

Leave Of Absence

Friday, March 28, 2008

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 28, 2008

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from the following Members requesting leave of absence from sittings of the House: The Hon. Mustapha Abdul Hamid, Member of Parliament for Chaguanas East, for the period March 28 to March 31; the Hon. Roger Joseph, Member of Parliament for La Horquetta/Talparo, for the period March 25 to March 29; the Hon. Nizam Baksh, Member of Parliament for Naparima, for the period March 08 to April 05; Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj, Member of Parliament for Tabaquite, from today's sitting of the House; Mr. Vasant Bharath, Member of Parliament for St. Augustine, from today's sitting of the House. The leave which these Members seek is granted.

**BASEL CONVENTION (REGIONAL CENTRE FOR TRAINING
AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER) BILL**

Bill to amend the Basel Convention (Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer) Act, 2008, brought from the Senate [*The Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment*]; read the first time.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited for the year ended December 31, 2000. [*The Minister of Finance (Hon. Karen Nunez-Tesheira)*]

To be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee.

2. Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the financial statements of the Arima Corporation for the year ended September 30, 2000. [*Hon. K. Nunez-Tesheira*]

To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, the Government is in a position to answer questions Nos. 61, 64, 65, 66 and 68 for

oral answer and 58 for written answer. I ask for a deferment of two weeks for the other questions on the Order Paper.

Mr. Speaker: Before I proceed I have noticed that we have on the Order Paper some questions from January and February, let me urge you to pay attention to them please.

The following questions stood on the Order Paper:

**Office of Disaster Preparedness Management
(Details of)**

12. With regard to the Office of Disaster Preparedness Management, can the hon. Minister of National Security inform the House what is the recurrent cost in 2007 in relation to the operations of this office and what has the office achieved thus far? [*Mr. J. Warner*]

**Municipal Corporations
(Wooden Bridges Owned by)**

23. Is the hon. Minister of Local Government aware that a person was injured when he fell through a dilapidated, rotten wooden bridge in the jurisdiction of the Penal/Debe Regional Corporation?

Could the Minister state:

- a) the number of wooden bridges under the jurisdiction of each municipal corporation;
- b) whether funds have been allocated to municipal corporations for the conversion of these wooden bridges into concrete bridges;
- c) the allocations for conversion of wooden bridges into concrete bridges in each municipal corporation, if the answer to (b) is in the affirmative; and
- d) the number of wooden bridges she expects to be converted into concrete bridges utilizing the said allocation? [*Mr. S. Panday*]

**Special Purpose Companies
(Criteria and Purposes for)**

24. Could the hon. Prime Minister state:
- a) the allocations given to the special purpose companies for carrying out infrastructure works for the years 2006 and 2007;

- b) what criteria and/or mechanisms are used in determining the type of work and the areas in which such works are to be carried out by the special purpose companies;
- c) the various ministries under which each special purpose company falls;
- d) the criteria and procedures adopted by these companies in awarding contracts; and
- e) the persons and/or organizations which supervise and/or monitor the performance and the quality of work carried out by them? [*Mr. S. Panday*]

Self-Employed Persons
(National Insurance Coverage for)

43. Could the hon. Minister of Finance indicate:
- a) why coverage of self-employed persons has not been introduced under the National Insurance Board; and
 - b) whether this will be done in the future, and if so when? [*Mr. N. Baksh*]

Brian Lara Sporting Complex
(Cost and Completion of)

48. With regard to the Brian Lara Sporting Complex in Tarouba, could the hon. Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs state:
- a) the projected cost;
 - b) how much money has been expended on the project so far; and
 - c) the expected date of completion of the entire project? [*Dr. H. Rafeeq*]

Housing Development Corporation
(Details of Housing Units)

49. With respect to the Housing Development Corporation could the hon. Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment state:
- (a) how many housing units were constructed in the Mayaro constituency during the period January 01, 2006—December 31, 2007;
 - (b) the geographical location of these units;
 - (c) the total expenditure on construction of those units to date; and
 - (d) how many of these units are still unoccupied? [*Mr. W. Peters*]

Mayaro Constituency
(Construction of Housing Units)

50. Could the hon. Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment state what new housing units are earmarked for construction in the Mayaro constituency? [*Mr. W. Peters*]

Housing Development Corporation
(Relief from Flooding by Homeowners)

51. Could the hon. Minister of Planning, Housing and the Environment state:
- (a) whether she is aware of the plight of families in Plaisance Park, Mayaro who have been severely affected by regular flooding of their Housing Development Corporation Units (recent advertisement December, 2007); and
 - (b) what the Housing Development Corporation is doing to bring relief and comfort to these homeowners in the short and long term? [*Mr. W. Peters*]

Naparima Mayaro Road
(Details of)

53. Could the hon. Minister of Works and Transport give a status report on road paving works along the Naparima Mayaro Road to Rio Claro inclusive of the present condition of the road, scope of works still needed to be done and projected completion date? [*Mr. W. Peters*]

Constituency of Mayaro
(Details of Road Works)

54. Could the hon. Minister of Works and Transport state:
- a) what roads within the constituency of Mayaro are earmarked for road paving, restoration/rehabilitation; and
 - b) when these works are expected to commence? [*Mr. W. Peters*]

Financial Support for Needy Students
(Details of Selection)

60. Could the hon. Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education state:
- a) how much money was spent in 2007 to support needy students seeking tertiary training abroad;

- b) how these students were selected for financial support;
- c) whether there was any advertisement with respect to the availability of this fund for assistance to local students studying abroad; and
- d) if the answer to (c) is in the affirmative, could the Minister state the dates and the specific media in which these advertisements were placed? [*Dr. H. Rafeeq*]

**Sangre Grande Public Market
(Details of Construction)**

- 62.** Could the hon. Minister of Local Government state:
- a) what was the estimated cost of construction of the Sangre Grande Public Market;
 - b) when was construction started and when was it scheduled for completion;
 - c) which contractor/contracting firm was awarded the contract for the construction of the market; and
 - d) is the contractor still on the project and has there been a cost overrun on the construction project? [*Mr. H. Partap*]

**Gasparillo Intersection
(Traffic Jams and Congestions)**

- 67.** Could the hon. Minister of Works and Transport state what plans if any, the government has to redress the continuing hardships and anguish experienced, on a daily basis, by the travelling public at the vicinity of the Gasparillo intersection with the Solomon Hochoy Highway from the traffic jams and congestions of motor vehicles travelling to and from Gasparillo either from north or south on the highway? [*Mr. R. L. Maharaj SC*]

**Foreign Consultant Stephen Mastrofski
(Hiring of)**

- 69.** Could the hon. Minister of National Security state:
- (a) the sum of money it has cost the Government to date for it to hire foreign consultant Stephen Mastrofski;
 - (b) whether any other foreign consultant or advisor is now employed by the Government in the police service, and if so, how many and at what cost in respect of each advisor and/or consultant; and

- (c) what is the total sum spent by the Government since it took office in 2001, to present time, in hiring foreign advisors and/or consultants for the police service and/or for the fight against crime, giving the particulars for each foreign advisor and/or consultant? [*Mr. R. L. Maharaj SC*]

**Justice Monica Barnes Report
(Recommendations)**

- 71.** Could the hon. Minister of Social Development inform this House:
- (a) if the Government has received the Justice Monica Barnes Report;
- (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, when this report will be laid in Parliament; and
- (c) what are the recommendations made in the report and whether these recommendations are being implemented? [*Mr. N. Baksh*]

**Barrackpore Regional Complex
(Board of Management)**

- 73.** Could the hon. Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs state:
- (a) the period/s during which the Board of Management of the Barrackpore Regional Complex was appointed and functioned for the last five years;
- (b) if he is aware that there is no functional Board at present; and
- (c) if the answer to (b) is in the affirmative, when the Board will be appointed and become functional? [*Mr. N. Baksh*]

**Ex-Caroni (1975) Limited
(Leases for Agricultural Land)**

- 74.** Could the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources state:
- (a) how many leases for agricultural land have been given out to and executed by ex-Caroni (1975) Limited VSEP-availed workers as at February 29, 2008; and
- (b) where the lands in (a) are located? [*Dr. H. Rafeeq*]

Ex-Caroni (1975) Limited
(Leases for Residential Lands)

- 75.** Could the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources state:
- (a) how many leases for residential lands have been given out to and executed by ex-Caroni (1975) Limited VSEP-availed workers as at February 29, 2008; and
 - (b) where the lands in (a) are located? [*Dr. H. Rafeeq*]

Caroni (1975) Limited
(Details of Residential Lots)

- 76.** Could the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources state:
- (a) how many residential lots from land previously owned by Caroni (1975) Limited will be made available by sale/lease/rental to members of the public;
 - (b) the price of which the lands in (a) will be sold; and
 - (c) when the land in (a) will become available; and the criteria for selection of purchasers for the above lots of lands? [*Dr. H. Rafeeq*]

Questions, by leave, deferred.

Allocation of Police Vehicles
(Details of)

- 61. Dr. Hamza Rafeeq** asked the hon. Minister of National Security:
Could the Minister inform this House as to:
- a) how many vehicles are allocated each of the following:
 - i. Freeport Police Station,
 - ii. Gran Couva Police Stations;
 - iii. Longdenville Police Stations; and
 - iv. the Flanagin Town and Las Lomas Police Post; and
 - b) how many policemen are allocated to work in each of the stations and police posts in (a)?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, the Minister is not here but I will answer on his behalf. Hon. Members are advised that Longdenville is serviced by a police post and not a police station as indicated

in the question. The manpower strength and vehicle capacity of any police station or division is a strategic decision based on careful analysis of the needs of the specific area. To reveal that information to the general public, not all of whom have this country's best interest at heart would set not only a dangerous precedent but could also potentially place the lives of officers stationed in these areas in unnecessary dangers. *[Interruption]*

Consequently, it will be imprudent to reveal the number of police officers currently assigned to these police stations or posts or the number of vehicles assigned to them. An analysis of the manpower needs of the entire police service is being undertaken, the outcome of which will guide the police service in its future assignment of officers to ensure that all police stations are properly manned.

Hon. Members should note that the vehicular fleet of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service will be augmented during fiscal year 2008 with the acquisition of an additional 314 vehicles; 99 of these vehicles have already been received and deployed, and the remaining 215 vehicles are due by July 2008. These additional vehicles will be distributed based on the particular needs of the area in question and are expected to assist in alleviating existing shortages.

Dr. Rafeeq: Mr. Speaker, seeing that they cannot divulge how many officers are attached to these police stations, are you satisfied that the complement of staff there is adequate?

Hon. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, in the first instance that supplement requires me to venture an opinion which is against the Standing Orders. And in the second case the substantive Minister is not here, so I suggest that you pose that question in the normal fashion. *[Interruption]*

Mr. S. Panday: Is the hon. Minister satisfied with the number of vehicles which have been allocated to the various police stations referred to in the question?

Hon. C. Imbert: Again, Mr. Speaker, that requires an opinion which I am not required to give and I would ask the Member to pose that question in the normal manner.

Construction of Fire Station (Plum Mitan Main Road, Manzanilla)

64. Mr. Harry Partap asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister state:

- a) whether government intends to construct a new fire station at Plum Mitan Main Road, Manzanilla; and

- b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, would the Minister give a date for the commencement of this project and the estimated cost thereof?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, hon. Members are advised that the Government has no intention at this time of constructing a fire station at Plum Mitan Road in Manzanilla as the proposed station at Mayaro would be more strategically located and adequate to service residents in both communities. The other part of the question is therefore not applicable.

Caroni Bridge
(Extent of Damage)

65. Mr. Jack Warner asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

- (a) Is the Minister aware that the landslip on the southern end of the new Caroni bridge has caused the steel truss bridge to move resulting in damage to some of the steel members; and
- (b) if the answer to (a) is yes, could the Minister briefly state the extent of the damage and the measures that are being taken to ensure public safety?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Works and Transport is aware that there has been some localized land slippage in the vicinity of the embankment at the southern end of the new bridge over the Caroni River. However, the Highways Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport has investigated the matter and reported that there are no signs of distress to date on the major load-carrying members of the bridge. The division has also advised that there is no undue cause for concern and that the bridge is safe for use by the travelling public.

While geotechnical investigations were undertaken prior to the construction of the bridge, in order to gain full understanding of the reason for the land slippage and to identify the necessary corrective action, the ministry has engaged geotechnical experts to carry out further soils investigation and to recommend an appropriate engineering solution.

It is expected that the soils investigation and analysis would be completed by the end of March 2008, at which time appropriate steps will be taken to rectify the problem permanently. In the interim the bridge is being monitored continuously to ensure that there is no vertical or lateral movement and that it remains safe for use and fit for purpose.

Caroni Bridge
(Details of Construction)

66. Mr. Jack Warner asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

With respect to the Caroni bridge:

- a) could the Minister furnish details of the cost of construction;
- b) who were the designers of the local bridge works, specifically, river alignment, bridge supports and associated road works; and
- c) was the Ministry of Works Highways Division given any responsibility for the bridge?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): The reconstruction of the Caroni bridge was done for the following reasons:

1. the old bridge was 134 years old;
2. the volume of vehicular traffic on the bridge was way beyond its designed capacity;
3. the southern abutment of the old bridge had deteriorated because the bridge was used way beyond its original design life which was about 60 years.

In undertaking the design of the new bridge consideration was given to the use of a multiple span or a single span bridge. However, the use of a traditional multi-span pre-stressed concrete bridge would reinforce concrete piers and abutment would have required the construction of four concrete piers inside the river and the associated piling and concrete works would have been adversely affected by the high water level of the river during the rainy season. In addition, the design and construction time for a traditional bridge would have been of the order of 24 months, a time frame which could not be accommodated in the existing circumstances, especially in view of the deterioration of the old bridge.

The cost of a traditional concrete bridge was also estimated at \$50 million. In the circumstances the ministry took the decision to use a single span steel bridge with the capacity to withstand the expected traffic loading and impact loading in accordance with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) code of practice while maintaining the minimum waterway area and freeboard space required by the Drainage Division. It was also necessary to limit the time for construction in order to meet the required deadlines. The

resulting choice was a Mabey & Johnson 81 metre or 265 foot span, two-lane, modular hot dipped, galvanized steel bridge that can be loaded to 300 tonnes before failure. The supporting system for the bridge consists of reinforced concrete abutment walls and a deep foundation consisting of 23.3 metre or 76 foot long pre-stressed concrete pipes.

Key success factors in the development of the project included the cost. The bridge solution which includes the super structure and associated support mechanism provided cost effectiveness in terms of capital and maintenance cost. The new bridge cost \$25 million and the saving in cost over a traditional bridge construction was of the order of \$25 million.

Time: Time was of the essence, both in terms of design and construction. The oncoming rainy season and its deleterious effects on substructure works was a particular source of concern. The time saved using the modular steel bridge solution was in excess of 18 months.

Minimal disruption of traffic: Given the key nature of this access it was imperative that the proposed works were completed with minimal interference to commuters. There was virtually no disruption of traffic using the modular design. The particular features of the new bridge are as follows:

- design lights—60 years;
- cost—\$25 million, saved million compared to traditional construction;
- fatigue resistance—accommodates up to two million truck tandem axles passing;
- deflection—minimized and controlled by pre-cambered geometry;
- traffic load—accommodates full traffic load up to 300 tonnes;
- bridge width—7.35 metres or 24 feet, accommodates two full traffic lanes to international standards;
- clear span—81 metres or 265 feet;
- a light weight which minimizes the need for an elaborate support structure;
- a galvanize steel frame which reduced maintenance cost;
- a contour lever approach to launching of the bridge which saved time and cost because no rigs or special cranes were required.

The erection time for the actual bridge was 21 days. Total construction time was three months and saved over 18 months compared to traditional construction.

With respect to parts (b) and (c) of the question; it is noteworthy that the design for the bridge and the associated road works were done in-house by the engineers in the Programme for Upgrading Road Efficiency (PURE) Unit in the Ministry of Works and Transport, while the engineers in the Drainage Division of the ministry designed the river alignment. The construction work was also managed in-house by the Highways Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

**Penn State University and Safety Institute
(Details of Training)**

68. Dr. Hamza Rafeeq (*Caroni Central*) on behalf of Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj SC (Tabaquite) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister state:

- (a) whether the Penn State University and Safety Institute began to conduct training of supervisors and trainees of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service;
- (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, the date of such commencement of training, the particulars of such training, the numbers of personnel so far trained and the total cost to the taxpayer for such training; and
- (c) how much money the Government has paid, so far, to Penn University, and if there is any balance outstanding what is the balance due to date?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Acting on behalf of the Minister of National Security the answer to question 68 is as follows:

Part (a): Hon. Members are advised that the Pennsylvania State University has indeed begun training for supervisors and trainers of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

Part (b): The training contract commenced on June 01, 2005 and training sessions began in Trinidad and Tobago in September 2005. With respect to the particulars of the training, hon. Members should note that between September 2005 and December 2007 officers were trained as follows:

- High impact supervision 1—1,246 officers;
- High impact supervision 2—195 officers.
- Instructor development—33 officers.
- Train the trainer for customer service—79 officers.
- Field training officers—64 officers.
- Value-based planning and change management—80 officers.

- Incident command—118 officers.

A total of 2,065 police officers trained.

1.45 p.m.

Further, for the information of Members, brief outlines of these courses are as follows:

- High impact supervisory training programme 1 and also 2: High impact supervisory training provides supervisors namely, Inspectors, Sergeants and Corporals of Trinidad and Tobago Police Service with core leadership, supervisory techniques and skills to effectively manage their subordinates. It exposes officers to a number of leadership and motivational theories and skills, as well as information and skills relating to managing change; coaching and mentoring subordinates and effective communication; and their effective application in the workplace.
- Instructor Development: This course targets officers attached to the Police Training College and those identified as potential trainers, exposing them to intensive training aimed at equipping them with the tools and techniques of an effective trainer.
- Train the trainer for customer service: A comprehensive customer service training designed for the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to enlighten trainers on the practical tools necessary for improving the interaction between the police service's internal and external customers. Participants are taught how to identify and evaluate the needs of customers; reinforce the importance of people skills while relating to customers; develop skills to deal with difficult people; and how to build more effective customer relationships.

Trainers who attended this programme were also taught how to disseminate these techniques throughout the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

- Field training officers training programme: This programme equips specially selected officers to perform as field training officers with the techniques, knowledge and skills needed to effectively supervise newly graduated recruits from the police training college. The field training officers provide continuing development training and support to police recruits for a period of 12 weeks by way of coaching and mentoring.

The objective is to ensure recruits receive effective supervision in a nurturing and learning environment, both at stations and while on beat and patrols.

Additionally, it allows for a better appreciation of the individual needs of recruits, so as to ensure that they can achieve the performance standards necessary

to accomplish tasks. It is an innovative feature in the development of new police officers which capitalizes on the knowledge, experience and best practice of seasoned officers, who work with the new officers to help encourage appropriate behaviour.

- Value-based planning and change management: Designed for First Division Officers, this course teaches participants how to develop action plans which incorporate agency, professional and community values, while attending to the needs of various stakeholders. The roles of leaders in leading organizational change are also reinforced.
- Incident command: Designed for First Division Officers, this programme exposes officers to a variety of information on planning and response systems when dealing with large events, such as natural disasters, Carnival or any other major activity which demands an effective response from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Participants are also taught the five major management activities involved in development of an effective critical instant development plan.

With respect to the cost of training to date, approximately US \$1,818,623 or TT \$11,457,324 has been paid to the Pennsylvania State University for the training services provided.

As at February 2008, the total sum paid by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to Penn State is US \$2,241,409 or TT \$14,120,876. The remaining balance owed to Pennsylvania State University is US \$623,855 or TT \$3,930,287.

Dr. Rafeeq: Could the Minister tell us on what basis was Pennsylvania State University selected to provide these services?

Hon. C. Imbert: I regret that is a question you will have to pose to the substantive Minister; I do not have that information.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Retired Police Officers

(Hiring of)

72. Mr. Nizam Baksh (*Naparima*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister inform this House of:

- a) The names of the fifty-five (55) police officers who were hired out of retirement and their ranks;
- b) the duties to be performed by each rank and the remuneration and other benefits paid per rank;

- c) whether a short fall exists in the establishment of the police service; and
- d) if the answer to (c) is in the affirmative, what actions are being taken to increase it to full capacity?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

**Rural Electrification Programme 2006/2007
(Details of)**

58. Mr. Winston Peters (*Mayaro*) asked the hon. Minister of Tourism:

Could the Minister state:

- a) what is the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Development Company Limited doing to promote community based tourism initiatives; and
- b) what moneys are allocated for these projects?

Vide end of sitting for written answer.

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO NATIONAL STEEL
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CORPORATION BILL**

Bill to establish the Trinidad and Tobago National Steel Symphony Orchestra Corporation and for matters incidental thereto, [*The Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs*]; read the first time.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES
(DURING SITTINGS)**

Mr. Speaker: Before I put the question, I wish to remind Members of a circular I issued on February 25, concerning the use of electronic devices. Let me read the most important part of it:

“I also wish to remind you of the rule that is in place for the use of such technology during sittings, that is, Members must seek the permission of the Speaker before using these electronic devices during a sitting.

Secondly, if permission is granted, usage must be confined to refreshing one’s mind of speaking notes, or to the making of amendments to notes in response to issues which may have been raised during debate and to which you intend to respond on the date on which the permission was sought.”

Member for Port of Spain North, is it your intention to contribute in this debate, today?

Mr. Hunt: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member for Couva North, are you contributing in the debate before this House, today? Hon. Member for Couva North, if you are not— [Crosstalk] Order, I know that. If he is not contributing in the debate today, then he has not asked permission to use his computer for the purpose of contributing in the debate today. So if he is not contributing in the debate today, I am asking—

Mr. Ramnath: [Inaudible]

Mr. Speaker: Yes. If you intend to use any electronic device in the House—

Mr. Ramnath: You are living in the Stone Age.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps.

Mr. B. Panday: How can I say what I am doing today?

Mr. Speaker: I am asking you again, hon. Member for Couva North.

Mr. B. Panday: Mr. Speaker, I cannot say what you want me to say, this is a debate.

Mr. Speaker: No, well in that case, I will have to ask you, if you cannot assure me that you are going to contribute in the debate today, you have not sought my permission to use the computer to contribute in today's proceedings. If it is that you are not going to contribute in the debate today, I am asking you to put away your computer.

I will tell you that on occasions, the hon. Member for Oropouche East, Dr. Moonilal, when he wants to contribute to the debate, he has asked—

Mr. B. Panday: This is not a [Inaudible] a school master.

Mr. Speaker:—permission and that permission has been granted on almost all occasions. Order! I am asking again, for the last time, hon. Member for Couva North—

Mr. B. Panday: I do not know. How do I know until they speak?

Mr. Ramnath: You come here with a plan to discipline people.

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw the attention—

Mr. B. Panday: You have been harassing me since I have been to this—

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of the House to Standing Order 43(5). I wish to indicate that the Member for Couva North has shown disregard for the authority of the Chair. I am calling upon a Minister to name the Member for Couva North. I am naming the Member for Couva North.

Hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Speaker: Read Standing Order—

Hon. Member: Shame!

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Member: You cannot control all of us.

Mr. B. Panday: You think is a school “yuh” running?

Hon. C. Imbert:—43(5)—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Ramnath: You have no authorization to do that.

Mr. B. Panday: To use a computer?

Hon. C. Imbert:—I move that Mr. Basdeo Panday—

Mrs. Persad-Bissessar: You gave us these computers to use.

Hon. C. Imbert:—be suspended from the services of this House.

Question put.

Mr. Speaker: Do you want a division? Do you want a division?

Hon. Members: No!

Mr. Ramnath: Do what you want and suspend me too.

Mr. Speaker: Division.

Mr. Ramnath: Suspend me too. “Yuh think yuh own dis place?”

The House divided:

AYES 23 NOES 11

AYES

Imbert, Hon. C.

Manning, Hon. P.

Rowley, Hon. Dr. K.

Nunez-Tesheira, Hon. K.

Gopee-Scoon, Hon. P.

Kangaloo, Hon. C.

Dumas, Hon. R.

Ross, Hon. J.

Taylor, Hon. P.

Swaratsingh, Hon. K.

Beckles, Miss P.

Parsanlal, Hon. N.

Mc Donald, Hon. M.

Hunt, Hon. G.

Le Gendre, Hon. E.

Browne, Hon. Dr. A.

Callender, Hon. S.

Cox, Hon. D.

Jeffrey, Hon. F.

Hospedales, Hon. A.

Hypolite, N.

Roberts, A.

Ojah-Maharaj, Mrs. I.

NOES

Panday, B.

Warner, J.

Persad-Bissessar, Mrs. K.

Mr. Ramnath: What are you asking me?

Clerk: For or against, Sir?

Mr. Ramnath: Against what?

Clerk: The question?

Mr. Ramnath: Well, what is the question? I do not know what is the question. The Member for Diego Martin West disturbed me.

Clerk: Is that an abstention, Sir?

Mr. Ramnath: Pardon me?

Clerk: Is that an abstention, Sir?

Mr. Ramnath: I do not know what you are asking me, if you could get rid of the Speaker?

Division continued

Moonilal, Dr. R.

Dr. Gopeesingh: What is the question? We do not know the question. I am saying no then. If you do not want to tell me the question, I am saying no.

Division continued.

Panday, S.

Panday, Miss M.

Sharma, C.

Peters, W.

Rafeeq, Dr. H.

Partap, H.

Question agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: The result of the division is 23 Members voted for the suspension of the hon. Member for Couva North and 11 Members voted against. I will ask the hon. Member for Couva North to leave this Chamber and precincts of the House.

Mr. Ramnath: “Why you doh get a police to put him out?” [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. S. Panday: “Yuh dinosaur”. Mr. Speaker is a dinosaur.

Mr. Speaker: I will suspend the sitting of the House for 10 minutes to allow the Member for Couva North—order please—to vacate the Chamber and the precincts of this House.

1.59 p.m.: *Sitting Suspended.*

2.12 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

[*Opposition Members remain seated on entry of the Speaker*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the hon. Member for Couva North, Mr. Basdeo Panday, has refused to leave the House; to withdraw from the House and its precincts; as such, recourse to force is necessary.

Hon. Members: Force! You are a dictator here!

Mr. Speaker: It is necessary to remove Mr. Panday from the precincts of this Chamber. I, therefore, call on the police to remove the Member for Couva North from this Chamber and the precincts of this House.

[Policemen approach Mr. Panday]

Hon. Members: Boo! *[Interruption]* *[Loud Crosstalk]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, pursuant to Standing Order 43(12), this House is now adjourned.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 2.14 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Rural Electrification Programme 2006/2007

(Details of)

58. Mr. Winston Peters (*Mayaro*) asked the hon. Minister of Tourism:

Could the Minister state:

- c) what is the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Development Company Limited doing to promote community based tourism initiatives; and
- d) what moneys are allocated for these projects?

The Minister of Tourism (Hon. Joseph Ross): The promotion of community tourism is well acknowledged by the Ministry of Tourism as being critically important for filtering the benefits of tourism to communities across Trinidad and Tobago, via increased employment and income generation. The Draft National Tourism Policy of Trinidad and Tobago states among its policy objectives the following:

“To appropriately engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making for the development and management of tourism products and services”.

Both the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC) have been engaged in initiatives to develop community tourism projects as well as to build the capacities of communities to own, manage and operate such projects.

In this regard, efforts have been pursued and are indeed on-going, towards enhancing collaboration with Regional Corporations and community groups, given the very critical role of these bodies in the tourism developmental process.

Current efforts at promoting community tourism include the following:

Project Development

Implementation of Project Proposals related to the Devil's Woodyard in Princes Town, the Banwarie Archaeological Site in Siparia and the North Post Recreation Site at Diego Martin

The Ministry, in 2007, funded and supervised the development of Project Proposals with Financial Plans for these projects, using the services of a consultancy with the Business Development Company Limited (BDC). This was done at a cost of \$360,000 and was pursued in close collaboration with the related Regional Corporations and community groups. The Plans were handed over to the Corporations and the Ministry is now working with these Corporations to have them execute these projects via their Development Programs. It is expected that ownership and management of all community projects would, as far as possible, reside in the hands of Regional Corporations and community groups to ensure buy-in, for effective management and operations of these projects. The Ministry stands ready to provide the requisite skills training to build such capacities and to promote the marketing of these attractions.

Turtle Village

Turtle Village Trust was set up as an initiative between BHP Billiton and community groups from the areas of Grande Riviere, Toco, Matura, Fishing Pond and North West Tobago, to place Trinidad and Tobago as the premier turtle destination internationally. Given the tremendous turtle conservation efforts of local community groups on the North-East coast, and the growing attraction of Trinidad and Tobago as nesting sites for turtles, a huge potential exists for developing eco-tourism in these parts of the country using turtles as the centerpiece attraction. The Ministry of Tourism, in recognition of the immense benefits that communities can derive from this project, has thrown full support towards the development of this initiative, both financially and by way of technical support. In 2008, \$600,000 has been allocated to this project. The project encompasses development of nature tours, river tours, hiking trails, tour guiding, and community

business; awareness building; turtle conservation; environment protection; skills and capacity building; website development; and signage. In the longer-term the project envisages the establishment of a Wildlife Park, a Sea Aquarium, a Research Station and an Entertainment Centre.

Indian Caribbean Museum

The Indian Caribbean Museum in Waterloo opened its doors to the public in 2006, thereby adding to the spectrum of attractions in the Carapichaima area in Central Trinidad. During its first year of operation, over 8,000 visitors passed through this facility. The Museum, along with the Temple in the Sea and the Dattatreya Temple, is included as a tourism destination by tour operators, and promoted and marketed by the Ministry and TDC. The Ministry provided assistance towards developmental works and promotion of the Museum in the amount of \$71,000 in 2007. Further assistance is being looked at in 2008.

Development of Tour Guides

Both the Ministry and TDC are engaged on an on-going basis in the training of community tour guides so as to enhance their capabilities in delivering an exceptional visitor experience in whichever community they may take visitors to. In 2008, training is being given in the areas of Customer Service, Tourist Information, First Aid, Water and other Safety, Computer Skills etc.

Tourism Park

Tourism Park was held over the years 2004—2007 as an event to give exposition to our national community on the tourism assets resident among communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago. The hosting of this event contributed significantly to the building of awareness among our population of the varying attractions and their attributes. In 2007, some of the attractions showcased included Knolly's Tunnel in Tabaquite, the Pitch Lake in La Brea, the mud volcano at Piparo, the Temple in the Sea, turtles on the North East coast, the Waterfront in Port of Spain, and birds, fishes and animals in their natural environment. Tours to many of these sites were offered by qualified tour operators and tour guides.

Lifeguard and Beach Facilities

The Ministry has been expanding the level of Lifeguard Services at beaches across the country. Lifeguards are recruited from communities in which they live and this contributes to the development of themselves and their communities. Over the last few years, the Ministry has sought to upgrade the level of Lifeguarding

Services via equipment upgrade, lifeguard regularization and training, and improvement in lifeguard facilities. The Ministry, working in collaboration with the Salybia community group, is currently exploring beach enhancement facilities at the Salybia beach which will see washroom facilities, vending facilities, river kayaking, better parking, better signage, and a much cleaner beach environment being offered. TDC is also pursuing a Plan for the redesign and redevelopment of the Maracas beach facilities, and continues to undertake refurbishment work at its Manzanilla, Las Cuevas, Mayaro, Vessigny and La Brea facilities. Employment opportunities and income benefits are expected to redound to the communities from these investments. Allocation towards further development of Lifeguard and Beach Facilities approximate \$1 million in 2008.

Dinghy Sailing

Dinghy Sailing is an initiative under the Trinidad and Tobago Optimist Dinghy Association to foster the social development of kids and young teens through Dinghy Sailing. The program was recently launched at the Vessigny beach and is aimed at imparting to participants training in dinghy sailing as well as in varied disciplinary skills. TDC supported the launch at Vessigny.

The Ministry of Tourism is currently pursuing discussions with a number of persons/Agencies towards developing and enhancing other community-based tourism projects.

The total allocation by the Ministry of Tourism and TDC towards community-based tourism development in 2008 has been projected at \$3.0 million.

Retired Police Officers (Hiring of)

The following question was asked by Mr. Nizam Baksh (Naparima) earlier in the proceedings:

- 72.** Could the hon. Minister of National Security inform this House of:
- e) The names of the fifty-five (55) police officers who were hired out of retirement and their ranks;
 - f) the duties to be performed by each rank and the remuneration and other benefits paid per rank;
 - g) whether a short fall exists in the establishment of the police service; and
 - h) if the answer to (c) is in the affirmative, what actions are being taken to increase it to full capacity?

The following reply was circulated to members of the House:

The Minister of National Security (Sen. The Hon. Martin Joseph): In November 2007, Cabinet agreed to the employment, on contract, of fifty-five (55) retired Police Officers, in the under mentioned ranks of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service: Inspector, 26; Sergeant, 16; Corporal, 9 and Constable, 4.

To date, thirty-eight (38) Officers have been recruited with seventeen (17) positions remaining vacant. The thirty-eight positions that have been filled are as follows: Inspector, 19; Sergeant, 10; Corporal, 8 and Constable 1

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with my responsibility to these Officers and their families, I have been advised that the names of these officers should not be revealed.

Honourable Members are advised that these Officers have been assigned to strengthen a number of critical investigative Units within the Ministry, including the Repeat Offenders Programme (ROP), the Inter Agency Task Force (IATF), the Anti-Corruption Investigation Bureau (ACIB), the Incident Command Centre (ICC) and the Justice Protection Programme (JPP). Their duties vary, based on their rank and the Unit to which they are assigned. Generally, however, the Officers are involved in operational and supervisory functions, including conducting surveillance and undercover intelligence operations, collecting, analyzing and disseminating intelligence data, preventive patrols, and activities targeting repeat offenders and dismantling of gangs and drug blocks.

Further, as negotiated with the Chief Personnel Officer, the only remuneration/benefit paid to the Officers is a monthly salary, which varies by rank, as shown hereunder:

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Contract Position</u>	<u>Monthly Salary</u>
Police Inspector	Support Officer IV	\$11,300.00
Police Sergeant	Support Officer III	\$ 9,900.00
Police Corporal	Support Officer II	\$ 8,200.00
Police Constable	Support Officer I	\$ 7,200.00

The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service currently employs five thousand, nine hundred and sixty-one (5,961) officers, distributed among thirty-two (32) Sections/Divisions/Branches/Units. With a sanctioned strength of seven thousand, six hundred and ninety-one (7,691), there is therefore, a shortfall of one thousand, seven hundred and thirty (1,730) officers, arising mainly as a result of factors

such as retirement, resignations, Officers on study leave, deaths, medical issues, secondment, abandonment and dismissals.

To address the shortfall, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is pursuing a programme of intensified recruitment. There are 77 Recruits currently in training, while an additional 634 applicants have been successfully interviewed and are being processed for enlistment in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

A proposal to buy out the vacation leave of selected First and Second Division officers is also an option currently being explored, in an effort to decelerate the rate of attrition.