

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Friday, June 12, 2009*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES****(REPLACEMENT OF MEMBER)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have received communication from the Opposition Chief Whip advising that the hon. Subhas Panday will replace the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar as a Member of the Privileges Committee of the House during the hearing of the matter against Mrs. Persad-Bissessar.

[*Cellphone rings*]

I hope this is the last time I hear that telephone ring.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the following Members have requested leave of absence during sittings of the House: The hon. Karen Nunez-Tesheira, Member of Parliament for D'Abadie/O'Meara, for the period 12—14 June, 2009; the hon. Anthony Roberts, Member of Parliament for St. Ann's East, for the period 08—19 June, 2009; the hon. Tim Gopeesingh, the Member of Parliament for Caroni East, from today's sitting of the House; the hon. Jack Warner, Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West, for the period 12—25 June 2009; the hon. Vasant Bharath, Member of Parliament for St. Augustine for the period 12—25 June, 2009.

Did I say Mr. Jack Warner?

**Hon. Members:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Actually, he would be absent from today's sitting of the House: The hon. Mickela Panday, Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West, from today's sitting of the House. The leave which these Members seek is granted.

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Speaker, the Government is in a position to answer four questions today, as follows: Nos. 62, 65, 66 and 88. There are five others for which we ask for a deferral of two weeks, please.

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper:*

**Pre-Summit Preparations  
(Details of)**

- 64.** With respect to the pre-summit preparations could the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance Minister please advise:
- A. the number of personnel who were hired;
    - (i) to clean the area along the route travelled by the summit participants; and
    - (ii) to paint the curb walls and road barriers along the route; and
  - B. whether this work was done by existing CEPEP and URP workers?
- [*Mr. J. Warner*]

**Solicitor General  
(Details of Appointment)**

- 67.** With respect to the appointment of a Solicitor General could the hon. Attorney General state:
- (a) the date on which the post became vacant;
  - (b) since the post became vacant, the number of times the Prime Minister objected to the appointment of persons recommended to fill the post;
  - (c) the names of the persons to whom he objected; and
  - (d) the reasons for his objection in each case? [*Dr. H. Rafeeq*]

**Chief Parliamentary Counsel  
(Details of Appointment)**

- 68.** With respect to the appointment of a Chief Parliamentary Counsel could the hon. Attorney General state:
- (a) the date on which the post became vacant;
  - (b) since the post became vacant, the number of times the Prime Minister objected to the appointment of the persons recommended to fill the post;
  - (c) the names of the persons to whom he objected; and
  - (d) the reasons for his objection in each case? [*Dr. H. Rafeeq*]

**Director of Public Prosecutions  
(Details of Appointment)**

- 69.** With respect to the appointment of a Director of Public Prosecutions, could the hon. Attorney General state:
- (a) the date on which the post became vacant;
  - (b) since the post became vacant, the number of times the Prime Minister objected to the appointment of the persons recommended to fill the post;
  - (c) the names of the persons to whom he objected; and
  - (d) the reasons for his objection in each case? [*Dr. H. Rafeeq*]

**Lifeguards in Mayaro/Guayaguayare/Manzanilla  
(Details of Plans for)**

- 81.** With respect to Lifeguards in the Mayaro/Guayaguayare/Manzanilla area, could the Minister of Tourism state:
- (a) the number of lifeguards assigned to these areas?
  - (b) whether there are sufficient lifeguards assigned to the existing facilities? and
  - (c) if the answer is negative, please state whether there are plans to increase the intake of lifeguards, the requisite number needed and when will the plan take effect. [*Mr. W. Peters*]

*Questions, by leave, deferred.*

**5th Summit of The Americas  
(Details of Costs)**

- 62.** **Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj SC** (*Tabaquite*) on behalf of Mr. Jack Warner (*Chaguanas West*) asked the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance:

In respect of the 5th Summit of the Americas could the Minister inform this House who was responsible for the costs of:

- (i) travel to and from Trinidad and Tobago;
- (ii) ground transportation in Trinidad and Tobago;

- (iii) accommodation and meals in Trinidad and Tobago in respect of: Heads of States, spouses, various personal staff of Heads; the various visiting Ministers and their staff, visitors' personal security services; and foreign media observers?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Speaker, I shall depute for the Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister in the Ministry of Finance. In answer to question 62, in respect of heads of state, spouses, various personal staff of heads; foreign ministers and their staff, and visitors' personal security services, the following applied:

1. The cost of travel to and from Trinidad and Tobago was met by the respective countries and individuals;
2. A complimentary bus service between Piarco International Airport and designated hotels and between designated hotels and the Summit venues, was provided for delegates, media representatives and representatives of regional institutions. In addition, three official vehicles were provided to each country for use by the following:
  - (a) by the head of state or head of government or head of delegation;
  - (b) by the spouse of the head of state or government;
  - (c) a third vehicle was made available to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the respective countries.

In addition, the heads of the 12 institutions of the joint summit working group were also provided with an official vehicle.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago covered the cost of two rooms per delegation, one suite for the head of state or government and one executive room for the foreign minister, inclusive of room rates and taxes, meals, excluding alcoholic beverages, as well as Internet access, laundry and local telephone charges, at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad Hotel, from April 16 to April 20, 2009.

In respect of foreign media observers, all costs associated with their participation, with the exception of the ground transportation provided to all delegates, the complimentary bus service, were borne by the respective individuals, media houses or countries.

**Prof. Stephen Mastrofski and George Mason University****(Details of Contract)**

**65. Dr. Hamza Rafeeq** (*Caroni Central*) on behalf of Mr. Basdeo Panday (*Couva North*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister state:

- (a) whether Professor Stephen Mastrofski and George Mason University (GMU) received any further contracts or extensions to contracts from the Government since August 2008; and
- (b) the total cost incurred by the Government in hiring Professor Mastrofski and GMU for the Police Transformation Project?

**The Minister in the Ministry of National Security (Hon. Donna Cox):** Mr. Speaker, in 2004, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago contracted George Mason University to implement an organizational development project in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Prof. Stephen Mastrofski, Chair of the Department of Administration of Justice and Director of the Centre for Justice, Leadership and Management at George Mason University was identified as the principal investigator in the project. He was supported on the transformation team by other members of staff of George Mason University, experts from the Universities of San Francisco, Arizona State, Golden Green, North Carolina and Southern Illinois State, as well as experts from Penn State University and Justice and Security Strategies Incorporated.

Hon. Members are advised that no further paying contracts or extensions to contracts have been awarded to George Mason University since August 2008. However, the Ministry has agreed to a modification at no additional cost which would extend the project by a year, until August 2009. This would allow George Mason University to complete the positioning of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, to manage and advance the transformation process independent of the primary consultant.

With regard to (b), the total cost incurred by the Government in hiring George Mason University and the transformation team is US \$12,612,211.90; the TT equivalent is \$79,456,935.

**Police Transformation Project**  
**(Details of)**

**66. Dr. Hamza Rafeeq** (*Caroni Central*) on behalf of Mr. Basdeo Panday (*Couva North*) asked the hon. Minister of National Security:

Could the Minister inform this House:

- (a) whether the objectives of the Police Transformation Project have been accomplished;
- (b) if the answer to (a) is in the negative, why not; and
- (c) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, why there continues to be a spiralling increase in crime in Trinidad and Tobago?

**The Minister in the Ministry of National Security (Hon. Donna Cox):**  
Hon. Members are advised that in implementing the police transformation project, a four-tiered approach was adopted by the transformation team, namely:

1. create a functional organization.
2. promote professionalism;
3. improve crime control; and
4. enhance service.

Under these four elements were 26 recommendations aimed at achieving them. To date, 22 of those recommendations have been implemented and of the remaining four there are three that are not fully implemented and one which the Ministry has determined will not be implemented at this point. Therefore, it is evident that the recommendations of the police transformation team have, in large part, been implemented.

Part (b) is not applicable.

With respect to part (c): Notwithstanding the progress thus far, however, it must be noted that transformation of the police service is for the most part a long-term project, especially given the fact that a key component of transforming the police service is changing deeply entrenched mindsets, attitudes and culture. It is a process for which the foundation is being laid and while there will be immediate improvements in some areas, mostly systemic and structural, the attainment of successful transformation is, to a large degree, reliant on the rapidity at which police officers internalize and adopt the new philosophies and approaches to policing.

Moreover, it is widely known and accepted that crime and the causes of crime are multidimensional in nature and, therefore, it was not Government's intention or expectation that the organizational development project in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service would single-handedly address the crime situation in Trinidad and Tobago. Nonetheless it is a significant component of the anti-crime strategy and, given time, the Government is confident that the foundation laid by this initiative will bear fruit and together with other anti-crime initiatives, will redound to the benefit of the entire country in the area of crime control and reduction.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Dr. Rafeeq:** Madam Minister, can you tell us when we can expect to see a decrease in the crime rate in Trinidad and Tobago as a result of these initiatives— if you can answer the question?

**Hon. D. Cox:** Could you pose another question?

**National Social Development Programme – Rio Claro/Mayaro Region  
(Details of Housing Wiring Programme)**

**88. Mr. Winston Peters (Mayaro)** asked the hon. Minister of Public Utilities:

With respect to the National Social Development Programme in the Rio Claro/Mayaro region, could the Minister state:

- (a) the total number of applicants for the House Wiring Programme from September 2007 to date?
- (b) the number of successful applicants for the given period? and
- (c) the entire cost of the House Wiring Programme in the region?

**The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid):** Mr. Speaker, the house wiring facilities, a component of the National Social Development Programme (NSDP) states that citizens may apply to have their homes wired or rewired for electricity provided that they satisfy criteria from among the following:

1. The applicant's total household income is less than \$6,000 per month;
2. The applicant is a pensioner or is a recipient of Public Assistance Grant or the Senior Citizens Grant.
3. The applicant suffers from a disability;
4. The applicant can show proof of ownership of the house to be wired or rewired or can supply an affidavit indemnifying T&TEC from litigation wherever ownership of the property is challenged.

The programme is administered in four administrative districts, namely: North-west Central; North-east, South and Tobago. The region of Rio Claro/Mayaro is located in the south administrative district. For the period, September 2007 to April 2009, a total of 1,611 applications were received for house wiring services in the south administrative district. For the period September 2007 to April 2009, there was a total of 952 successful applicants in the house wiring component of the NSDP in the south administrative district. The entire cost of the house wiring component of the NSDP in the south administrative district was \$12,154,462.91.

**Mr. Peters:** Mr. Speaker, I think that I asked the hon. Minister how much was done in Mayaro/Rio Claro. That is what I really want to find out.

**Hon. M. Abdul-Hamid:** Mr. Speaker, I have provided the answer in the best way possible. The programme is divided into four administrative districts. We collect the information in accordance with those administrative districts. The region of Rio Claro/Mayaro is within the south administrative district and, as I have indicated, there were 952 successful applications out of 1,611 applications received in the south administrative district at a cost of just over \$12 million.

#### WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*The following question was asked by Mr. Vasant Bharath (St. Augustine):*

#### **Fifth Summit of The Americas (Detailed List of Costs to Projects)**

- 71.** With respect to the recently concluded 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of The Americas, could the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:
- (a) provide a detailed list of all the infrastructure and development projects undertaken? and
  - (b) state the cost of each of these projects?

*Vide end of sitting for written reply.*

*The following question was asked by Mr. Winston Peters (Mayaro):*

#### **Rural Development Company Limited (Details of Projects for Rio Claro/Mayaro Region)**

- 82.** With respect to the Rural Development Company Limited, and its operations in the Rio Claro/Mayaro region, could the Minister state:
- (a) all the projects undertaken from September 2007 to December 2008 and the estimated and actual costs incurred for each project?

- (b) all new projects proposed for 2009, the estimated cost of each, the scope of works to be done and the tentative date for commencement and completion?

*Vide end of sitting for written reply.*

**1.45 p.m.**

**ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION  
(LOCAL GOVERNMENT) ORDER**

**The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Whereas it is provided by subsection (3) of section 4 of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, that as soon as may be after the Elections and Boundaries Commission (hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”) has submitted a report under paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 4 of the said Act, the Minister shall lay before the House of Representatives for its approval the draft of an Order by the President for giving effect, whether with or without modifications, to the recommendations contained in the report:

*And whereas* the Commission has submitted a report to the Minister in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 4:

*And whereas* the draft of an Order entitled the “Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Order, 2009” giving effect to the recommendations of the Commission was laid before the House of Representatives on the 20th day of March, 2009

*Be it resolved* that the draft of the “Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Order, 2009”, be approved.

Mr. Speaker, this exercise is conducted in accordance with section 72 of the Second Schedule to the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in the case of parliamentary elections. In the case of municipal corporations elections, the legal instrument by which the commission is guided are: the Elections and Boundaries Commission, (Local Government and Tobago House of Assembly) Act, Chap. 25:50 and the Municipal Corporations Act, 1990 and their relevant amendments. These pieces of legislation speak to defining and reviewing the boundaries of electoral districts by examining population growth and shift and the alteration to electoral districts, all within a specific time limit for modifications if need be.

Consequently, the Elections and Boundaries Commission is obliged to submit for presentation to Parliament, in a report, its recommendations with respect to the number of electoral districts that exist and the descriptions of the boundaries of each district as defined. For the purposes of the municipal corporations elections, Trinidad is divided into 14 municipalities, that is two cities; three boroughs and nine regional municipalities. The number of electoral districts in the cities and boroughs is listed in the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, No. 18 of 1967, amended by the Municipal Corporations Act, No. 21 of 1990. The areas and their electoral districts are as follows: for the City of Port of Spain, 12; the City of San Fernando, 9; the borough of Arima, 7; the Borough of Point Fortin, 6; and the Borough of Chaguanas, 8.

The cities and boroughs are governed differently from the municipal regions which are mandated by Act No. 18 of 1967, which was subsequently amended. In this amended Act, there is provision for each regional municipality to be allocated a basic number of four electoral districts. In addition to this standard number of four electoral districts per region, where there is excess population of over 15,000 persons an additional electoral district is allocated and that is repeated for each additional cohort of over 15,000 persons. However, any regional municipality with an additional electorate of under 15,000 persons is allocated five electoral districts. Consequently, the number of electoral districts in the regional municipalities based on population counts is as follows:

Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo	13
Diego Martin	9
Mayaro/Rio Claro	6
Princes Town	9
Sangre Grande	8
San Juan/Laventille	12
Siparia	9
Tunapuna/Piarco	14

In addition, the Order goes on to state:

"Whereas under section 71 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago there is established an Elections and Boundaries Commission (hereinafter referred to as 'the Commission');

“And whereas under subsection (1) of section 4 of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act, (hereinafter referred to as 'the Act'), the Commission is charged inter alia with responsibility for defining and reviewing the boundaries of the electoral districts into which an electoral area is, or is to be, divided.”

Therefore the commission did set out as mandated, to define and review the boundaries of the electoral districts. Section 4(1) states:

"The Commission shall define and review the boundaries of the electoral districts into which an electoral area is, or is to be, divided and shall submit to the Minister Reports either—

- (a) showing the constituencies into which it recommends that an electoral area should be divided in order to give effect to the Rules set out in the Second Schedule; or
- (b) Stating that, in the opinion of the Commission, no alteration is required to the existing number or boundaries of electoral districts in order to give effect to the said Rules."

The last report of the commission on its review of electorate boundaries was based on an electorate in the electoral areas of Trinidad of 895, 409 persons as appeared on the commission's record as of April 29, 2005. However, the electorate on which this report dated July 04, 2008 is based, is 950,248 persons as appears on the commission's record as at January 22, 2008, an increase of over 54,839 persons. On the basis of this increased electorate in 2008, the commission duly reviewed the number and boundaries of electoral districts into which each of the 14 electoral areas in Trinidad should be divided.

After applications of the relevant formula for regional corporations using Rule 2 of the Second Schedule of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government and Tobago House of Assembly) Act, the commission concluded that alterations are required to the existing number of electoral districts of the following three regional corporations: Diego Martin electoral area, an increase from nine electoral districts to 10; San Juan/Laventille electoral area, an increase from 12 electoral districts to 13 and Tunapuna/Piarco electoral area, an increase from 14 electoral districts to 15.

As a result of the creation of an additional electoral district in each of the electoral areas and in an effort to have the names of the electoral districts more

adequately reflect the communities, changes in the names of certain electoral districts have been made as follows:

Electoral area of Diego Martin

Bagatelle/Blue Basin

Chaguaramas/Point Cumana

Glencoe/Goodwood/La Puerta.

Electoral area of San Juan/Laventille

Caledonia/Upper Malick

Morvant

San Juan West

Electoral area of Tunapuna/Piarco

Auzonville/Tunapuna

Curepe/Pasea

Five Rivers/Lopinot

Kelly Village/Warrenville

La Florisante/Cleaver

Maracas/Santa Margarita

St. Augustine South/Piarco/St. Helena

Valsayn/St. Joseph

Each of these electoral districts forms part of the commission's recommendations and should be so regarded for the purpose of this report.

It is important to note that the increases of the electoral boundaries were occasioned by the application of the formula of 15,000 persons per electoral district. It is also important to note that no alteration is required to the existing number of electoral districts for the municipal corporations in Port of Spain, San Fernando, Arima, Point Fortin and Chaguanas, as these are fixed by law and cannot be varied. It is important to note that changes in the electorate in six electoral areas require alterations to be made to the boundaries of 48 electoral districts therein as indicated in columns 1 and 2 of the draft order. It is also important to note that changes in the electorate of 88 electoral districts in the

electoral areas as indicated in columns 1 and 3 of the table in the Schedule to the draft order were such that no alterations to the boundaries of such electoral districts were required.

Finally, further particulars on the commission's recommendations, including maps defining each of the 134 electoral districts are contained in the Appendices of the draft order.

The foregoing is a direct result of the application of the municipal corporations rule No. 4 of this Schedule as amended which states:

"The number of electors in an electoral district of a municipal electoral area shall be the number obtained by dividing the number of electors in that electoral area by the number of electoral districts shown opposite the name of that electoral area in the Third Column of Part I of the First Schedule, but the Commission may in consideration of topographical factors vary such number provided that in no case shall the number of electors in any one electoral district of an electoral area exceed or be less than the number of electors in any other electoral district of that electoral area by more than twenty-five per cent."

For Regional Corporations, rules 1, 2 and 3 of the same schedule provide the following directions.

"The number of electors in each electoral district of a regional electoral area shall, so far as practicable, be the number obtained by the application of rule 2, but the Commission may, in consideration of rule 3 vary such number provided that in no case shall the number of electors in any one electoral district of an electoral area exceed or be less than the number of electors in any other electoral district of that electoral area by more than twenty-five per cent.

Rule 3 stipulates that in the division of electoral districts in the regional electoral areas, natural boundaries as major highways and rivers shall be used wherever possible.

Therefore, the report was submitted to the Minister of Local Government on July 04, 2008 and with the commission's recommendation and signed off by the commissioners.

## **2.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) (Tobago House of Assembly) Draft Order, 2008 and the accompanying resolution was forwarded to Parliament pursuant to Cabinet Minute No. 1889, dated July 10, 2008, which mandated that the matters be laid for the approval of the House of

*EBC (Local Government) Order*  
[SEN. THE HON. H. MANNING]

*Friday 12 June 2009*

Representatives in accordance with the provisions of section 4(3) and (6) of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government and Tobago House of Assembly) Act, Chap. 25:50, which states:

- “(3) As soon as... the Commission has submitted a report under subsection (1)(a), the Minister shall lay before the House of Representatives for its approval the draft of an Order made by the President and giving effect...with or without modification, to the recommendations contained in the report, and that draft may make provision for any matters which appear to the Minister to be incidental to or consequential upon the other provisions of the draft.”

Accordingly, the order was drafted by the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and approved by the Legislative Review Committee and Cabinet and subsequently forwarded to Parliament in accordance with Cabinet's directive. The draft order was laid in the House of Representatives on September 05, 2008. Mr. Speaker, although laid in the House, the draft order was never effectively dealt with and debated because of the heavy legislative agenda and consequently the matter lapsed, without having been approved, on the prorogation of the First Session of the Ninth Parliament, which extended from 2007 to 2008. As a consequence, immediate steps were taken by the Government to have this important Sixth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission laid before the House of Representatives for a second time, and this was done on March 20, 2009.

The draft of an order entitled the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) (Tobago House of Assembly) Order, 2009, to be made by His Excellency The President, to give effect to the recommendations contained in the Sixth Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission is now submitted for approval by the House of Representatives.

The report was submitted within the stipulated time period for submission as required by subsection (2)(c) of section 4 which states that:

- “(2) Reports under subsection (1) shall be submitted by the Commission:
- (c) in the case of a subsequent report, not less than two nor more than three years of the date of submission of its last report.”

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government, I submit to this honourable House this report for approval.

*And whereas* the draft of an Order entitled the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) (Tobago House of Assembly) Order, 2009

giving effect to the recommendations of the Commission was previously laid before this honourable House,

*Be it resolved* that draft of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) (Tobago House of Assembly) Order, 2009 be approved.

It is important to note that while this Government is adhering to the legislation in meeting the order of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) (Tobago House of Assembly) Act, it is important to note that we on this side are concerned about the promotion of greater local and national democracy and the achievement of good practice for democracy and governance throughout Trinidad and Tobago because, as a Government, we are committed to the importance of sound representation for and participatory democracy by all our people.

In response to the many needs of our people as defined by them, especially through the public consultations and through daily contacts, we are currently reforming the local governance structure. After extensive research, both locally and abroad, after a lot of public consultations throughout the country conducted by the Government since 2004, and guided by international standards and best practices, the Ministry of Local Government has produced a White Paper to clarify the rules and responsibilities of the local government bodies, municipal corporations and the Ministry of Local Government.

This document is created in the method that is esconced in good governance. The process used promoted local democracy through participation by focused citizens and soon this policy paper on local governance will be laid in Parliament followed by the new omnibus and enabling legislation on municipal bodies. Already the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Local Government and the regional corporations have been approved by Cabinet and the programmes and projects are being designed to accommodate the People's Charter, which include heavy emphasis on transparency, accountability, people participation and development, guided by far-sighted programmes and well-laid-out strategic plans.

The local government reform policy prescriptions and programmes are critical to the empowering of local government bodies to play their part in transforming Trinidad and Tobago to developed country status as well as advancing the Government's constitutional reform agenda. It is in this regard and in continuance of the development of good local governance, that the Government seeks the agreement and the approval of the Members of this honourable House of this Draft Order in furtherance of the modernization of local Government.

I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Subhas Panday** (*Princes Town North*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, The Prime Minister is groaning because he himself feels the futility in this exercise, having gone through this exercise many times before—spinning on one spot and going nowhere.

The hon. Member failed to address what is the purpose of bringing this order for approval by this House at this time.

**Hon. Manning:** It is the law.

**Mr. S. Panday:** Are we going to have local government elections? This is to clear the way for local government elections under the present system? You are saying that we are complying with the law, where the Elections and Boundaries Commission has to produce this report, but when we argued on the last occasion for the Tobago House of Assembly, it was said that we needed to have the legislation and this Order passed in order to have the Tobago House of Assembly elections. Are you asking the House to approve this Order so that elections will be held under the present system?

**Mr. Manning:** Do you want me to answer that question?

**Mr. S. Panday:** Yes.

**Mr. Manning:** I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker that I am taken aback that the Member answered in the affirmative. It was a rhetorical question, but since he sat, I should tell him we are merely bringing the Order in satisfaction of the legal requirement.

**Mr. S. Panday:** Then we are wasting time on this issue. When the Prime Minister and the Member opposite spoke about local government reform, they complained that the boundaries were not reflecting the ethos of the community and there was need to change them in order to have local government reform. After all that hullabaloo, they bring regulations to the Parliament to fit the same boundaries and you say it is to fulfill the requirements of the law. That is a lot of hot air.

In any event, this Order was submitted to the Minister on July 04, 2008. Since fulfilling the requirements of the law, what does the law say about these Orders? It says that as soon as possible these orders should be laid in the House. It was laid on July 04, 2008. What was the purpose of laying the order at that time? So that it could be debated quickly and be relevant with the prevailing circumstances as to the population in the various areas.

This was laid in the spirit of the legislation and this should have been debated soon after and we would have had the Presidential Order. But what did the Government do? It allowed it to lapse and came back to the House on March 20, this year, to have it approved. It seems to me that the Government does not know what it is doing. The reason the Government was saying it did not want to hold local government election was that it wanted local government reform, which included a major plank, including the changing of the boundaries. Hence, it would appear to members of the public that if the Government had intended to change the boundaries under the reformed law, what was the purpose of going with this? One could rationalize and say that was the reason it was allowed to lapse.

The question is that you brought it back in March, trying to have it approved in June. You are attempting to fulfil the requirement and the legal requirement so that the election can be held. The reason you did not do it last year was that you were concentrating on local government reform. The question now is that you have failed in local government reform to fulfil the timetable requirements; you have failed in getting into readiness for local government reform, hence you have gone back to the old system. This contradicts the new system.

**Mr. Manning:** Suppose the councils lapse, what happens?

**Mr. S. Panday:** You have time all now. In the past what have you done to prevent them from lapsing?

**2.15 p.m.**

You are fooling the population. You are asking me: Suppose the life of the councils lapse, what would be the position? I am asking you: What have you done in the past to prevent the life of the councils from lapsing? In 2006, you brought a Bill to extend the life of the councils. You came in 2007, to extend the life of the councils. You came in 2008, to extend the life of the councils; to give you the opportunity to complete local government reform. How could you be asking me such a question: Suppose the life of the council lapses? You are pulling wool over the eyes of the population.

This is the Prime Minister who said that the boundaries as they stand in local government regional corporations do not represent the ethos of the communities and that it does not fit into a system for development. Hon. Minister, you also said that in various contributions which you made in the House and elsewhere. It still does not. Therefore, why did we not go to the new system? Therefore, we are really going nowhere. If that is it, why are you wasting parliamentary time?  
[Interruption]

**Hon. Members:** You are wasting time.

**Mr. S. Panday:** Why are you bringing—in the process of talking about local government reform, the Prime Minister said he agrees that is outdated, obsolete and irrelevant. He is asking us to pass this in Parliament. I will try to show you how it is indeed so.

Today this Government is legislating inequality and inequity. The hon. Minister today, has indicated that we cannot change the electoral districts in the cities and the boroughs, because that has to be done according to law. What the hon. Minister is really saying is that the Elections and Boundaries Commission cannot change those boundaries. If you want to be fair and if you want equity, why did you not bring legislation to the Parliament to create a situation of equity?

Let us take Port of Spain, we are legislating inequality. In Port of Spain, there are 12 districts, 111 polling divisions with 36,947 persons; that is 2,000 persons per electoral district in Port of Spain. That is an average of 2,800 or 2,880; St. James East, 2,958 and St. Ann's River North, 2,857. We enact a situation where each electoral district in Port of Spain only has about 2,000 to 3,000 electors. In that, you have 111 polling divisions. Therefore, in those circumstances, a polling division would have approximately 200 or 300 persons.

What would happen is that a councillor in Port of Spain will be representing a smaller number of persons, when compared to councillors in other areas. How could we sit today in Parliament and enact legislation to perpetuate such a situation?

**Mr. Imbert:** I thank the hon. Member for giving way. Could you tell me why you are accusing the PNM Government of being responsible for the recommendations in that report, when they are the findings and recommendations of an independent commission appointed by the President in his own discretion? *[Interruption]* I am not finished.

**Mr. S. Panday:** That is the height of shamelessness.

**Mr. Imbert:** That is question one. Those are the recommendations of an independent commission; nothing to do with the PNM Government. Question No. 2, the 1990 Municipal Corporations Act established all the parameters that informed the decision-making in that report passed by the NAR government, of which the PNM was not a part either, why are you accusing us of being responsible for these recommendations?

**Mr. S. Panday:** As I said, that is the height of shamelessness for that Member to make such a statement, when he is on record as saying that the Elections and

Boundaries Commission is a bias organization. He is the person who said that they are incompetent. He is the person who went on and said they had dead people on the electoral list. He is the person who attacked the Elections and Boundaries Commission of not being independent. Regardless of what it is, why are we, at this point in time, perpetuating that inequality?

Let us take Point Fortin Borough. The population is 15,450 persons. Who made Point Fortin a borough? The PNM did, with 15,450 persons. In Point Fortin Borough, there are six councillors. Therefore, what is the population of electorate that each councillor is representing? The answer is approximately 2,000 persons. How could we perpetuate that? If you go to Arima, there are 24,000 electorates with seven electoral districts and 3,000 persons and one councillor representing.

When you go to Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, there are 13 electoral districts and 128,936 electors. Therefore, each councillor or local government representative would be representing 9,918.

When you go to San Juan/Laventille, again there are 126,935 persons. I think they gave an extra one to go from 12 to 13. They are now representing again 9,000 electors. It is not that you are preaching inequality according to political parties, but there is inequality in the system. In Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, there are 9,998 persons and in San Juan/Laventille, it is approximately the same number. Why are we perpetuating this inequality?

It is in those circumstances I would have thought that having regard to these inequalities, the Government would have introduced in the Parliament, amending legislation to correct this inequality.

When one looks at the boundaries, let us take Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, one would see that the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation stretches from Point Lisas to Rio Claro. There are a number of polling divisions in Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, which are closer to Rio Claro, but they have been brought into this system in such a way—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Manning:** What are you suggesting?

**Mr. S. Panday:** I am suggesting that we should pass legislation to redefine the boundaries of the regional corporations—*[Desk thumping]*—to make it relevant to the needs of the people and, therefore, to say that you are bringing this legislation here merely to fulfil a legal requirement, you are wasting time. We should have gone before this and brought this legislation before the House to ensure that we ease the burden of those persons who live in those distant areas. *[Interruption]* I am correct?

**Mr. Manning:** Yes.

**Mr. S. Panday:** “So why yuh bring dis?” This is the argument. I humbly submit that this Government—why did you, in those circumstances, extend the life of the local government corporations on three occasions and did not bring this report? Why are you bringing it at this time? It would appear that this Government has given this country a six for a nine.

This Government, since 2002, indicated that it wanted to reform local government. As a result of that, what did this Government do? In 2004, the Government introduced a Green Paper. When the Green Paper was introduced, there was a lot of discussion on the Green Paper. From the Green Paper the experts came in and made their input. Then a White Paper was produced in 2006, after a revised Green Paper. You would have done a lot of work there so you produced the White Paper. What was the next step after the White Paper? The next step would have been to go to the next stage and go to legislation. Why did you not go to legislation then? [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Manning:** The Member for Princes Town North is quite correct. When we moved to the legislative stage we brought in a consultant and what became very clear to us is that there was no agreement on the role and function of the local government body. That is what the problem was. As a consequence of which, we put out another Green Paper on the role and function of local government only. That was the subject of consultation.

We have now come to a conclusion on that and we are in the final stages of bringing a new White Paper together with legislation for this Parliament for its consideration.

**Mr. S. Panday:** When could we expect that, Mr. Prime Minister?

**Mr. Manning:** Soon, before July 14.

**2.30 p.m.**

**Mr. S. Panday:** Before July 14? If that is coming before July 14, 2009, the validity will be for one month. Why are you all wasting time? [*Laughter*] You did not have to bring this. You could have brought the other piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, as I said, if that is the case, it makes no sense continuing this debate, but I do not trust them. [*Desk thumping*]

What has happened during this period? If you say that it is coming before July 14, 2009, I do not believe them until we see it. We took part in local government reform

from 2002—2009, but what happened to local government as it was then? Mr. Speaker, what we saw is that while the Government was talking about local government reform, it took every step possible to undermine the function of local government.

Mr. Speaker, they have formed a number of special purpose companies, and we would like to find out today whether those special purpose companies are going to continue after the local government reform legislation comes into being. Now, if that is so, local government will remain as it is now, and it will not function. It will be undermined by the PNM.

They have formed a number of special purpose companies and those companies perform the same functions as local government. So, if you are going to reform local government and you are still going to maintain those special purpose companies, what will be the role of local government? You see, you have Palo Seco Enterprises Limited, CISL and the Rural Development Company, and all those companies are under the direct control of the Minister. Those companies do not take instructions or do not even consult with the local government bodies. The Minister decides what they do. What the PNM has done is undermined democracy. They have undermined the electoral process, because persons who have voted for these councillors and local government practitioners have no say.

Do you know what happens in reality? If the elected representative of the people makes representation to these special purpose companies, they are ignored.

**Mr. Manning:** You have to make it to the Minister.

**Mr. S. Panday:** The local government councillors who have been elected are required to ask the Minister where to put a project, when they are elected by the people. Why? The way the PNM does it is that in every constituency where there is a sitting Opposition Member of Parliament, the Government puts a shadow minister in every constituency. Mr. Speaker, you will be surprised to know that the shadow MP goes to the Minister—they are in the same party—and instead of the elected representative of the people, they would put projects where they want. That happens! They could ask as much as they want; they could make representation as much as they want, but this Government only cares about its own. The shadow representative of the PNM would get the work done and try to make the elected members irrelevant.

Mr. Speaker, the people are suffering. [*Interruption*] They did a survey of the election results, and if you represent a constituency in a polling division where the PNM got votes, you are going to find all the projects going on there.

**Mr. Manning:** That is not true.

**Mr. S. Panday:** That is true. That is why we are saying that the PNM is strangling local government. In spite of all the reform, the PNM Government is going to undermine local government. If they want to grab an electoral district, they will start doing a little work in that area. So, we have little hope in this legislation, and little hope with local government reform. They have said that it is coming, and we are waiting for it. When it comes, we will decide and deal with it.

Thank you.

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Works and Transport (Hon. Roger Joseph):** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I thank you for allowing me to contribute to this debate on the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Order, 2009. The Motion before this honourable House seeks the approval of the House for the draft of an order by the President in accordance with section 4 of the Elections and Boundaries (Local Government and the Tobago House of Assembly) Act. That is all, nothing else.

When I heard the hon. Member for Princes Town North, I could not help but wonder whether the hon. Member knows anything about local government. [*Desk thumping*] Mr. Speaker, I have been in local government for just about five years. I was the Deputy Chairman of the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation for the period 2002—2007 and then I was elected the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo. Hearing the Member, I have to ask: Does the Member really understand what local government is about? Does the Member understand how local government works, the role of councillors and the role of the council in local government and municipal corporations?

When I look at the line up—both the Front Bench and the Back Benches of the Opposition—I ask myself, which one of the hon. Members opposite has served in local government as a councillor, an alderman or as a Minister, and I could not find anyone. Perhaps I may be wrong, but I will be happy to be corrected. Therefore, it is not surprising to hear what the Member said. I think I owe it to Members Opposite to teach them a little of what happens in local government. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Princes Town North talked about shadow MPs, but I am not aware of any concept of shadow MPs in the PNM. If the Member has information, I would be very pleased to hear it. I am not aware of any shadow ministers as well.

Perhaps when I say what I have to say, the Member will be enlightened so that on the next occasion he speaks on local government—I understand he is the shadow minister for local government—he will not speak in those terms. Mr. Speaker, the Member said that the elected councillors who represent the UNC in PNM municipalities have no say. The Member also said that local government has to ask the Minister for projects. He infers that the Minister determines where those projects should be, and that is far from the truth.

I want to tell the hon. Member—I am speaking specifically in terms of what happens at the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation, where I was a member for five years. It is the same for all PNM-controlled municipalities in Trinidad. We operate with a standard. I am almost sure that standard does not apply in those municipalities which are controlled by the UNC. I just want to inform the hon. Member for Princes Town North what is the standard in PNM-controlled municipalities. At the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation, there are nine elected PNM councillors, one of whom is appointed chairman and then there are four UNC councillors. All the resources are allocated equally amongst all the councillors, PNM and UNC. [*Desk thumping*] Each year there is a development programme which is a Capital Expenditure Programme, and that programme occurs in each municipal body throughout Trinidad. The programme involves infrastructural renewal works such as roads, bridges and drainage, et cetera. The request for funding for Capital Expenditure is based on submissions made by each councillor.

The chairman invites project proposals from each councillor; both UNC and PNM. These projects are then costed and sent to the ministry for budgeting. The request to the ministry is not sent in secret. Every single councillor knows exactly what the other councillor has asked for and knows what projects have been approved.

Each project under the Capital Expenditure Programme is approved in council, and each project has roughly the same dollar value. So, for instance, when the Member for Princes Town North talked about UNC councillors in PNM municipalities not having any say in terms of where projects are to be done, that is not true. The Member is misrepresenting the truth.

Mr. Speaker, I have sat in this House, and time and time again reference has been made to the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation by the hon. Member for St. Augustine. I am sorry the Member is not here today. The Member said that the regional corporation does not do any work in his constituency, and he suffers for projects in his constituency. I am very sorry that he is not here. Perhaps, the UNC councillors are not liaising with him and they are not treating with the MP.

**2.45 p.m.**

Perhaps they are not taking the advice of the Member of Parliament in putting forward projects. I can assure the Members opposite that all the councillors, in all PNM municipalities are treated equally, because our policy is equality, equity and fairness. [*Desk thumping*] The reality is that each councillor is the one who is authorized; is the only person authorized to decide which projects are to be done, where they are to be done, and when they are to be done.

In the case of the councillor for instance, in the constituency of St. Augustine, I have public records here, I got from the regional corporation, showing projects throughout the years in that particular electoral district, which actually I should point out that that electoral district—and I would quote the electoral district for you, Mr. Speaker—lies within two constituencies: one is the constituency of St. Augustine and one is the constituency of D'Abadie/O'Meara.

That particular councillor for that area promotes all projects within the constituency of D'Abadie/O'Meara—that is a UNC councillor—but yet the Member for St. Augustine talks about the corporation not giving any projects in his constituency. He is clearly out of touch. I will tell you why the councillor is doing work in that area of D'Abadie/O'Meara, in an area called Carapo, Peytonville, because that is where the councillor resides, and that is why the work is being done there. I have development programmes, draft estimates for the year 2007—2009, showing all capital expenditure works being done in those areas: play parks, recreational facilities, roads, drains, everything being done there. So, if the Member for Princes Town North is referring to any issue where their councillor is not bringing forward work in their area, it is exactly for the same reason.

In the regional corporation of Tunapuna/Piarco, the whole concept of equality, of fairness and equity is not only extended to development work, development programmes, it is extended across the board in terms of recurrent works, where you place the work teams to clean the verges, the drains. It is decided by the councillor and approved in council, no councillor interferes with the other council's programme. I want to repeat again, in case the point is lost; that is the policy that extends in all municipalities controlled by the PNM. [*Desk thumping*] I cannot say if that occurs in the municipalities that are controlled by the United National Congress.

As a matter of fact, I want to go so far as to say that when I was in council, we met frequently with our colleagues and I would hear my colleagues, who were at the regional corporation of Penal/Debe for instance, complaining bitterly about

the discrimination that they faced at that regional corporation; they cannot get resources, they are being treated as unequals. The councillor Diptee Primnath, I think, but I would get his name.

**Mr. Ramnath:** Ramnath.

**Hon. R. Joseph:** Primnath Diptee—I think his name is—complains bitterly about the treatment that is given, that is shown, the lack of respect; exactly what the Member for Princes Town North is accusing the PNM of, is exactly what they have been doing to that councillor, and the councillor is in the Chaguanas Borough Council, the PNM councillors, I think there are three councillors there. It is exactly the same treatment. I think the Member for Princes Town North knows exactly what he is talking about, except that is happening in those areas, and those municipal bodies controlled by the UNC.

Mr. Speaker, I kept hearing about inequality and the Member was talking about the Government is strangling local government and you know as I said, this PNM Government, is not strangling local government. This Government is the Government that has boosted local government and I would show evidence of that. I have a document prepared by the Ministry of Local Government, which shows capital expenditure for the period 1995—2009. I just want to quote from this report the years to show a comparison, and I want the Members of this House to determine exactly who was strangling or who has been strangling local government all along.

This is the capital expenditure, which would involve things under the development programme, for building of bridges, fixing of roads, recreational facilities. In the year 1998, when the UNC was in government and they had very colourful Ministers of Local Government, I just want to tell you what the borough of Chaguanas got under capital expenditure. According to the report here, they got \$550,000 for capital expenditure; to fix roads, build bridges, build recreational facilities, build play parks

In the year 2007, Chaguanas got \$8,031,000; [*Desk thumping*] the estimate for 2009 was \$10-plus million; Couva/Tabaquite in 1997, under the UNC government, 1998—because I am being consistent with my dates—got \$190,000 in an area that is rural in nature with, as they say, flooding, that they complain about; under the PNM in 2007, almost \$4 million. [*Desk thumping*] The 2009 estimates almost \$13 million under the PNM. In Port of Spain, in 1998, just about \$1 million was given by the UNC government, when they were in government—and they want to talk about support for local government—and under the PNM in 2007, \$7.3 million. [*Desk thumping*]

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So, when the Member talks about the PNM strangling local government, I ask the question: Who is really strangling local government? The fact of the matter is, the facts are here, they do not lie. According to my colleague, the Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West, the facts are stubborn things; they just would not go away; you could use how much "Breeze" you want, they just cannot go away. [Laughter]

Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite spoke about local government reform and reference was made to the Government's Green Paper on Local Government Reform. I do not plan to dwell too much on this subject as the hon. Minister of Local Government would have spent some time on this and I am sure other speakers on this side would talk about it. I just want to make reference to an interim report presented to the Ministry of Local Government on consultations done by the Ministry throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad, because you see the Member for Princes Town North inferred that the consultation programme was dragging on; that we brought it out in 2004; that we kept on postponing local government elections. I just want to let the Member for Princes Town North know that the important process of consultation is a significantly integral part of local government reform.

In systems development, if any one of the Members on the other side understands systems development, you must have a user requirement before you go and develop a system. You just cannot develop a system and say, this is what I am choosing for you. A user requirement is developed and a user requirement is developed by interviews with the users, in terms of what are their requirements. The process of consultation is a critical component of local government reform. [Desk thumping] To rush that process, as perhaps the Member for Princes Town North is suggesting, is foolhardy and I am very, very grateful that this PNM government has not taken the advice offered by the Member for Princes Town North.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to the consultations. These consultations, as you know, were facilitated by the Ministry of Local Government and were done in all 14 municipal regions, and one internal consultation was done at the Crowne Plaza. It is reported that an estimated total of 8,500 people attended these consultations, and if the Member wishes, I have a breakdown in terms of where they were done in each municipality and the number that attended in each municipality.

I attended three of these consultations, because as you know, the constituency of La Horquetta/Talparo is quite expansive, is geographically wide, and lies within three municipalities, namely Tunapuna/Piarco, Arima, Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo. I was very pleased to see a wide participation of stakeholders such as politicians,

both at the local and national levels, ministries and state enterprises, municipal employees, households, NGOs, CBOs, faith-based organizations, youth groups, women's groups, the private sector, trade unions—yes, trade unions, participated fully—village councils, community councils, political parties, including the COP.

In fact, it is reported that an estimated 250 organizations participated. [*Desk thumping*] This, Mr. Speaker, you would agree, can truly be defined as widespread national consultation—[*Desk thumping*]—and obviously has resonated with great success. It is instructive to note that all the views were heard. Every single person who had something to say was allowed to say it and their views were heard, recorded and analyzed. These consultations have served to inform the prescriptions featured in the Government's White Paper and of course, the new legislation. I just want to quote some of the consensus that arose out of that consultation; just to give an idea of what people felt, that obviously would show the Members opposite the need why these consultations were important and why of course, there is a need for local government reform.

**3.00 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, a number of people felt that:

- There needs to be compliance with accounting policies and procedures.
- It needs to be regularly prepared and reviewed.
- There is need for approval of annual operating and capital budgets, monitoring and evaluating, reviewing capital and other expenditure by regional bodies.
- Conducting period audits and cost reviews.

Strong views were articulated on the fact that people felt that:

- There was poor implementation and execution of projects.
- Inadequate monitoring and evaluation of projects.

People felt generally that in the new dispensation we need to address the social aspect of sustainable communities to allay tension; tensions between groups based on race, politics, religion and gender and income disparity; build consensus on major projects through town meetings, focus group meetings, promote local culture, establish street services and develop a vibrant municipal community police service. There was widespread consensus on the need to have more

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effective communication between local government bodies and citizens; the need for greater participation and involvement of communities in local government affairs; the need for constant consultation with stakeholders in communities in order for a greater sense of community ownership.

That is just to give you an idea of what people think out there, what they feel about local government and what should happen. It is just a very miniscule part of the report, but the Motion before this House is the approval of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Order, 2009, and the hon. Minister of Local Government in her presentation gave all the justification why this Order is before the House. She indicated that the report was first laid in Parliament in September 2008 but due to the Government's legislative agenda it was not effectively dealt with, and as such it lapsed on the prorogation of the First Session of the Ninth Parliament 2007—2008.

The hon. Minister in her presentation took time to quote extensively from the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act and the Tobago House of Assembly Act. The Minister showed where the EBC, in its report that was presented on July 04, 2008, recommended for the purposes of local government elections the boundaries of the electoral districts. All of this was done in accordance with section 4 of the Act. As indicated by the hon. Minister, the Second Schedule of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act prescribed the rules to be followed by the Commission in its review of the number and boundaries of the electoral districts into which an electoral area is to be divided. We did not make the rules.

The Member for Princes Town North, in his contribution, tried to make it out as if we fiddled; we tried to engineer the thing. We did not make the rules. These rules were done in an era where some of their Members were part of that government in 1990. The Member for Siparia—I was looking at *Hansard*—in 2003, brought the same argument, but the Member for Siparia was a Member of that government in the ONR/NAR marriage [*Interruption*] and it subsequently became Club 88. The fact of the matter is, that legislation was brought by them. They created the municipalities; we did not. They created it! As a matter of fact, if the Member wishes to go back to *Hansard*, he would see the objection of the PNM raising the same arguments, giving reasons why they should have a weighted system, but of course, the Member would not go that way back to research. The fact of the matter is, these are the rules and the Elections and Boundaries Commission in its report—it is done in accordance with the rules. It is almost like a formula; they have to slavishly follow those rules.

The hon. Minister quoted from the rules of this Act and the Members opposite know this very well. So, we on this side insist that rules are to be followed. They on that side do not seem to appreciate rules and regulations and it is unfortunate, because—I sit on the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament and, as you know, Public Accounts Committee is broadcasted live on national television and radio, and last week Friday we met and examined—as you know, Mr. Speaker, I should say that the Public Accounts Committee is chaired by the distinguished Member for Oropouche East—the accounts of the Chaguanas Borough Corporation and it is absolutely horrendous the extent to which that borough corporation which is headed by Mayor Surujrattan Rambachan—the public would have seen it and the national community would be appalled to see the extent to which that corporation did not follow rules and regulations. *[Interruption]* Almost as if they manipulated the system. *[Interruption]*

I have the Auditor General's report. If the Member so wishes I would read the Auditor General's report. I did not say it; the Auditor General said it. The Auditor General's report in 2003, said that the Chaguanas Borough Corporation was acting in contravention of certain rules. *[Interruption]* The fact of the matter is, if the Member wishes I would quote him the report.

**Hon. Member:** You could quote other things too.

**Mr. R. Joseph:** Mr. Speaker, I did not write the report. I am not the Auditor General. I am just a Member of the Public Accounts Committee, but the point I was trying to make, is that we on this side follow rules and we want to make it quite clear that the recommendation of the EBC is in accordance with rules as established by legislation.

The Motion seeks the approval of this honourable House to the draft of an order of the President in accordance with section 4 of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act and the Tobago House of Assembly Act. As indicated by the hon. Minister and in furtherance of the efforts of her ministry in the continued reform and modernization of local government, I urge hon. Members to agree to this draft Order.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

**Mr. Chandresh Sharma (Fyzabad):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think one area of common agreement between both sides of the House is that we all agree that local government is indeed a very important ministry. At another public place I moved that the appointment of the current Minister perhaps was an indicator by the hon. Prime Minister of the importance he has attached to this particular ministry.

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In fact, as I listened to the hon. Minister who moved the Motion today, the Minister did make the point that this is about 958,000 people in Trinidad who have to participate, and by extension, who have to benefit. It is unfortunate when I listened to the last speaker, the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo, he had very little to say on the Bill and went all over the place. I will try to contain my arguments on what the Minister said—

**Hon. Member:** That will be a first. [*Desk thumping and laughter*]

**Mr. C. Sharma:** —but in so doing I want to take this House back to 2002, “The Government will bring no pressure to bear on EBC Commissioners to resign”, Prime Minister Patrick Manning said yesterday. What he was saying is that EBC has a very important role to play, and the Minister did indicate that a short while ago. But what came from the EBC really is the recommendation, and in this very House the current Prime Minister rejected the recommendations of the Salaries Review Commission on one occasion, saying that his Government was not prepared to treat with it. In the same way, you do not necessarily have to treat with the recommendations. What you have to take into consideration is, are the recommendations beneficial and useful for the purpose for which we are gathered here today? And it does not seem so. The cry across the country is the lack of goods and services from local government and we all know that.

It is most unfortunate that the Member who spoke last seems to suggest that everything is okay in local government. We all are suffering, both sides of the House, and to indicate that moneys are available, that is not true! In fact, if you look at today's *Daily Express*, the editorial talks about that: "Give Local Govt proper funding". What it said in part:

"Over the past three years, the PNM administration has spoken much about strengthening Local Government, with the sub-heading of the Government's 2006 Draft White Paper declaring there will be ‘decentralisation of Local Government System and promotion of greater Citizen Participation in the affairs of Local Government’”.

But if local government is to perform, one of the critical areas is funding, and we all sing that song all the time.

My colleague, the Member for Princes Town North was making a very important point and it must be considered. What he was saying—and this is what the national community is also saying—is that when you look at areas—and Point Fortin was a good example—the radius of the Point Fortin Corporation is about

seven miles, with six councillors receiving the same amount of funding as what Siparia obtains or Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo with a much larger area.

He went further, he said when you look at Port of Spain—the councillor is elected at the Port of Spain City Corporation with less than 500 votes—and you look at the amount of moneys that councillor gets compared to the other areas, it is much higher, and of course when you look at the nearness of the other corporations in Port of Spain, Diego Martin, Laventille, Tunapuna, all within a 20-mile radius and more than \$100 million going there. When you look at Mayaro, go down to Princes Town, Penal/Debe, Siparia—Cedros falls under Siparia for instance, so the distance from Cedros to the Siparia Regional Corporation is close to 30-plus miles, and a few miles away is Point Fortin with a small radius with six councillors. So that is the first thing.

Now, we are the legislators here, we can change that! If we feel strong enough that that is an area that needs to be revisited, you have the support of us here. We are not asking for something that will not benefit the national community. We are agreeing that local government is critical; we are agreeing that local government needs more funding. When the hon. Member said in 1998 the Chaguanas Borough Corporation obtained \$550,000, was the UNC government spiting Couva or Chaguanas? No! That was the moneys that were available then. If in 2007, \$8 million is available, that is what the Treasury could afford. We are still arguing more moneys are required, so it is not a question that one Government was treating it differently. We all agree that local government is a very important area of governance and many of us know on a daily basis the number of frustrated citizens we come across who phone us, text us and send messages—the quality of life in this country depends on the availability of goods and services from the regional corporations. So that is the second point we want to make that we need to revisit this. Let us work on it together.

This is an opportunity for us to really get down and do some serious work for Trinidad—this does not cover Tobago in the current status—and let us make an effort.

**Mr. Manning:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. C. Sharma:** If we have that commitment, I am prepared to take my seat. [*Inaudible*] Well, perhaps if you get up and you say that and it can go on the record, I will take my seat and conclude my submissions.

**Mr. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I must thank the Member for Fyzabad for giving way. In fact, it is the intention of the Government when we bring a draft White Paper to the Parliament where it will have all the proposals for local government

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including proposals for new boundary arrangements, it will be our pleasure to work with hon. Members opposite to ensure that the system introduces a new system of local government and that the people of Trinidad and Tobago benefit appropriately as a consequence of this bipartisanship that, we would expect, is between the two sides.

**Mr. C. Sharma:** Thank you very much, hon. Prime Minister. As the Prime Minister will say, I will engage in no more foreplay.

I thank you very much.

**3.15 p.m.**

**Dr. Hamza Rafeeq** (*Caroni Central*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will just make a brief intervention. I will not be very long, but there are a couple points I must make.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing today with a 2008 Report. There was a report that was presented before this Parliament in 2005 and, subject to correction, I do not recall that report in 2005 ever being debated or approved by this House. If that is in fact so—and I stand corrected—then we are debating an Order today that will increase the number of local government seats from 131 to 134. But in 2005, the Order increased it from 126 to 131. If that report was not accepted, then what is the status of this report that we are dealing with today? Is it legal? That report was not accepted and today we are moving from 131 to 134, when in fact we never approved the report to move it from 126 to 131.

**Mr. Manning:** [*Inaudible*]

**Dr. H. Rafeeq:** Sorry? As you say, my recollection is that we did not. I stand corrected, but my recollection is that we did not. It needs to be checked.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen what has happened with local government elections over the last couple of years. Just by a simple majority, the Government comes, brings a Bill and extends the life of the corporations by a year. They have done it on three occasions within the last three years, and so councillors who were elected to serve for three years are now serving for a six-year period. We are of the view that local government is extremely important to our democracy. In fact, we feel that local government stands at the heart of our democracy and because that is so, we feel that local government should be enshrined in the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. If any changes of course have to be made, they should be made by a specified majority, but we feel that local government should be enshrined in the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. That is one of the—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Manning:** Who tell you that?

**Dr. H. Rafeeq:** So you would not be able to come and postpone elections so very easily. You will need a specified majority to postpone elections.

**Mr. Manning:** [*Inaudible*]

**Dr. H. Rafeeq:** Mr. Speaker, the report that we are dealing with is based on information and electors from January 2008, which is about 18 months ago. In the normal run of things, we have migration of people from one area to another area, and in addition to that of course, we have an increase in the number of electors for so many reasons. But because of the aggressive housing thrust by the Government, we feel that the figures that are presented in the 2008 Report, from January 2008, may not be as relevant today as so many people have moved residence. Because as I said, the aggressive housing thrust that this Government has engaged in, a lot of people have moved residence and today, those figures may no longer be relevant and applicable. So we feel that needs to be looked into before we have a local government election, again.

Mr. Speaker, the Members on this side were making the point—and this is something that we have had no clarification from, but we know there is a formula by which electoral districts are added to different corporations. There is a formula: 4 + 15,000 and so on. We understand that, but what about the borough corporations and the city corporations? They have a fixed number of seats by law and, as the Member for Princes Town North was mentioning, that can be changed by law. Why it is that a councillor in Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation must be in a position where he has to serve 10,000 electors, whereas a councillor in Point Fortin Borough Corporation has to serve 2,000/2,500? That does not cater for equality and something has to be done to address that. Because if you look at Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation for instance, there are some electoral districts in that corporation that have a very, very large geographical area, in addition to the fact that you have to serve over 10,000 electors. A very vast geographical area; that is almost half of a constituency. A Member of Parliament has 23,000/25,000 electors in his constituency, and here you have a local government representative with over 10,000 electors. Something has to be wrong with a system that perpetuates that.

If councillors are to service their constituents in an effective manner—and as I said some of them serving 10,000, 9,000 and so on—then we feel that the time has come when councillors should be made full-time. The time has come when councillors should be made full-time and they should be given resources to

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service their constituents. For instance—[*Interruption*] [*Crosstalk*] Well, okay. Okay! Okay! I am not anticipating. I am just giving suggestions. [*Crosstalk*] [*Interruption*]

**Mr. Ramnath:** How can we anticipate?

**Mr. P. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for Caroni Central for giving way. Just as we were saying to the Member for Fyzabad and to the Member for Princes Town North before him, the White Paper is coming with a lot of sweeping changes in it. As is required and the Members on both sides accept, I would like to suggest to the very distinguished Member for Caroni Central, that he just bide his time a little longer. Before July 14, 2009 it will all be here.

**Dr. H. Rafeeq:** Mr. Prime Minister, I accept what you are saying. I think maybe if you had brought both of them together, we could have been debating both of them together and we would have—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Imbert:** How long again?

**Dr. H. Rafeeq:** Give me about three minutes again.

**Mr. Ramnath:** You want to prevent us from speaking to the country.

**Dr. H. Rafeeq:** I just have two small points again. Mr. Speaker, the administrative complexes for the regional corporations. We have taken the position that the administration complexes should be constructed of course in each electoral area, and these administrative complexes should contain within them facilities for members of the public to access things like birth certificates and things for which you have to travel to Port of Spain. You should build little complexes where members can access all of these services, so that they do not have to travel to Port of Spain and San Fernando for everything.

Mr. Speaker, there is just one point I want to raise again and that is, recently—You know there is an item of expenditure in the regional corporation called "Unspent Balances". My understanding is that each of the regional corporations has a significant amount of money—I think it is in the bank, unspent balances—and the law clearly states how these unspent balances can be spent. There was an opinion given by the Solicitor General, I think it was sometime in 2002, and the opinion said at that time that the section restricted the use of unspent balances to either the erection of buildings, or the acquisition of lands or buildings. It further listed the purposes for which the erected buildings, acquired lands or buildings are to be used. That is for library, care of infants and indigent persons, erection of emoluments and so on. So there are two areas that are allowed to spend these unspent balances, the erection of buildings and the acquisition of land and buildings.

Mr. Speaker, recently, May 2009, the Permanent Secretary from the Ministry of Local Government issued a circular to the Chief Executive Officers of the Regional Corporations, asking the Chief Executive Officers to use the unspent balances to pay the consultants that were hired to produce the development of local area plans for the regional corporations. This document I have here is for the Chaguanas area, and this is asking the Chief Executive Officer to pay the consultant, Dr. Michelle Myco, \$1.1 million for the development of that local area plan. Whereas, it clearly states in the opinion of the Solicitor General that this is illegal, and that is, the moneys in the unspent balances can only be used for the erection of buildings or for the acquisition of lands.

Mr. Speaker, we would like when the Minister is winding up for her to—  
[*Interruption*]

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would really like him to read the whole document. He would see the last sentence says, "and other works". So if you read the document, you would see that.

**Dr. H. Rafeeq:** Mr. Speaker, I did not want to engage the Minister, but I would read it as she has said.

"(a) the section restricts the use of the unspent balances to either the erection of buildings or the acquisition of lands or buildings."

And they further list the purposes for which the erected buildings or acquired lands or buildings are to be used. So you either erect buildings or you buy lands and buildings.

"(b) and the building will be used for these purposes: a library or other public institution for the diffusion of knowledge;

(c) any public institutions situated within the municipality and devoted for the care of infants and indigent persons, for the erection and maintenance of emoluments or foundations of both;

(d) generally for the improvement of the municipality and for the benefit of the inhabitants thereof."

Mr. Speaker, that is the sentence that our lawyer advised us that we must use to do other jobs, and that is exactly what we have done.

**Dr. H. Rafeeq:** Mr. Speaker, common sense, I am not a lawyer. It says that you can erect buildings, or you can buy lands or buildings and the purposes of these buildings will be for these, including for the general improvement of the municipality. That is, the buildings will be used for that purpose, not to develop a local area plan. That is not for that.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister will have the opportunity to deal with that, but the reason I am raising this is that the Chaguanas Borough Corporation wrote to the Minister asking her permission to utilize some of the unspent balances for the purpose of erecting a building for disabled persons, and up to now they have not been given permission after so many years. They are not allowing the money to be used for the purposes for which they are intended, but they are using it for purposes for which it is illegal. That is the point I wanted to make.

There are so many other things that we wanted to say, but the Prime Minister has given the undertaking that a lot of these issues will be addressed when he brings the White Paper. We look forward to the White Paper coming because, as I said, there are a lot of issues that we will want to raise, but if he gives the undertaking that they will be addressed, we will be raising these issues during that debate.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** One minute please. The hon. Member for Barataria/San Juan. [*Crosstalk*] Order!

**The Minister of Tourism (Hon. Joseph Ross):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Imbert:** Do not be too long.

**Hon. J. Ross:** I will be very short, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, the Motion before us deals with the approval of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Order, 2009. I would refer to a couple statements that were made to clear the air.

I heard the Member for Caroni Central in fact referring to the unspent balances that the Mayor for Chaguanas had requested, to construct some building for the disabled in the community. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, that matter came up and it was discussed at length at Public Accounts Committee, and that clearly is a responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development.

**3.30 p.m.**

In addition, the Member failed to mention, and I think it came out very clearly earlier on, that the situation in Chaguanas had reached a position where there was a total breakdown in controls within that corporation over the years. You would highlight one point, but you would not demonstrate to this honourable House the number of inconsistencies that existed in the Chaguanas Borough Corporation.

I recall that the Auditor General in an earlier report, I think it was around 2002, had requested the Chaguanas Borough Corporation to provide the Auditor General, within three weeks, with answers as to a number of deficiencies and queries raised. That Corporation took four year to respond. The response was requested within three weeks, and the Corporation took four years. Mr. Speaker, that alone goes to show how these corporations and, in this particular instance, the Chaguanas Borough Corporation, was actually performing.

As we look at the Order 2009, if we examine all the steps that led to what we have before us to approve today, we would see clearly that all the necessary requirements were, in fact, met. I think the hon. Minister of Local Government clearly identified the steps. The Commission submitted its report on July 04, 2008, in accordance with section 4(1) of the Act. Again, the report was laid in the Parliament, as the hon. Minister indicated; Parliament was prorogued and the order lapsed. Then it came back in March 2009; and here today we have the draft before us to approve. All the steps were followed. So there was really, in my view, very little area for the Opposition to raise. I believe that is why they spoke so briefly, because they recognized that we covered all the necessary tracks.

With respect to the contents of the order, and all the necessary adjustments that had to be made, these things were done in accordance with the Act. There is one point I think is important to emphasize, made by the Member for Princes Town North in his earlier contribution — and, to some extent, it was dealt with by my honourable colleague from La Horquetta/Talparo—when he accused this Government of squeezing or strangling some of these corporations and, in particular, those dominated by the Opposition. The records are there to show that this, in fact, was not the case. I will give you some very important information that would assist in clearing the air on that.

If you go through the period 1995—2001, you would see that in every single instance, when you compare them with the years 2003—2007, you would see that the highest amounts given to these corporations were consistently given under the PNM regime; which goes to show that at no point in time did we as a government ever attempt to strangle the corporations.

Chaguanas was dealt with already, so we can go to any other corporation. We can go to Penal/Debe, and you would see that it never got as much under the UNC as it is getting today under the PNM Government. We have always attempted to be fair and equitable in the distribution of resources.

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Mr. Speaker, just to get back to the Motion specifically before us, the only reason I think Members on the other side would not support this is if the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC), in fact, committed any error of omission or any deliberate error. When you look at the entire process, the process was followed completely. The contents of the report were quite, quite consistent. The boundaries were adjusted after a comprehensive review, after a comprehensive appraisal, was conducted by the EBC. Adjustments to the boundaries in 46 electoral districts out of 131 overall and changes in the names of certain electoral districts, as the hon. Minister indicated, were recommended by the Commission.

Under the EBC (Local Government and the Tobago House of Assembly) (THA) Act, section 4(1), this is the Commission's responsibility. The impression we have been getting from a couple of the speakers before was this Government was responsible; nothing could be further from the truth.

This Government's responsibility is to receive the report from the EBC and bring it to the House of Representatives; this, in fact, was carried out in its entirety. So there is no need for us to accuse this Government of trying to manipulate the findings of the Commission or trying to manipulate the boundaries.

Section 4(4) of the Act requires the Minister to provide reasons for the modifications; all these things were provided. The hon. Minister in laying the Bill before us stated that there were significant increases. In addition, the hon. Minister gave all the reasons why the Bill had to come back to Parliament. So all the explanation required was provided, which again goes to show that we have been following the rules. Member for Couva South, we have been following the rules.

In closing, I think it is, indeed, a Motion that all Members on both sides should be happy to support, because there is no inconsistency at all in the Order that you could point to. I urge you to support this Bill.

**Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj SC** (*Tabaquite*): Mr. Speaker, I join this debate, but I do not think, with the greatest respect, that the way it has been positioned, that the issue is simply whether the procedures for this Order have been followed or not.

As the Minister said in opening the debate, in Trinidad and Tobago there is greater local and national democracy; good practices in local government democracy. There is participatory democracy. We are reforming the local government structure and we are modernizing local government. The way this debate has developed, it seems as though the whole question as to what the relevance of this provision is, at this time, has arisen.

As the hon. Minister said when she presented the Motion, this report was given by the Commission since 2008, but the Government did not find the time because of its busy schedule, to bring it before the Parliament. As a result, this is the second time that the Order has been laid.

The whole question then is: Why has this come up today, in light of what is happening in the country? What is the Government's agenda? That is very relevant. The issue is not simply whether the procedures were followed. Yes, there is no doubt that the procedures were followed, but those procedures have to be taken in the context that from 2006 to now, the Government has been postponing local government elections on the basis that there would have been reforms by now.

In that process we have to remember that two important things are happening; one is that persons are being given representatives who they did not have a right to choose. When local government elections became due, the people of the country had a right to vote for their representatives. That could not be suspended, and it cannot be suspended on the basis that reforms are occurring. Yes, the hon. Prime Minister got up and said, "We are going to come and bring the reforms and everybody would have a say." What is the time frame? Is it that in the meantime, no matter how long these reforms take, people are not going to have the right to vote? You are disenfranchising these people.

As a matter of fact, my constituents in the constituency of Tabaquite, and I am sure constituents throughout Trinidad and Tobago, face the everyday problem of the lack of local governance. They are unhappy; most of them want to change their representatives; most of them are not happy; most of them are not happy with what is happening with local government.

I have tried to make a list of the issues which affect people every day. Some people believe that having proper local government is more important than at the national level. Take, for example, primary and secondary roads. We know that secondary roads are the function of local government normally, but everyday in most constituencies and, in particular, the rural constituencies, you have complaints about roads. As a matter of fact, the hon. Minister of Local Government would remember, I think it was about a year or two ago, that I wrote her a letter. She gave me a commitment. My constituents do not have proper local government roads.

I have had to go to the private sector to buy gravel, to get donations for trucks in order to provide material to give people roads. When I go to the local government representative, he tells me that the local government body tells him that they do not have the money.

I even appealed to the hon. Minister of Works and Transport. He has promised me; I have not gotten the assistance as yet, I got some. But I begged the Minister of Local Government. I said, "My constituents are suffering." The hon. Minister of Local Government gave a commitment to the whole country that come this year in the budget the roads would be fixed. Everyday the people in my constituency are telling me that the Minister of Local Government does not have a word. "She promised us and she has not delivered." I wrote to her about it; I have not gotten a reply. I got a reply saying that I must talk to somebody in the Ministry. *[Interruption]*

**Miss Cox:** That is a reply.

**Mr. R. L. Maharaj SC:** Secondary roads are very important. They affect people in their daily lives. Students cannot go to work. *[Laughter]* I am sorry—they cannot go to school. Parents cannot go to work. Parents are kept at home because taxis do not go in those roads. Sometimes when persons are sick in those areas, they cannot get a taxi or a vehicle to pick them up and ambulances refuse to go in the road.

I have a situation in any constituency, and I am sure this exists in other parts of the country, where persons cannot get their garbage collected, because the garbage trucks have refused to go on the roads, because the roads are so bad.

**3.45 p.m.**

So how it is we come here today with an Order and we say it is not important, we can finish this debate very quickly, but it affects the constitutional rights of people to vote and their right to important matters which affect their daily lives?

I would have thought that the Prime Minister would have got up today in this Parliament and give the date for local government election, he would have even given the time frame for reform. As a matter of fact, we have been hearing about these reforms even before 2006, but local government election had been postponed since 2006.

In my constituency and several others, there are traces, bridges, side roads, pavements, drainage, lighting, burial grounds, markets, public health laws which have not been implemented. There are no garbage collection, guidelines for building to be followed, and no distribution of water.

Mr. Speaker, there are areas in this country—and there are lots in my constituency—where people have never had a pipe borne supply of water in their lives. There are many areas where there are community water tanks and ladies

have to put pails on their heads and walk to get water, children sometimes have to stay home from school to fetch water from ponds.

This is a simple thing, this is serious business. So yes, in the Order and the Schedule the section has been complied with; as a matter of fact, this report was made in 2008 on the basis that there would have been election in 2008 and the last report before 2008 was in July 2005. So the Elections and Boundaries Commission did its job in 2005 expecting there will be local government election in 2006. They have postponed it and did its job for 2008 and the Government said it did not have time, there were important matters and brought this today. I would have thought the most important matter to bring today would have been the issue of crime in this country. Murders are happening every day and the Government is not saying anything about it.

I would have thought today that the Prime Minister would have said this is not important, this is of lesser importance and tell the people what the Government is doing to make the people safer and more secure. This is what the Parliament is about. Here it is the Government is admitting that there is no great significance to this. Then why do we not discuss matters that are of great significance and importance?

Mr. Speaker, I just want to put on the record of this Parliament the importance of the right to vote and what we are doing here is in effect, not placing great emphasis on the right of the electorate to vote in local government elections. I do not think this Parliament should treat this in the way it is treating it today. I would ask the Government to indicate some time frame, but I want to say that I do not agree that you have to wait on these reforms before local government elections are held. As a matter of fact, there are some councillors who—in my constituency, for example, there is a particular councilor who is not functioning because he is not going back to be a Local Government Councillor.

And, I understand there are many in the same situation; they are not going back, therefore, the people are being affected with representation and we cannot have a situation in which the whole purpose and objectives of local government are being defeated and we are saying that we are going to continue to postpone local government election.

Let me make it clear that this Order or a report did not prevent us from having local government elections, so this step was not necessary. In other words, it is not preventing us from having local government elections. Under the law, as I understand it, when the report comes to Parliament it does not have to accept everything the Elections and Boundaries Commission says.

So even if the Government wanted to change this and fit it in line with its reform, the Government from 2006, 2007, 2008, or whatever year, could have fitted whatever it wanted to do and come with a Bill today, or earlier or tell this country what is the time frame, but I cannot support any decision which will give the Government a blanket to say that whatever time the reform takes to be achieved or discussed, there is going to be a postponement of local government election.

Mr. Speaker, the United Nations in dealing with the right to vote and in Article 21, made it quite clear that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country and that would include national government and local government. And when persons are denied their right to elect councillors, they are in effect, denied the right to participatory democracy.

I notice the hon. Minister said in closing that the Government is committed to participatory democracy. How could it be if on the one hand you are postponing local government election, you are talking about reforms and this Order, but you are not telling the electorate what time frame they will be given to exercise their vote.

So the issue here is really not whether during the UNC administration this sum or that sum of money was given. That is not the issue. The issue is that there were different economic times, and that is not a relevant factor. The issue really is: Is local government in Trinidad and Tobago today serving the needs of the people? "Is it right to say that the Government has to have these reforms in order for people drains to get fix, people road to get fix and for people to get water?"

It cannot be right that we could spend "plenty money" on Summit, on aeroplane, on chartered flights and public relations of the Government, but ladies old and young have to put pails on their head to get water. People do not have roads and Members of Parliament have to take moneys from their pockets and beg the private sector to fix roads and drains.

As a matter of fact, in the area of Ramdial Trace in Tortuga in the constituency of Tabaquite, drains have to be fixed by the MPs and villagers having fund-raising projects and donations of culverts by the business community. Roads in Springville, Claxton Bay, Tortuga, and parts of Gasparillo had to be fixed by way of contributions from the private sector and the constituents raising money.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to announce that in the entire area of Guaracara, Whiteland, Tabaquite, Brasso and other areas of Gasparillo and Poona, we cannot get the roads fixed. I will not deal with the primary roads today because we are not dealing with that, we cannot get the secondary roads fixed. We begged, and we decided that we cannot wait any

longer. As a matter of fact, whenever it rains, children have to stay home and parents sometimes have to stay home. I am begging the Ministry of Local Government to fix the drainage and that has not worked. So we are getting donations of backhoes, tractors, material and we are fixing them ourselves. The people of Tabaquite are going to be their own local government.

We have tried the local corporation and I am not blaming the councillors, they have tried their best. I have had discussions with the Chief Executive Officer, I have had discussions with the Chairman of the Regional Corporation, I have tried everything in the book and it is not working.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I know at one time, the hon. Prime Minister was saying that local government would be so reformed that it will play an important part in the fight against crime. There will be community orientation in the fight against crime and it would play a very important part. So I have tried to get the local corporation involved, they said they do not have resources and crime is a major problem in my constituency and I am sure in other regions of Trinidad and Tobago.

I do not think we need White Paper, Green Paper and yellow paper or any kind of paper again; we have had enough paper. As a matter of fact, the amount of paper we have had for local government reform, probably all the forests in Trinidad and Tobago have been used. As a matter of fact, the amount of paper I have seen, I do not think that this country should accept anymore paper.

Mr. Speaker, I have a report from a community based organization (CBO), it is called "Citizens' Plan to Transform Local Government, Create Community Well-being". And one Sheila Solomon, who was co-ordinator of that on August 27, 2003 conducted consultations throughout Trinidad and Tobago and came up with a report which had the consensus of the civil society groups; politicians, councillors, village councillors, et cetera. I will not read at length from it, but it has important recommendations and it shows that local government, even administratively a lot can be done without legislative reform to improve it and make it really serve the local community.

I want to deal with the part addressing community crime prevention and I want the Government to understand that even without all these reforms that the Minister of Local Government and the Government can cause local government to play an important fight against crime.

Under the Municipal Police Act, there is the power to appoint community police officers for these corporations. These police officers administratively can

work with the Commissioner of Police so it is not a police service on its own, but these Municipal Police Officers would work with the community, know the community, become involved in the community, would be able to get intelligence from it and this would be an important people network in the fight against crime.

At the present time when a murder or a serious crime occurs in the community, most of the people do not see the crime and do not know who the criminals are but they have the names of persons who are suspects because in most of these communities you would have people who are aligned with certain illegal activities, and there will be situations where they would know some persons who can be suspected, but they are afraid to give it to the police because they believe that some police officers are working with the criminals.

**4.00 p.m.**

Therefore, if in every community you can develop a situation in which these municipal police officers would gain the confidence of the people in the community and they would work with the community, then you would be able to get names and then you have the investigations done by the police and whatever else you can do you would be able to detect some of the crime.

These communities are all facing the attack because crime is being committed in their communities and when they go to the police, they are not getting response. Why are we waiting on reforms on White Paper, et cetera, to make a difference to local representation in the fight against crime? I would want the Minister of Local Government, in her winding up, to tell us, one: Does the Government intend to postpone local government election no matter how long it takes for these reforms to be effected? Secondly, since the Minister is committed to participatory democracy and modernization of local government, is she going to announce some plan that the Government would have to do an assessment of the communities, whether it is UNC communities, or PNM communities, the communities which most need attention at this stage for local governance? I talk about roads, drains and the other matters I talked about, and find resources in order to give them local governance.

And thirdly, has the Ministry of Local Government or has the Government together with the Ministry of Local Government, looked at any plan whereby the local government ministry and the municipal corporations can assist in the fight against crime? If it has done that, why it is that in a matter of a week or months we could not have had and we cannot have a situation in which the municipal police officers can play a vital role to assist the regular police service in the fight against crime?

These are important questions which I would ask the Minister to answer, because underlying all my submissions I find it unacceptable that we could treat the right to vote with such contempt. I think that the Government has a responsibility to demonstrate to the national community that their right to vote to elect their local representatives of their choice, is a sacrosanct right and it cannot be whittled away by excuses or by plans of the Government to effect local government reform.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Harry Partap** (*Cumuto/Manzanilla*): Mr. Speaker, on the Motion before us, my colleagues have referred to the disparity in the allocation of the electoral districts in the various regional corporations and municipalities. While the law sets out the formula for creating the electoral districts, there is no such stipulation with regard to polling divisions, as far as I am aware, in creating polling divisions. There is a law that relates to the electoral districts. I am not aware, so I stand corrected, that there is any in relation to creating polling divisions. We believe that the present formula for creating electoral districts must change, because they do not reflect what is necessary, at least in terms of numbers, to make an electoral district manageable by those who will represent them. The same happens in relation to the polling divisions and I just want to use the situation of the Sangre Grande Regional Corporation to demonstrate this disparity, this inequality in relation to the polling divisions. Polling divisions are carved out of the electoral districts, as you are aware, and what we have here in Sangre Grande, we have Cumuto/Tamana with 6,872 electors and you have 12 polling divisions. So the highest number of electors in the Cumuto/Tamana electoral district is 1,040 while the lowest is 253. That is in Cumuto/Tamana.

In the Manzanilla electoral district you have 5,633 electors; you have 13 polling divisions. The highest number of electors in a polling division there is 814 while the lowest is 218. Then you have Sangre Grande Northeast with 6,406 electors, but you have nine polling divisions. The highest number of electors in one of the nine is 1,901 while the lowest is 228. Sangre Grande Northeast, 5,905; 12 polling divisions. The highest number of electors in that polling division and that electoral district is 678, the lowest, 411. And we go down the line and we come to Valencia, the electoral district of Valencia. In Valencia, you have 6,207 electors but you have four polling divisions—6,207, but you have for polling divisions.

The highest number of electors in one of the four polling divisions is 3,063. The lowest is 68. The point I am making is that for the election itself, the logistics for an election make it quite difficult for preparation.

**Mr. Imbert:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for giving way. I thought I just heard him say there is a polling division with 6,000 electors in it—a polling division? Because that is what you said. You meant a district.

**Mr. H. Partap:** A district. It is 6,207. That is a district, yes.

So what we are saying is that I think that the Elections and Boundaries Commission should review this. I do not know if you have to do it through legislation or if the Parliament has to take the initiative. But if Parliament has to take the initiative, I think it should, because in Valencia it is more difficult, really for organizing so as to give the electors in that polling division an ample opportunity to express their preference in voting 3,063 electors in one polling division—

**Mr. Imbert:** “Yuh gone back to the polling division.”

**Mr. H. Partap:** No, no. That is a polling division, yes, and not an electoral district. It is 3,063. It is polling division 2185, if you need to know, in Valencia.

So the Elections and Boundaries Commission should look at this. Then the lowest there in that same electoral district, is 68. So that is one of the points I want to make this evening and I hope that if we have to take action, we should; if it is the Elections and Boundaries Commission, they must do their job and revise this.

Reference had been made by the distinguished Member for Princes Town North about PNM shadow MPs usurping the role of the elected Members of Parliament in their constituencies.

**Mr. Imbert:** You sure there is such a thing as a shadow Minister?

**Mr. H. Partap:** You may say so. You may say there is no such thing as a shadow MP. You are quite right; there is no provision for that in the law.

**Mr. Imbert:** It does not exist.

**Mr. H. Partap:** Then why are you doing it? *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Imbert:** We do not do it.

**Mr. H. Partap:** Yes, you are doing it. Do not tell me you do not do it. And of course the rejoinder by the Prime Minister had been, he said, if the elected MPs do not do their jobs, the population must find others to do it for them. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. H. Partap:** I will tell you who the shadow is in Cumuto/Manzanilla. I will tell you. Mr. Speaker, there were two other speakers, but now I have to include a third, so three people across there are surprised. They say. “We do not put shadow MPs.” That is not true. Your surprise is misplaced. You have been

putting shadow MPs in constituencies where you have UNC MPs. I will tell you something. You have changed three shadow MPs in Cumuto/Manzanilla. *[Interruption]* I hear on this side that in Mayaro you changed two. You changed three in Cumuto/Manzanilla. The last one was the Attorney General who was fired by the Prime Minister about two weeks ago. So they fire the shadow. What we are saying is, I guess you may have to change many more in Cumuto/Manzanilla. *[Interruption]*

The Minister of Local Government had been blaming the local government bodies, the regional corporations, particularly, the regional corporations run by the UNC. They have been blaming them for the lack of delivery of services and they have been using an in-house bogus poll to say that goods and services are not satisfactorily distributed or delivered by the local government bodies. The PNM has been doing that. They have a bogus poll; an in-house bogus poll telling them that the local government bodies do not—

**Mr. Imbert:** Is Ramnath say that.

**Mr. H. Partap:** You cannot ask the local government bodies to deliver services if you do not provide them with the funding.

**Mr. Imbert:** “They full ah money.”

**Mr. H. Partap:** No, they do not have. They may have an allocation but that allocation is never translated into hard currency. It has not been. So you may have allocation but the regional corporations do not get all the money that is required. Therefore, you cannot blame them, really, if you are reducing their budgets. If you are not giving them the money, how could you blame them? But what you are doing, you are providing resources to those special companies. You are providing resources to special companies, to CEPEP, to URP, to do what the regional corporations are entitled to do by law. That is what you are doing. In other words, you are emasculating the local bodies and maybe this is the reason you continue to postpone local government election, because you really have no interest in local government bodies. You do not want to decentralize; you do not want to give them that authority so that it would assist people. The local government bodies can do a lot to assist people, but they cannot if they do not have the resources.

**4.15 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I will give you an example of what happened in Sangre Grande. No Member of Parliament in the Opposition has access to the Rural Development Company. They cannot tell them what to do. *[Interruption]* Do not tell me that, tell the Government. That is not true. The PNM councillors can direct the Rural

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Development Company where to put projects. It is happening in Sangre Grande. I can talk for Sangre Grande. Do you know what they have done? I have raised this matter at some point. They have rehabilitated a 100 metre road which is 300 feet, 100 feet, 300 metres or thereabouts, at a cost of \$1.2 million, meaning that it costs \$4,000 per foot to pave that. I can carry you there.

These special purpose companies are doing the same work that the regional corporations are entitled to do by law, but at a higher cost. I think it is time that the Government take a look at that again. If you are allowing the PNM councillors to identify projects for these companies, why not extend that same courtesy to the Members of Parliament in these areas? If that happens we can deliver or arrange or whatever for the RDC to deliver facilities to the people of our regions. The Minister of Local Government may want to set the record straight, if she has to. The ministry has instructed the regional corporations not to fix any roads.

**Hon. Manning:** You believe that?

**Mr. H. Partap:** We cannot get the roads repaired. I believe it because I am not seeing anything happening in the roads in the constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla. There is the St. Marie Emmanuel Road which I will raise at a later stage in this Parliament. We took a delegation to meet the Minister; she gave all the assurances that it would be done and it is more than seven months and not a single thing has been done. We are saying to give the Rural Development Company the authority to fix the roads if you give them all the funding. I am sure that they will do a good job. It may be expensive but at least the people will get the roads fixed.

We are seeing that the Government is taking away all the resources and powers from the regional corporations and handing them to companies that maybe, you do not monitor. If you are monitoring these companies, no company could tell me that they will repair a 100 metre road for \$1.2 million. If you are having reform—I do not know if I can believe you—because if I go back to the *Hansard* of Monday July 09, 2007, when the former Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Affairs, Jarrette Narine was piloting a motion for the extension of the life of the regional corporations, he said, “The reason for having this extension is that the local government authority has embarked on an exercise of reforming local government.” That was three years ago. I understand that you started it in 2004. Do something! You need to call elections so that people can exercise their franchise. If you have to do reform, do it at some later stage because from what I am seeing, “no reform comin”.

Thank you.

**The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning):** Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. I also thank the Members on the other side and this side who entered the debate. It was indeed a very lively and emotional debate as Members feel how we in the Ministry of Local Government feel because local government speaks to the issues at the grass roots level, the irritants mainly where our citizens and burgesses complain to us almost on a daily basis.

I also particularly thank my colleagues on this side because you saw the difference in most of them or all of them who spoke as they came out of the local government system. They speak from a knowledge base having been in the system, working for it and understanding the problems and challenges.

We on this side nurture our young ones until, as you see, they become more mature politicians sitting on this side of the House. It serves for good democracy. I start with the first Member who spoke. Unfortunately, he is not here, my — favourite Member on the other side, the representative for Princes Town North. I took note of the statements made by the Member for Princes Town North who spoke about inequity in the system, discrimination and the need for equity. Suffice it to say, that one of the reasons we are very much involved in the reform of the local government system is because we, too, understood the inequities in the system. We are in full agreement with what he is saying that this system has been in place for a long while and they have been tinkering with the system throughout the history of local government.

Sometime in the 1970s when the NAR was in place, they attempted to do something a bit more fundamental, but yet, in the '80s when they were in office, not fundamental enough. Much of what has been done by them has not been implemented because they did not go through the process along the way. Therefore, I want to agree with him that there are inequities in the system. I want to assure him that the reform will deepen and widen the process to ensure that we minimize the inequities.

Minister Roger Joseph, the representative for La Horquetta/Talparo, explained it well when he attempted to show the use of the funds and spreading them across to ensure that we meet the needs of the representatives. It does not matter where they are from, whether this side or the other side. We looked at the disbursement of funds on a more equitable basis; the needs of the regions, boroughs and cities and the funds were given in that particular way. As we deepen and widen the reform we are looking at a new approach to how we do business. It cannot be business as usual. No matter how we tinker, whatever we do with it, we are still getting the same results.

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The Member for Tabaquite hit the nail on the head. We still have problems to ensure that primary and secondary roads are fixed; garbage collection takes place efficiently and effectively; drains are well fixed in primary and secondary road areas and markets are repaired and built. Those challenges exist; they have existed for a long while and would continue to exist unless we change how we do business.

**Hon. Member:** Put Calder Hart in charge.

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** I want to assure the Members on the other side, that in the reform that is coming we are attempting to do exactly that. We have taken note of the fact that people are dissatisfied. As the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla said, we do have a poll. The poll has agreed with all that has been said on that side, that a number of people are dissatisfied. Over 33 per cent of the burgesses surveyed talked about the poor condition of roads; 27 per cent talked about poor drainage and flooding conditions; 49 per cent spoke to environmental issues and the fact that the environment is not clean; 26 per cent talked about local government being very poorly managed. About 46 per cent of the people we interviewed did not know their councillors. They did not know who represented them and what they were doing for them. [*Interruption*] That is bad.

At the end of the day, our people on the ground are saying to us that local government provides a poor service. People are uninterested and there is great dissatisfaction. Fifty-five per cent of them believe that local government wastes taxpayers' money. Because of the widespread dissatisfaction, we have sat down as a ministry and went back since 2004, collecting data and doing analysis to come to some agreement as to how we need to do business differently. We cannot do it the same way. Therefore, because of that [*Interruption*] there is a need for both Houses to come together to improve the local government system. As we bring the reform on the table we would be asking them to join with us and say to us that they are in agreement with what we are doing and to help us in the field to implement what has to be done. [*Interruption*] No. Action time now. We are now about to implement. [*Interruption*]

Another Member on the other side called for the enshrinement of the local government system in the Constitution. We would also be considering that. He asked for the establishment of facilities to provide birth certificates and drivers' licences, et cetera. As a matter of fact, at this point in time the Ministry of Public Administration is putting kiosks in the area. We will also be looking at that. We are talking about the virtual town hall and the fact that soon we would be able to stay at home and access information on the local government system from the computer. We would be able to pay rates and taxes.

**Mr. Speaker:** The House is suspended for tea. We will resume at 5.00 p.m.

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

**5.00 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I now want to speak to the representative for Caroni Central, who, in his statement, spoke about unspent balances and gave the impression to this honourable House that we were requesting the spending of unspent balances in a very illegal way. I want to put on the record of this House that we too had legal counsel and that our legal counsel spoke to the fact that, in that particular document, the Act stated that the general improvement of municipalities could be used to spend the money in different ways. Based on that advice from our legal counsel, in the first instance, we told all the regional corporations what our legal advice was and then we asked them to consider spending some of the funding they had in the unspent balances for the development of regional area plans.

That was important for us because we see the local area and regional plans as the foundation for the development of the new approach to local government. We believe if we can get our regional corporations, cities and boroughs involved in local area and regional planning, we would have a platform for development. All this we will explain in detail as the reform is laid on the table. We would use these local area and regional plans to fund development. No longer would we go into the Ministry of Finance and to Parliament with no plan—in an ad hoc way—to build this and to develop this, but we will have in place a local area plan, a regional plan in the first instance and then we would go to the Ministry of Finance saying this is our regional plan, the cost is so much, could we get funding over the next so many years to develop the regional plans.

I need to say that it has started. We have at this time almost 20 firms in the regions speaking to the corporations, doing the research and involving the people, so that we can develop local area plans.

The representative for Tabaquite spoke about participation—how we can get the participation of the people. That is how we will get it. They are at this time—and I am going to give you a good example of Sangre Grande where the development plan has been completed. There is a plan approved by Cabinet and they are using that plan to go almost from community to community. They have gone to about 43 with that development plan saying: This is your plan; what do you think of it?

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By doing that, they have been able to get the communities to understand where they want to go and to get involved. People would agree on what they want and, therefore, sign off the plan. It is really a charter and agreement between the people involved in the planning and the implementation and development of the plan.

The plan for the Sangre Grande area is one of eco-tourism. The turtle watch that is happening right now and all the eco-tourism activities taking place have come out of that plan that they are working with the people to put in place. So there is participation and involvement in what is happening in the area. That is going to be replicated in every region. Port of Spain, San Fernando and Princes Town have started, as the consultants are engaging the people to participate in the delivery of services within their own area. So it is not right, Member for Caroni Central, to say that it sounds like we are doing something strange in Chaguanas. We also got an opinion that says that we can do it, and we have been doing it.

Member for Caroni Central, in asking to develop facilities in an area, you have to be careful that you are not replicating what is being done at another level. Social development in Chaguanas may be better lodged in the Ministry of Social Development where the experts are and that Ministry is expanding in its social programme throughout the country. We are not being discriminatory; we are not being evil, as the Member for Caroni Central would think, but we are trying to be not ad hoc in the way we do business, but logical, scientific and strategic as we pull together a plan with a basis that speaks to something.

I come to the representative for Tabaquite. I commend him for his contribution because he hit the core when he spoke of the right to vote. We fully agree with you that citizens have a right to vote, but we also believe that we just do not vote and wait for the next three years to vote again. Between times of voting, the citizen has a responsibility to be involved in the democratic process. When we speak to postponing the election and getting things in place, we feel we need to support the citizen to get to the right place. We are in full agreement, but we feel there should be more responsibility and that sacred right will then mean something for the citizen.

The Member spoke to the roads, the abattoirs, markets. The planning process will engage the citizen to get it right. We believe that the regional corporations are not efficient and effective enough. We are putting in place instruments that are not as bureaucratic as the regional corporations. We are trying to put in place special purpose companies that do things quicker and without that red tape.

Since I have been in the Ministry, there has been a market to be built in San Juan being tendered for. It has been to the Central Tenders Board for a year; we

have to wait for it to come out, get all the agreements and then to be able to start construction. I have been there almost one year and a half and it is still going through the process. We feel that if we can go to the special purpose companies which could assist us to do things quicker, we could get the business going faster. That is why we are doing things differently; the bureaucracy and the red tape are not getting the job done.

I go back to the polls that talk to the fact that the service is poor, slow, unsatisfactory and that there is a sense that people working in local government are not interested in doing what they have to do.

**Mr. Maharaj SC:** Would the hon. Minister tell this honourable House, assuming but admitting that we accept all that, if the Government has put a time frame for the reforms to be completed so that the people would have a right to vote in local government election?

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** Reform is a very long process. It could take years for the process to be completed. To me, reform never finishes because, as you go on, you always reach a stage where you have to re-examine and go on. There is no time frame at this time. We can tell you that we have a five-year or 10-year plan, but it is a work in progress.

At this time, the planners are out there putting together the local area and regional plans, and based on what comes in—should be coming in before the end of the year—we will then start building on that. It will be phased. I cannot give you a time yet because the plans are not in. I was told at a meeting this week that almost every planner in the country is occupied because they are outside in the local government areas developing local area and regional plans, for the first time in the history of this country, going to report back to us and then we have a platform in which development can take place and we can move forward. I cannot give you a time frame.

**Mr. Maharaj SC:** Would the Minister say, therefore, that she would not rule out another five years?

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** Another five years for election or for development of plans?

**Mr. Maharaj SC:** Another five years for local government election.

**Sen. The Hon. H. Manning:** I do not call local government election. [*Desk thumping*] I cannot tell you when it would be, but I will tell you that the reform has started and that we need to change the laws. We need to have the policy that is

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sound and those things are almost finished. I am sure we can bring the policy document to Parliament soon because it will go to Cabinet shortly. The laws are almost completed and we move again.

At the end of the day, I am sure you will be pleased with what we would come up with and all of us would be involved in making sure that this country is a better country for the improvement of local government.

Before I come to an end, I need to let you know that there has been a change in the title of the legislation. I have been asked to let you know that it is as follows:

*Be it resolved* that the draft of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Order, 2009 be approved subject to minor amendments to the name of the parent Act wherever it appears. Such references should read:

Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government and Tobago House of Assembly) Act and consequently the title of this Order should be cited as the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government and Tobago House of Assembly) Order, 2009.

I beg to move.

*Question, on amended motion, put and agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That the draft of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Order, 2009 be approved subject to minor amendments to the name of the parent Act wherever it appears. Such references should read:

Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government and Tobago House of Assembly) Act and consequently the title of this Order should be cited as the Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government and Tobago House of Assembly) Order, 2009.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn to Wednesday, June 24, 2009, which is the deadline for the Motion to negative the Deputy Police Commissioner Orders and that is what will be done on that day.

**5.15 p.m.**

**Installation of Security Cameras  
(Chaguanas Borough Corporation)**

**Dr. Hamza Rafeeq** (*Caroni Central*): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Despite all the pronouncements we have heard from the Government, crime remains the number one issue facing the population.

Today, I want to deal, very briefly, with what is happening in Chaguanas and to ask the Government if they would take the advice and install some of the security cameras, which they bought recently for the Summit of the Americas, in Chaguanas.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, crime continues to increase all over Trinidad and Tobago and Chaguanas is no exception. As you know, Chaguanas is the fastest growing town in Trinidad and Tobago, both commercially and in terms of residential areas. On a daily basis, there are between 75,000 and 120,000 persons passing through Chaguanas and on Fridays and Saturdays, the numbers are a lot more. Criminal activities take place in Chaguanas, as everywhere else, but I can tell you that a fair number of these criminal activities are not even reported. There are certain areas in Chaguanas which are considered as hot spots, such as Busy Corner and some other areas in Chaguanas. On a daily basis, there are robberies and other criminal activities taking place in these areas.

As you know, in Chaguanas and the surrounding areas, seven young women have been kidnapped and murdered and four taxi drivers have also been murdered. A few of these cases are now before the courts. It may be that if the security cameras were there before, they would have been able to pick up some of these activities and just maybe the lives of these people could have been spared.

In Chaguanas, there is a shortage of policemen. My understanding is that in the Chaguanas district there is a shortage of approximately 100 policemen in that area. In the borough of Chaguanas the complement is 51. The borough is supposed to have 51 policemen and they have nine out of the 51.

Sometime ago they had put in Chaguanas the eye in the sky. That remained for sometime, but there was nobody to man it and it has been removed. That also is not contributing in any positive way.

During the Summit of the Americas, our understanding is that the Government spent approximately \$10 million with Israeli technology, installing cameras in the East-West Corridor around the airport, Port of Spain and San Fernando. By the way, recently I saw a report where these cameras may not be working. I do not

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know. I saw a report. Maybe when the Minister speaks she would address that. Cameras were installed in different areas and in Chaguanas and all the borough is asking is that eight to 10 cameras be installed in Chaguanas. This, we feel, will go a long way in assisting and preventing some of the criminal activities which are taking place in that area.

Recently, I heard the Minister of National Security himself saying that the cameras are an important tool in the fight against crime. If in fact that is so, then I think it will be able to help in the Chaguanas area, because that is a growing town and a lot of criminal activities are taking place there.

Chaguanas used to be a very nice place to walk, do business and even to live, it is no longer so with the number of criminal activities that are taking place. I want to ask the Government to seriously consider this request to install eight to 10 cameras in the Chaguanas area, in addition to whatever else you are going to do to prevent crime in the area, so that the people can live, work and go about their legitimate business in peace and security. Thank you very much.

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security (Hon. Donna Cox):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to address hon. Members of the House in response to the Motion moved by Member for Caroni Central.

In every effort to bolster the police fight against crime, Cabinet, on March 14, 2005, approved the acquisition of a closed circuit television network in Port of Spain and San Fernando. The Government felt that the CCTV network should form part of a package of measures to alleviate the crime situation by equipping law enforcement with the capability to monitor public areas more effectively, increase intelligence gathering opportunities and also preventing street crime.

Following Government's directive to implement the network, a decision was made to utilize firms with experience in deploying CCTV network in metropolitan cities with a population greater than 50,000. As such, firms from the United States, the United Kingdom and Venezuela were invited to tender. Mr. Speaker and hon. Members, a request for proposals was developed and sent to six firms in the United States, United Kingdom and Venezuela. Unfortunately, after the July 2005 bombings in the United Kingdom and the subsequent successful use of the CCTV images, several major cities issued tenders for CCTV networks and only one of the shortlisted firms submitted a tender, but this tender did not conform to the tendering criteria. As a result, this tendering challenge delayed the implementation process.

Mr. Speaker, to ensure no further delay, the Ministry of National Security's technical personnel took responsibility to implement the programme and as a

result began the deployment of the CCTV network in February 2008. Benefitting from the lessons learned during the implementation of a temporary system for Cricket World Cup 2007, the Ministry of National Security launched a pilot phase of the CCTV network.

For Carnival 2008, the Ministry of National Security deployed a temporary CCTV network consisting of 18 cameras in Port of Spain, including nine cameras installed by the Ministry of National Security and four cameras from a private donor and five analog cameras from the Public Transport Service Corporation's network at City Gate. This provided the Ministry with an understanding of the intricacies involved in the deploying and monitoring of these types of networks.

Additionally, the Ministry of National Security worked closely with TSTT for connectivity and successfully installed several day/night CCTV cameras to complement security at the April 2008 Jazz Festival in Tobago. The Ministry of National Security commenced the pilot programme in April 2008. To date, 74 IP cameras, pan tilt zoom and fixed cameras have been installed in Port of Spain and San Fernando. Forty-seven cameras have been installed in strategic locations. I must say to the Member for Caroni Central, these cameras are working.

Given the success of CCTV network to date, the initiative would be expanded in consultation with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. The police have been engaged in the process of identifying the various towns and roadways where the cameras would be needed. It must be noted that there are also cameras installed in several towns and city centres which are owned and operated by private entities.

In support of the Summit of the Americas, 389 IP CCTV cameras were installed through a contract with TSTT. The installation of these cameras began February 2009. To date, 330 have been installed in Trinidad and 30 initial cameras have already been installed in Tobago. It should be noted that these cameras are currently being utilized by law enforcement in the fight against crime and they represent a critical legacy item of the Summit. It would bring the number of cameras in the nation's CCTV network to 510. The cameras would also provide an additional layer of security for the nation's critical infrastructure.

After the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference, several of these cameras would be redeployed to other cities and boroughs identified by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. This network has 45 storage of video footage capacity and a secondary storage location. Additionally, all video storage would be archived.

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On July 03, 2008, the Acting Police Commissioner, Mr. James Philbert, and Acting Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Gilbert Reyes, and representatives of the Ministry of National Security attended a community meeting on crime held in Felicity by the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas West, Mr. Jack Warner. At that meeting the residents submitted a petition signed by 5,604 residents, which was handed over to a representative of the Ministry of National Security by Imam Rasheed Karim. The petition requested that a police post be erected within 21 days at either of two sites: the corner of Cacandee Road and Petersfield Main Road, or at the corner of Pierre Road and Cacandee Road. However, after careful analysis of the areas, the Acting Commissioner of Police, Mr. James Philbert requested three CCTV cameras for the area. These cameras are to be installed soon, on the direction of the Commissioner of Police.

Thank you for this opportunity to present the facts on the implementation of the CCTV network in Trinidad and Tobago to this honourable House.

Please allow me to once again voice my support for all the law enforcement agencies, divisions, task force and units which are working assiduously to address and arrest the crime problem within Trinidad and Tobago, so as to make this country a safe and secure place for citizens and visitors alike.

I thank you.

### **Repair of Roads in Cumuto/Manzanilla (Government's Failure)**

**Mr. Harry Partap** (*Cumuto/Manzanilla*): Mr. Speaker, the matter is the failure of the Government to rehabilitate, repair and repave the St. Marie

Emmanuel Road in Cumuto, the North Oropouche Road, the Fishing Pond Road and the Guaico Tamana Road.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that I am raising this matter. I have raised this matter with respect to several other roads in relation to the Cumuto/Manzanilla constituency over the past months.

The St. Marie Emmanuel Road in Cumuto would need \$7.8 million to repair. This is an estimate I got. I would not say where I got it, but that is the estimate I received. The North Oropouche—[*Interruption*] we have to do that, because you are not doing it. We have to do it. The North Oropouche Road will cost \$7 million; the Fishing Pond Road, \$8 million and the Guaico Tamana Road, \$7.8 million. If we had the money, we would have fixed it, but we do not have the money.

These are main roads linking to rural villages, which are populated with law-abiding citizens whose patience is growing thin. These roads are in a deplorable condition, with large potholes and bad drainage. The bad drainage has created crevices in the roads, which amount to drains. They really are a torture for residents.

I am told that these four roads can be repaired, rehabilitated and paved for a total of \$32 million, which is \$8 million less than what it will cost UDeCott to install the proposed \$14 million six-storey television screen on the eastern side of the new Board of Inland Revenue Tower. Remember you spent over \$1 billion in the Summit of the Americas, while people there cannot travel or conduct their business in some measure of comfort.

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

Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. Minister may—as he did in the newspaper—say that \$45 million was spent on roads in Cumuto/Manzanilla. [*Interruption*] That is what you said, and that was on the newspaper. I hope the Minister is not talking about the millions of dollars spent to provide a hot mix road leading to a 100-acre mega farm by the former Treasurer of the PNM, Mr. Andre Monteil, at Sin Verguena Road. [*Interruption*] I do not know how much money was spent. I said millions of dollars were spent on hot fix leading to the man's farm. The other roads which were developed are not benefiting the people of Cumuto/Manzanilla.

Let us take the St. Marie Emmanuel Road. There are piles of letters that I have sent to both the Minister of Works and Transport and the Minister of Local Government, but we did not get any response from them. That road has been reduced to a mud track, and there are over 800 persons who use that road on a daily basis in that area. They have to go through a mud track to get out.

During the 2007 general election, they put the PNM candidate for the Cumuto/Manzanilla in a backhoe, and they had him driving through the road saying that it was going to be fixed, and nothing was done on that road since then. [*Interruption*] He was sitting on the backhoe driving through the area saying that the road will be fixed. Do you think they could fool the people again? The Member for La Brea will know. He had to hide in the backseat of a car to get out from Point Fortin. Anyway, that is not what I am talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I led a delegation to the Minister of Local Government office, and she received us graciously. She gave us her sympathetic understanding, and she made a promise that the Sangre Grande Regional Corporation would be asked to fix the road. That was more than seven months ago, and absolutely nothing was done on the road.

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[MR. PARTAP]

*Friday 12 June 2009*

Mr. Speaker, the people are fed up. They are anxious to get into Port of Spain and go to the Minister's office to lodge a complaint, and I am not going to stop them.

I understand that the Minister of Local Government has ordered all the corporations not to fix the roads. The roads have been put under an authority. I am saying to do something now to assist these people.

The residents in the North Oropouche Road and the Fishing Pond Road are frustrated. They have protested and they have made appeals. Some patching was done after they protested, but that was not good enough. That road which leads into the Fishing Pond Road—North Oropouche Road leads into the Fishing Pond Road and it goes into what is called the Turtle Village—there was a high profile launching of that Turtle Village, but not a single visitor can go there. The road is like a “bocas”. They want to develop tourism and they are developing Turtle Village, but people are not going to visit the village if the road is bad. That is a simple thing. I am asking you to please fix the road. If you do not fix the road, it means that over 2,000 citizens in that area will continue to suffer.

The other matter is with respect to the Guaico Tamana Road. The Guaico Tamana Road is a 24 kilometre road. The road was repaved under the UNC, and the state of the road now is extremely bad, because of the lack of maintenance. The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources gave out contracts to cut the teak and no provision was made to rehabilitate the road after these contractors did havoc to the road.

I am asking the Minister to take cognizance of that and do something and act quickly on these four roads. There are other roads that I am going to bring at some later stage in the life of this Parliament. The people are disturbed; they are fed up; they are frustrated; and they do not know what to do and who to turn to because they cannot get the road fixed. It may be a laughing matter for some Members across there, like the Member for Diego Martin Central, because the roads in his constituency are good. He should go down to Cumuto/Manzanilla and see the condition under which the rural people live. You are accustomed ignoring rural people. I want to tell you that we are not going to tolerate that. We will not tolerate it.

Mr. Speaker, thank you. [*Desk thumping*]

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Mr. Speaker, whenever the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla brings one of these Motions into this Parliament, it is very difficult to sit and listen to the untruths that emerge from the Member's mouth. The problem is that we have spent a little too much money in the

constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla. I was just doing some calculations, and contrary to the untruths uttered by the Member, we have not spent \$45 million—that is inaccurate and that was a mistake—but we have spent \$76 million on roads in the constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla during the period 2006—2009.

**Hon. Member:** That could never be true.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** That could never be true; well, I will give you the roads. On the Cumuto Road, between the 0—28 kilometre mark, we have spent \$3.8 million, and we have spent small amounts of money on the Eastern Main Road. Let us go to the local roads. This is the Ministry of Works and Transport doing this—spending moneys on roads for which we have no direct responsibility. We have spent on Bramble Alexander Trace and Dharsan Trace—these roads are in the constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla—\$3.3 million. We rehabilitated the Caratal Road at a cost of \$11.3 million. [*Interruption*] Okay, you have admitted that. On the Tamana Road, we spent \$7.8 million, and all of this was done in the last three years. On the Bon Air Road, we have spent \$7.8 million; on the Cunapo Southern Road—you see, it is infuriating. I drove in this constituency yesterday, so I know that all this work was done. This is infuriating. I passed and looked at the Bon Air Road yesterday. We have spent \$8.5 million rehabilitating the Bon Air Road. [*Desk thumping*] On the Guaico-Tamana Road, between the 0—17 kilometre mark, we have spent \$3.7 million. On Little Caura Road, we have spent \$4.4 million; on the Caigaul Road, \$1.3 million was spent on expenditure; the Fishing Pond Road, \$1 million; the North Manzanilla Road, \$3.8 million; Gajadhar Road, \$1.3 million; Plum Mitán Road between the 0—8 kilometre mark, \$2 million; St. Isidore Road, Balata Hill Road and Tamana Extension, \$7.9 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Member's contribution is an absolute and utter disgrace. We have spent \$76 million in that constituency on roads. I worked it out. If we take that \$76 million and put it in the 39 constituencies in Trinidad, we would have had to spend over \$3 billion on roads in Trinidad in order to get up to the average expenditure in Cumuto/Manzanilla.

You know, there are some ungrateful people in this country, and that Member of Parliament is one of the most ungrateful and untruthful Members of Parliament that I have ever come across. Nonsense! Absolute nonsense! Is the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla denying that Cumuto Road, Bramble Alexander Trace, Caratal Road, Tamana Hill Road, Bon Air Road, Cunapo Southern Road, Cunapo Junction Road, Guaico Tamana Road, Caigaul, Road, Little Caura Road, Fishing Pond Road, North Manzanilla Road, Gajadhar Road, Plum Mitán Road and St. Isidore Road are not in Cumuto/Manzanilla constituency? Nonsense! Absolute nonsense!

*Repair of Roads*  
[HON. C. IMBERT]

*Friday 12 June 2009*

Do you know what is beating me? When the UNC was in power, they did not spend a cent in the constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla. They spent all the money on some shed up at Piarco and wasted a set of money, and many people are in jail now, because of the squandermania on the Piarco Airport. They did not take the people's money and spend it on roads in their constituencies. *[Interruption]* You can tell them what you want. I know that the PNM Government has spent \$76 million in your constituency on roads in the last three years. I know that! You could say what you want.

Mr. Speaker, the other matter that bothers me about the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla is that the St. Marie Emmanuel Road is not a Ministry of Works and Transport Road. So, why did the Member send me this Motion? It is not my road. The Member is always doing that. The Ministry of Works and Transport has spent millions and millions of dollars on roads in the constituency of Cumuto/Manzanilla. Why do you not approach the Sangre Grande Regional Corporation? Do you know why? It is convenient for the Member to come into this Parliament and spread untruths. The Member needs to do his work and approach the Sangre Grande Regional Corporation. It is a local road. Be that as it may, and notwithstanding the fact that we have spent \$76 million in Cumuto/Manzanilla, we need to spend some money on other areas, for instance, the Member for Tabaquite needs some equity; the Member for Mayaro needs some equity; the Member for Arima needs some roads—I have been promising the Member for Chaguanas East some sidewalks for the longest while; the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo needs some roads; the Member for San Fernando West needs some roads; the Member for Laventille and the Member for St. Joseph need some roads.

What I would like to tell the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla is that we are going to deal with these roads in due course, but we have other people to deal with. He is too greedy. We are going to do some roads in Caroni Central, Siparia and Oropouche East, but you get enough and you would just have to wait until I fix everybody else.

Mr. Speaker, thank you. *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. Speaker I wanted to point out that the Motion on June 24, 2009 is a private Motion. It is going to be listed under "Private Business" and if the Opposition does not deal with the matter, it is going to lapse.

**5.45 p.m.**

**Dr. Rafeeq:** Yes, we will be dealing with the motion, as you mentioned, on Wednesday, and then Friday would be our Private Members' Day.

**Mr. Speaker:** My understanding is that the motion to negative the Police Service Order must be debated within a 40-day period. If it is not debated by the 24th, we would be outside of the 40-day period, okay.

I think what the Leader of the House is saying, is that he is treating that day, the 24th, as Private Members' Day. [*Crosstalk*] So, you will deal with that— [*Interruption*] Sorry? [*Interruption*] Yes, this is true, I mean, you can choose what is done. All I am saying is that if you do not do Mr. Subhas Panday's motion, then that motion would lapse. [*Interruption*] Well, that is a matter for you all to work out.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly*

*Adjourned at 5.46 p.m.*

#### WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*The following question was asked by Mr. Vasant Bharath (St. Augustine):*

#### **Fifth Summit of The Americas (Detailed List of Costs of Projects)**

- 71.** With respect to the recently concluded 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas, could the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:
- (a) provide a detailed list of all the infrastructure and development projects undertaken? and
  - (b) state the cost of each of these projects?

*The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:*

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** The hosting of the Fifth Summit of the Americas conference in Port of Spain during 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> April 2009 provided an opportunity for PATT to fast track some of its short and medium term goals. The goals of the Authority are identified as follows:

The long term plan is to construct a new port facility at Sea Lots, Port-of-Spain which will replace the existing port. However, in the medium term, that is, within the next three (3) years, it is anticipated that the Port will be fully restructured and transformed into three (3) separate business entities.

These entities are the Port of Port of Spain (PPOS), with responsibility for cargo operations; the Port of Spain Infrastructure Company (POSINCO), with responsibility for infrastructure maintenance and development as well as real

estate management; and the Trinidad and Tobago Inter-Island Transport Company Limited (TTIT) responsible for the Ferry Service and the Port of Scarborough. The focus of these business entities in the short term is ensuring continuity and sustainability.

To this end, a key objective of the cargo operations entity is to maximize use of the existing physical infrastructure facilities. In this regard, the engineering works which were done for the Fifth Summit of the Americas have contributed significantly to achieving this objective as stated hereunder:

- (i) Maintenance dredging of the Port of Spain Harbour at a cost of \$12.3 million to remove the routine build up of silt and restore it to its designed maximum depth of 12 metres. This was done to facilitate the safe berthing of large cruise and cargo vessels which presently call at the Port.
- (ii) Upgrade works to Sheds 3 and 4 at a cost of \$6.1 million have provided for a safe, secure and healthy environment with renewed capacity for handling increased break-bulk cargo business. Prior to the Summit, a major portion of the Sheds were occupied with old cargo.
- (iii) Major improvements/addition to the fenders, hydrants and bollards, which were long overdue, at a cost of approximately \$1.1 million, are important for accommodating/safe berthing of large cruise vessels which frequent the port. Given that two large cruise vessels would have been here for the Summit of the Americas it was prudent to undertake those works at that time.

POSINCO's key objective is to be in compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code in the interest of promoting international trade, particularly trade with the United States. In this regard, the security infrastructure which was acquired/installed for the Summit of the Americas at a cost of \$23.5 million has significantly raised the level of security at the port. The acquisitions and work done included:

- (i) Hand-held, baggage and passenger scanners, a Radio Frequency Personnel Identification (RFID) System, Systems for Detecting Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and emergency generators. Furthermore, the port is now equipped with a wireless network which had to be installed as a prerequisite for these systems. This has made possible far greater interconnectivity capabilities with end to end network access from anywhere on the port, extending from Caricom Wharf to Spectrum.

- (ii) Improved perimeter fencing now provides customers, visitors and employees with a greater sense of comfort and security whilst doing business with the port.
- (iii) Major repair works at a cost of \$0.3 million were carried out on the Port Authority's Motor Launch, Tarpon, which is now being used as a surveillance vessel and for routine checks on the navigational aids in the Harbour.

Some of the Port buildings along Dock Road have been in a dilapidated state for quite some time. It has always been the intention of the Port to correct this situation but due to financial constraints, major works were left undone. In an effort to improve the aesthetics of the Port, these buildings have been "spruced up", lands have been cleared of rubble/discarded materials, roads have been paved and lighting throughout the Port vastly improved at a price of \$8.2 million.

The hosting of the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas provided an opportunity for the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago to fast track some of its short and medium term goals.

The infrastructure and development projects undertaken by the Airports Authority are as follows:

<u>Project Name and Description</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Temporary Accreditation Centre, 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor Atrium	\$1.0Mn
Refurbishment of the carpark at the South Terminal	\$5.4Mn

There were other capital development works taking place at the Airports Authority contemporaneously with the Fifth Summit of the Americas. These works form part of the Airports Authority capital investment programme and include the following major infrastructural works:

- (i) In 2003 the Airports Authority developed a reuse concept for the South Terminal following its decommissioning in 2001. The main features of this development concept are:
  - (a) The conversion of the VIP and Diplomatic Reception Lounge into a Helicopter Passenger Terminal. Bristow Helicopters commenced operations in this facility in October 2003.
  - (b) Conversion of the Customs baggage hall into a two-storey modern office building to accommodate the Airports Authority Administration staff. The new Administration Centre is scheduled

for occupancy during August 2009. The cost of this project is \$32.8 million inclusive of furniture, fixtures and equipment.

- (c) In 2007 the Airports Authority engaged Avireal AG of Zurich to develop a Preliminary Design Adaptive Re-use Fixed Base of Operations (FBO) at Piarco South Terminal. The Reuse concept envisioned the efficient reuse of the South Terminal ramp area for General Aviation activity and was contingent on the removal of the existing finger pier dock and the renovation of the Immigration hall and Sterile Holding Bay (first floor) to handle General Aviation traffic and also accommodate commercial traffic, should the need arise.

The costs associated with these works are:

- i.* Demolition of Finger and reconstruction of the ramp area, South Terminal - \$15.4 million; and
  - ii.* Renovation to establish the FBO or Executive Jet Centre - \$54.0 million
- (d) Conversion of the BWIA passenger check-in facility and baggage makeup area into a Customs Bonded Air cargo facility. This area was leased to private enterprise for development.
- (ii) In 2006 the Authority engaged All Inclusive Project Development Services Limited to develop a Strategic Land Use Development Plan for the Piarco International Airport estate. This plan was approved by the Government in December 2008 and provides for the structured development of the Airport estate to cater for the aeronautical and non-aeronautical needs of the Piarco International Airport. The non-aeronautical requirements include the provision of infrastructure for Airport Hotel, conference facility and office sites, Meteorological services, and Maintenance Repair and Overhaul facilities.

The aeronautical requirements include the provision of reserve lands for future runways, taxiways, and parking ramps.

The Operations and Engineering department of the Authority conducted a review of the forecasted aircraft operations for the years 2009 and beyond and determined that additional ramp space was required to service the expected aircraft mix. An Airport Improvement Works 2009 was formulated for the provision of 12 remote ramp parking positions for Dash 8, B737 and B777 aircraft. The total acreage developed is 5.72.ha.

The cost of the ramp expansion is \$167 million.

- (iii) Rehabilitation of the Alpha Taxiway System: Due to the increasing occurrences of taxiway pavement distresses, the Authority engaged Roy D. McQueen and Associates, Inc. to perform extensive Non-Destructive testing of Airport pavements at Piarco and Crown Point. In October 2008 Roy D. McQueen and Associates, Inc. submitted an Airport Pavement Management Study Report which indicated that there were several areas of the Alpha Taxiway system, which were constructed during the period ending 2000, with a pavement strength varying between 19FBWT to 30FBWT. The strength required for the safe operation of the B777 aircraft, the design aircraft for Piarco is 68FBWT.

The contract price for the rehabilitation of the Alpha Taxiway system at Piarco International Airport is \$130.6 million.

- (iv) In October 2008 the Authority engaged Norman Shanks Associates International to conduct a Diagnostic of the security systems at Piarco and Crown Point International Airports. The report documented a total of 163 recommendations which were categorized into ICAO/STATE Compliance Requirements, Best Industry Practice and Good Practice. In accordance with the audit, the Authority has undertaken upgrades to:
- (a) Security screening equipment;
  - (b) Security Surveillance equipment;
  - (c) Upgrade the Access Control System;
  - (d) Upgrade the security fence line and main access gates; and
  - (e) Perimeter lighting.

The cost of this security system maintenance project is \$10.6 million.

*The following question was asked by Mr. Winston Peters (Mayaro):*

**Rural Development Company Limited  
(Details of Projects for Rio Claro/Mayaro Region)**

- 82.** With respect to the Rural Development Company Limited, and its operations in the Rio Claro/Mayaro region, could the Minister state:
- (a) all the projects undertaken from September 2007 to December 2008 and the estimated and actual costs incurred for each project?

- (b) all new projects proposed for 2009, the estimated cost of each, the scope of works to be done and the tentative date for commencement and completion?

*The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:*

**The Minister of Local Government (Sen. The Hon. Hazel Manning):** Mr. Speaker, the reply to question No. 82 is as follows:

- (a) For the period September 2007 to December, 2008 the following five (5) projects were undertaken in the Mayaro area by the Rural Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited at a total estimated cost of \$4,950,262.99 and a total actual cost of \$4,186,762.79.

No.	Project Nos.	Description	Contract Sum	Actual Cost
1	EDC 06/14 04	Drainage Upgrade and Sidewalk on Cunapo Southern Road from LP # 110 to LP # 115	TT\$ 795,113.45	TT\$ 783,232.57
2	EDC 06/14 05	Drainage Upgrade and Sidewalk on Cunapo Southern Road from LP#104 to LP#110 (400m)	TT\$1,473,529.50	TT\$ 726,552.75
3.	EDC 06/14 06	Drainage Upgrade and Sidewalk on Cunapo Southern Road from LP # 85 to LP # 91 (250m)	TT\$ 841,043.88	TT\$ 840,765.67
4	EDC 06/14 07	Drainage Upgrade and Sidewalk on Cunapo Southern Road from House # 387 to LP # A 74 (250m)	TT\$ 798,194.88	TT\$ 797,766.85

<b>No.</b>	<b>Project Nos.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Contract Sum</b>	<b>Actual Cost</b>
5	EDC 06/14 08	Rehabilitate Agricultural Access Road off Cunapo Southern Road at LP No. 144	TT\$1,042,381.2	TT\$1,038,444.95

*Written Answers to Questions*

*Friday, June 12, 2009*

The RDC has identified the under mentioned proposed project to be implemented in the Mayaro area in the fiscal year 2009—2010:

<b>No.</b>	<b>Project No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Tentative Date for Commencement</b>	<b>Tentative Date for Completion</b>
1	EDC 08/14 13	<p>Drainage Upgrade Works (270m) on Cunapo Southern Road (Eastern Side) from LP # 91 to LP #95</p> <p>Construction of reinforced concrete open box drains with reinforced concrete sidewalk 1.5m wide on grade, including backfill to both sides of the drain walls – 270m long x 0.8m wide x 0.8m high</p> <p>Construction of twelve (12) driveways – 4m long x 4m wide x 0.15m thick</p> <p>270m of 2” galvanized steel pipe pedestrian handrail</p> <p>Eight (8)WASA service connections</p>	TT\$ 2,000,000.00	January, 2010	August 2010