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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE

1.1 At a sitting held on February 10, 2004, the Senate agreed to the following Resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the government arrange, with appropriate permission, for full debates and the business of both Houses to be transmitted to the public through the electronic media (television and radio) in an equitable and discreetly edited form on fixed days of the week and with such transmission to begin before the end of the year 2004.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a Joint Select Committee of Parliament be appointed to consider and report on this matter so as to facilitate Government action before June 30, 2004”.

1.2 At a sitting of the Senate on February 10, 2004 the Senate appointed the following six members to serve on the Joint Select Committee:

Mr. Danny Montano

Ms. Christine Kangaloo

Mr. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid

Mr. Robin Montano

Mrs. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan

Mrs. Mary King

1.3 At a sitting held on Friday March 05, 2004, the House of Representatives agreed to the same resolution and appointed the following six (6) Members to serve on the Joint Select Committee:

Dr. Keith Rowley

Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis

Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis

Mr. Edward Hart

Mr. Ganga Singh

Dr. Roodal Moonilal

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

2.1 Your Committee held its First Meeting on Tuesday, March 16, 2004 and elected Dr. Keith Rowley as Chairman of the Committee. At that meeting your Committee also agreed that a quorum would constitute six (6) members with at least two (2) members from each House, including the Chairman. At its second meeting on April 20, 2004, the quorum was changed to four (4) members with at least two (2) members from each House, including the Chairman. (*See Attendance Record at Appendix I*).

SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE

3.1 Ms. Jean Sandy, Parliamentary Clerk II and Ms. Nataki Atiba, Parliamentary Clerk I were appointed to serve as Secretary and Assistant Secretary to the Committee.

MEETINGS

4.1 Your Committee held five (5) meetings on the following dates:

Tuesday March 16, 2004

Tuesday April 20, 2004

Tuesday May 04, 2004

Tuesday May 18, 2004

Tuesday June 22, 2004

(*See Minutes at Appendix II*).

4.2 Three (3) meetings were aborted due to a lack of quorum.

EXPERT ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE

5.1 As part of the process of deliberation your Committee sought the views of various stakeholders.

5.2 At the third meeting of the Committee held on May 4, 2004 one representative each from the Trinidad Guardian, Radio Toco and the National Broadcasting Network was in attendance. Discussions at this meeting were followed up by written submissions from the Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MATT), Trinidad Guardian and the Government Information Service.

5.3 The Clerk of the House, the Clerk of the Senate and the Information Systems Specialist of the Parliament were invited to attend the fourth meeting of the Committee held on May 18, 2004.

5.4 Your Committee reviewed documentation on the precedents set in other Commonwealth Parliaments where proceedings of Parliament are currently televised. Your Committee also noted the recommendations contained in the *Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament appointed to consider and report on all aspects relating to the Broadcasting and Televising of the Proceedings of Parliament* which was established in 1989.

ISSUES

6.1 The following points emanated from the discussions and research that was conducted by the Committee -:

Advantages/disadvantages of live broadcast

- Extensive broadcast of sittings of Parliament would be beneficial to both Members of Parliament and the public.
- The time had come for live broadcast of parliamentary business.
- Live broadcast should improve the quality of news reporting on the activities of Parliament and by extension the perception of Members of the public as to what occurs in Parliament.

Editing

- Some Parliaments have an in-house production/editing team while others provide for a standing committee on broadcasting with the power to edit speeches for broadcast.
- The Committee found merit in the suggestion that a standing committee on broadcasting be established to oversee the development of guidelines with regard to broadcasting and determining what is to be broadcast.

Broadcast – Simultaneous versus Delayed

- Some minimal delay should be instituted in live broadcast to allow for times when the Presiding Officer may wish to intervene.
- Research has shown that with the introduction of live broadcast in other Parliaments, the behaviour of Parliamentarians had improved.
- Absolute live broadcast more exciting.

Packaged/Condensed Version

- The Committee considered that a minimum of two hours per week per House on a designated period should be adequate for the condensed version of weekly sittings of Parliament.
- A standing committee on broadcasting should determine what is broadcast.
- Rules and guidelines should be established.
- Benefit would only accrue to the electronic media since there was not much prospect of Parliament receiving more coverage in the print media.

Parliamentary Privilege

- In some jurisdictions the provision exists whereby aggrieved members of the public, with the approval of the Presiding Officer, are afforded an opportunity to present a response on record.

Cost

- Parliamentary business must be considered a social investment and therefore the cost should be borne by the State.

Speaking Time/Standing Orders

- Some members supported the view that the reduction of the speaking time to thirty (30) minutes, with an extension of fifteen (15) minutes, was sufficient time in which to make a meaningful contribution and would facilitate concise broadcasting.
- The Standing Orders embody the rulings, resolutions and practice of the House of Representatives and the Senate over time. Standing Orders, however, need to be amended.

Ownership of tapes and other material

- The ownership of audio/video tapes and any other material should remain with the Parliament in the interest of continuity and longevity.

Internet Transmission of Debates

- An upgrade of IT systems was necessary to facilitate live transmission by Internet.

Responsibility for Broadcast

- A dedicated channel should be set up solely for the purpose of broadcasting parliamentary affairs.
- A collaborative approach is necessary, initially, between Parliament and the Government Information Service since the Government Information Service had the requisite equipment and experience in broadcasting.

Feedback from the Public

- The Staff of Parliament receives and deals with requests and queries from the public via Webmaster on a daily basis. The development and expansion of this service will become necessary.

6.2 Extensive discussion took place on the issues of parliamentary privilege and legal implications which may originate from the abuse thereof. Your Committee is of the view that this should not be a deterrent to live broadcast.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Your Committee makes the following recommendations-:

- (a) that arrangements be made for full debates and the business of both Houses of Parliament to be transmitted live to the public through the electronic media (television and radio) .
- (b) that an edited/packaged version of the proceedings of both Houses should be provided as a supplementary service.
- (c) that a Standing Committee on Broadcasting be appointed to oversee the establishment of guidelines and other matters relating to the live broadcast of proceedings.
- (d) that a dedicated channel be set up solely for the purpose of broadcasting parliamentary affairs. In this respect, a collaborative effort between the Parliament and the Government Information Service is required since that Division has the necessary equipment and expertise for broadcasting.
- (e) that an upgrade of IT systems of the Parliament be undertaken to facilitate live transmission by Internet. The Committee agreed that this is an imperative and recommends that this service be made available as soon as possible.

- (f) that as happens in other jurisdictions, in the use of parliamentary privilege, provisions be made whereby aggrieved members of the public, with the approval of the Presiding Officer, be afforded an opportunity to present a response on record.

7.2 Your Committee agrees that guidelines be outlined for the broadcast of debates and business of both Houses of Parliament and accordingly recommends the appended guidelines. *This list is not an exhaustive one. (See Guidelines at Appendix III).*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1 Your Committee expresses its appreciation to all those who assisted the Committee in its deliberations.

.....
Dr. Keith Rowley
(Chairman)

.....
Mr. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid

.....
Mr. Edward Hart

.....
Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis

.....
Ms. Christine Kangaloo

.....
Mrs. Mary King

.....
Mr. Danny Montano

.....
Mr. Robin Montano

.....
Dr. Roodal Moonilal

.....
Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis

.....
Mrs. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan

.....
Mr. Ganga Singh

June 25, 2004

ATTENDANCE RECORD

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO CONSIDER AND
REPORT ON THE PUBLIC BROADCAST OF DEBATES
AND BUSINESS OF BOTH HOUSES

MEMBERS	<i>1st Meeting March 16, 2004</i>	<i>2nd Meeting April 20, 2004</i>	<i>3rd Meeting May 04, 2004</i>	<i>4th Meeting May 18, 2004</i>	<i>5th Meeting June 22, 2004</i>
Dr. Keith Rowley	√	√	√	√	√
Mr. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid	√	√	√	√	√
Mr. Edward Hart	√	x	x	x	√
Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis	√	√	√	√	x
Ms. Christine Kangaloo	√	√	x	x	x
Mrs. Mary King	x	√	x	√	x
Mr. Danny Montano	√	x	x	x	x
Mr. Robin Montano	√	x	x	x	x
Dr. Roodal Moonilal	√	√	√	√	√
Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis	√	x	x	x	x
Mrs. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan	√	√	√	√	√
Mr. Ganga Singh	x	√	x	x	x

Present = √
Absent = x

**MINUTES OF THE 1ST MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO
CONSIDER AND REPORT ON THE PUBLIC BROADCAST OF DEBATES AND BUSINESS OF
BOTH HOUSES HELD ON TUESDAY MARCH 16, 2004 IN COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 5,
PARLIAMENT, RED HOUSE, PORT OF SPAIN**

Present were:

Dr. Keith Rowley	-	Chairman
Mr. Danny Montano	-	Member
Ms. Christine Kangaloo	-	Member
Mr. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid	-	Member
Mr. Robin Montano	-	Member
Mrs. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan	-	Member
Dr. Roodal Moonilal	-	Member
Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis	-	Member
Mr. Edward Hart	-	Member
Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis	-	Member
Sen. the Hon. Dr. Linda Baboolal	-	President of the Senate
Ms. Jean Sandy	-	Secretary
Ms. Nataki Atiba	-	Asst. Secretary

Absent were:

Mrs. Mary King	-	Member (Excused)
Mr. Ganga Singh	-	Member (Excused)

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The meeting was called to order at 11.32 a.m.

1.2 The President of the Senate welcomed Members to the meeting. She informed Members that their Terms of Reference were as follows:-

“To consider and report on Government’s arrangement, with appropriate permission, for full debates on the business of both Houses to be transmitted to the public through the electronic media (television and radio) on an equitable and discreetly edited form on fixed days of the week and with such transmission to begin before the end of the year, 2004.

To report before June 30, 2004 so as to facilitate Government’s action.”

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

2.1 The President of the Senate explained that her presence at the meeting was to facilitate the election of a Chairman. She proceeded to invite nominations.

2.2 Mrs. Mary King was nominated by Mr. Robin Montano and was seconded by Mrs. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan.

2.3 Dr. Keith Rowley was nominated by Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis and was seconded by Mr. Edward Hart. There were no further nominees.

2.4 The voting results were as follows:

Mrs. Mary King	-	3
Dr. Keith Rowley	-	6

2.5 The President of the Senate declared Dr. Rowley the Chairman of the Committee. After extending congratulations to Dr. Rowley and wishing the Committee every success, Madam President exited the meeting.

2.6 Dr. Rowley took the Chair and thanked Members for electing him. He reminded those present that this was a joint committee of the Parliament, and not a partisan group.

QUORUM

3.1 The Chairman informed Members that it was standard practice in our Parliament that with a committee of twelve (12) Members, six Members inclusive of the Chairman would constitute a quorum, with at least two (2) Members representing each House.

3.2 Mr. Robin Montano suggested that four (4) persons would be a more practical figure to ensure that meetings were not aborted and that the work of the Committee would be completed by the June 30, 2004 deadline.

3.3 After some discussion the Committee agreed that in the first instance the quorum would constitute six (6) persons, but should this not work effectively, the matter would be revisited to reduce the number.

3.4 Members were asked to make a commitment to attend meetings regularly and promptly.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

4.1 The Chairman read the Terms of Reference of the Committee. The attention of Members was drawn to Standing Orders: 73(6) and 74 of the Senate and 80(6) and 81 of the House of Representatives, respectively, which state:

“The deliberations of a Select Committee shall be confined to the matter referred to it by the Senate [House] and any extension or limitation thereof made by the Senate [House]...” (SO 73(6) of Senate and 80(6) of HOR)

“The proceedings of, and the evidence taken before any Select Committee and any documents presented to and decisions of such a Committee shall not be published by any Member thereof or by any other person before the Committee has presented its Report to the Senate [House]. (SO 74 of Senate & 81 of HOR)

APPROACH TO THE WORK

5.1 The Chairman invited Members to put forward ideas on the best approach for the Committee to take in accomplishing its mission.

5.2 It was agreed that the Secretary should compile whatever material was available on what obtained in other jurisdictions with regard to policies in the broadcasting of parliamentary events and legal implications of these policies. This should be forwarded to Members before the next meeting.

5.3 The Secretary was also directed to write to the Media Association to inform them of the existence of the Committee and alert them that the assistance of the general media would be required in the deliberations of the Committee in the near future.

5.4 A detailed course of action for the work of the Committee would be decided at the next meeting.

5.5 Mrs. Seepersad–Bachan suggested that a time-table for the completion of different tasks should also be set at the next meeting to ensure that the work of the Committee progressed efficiently.

MEETING TIMES

6.1 The Committee agreed that it would meet on Tuesday mornings at 11:00 am.

ADJOURNMENT

7.1 The Chairman thanked all who attended the meeting and adjourned to Tuesday March 23, 2004 at 11:00 am.

7.2 The adjournment was taken at 12:03 p.m.

Chairman

Secretary

March 18, 2004

**MINUTES OF THE 2nd MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO
CONSIDER AND REPORT ON THE PUBLIC BROADCAST OF DEBATES AND BUSINESS OF
BOTH HOUSES HELD ON TUESDAY APRIL 20, 2004 IN COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 5,
PARLIAMENT, RED HOUSE, PORT OF SPAIN**

Present were:

Dr. Keith Rowley	-	Chairman
Mr. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid	-	Member
Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis	-	Member
Ms. Christine Kangaloo	-	Member
Mrs. Mary King	-	Member
Dr. Roodal Moonilal	-	Member
Mrs. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan	-	Member
Mr. Ganga Singh	-	Member
Ms. Jean Sandy	-	Secretary
Ms. Nataki Atiba	-	Asst. Secretary

Absent were:

Mr. Edward Hart	-	Member (Excused)
Mr. Danny Montano	-	Member (Excused)
Mr. Robin Montano	-	Member (Excused)
Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis	-	Member (Excused)

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

1.2 The Chairman welcomed those present and apologised for his absence at the last meeting, which unfortunately was aborted because of a lack of quorum.

OTHER BUSUINESS

Adjustment of Quorum

2.1 With the consensus of all present the Committee moved to the item "Other Business" on the agenda.

2.2 On a motion moved by Dr. Moonilal and seconded by Mrs. King, the quorum was unanimously reduced to four (4) members with at least one (1) member from each House.

MINUTES

3.1 Mrs. King's objection at being nominated in her absence and without her consent was noted.

3.2 The Chairman explained that at the time the Committee was unaware that Mrs. King had not been consulted on the nomination.

3.3 The motion for the confirmation of the Minutes was moved by Ms. Kangaloo and seconded by Mr. Abdul-Hamid.

MATTERS ARISING

4.1 The documentation requested by the Committee had been compiled and circulated. The Chairman commented that from his review of the material in the document, much of the work had already been done. The document would serve as the basis of the work of the Committee.

4.2 The Chairman read the contents of a letter sent to MATT informing it of the existence of the Committee and requesting it to alert its members of the likelihood of being invited to attend a meeting of the Committee in the near future.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

5.1 The Committee agreed that no further discussion of the Terms of Reference of the Committee was necessary.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION

5.1 The Chairman opened the floor to comments from members of the Committee and the following issues were raised:-

(a) Parliamentary Privilege

Members of the Committee expressed their concern about the protection of their parliamentary privilege and how this would be affected by live broadcast. The question was also raised as to whether there were any legal implications.

(b) Editing

The issue of editing was also discussed. The Committee noted that some Parliaments have an in-house production/editing team while some others provide for a Committee on broadcasting with the power to edit speeches for broadcast.

It was also noted that the private media, because of cost, content and time factors, would edit at their own discretion.

(c) Broadcast – Simultaneous versus Delayed

The Committee agreed that some minimal delay must be instituted in live broadcast to allow for times when the Presiding Officer may wish to have comments struck from the Hansard.

Concerns over the tendency of Members to “play” to the camera were raised. The Committee noted though that experiences in other countries have shown that the behaviour of Parliamentarians had improved as a result of extended broadcast, as Members were more open to public scrutiny and were forced to show greater responsibility.

The Committee also noted that instances of the abuse of parliamentary privilege were also minimal.

(d) Packaged/Condensed Programme

The Committee considered that a minimum of two hours per week per House on a designated night should be adequate for the condensed version of weekly sittings of Parliament.

There was no agreement on how contributions for the programme would be selected or by whom.

The Committee also admitted that the issue of time was a constraint.

There was consensus that:

- parliamentary proceedings should be broadcast, and that rules and guidelines would be established
- proceedings though live should involve some time delay element
- a two-hour per House condensed version of parliamentary sittings be aired sometime subsequent to a Sitting.

OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 The Secretary was asked to supply the Committee with information on the following:

- parliamentary privilege and how it would be affected by live broadcast.
- internet feed for live proceedings
- libel suits against Parliamentarians

6.2 The Secretary was also directed to draft a letter to the various media and publishing houses inviting representatives to attend the next meeting of the Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

7.1 The Chairman thanked those in attendance and adjourned the meeting to Tuesday, May 4, 2004 at 11:00 am.

7.2 The adjournment was taken at 12:45 p.m.

Chairman

Secretary

April 26, 2004

**MINUTES OF THE 3rd MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO
CONSIDER AND REPORT ON THE PUBLIC BROADCAST OF DEBATES AND BUSINESS OF
BOTH HOUSES HELD ON TUESDAY MAY 04, 2004 IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER,
PARLIAMENT, RED HOUSE, PORT OF SPAIN**

PRESENT

Dr. Keith Rowley	-	Chairman
Mr. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid	-	Member
Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis	-	Member
Dr. Roodal Moonilal	-	Member
Mrs. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan	-	Member
Ms. Jean Sandy	-	Secretary
Ms. Nataki Atiba	-	Asst. Secretary

ABSENT

Mr. Danny Montano	-	Member (Excused)
Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis	-	Member (Excused)
Ms. Christine Kangaloo	-	Member (Excused)
Mrs. Mary King	-	Member
Mr. Robin Montano	-	Member
Mr. Edward Hart	-	Member
Mr. Ganga Singh	-	Member

The following Media Personnel were also present:

Ms. Judy Raymond	-	Acting Editor, Trinidad Guardian
Ms. Vera Edwards	-	Radio Toco
Mr. John Victor	-	National Broadcasting Network

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

1.2 The Chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for their attendance. He informed the Committee that excuses for their absences had been received on behalf of Mrs. Robinson-Regis, and Ms. Christine Kangaloo and from Mr. Danny Montano. Mrs. King indicated that she would try to attend but may be a bit late.

1.3 The Chairman explained that the media had been invited to this meeting, but only three positive responses were received. This being National Journalist Week would have caused a clash of events.

MINUTES

2.1 There being no corrections to the Minutes, the motion for the confirmation of the Minutes was moved by Dr. Roodal Moonilal and seconded by Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis.

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 The Chairman indicated that the material requested on parliamentary privilege was sent to all Members. With regard to the use of the Internet in broadcasting debates, the Secretary informed the Committee that the Parliament's Information Technology Specialist could be invited to the next meeting to provide information on this area.

3.2 A copy of the invitation letter sent to the media was circulated to the members of the Committee. The letter indicated that the discussion points would include the following:

- advantages/disadvantages of live broadcast;
- advantages/disadvantages of packaged broadcast;
- legal implications for media houses;
- cost factors involved and;
- marketability of the broadcasts.

3.3 The Committee noted that the Government Information Service did not respond to the invitation to attend the meeting. The Secretary was asked to follow up on the matter.

DISCUSSION WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

4.1 The Committee invited the sole representative of the media present to join the meeting. Introductions were made. Two other representatives of the media soon joined the meeting and were introduced as well.

4.2 The following issues were raised -:

(a) Advantages/disadvantages of live broadcast

There was a general consensus among the representatives of the media that more extensive broadcasts of sittings of Parliament would be beneficial to both Members of Parliament and the public. It was felt that a wider interest in the business of Parliament would be generated.

For the print media, delayed broadcasts would provide a source from which stories could be taken. The matter of deadlines limited what was printed in the newspapers the following day.

It was also noted however that at present, interest in the proceedings of Parliament in the media newsrooms and in the public at large was low. This lack of interest was in some part due to ignorance.

(b) Marketability

The view was expressed that commercial houses could have an interest in the marketability of live broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings.

(c) Parliamentary Privilege

The general opinion was that abuse of parliamentary privilege in our Parliament was a minimal occurrence. The media representatives noted that it was incumbent on the Members of Parliament to be factual in their statements.

The Committee noted that in some jurisdictions there was a provision by which aggrieved members of the public, with the approval of the Presiding Officer, are afforded an opportunity to present a response on record.

The view was expressed that consideration be given to so structure the broadcast to allow for the intervention of the Presiding Officer.

(d) Code of Ethics

In response to the matter of a Code of Ethics for journalists, the President of MATT stated that he preferred to call it a code of best practice, as it was something to be voluntarily adopted by media practitioners. The new MATT executive is actively looking at the issue.

(e) Cost

It was agreed that the broadcast of parliamentary business must be considered a social investment and the cost should be borne by the State.

(f) Absolute live versus slight delay

Although the representatives of the media felt that “absolute live” would be the most “exciting” version of the broadcast of debates, it was noted that a three-minute delay would not make any difference to the viewer.

Technology would allow for the intervention of the Chair but the logistics would have to be worked out as it would mean having personnel on the spot to edit out various parts.

(g) Advantages/Disadvantages of Packaged (Condensed) Broadcast

The representatives agreed that there would be some value in the packaged version of debates. However, the benefits would only accrue to the electronic media, as there was not much prospect of Parliament getting more coverage in the print media at present, except by way of a special sponsored supplement.

(h) Speaking Time

It was intimated that a reduction in the speaking time to thirty (30) minutes with an extension of fifteen (15) minutes was sufficient time in which to make a meaningful contribution and would facilitate concise broadcasting.

(i) Views of Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MATT)

Mr. Victor informed the Committee that the Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago had not yet discussed the question of live broadcast of Parliamentary business. This would be brought to the attention of the Association at its next meeting and MATT’s comments would be forwarded to the Committee as soon as possible thereafter.

4.3 The representatives of the media were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 The Secretary was directed to write to the two media houses in Tobago seeking their input on the matter before the Committee.

5.2 The Secretary was also directed to draft a letter to the Clerk of the House, Clerk of the Senate and the Information Systems Specialist inviting them to attend the next meeting of the Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

6.1 The Chairman thanked those in attendance and adjourned the meeting to Tuesday, May 18, 2004 at 11:00 am.

6.2 The adjournment was taken at 12:35 p.m.

Chairman

Secretary

May 11, 2004

**MINUTES OF THE 4th MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE
APPOINTED TO CONSIDER AND REPORT ON THE PUBLIC BROADCAST OF
DEBATES AND BUSINESS OF BOTH HOUSES HELD ON TUESDAY MAY 18, 2004 IN
COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 2, PARLIAMENT, RED HOUSE, PORT OF SPAIN**

PRESENT

Dr. Keith Rowley	-	Chairman
Mr. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid	-	Member
Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis	-	Member
Mrs. Mary King	-	Member
Dr. Roodal Moonilal	-	Member
Mrs. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan	-	Member
Ms. Jean Sandy	-	Secretary
Ms. Nataki Atiba	-	Asst. Secretary

ABSENT

Mr. Danny Montano	-	Member (Excused)
Mr. Robin Montano	-	Member (Excused)
Ms. Christine Kangaloo	-	Member
Mr. Edward Hart	-	Member
Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis	-	Member
Mr. Ganga Singh	-	Member

The following Staff of the Parliament were also present:

Ms. Jacqui Sampson-Jacent	-	Clerk of the House
Mr. Neil Jaggassar	-	Clerk of the Senate (Ag.)
Mr. Garreth Ferguson	-	Information Systems Specialist

COMMENCEMENT

1.1 The meeting was called to order at 11.07 a.m.

1.2 The Chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for their attendance. He informed the Committee that excuses for their absences had been received on behalf of Mr. Danny Montano and Mr. Robin Montano.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES (May 4, 2004)

2.1 The following corrections were made -:

Page 3 Paragraph 4.2 (b)

The first sentence was replaced by the following:

“The view was expressed that commercial houses could have an interest in the marketability of live broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings”.

Page 3 Paragraph 4.2 (c) subparagraph 2:

Subparagraph 2 was replaced by the following:

“The Committee noted that in some jurisdictions there was a provision by which aggrieved members of the public, with the approval of the Presiding Officer, are afforded an opportunity to present a response on record.”

Page 3 Paragraph 4.2 (c)

A third subparagraph was added to read:

“The view was expressed that consideration be given to so structure the broadcast to allow for the intervention of the Presiding Officer.”

Page 4 Paragraph 4.2 (h)

Paragraph (h) was replaced by the following:

“It was intimated that a reduction in the speaking time to thirty (30) minutes with an extension of fifteen (15) minutes was sufficient time in which to make a meaningful contribution and would facilitate concise broadcasting.”

2.2 The motion for the confirmation of the Minutes was moved by Mr. Abdul-Hamid and seconded by Mrs. Job-Davis.

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 There was consensus that systems should be instituted to allow for public feedback when live broadcast is introduced.

3.2 The Committee was informed that the Government Information Service and the media houses in Tobago would submit their contributions in writing within the week.

3.3 The Chairman undertook to discuss the matter with the relevant Minister.

3.4 On the advice of Mrs. Job-Davis that the views of the Media Workers' of Tobago should be obtained, the Secretary was directed to write to the Media Workers' of Tobago in that regard.

DISCUSSION WITH THE OFFICIALS OF THE PARLIAMENT

4.1 The Clerk of the House, the Clerk of the Senate (Ag.) and the Information Systems Specialist joined the meeting. The Chairman welcomed them and introductions were made.

4.2 The following issues were raised -:

(a) Ownership of Parliamentary broadcast materials

The Clerk of the House stated her concern that the Terms of Reference of the Committee seemed to give ownership of the concept of parliamentary broadcasting to the Government. She felt that the ownership of audio/video tapes and any other material should remain with the Parliament in the interest of continuity and longevity.

The Committee agreed that it did not think it was the intention of the Government to take ownership, even if that was inferred in the wording of the Terms of Reference.

(b) Edited Broadcast

The Clerk of the House commented that editing live broadcast could prove to be a difficult task.

The Committee explained that their interpretation of edited related more to a packaged version of the broadcast, which would be aired later in the afternoon for persons who could not follow the live broadcast.

The Committee found merit in the suggestion that a standing committee on broadcasting should be established to oversee the development of guidelines with regard to broadcasting, and to determine what is to be broadcast.

(c) Internet Transmission of Debates

The Information Systems Specialist explained the system that was currently in use for live broadcast of parliamentary proceedings within its precincts. Archiving of the transmissions had also begun so that Members could have their presentations made available to them on CD.

The question was raised as to the possibility of this facility being extended to ministries. The Information System Specialist responded that the Parliament would need an upgrade in the current equipment to facilitate this. The Committee agreed that this was an avenue worth pursuing.

(d) Responsibility for Broadcasting

The Clerk of the House proposed the setting up of a dedicated channel for broadcasting parliamentary business. She intimated that initially, a collaborative approach between Parliament and the Government Information Service was necessary since the Government Information Service had the necessary technology and expertise in the area of broadcasting.

It was agreed that there was need to guard against compromising the integrity of these broadcast by transmitting anything other than parliamentary business on the dedicated channel.

(e) Standards of Behaviour

With respect to the issue of standards of behaviour, the Clerk of the House expressed the opinion that the public had the right to know what transpires in Parliament, including the behaviour of Parliamentarians.

(f) Standing Orders

In response to a question on the applicability of the Standing Orders as they exist to the proposals being considered, the Clerk of the House explained that the Standing Orders were the creatures of the rulings, resolutions and practice of the House of Representatives and the Senate over time. They however were in need of amendment.

(g) Full Debate Coverage

The officials of the Parliament agreed that the time had come for live broadcasting of parliamentary business.

(h) Quality of News Reporting

The point was made that live broadcast should improve the quality of news reporting on the activities of Parliament and by extension the perception of Members of the public as to what is done in Parliament.

(i) Intervention of Chair

When asked to comment on the institution of a three-minute delay in broadcasting to accommodate intervention by the Chair, the Clerk of the House expressed the view that the expunging of words from the records gives a distorted perception of some incidents. She believed it was the role of the Presiding Officer to decide on what words were unparliamentary, but not necessarily to have them expunged from the records.

(j) Packaged Broadcasts

On the issue of rationing time in the packaged version of the broadcast, it was suggested that time could be rationed according to the percentage of time taken by any side to make contributions during the debate.

(k) Feedback from Public on content of broadcasts

The Clerk of the House indicated that the Parliament was accustomed to dealing with requests and queries from the public through the Webmaster.

(l) Internet versus broadcasting via other media

With respect to the Internet broadcast versus broadcast by other media, the Clerk of the House stated that these would work harmoniously. This is what obtained in most other Parliaments.

4.3 The Clerk of the House agreed to draft guidelines for the consideration of the Committee.

4.4 The officials of the Parliament were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 The Committee directed the Secretary to circulate a list of issues emanating from the meetings to Members before the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

6.1 The Chairman thanked those in attendance and adjourned the meeting to Wednesday, June 02, 2004 at 11:00 am.

6.2 The adjournment was taken at 12:35 p.m.

Chairman

Secretary

May 21, 2004

**MINUTES OF THE 5th MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE
APPOINTED TO CONSIDER AND REPORT ON THE PUBLIC BROADCAST OF
DEBATES AND BUSINESS OF BOTH HOUSES HELD ON TUESDAY JUNE 22, 2004
IN COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 2, PARLIAMENT, RED HOUSE, PORT OF SPAIN**

PRESENT

Dr. Keith Rowley	-	Chairman
Mr. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid	-	Member
Mr. Edward Hart	-	Member
Dr. Roodal Moonilal	-	Member
Mrs. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan	-	Member
Ms. Jean Sandy	-	Secretary
Ms. Nataki Atiba	-	Asst. Secretary

ABSENT

Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis	-	Member (Excused)
Mr. Danny Montano	-	Member
Mr. Robin Montano	-	Member (Excused)
Ms. Christine Kangaloo	-	Member
Mrs. Mary King	-	Member (Excused)
Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis	-	Member (Excused)
Mr. Ganga Singh	-	Member (Excused)

COMMENCEMENT

1.1 The meeting was called to order at 11.29 a.m.

1.2 The Chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for their attendance. He apologised for his late arrival. He informed the Committee that excuses for their absences had been received on behalf of Mrs. Mary King, Mrs. Eudine Job-Davis, Mr. Robin Montano, Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis and Mr. Ganga Singh.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES (May 18, 2004)

2.1 The motion for the confirmation of the Minutes was moved by Dr. Roodal Moonilal and seconded by Mr. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid.

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 The Committee was informed that responses received from the Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MATT) and the Government Information Service had been circulated.

3.2 A list of issues emanating from previous meetings had also been compiled and circulated.

3.3 The Chairman asked that a more comprehensive set of guidelines for broadcasting be prepared.

DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT REPORT

4.1 The Chairman drew the attention of the Committee to the Draft Report which had been circulated and invited comments.

4.2 The following amendments to the Report were agreed to -:

ISSUES

(a) Broadcast-Simultaneous versus Delayed

The words "*have comments struck from the records*" were deleted and replaced by the word "*intervene*".

(b) Packaged/Condensed Version

The word "*night*" at the first bullet point was deleted and replaced by "*period*".

The last bullet point relating to the setting of guidelines for the media was deleted.

(c) Marketability

This item was deleted.

(d) Speaking Time/Standing Orders

The words “*Some Members supported the view that the*” were inserted at the beginning of the first item.

(e) Internet Transmission of Debate

It was agreed that the issue of Internet transmission should be included as a recommendation and phrased to reflect the Committee’s view that its implementation was imperative and should be done as soon as possible.

(f) Feedback from the Public

The Committee agreed that this item should be amended to highlight the need for the service dealing with requests and queries to be further developed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3 The Committee approved the recommendations with the following amendments:

(1) At (a), the word “*live*” was inserted after the word “*transmitted*”.

(2) A new (b) was inserted as follows:

“that an edited/packaged version of the proceedings of both Houses should be provided as a supplementary service”.

(3) The existing (b) and (c) were changed to (c) and (d).

(4) The following new recommendations were inserted as (e) and (f):

“(e) that an upgrade of IT systems of the Parliament be undertaken to facilitate live transmission by Internet. This service should be made available as soon as possible.

“(f) that as happens in other jurisdictions, in the use of parliamentary privilege, provisions be made whereby aggrieved members of the public, with the approval of the Presiding Officer, be afforded an opportunity to present a response on record.”

OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 The Chairman emphasised the need for the Report to be completed and presented to Parliament before the deadline date of June 30, 2004.

5.2 It was indicated that once a majority of signatures had been obtained, the report would be tabled in Parliament on Friday June 25, 2004.

ADJOURNMENT

6.1 The Chairman thanked those in attendance and expressed his appreciation for their co-operation in the deliberations of the Committee. He also expressed his willingness to work with them in the future.

6.2 The adjournment was taken at 12:58 p.m.

Chairman

Secretary

June 23, 2004

GUIDELINES GOVERNING BROADCASTING

Because it is necessary to uphold and maintain the dignity of Parliament, the Committee recommends the following guidelines. The guidelines currently in operation are also included.

The proposed standing Committee on Broadcasting may review and amend the guidelines from time to time.

Use of Recordings or Film Footage

- (i) Reports of proceedings should be such as to provide a balanced presentation of different views. Equivalent treatment should therefore be given to the leading speaker of each of the parties.
- (ii) Parliamentary reports should give a balanced, fair and accurate account of proceedings with the aim of informing viewers about the work of both Houses.
- (iii) No extracts of Parliamentary proceedings may be used in any form of advertising, promotion or other form of publicity.
- (iv) No extracts of Parliamentary proceedings may be used in any light entertainment programme, in a programme of political satire or for ridicule.

Operation of Cameras

1. Regard should be given to the dignity of the House and to its function as a working body rather than as a place of entertainment.
2. Coverage should give an accurate account of the proceedings of the House, free of subjective commentary and editing techniques designed to produce entertainment rather than information.
3. Individual Members should be broadcast only when they have been recognised by the Presiding Officer or as a group when voting. Shots, such as the following, which are likely to embarrass unsuspecting Members should not be broadcast:
 - Members yawning or dozing, unless they happen to be in the frame behind or next to the MP who is speaking.

- Disorderly scenes. (Focus must be on the Speaker instead).
4. The standard format for depicting the Member who is speaking should be head and shoulder shots.
 5. Roving or reaction shots should be allowed only under the following circumstances:
 - when a Member has sought information which is being supplied by the Member speaking
 - when the Member is referred to in debate
 6. Wide-angled shots of the Chamber may be used from time to time.
 7. The camera should concentrate on the Presiding Officer whenever he/she rises.
 8. During incidents of disorder or altercations between the Chair and other Members, the camera should be focussed on the Presiding Officer until order has been restored.
 9. Interruptions from and demonstrations in the public gallery should not be televised, as they do not constitute “parliamentary proceedings”.
 10. Proceedings filmed are to be used only for reports of such proceedings and on no other occasion except with the express permission of the Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting.
 11. Shots designed to show the Presiding Officer receiving advice from the Clerk at the table, or speaking with members who are invited to the Dais, should not be used.
 12. The press and public galleries and the area behind the Presiding Officer’s Chair not directly related to the proceedings, should not be shown, except where unavoidably, as part of wide angled shots of the Chamber.

Privilege and the Right of Reply

- (a) If a Member, or a witness appearing in a parliamentary proceeding, under the protection of privilege, defames or makes allegedly false statements, either intentionally or unintentionally, about a person who is outside Parliament, that person should have the right to apply to the Parliament to have a reply placed on the public parliamentary record.

- (b) In order to ensure that a reply is published in the parliamentary record as close as possible to the initial allegation, a request from a member of the public to rebut a statement made in Parliament about that person should be referred to the relevant Presiding Officer, which must rule on the matter fairly and expeditiously.
- (c) The media should report the rebuttal if they have reported the original allegation.

Sanctions

Sanctions should be imposed for breaking the rules. These should include restriction on access to the Press Gallery and censure.