was another area we went into with some great detail, because there were a lot of questions asked. All of this leading to the integrity of the process of DNA testing.
There were a lot of questions asked about the accuracy of the tests; the integrity of the tests and how you would be sure that when a sample is taken and analyzed, the result was as accurate as humanly possible. One of the primary functions of the DNA Board is to look at the accreditation process and ensure that all DNA labs maintain appropriate accreditation.

We have also beefed up the section with respect to the forensic databank. We are allowing a provision that:

"The President shall terminate the appointment of the Custodian where the Custodian—

(a) is found to be of unsound mind or is incapable of carrying on his duties;
(b) becomes bankrupt...
(c) is convicted of any offence which brings his office into disrepute;
(d) is guilty of misconduct..."

We put in provisions to allow the removal of a custodian, because he is a very important person. This is the person who ensures that the DNA samples are preserved properly, kept safely, and that the records of the DNA samples are not tampered with and, therefore, can stand scrutiny in a court of law. We felt that it was necessary to put in a provision where if this person misbehaves or engages in misconduct, that person could be removed.

The final part of the redrafted legislation deals with penalties and offences. I will give an example. Clause 50 states:

"A person who wilfully and without authorization

(a) takes a...sample without consent or an order of the court,...
(b) gives false information as to the existence of a DNA profile...
(c) discloses or obtains DNA data of DNA profiles;
(d) breaks the seal of or opens or causes to be opened any DNA package;...
(f) adds, deletes or modifies any information in the Forensic DNA Databank;
(g) provides false information..."
Generally, under this legislation:

"commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of one hundred thousand dollars and to imprisonment for seven years."

The reason we felt it was necessary to have those provisions in, was that this process of DNA sampling will be used to prove or disprove the guilt of a person and could result in somebody being sentenced to hang or to very lengthy terms of imprisonment. Because of the accuracy of DNA testing, once DNA samples are taken properly, once the testing is carried out properly and once it is demonstrated that the DNA sample has not been tampered with, it more or less guarantees that the person will either be found guilty or innocent of a crime. So we felt that we had to have very strong provisions in there dealing with samples.

That is basically it. I wish to reiterate that we reached consensus. There was unanimity among all Members. It was truly a collaborative effort on the part of all Members. I expect that we will receive the support of Members opposite. I remind the Member for Siparia that this Bill requires a special majority, so when we take the vote I will truly appreciate if your Members can be seated so that we obtain the requisite number.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I beg to move that the report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on a Bill entitled the DNA Bill, 2006, be adopted.

Question proposed.

Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar (Siparia): Mr. Speaker, it has taken us six or seven years to reach a revised and amended DNA Bill. I really want to thank Members on this side, of course, with others, that through a collaborative effort we have been able to have the revision of this law.

I have two concerns, a very short intervention, because we have been able, as the Minister pointed out, to obtain the majority of the requests that we had in order to tighten this law.

One concern is that this Bill which will be enacted today, hopefully with support from everyone, does not have a date for proclamation; it therefore means that it will come into effect on assent, which is going to be in a very short space of time, which is good. However, Minister, we do not know anything about the infrastructure that will be necessary for implementation of this.

When the debate took place, whenever it was sometime ago, we had raised serious concerns about the ability of the forensic centre and all the supporting agencies in terms of implementation. It will be most appropriate for the Minister...
to give us an update as to the readiness of the various agencies for implementation of this; otherwise it will become just another piece of legislation on the statute books that will not be implemented. We need to know that you are ready to go for implementation.

The second concern has to do with the very provision I had requested and the hon. Prime Minister kindly agreed that we should put in place, which was the setting up of the national database. We are very happy that you have agreed to that and it is included. I think we should take our marks for that, both with respect to the DNA and, of course, what we did previously with the fingerprinting database. That too has to come into place very quickly.

That is why the infrastructure is important; the procedure, how it is going to be done. Therefore, your regulations need to come back to us very quickly so that we can actually implement it. Let it not happen as with others. My concern is with respect to that very setting up of that database.

There is the provision in the Bill with respect to the establishment of the Forensic DNA Databank in clause 41:

"There shall be a Forensic DNA Databank which shall comprise the following databases:

(a) crime scene database;
(b) volunteer database;
(c) protective services database; and
(d) non-intimate and intimate sample database."

This is what we asked for, you have included it and we are happy with that.

We then go on to the appointment of a custodian:

"There shall be a Custodian of the Forensic DNA Databank who shall be responsible for receiving and storing all DNA profiles from a forensic DNA laboratory and for carrying out searches against the Forensic DNA Databank."

In that same Part XII, clause 44 says:

"...the Custodian shall not disclose any DNA data and where he discloses such DNA data, he commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of one hundred thousand dollars and to imprisonment for seven years."

That is also perfectly in order, but we come to the exceptions, because the custodian will have the database, will have the data. Of course, the reason we are
collecting this data is in order to use it to disclose it in order to bring criminals to justice; so the exceptions to non-disclosure are very important.

We have in 44(2):

"Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Custodian shall disclose DNA data to—

(a) an officer of the First Division, to be used in the course of a criminal investigation or proceedings;"

That is all good and fine; you are investigating and, therefore, the custodian has the authority to give the First Division officer. It is good that we have a First Division officer; because of the rank you will get greater integrity in the process.

Thereafter, what happens when that First Division officer gets it? I do not think this section adequately provides for what we really want to achieve, which is for this DNA to be used in criminal proceedings, to be given in criminal proceedings as proof, as evidence of a person being the same person as their DNA may show in their blood samples or their intimate samples as the person on the crime scene.

4.15 p.m.

Therefore, the exclusions you have given do not, in my respectful view, cover the situation for that information to be disclosed in a court of law. From my limited memory of proceedings, evidence has been given by whoever is the maker of it and also by the custodian, but there is nothing here, no vision for the custodian to disclose in the court of law. It does not mean the custodian has to go there but the keeper. From my memory of the evidence, it is always the keeper of the records who is the person empowered in law to give that information as admissible evidence in the court of law. But the way you have it here—

[Mr. Imbert stands]

No, you are too hurry, let me finish. You do not jump the gun. So you must be sure it is admissible in the court of law. I will gave way and see if you can answer that.

Mr. Imbert: I would draw your attention to clause 44(2)(e).

Mrs. K. Persad-Bissessar: I have read all of them. How are you going to obtain the order of the court? Then it is the keeper of the record. That is in the Evidence Act. Out of an abundance of caution, we can insert that. The Member for Princes Town practises in the criminal court, I am saying that this is my memory, but
in criminal evidence and criminal law, my marks were at the top at the As so that is my memory of how the Evidence Act is framed.

Clause 44(2)(e) says:

“a person who has obtained an Order of the court for disclosure of DNA data.”

Who are the persons who obtained it? How will the court order give an Order for that person to obtain it from the custodian? The custodian is the keeper of the record. I am asking that we insert an (f) if you wish, which says that the custodian can disclose to a court of law. That was one of the main purposes of this. So if you can agree to that, then I really do not have too much difficulty.

I am happy to see this; maybe we can catch some of those people; the murderer of Akiel Chambers and all those other people. I do not know if this would take us backwards now that we have DNA samples that we can access in order to deal with those lawbreakers and bring them to justice.

We are happy to see this go through, we give our support and we have always said that we would support the DNA legislation once you have included certain conditions of which my colleague would speak later on. So we give our full support to the DNA legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. Adesh Nanan (Tabaquite): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to make a contribution on the Motion: 

Be it resolved that the report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on a Bill entitled the Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Bill, 2006 be adopted.

Mr. Speaker, today is a day for a UNC Alliance victory in this House. [Desk thumping] We claim victory for this piece of legislation because the genesis of this Bill started under the United National Congress in 2000.

It has been six long years as we come here today to hopefully pass this DNA Bill but we still stand by our position that it could have been done with amendments rather than to have to replace and repeal. The Minister of National Security in presenting this Bill talked about a country that is in chaos in terms of crime.

The Government has broken the social contract, our citizens are living in fear and we see this as an abandonment of the law-abiding citizens by the Government, and we are saying that in an atmosphere where bandits are ruling our nation, and where women and children are being brutalized, raped and murdered and this particular tool,
it is a tool where this technology could have been utilized since 2002. So it has been a very long time in coming and it cannot be that the DNA will be utilized after a crime is committed.

We ask about crime detection in our country and the percentage is very low. We have heard from time to time and continue to hear of the situation of our police stations where there are no vehicles and we are saying ex post facto that this must go hand in hand with the police Bills.

We have passed a package of police legislation in this House and we are not seeing the benefits. The Government has been very tardy in terms of our police service and its management and we ask the question: Where is the Government in terms of bringing the gun and kidnapping court, the amendment to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act, the strengthening of the Money Laundering Act, and the introduction of the new equal opportunity legislation? It is in this context I ask these questions before I go to the report itself.

I also have to point out the position of hon. Members opposite because this Bill needs a special majority and they all supported the Bill, and I just want to remind the House of some of the views of some of the Members who made contributions to remind them of what had happened at that time.

I want to start off with the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, my very good friend over there. I will be very brief, I just want to remind the House that— [Interruption] In fact, I still have to go into the report. I have some points I have to put on the record. This is historic legislation being introduced today. [Interruption] Permit me, it is unfortunate, but I must go on.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go back very briefly to what the Leader of the Opposition said in the debate. This Government is guilty of gross criminal negligence when it comes to protecting law-abiding citizens. [Desk thumping] The Minister of National Security painted a most horrendous picture of a nation under siege. He has the country in the hands of criminals. [Desk thumping] That is what we are dealing with. So when you try to curtail my contribution I have to speak out for the citizens of the country.

We support the DNA legislation, it is good and it was good legislation in 2000 but for some reason, according to the Member for Laventille East/Morvant, in terms of regulation it could have been produced a long time ago. That is why I will take my time but I will not be very long.

Hon. Member: Take your time.
Dr. A. Nanan: On May 11, 2000 this came about over the last two years and I am dealing with testing now, Mr. Speaker, because this is important. We heard about accreditation and this report speaks about accreditation and that is why we are questioning the Member for Diego Martin East. Yes, the legislation is coming, but we want an answer today.

Hear how we were ready in 2000. The centre has been stockpiling equipment and chemicals in preparation for the commencement of DNA analysis since 2000. The centre has acquired all the reagents, chemicals and physical equipment necessary for DNA typing of blood or body fluids using the pta method of analysis. Tell us, Member for Diego Martin East, if you are ready and what method of analysis would you use in this particular exercise of DNA analysis?

We were ready in 2000. Are you ready in 2007? We are giving you our support but we want to know if you are ready. I want to make this point that the criminals are in charge, I want the Prime Minister to know that the criminals are in charge; the DNA legislation is a tool for analysis. What about our police stations, and our police vehicles? Are our citizens going to be able to roam our streets freely once this legislation is passed?

We have no confidence in police management. We have given you a package of police legislation and you are sitting on it doing nothing for the country, and I will come to the report very quickly but I need to get a little more on the record of what the hon. Prime Minister said.

The Government recognizes that demonstrations are legitimate expressions of descent in any democratic society. Although the Government wishes to make it absolutely clear that it will not tolerate acts of civil disobedience and will enforce the laws of the country rigidly and fearlessly.

I have a question with that statement hon. Prime Minister, what we are questioning is that you have broken the social contract with the citizens to provide safety and security to life and limb and we are asking if you want a situation where we go into self-defence. If the State cannot protect citizens they would have to take up a hammer, an axe, or even a gun to protect themselves.

Member for Laventille East/Morvant, I have the information here but I did not want to quote you, I want to give you a break so I will leave you alone. I know you have difficult times in Laventille right now so I will not aggravate your problems further. I will now move to the report.

The Prime Minister indicated that he was very pleased to announce nine pieces of legislation which were identified. I need to talk about that because we all have packages of legislation.
Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the sitting of the House is suspended for tea and will resume at 5.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.: Sitting suspended.

5.00 p.m.: Sitting resumed.

Dr. A. Nanan: Mr. Speaker, when we took the break, I was debating in my mind whether to read what the Member for Laventille East/Morvant said in 2000 and I think I will read that for the record. This is in 2000, from the Member for Laventille East/Morvant.

“We consider the implementation and the establishment of DNA testing in our system of justice to be very important. We consider it to be a very good thing and we support it for that reason.”

This is the same Minister who now sits and condones the negligence on the part of the Government over the six-year period. I would also like to put on record the work of Dr. Tim Gopeesingh [Desk thumping] who worked, alongside with myself, tirelessly in the pursuit of bringing this legislation to its conclusion. The country owes Sen. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh a debt of gratitude. [Desk thumping]

Dr. Moonilal: A brilliant man.

Dr. A. Nanan: I just want to go to the report briefly to point out the areas that the United National Congress had concerns about. It is important to put that on the record.

Mr. Imbert: We went through that, man.

Dr. A. Nanan: I want to read from the report. This is not for any praise for myself, but this is just for the country to know. It is on page 13 of the report, 6.3 and it states:

“Dr. Nanan raised the issue that all members of the protective services should fall under the ambit of the DNA databank. He reiterated that not only should all police officers be included, but defence force officers as well.”

Dr. Rowley: Who said that?

Dr. A. Nanan: On page 14, item 6.8 states:

“Dr. Nanan guided the country’s attention to clause 34 with respect to the board which was established in the 2000 Act now being replaced by the office of a custodian.”
And on page 15, item 6.9, it states:

“Dr Nanan wondered whether the Forensic Science Centre was accredited. Dr. Nanan, however, raised concerns whether the Centre met the international standards of DNA testing.”

Dr. Moonilal: Read it out. I want to hear it.

Dr. A. Nanan: I made reference to these parts of the report to point out that it is the United National Congress Alliance that made the representation for these areas, because the Member for Diego Martin East in his contribution spoke about the DNA board, but the DNA board was omitted in the legislation that came before the House.

Mr. Imbert: I said that and I said we will make a new provision, at your request.

Dr. A. Nanan: The DNA board was originally in the 2000 Act. But there is another point with respect to the DNA board that the Member for Diego Martin East left out.

Mr. Imbert: “Wha ah leave out?” [Crosstalk]

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Dr. A. Nanan: The Member spoke about a person with experience, a geneticist, but the committee found that that particular professional would have been difficult to find and there was another part that was added; somebody with the same skill and competence, similar, so that particular board would not be hamstrung in terms of being able to do its duty. The revised Bill demonstrates the need for the DNA board.

Another major area of concern that had to be addressed, and was addressed, was the matter of accreditation which is of paramount importance. Part of the report and the legislation talks about identifying other laboratories besides the Forensic Science Centre, as a DNA laboratory. It cannot only be located at the Forensic Science Centre. There are other areas that can be designated as DNA laboratories once the accreditation process is taking place.

Mr. Speaker, can I give way to a colleague?

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Sharma: Thank you, hon. Member. I wanted to ask the Leader of Government Business, since this needs a constitutional majority and we do not have the numbers, how do you intend to progress this discussion?
Mr. Valley: I thought you had the numbers. Your leader assured me. We have the numbers.

Mr. Bereaux: Let him continue to talk.

Dr. A. Nanan: Mr. Speaker, the role and function of the DNA board, the Member for Diego Martin East did not talk about that and I would like to point it out at clause 36:

“(1) The DNA Board shall convene at least four times in every year after the appointment of its members, so that a period of more than three months shall not intervene between meetings.

(2) A quorum of the Board shall be not less than three members.”

And clause 37(1):

“The DNA Board shall within one month after the end of each meeting, submit to the Minister, a report on its operations.”

But a major part is clause 37(2):

“The Minister shall cause the reports of the DNA Board to be laid in Parliament twice annually.”

So that we would be able, as Members of Parliament, to peruse these reports and to judge for ourselves in terms of the credibility of the DNA standards in this country.

As I conclude, as we have worked together with the Government on this particular piece of legislation, we are committed to working with the Government in the interest of Trinidad and Tobago and a UNC Alliance government will implement all the legislation that has been languishing in the Attorney General’s department, to ensure that we return our country once more to the standard in terms of safety and security of our citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Manohar Ramsaran (Chaguanas): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for recognizing me as I make my contribution to this debate on the Motion brought before us. I recall when this was debated some time in February, certain questions were asked and it is from some of these questions that I direct my intervention. Before I go there, I would like to look at what I would like to see happen. We are moving in a high-tech crime-solving arena and when we move there we must understand that it is not business as usual, but how we get ourselves ready. I am not
knocking Trinidadians and Tobagonians; I am talking about the fact that DNA, as we know it across the world, is evolving every day and we must get into it; not to try to catch up, but to actually get into midstream as quickly as possible for DNA to work for us.

Because, you know, sometimes when you look at television shows you see DNA testing being used for various things. In North America today, paternity testing depends on DNA to a large extent and I heard my colleague, the Member for Tabaquite, talk about who is claiming the rights or the paternity for this DNA Bill. Maybe we have to use DNA to find the real people who asked for this. [Desk thumping]

Let us examine the global scenario with regard to DNA. When we look at DNA testing, it is not a simple matter. You need to have the competencies, the capabilities and the infrastructure in place to facilitate it. You know, when we in Trinidad and Tobago talk DNA testing, it is as if it is something we could wake up one morning and so be it. I believe that we might be in for a shock. I read the final report on Public Consultation on Crime and on page 17 a participant asked:

“How soon would the DNA process be implemented in Trinidad and Tobago?

Brigadier Joseph: The DNA Act is presently going through the parliamentary process. It means that it cannot be used as yet as a tool in fighting crime, but what we have been doing is working with the Forensic Science Centre that is presently upgrading its systems and the UK police officers who are in SUATT to help develop the mechanism so that when the law is passed, there will be little time in implementing the process.”

I quoted that to make the point that people out there are thinking and I am sure that if we do a survey now—a MORI survey, or whatever—the percentage of people in Trinidad and Tobago would not know what DNA is; how it would be used; what results we could have. So when you come to this Parliament and believe you are passing high-tech laws, I believe you have to really remember what it is being used for.

I would like to hear the Member for Diego Martin East. I was not in the committee but my colleague was, and I know in reading the verbatim reports she did ask some serious questions, as also other colleagues from the House. Questions were asked, yet the answers were not as clear as I would like them to be. These are my questions: Is the DNA to help in only dealing with serious crimes, as I keep hearing about blood samples, about human tissue, and so on? Is
it to help in the white collar crime? Because when you look at DNA throughout the
world today, it is used in almost every facet in the crime industry, so to speak.

We have to face the reality. Let us look at Trinidad and Tobago for a
moment—close your eyes—and think of what is happening with our police
service, with our crime fighting fraternity. What do we have?

5.15 p.m.

If we do not have forces that will challenge an industry we are wasting time.
Do we believe that we are ready and willing to implement DNA and say that it is
on the books? DNA must be done in a particular way to solve crimes effectively
and quickly. I keep repeating myself whenever I talk about crime in this country.
If we do not put infrastructure in place to deal with crime, I believe that we would
end up with nought. For example, are efforts being made to equip our police
stations with the crime fighting apparatus? Do we have computers? I know that
we do not have. I should not ask that question. Do we have any intention of
computerizing the entire police service? We talk about First World nation and
Vision 2020. We do not have to re-invent the wheel in Trinidad and Tobago. We
could send our officers to be trained abroad and then come back to this country,
but it would be very frustrating for a young crime fighter who is computer trained;
has IT information at his finger tips and when he goes there he has nothing to
work with.

I will like to assess this Government in crime fighting. If we can get people to
ensure that police stations—if you stop a car with criminals you will not know
them. They can hoodwink you. People can drive through with a body in their
trunk. There is no communication between police stations. I am not trying to
criticize anybody. I am talking about crime fighting and what we want to do to
improve crime fighting in this country. We could have all the plans but if we do
not approach it at the base we would be in trouble.

You want to have DNA testing. I have no problem with that and we support the
Bill. Do our people understand the question of communicating with each other;
computerizing and the Internet? This must be used in today’s crime fighting. It is no
use talking about bringing more police officers and police cars when they are not
properly equipped.

Mr. Hinds: What did you say? There is no need bringing cars when they are
not properly equipped?

Mr. M. Ramsaran: You always do not hear properly.
Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: We need computers in motor cars so that we could relate to each other. We could relate with the police officers in the police stations and those on the streets. To get there we have to move collectively. We cannot move with DNA here and say that is one approach without having the total infrastructure in place. To repeat my call, let us see how we can equip the police service with the competencies and infrastructure to deal with crime fighting. We have to do that or else we would be wasting time.

You are passing the DNA Bill, but is that enough? How do we treat with our samples? I heard that being mentioned. How confidential is it? An average Trinidadian hears reports about cocaine disappearing and rats destroying evidence in police stations. [Interruption] We know that we have the legislation. I am not talking about that. I am talking about the whole question of implementation and execution of this strategy. How do we get it organized? How do we get people’s trust that a sample would be used in the proper manner? These are questions we must ask ourselves when we talk about implementing this DNA Bill. We know that we have approval from both Houses of Parliament and we believe that it would be easy to pass. I am not saying that it is not easy. I keep challenging the Prime Minister at every turn in crime fighting. I want to do it again this afternoon. I said it more than once. When I look at what is taking place in this country I am willing to give the Prime Minister every piece of legislation he wants in his crime fighting effort. When we get serious about implementation or have the political will to say that we would have zero tolerance and not only saying it, but acting it, then we would get rid of crime in this country.

As I stand here today, it is not easy. Criminals are becoming high tech and better armed than the police officers. They are always one step ahead of the police officers. That is there for all of us to see and we cannot deny it. When I read the Prime Minister’s budget statement the same things regurgitated year after year and we are not seeing any success or the intelligence within the protective service to deal effectively with crime. I could talk about the ineffective operation in the drug trade, but I will not go too wide.

Let us talk about what is taking place in the crime fighting laboratory. If we are talking about DNA sampling I do not want to have something—for the politician, you will assent to it and maybe proclaim it, but getting it to be implemented is my problem. Unless we do not get everything correct we would be wasting time passing these Bills. I want to say categorically, that at this time on the eve of an election in Trinidad and Tobago, it is nothing but electioneering.
Mr. Valley: Why are you saying that?

Mr. M. Ramsaran: I am saying that because I am worried about the implementation. I want to see it done.

Dr. Rowley: “Don't worry.”

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Is the DNA Bill as we have it today, retroactive? Sometimes you have Bills that cannot go back. If we have samples taken from a crime that was committed—when we debated the Bill the first time we spoke about DNA samples being used to solve crimes that were committed 20 or 30 years ago because the samples were well-kept and secured and the officers of today went into the labs and solved these crimes. Is it possible for us to do that? Are we thinking about the white collar crimes? Would DNA testing be used there? Is it only for criminal activities as murder or does it go across the board? [Crosstalk] Maybe, you have the answers. “I don’t.”

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. M. Ramsaran: My little intervention is to get us to understand—did you read this book Member for Diego Martin Central?

Mr. Valley: What book is it?

Mr. M. Ramsaran: Yours. I am quoting.

My name is Francis Marchand. I am from the Arouca North constituency. I am here because of a crime that was committed against me in 1991. I used to work at St. Phillips’s Government Primary School as a security guard. On 26th July I was attacked by people I do not know and I had an accident. I fell down and injured my spine. From that day to now I have been unable to hold a proper job. Up to this day I’ve had no justice. The company dismissed me. I was dismissed on 6th March 1992. To this day I cannot hold a proper job. My life is just deteriorating and I am going down. I have not committed any crime to this day. I do not have anywhere to turn.

If the Prime Minister was at these consultations and fully awake he would have heard this. Crimes are being committed against people; they have been crippled because of crime and they suffer. We are coming to pass this DNA Bill. How can we give them confidence that we can put this in place and deal with it? When I take my seat I would like to hear how we can give confidence to others about the implementation of this Bill. The experience in this country is that six years will pass; we will have a Bill assented to and not proclaimed. We can say that over and over because it is like nobody listens.
I am happy that this Bill was approved in the Joint Select Committee and the Members who were there made their contributions to make it a workable Bill. We must not believe that this is the panacea. We believe that we have to continue to look at crime fighting initiatives, not just to be politically right, but to be morally and legally right and get the persuasion to make it happen.

We had the consultation on crime. The Congress of the People has put forward 103 promises as to how you deal with crime fighting in this country. Crime fighting is not only about catching criminals. It must start from the primary schools by teaching the children the value of family and community life; Government’s property and we go from there. Crime fighting must not be seen as coming at the end and trying to go back. We have to do it both ways. We must not forget the question of social and community development and getting our young people to understand the value of each other.

Sometimes when I read about the murders that are committed in this country, it is as if we do not have respect for each other’s life. How can we give solace to the parents of children who have been murdered and are being murdered on a daily basis? How can we give them solace with DNA? As I said, 90 per cent will not understand what is DNA. We have to let people know what is going to happen and that we will tackle crime from both sides, preventive as well as interdiction. I am not seeing it taking place in a serious manner in this country. When you look at the Children Bill it was put there as a crime fighting initiative to get people to understand that children must be protected. All the work of the United Nations; the officers of Trinidad and Tobago and a few Ministers in going to ensure that we sit at the United Nations and put the children’s laws in place; it was passed in 1999/2000; assented; not yet proclaimed and put in law. Are we serious about crime fighting?

I heard the Member for Toco/Manzanilla in the budget debate talk about lighting the recreation grounds. These things are commendable, but they must not be seen to be only political. How can we get into the psyche of the young people to make them understand that we are serious about their development and fighting crime from the early days? We cannot wait for people to commit a murder and then go backwards. We have to look at the causes of poverty and why children get in trouble. Is it only because of poverty and neglect? We must find the causes to end the cycle of crime.

I know that it has been a long week. Most faces are tired and the Prime Minister is in the middle of a yawn as we speak. We have to put things right. Are we proud of the three headlines this morning? [Interruption] The Monteil issue. You did not see any. Okay. Are we proud of that? That is again crime. We have
to understand where the country is heading and getting to the root of the problem must be done in a holistic manner. We must show care for our people and ensure that we do not allow things to go on as usual.

5.30 p.m.

As I continue my contribution, I just want to talk seriously to the Prime Minister again. Yes, we did well and this Bill has come before us, but how do we implement and execute this piece of legislation. We must train the people and make sure they have the required skills and so forth to deal with this piece of legislation. I want to be assured of the confidentiality of securing samples.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the history of storing evidence with respect to simple day-to-day criminal activity is not one that we have faith in. When this Bill is proclaimed, I want to make a plea on behalf of the police officers in this country to have them properly equipped, because numbers may not be the answer. They must be trained in computers and understand it quickly.

Mr. Speaker, if we do not let persons understand the seriousness of crime, when we take their DNA—soon we are going to have the breathalyser—how are we going to make these things work to prevent crime and to solve crimes?

I just want to draw one scenario before I take my seat. If you stop a motor car—well, let us say the person started driving and then that person was stopped for a breathalyser test, I believe at that time a police officer must be strong enough and confident enough to do a check on him as is done in other countries. We want to reach Vision 2020 and world class status, and that is not difficult and it is not expensive like some of the things that are taking place. I do not want to criticize what is taking place now, but it is not expensive. If they go to the computer in the car—you do not have to reinvent the wheel—immediately you will know that this person is wanted for other crimes. So, a simple thing as driving drunk could expose him to other criminal activities that he or she has committed.

We have to understand that fighting crime is a holistic thing and it cannot be done as an individual. Minister you said that the Bill is passed, so let us go home. That is fine, but let me end by saying that I look forward to the Breathalyser Bill; I look forward to the DNA Bill, and the Bail (Amdt.) Bill will be coming back. I just want to touch on the Bail (Amdt.) Bill a bit.

We have a country preparing for an election, but had it not been for a couple of individuals—I am not going to tell the Prime Minister who they were—who
came forward and mentioned that Bail (Amdt.) Bill to us, maybe you would have prorogued Parliament and that Bill would have lapsed and while we were campaigning out there, a few of us would have been kidnapped. We must be careful not to make mistakes about serious things in the country and to get things happening.

Again, with these few words, I wish that we would put these laws in place. Every time we come with these kinds of legislation there must be the implementation process following. There may be many views, but do you put structure in place? Do you put strategy in place? Whatever we do, we must make sure, at the end of the day, that we create that confidence in our police officers to do their job better.

Thank you very much. [Desk thumping]

Mr. Subhas Panday (Princes Town): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. All Members of this House should congratulate themselves for such a piece of legislation. It is progressive and we support it because we believe that it would be beneficial to the society.

As legislators, previously when the Bill came before the House, we were saying that this Bill is to catch the criminal. We can look at it from another angle. It is a modern piece of technique being given to the police in investigations. Now, the police have a very archaic method of investigating. For example, they will hold you if they cannot get a witness, they cannot find anybody or they cannot find an accomplice. So they suspect it is you and the next thing they do is hold you and brutalize you beyond control. They beat you until they extract a statement from you.

Now, what is going to happen is that the whole police service must now modernize their thinking and must not stay in that warp. Mr. Speaker, I am going to give you an example. A security guard was held whom they thought had stolen a gun. He had reported that somebody had taken it away from him. The police broke his hand; they beat him on the sole of his feet with the blue rubber hose—under the sole of his feet was swollen—and they told him that they would give him piles. They took a soldering iron and inserted it in his rear and they were going to plug it on and he started to bawl. I want to tell the policemen out there that there is no need for that anymore. There is modern legislation to deal with that.

Mr. Speaker, they are so brutal at times; they tie their fingers with a piece of wire and stretch it and put it in a plug and when they ask you a question, they would touch you and it would shock you.

Mr. Imbert: Where did that happen?
Mr. S. Panday: At the Marabella Police Station. I am in the process of taking legal action against police officers. I have the X-ray and I have the doctor’s report on it. [ Interruption ]

Mr. Imbert: You are all wrong.

Mr. S. Panday: Member for Diego Martin East, you do not spit on poor people like that. What I am saying is that the police should realize now that they have a modern system of dealing with criminals, so they do not have to go back to that state of being brutal. Although we are saying that we want to catch the criminals, we must not treat a person less than a human being.

Mr. Speaker, when you go to court, you may find a very influential witness who is a “slick” witness—who is a dishonest witness and who could cause a man to go to jail. When you go to the courts they say that you do not only have to hear what he says, but you have to look at his demeanour and the way he delivers—how quickly he answers the questions; how smooth he is flowing; and a jury will “buy” that when the judge sums up his case. You have to look at these things. A witness who is a dishonest witness is smooth flowing and he might be an influential witness. You could find an innocent man going down the road.

Further, there is the issue of the identification parade. This piece of legislation really helps you to take the identification process further. For example, when you lift off fingerprints, they are so weak sometimes that if rain falls in that area it could wash away the fingerprints. This will buttress that.

What happens is that the police have a suspect in their custody and they would take him for an identification parade. They would put that person among eight other men who look like him. It is very difficult to find eight men who look like him. That person will come and identify a man. They would then take you and extract that confession from you at all costs, and then down the road you gone and you could be an innocent man.

If this legislation is used properly, we would not depend on that type of investigative crime scene detection. That is why I said that all of us should congratulate ourselves for a good piece of legislation coming before the House. [ Desk thumping ]

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Laventille East/Morvant will tell you, as someone who has been practising in the courts, when they bring blood samples to the court, the furthest it could reach in a post mortem is to give you the blood group. They cannot go further. If I kill a man say, for example, the Member for
Laventille East/Morvant, and his blood spilled on my clothes, and they take a blood sample from me, all that they could go and say is that his blood group is on my clothes but, again, there are many other persons with that same blood group so it really does not help. This piece of legislation is the most direct piece of legislation for the police service.

Mr. Speaker, the only thing that I am sad about is that this piece of legislation was passed in 2000 in this honourable House. In 2006, the Government came with the legislation and they changed certain fundamental sections like the board and so forth. I remember the Member for Laventille East/Morvant indicated that the reason they came to the Parliament so late was that they were going through the legislation. They took five years to extract what they thought were irrelevant or offensive sections. When it went to the joint select committee everything came back in the Bill. So, really, we are back to the stage of the 2000 Bill.

Mr. Speaker, if this legislation was passed in time, I am certain that the killers of the son of my dear brother, the Member for Naparima, would have been caught and he would have been a happier man today. If we had this legislation, we probably would have been able to catch those criminals so he would have had closure in the matter. That is why I thought we really dilly-dallied for too long with this piece of legislation. We could have brought the legislation.

As was indicated, the Forensic Science Centre was quick to perform the function. As a matter of fact, I remember during the debate Brig. Theodore came to the House and said that officers were being trained. The Forensic Science Centre laboratory had been equipped, and we should have brought that legislation then. If there were mistakes or any concerns in the legislation, we could have dealt with them as we go along and, as such, probably our murder rate would have been arrested during that period of time. However, let us not cry over spilled milk. Let us say congratulations to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, there are matters in Trinidad that have occurred and during the tea break I purchased this book, *The Lawyer*. In *The Lawyer*, this issue has been dealt with—DNA in the defence of the innocent. So, all we were talking about at one time was catching the criminal. Now, the legal fraternity is saying that it is good law. So, therefore, when we pass law and we hear the public saying it is good law—at least the specialists in the areas—it means that we are on a good track.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to quote from the latest edition of *The Lawyer*, which came out in June 2007, at least one case, in Trinidad and Tobago, and that is the case against Samlalsingh. It says on page 26 that the accused was charged with rape on the testimony of a victim. He was convicted and sentenced and after trial
an appeal or retrial was ordered. At the retrial the victim admitted that she had lied and gave the reasons for lying. It says that this man could have faced a jail term. Her conscience beat her and she came and gave evidence at the Court of Appeal.

5.45 p.m.

Clearly, DNA testing would have saved this man from the trauma of prison, because after he was convicted he was kept in prison until the trial. Also, it helps, as this speaks about rape. It is very easy to be accused of committing a rape. [Interruption] You drank too much last night, Member for Diego Martin Central; you must not run up and down. I would not be more than five minutes.

For example, if a woman said she had sex with another man and she claims that he raped her, the police would take her to the doctor; they may find the spermmatoza inside her and charge him for rape. They would say the spermmatoza corroborated her evidence. When you come before the court now, you cannot ask her any question about sex with another man. You could only ask her about sex with this man.

So, the accused is put in a kind of a tight position where he finds that the accusation is easy to make and the burden is heavy to lift. I see the Member for Diego Martin West is very interested in this area. [Interruption] No, no, it is true. With this legislation, if they do a DNA testing they could determine whether he is guilty immediately or innocent immediately, so he would not have to face even a trial. That is why this legislation is so far-reaching and very good.

Hon. Member:—did they accuse the man?

Mr. S. Panday: Yes. What happened, in your case the samples had disappeared? [Laughter] Sorry. You want me to explain the legal technicalities?

Hon. Member: It is a panacea.

Mr. S. Panday: It is not a panacea, but it is a very important tool and the most important tool at this point in time in our development. There is a case which the hon. Leader of the Opposition spoke about and again, I do not want the Member for Diego Martin Central catch me for plagiarism. A classic case and it comes from page 96:

“The local jurisdiction which would have benefited from the DNA investigation was the Akiel Chambers case. Akiel was an 11-year old boy whose lifeless body was found at the bottom of a swimming pool on the premises where he attended a birthday party on the previous afternoon.”
Postmortem reports reveal that he had a lapsed anal canal and a swab revealed the presence of spotsomatozoa in his anus.

Notwithstanding the fact a postmortem was pending, the swab was destroyed at the Forensic Science Centre. And when the matter went to the coroner and the coroner sent it back to the police, they could not go any further because the swab had been destroyed. This legislation makes provision for the retention or the keeping of the swab until a certain period.

The coroner in this case referred the matter back to the police for further investigation, as there remained a slim hope that the DNA might be extracted from Akeil’s underwear, which he was wearing at the time of his death, which is still in possession of the police…"

So, the underwear was still in possession of the police.

“Months have passed since this referral and nothing further has happened.”

We said it, Mr. Speaker, if this legislation had been passed when it was first introduced into this House in 2000 we could probably have dealt with the issue of Akiel Chambers. [Desk thumping]

I know that the Prime Minister had a long brutal debate in the budget and I know he had a good time last night. I know that he is tired to the extent that he had to suspend the Finance Committee meeting. Well, Mr. Prime Minister, we want to sincerely inform you, it is not the intention on our part to carry you for the long run. In the budget debate, you speak on the general issue policies, but when we come to the committee meeting, we do constituency work. That is why we went through it like that and we did not mean to stress you out like that, because we thought that you had a good, happy night last night; you are tired; you have a headache and we want you to go home early.

With these words, Mr. Speaker, we want to congratulate all Members as they—is it the Minister of National Security who on certain Bills, said we should be proud of ourselves? The budget has come and gone and now is a time that we should tell the society that they should thank all of us for a good job done.

**Dr. Rafeeq:** Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 57(3), I move that the Motion be amended by adding the following words at the end of the Motion:

“subject to the recommittal of clause 44 of the Bill to a committee of the whole House.”

**Dr. Moonilal:** Mr. Speaker, I second the amendment.
The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We need to deal with some of the issues raised. The Member for Siparia asked whether we were ready to implement this Bill, a very important question. That question was also posed by the Member for Chaguanas in a different form. If Members had taken the time—as I was commenting when we did the breathalyser, one of the Independent Senators, Sen. Basharat Ali, took the time to read all 250 pages of that report.

If you go into the minutes of the meetings you will see that the way the Bill has been drafted it allows for immediate implementation. Yes, some regulations will be required to fine-tune certain elements of the Bill, but the Bill can be assented to and put into effect immediately, because what the Bill requires is the appointment of a custodian and the DNA board; that is essentially what is required. All of the procedures for taking of samples, testing and all of the safeguards—[Interruption] yes, all of that—have been incorporated into the drafting of the Bill.[Desk thumping] So, we were very, very careful in the way—the Breathalyser is also very, very similar. We took our time with those bits of legislation to reduce and minimize the requirement for the bureaucratic process of drafting of regulations and passage through both Houses of Parliament and so on.

I wish to give Members the assurance that the way the Committee went about its work, this DNA Bill, this piece of legislation can be implemented virtually immediately with the appointment of the custodian and so on, because we also gave the Forensic Science Centre a grace period. In other words, we deemed it to be an accredited centre for a period within which it will have to go and get its international accreditation.

So, Member of Chaguanas, I hope you understand now why we took our time with this bit of legislation and why the Committee went into such depth. So, that deals with the whole question of “Are we ready?” The other points were well articulated by the Member for Princes Town, that the Bill is not only for serious crimes, it is for all sorts of things; paternity, whatever; for all sorts of crimes where you require tissue sample. It is not only crimes, but for just the taking of DNA samples, analyzing of the samples and for medical purposes, for example and so on.

The point made by the Member for Princes Town is quite relevant and it is interesting that he read from the book, The Lawyer, in the defence of the innocent, I truly believe that. There are so many stories; you look at movies on television and so on and you hear about people who had been convicted of murder, sentenced to imprisonment and in prison for 25 years, and then DNA testing proves that they could not possibly have committed the crime and they are set free. So, this is truly
historic legislation. And underneath all the “ol’ talk” and the asides, the Parliament has really risen to the occasion with this piece of legislation and similarly with the breathalyser.

And you know, the society at large, sometimes have a very dim view of parliamentarians; they think that all we do inside of here is “kicks” and throw “picong” at each other and so on. But this non-partisan approach and this team effort on the part of both sides of the House and also in the other place, demonstrates that we, as a Parliament—in my view—are coming of age and we have done extremely well and all of us deserve the warmest and the highest commendations for our approach to this DNA legislation and the Breathalyser legislation.

Before I beg to move, I want to make the point that we have managed to pass the Breathalyser legislation, which will be implemented very shortly, once the orders are published with respect to the specifications for the devices and so on. We have reached this stage with the DNA legislation; we on this side have met the commitments we made to the Members opposite and we also are in committee on the Equal Opportunity legislation.

I just want to correct the record before I complete my winding up on this Bill. During the Committee meetings of the Equal Opportunity legislation, Members of the Opposition, whose support we require to pass the legislation, asked for a series of public consultations: four in Trinidad and one in Tobago. As Chairman of the Committee I had to agree and in any event, it was a good idea. So, we on this side will not take any responsibility for any delay with respect to the passage of the Equal Opportunity Bill.

The Members of the Opposition asked firstly for a critical examination of the Bill; a virtual dissertation from the lawyers on the differences between the two pieces of legislation, for consideration of all the points made by the Member for Siparia in particular, in terms of amendments to the legislation, and after that, development of a common position of the team as such, and then a series of public consultations. All of that in my view, was required, but I just wanted to put that on the record. We have dealt with the Breathalyser; we have dealt with the DNA and we will deal with the Equal Opportunity Bill in due course.

I beg to move.

Question, on amended motion, put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That the report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider and report on a Bill entitled, “The Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Bill, 2006”, subject to a recommittal of clause 44 of the Bill to a committee of the whole House, be adopted.
Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.

House in committee.

6.00 p.m.

Clause 44 recommitted.

Question again proposed, That clause 44 stand part of the Bill.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Mr. Chairman, I proposed an amendment to clause 44(2), (f) to insert the words “(f) a court of law.”

Mr. Chairman: To add.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: Well, insert is the same as to add.

Mr. Chairman: No, it is really to add.

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: So insert or add to clause 44(2), (f) “a court of law”.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the committee considered clause 44 and there is a new clause 44 as you will see in your report and what is being proposed is that the original clause 44 be amended as suggested in the report and then further amended by adding “(f), a court of law.”

Mr. Imbert: That is 44(2).

Mr. Chairman: 44(2)(f). Hon. Members, the question is that new clause 44(2) be amended by inserting “(f) a court of law.”

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 44, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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

House resumed.

Bill reported with amendment.

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me a little break in procedure, I omitted to congratulate the Secretary to the Committee who did yeoman service—Mrs. Maharaj. [Desk thumping]

Question put, That the Bill be read a third time.
DNA Bill
Thursday, August 30, 2007

The House voted: Ayes 24

Valley, Hon. K.
Manning, Hon. P.
Rowley, Hon. Dr. K.
Imbert, Hon. C.
Narine, Hon. J.
Boynes, Hon. R.
Rahael, Hon. J.
Roberts, Hon. A.
Bereaux, H.
James, Hon. E.
Hart, Hon. E.
Callender, Hon. S.
Seukeran, Hon. D.
Job-Davis, Hon. E.
Hinds, Hon. F.
Khan. F.
Rafeeq, Dr. H.
Persad-Bissessar, K.
Partap, H.
Nanan, Dr. A.
Panday, S.
Baksh, N.
Moonilal, Dr. R.
Ramsaran, M.

Question agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the third and passed.
The Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Mr. Speaker, as I close, let me again thank the Opposition for the support of this very important piece of legislation. I beg to move that this House be now adjourned to Monday, September 10, 2007 at 1.30 p.m.. Let me take this opportunity to wish all Members of this House and on the other side, happy Independence, and the nation as a whole, a happy and prayerful Independence.

On that day, Mr. Speaker, the Government plans to do the Bail Bill which will be circulated, as well as the Bill which has come from the Upper House, a Bill entitled an Act to amend the Medical Board Act, as well as—[ Interruption]

Dr. Rafeeq: [ Inaudible]

Hon. K. Valley: No, we are getting very close to the end of the term and we need to, because we need also really on that day to adopt the report on the bankruptcy legislation.

Independence Greetings

Dr. Hamza Rafeeq (Caroni Central): Mr. Speaker, I want to join with Members on the opposite side as well, on behalf of all of us on this side, to wish Members of the House, the staff, members of the protective services, and indeed the national community, happy Independence.

Mr. Manohar Ramsaran (Chaguanas): [ Laughter] Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me join the Members of this House in extending to our nation Happy 45th Anniversary of Independence. Mr. Speaker, I remember that as my first term in school and I remember that day as if it was yesterday, and the hopes and aspirations of a free and independent Trinidad and Tobago are still alive in me and most of us. So let me extend to all of us, Happy Independence.

Mr. Manning: Well said.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, I would like to join the Leader of Government Business, the Chief Whip and the Acting Whip of the Congress of the People, in extending felicitations to the national community as we celebrate the 45th Anniversary of our Independence.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.09 p.m.