

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Friday, August 23, 1991*

The House met at 1.50 p.m.

PRAYERS[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY BILL**

Bill to provide for the establishment and incorporation of the Trinidad and Tobago Telecommunications Authority and for the regulation of telecommunications services operating in Trinidad and Tobago or on any ship, aircraft, vessel or other contrivance registered in Trinidad and Tobago and for the regulation of the use of apparatus in telecommunications services and for related purposes [*The Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy*]; brought from the Senate, read the first time.

PAPERS LAID

1. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of Trinidad and Tobago Nitrogen Company Limited for the year ended December 31, 1991. [*Minister of Finance (Hon. Selby Wilson)*]
(To be referred to the Public Accounts Committee)
2. Report of the Auditor General on the accounts of Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited for the year ended December 31, 1990. [*Hon. S. Wilson*]
(To be referred to the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee)
3. The Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Order, 1991. [*The Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization (Dr. The Hon. Carson Charles)*]
4. First Report of the Elections and Boundaries Commission under the Municipal Corporations Act No. 21 of 1990 for the purposes of Local Government elections. [*Dr. The Hon. C. Charles*]
5. Loan Contract between the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Inter-American Development Bank (Secondary Recovery of Oil and Refinery Modernization Project) June 25, 1991. [*The Minister of Justice and National Security (Hon. Joseph Toney)*]

6. Non-reimbursable Technical Co-operation Agreement between the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Pointe-a-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust and the Inter-American Development Bank (Institutional Strengthening of the Point-a-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust) June 25, 1991. [*Hon. J. Toney*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

LIDP Projects

53. Mr. Trevor Sudama (*Oropouche*) asked the Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization:

Could the Minister state:

- (a) What are the procedures and processes involved in determining the nature and location of LIDP projects in various parts of the country in 1991?
- (b) What provision has his Ministry made for elected parliamentary representatives of the people to have an input in the decisions taken on these LIDP projects?
- (c) What criteria are used in recruiting labour for these projects and by whom is the recruitment made?
- (d) How is the accountability exercised with respect to the expenditure of public funds on these projects?

The Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization (Dr. The Hon. Carson Charles): Mr. Speaker, full details of the underlying philosophy, organizational structure and functioning of the LID Programme are contained in the paper "Urban and Rural Development in Trinidad and Tobago—A Labour Intensive Approach" published in May 1991 by the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization and laid in Parliament on June 7, 1991.

LIDP projects are identified by the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization to give effect to the regional development programmes being pursued by the Government. Projects may also be identified from requests for public infrastructure works made to the Minister by parliamentary representatives, local government representatives, and bona fide community groups. Upon receipt of a request, the LIDP technical staff make the necessary site visits, prepare outline scope of works, develop designs and project cost

estimates which permit an assessment of the technical feasibility of executing the project within the time and budget constraints of the LID Programme.

Approval to execute a LIDP project is given by the Hon. Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization, within the context of the annual LID Programme of activities approved by Cabinet.

Elected parliamentary representatives are entitled to make representations to the Ministry in respect of the operations of the LID Programme. Indeed, many representatives frequently make such representations in support of the inclusion of projects in the programme and these are given due consideration by the Ministry, which then exercises executive authority.

The criteria used in recruiting labour for the projects are:

1. Relative need of individuals seeking employment as assessed by community organizations and recruiting officers.
2. The possession by the individual seeking employment of the appropriate skill for the job available.
3. The individual's employment status in respect of LIDP or the former DEWD programme, in that ex-DEWD employees who have not yet received severance payments are entitled to a minimum of three (3) fortnights employment, subject to all other rules of the programme, and casual labour is to be distributed to the largest number of persons feasible and consistent with the practical necessities of project execution. In this regard, approximately 30,000 different individuals have so far been employed in the LID Programme this year, and it is anticipated that this number will cross the 40,000 mark by the end of the programme in October.

Recruitment policy for LIDP projects requires that on each project the workforce comprises the following, out of a total of approximately 25 workers:

- (a) A full-time Project Supervisor and/or Site Foreman in charge.
- (b) A full-time Project Checker responsible for clerical duties of time-keeping, tool-keeping and other record-keeping work.
- (c) Generally, a full-time core of two to four workers skilled in masonry, carpentry, steel-bending, welding, *etc.*

- (d) Casual workers, skilled and unskilled, recruited by the community economic co-operatives in the area of the project, in keeping with guidelines set by the respective Regional Manager. This number varies generally from 5 to 15 persons.
- (e) Casual workers, skilled and unskilled, recruited directly by the Regional Manager through his recruiting officers, with the assistance of community organizations and from among persons seeking employment at the Regional Office. Political representatives and voluntary social workers or organizations may also make representations to Regional Managers for the casual employment of deserving persons who have approached them. It is in the discretion of the Regional Manager to entertain such requests in part or in full, if at all.
- (f) On some projects provision is made for the employment of persons who are former DEWD regular workers and who have not yet received severance payments. It is estimated that there are approximately 2,000 such persons still within the programme.

Since the Consolidated Fund and the Unemployment Fund are the sources which fund LID Programme expenditures, all LIDP expenditures are subject to the control, systems of management and accountability required by the financial regulations of the Exchequer and Audit Act, Chap. 69:01.

All accounting systems used in LIDP are therefore in conformity with the approved systems in use throughout the Public Service in Trinidad and Tobago. Nevertheless, the LID Programme has instituted additional stringent accounting and reporting systems to ensure effective accountability, key features of which are:

- (i) A detailed fortnightly report giving expenditure for material, equipment and labour is submitted to the Permanent Secretary and the hon. Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization.
- (ii) All payments are made by cheque, and the paysheets, ledgers and computerized printouts of the payrolls are subject to examination both by the Internal Audit of the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization and the Auditor General.
- (iii) Purchase of materials are authorized by qualified professional engineers in accordance with engineering codes of practice. Material specifications

are rigidly followed. Physical movement of materials to work sites are controlled by transfer slips, delivery notes and material receipt books which are subject to both external and internal audit.

- (iv) A monthly inventory of all office furniture and equipment, and construction site tools and equipment, is prepared and submitted to the LID Programme Manager.
- (v) The National Insurance accounting is handled by public officers of the Ministry and is subject to departmental audit as well as the audit of the Auditor General.

Accountability is also ensured through the operations of the Public Accounts Committee which is required to consider and report to the House of Representatives on moneys spent to meet public expenditure, including expenditure on the LID Programme.

Mr. Speaker, may I also take the opportunity to indicate that from its inception in 1988 to July, 1991, the LID Programme has successfully undertaken 366 major projects of which 295 consist of road, drainage and retention works and hard courts; 25 consist of industrial craft and pan cottages; 20 consist of other building works; and 26 consist of estate rehabilitation works on 1,350 acres of land.

These and several other projects will all be completed by the end of this year.

In addition, two urban agricultural projects are currently under development at Morvant and Malick and will become productive in 1992.

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Sudama: Mr. Speaker, could the Minister explain why requests addressed to the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization in 1989, 1990 and 1991 by me as parliamentary representative for the Oropouche constituency, to have LIDP projects identified by me, have not been acknowledged by his Ministry to date, let alone acknowledged?

Dr. Charles: Mr. Speaker, I do not know to whom the Member writes in the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization. What I know is that any recommendations which are made to the Minister or to which the Minister's attention is drawn, are assessed by his technical officers to determine whether such projects can be executed within the constraints of the programme. If the Member has written elsewhere, I will not be in a position to respond.

Mr. Sudama: Mr. Speaker, may I enquire from the Minister whether he is responsible for the LID Programme in his Ministry? Does the Director of the LID Programme come under his jurisdiction in the Ministry? That is the person to whom I have been writing. Is he responsible to him?

With respect to the recruiting of labour on these projects, the Minister indicated that labour is recruited by the recruiting officers on each project. Could he tell this House how these recruiting officers are selected?

Dr. Charles: I indicated that labour is recruited by several mechanisms or from several sources, of which one is the community economic co-operative. I am sure the Member recalls bringing to my office a proposal for the establishment of one of those co-operatives. I trust that it is functioning well. If he has lost control of his co-operative, I cannot help him.

In respect of the recruiting officers, all contract officers of the Ministry are appointed by the Permanent Secretary. They, of course, will require the approval of the Minister, but they are appointed by the Permanent Secretary. Those include the recruiting officers.

Mr. Valley: Would the Minister inform this House whether it is a fact that NAR parliamentarians are allowed a certain number of workers on each project?

Dr. Charles: I can assist the Member by referring again to part of my answer. I indicated in my answer that Members of Parliament, to whose offices I am sure many needy persons come, as well as other social workers, community workers, are free to make recommendations to the—*[Interruption]* Do you want the answer or not?

[Crosstalk]

Mr. Valley: I thought the Minister was answering, but I wonder whether you would allow him to answer.

Mr. Speaker: I am trying to accommodate Members with the supplemental questions, but the Minister is not being given an opportunity.

Question No. 63 please. Please take your seat.

The Minister was answering the question and you, the Member for Diego Martin—*[Interruption]* Will you allow me please?

Mr. Valley: Yes, I am challenging the Speaker. The Speaker must respect the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: Order please! Hon. Members will observe that the Speaker is fully aware that the subject matter of this question is one that is of deep political significance to all Members of Parliament. No Member here can recall any previous occasion when I allowed a Member other than the Member in whose name the question stands, to ask a supplementary question. Let us get the record straight. I permitted the Member for Diego Martin Central. While the Minister was in the process of giving the answer—and I am quoting the Member for Diego Martin Central, now—he was interrupted by saying: "and defeated candidates as well." And he repeated it. I therefore decided that we will move on to the next question.

It is unfortunate that the Member for Diego Martin Central, after being given the opportunity by the Chair, made such disrespectful remarks towards the Chair. I will ignore these remarks on this occasion and I call on the Member for Oropouche to continue with question No. 63.

National Quarries Limited

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Trevor Sudama (Oropouche):

63. Could the Minister state whether any privately owned quarries in Tobago were purchased by National Quarries Limited in 1987 and, if so, could he advise who the owner/owners of these quarries were?

The Minister of National Security (Hon. Joseph Toney): Mr. Speaker, could I ask that this question be deferred to the next sitting, please? The answer is not ready.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Hon. Surujrattan Rambachan (Construction/Repair of Schools)

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Trevor Sudama (Oropouche):

64. Could the Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy state whether the Minister in the Ministry of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism, Mr. Surujrattan Rambachan, has the authority to arrange for the construction and/or repair and/or extension of Government or Government-assisted schools in Trinidad and

Tobago, and if so, who gave him such authority and to whom is he accountable for such activity?

Mr. Sudama: I am now requesting that question No. 64 be deferred until the Prime Minister is present in this House, simply because this question has to do with the assignment of ministerial responsibility and only the Prime Minister can answer this question.

Question, by leave, deferred.

US Tax Code (Funding)

70. Mr. Kenneth Valley (*Diego Martin Central*) asked the Minister of Finance:

Would the Minister state:

- (a) Whether any funding has been approved for any project in Trinidad and Tobago under section 936 of the US Tax Code?
- (b) The terms and conditions of any such funding including the identity of the borrower and the purpose of the funding?

The Minister of Finance (Hon. Selby Wilson): Mr. Speaker, to date only one project, a Government joint-venture project, has been approved for funding under section 936 of the US Tax Code. The borrower is the Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited. The purpose of the 936 Fund was to construct and operate a liquid gas recovery plant at Point Lisas. The terms and conditions of this fund are as follows:-

Amount:	US \$80 million or TT \$340 million
The tenure:	8 years
Interest Rate:	7% per annum
Security:	Cash flows of the project

2.10 p.m.

It should be noted that the Phoenix Park Project is the largest section 936 financing in the Caribbean. The following projects are currently being considered for funding under the 936 provisions:

Government joint venture projects:

1. Trinmar Water flood Project—Texaco's contribution of US \$20 Million or TT \$85 million. This project involves oil exploration in the Soldado Main Field, Point Fortin. This project has been approved by the Puerto Rico Economic Development Administration and Credit Enhancement. That is, a guarantee to cover commercial and political risk, has been extended. However, several banks are currently bidding for the award of this contract.
2. Oil exploration project: Mobile Corporation, US \$35 million or TT \$148.8 million. This project consists of seismic testing and oil exploratory drilling in Trinidad and Tobago to be carried out by Mobile Trinidad and Tobago Petroleum Limited. The project has been approved by the Puerto Rican authorities and is now awaiting credit enhancement.

Private Sector Projects:

1. Export manufacturing project: Colourclad Limited, US \$24 million or TT \$102. This project involves the manufacture of coated galvanized and aluzinc coils for export. The Colourclad Limited Company is now an approved borrower but no credit enhancement has yet been extended for the project.
2. Oil Exploration Project: TOTALE, US \$40 million or TT \$170 million. This is an oil exploration project on the east coast of Trinidad and Tobago, by the French Company, TOTALE. This project has been approved by the Puerto Rican authorities and is now awaiting credit enhancement.
3. Export Manufacturing Project: The Trinidad Italian Tile Company Limited, US \$7 million or TT \$29.8 million. The company is working with WELCO Industrial, SPA, of Milan Italy, to establish a plant to manufacture ceramic tiles for the US market where the Italians hold a 38 per cent share. The project has been approved by the Puerto Rican authorities, but is yet to receive credit enhancement.

Mr. Speaker, other Caribbean countries have also benefited from the 936 funding. They are as follows: In 1988, Jamaica—US \$8.7 million; Dominica—US \$2.1 million; in 1989, Jamaica—US \$6.8 million; in 1990, Trinidad and Tobago—US \$80 million; the Dominican Republic—US \$45.5 million; the

US. Virgin Islands—US \$36.14 million; Jamaica—US \$32 million and Barbados—US \$13 million.

**Trade School
(Construction)**

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Kenneth Valley (Diego Martin Central):

- 71.** Would the Minister of Finance kindly state when the Government plans to start construction of the Trade School in Diego Martin which was promised in the 1991 budget?

Mr. Speaker: I am not sure whether this is properly directed to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Valley: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to have to really be in any noise with the Chair, but I know we discussed this issue and I mentioned to you that, since, in fact, it was mentioned in the budget for 1991, I thought it should have been directed to the Minister of Finance. The question, as far as I am concerned, has been approved, and I am also asking that you reconsider your decision.

Mr. Speaker: Just for the benefit of hon. Members. The Minister of Finance approached the Chair prior to question time, and indicated to me that he was not too sure whether this question was properly directed to him. I asked the Member for Diego Martin Central to come up and he pointed out too that since it was promised in the 1991 budget he thought that it was properly directed. The Chair is asking hon. Members, not the Minister of Finance, that this matter be given further consideration. When a matter like this is being given further consideration for the benefit of the Member for Diego Martin Central, it is done in the Speaker's chambers. It is not that anyone is being deprived of anything. It is just that I want the question to be directed to the proper Minister so that there can be an answer. I cannot tell the Minister of Finance how to answer questions. Perhaps all he had to do was to stand and say: "this does not fall within my portfolio". Then the question will be off the Order Paper. I do not want something like that. This is a matter that affects the Member's constituency, and I want it to be answered. Therefore, the Chair is asking that we have further consultations, and the Clerk of the House will call upon the Minister who can provide a proper answer. That is all I am asking.

Question, by leave, deferred.

DEWD Employees

(Severance Benefits)

72. *The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Kenneth Valley (Diego Martin Central):*

Would the Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization kindly state:

- (a) How many employees under the former DEWD programmes are owed severance/retirement benefits by the Government?
- (b) Why have they not been paid?
- (c) When can they expect to be paid?

The Minister of Works, Infrastructure and Decentralization (Dr. The Hon. Carson Charles): Mr. Speaker, I will be very happy to answer the question, but I believe that there has been some error, in that the document that indicates when it qualifies, says it qualifies for the 28th, so my answer is not yet ready. But I will be ready in one week's time with this answer.

Question, by leave, deferred.

CHILDREN (AMDT.) BILL

Bill to amend the Children Act, Chap. 46:01 [*The Minister of Social Development and Family Services*], read the first time

INDIAN ARRIVAL DAY

Mr. Trevor Sudama (Oropouche): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to put an historic motion before this august House, and as I proceed in my contribution I will point out how this motion acquires this significance that I am attaching to it this afternoon. Let me, for the benefit of Members of this House—who, from their responses seem to think that this is quite a flippant matter—as well as for the benefit of the press and the country at large, read this motion into the records of the House.

“Whereas May 30, 1845, is a highly significant day in the history of Trinidad and Tobago in that it was the day on which the very first group of indentured immigrants from India arrived in this country;

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“*And whereas* May 30 is now widely celebrated and commemorated as a day of historical importance especially among the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago who are descendants of the indentured immigrants;

And whereas the recognition of May 30 by public authority as a day of national significance would serve the interest of national integration and patriotism:

Be it resolved that this House recommend to the Government that May 30 be declared a National Public Holiday to be known as INDIAN ARRIVAL DAY.”

Mr. Speaker, that is the text of the motion. I want to give a little background as to why this motion was brought to the attention of this House. First of all, Mr. Speaker, there have been numerous requests by various groups in the country which have commemorated the day, May 30, as Indian Arrival Day. This commemorative event is becoming bigger and bigger as the years go by, and more and more people are being attracted to the celebration of this day and to the historical significance which is attached to it. I myself have had requests made to me, personally, when I have attended these various functions throughout Trinidad and Tobago, and in my own constituency, that this day should be declared a public holiday, so that the significance of the day should not be confined merely to one ethnic group in the society but it should have significance for all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. As I proceed in my contribution, I would elaborate on this point.

2.20 p.m.

As I said, support for this motion has come from numerous groups in this society. Therefore, I thought because of the strength of that request, because of that popular support, that this is a matter which is deserving of the attention of this House, and through this House, of the attention of the Government of the day.

The first point I wish to make is to justify why May 30 should be declared a public holiday and I would go through various points of justification. First of all, I want to inform this House, and the country that May 30, is a day of historic significance and, that is, when we look at the history of Trinidad and Tobago from the time of colonialism—and perhaps even before—to the present day, May 30 is the day when the first group of indentured immigrants from India landed in this country.

As a result of that first instance of immigration from India, a whole stream of immigration was engendered from the sub-continent. Today, as a result of that first landing—which presaged what happened further with the composition of this society—there is a situation where just under 50 per cent of the population of this country are citizens of Indian descent, who can trace their history, in this country, to that significant day, May 30.

As we know, that period of immigration under the system of indentureship lasted from 1845 to 1917—that span of our colonial history. Over that period, over 143,000 immigrants came to this country and constituted a substantial portion of the population of this country. Because had they not come to this country, then Trinidad and Tobago as it is today—as a plural society; as a society with diverse cultural affinities; as a society with diverse creeds—would not have been what it is. Therefore, one cannot deny that the first coming of the indentured immigrants from India to this society, was of significance to the history of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, it is significant to the whole history of Trinidad and Tobago, and not only to one of the ethnic groupings in this society.

I want to emphasize that the history of this country is really the history of streams of migration into Trinidad and Tobago from the days of colonialism. That is the history of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, if we seek to commemorate a day in our history, it is very likely that day—as a matter of historical importance—will have to do more with the history of one ethnic group than perhaps with the history of another ethnic group. But, the point is that you cannot deny that this day was significant in the historical evolution of this country. Therefore, if it is significant in the historical evolution, it has significance for the whole society. That is one of the points I wish to make because I will come to deal with the opposition to this motion and one of the grounds of that opposition. So, I wish to establish this point.

Secondly, I want to make it absolutely clear to this House that to request that Indian Arrival Day be declared a public holiday is not to seek a compensatory holiday for the citizens of Indian descent *vis-a-vis* Emancipation Day as a day of significance for the citizens of African descent. Because similarly, as I am arguing, that Indian Arrival Day is a day of national historical significance so too, in my view, is Emancipation Day and they have significance in their own right. It is not a question of looking at Indian Arrival Day as a day of significance for one group in compensation, so to speak, for national recognition of Emancipation Day

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as a day of significance merely for citizens of African descent. So, I trust that members on the other side will understand and appreciate that point.

My own view is that to recognize Indian Arrival Day as a public holiday and as a day of national historical importance will assist the whole society in the process of national integration. This has been one of the issues with which we have been confronted as a society and I believe it was the late Dr. Eric Williams who made the point when he spoke on the day of Independence, that a society was created in Trinidad and Tobago but a nation was not born. For a nation to be born, we need to have the underlying understanding; we need to elaborate the proper relationships which ought to exist between the various groupings in this society.

Therefore, to recognize this day, in my view, will serve the interest of national integration and would provide greater knowledge and awareness to all ethnic groups, of the aspirations of each other; in this instance, of the aspirations of citizens of Indian descent; their aspirations in terms of belonging and not feeling a sense of alienation which has dominated their consciousness up to the present time.

Insofar as the citizens of Indian descent do not feel that they belong to the society; do not have that inherent sense of belonging, then this will be a symbolic gesture to them. What we are asking for is a symbolic gesture, the declaration of a public holiday to commemorate part of the history of Trinidad and Tobago, a part of that history which has to do with the coming of the Indians.

2.30 p.m.

It will be a symbolic gesture to them—not that it will wholly give them that sense of belonging which they do not perhaps possess in full measure today, but it will go a long way in providing that sense of belonging and trying to dissipate the feeling of alienation, which so many members of that ethnic group at this moment experience and labour under.

Far from fragmenting the society, my own view is that the recognition of this day will lay the foundation for far greater cohesiveness in the society, and will acknowledge the fact of our history of how we came to this country in different ways. We came in different ways and in fact, we are attempting to forge a society which recognizes both our commonalities and our differences, and will try to bring forth a harmonious relationship. Therefore, the argument that to recognize such a day will be laying the foundation for further fragmentation of the society, I

want to argue, does not hold any water. If we do want to promote greater cohesiveness in the society, a greater sense of unity, I think this is a gesture that we can make which will go one step towards that laudable objective which we have in mind.

I think it was the author, Vidia Naipaul, who spoke of the search for self-knowledge and who emphasized that we ought to recognize who we are and where we have come from. The recognition of this day and the attendant celebrations which go with it, is an attempt at self-knowledge; is an attempt to find out who we are and where we have come from. It is not an attempt merely to look backwards, but one needs to look backwards with a certain objective that one wants self-knowledge. It is not only an attempt to look backwards, but it is an attempt to look backwards to make an effort to understand the present, and to prepare ourselves for the future as a nation and as a society.

As I come to that point, I want to quote what two prominent citizens of Trinidad and Tobago had to say on the question of the celebration of Indian Arrival Day. The first is none other than the hon. Prime Minister and the Member for Tobago East. This is what he said in his message on Indian Arrival Day, 1990 taken from the *Sunday Guardian* May 27, 1990:

"Indian Arrival Day celebrated on May 30, represents one of the ritualized backward glances which have assumed tremendous significance for our multi-ethnic population. I use the term 'ritualized', because I believe that this and similar celebrations which have emerged spontaneously from the hearts of the people are valuable for the spiritual healing and well-being of the entire community."

It is "valuable for the spiritual healing and well-being of the entire community". So that the Prime Minister himself recognizes that the commemoration of this day, commemorates the history of one of the ethnic groups of Trinidad and Tobago. He goes on in the same vein which I have been talking about, self-knowledge, to quote Naipaul approvingly. In fact, the great Trinidadian writer has been awarded the highest award, the Trinity Cross, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. This is what Naipaul had to say:

"I stress the value of self-knowledge because I think that for us in a small society, there can be no intellectual growth without self-knowledge."

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He also noted that:

“The last thing that self-knowledge should do is to make us provincial or narrow.”

There are many members of the Government who are steeped in their own provinciality and narrowness of mind and who, I am sure, may oppose this motion that I am proposing today. The recognition and commemoration of Indian Arrival Day is a quest for self-knowledge. The Prime Minister further went on to say:

"Indian Arrival Day is about self-knowledge. Its celebration is regenerative because it is impossible to look backwards without examining afresh the systematic defamation of character based on race, which was part of the process by which colonial administration justified the injustices of both indentured Indian indentureship and African slavery."

That is an extremely significant point, that when you look backwards you examine afresh the systematic defamation of character, but a defamation of character which is not only applicable to colonial society and history but it is applicable today, in Trinidad and Tobago and which informs the consciousness of many members of his Government and party.

Today as I propose this motion, we would look to see how they regard this proposal and how they will vote when the time comes. He went on to say:

"The very act of looking backwards then becomes an act of exorcism of the demons of racial denigration, vestiges of which remain to haunt us today."

He himself has acknowledged that. I will come later on to talk about the official attitude in this society to citizens of Indian descent. He continued:

"It is also an act of restoration of pride, dignity and self-knowledge. It also fortifies us for the future. The very qualities of courage, creative resistance and diligence, which enabled us to throw off the shackles of indentureship and slavery are the ones that we will draw upon in the face of the challenges of 1992 and beyond. They are the qualities which will ensure that we will never again be reduced to hewers of wood and drawers of water."

Indian Arrival Day and similar celebrations rehearse the fact that we have been victorious in the past. They foreshadow the certainty of our triumphs in the future."

2.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is not very often that I agree with the Prime Minister, but I fully endorse the sentiments he expressed in his message on this occasion. At least, on this issue, we are at one. Therefore, it is with great eagerness that I look forward to the outcome of this debate.

The other citizen of note who has commented on Indian Arrival Day is none other than the political leader of the People's National Movement and the Member for San Fernando East. He said in a message which was printed in the *Trinidad Guardian* of May 30, 1991:

"The People's National Movement has extended greetings to the Indian community on Indian Arrival Day, which PNM has described as an occasion that celebrates a most vital part of the nation's history."

So it is not only Trevor Sudama who was making and emphasizing that point, but also the Prime Minister and the Member for San Fernando East. Today, I am merely asking that this vital part of the nation's history be given national and public recognition. This is all I am seeking in this motion. He said:

"Together it is difficult to imagine our country devoid of the East Indian presence because of the many contributions they have made in every sphere of life. They have been a driving force in weaving the social, economic and political fabric of the nation."

If they had made that contribution, one wishes to ask whether their first coming to these shores should not be a matter of national commemoration.

Mr. Speaker, May 30, as I am arguing, is a day of historic and national importance for the whole society. Even if it were viewed as a day of significance only to citizens of Indian descent, then I think that the question has to be confronted: How does this society view citizens of Indian descent, by and large? What is the historical consciousness which informs our thinking today, especially the thinking of those who hold political, economic and social power in this country?

I want to give a little background to the problem that we face and the attitude of the wider society to citizens of East Indian descent in Trinidad and Tobago. I

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have, in a sense, in the past, described this as the “politics and economics of exclusion”. This is why this motion seeks to redress that consciousness and to point in a new direction—a direction of greater understanding, candour, and true integration of all our peoples in Trinidad and Tobago.

For the benefit of this House, I want to read into the record the views of Mr. Jimmy Bain, a very important personage in the political, bureaucratic, social structure of Trinidad and Tobago a leading French Creole—who was in the bosom of the People's National Movement, and held very significant posts as Commissioner of the Public Service Commission, Chairman of the Police Service Commission, *etc.*, who directed the recruitment into the bureaucracy in the public sector of Trinidad and Tobago. This gives you one illustration that is symptomatic of the attitude of a large number of non-Indians to Indians in the society. He said, as quoted in the *Trinidad Guardian* of April 25, 1976:

"The result has been that although for a long time the East Indians' employment was mainly in agriculture, where wages and returns were lower, they have saved and invested in business and agriculture so that today their descendants have acquired more and more of the land and business of the country. With people of African descent controlling the Government, and people of Indian descent capturing the heights of property and business, there has been a fair balance in this country, but this is changing."

Now, we will question the assumptions later. Let us just note the assumptions which have informed the relationship between the two major ethnic groups, and which have determined political outcomes in Trinidad and Tobago for the last 35 years. He went on:

"With the introduction of compulsory primary education, the East Indians have increasingly acquired education and have been increasingly invading. . ."

I want you to note the word, Mr. Speaker, “invading”—

". . . the fields of the Civil Service, the professions and Government."

As far as Jimmy Bain is concerned, and those for whom he speaks, the Civil Service, the professions and Government are a foreign country to the citizens of Indian descent of this country, so they are accused of invading these fields.

"As their numbers must now reach parity with people of African descent, there is a real possibility that in the not too distant future they will get control of the Government.

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Should this time come when the East Indian section owns most of the property, business and wealth of the country, as well as control of the Government, an imbalance could develop in our society that would cause undesirable stresses and strains that would not be good for the nation."

A member of a minority ethnic group is dictating, telling us what ought to be the relationship between the two major ethnic groups. You see where the germ has been sown. He went on:

"It is an urgent necessity, therefore, that all of us give serious thought to these matters and like sensible people make a conscious effort to counter any undesirable consequences that could develop from such a possible situation."

Warning of the dire consequences if Indians participate in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. It is an issue, as I said, that has informed outcomes in the electoral culture in Trinidad and Tobago from 1956, to today.

To further confirm the consciousness which dictates that we compartmentalize the society and that people of African descent must, of necessity, control, the government, bureaucracy, and so forth, and people of Indian descent are assumed to control business, I want to quote Jack Harewood and Ralph Henry who wrote *Inequality in a Post-colonial Society Trinidad and Tobago 1956—81*. They are academics who, we presume, do not have any overt political axe to grind. Listen to what they have to say:

"The blacks, who have dominated the formal political arena since self-government, are likely to cling tenaciously to State power in the hope that this would continue to accord to them some leverage over the channels of mobility traditionally available to them.

Those with elevated positions, class positions . . ."

Very important as to who promotes this kind of consciousness in the society.

". . . from among them would have no real quarrel with the system which has allowed them, as it has done elsewhere for comparable groups in the underdeveloped world, to engage in self-recruitment through their children who will be better educated than those of the lower income groups, given the advantage of home background.

At the same time, the lower mass base of the black segment may continue to see a vested interest in having State power under the control of blacks since

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this guarantees the present arrangement for income transfers for the lowest income groups, as well as for expected mobility for the more energetic among them."

I do not want to go into further quotation, but the very same sentiment was expressed in the letter by the anonymous technocrat in December 1987 which was headlined in the *Express* "The Grab by the ULF for Power".

Mr. Panday: Which the Prime Minister has not read to this day.

Mr. Sudama: And has not disavowed to this day.

What I am arguing is that this consciousness is perpetuated. In 1976, Jimmy Bain writes; in 1985, Jack Harewood and Ralph Henry reflects what has been the prevailing consciousness; and in 1987, the anonymous technocrat had his say.

2.50 p.m.

Let me try to dispel the myth because if we do not deal with and dissipate the myth which surrounds relationships between the two major ethnic groups in this society, we are not going to get a better understanding; we are not going to get a proper relationship established between them and then motions such as this will be viewed in a very negative way, by people of African descent.

Let me just for the purposes of the record, deal with this question of who dominates the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, and to establish once and for all, that by no stretch of the imagination can the Indians be said to dominate the economy of Trinidad and Tobago nor do they dominate the professions. But you had political decisions being determined on the basis of this misconception and this illusion of economic dominance by the Indians in this society and, therefore, they ought to be excluded by whatever means, from any effective participation in political power and bureaucratic and social power in this country.

Let us look at the gross domestic product of Trinidad and Tobago. I merely wish to look at the sectors involved and I wish to ask this House, where, in fact, do the Indians dominate? The oil sector comprises about 27 per cent of the economy. Can it be said that the Indians dominate the oil sector of Trinidad and Tobago? The agricultural sector comprises about 4 per cent of the economy and in the agricultural sector, the Indians are dominant either as workers, cane farmers of one sort or the other. But domestic agriculture is only 3 per cent of the population. They do not dominate export agriculture. If the thousands who are employed in that sector are only responsible for 3 per cent of the GDP, it gives

you an idea of the incomes in the agricultural sector of Trinidad and Tobago. This whole propaganda of dominance has to be put and, scrutinized, under the glare of the sunlight which only the UNC could provide. As you know, our symbol is the rising sun. Manufacturing: 8.2 per cent of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. Who controls manufacturing in this country? Who are the dominant elements in manufacturing? Large-scale constructing and quarrying: Who dominates that? That constitutes 9.7 per cent of the economy.

Dr. Samaroo: Would the Hon. Member give way to a question, please? May I ask the Hon. Member to indicate the date of the article by Harewood and Henry as well as the particular statistics that he is giving? What year do they represent?

Mr. Sudama: These are statistics of the gross domestic product for 1987, which are not very different from what they were in 1990. There may be marginal differences in 1990, but on the whole they give an idea of the basic proportions.

Construction and quarrying: 9.7 per cent. Who dominates this sector? Do the Indians dominate it? Transport, storage and communication: 10.3 per cent. Now let me say that when it comes to the major ownership of assets, you are talking about public sector enterprises, British West Indian Airways, Public Transport Service Corporation, Shipping Corporation and so forth. The minor forms of transport that is in a sense evenly divided, maxi-taxis and the fellows with the lorries, whatever.

Communications: Textel and Telco, the major elements of communication and, of course, the media, television and so forth. Who dominates that? Do the Indians in this country dominate that?

Then finance, insurance and real estate: 9.8 per cent of the economy. Who dominates finance—the banks, the insurance companies, the finance houses, the trust companies, Indians in Trinidad and Tobago?

Distribution: 8.2 per cent, wholesale and retail trade primarily. With respect to wholesale trade, it can never be said that that is under the dominance of Indians. Retail trade represents a significant presence by the Indians. But retail trade is merely 5 per cent of the economy of the country. So that if there is a dominant presence there, you are talking about a dominant presence in 5 per cent of the economy and 3 per cent under agriculture.

Government: 16.4 per cent of the economy. Who dominates Government in Trinidad and Tobago? Is it the Indians who dominate Government, despite the presence of my very ubiquitous friend from the Ministry of Enterprise and Tourism? But then he suffers under a very great illusion. So we will deal with

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that in due course, in the hustings, the illusion of dominance under which he labours.

Cultural community services: 5.2 per cent.

So when you look at the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, and you talk about dominance of the Indians, where on earth did that notion come from and who is perpetuating it and for what objectives? You have to face these questions. Look at the composition of the various Chambers of Commerce, the Southern Chamber, the Manufacturers' Association. Look at the composition of the chambers and the business associations. Who then is dominant? As a Government they ought to know and confront the question if they are honest enough to do so, brave enough to do so, and have the courage of their convictions.

Let me come to the professions and briefly outline the position in the professions which, we are told, are also dominated by Indians. We are talking about, say, Medicine at the end of 1983: 36 per cent of the doctors were Trinidad and Tobago citizens of Indian descent. 36 per cent in a population where we are nearly 45 per cent of the population of this country. In the 1987/1988 term, 35 per cent of the total population, legal fraternity were Indians, 65 per cent non-Indians; Dentists: 15 per cent Indians; Veterinary surgeons: 24 per cent Indians; Engineers: 24 per cent; Dispensing Opticians: 14 per cent and Dental Nurses: 26 per cent.

So where does Jimmy Bain, and those who think like him, come up with the idea that the Indians are dominant in the professions in Trinidad and Tobago? But you see, on the basis of that notion, they have acquired a certain attitude towards Indians in the society. We are trying to deal with that and we are trying to say, "well look here, this is a misconception. Let us clear away the underbrush of illusion and misconception and start with a candid assessment of where we are in this society. Who dominates what in the economy and so on".

3.00 p.m.

So that, Mr. Speaker, I merely wished to make that point in order to lay the groundwork for looking at this motion in a different light. I want, as I am proceeding in that vein, to quote our celebrated author, and acclaimed national hero, CLR James acclaimed by none other than the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, to be a national hero, notwithstanding that he was a member of the Cabinet which had put CLR James under house arrest. But that is another issue.

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Listen to what our acclaimed national hero had to say about the East Indians in this society at page 132:

"Every West Indian island has its own history by which it is to be judged."

This is in *Party Politics in the West Indies*.

"But I wish to say, in a sentence, that the West Indian nation, the people of Trinidad and Tobago, are better off, have wider, broader and deeper prospects from the fact that Indians were brought here."

Therefore one would seem to think that were Mr. James alive today, he would have supported the intent and the sentiment behind this motion. He says:

"That, I hope is plain enough. Now I ask you to watch and see how our local political leaders will shirk, and dodge and twist around this plain statement of position."

Of course, the Member for Tobago East was at that time one of our esteemed political leaders when Mr. James was writing, "how they will shirk, dodge and twist around this plain statement of position."

This is the point I am making. Some of my friends in the back are squirming, feeling that this issue must be thrown under the carpet as they have dismissed it for 30 years. He continued:

"That, all of it and more, needs to be said, often and unambiguously. No one says that. Even the Indians themselves cannot say it. They are a section of the population forced on the defensive. Until that is corrected no progress in race relations can be made. And the responsibility for this lies with those who hold the social and political sway".

Now who held and still holds the social and political sway in Trinidad and Tobago, then and now? I wish people would honestly answer that question for themselves.

"These opinions and attitudes of mind are not new, directed against PNM's political renegacy. . .

They are the legacy of that renegacy in the back of me here.

"and political backwardness."

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Of course, since the Member for Tobago East, was a leading member of PNM at that time, I suppose that this statement also refers to him and his attitude, except he was different from the lot.

"I have always had them. The best I can do is to indicate a line of approach..."

He went on to population—

"In proportion to population no section of our society has done more than the Indians for our agricultural development...The Indians... also have it to their credit that, more than all others, they have established small-scale business in the Trinidad economy."

That is where they still are today and where they are significant—small scale. They do not dominate this economy and never have done in Trinidad and Tobago. They are at the small-scale level, both in the retail sector and in farming.

"What the figures are I do not know. But were it not for them, more business would have been big business, i.e., in the already full hands of expatriates and local whites. With that type of monopoly so fraught with danger for any community, the Indians more than any others have broken. Our society is therefore a sounder and healthier place."

This is CLR James, speaking with a candour which is very seldom seen or heard in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that what I have said so far seeks to dissipate some of the myths, some of the misconceptions, some of the illusions which have characterized the presence of Indians of this society and how the rest of the society looks upon that presence. I honestly hope and trust what I have said so far has thrown light in a very candid and honest way. Because we, in the United National Congress, are on the platform of truth. We are practising the politics of integrity and we will come here and we will go elsewhere and deal with questions candidly and openly regardless of the consequences. That is why I am making this contribution here today. After I have finished and after our citizens of African descent have listened and have analyzed, they will come to the conclusion that it is about time we confront these issues openly in order to establish a more harmonious working relationship between the two major races in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with the issues on the arguments raised against declaring May 30, a public holiday as Indian Arrival Day. One of the first arguments which have been raised in the press and elsewhere, is that such a declaration will cause further fragmentation in the society by emphasizing ethnic differences. Now, we are not emphasizing ethnic differences; we are taking note of our historical evolution and in doing so, in a spirit of generosity, we will be furthering the cause of integration in this society; we will be furthering the cause of patriotism to this land, and we will be furthering the cause of a sense of belonging to all our peoples in the country of their birth. But at the same time it will take note of the diverse origins, and diverse evolutions of the history of Trinidad and Tobago and the contribution which each group would have made to that evolution. So I hope that deals with that argument, that it will cause further fragmentation in this society.

Mr. Speaker, the second argument is that we already have too many public holidays in Trinidad and Tobago and, therefore, to add another public holiday will be to make this a society of holidays only, and that will have an effect on productivity in the country. Productivity has to do with a state of mind, not necessarily with how many holidays you celebrate. I dare say many citizens of Trinidad and Tobago may go to work and feel it is a national holiday and that they have just come to work as a matter of formality. Therefore, the issue of productivity is not relevant to the question of the number of public holidays. But I am not asking for an additional holiday. When I first proposed this motion three or four years ago, when I was speaking at one of the commemorative occasions, I said that Indian Arrival Day should be declared a public holiday in substitution for one of the less significant Christian holidays that we have in this country. And when I made that comment, two church leaders, the head of the Catholic Church in Trinidad and Tobago, and the head of the Anglican Church in Trinidad and Tobago said that they had no objection to the giving up of Whit Monday as a public holiday in order to accommodate another holiday in Trinidad and Tobago. I quote from the *Guardian* of the May 29, 1990 which says:

"Anglican and Roman Catholic Church leaders yesterday offered no objections to giving up Whit Monday as a public holiday if the Government so decides."

3.10 p.m.

So, you see where the onus is. The onus is on the Government. I want to see how it will decide in this particular instance. The country is watching how it will decide in this particular instance. The church leaders said, "if the Government so

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decides." So, the Government cannot bring up objections from the church. They have said they are not averse to giving up Whit Monday.

"Bishop Clive Abdulah, head of the Anglican Church, and Archbishop Anthony Pantin, who leads the Roman Catholics, said yesterday that if any of the Christian holidays were to be abolished it could very well be the Whit Monday holiday.

They were responding to a suggestion by Trevor Sudama, UNC MP for Oropouche, in a *Sunday Guardian Supplement* article that Indian Arrival Day should be declared a public holiday by taking away one of the 'less significant Christian holidays'.

Sudama proposed that it should be substituted for either Whit Monday, which will be celebrated next Monday, or Corpus Christi.

Both are movable feasts.

Bishop Abdulah said yesterday . . ."

This is his very considered opinion—

". . .that he did not think that Indian Arrival Day warranted a public holiday.

'You have to separate Indian Arrival Day from other holidays'.

He said, 'I have no problems if they give up Whit Monday'. . .

He said, 'I think that the Government would have to look at what a national holiday should be, . . .'

Now while he had no objection to the giving up of Whit Monday, you see, it comes out in the thinking that I have been elaborating and quoting. It comes out in the thinking of our dear Bishop Abdulah. He said—

" 'I think that Government would have to look at what a national holiday should be', and added, that 'Indian Arrival Day should not displace a Christian holiday. You have to make distinction between holidays that have a religious significance and those that have national significance'.

“ 'If I were given a choice, I would be prepared to bypass Whit Monday. At the moment I will never feel that we are losing anything on Whit Monday.' "

So, here you have it. Church leaders are saying that they have no objection. Therefore, they have put the onus on the Government to decide whether a holiday

such as Indian Arrival Day on May 30, should displace Whit Monday as a public holiday. They will have to decide and we are looking to see how they will.

Now, the other argument against the declaration of May 30 as a public holiday, is that the other ethnic groups in the society will demand holidays to commemorate their own coming. Now, first of all, if the other ethnic groups of Trinidad and Tobago—and whoever their representative organizations are—make such a demand, then, of course, in due course you would have to consider it. As far as I am concerned no such demand has been made. Who are the other ethnic groups? Chinese—came here in very small numbers—and their history was very minimally involved in the plantation system; because our history in Trinidad and Tobago really, until very recent times, is the history of sugar economy and the plantation system, in which three major groups were involved: the Europeans, the Africans and the Indians.

The Chinese came and they made their contribution, whatever it was; a small group, but they are not demanding any such holiday. The Syrians, they came in very different circumstances from this society. They did not come in the period when the history of this country was really being forged and as I said, it is a matter for them to demand, and if they do so demand, the Government and other authorities would have to take that demand in due course. But who else are we talking about in Trinidad and Tobago? So, that really is not an argument. That is merely to confuse the issue as to whether Indian Arrival Day should be declared a public holiday or not.

Then you have an objection coming from the hallowed halls of the University of the West Indies, from one Dr. Kelvin Singh who says that to commemorate Indian Arrival Day is to commemorate degradation. I want to tell him here today that if he is looking for degradation, it really did not stop in 1845. Today, if he looks around in the society of Trinidad and Tobago, there is degradation and squalor of all sorts. It has very little to do with indentureship.

Furthermore, that while it was more significant for people of African descent to celebrate Emancipation, that it is ending of the system of slavery on a particular day—and that is a notable day—and an identifiable day on the calendar, for the ending of a system, it is more significant for the Indians with respect to their coming here because they came on contract; and their contract expired at different times. So that you do not want to celebrate the expiry of a contract. Therefore, the more significant thing, is the identifiable day of their arrival and coming to this society.

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So, this intervention from the hallowed precincts of the University of the West Indies does not even deserve a comment. To talk about it in terms of having a day to celebrate the start or ending of the Indian indenture *vis-a-vis*, the beginning and ending of slavery, is to put the historical experience of both these groups into a Procrustean bed, that is, to mould these experiences to fit a particular situation. That is not acceptable historically and I am amazed that this fellow claims to be a historian at the University of the West Indies. They were two separate identifiable experiences which have relevance, in their own right, and not relevant in counterpoise, one experience in terms of the other.

I believe that I have dealt, in a very brief way, and perhaps a very succinct way, with the various arguments which have been raised publicly against the declaration of Indian Arrival Day as a public holiday. From what I have said, you will come to the conclusion that these arguments really have little merit in them, but since they have been raised they must be discussed and dealt with.

Even if the Indians in this country were seeking to commemorate their arrival and therefore seeking out the branches of their roots in this society, one could argue that perhaps there is really nothing wrong with such an attempt to seek out where you have come from. The Prime Minister himself has made a significant statement to that effect, and the Member for Tobago West, for example, has made a point with respect to people of African descent trying to seek out their roots and we see absolutely nothing wrong with that.

3.20 p.m.

Why, if nothing is wrong with that, something is wrong if people of East Indian descent in Trinidad and Tobago try to seek out their roots? Let me quote the goodly Minister. For example, there is a report in the *Trinidad Guardian* which appeared on March 11, 1991:"

"Africans worldwide are urged to retain their origins."

There is absolutely nothing wrong in that if that is the prevailing sentiment of a people who have been rooted out from their homeland and scattered throughout the world. Here is the Minister herself in the *Express* of November 3, 1987; she says, very candidly—and I must commend her for her candour and I must put this on the records.

"We Africans are all too eager to forget our roots and our heritage."

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I am commending her. Let us suppose that Indians want to recall their roots and heritage, would she object to that? Would she object to the commemoration of Indian Arrival Day as a public holiday, even if she regards it as a seeking after of the roots of Indians in this country?

"We want to lighten our skin and hair and straighten our noses. Although some Africans choose to forget their heritage, there were some black intellectuals who were fighting to enlighten the public and dispel myths surrounding African culture."

There are myths. Surely, it is a worthwhile exercise to dispel those myths and to give people a sense of dignity which is justifiably theirs. The Minister said:

"I have noticed that there is a resurgence of black awareness and black consciousness in our society and I am pleased to be part of this resurgence."

According to the Minister:

"Dr. Elder's pre-occupation with the African contribution persistent in the region was very telling and important. In linking the cultural tradition of the people of Trinidad and Tobago with certain African tribes, Dr. Elder had made an attempt to dispel myths about African civilization and culture, promote a sense of identity among Afro-Trinbagonians and generally uplift our perceptions of self."

A sense of identity, a sense of cohesiveness and I trust she means not a sense of cohesiveness in a fragmenting way, but a sense of cohesiveness in an integrated way. I suppose that is what she meant. Therefore, I am making the same argument on behalf of those who may think that what I am proposing here is an attempt to fragment the society and merely inculcate Indo-Trinidadian inclusiveness in that exercise.

"I feel this trend of examination of our traditions is necessary in order to draw our people closer together and have them identify with each other."

"Draw our people" that means our people of Afro-Trinbagonian descent, draw them closer together and have them identify with each other. I am not saying for a moment that the Member for Tobago West has a political agenda in making this statement. She may very well be making this statement with a genuine attempt to deal with the problem of heritage and perhaps loss of heritage and with the problem of cultural alienation. If that is the assumption which underlays her statement, then I am fully supportive of that sentiment.

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If we had any doubts as to how the wider society tends to view the Indian presence, Indian culture in Trinidad and Tobago, the hon. goodly Sen. Sahadeo Basdeo from the other place—I see his colleague has made his presence felt here, so maybe he would carry back a little message to him.

Dr. Rambachan: Are you feeling the heat?

Mr. Sudama: What heat? You are a burnt-out cause.

Let me quote the hon. Sen. Basdeo who was reported in the *Sunday Guardian* dated January 9, 1988 just a week or so before he was elevated to the position of Minister of External Affairs. I do not know if the situation is any different today but this is what our good friend had to say under the headline "Hinduism Sidelined in Trinidad and Tobago Culture":

"Despite window dressing which has occurred here and there in respect of the support for Indians, Hindu culture, the State still treats that aspect of our culture emanating from the Afro-Caribbean society as dominant. East Indian Hindu culture is peripheral and so often deliberately sidelined. In fact, it is not only treated as inferior but it is referred to as misplaced or displaced."

A senior Government Minister is holding these views, but after February 8, 1988 that goodly gentleman is not going to make any such sentiments public, for obvious reasons because his love of office is so great that he has to stifle such sentiments in the interest of holding on to ministerial position, which he wanted more than anything in his whole life. Therefore, he would have done anything to hold on to ministerial office as Minister of External Affairs. The Senator stated:

"Because of this present neglect situation by the State . . ."

The state being the Government of Trinidad and Tobago among other institutions—

"that not only East Indian culture is developing in isolation from the rest of the society but to some extent gross creativity and originality are being impeded.

Hindus in this country and in this region have never been made to feel that they are equal if only because of the glaring reality of the situation."

What I am proposing is a small step to ending that alienation and feeling of inequality under which so many Indians in this country labour. It is not Trevor Sudama alone who is emphasizing the point. It is a senior member of the NAR

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Government making the same point. When they talk about our wanting to keep the Indians in indentureship, they must perhaps first talk to their own colleagues as to the views they hold.

Dr. Basdeo illustrated that in Trinidad and Tobago the impression given to the outside world is that:

"The only aspect of culture originating from here is the steelband music, limbo dancing and calypso."

Legitimate as that is, it is only part of the story.

"This is the picture painted abroad in our embassies in Canada, United States and Europe and the insensitivity has gone so far that even in our High Commission in India the situation is the same."

Former Senator, now Minister of External Affairs pointing out—and I suppose he was true to himself—the inherited, entrenched discrimination; the attitude towards Indian culture and Indians in Trinidad and Tobago and referring indirectly to one of the issues which I have raised in this debate: that if you are going to give people of East Indian descent in this country a sense of belonging, a sense that they are part of Trinidad and Tobago, that they do enjoy equal rights in this society, then all I am asking here this afternoon is that the Government make a small gesture towards that end, even if it is felt that marking this day as a public holiday has significance for only one ethnic group in the society.

3.30 p.m.

I am arguing, and I have argued, that it has significance, not only to one ethnic group but to the wider society, because the coming of the Indians here has changed the whole history of Trinidad and Tobago, and we would not have evolved to the society that we are, except the Indians had come to this country and made their presence felt in the society, in one way or the other. Therefore, to commemorate Indian Arrival Day is to commemorate an integral part of the history of this society.

In conclusion, I appeal to Members of this House that I have raised this motion, not as a partisan issue. This is an issue which has to be dealt with exclusive of partisan affinities and loyalties in this House; it has to be raised above that; we have to talk about the issue of national integration and the commitment of Members, individually, in this House, to the whole issue of national integration and the issue of attempting to end that sense of alienation in the society.

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Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Seconded by Mr. R. Palackdharrysingh.

Question proposed.

Mr. Raymond Palackdharrysingh (*Naparima*): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the motion so ably moved by the Member for Oropouche, and to endorse his views expressed, as I believe that Indian Arrival Day is an identifying of a focal point and a point of reference, which gives coherence and meaning to the presence of East Indians in our society. It is aimed at the recognition of their contribution to this society and the removal of alienation and the feeling of transience imposed upon them by the status quo. It must be a day that is set aside by this population to commemorate, ritually celebrate and to re-enact as an expression of their *bona fide* citizenry, Indians in this country. It is to give effect to the ideal, "Here every creed and race find an equal place"; in order to bind the covenant, "we pledge our lives to thee".

How intellectually dishonest it is to mislead the population by saying that there is nothing for the East Indians to be happy about and to celebrate. The juxtaposing of his history with that of his African brother to show that the Africans had emancipation to celebrate and that the Indians have no comparable experience, is an attempt to deceive the population. It is a plot, once again, to deny him the authenticity of his self-worth and the recognition of his entry and contribution to Trinidad and Tobago. Why are some of our pseudo-intellectuals, particularly of East Indian descent, negating this inherent yearning by word and deed? Is it that their Anglo-Saxon Western acculturation forces them to scorn their past?

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to rationalize the non-recognition of Indian Arrival Day as a public national holiday by attempting to justify that there are no events of historic significance about which the East Indians, as an important ethnic group, could be proud and joyous. Is it that we are all victims of the paradox that emancipation represented freedom of the African slaves *vis-a-vis* Indian Arrival Day that represented indentureship or neo-slavery? No one could seriously accept that point of view.

Indian Arrival Day in Trinidad and, indeed, the Caribbean, was an extension of the perpetuation of British colonization upon us. Notwithstanding the conditionality of his entry, we are compelled to give due recognition to his arrival, for without it, our country would not be as enriched as it is today. The

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place of departure was not the point of departure. While it was the same trip on the same ship, the journey was longer. The point of departure has to be that the East Indians must be seen as one of the basic colour inherent in the rainbow.

"Here every creed and race find an equal place." It is the ideal and truism expressed in our National Anthem, that is self-sustaining, on the one hand, and traumatic and nascent, on the other hand, as it pertains to the East Indians in Trinidad and Tobago. It gives perennial struggle as it manifests itself for recognition. Why do we have to delay the inevitable? Why do we not have the conviction to act in a manner that would reduce the cataclysmic and epic dialectic discourse before this honourable House today?

3.40 p.m.

Why is it always necessary to inflict upon the Government, shock therapy for them to take action on matters that are self-evident; that May 30 be declared a national public holiday to be known as Indian Arrival Day? It is begging the question for authenticity and recognition by a significant sector of the population who pledge themselves to the country of Trinidad and Tobago. To turn a blind eye, or to remain silent and inactive on this matter, renders us all guilty of the crime of historical and cultural negligence. It is rather passive discrimination. The United Nations on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, proclaims in Article (1):

"Discrimination between human beings on the grounds of race colour or ethnic origin, offends the human dignity and shall be condemned as a denial of the principles of the charter of the United Nations as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among nations, and are in fact capable of disturbing peace and security among peoples."

Mr. Speaker, Indian Arrival Day is clearly a socio-historic, cultural day of a significant ethnic growth in his society. To deny this call for recognition is to violate the spirit and intent of the international covenant on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. The Government's response to this matter has been devoid of altruism. The intoxication of office has dulled their sensitivities, eroded their consciousness and eliminated their sympathies. Why do the East Indians have to struggle vehemently for recognition that is "forged from the love of liberty"? Have they not yet arrived in this society? Have they not wrestled with the colonial masters? Have they not contributed significantly to the development

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of the nation? Did they not travel on the same kind of ships across the Indian and Atlantic Oceans? Did they not consciously make a choice to remain and build homes, families and a future in and for the nation? Do they not merit a national holiday that has been identified as May 30 as their point of enjoinment into a society that they ably assisted in building and sustaining?

How did they assist in the building and sustaining of the society? Some may ask? The answer lies partly in the capitalist mode of economic activity led by the metropolitan countries. The East Indian workers, like the African slaves before them, were but the innocent victims of both political and economic forces which they did not understand and over which they had no control. Hugh Tinker, in his book a *New System of Slavery* has this to say:

"The legacy of negro slavery in the Caribbean incorporated many of the repressive features of the old system which induced in the Indians many of the responses of their African brothers in bondage. For 90 years after emancipation, sugar planters and sugar workers, to be followed by others involved in other kinds of plantation culture, worked out the inheritance of slavery. Slavery produced both a system and an attitude of mind in which the products determined everything, not the people. As part of the world demand for raw materials, the Indians journeyed across the world to labour upon the plantation."

It is therefore known that the export of Indian labour from India in the 1830s was to replace African slaves on the sugar plantations. Indian indentureship must be placed within the context of the world capitalist system, thereby providing the link of the oppression of our ancestors in world history with the destruction of ancient civilizations and their populations. Indian Arrival Day which began our history as overseas Indians must be seen in this light. East Indians must be seen as a significant component of this young nation of Trinidad and Tobago.

The late Dr. Eric Williams in his book, the *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*, has pointed out on page 96:

"In 1848, on the eve of the vast new wave of immigration, which was to continue until 1917, the Governor of Trinidad, Lord Harris wrote memorable and prophetic words: 'A race has been freed, but a society has not been formed.' "

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An Oxford Professor, speaking of the decision to bring in by immigration a new supply of labour in the colonies, stated: "Such a colony is but a great workshop rather than a miniature state.' "

Mr. Speaker, in 1844, the British Government agreed to an immediate immigration from India to Trinidad of 2,500 Indian workers from the ports of Calcutta and Madras, in an exercise to fulfil the stipulation of a resolution of July 25, 1842. The resolution at page 94 states:

"THAT one obvious and most desirable mode of endeavouring to compensate for this diminished supply of labour, is to promote the immigration of a fresh labouring population, to such an extent as to create competition for employment."

Such were the schemes and treachery of British capitalism. Trinidad imported, according to the statistics reproduced by Dr. Williams on page 100 in the same book, the following number of East Indians:

1872	3,607
1869	3,329
1875	3,274
1892	3,254
1910	3,228
1867	3,267
1905	3,796

Indian immigration thus became the new prop of the planters since Britain abandoned the traditional sugar preferences. The late Dr. Eric Williams had to wonder how it was possible for any country that had abolished Negro slavery on the ground that it was inhuman, to justify East Indian indenture with its 25 cents a day wage and its jails.

3.50 p.m.

It was his view that the Europeans had distorted and maligned African civilization in order to find an alibi for Negro slavery, in the same way they distorted and maligned Indian civilization in the 19th century in order to justify Indian indenture. One must not be deluded to think that the subjugation of the Indians by the European powers left no hope of optimism for them. The Indian

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diaspora was pre-meditated and callous. Having crossed the rubicon of the Middle Passage and with the will to survive, their arrival to their various destinations was providential. However, theirs was the determination to brave and survive the new frontier experiences.

Not only did the Indians survive the new and harsh experiences in Trinidad and Tobago but they contributed immensely to the development of the society by their sweat, blood and tears. The 1821 census report Part (v) pointed out that 65,593 persons, or 48 per cent of the total Trinidad population, were engaged in agriculture in 1891; 40,902 or 62 per cent were Indians and 78 per cent of the adult Indian population was employed in this sector. According to the 1921 census report, whereas 40 per cent of the total population in Trinidad was engaged in agriculture, nearly 60 per cent were Indians and 67 per cent of adult Indian were so engaged. Is it not clear that the Indians exerted considerable impact on the sugar industry since their arrival?

Nearly all of the indentured labourers were assigned to the sugar industry, between 80 to 90 per cent of them. After the depression in the 1880s the cocoa and coconut industries had made a slightly higher input into the national economy, but employed no more than 10 per cent of the East Indian indentured labour population. The system of plantation, agriculture was established during slavery. Conditions associated with slavery remained to stigmatize those who were involved in agricultural labour.

Agriculture after emancipation became an anathema to those who were freed. However, estate conditions for thousands of East Indian indentured labourers were associated with a low standard of living, manual drudgery, seasonal unemployment, wasted labour and unfair and ill-treatment.

In the evidence of K.J. Grant in the Labour Committee Report of 1906, he diagnosed the effects of indenture following slavery which had reinforced prejudices against agricultural labour in Trinidad. He suggested the need for improved wages, and treatment for estate labourers fewer prosecution for breaches of indenture, one-acre plots per families near the estate, fairer weighing and prices for cane farmers and better preventative health care, but to no avail.

Mr. Speaker, as the indentured system became established with abundance of labour around, the differential systems of wages became the norm. The practice developed in Trinidad whereby Indians were to be employed and to receive very little wage.

The Labour Committee Report of 1906 pointed out that Mr. Mc Lean, a Princes Town planter, stated that he employed Indians on the cocoa estates at 25 cents per day, plus free medical care, while for road work, the Creoles and the West Indian islanders as job workers, got the equivalent of 60 to 80 cents per day, and even \$1 per day. These workers refused to be bound to the estate like "coolies".

D.H. Hann, a public works engineer in his evidence to the Labour Committee Report of 1906, said that he employed mainly negroes, that is African, Creoles and West Indians, on his project at 40—60 cents a day. Wages were not the only determining factor. Cultivation work had low status for all the groups involved.

According to the Parliament papers, memo by J. Hart on page 323 he said "that to call a man a gardener was to class him with the Portuguese jobber who is of a low type. There was much in name, especially in a mixed community like ours where the people were super-sensitive as to social standing."

So, Mr. Speaker, you understand the role that the East Indians had to play and continues to play, in building the economy. Not only should they have an occasion to reflect and commemorate their entry here, but they should be encouraged and supported by other sectors since they had to engage themselves in the lowest paying and lowest status quo jobs in the colonial plantation system.

Mr. Speaker, until the 1920s, agriculture remained the most important sector and non-Indian labourers comprised of two-fifths of its work-force especially in cocoa production. When other opportunities came their way, the Creoles went into the mineral industries and the clerical positions, thus abandoning the agricultural sector and leaving the Indians to the low-esteemed agricultural sector.

Mr. Speaker, Marianne D. Ramesar, in an article entitled "The impact of the Indian immigrants on colonial Trinidad society, has shown from a source compiled by the labour community, Usine Ste. Madeleine included Trinidad largest central factory and, of course, in the constituency of Naparima. It deals with the nationality of labourers employed at Usine Ste. Madeleine, the units of labour in terms of days' work, the year and the estates and it points out that on the estates in 1894, there were 699,000 units of labour produced by the Indians, which represented a 89.7 per cent of the units of labour, as against the Creoles who contributed 80,448, which amounted to a mere 10.3 per cent.

In 1897 the number of units—

Hon. Member: Is the hon. Member giving the breakdown of production by nationalities?

Mr. Sudama: Units of labour provided by nationalities in the agricultural sector.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: As identified as Indians or Creoles, as from the article.

In 1900, the East Indians contributed about 90 per cent of the units of labour as against 9.6 for the Creoles, and in 1904, 95 per cent of the labour as against 4.4 per cent.

Now, if we look at the number of units of labour as in the factories we are going to find a reverse situation, where in 1894, the Indians contributed, in the factories, 27.3 per cent and the Creoles 72.4 per cent. In 1897, 25.7 per cent by the Indians, 74.3 per cent by the Creoles. In 1900, 18.8 per cent by the Indians and 81.2 per cent by the Creoles. In 1904, 21.2 per cent by the Indians as against 78.8 per cent by the Creoles.

4.00 p.m.

So, the point here is, that when it came to sugar and agriculture, it was shown that the East Indians had to accept what was considered the menial jobs in the society. The Trinidad Agricultural Society Report of 1980 indicated that nearly 50 per cent of cane farmers were Indians in 1917. It is clear that the Indians made their major contribution to the development of Trinidad and Tobago through their involvement in the lowest rung of economic activity—peasant farming. They helped to stem the tide of imports, which amounted to thousands of pounds annually, spent on importing tropical vegetables, ground provisions, yams, sweet potatoes, *etc.*, from Venezuela and the neighbouring West Indian islands, while thousands of acres of lands remained uncultivated in Trinidad.

Many Indians then engaged themselves in production of food crops; participated in the underdeveloped areas of Trinidad when Crown lands were made available in small parcels in 1869. Having joined the Creoles as cocoa producers, cane farmers and market gardeners, they became an important land-owning group mainly because of their tendency to invest their savings in land.

Again, I would like to indicate what Marianne D. Ramesar, in an article, “The impact of the Indian immigration on colonial Trinidad society”, has said. She stated:

"The end of the immigration system found Indians numerically important in Trinidad where enough of them remained to make a lasting difference to the composition of the population. They had brought an added diversity to an already heterogeneous and a novel society. Despite the assertion of a Creole identity and expressions of proto-nationalism by some French Creoles and African descended professionals, the society remained unformed and divided. The continued influx of immigrants was largely responsible for this.

The Indians were particularly influenced by the development of a multi-ethnic society with the complexities which this entailed. Fed by fresh annual waves of compatriots, they managed to retain and recreate traditional religious and cultural forms."

She went on to state:

"Like the African slaves before them, the Indians supplied an adult work force, facilitating the maintenance of the production of the colony staples under a plantation system and contributing to their employers' prosperity. Indirectly, some of them benefited from opportunities for land acquisition, contributing to new agricultural development in an undeveloped Trinidad and Tobago. Indians played a vital role in agriculture mainly at a subordinate level, in a way which determined their status, and the status of agriculture, with lasting effects."

She also indicated that:

"Like the slaves, the Indian immigrants provided Trinidad with more than a labouring force, however. Survivors of another crossing, they had endured hardship, adapted to the discarding of traditional social customs, recreated broken family systems and clung tenaciously to some religious and cultural practices. Their experience had conditioned them to contribute, not only to the number, but to the natives of the population of Trinidad."

I am grateful to Marianne Ramesar for the research and documentation.

Mr. Speaker, need I say more for the authentic acceptance of Indians in this country by way of recognizing their arrival in an official way, by making May 30, a national public holiday? The superficial mouthings of the pseudo-intellectuals and the opposition by the status quo to the recognition of East Indian Arrival Day is becoming deafening. Listen to what Sen. Dr. Sahadeo Basdeo had to say in an article on page 14 of the *Trinidad Guardian*, of Wednesday, May 29, 1985. I quote:

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"In the field of cultural growth in Trinidad and Tobago, the presence of the Indian has seen an enrichment to the nation's cultural mosaic. By the introduction of their religion, food, their lifestyle, their cohesive family structure and social system, their music and associated art forms, pottery and handicraft, the Indians have helped to make this country culturally unique and exciting. In short, the East Indian sector of our cosmopolitan society has made a major contribution to all aspects of contemporary life in this country. Indian Arrival Day 1985 must be a reaffirmation of this position."

Somehow, that voice has now been silent on the matter. The struggle for the recognition of East Indians as an authentic and integral part of the society is no longer an issue. What is more important for the goodly Senator is the elevation to ministerial office of a couple of Hindus. What qualitative change has come about because of the elevation of him, and a couple of his East Indians colleagues, to ministerial office? The answer is there for all and sundry. It is no wonder that the Member for Oropouche has to bring such a motion to the Parliament.

It is now possible for me to conclude that the status quo shapes the thoughts and beliefs of those who are absorbed into it. The vision of our intellectuals seem to be lost and the convictions that they once held are no more. That it why the struggle for equality would never end with the assumption of office. Indian Arrival Day is destined for a long and bitter struggle before it is finally recognized. One writer had this to say:

"In a multi-ethnic, multi-racial society, such as ours, it must be clear by now that there can be no monolithic culture. It is not possible, nor is it desirable. It is inevitable and reasonable that our national culture will reflect the inputs of the various cultural streams in the society.

Indian Arrival Day will always be more meaningful to Indians than others in the society because of a certain kind of emotional appeal inherent in the situation. But Indian Arrival Day should be an occasion for national reflection. Because it is good to remember and to celebrate the past, but we have to face the future."

This quotation came from Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie as obtained from the *Sunday Guardian* dated June 15, 1986, Indian Arrival Day Celebration at the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha. *[Interruption]* We will see if you still have that position. We will see if you still have the fortitude to say that.

4.10 p.m.

As we move forward, what better way to celebrate than to have Indian Arrival Day a national holiday, that would be shared by the rest of our national community? But then others would argue that to have another holiday would be ridiculous; the society cannot afford it. Yet others would argue that every other group would agitate for a national holiday. Let us examine the justification for such demand that Indian Arrival Day be a national holiday.

Indian Arrival Day, like Emancipation, was an historic occasion of great importance to the community. It is not a religious event. We all are aware that among the East Indians, we have Hindus, Moslems with many being converted into Christianity some time later. Yet, they all share a common past and they have all made their contributions in the development of the society. The East Indian community is not a marginal group. They comprise more than 43 per cent of the population. The Indians are not a recalcitrant group, neither are they a transient group. They have rooted themselves here and there is no better point of reference than the date of first putting foot on this glorious land. All they ask is the stamp of authenticity and self-esteem.

On page 15 of the *Sunday Guardian* April 21, 1991 Ravi Ji wrote:

"Mr. Immigration—is time for my visa—is time for my offering—I can't go to the altar—with half miself—dat is sacrilege—the Gods would be angry. Sen de message—Mr. Immigration—let mi children prepare for de arrival—like Rama coming home—Sita freed from Lanka—let them prepare the welcome lights and tharias—and sing songs in ancient tongues—Look at my forehead. The Caroni River flows deep. Look at mih hands—de history of dis land written in patterns of corn."

Do you understand the sentiments expressed in this piece? Ponder on it. This is the call of a large group that merits and deserves a holiday in their recognition.

Let us come back to the idea that another holiday is ridiculous and costly and in any event there are already too many holidays. A comparison would show the number of holidays in some countries.

Name of Countries	No. of Holidays
Trinidad and Tobago	15
United States	9
United Kingdom	9

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Name of Countries	No. of Holidays
Canada	11
Switzerland	8
Ireland	9
Greece	9
Holland	9
Norway	9

So Trinidad is 15 with the mean 9, that is 6 more above the selected countries.

One writer indicated that it costs this country between \$70 and 80 million in wages and overheads for every public holiday. The 15 holidays including traditional carnival days would cost this country \$1.2 billion, nearly one-fifth of the nation's budget. This argument would seem reasonable and, therefore, would make the call for a national holiday on Indian Arrival Day a non-starter. That is not what is being argued from this side. What is argued is that there must be a review of the holidays and, consequently, an evaluation and re-ordering of the holiday calendar.

Let us now take a look at holidays and the origins.

Christian Origin	Dates
New Year's Day	January 1
Good Friday	Last Friday in March
Easter Sunday	
Whit Monday	Some time in May
Corpus Christi	Late May
Christmas Day	December 25
Boxing Day	December 26
Hindu Holiday	
Divali	To be announced
Muslim Holiday	
Eid-UI-Fitr	To be announced

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Historic Origin	Dates
Labour Day	June 19
Emancipation Day	August 1
Independence Day	August 31
Republic Day	September 24

Among the nine religious holidays we have seven from Christian origin; one from Hindu; one from the Muslim Faith. Divali and Eid-UI-Fitr have been recent additions brought about by the agitation of the respective communities.

From a theological point of view, we all would have no problems with Christmas Day. That is the day of the Lord Incarnate, the day that Christians believe that the Lord entered the world of human realm to start the process of salvation. It is a strong theological belief that no one ought to tamper with. Good Friday, another very strong Christian belief in the crucifixion of Christ which indicates the temporary death of Christ on the cross that was necessary if he was to win against the forces of evil. Easter Sunday, of course, which is the Resurrection Day is the glorious Ascension of the Saviour from the jaws of death, the grave. Therefore, it would be extreme folly to think about tampering with these religious holidays.

When you look at New Year's Day, Whit Sunday or Pentecost, the public holiday Whit Monday, Corpus Christi and Boxing Day, it is difficult in our society to justify their retention theologically.

4.20 p.m.

New Year's Day, Mr. Speaker, is the first day of the year. In countries that use the Gregorian calendar, and for some that also use a lunar calendar, like China, Japan and Korea, it is observed by a variety of rites, both religious and secular, and by parades, feasts, games and gifts. In Christianity generally, it is called, "The Feast of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus", and in Roman Catholicism, "The solemnity of Mary, Mother of God", a holy day of obligation for Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans. This information comes from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on page 73 of Vol. IV.

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

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mr. T. Sudama*]

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Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: The sitting is suspended for the tea break.

4.23 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.05 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, before the tea break, I was taking a look at the significance of some of the religious holidays. We look at Pentecost, also called Whit Sunday in Christianity, celebrated 50 days after Easter, commemorating the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples of Jesus and the beginning of the church by Anglicans, from the custom of baptizing white-robed believers on this day.

We take a look at Corpus Christi. It is a festival in Christianity in honour of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, primarily in the Roman Catholic countries on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday or the following Sunday in some places, like the United States. It is observed with processions in which the Corpus Christi or the body of Christ or consecrated bread is carried.

Here, when we look at Boxing Day, some feel that it is a day that is not highly significant in the religious calendar.

It would seem that there is some merit by the concurring of the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans that it might not be too difficult a proposition to give up the observance of Whit Monday as a national public holiday because it would seem that the religious and theological significance is not of the deep meaning that some others like Christmas, Easter and Good Friday have. Therefore, if there is a softening in the position by the heads of the churches and, eventually by the members of Christianity, it is worthwhile for the Government to consider following up the proposition with a view to satisfying the entire community by considering the conversion of one of these days for the observance of Indian Arrival Day.

It has been pointed out to me in the break-time that we have got, as I mentioned before, four historical holidays—holidays of historical origin: Labour Day, Emancipation Day, Independence Day and Republic Day. It would seem that the rationale, more or less, for both Independence and Republic Day seems to be the same. Independence Day marking our entry into self-hood as a nation and Republic Day, more or less, trying to put the additional feature of adopting a

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Republican style of government and constitution. It would seem that the significance of Republic Day should be re-evaluated with a view to dispensing with it, since it does not represent anything much more significant than Independence Day in our country.

I would want to enquire—and probably someone from the Government benches would respond—whether or not there are plans for the celebration for the quincentenary of the landing of Christopher Columbus in these parts, in 1992, and what plans are being envisaged, if any, and really what is the necessity for such plans, when in our own historical calendar we have removed Discovery Day and filled it with Emancipation Day? The point here is, are we prepared to negate some of the more related and urgent issues to fall back into positions that we seem to have dispensed with? Are we going back to embrace some of the Eurocentric customs that we seem to have been shedding in our understanding of our history? The undue weighing of public holidays with Eurocentric bias leaves much to be desired and must be addressed.

The struggle for Indian recognition did not begin with this motion in the House. It began long ago. The Immigration Ordinance of 1897 united Indians in Trinidad. The East Indian National Association in Princes Town demanded rights and privileges of British citizenship. They debated many issues and passed resolutions urging the redress of grievances.

5.15 p.m.

The Indians protested against the new Immigration Ordinance of 1897 because it required every Indian in Trinidad to be armed with a free pass, otherwise he would be arrested by the police.

On September 10, 1897, they met at the Oriental Hall in San Fernando and demanded that the ordinances be modified because the Indians who have settled in Trinidad should not be called immigrants, and should not be required to carry passes. At the end of the day, Indians who had completed their term of industrial residence would be able to get employment and be able to employ other Indians without any reference to the police or immigration officer.

In 1909, the Indian National Association in Couva, was launched. In 1899, the panchayat of Tacarigua was convened to consider the conduct of Rev. John Morton of the Presbyterian Church. The Indians had to fight all the way for recognition in the society, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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In 1904, Abdul Aziz led a delegation to the Governor, demanding the legal recognition of Muslim marriages. The Indians protested the proposed rise in the price of crown-lands aimed at militating against the permanent settlements of Indians in the island. The Indians took a keen interest in the proceedings of the Sanderson Committee, sent to Trinidad by the British Government in 1909. They demanded that there should be an Indian representative in the Trinidad Legislative Council. They told the Sanderson Committee that the conditions of East Indians were far from satisfactory. The Trinidad Democratic League founded in 1912, created a new interest in East Indians in general politics. The acceptance of English education by the Indians in Trinidad also helped in the creation of a new consciousness. In 1912, Fitzpatrick was nominated to the Legislative Council.

It is indeed very clear that the East Indians fought to be integrated in the social, political and economic fabric of the society, for they had no intention of returning to India. Should we begrudge them the right to celebrate Indian Arrival Day as a public holiday commemorating their permanent citizenry? We must not only say that Indians in Trinidad and Tobago must be able to step out of their communities to enrich the nation with the substance of their civilization; we must vote aye for the motion brought forward by the Member for Oropouche.

On May 30, 1991, Dr. Brinsley Samaroo, speaking to a congregation at the Edinburgh Hindi Mandir during an Indian Arrival Day Celebration, said:

"The Indian community must understand that it has contributed its full share and more to the development of this society, and therefore must regard itself as a full and complete participant in the affairs of the nation at every level".

He pointed out that the Indian community had invested too much in development of what the nation, as a whole, has achieved to think in terms of separating itself into an "Indesh" or a "bharatiyadesh". He emphasized that we have to accept the idea of our permanence and to assert that right strenuously. However, it is pitiable that he could not advocate that Indian Arrival Day be a national holiday. He could not do it there, and he cannot do it here in this House. He is a victim of permanent paralysis inflicted on him by the status quo because of his vaunting ambition for ministerial window-dressing.

I am certain that history would not absolve the Government, with so many East Indian Ministers, for not declaring Indian Arrival Day as a public holiday. The spirit of the East Indian community will not be stifled by our divergence of

referring the matter to be considered by a Joint Select Committee. The Indians of this country took a decision on this matter many moons ago.

An extract from the *Indian Centenary Review—100 years of progress in Trinidad*, from UWI, states:

“The greatest concourse of Indians ever to have assembled in Trinidad met in Skinner Park, San Fernando on Wednesday, May 30, 1945, to celebrate the centenary of Indians domicile in the territory.

Weeks of arduous preparation by the hon. Timothy Roodal and his committee of organizers were well rewarded when 20,000 Indians formed on the 'greens' at Harris Promenade in front of the Town Hall and marched into Skinner Park with Mr. Roodal and the Ag. Governor at the head.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am told that by evening the crowd grew to 30,000. It is written that those privileged to witness the spectacle that day, will ever have an indelible mark upon their minds.

In its course, our pioneers were remembered and tribute paid to them and the part their descendants have played in advancing their colony. Truly, it was a fitting climax to 100 years of settlement in this colony. It was clear that Indian Arrival Day, from that day, was destined to be a national holiday. Why delay? Why play games with the ineluctable? If there is any political will and sagacity in the Government, accept the motion in its entirety.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of information. What is the meaning of that word?

Mr. Sudama: He has no right in this House if he does not understand, the meaning of “ineluctable”.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: There is no power in the land to stop the tassa from beating; there is no process that will subside the yearning for self-hood; there will be no experience to eclipse the historic reality of our presence here, for this is the land of us all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support the motion resolving that Indian Arrival Day be made a national holiday in its entirety, so ably moved by the hon. member for Oropouche. I hope that the entire House would give its support to this motion.

I thank you.

The Minister of Food Production and Marine Exploitation (Dr. The Hon. Brinsley Samaroo): Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is quite a lot that I have to say on this particular motion, and I am very pleased that it has been brought before the House and finally we are debating it. I do not think that in the time we have between now and the end of the day, that I shall be able to say all that I want to say on this particular important motion. But I do hope to begin my contribution this afternoon, and on the next occasion that we meet, I shall be able to continue with my contribution.

5.25 p.m.

I commend the Member for Oropouche in saying that this should be a non-partisan debate; that people should express varying opinions and differing opinions if necessary. I appeal to him and the Member for Naparima that they must not necessarily be adamant in the position that May 30 ought to be declared a holiday for the recognition of Indian arrival. They have one point of view on that particular matter, others might have another point of view and I am going to suggest a way in which both points of view might be harmonized in a mutually acceptable direction.

I wish to make it very clear that nobody on this side of the House disputes the importance of May 30, 1845 in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. All that the Members for Oropouche and Naparima have said about the importance of that date is relevant. So that the point I am making is that there is no disagreement between the various sides of the House on the importance of May 30, 1845.

However, I am going to suggest to this House that it is very essential and necessary that the Government of this country make an appropriate arrangement for the commemoration—one might say the celebration—of the very considerable contribution that the Indian community has made to this country. On that matter, I think we are at one with the Members for Oropouche and Naparima. First of all, that we do not dispute the importance of May 30, 1845 and secondly, we are not in dispute against some form of celebration; some form of commemoration of the very important contribution that the Indian community has made to Trinidad and Tobago.

However, so far as I am concerned, I am not in agreement with the date, May 30, 1845, and I want to spend some time in agreeing with a view that has been condemned and criticized by the Member for Oropouche; that is the view of Dr. Kelvin Singh, one of our eminent historians in this country, who has done

considerably more work than the Member for Oropouche on this matter, as indeed, on the matter of Caribbean history. One must not lightly disregard the work of scholars of such seriousness.

The Member for Oropouche talked about having May 30 as the date for the declaration of a holiday for Indian Arrival Day but he makes the enormous mistake of citing as a precedent for that day, Emancipation Day which—

Mr. Sudama: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Member has misconstrued what I have said. Let me correct him. I made it a point in my contribution to say that there is no relationship between the call for Indian Arrival Day to be declared a public holiday and the declaration of Emancipation Day. There is no relation, simply because they are dates of historical significance in their own right and not because one relates more to the people of African ancestry in Trinidad, therefore you must have a day which commemorates the history of Indians. The point really is, that it is a day that has significance in its own right and I made the point that the call is not related in any way to Emancipation Day.

Dr. Samaroo: The Member for Oropouche is tying up himself; contradicting, considerably, what the Member for Naparima said. The Member for Naparima—*[Interruption]* When you are on a particular side you must talk before, so you do not contradict each other continuously. The Member for Oropouche is saying that they are two different and separate experiences; the Member for Naparima went at length to show the similarity between the two. He went at length to say that indentureship was a neo-system of slavery; that indentureship incorporated features of the African slave system; that the conditions of slavery remained antagonistic to those who came afterwards; like the African slaves, before them, the Indians had to endure the conditions of degradation.

So, here we have two Members of the same party, who obviously did not consult with each other: one says that it is a totally different experience, the other goes at great length to show the similarity of the two experiences. The point I am trying to make is that the concept—

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I think the honourable Member is trying to mislead the House. I do not think that he recognizes that difference between “same” and “similar”.

Dr. Samaroo: —a neo-system of slavery and the Member for Oropouche says that this is quite different from slavery and, therefore, the two cannot be compared.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to make the point— [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, order please! The Minister is being disturbed. Order please!

Dr. Samaroo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point I am trying to make is that it is abundantly clear, as the Member for Naparima indicated and as people have extensively written—and when I come on the next occasion I shall bring a good deal of such writings—to illustrate the similarity between the experience of slavery and the experience of Indian indentureship.

Therefore, those who spoke and agitated for the declaration of Emancipation Day, had in their mind, a concept of liberation—a liberation perspective. Those who convinced the Government of this country to declare Emancipation Day in commemoration of the contribution that the Africans made to the development of this society, could have well chosen the servile perspective of the Member for Oropouche and could have gone to some day in 1610 when the first Africans were brought to Haiti and recognize that day as a day of African arrival. That is a servile perspective I am indicating to you.

What they did on the other hand, was to look at the day when Africans were made free. So you could look back from the beginning of slavery in the Caribbean in 1610 to the Emancipation of the Africans in 1838 and look at the enormous struggle the Africans made to achieve that freedom.

Mr. Sudama: Would the Minister say, as a historian, that when the period of indentureship ended—the initial period of five years—that thousands of the immigrants re-contracted for another period to stay in Trinidad to work on the sugar plantation, and they did so voluntarily?

Dr. Samaroo: What is the relevance? That is true. It is a true historical statement. Nevertheless they re-indentured themselves to another five years of semi-slavery. [*Interruption*] Not necessarily voluntarily. I would have to give him some of the literature that indicates this. Not necessarily voluntarily. The point is that they re-indentured themselves to this new form of slavery for another five years. So, however one looks at it, it was a new form of slavery under which the Indians operated.

5.35 p.m.

So, when we are looking at the celebration of a particular day, and we are taking the example—because as I said it was cited by the Member for

Oropouche—of Emancipation Day in Trinidad and Tobago, what the African community sought to do, is to look at the struggle of the Africans from 1610 to 1838, the contribution they made to the development of the whole society in every sphere of activity and the cultural contributions that they made to the development of the society.

Therefore, it is with that liberation perspective that they decided to commemorate the day of their freedom. It is therefore ironic that some of the leaders of the East Indian community are calling for a recognition of a day for the East Indians, but forgetting that liberation perspective and accepting as the day to celebrate the very date when we were enslaved. So in asking for a celebration on this particular day, you are asking for the celebration of your enslavement. I am saying that if there is to be any day of commemoration, it should be January 1, 1920 when East Indian Indentureship was formally abolished in this country. Therefore, you would look back from May 30, 1845 to January 1, 1920 when East Indian Indentureship was abolished and look at the heroic, epic struggle of the East Indians from 1845—1920 and give to the East Indian community a holiday, a commemoration about which they can be proud.

That is the difference in the perspective and you must not necessarily neglect that perspective. You have your perspective. That is the direction in which the East Indian community has been pointed for so many years on the day when they meet to commemorate May 30. Many of us go and we speak to them but that is not a day when you celebrate as a day of emancipation, as a day of commemoration, as a day of which you can be proud. Not May 30 but January 1, 1920 as the day for emancipation. I was quite impressed by the latter part of the argument.

Mr. Humphrey: Do the Indian descendants in Trinidad and Tobago commemorate anything on January 1?

Dr. Samaroo: The Indians of Trinidad and Tobago do not commemorate it because—if I may say, until I pointed it out and I will bring the article—this was a gap in our history.

Mr. Humphrey: Do you commemorate it?

Dr. Samaroo: I absolutely do. I go to centres all over the country and speak to the East Indian community. If the Member for Couva South were here, he would tell you that he has been attending some of these meetings. I commemorate it because to me it is an important date. It was a gap in our history which the

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recent historians have now demonstrated as a day and that is the date that I am suggesting ought to be commemorated.

Mr. Humphrey: Would you admit that thousands of our Indian descendants in this country commemorate Indian Arrival Day without it being recognized?

Dr. Samaroo: In the very same way that there were thousands of Africans who, before they found out, before they learnt subsequently of the date of Emancipation, celebrated all kinds of different days. It is the duty of the historian, the duty of the academic, to point out and lead them in this new perspective of celebration than a perspective of degradation.

The Member for Oropouche is continuously leading into negativism, talking about Indian discrimination in the country and going abroad and writing to the Canadian government about discrimination against East Indians and creating the whole situation of refugee status in this country. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Dr. Tewarie: Mr. Deputy Speaker, two Members on the other side spoke. We hardly interrupted them. We listened to them. They continue to behave in the House as they behave outside of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Could I appeal to hon. Members, particularly those to my left, please, allow the Member to continue with his contribution.

Dr. Samaroo: I am not at all perturbed by their continuous interruptions. All I will say is that the Members doth protest too much. I did not interrupt them.

The Member for Oropouche is going to have an opportunity to reply at the end, but he cannot wait. He goes abroad; he goes to the Canadian government and writes about discrimination and that the police is against the East Indian community, and big business and the Government are against the East Indian community.

Mr. Sudama: Will the Member tell this House whether there is discrimination against people of East Indian descent in Trinidad and Tobago or will he say that there is no discrimination?

Dr. Samaroo: The Member for Oropouche quoted somebody in 1976 and that is why I asked him the date. Then he quotes another report in 1987 and he uses that to demonstrate discrimination against the East Indian population. He is unable to quote any kind of statistical information after 1987.

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This Government did not come into power before late 1986. He does not quote the statistics but he says he is quite sure, but he writes to the Canadian government on his letter-head saying that:

"The few jobs created by the Government are under the patronage of the ruling party and discrimination on the grounds of race is rampant. This practice is particularly directed against citizens of East Indian descent who are seen to be in opposition to the ruling regime and it is supported by the private sector..."

Dr. Tewarie: I just rise to ask the hon. Member a question. Is that letter addressed to the leader of a foreign government?

Dr. Samaroo: It is addressed "To whom it may concern" and it names a person for whoever it is concerned, who is being discriminated against by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, but it is obviously meant for a foreign government because a lot of information is provided here.

"This practice of racial discrimination is particularly directed against citizens of East Indian descent who are seen to be in opposition to the ruling regime and it is supported by the private sector who wish to be in the good graces of the Government."

I would wish Senators Moonan and Amar to agree to this statement by the soon to be General Secretary of the United National Congress.

"I have raised this issue of racial discrimination on numerous occasions, both inside and outside of Parliament, but the nefarious practice continues to be promoted."

Why does he not raise these issues in the articles which he writes in the *Express*? He has never quoted these letters that he wrote to these foreign governments.

"In addition, the crime rate in the country is high and it shows an increasing trend. Citizens of East Indian descent are the targets of the majority of violent crimes committed. There is little redress in a situation in which the overwhelming portion of the Police Service is of African descent."

I would wish the new executive of the UNC to say that they subscribe to this view of the Secretary General of the UNC. I particularly call upon Sen. Wade Mark, Mr. Martin Lopez, Christine Anderson, John Humphrey, to say publicly that they subscribe to this document that has been sent to the Canadian government by the Member for Oropouche, claiming discrimination by all different sections of the

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society: the Government, big business, the Police Service, everybody is discriminating.

The Member for Oropuche is absolutely paranoid. I wish the Members of his party to say that they subscribe to this view that he has put in writing. I have a number of letters which he sent to the Canadian government.

5.45 p.m.

Mr. Humphrey: Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the hon. Member aware that when the NAR came into power, an assessment was made of the racial content of all the boards of state enterprises, and it was found that four per cent of those boards comprised Trinidadians and Tobagonians of East Indian descent, and that an attempt was made in the Cabinet to redress that imbalance, and that all the leading members of the United Labour Front, who had come into the coalition, were fired mainly for that reason?

Miss Nicholson: Nonsense! Totally false.

Mrs. Johnson: John, how can you call that honest?

Mr. Humphrey: Look at this.

Hon. Member: What does that say?

Mr. Humphrey: It says a lot.

Dr. Samaroo: This is the kind of illogical argument—he shows a newspaper with absolutely no evidence, whatsoever.

Mr. Sudama: That is why you are not going up for elections. They will murder you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please! The Chair is appealing for some order, please.

Dr. Samaroo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hon. Member has also decided that I am not going up for elections, and he says he will murder me. That is the kind of behaviour that we have from people on the other side of the House, simply because someone has a different view. He started off by saying that we must have an open debate, a free debate. Here I am suggesting another date to do the same thing that he wishes to do, and he gets angry. He does not wish to allow me to speak. That is the arrogance, the lack of the democratic principle that one finds on

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the other side. If I contest elections, he says that he will murder me. “Not 10 like him”, as they say in local dialect.

Mr. Sudama: On the platform.

Mr. Humphrey: I would help him.

Dr. Samaroo: You will help him to murder me? You must say that in public. Go in St. Augustine where your leader chastised you. If you cannot organize St. Augustine, let me know and I will come and organize it. Let the Member for St. Augustine deny that. Now, he says that he will—

Mr. Sudama: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want the hon. Member to know that we have been to Rio Claro, in his constituency in Nariva, and we have dealt with him there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Dr. Samaroo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not in the least disturbed by the interruptions. The Members are trying to disturb me because they find what I am saying too bitter. They cannot take it. Why does the Member not let me speak? When he was speaking, I did not disturb him. He will have an opportunity, at the end, to respond but he cannot wait because this thing is hitting too hard.

I wish to give him the assurance that many of these letters, which we now have, will be published in this country and we will challenge all the members of his executive, of which he will be General Secretary, that they have to support him on this, or be shamed by the public.

Mr. Sudama: I want an investigation into the public service, the utilities and the state enterprises.

Dr. Samaroo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if the Member can cool himself and let other people speak, no matter what they have to say.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, once more an appeal is made to allow the hon. Member to continue.

Dr. Samaroo: Before I was rudely interrupted, I was going to make a comment on my agreement with the excellent second part of the contribution of the Member for Naparima, in which he indicated, quite clearly and logically, that there were some 15 holidays in this country and many of them were of Eurocentric derivation, and it was his own view that there should be a review of those public holidays and that possibly a day of commemoration, a day of

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celebration of the East Indians' presence and contribution in the society, could be included under that new revised rubric.

It is in pursuance of that very excellent suggestion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I now suggest an amendment to the motion. In the very last paragraph, that amendment reads as follows:

"Be it resolved that this House refer this motion to the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, appointed to look into the question of public holidays and into the report of the Constitution Commission."

I want to say a few words about the background to that particular amendment that I am proposing here today.

Cabinet, by Minute No. 829, dated May 2, 1991, agreed to refer the entire question of public holidays, as well as the Report of the Constitution Commission 1987, to a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament.

At a sitting of the House of Representatives held on May 3, 1991, the House agreed to the establishment of such a Joint Select Committee. At a sitting of the Senate held on May 23, 1991, the Senate also agreed to the establishment of the Joint Select Committee.

At a sitting of the House of Representatives held on June 7, 1991, the House named the following Members to serve—and I want you to listen very carefully to the Members:

Mr. S. Richardson

Dr. E. Hosein

Mrs. G. Henry

Mr. T. Sudama

Mr. K. Valley

So, the Member for Oropouche is a Member of this committee that is set up to look at the question of public holidays. Has he raised the issue in the Joint Select Committee?

Mr. Sudama: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Member is trying to give the impression to this House, that this committee is superior to the House. I have a motion of longstanding before the House, and this House debates the motion, as a superior body, and then the deliberations of this House may go to the

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committee. They may have the benefit of these deliberations. What nonsense is he talking about?

Dr. Samaroo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not surprised at the language. I have known the Member for a very long time. Once he gets annoyed, he moves into obscenity, which is what he is doing now.

At a sitting of the Senate held on June 11, 1991, the Senate named the following Senators to serve:

Sen. A. Tiwary

Sen. H. Charles

Sen. H. Broomes

Sen. P. Persad

Sen. A. Alexander

The Joint Select Committee held its first meeting on Tuesday, July 16, 1991, and elected its Chairman. I do not know if the Member for Oropouche was there. Was he there? If he were there, did he raise this issue and put it on the agenda, so that various persons, people like himself—

Mr. Sudama: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The rule is that you do not discuss deliberations of a committee while it is in progress in the House. We do not do that. He does not even know the rules of this House. He is so illiterate to the rules of this House.

Dr. Samaroo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is for that reason, and because, as I have indicated, we are thoroughly impressed with the latter part of the arguments of the Member for Naparima, with respect to this particular motion, that what we, on this side, are recommending is that this matter now be put before that Joint Select Committee, which was duly established. That Joint Select Committee would listen to all the various points of view.

We are not saying, for one moment, that those who are saying that May 30—which commemorates 1845—ought to be made a public holiday, are fools and idiots, and are stupid. We are not saying that.

Mr. Sudama: That is what you are trying to say.

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Dr. Samaroo: At the same time, you must not say that those of us who have a different perspective, a larger liberation perspective on history, are fools and idiots.

We have to listen to each other, if we are to maintain the democratic principles to which this Government is committed. We have to listen to each other, argue with each other, debate with each other. What we are saying is that the Joint Select Committee is the best place for a debate on this particular issue. So that Joint Select Committee can then make a recommendation to the Cabinet—because it is a Cabinet-appointed committee—and the Cabinet will then decide.

Mr. Sudama: It is a committee of Parliament. He is confusing the House with Cabinet.

Dr. Samaroo: It will come to the Parliament, first of all; from the Parliament, it goes to the Cabinet. *[Interruption]* A Joint Select Committee of the Parliament, appointed by the Cabinet.

5.55 p.m.

The point I am making is that the deliberations on this particular issue ought to take place, and this is what I am recommending in the amendment which I am proposing, that all of us of all different persuasions on this matter ought to be given the opportunity to present our different points of view and out of that, we hope a consensus would arise and some kind of truly commemorative celebration, recognizing the considerable contribution of the East Indian community, will be arrived at for the good of the whole of Trinidad and Tobago.

Motion made and question proposed, That the House do now adjourn to Monday, August 26, 1991 at 1.30 p.m. [Hon. B. Tewarie]

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 5.58 p.m.