

*Papers Laid*

*Friday, July 3, 1992*

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Friday, July 3, 1992*

The House met at 2.05 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

[Madam Speaker *in the Chair*]

**PAPERS LAID**

1. Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts of the Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association for the year ended December 31, 1983. [*The Minister of Finance (Hon. W. Mottley)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts of the Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association for the year ended December 31, 1984. [*Hon. W. Mottley*]
3. The Maxi-Taxi Regulations, 1992. [*The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. C. Imbert)*]
4. Annual Report of the Public Utilities Commission for the year ended December 31, 1990. [*The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. M. Marshall)*]
5. Report of the West Indian Commission (Time for Action). [*The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. K. Valley)*]

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**Rental of Buildings**

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Mohammed Haniff (Princes Town):*

- 61.** Would the Prime Minister state:
- (a) How many buildings are presently being rented by Government and state agencies?
  - (b) Where are these buildings situated and which ministries, departments or agencies are occupying these buildings?
  - (c) What is the individual cost of rental to the Government of these buildings?
  - (d) Who are the owners of these buildings?

### Building Construction

**62.** Would the Prime Minister state:

- (a) Whether the Government has any plans to construct buildings to house ministries or agencies presently housed on rented premises so as to reduce the cost incurred annually?
- (b) If the answer to (a) is yes, where and when are these buildings due to be constructed and for which ministries, departments or agencies?

**The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Madam Speaker, again we have to ask for an extension of time for these questions. I do not know if they are really due as yet. I thought it would have been next week. We are asking for a further extension.

**Mr. Sudama:** Will it be before the dissolution?

**Hon. K. Valley:** We will try to have the answers before the dissolution.

**Mr. Haniff:** Madam Speaker, questions Nos. 61 and 62 were submitted as one question. I have risen in this honourable House, and this is the fourth occasion in respect of these questions. I expect to get these replies, or there should be some procedure whereby the Minister in charge should inform this House whether they are prepared. It is embarrassing to me to continue to rise at every sitting only to be told an extension is required.

Thank you very much.

**Hon. K. Valley:** One wonders, more fundamentally, whether such questions ought not to be given a written reply some time later on. They ask, for example, how many buildings are at present being rented by Government and state agencies. That would cover the whole of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Madam Speaker:** If you are experiencing difficulty in answering, maybe you can indicate, and if it is a written answer, you can liaise with the Member.

**Hon. K. Valley:** In fact, I can inform the Member that replies are being prepared, but it is simply a question of gathering the information given the nature of the questions.

**Madam Speaker:** What period of deferral do you need?

**Hon. K. Valley:** One week.

*Questions, by leave, deferred.*

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name Mr. R. L. Maharaj (Couva South):

**Development Finance Company  
(Loan Disbursements)**

- 63.** Would the Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism state:
- (a) The names of the recipients of loans and/or other financial assistance given by the Trinidad and Tobago Development Finance Company and its subsidiaries during the years 1985 to 1991 (inclusive) stating the amounts given to each recipient and the purpose therefore?
  - (b) The number of non-performing loans, the names of the recipients, the years and amounts of each such loan and the purpose for which it was given?
  - (c) The names of all applicants for loans and for other financial assistance from the Trinidad and Tobago Development Finance Company and its subsidiaries for the years 1985 to 1991 (inclusive) the purposes for which such financial assistance was sought and the reason(s) for refusal, if any?

**Madam Speaker:** The Member for Couva North is not here.

**Oil and Water Board**

**65. Mr. Chandresh Sharma (Fyzabad)** asked the Minister of Energy and Energy-based Industries:

Would the Minister of Energy and Energy-based Industries state:

- (a) Whether there is presently functioning an Oil and Water Board.
- (b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, who are the members presently appointed and in charge and from where it functions?
- (c) If the answer to (a) is negative, how soon can the people of Trinidad and Tobago expect the said Board to be appointed, and what are the present means whereby citizens can seek redress on matters affecting same?

**The Minister of Energy and Energy-based Industries (Hon. Barry Barnes):**  
Madam Speaker, the reply to the question is as follows:

- (a) The Oil and Water Board ceased functioning in May, 1972.
- (b) There are no persons appointed to the Oil and Water Board since it does not now exist.
- (c) In the light of the foregoing the Government does not now propose to appoint persons to the Oil and Water Board. The Government is in the process of developing appropriate legislation to provide for the payment of compensation under the Petroleum Act. On the coming into force of such regulations, the Oil and Water Board Ordinance will be effectively repealed.

Currently the oil companies follow an established procedure for the settlement of pollution claims. This procedure can be summarized as follows:

- (1) After a complaint is received the company with the assistance of an evaluator assesses the damage due to pollution. As far as possible, an inspection of the area is carried out in the company of the complainant, or his representative.
- (2) Based on the investigation, if it is determined that the company was responsible for the pollution damage, an assessment is done in accordance with the current Agricultural Crop Schedule and the Forestry Schedule issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources and such other applicable parameters.
- (3) Where there is agreement between the individual farmer or their valuator and the company, claims are settled promptly.

For the period 1987—1991, the companies have settled 6,738 claims, or 99.5 per cent of 6,772 claims received. The companies have paid \$6,377,000.00 in compensation; 34 claims remain unsettled, because claimants have been unable to accept the best reasonable offer made by the oil companies.

**Mr. Sharma:** In view of the high success rate he is presenting, will there be any Oil and Water Board in the future?

**Hon. B. Barnes:** There is a requirement under the Act that regulations should be made to ensure compensation, and upon the coming into force of such regulations, the Oil and Water Board Ordinance would automatically be repealed.

**Mr. S. Panday:** What recourse, do victims who were dissatisfied with the companies' recommendation have in the present circumstances?

**Hon. B. Barnes:** As I understand it in the present circumstances, they have no further recourse to the court. We are hoping with the passing of the regulations that this will be corrected.

**Mr. S. Panday:** Will the statutory limitation apply to victims in these circumstances?

**Hon. B. Barnes:** I regret that I shall have to take legal advice on that. I simply do not know what the answer to that is.

**Mr. Maharaj:** What machinery does Government intend to put in place to cover claims of persons which are now outstanding and have not been settled, so that those claims can be resolved by a tribunal or some other machinery?

**Hon. B. Barnes:** Again, I am not able to answer that. I need legal advice on it.

**2.15 p.m.**

#### **Resident Status (Applications for)**

**67. Mr. Chandresh Sharma (Fyzabad)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Would the Minister state whether any efforts and representations are being made by the Government to ensure that citizens of Trinidad and Tobago in any foreign country receive fair and equitable consideration in their application for resident status?

**The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Ralph Maraj):** Madam Speaker, in countries abroad where Trinidad and Tobago has diplomatic and consular offices, every effort is made, within the bounds of the host country's own domestic legislation, to assist Trinidad and Tobago nationals in their legitimate applications for resident status or any other immigrant status.

I wish to assure the hon. Member that our diplomatic and consular offices will continue to make such representations to the relevant authorities in the host

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country to ensure that our nationals are assisted in fulfilling their legitimate objectives.

**Mr. Sharma:** Is the Minister aware that at the present time nationals from Trinidad and Tobago are having great difficulty in foreign countries?

**Hon. R. Maraj:** I am sure that people all over the world are having great difficulty, and I am sure that our people, as well, are having difficulty in living abroad. If the hon. Member is referring to anything dealing with consular activities, then he must be more specific.

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** Would the Minister indicate whether there is adequate machinery in countries such as Canada to deal with our citizens and their problems. For example, if you have your head office in Ottawa, are there any provisions for people in Vancouver to benefit from consular activities?

**Hon. R. Maraj:** In countries as large as Canada, we are not at the moment adequately represented in every part of the country. If, for example, citizens who are in Ottawa or Toronto are having problems, they can easily have access to our offices. However, it could be a problem for people who live in Edmonton, because we do not have consular offices in these cities. Through the system of having honorary consuls in certain countries and in certain places, we are seeking to assist our nationals in this regard.

**Mr. Sudama:** Where our diplomatic representatives overseas are asked questions or information is sought from the host Government, are these matters referred to your ministry before a response is given?

**Hon. R. Maraj:** It depends on the nature of the question. If it has to do with something that involves the relations between both countries; if it is something of great importance; if it deals with technical matters that need advice and further analysis and investigation, yes. If, however, it has to do with personal and individual matters, in terms of assistance for a lost passport or getting a visa, these matters are hardly referred to our ministry. If there are problems requiring the assistance of the ministry, then certainly they are referred.

**Mr. Jurai:** In cases where people have been wrongfully deported—and we have had examples very recently with Canada—would the Minister state whether the Government is willing to render assistance in this respect?

**Hon. R. Maraj:** Since my assumption of the duties of Foreign Minister, we have had occasion to review cases and assist people who have not been allowed,

for example, to return to universities. People have come to us with complaints and we have our Consular Division, on a daily basis, assisting nationals.

It must be remembered that any permission to go into another country whether for resident status, holiday or for purposes of study, lies with the host country. We try on a regular basis to assist people, but we have to be very careful because many people come to us swearing that they want to visit a country and return, when really their intention is to stay. So that one has to investigate each case individually and thoroughly in order not to embarrass the person who may recommend that particular individual or the ministry itself.

**Mr. Jurai:** Can the Minister state what assistance would be given to persons who have been legally married in those countries and have been deported?

**Hon. R. Maraj:** As I said before, we have to look at cases on an individual basis. Sometimes people get married for spurious reasons. People may get married simply to gain resident status in a foreign country.

#### **Tax Appeal Board (Pending Matters)**

**70. Mr. Ramesh L. Maharaj** (*Couva South*) asked the Minister of Finance:

Would the Minister state how many new matters were pending on December 31, 1981, in the Tax Appeal Board?

**The Minister of Finance (Hon. Wendell Mottley):** The records of the Board of Inland Revenue reflect that the number of new appeals received in 1981 and pending as at December 31, 1981, was 144 in respect of 57 taxpayers. Some taxpayers have filed appeals in respect of assessment for more than one year of income.

**Madam Speaker:** We move on to the next question.

#### **Squatting Community (Siparia)**

**76. Mr. Sahid Hosein** (*Siparia*) asked the Minister of Housing and Settlement:

Can the Minister indicate to this House:

- (a) When does he intend to regularize the squatting community in the constituency of Siparia?

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- (b) Whether any of these squatter's homes would be demolished until this is done?

**The Minister of Housing and Settlement (Dr. The Hon. Vincent Lasse):** Madam Speaker, the answer is as follows:

- (a) The Squatter Regularization Programme is being implemented jointly by the Project Execution Unit of the Ministry of Housing and Settlement and the National Housing Authority.

To date, both agencies have identified a total of 43 for inclusion in the programme. There are no sites in Siparia included in this phase.

- (b) At this time the ministry is not formulating any plans for demolishing squatter units in Siparia.

**2.25 p.m.**

**Mr. Sharma:** Would the Minister advise this House that across the board no squatters' homes will be demolished in this year or in future?

**Hon. V. Lasse:** May I repeat the answer to part (b). At this time the Ministry is not formulating any plans for demolishing squatter units at Siparia.

**Mr. Sharma:** Madam Speaker, I am asking whether any squatters' homes will be demolished in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Madam Speaker:** The hon. Member can file his question and the Minister will reply. Members must realize that we have only 45 minutes and I think each Member is entitled to their question.

**Mr. Hosein:** Can the hon. Member indicate when he intends to deal with the squatting community at Siparia—if that is possible—and secondly, he has stated quite categorically that there are no plans to demolish any squatters' homes at Siparia. I have a document which I passed on to the Member which purported to instruct a person who has been on a piece of land since 1933, Madam Speaker—

**Madam Speaker:** That is not in the question. You can take that up with the Minister, he will answer your question.

**Mr. Hosein:** Madam Speaker, when I raised the question with him he said he could not handle the matter.

**Madam Speaker:** Your answer please, Mr. Minister, to the supplemental question.



**Hon. V. Lasse:** I believe this is an attempt by the Member for Siparia to mislead the House. At one point he submitted a piece of paper to me on a matter which did not fall within the area of my competence and I told him so.

**Mr. Sudama:** Could the Minister tell this House who gives the authority to demolish a so-called squatter's house on state land?

**Hon. V. Lasse:** Madam Speaker, I believe this is a new question and I would entertain it at the appropriate time.

**Mr. Hosein:** May I have an answer to the first part: when does the hon. Minister intend to deal with the squatting community at Siparia?

**Hon. V. Lasse:** As I mentioned in my answer, the question of squatter regularization is being done on a phased basis.

#### **Entry Visas (Latin America)**

**77. Miss Hulsie Bhaggan** (*Chaguanas*) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

- (a) Would the Minister indicate whether he is aware that women from Latin American countries are granted a seven-day visa when they enter Trinidad and Tobago while their male counterparts are granted a fourteen-day visa?
- (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, would the Minister indicate whether he intends to ensure equal treatment for women from Latin American countries who may enter Trinidad and Tobago?

**The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Ralph Maraj):** Madam Speaker, it is the view of this side that this question is more appropriately directed to the Minister of National Security. However, I get the impression that the Member for Chaguanas is very keen and enthusiastic about getting a response and so I will attempt to respond to her question.

It is not correct to say that different visas are granted to Latin American men and women. There is no such immigration regulation. This is what, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, my investigation has revealed: Visas are issued valid for one entry within a certain time period and moreover, even the grant of a visa does not guarantee entry; nor indeed, does the visa itself dictate the length of the stay.

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Whenever a person in possession of a valid Trinidad and Tobago visa arrives at a port of entry in Trinidad and Tobago, the immigration officer on the spot has the discretionary power under the Immigration Act to determine the length of stay. Where the officer is uncertain of the bona fides of the person in question, or requires further documentary evidence regarding the purpose of the visit, place where he will be staying and so on, the officer may grant a few days' stay during which time that person could present himself or herself to the Immigration Head Office with the required documentation and apply for a longer stay.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Madam Speaker, I have no evidence of discrimination either by regulation or in practice on the basis of the gender of foreign nationals.

#### **LIDP Projects**

**78. Miss Hulsie Bhaggan** (*Chaguanas*) asked the Minister of Works and Transport:

Would the Minister indicate the location of all LIDP projects in Trinidad, giving details as to the budgeted amounts, the number of persons employed, the region, the date of commencement and the planned date of completion of each project?

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Madam Speaker, before I answer this question, permit me to refer to the statement made by the Member for Diego Martin Central just a short while ago, to the effect that we on this side are being asked to answer questions which are very complex, require considerable research and considerable time in preparation and presentation of the answers.

In this particular case, Madam Speaker, due to the nature of the question and the required answer, the Member for Chaguanas was contacted and a request made that this answer be changed from an oral answer to a written answer. The reply given was that this matter was raised at the party level and the party was adamant that it be an oral answer.

I shall now proceed to answer the question:

- Makai Lands, drain, Region I. Total budgetary allocation \$250,000. Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Projected date for completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

- Cascade Road: Project, drain, total budgetary allocation, \$250,000, Region I. Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- Lucien Lane: Project, drain, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- Boissierre Lane: retaining wall project, Region I.  
Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000.  
Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Projected date for completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- Mt. Hololo Project, retaining wall, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- St. John's Street, drain, Region I. Commencement date, March 30, 1992. Date of completion, October 16, 1992. Total number of persons employed, 14.

Madam Speaker, may I point out that while the budgetary allocations for this project are \$250,000, since the project started after the commencement of the programme on March 16, a review of expenditures currently in progress to determine whether all the funds will be exhausted by October 16, 1992.

- Upper Quarry Street: Wall project, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 30, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

Again, Madam Speaker, since this project started after the commencement of the programme, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether all funds will be exhausted on October 16, 1992.

- Ariapita Road, retaining wall project, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Date for commencement, April 27, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed, 14.

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Since this project started after March 16, 1992, a review of expenditure will be made to see whether all of the funds are exhausted by October 16, 1992.

- Harpe Place steps, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, June 8, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

Madam Speaker, since this project started after the commencement of the programme on March 16, 1992, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether all the funds will be exhausted by October 16, 1992.

- Prescott Alley: Project, retaining wall, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, June 8, 1992. Date for completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

Since Madam Speaker this project started after the beginning of the overall programme, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether all of the funds are exhausted by October 16, 1992.

- Celestin Trace: Project, drain, Region I. Total budgetary allocation \$250,000. Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- River Estate: Pavement, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Date for completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- Le Platte, paving of river, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- Belle View Extension, drainage, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed, at any given time, 14.
- Maraval: Project, road upgrading, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 30, 1992. Date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

Again, Madam Speaker, since this project started after the commencement of the overall programme, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether the budgeted allocation will be exhausted by October 16, 1992.

- Upper La Seiva Road, upgrading, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date—[Noise]

Madam Speaker, may I ask for quiet.

**Madam Speaker:** Due attention should be given to the Member.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** I have 267 projects to go.

- Upper La Seiva Road, upgrading, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 30, 1992. Date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

As this project started after commencement of the overall programme, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether the budgeted funds will be exhausted by October 16, 1992.

- Upper Moraldo Street, road upgrading, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 30, 1992. Date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

Since this project started after the commencement date, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether the budget allocation has been exhausted by October 16, 1992.

- Bournes Road, river paying, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, April 13, 1992. Date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

And since this project started after the commencement of the overall programme, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether the budgeted allocation is exhausted by October 16, 1992.

- Kwakasay, road upgrading, Region I. Total budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, April 26, 1992. Date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

Since this project started after the commencement of the overall programme, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether the budgeted funds will be exhausted by October 16, 1992.

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To continue, Madam Speaker.

- Smith Hill, road upgrading, Region I. budgetary allocation, \$250,000. Date of commencement, March 16, 1992. Date for completion, October 16 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- Alex Terrace, road upgrading, Region I. Budgeted allocation, \$250,000. Date for commencement, March 16, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- Morne Cocoa, road pavement, Region I. Budgeted allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- Upper La Puerta Road, drainage, Region I. Budgeted allocation \$250,000. Commencement date, March 16, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.
- La Horquetta Branch Road, drainage improvement, Region I. Budgeted allocation, \$250,000. Commencement date, March 30, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

Again, Madam Speaker, since this project started after the commencement of the overall programme, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether the budgeted allocation will be exhausted by October 16, 1992.

- Upper Gokoul Street, road, Region I. Budgeted allocation, \$250,000. Date of commencement March 30, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

Since this project started after the commencement of the overall programme, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether the budgeted allocation will be exhausted by October 16, 1992.

- Benedictine Road Extension, Region I. Budgeted allocation, \$250,000. Date of commencement, April 27, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

Again, Madam Speaker, since this project started after the commencement of the programme, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether the budgeted allocation has been exhausted by October 16, 1992.

— Covigne Road, drainage improvement, Region I.

I would point out, Madam Speaker, there are eight regions. I am on Region I at present.

Budgeted allocation, \$250,000. Date of commencement, May 11, 1992. Projected date of completion, October 16, 1992. Number of persons employed at any given time, 14.

And, Madam Speaker, since this project started after the commencement of the overall programme, a review of expenditure will be made to determine whether the budgeted allocation will be exhausted by October 16, 1992.

**Mr. Valley:** Madam Speaker, the period allowed for questions has now expired. I want to move that the remainder of this question be taken at the next sitting of Parliament.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Member, it cannot be taken at the next sitting. The answer will have to be given in writing in compliance with Standing Order 19(7) and so would questions No. 63, 78 (continuation of reply) 79, 83, and 87. And I ask that Ministers do so note.

*The following questions stood on the Order Paper:*

**Development Finance Company  
(Loan Disbursements)**

**63.** Would the Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism state:

- (a) The names of the recipients of loans and/or other financial assistance given by the Trinidad and Tobago Development Finance Company and its subsidiaries during the years 1985 to 1991 (inclusive) stating the amounts given to each recipient and the purpose therefor?
- (b) The numbers of non-performing loans, the names of the recipients, the years and amounts of each such loan and the purpose for which it was given?
- (c) The names of all applicants for loans and for other financial assistance from the Trinidad and Tobago Development Finance Company and its subsidiaries for the years 1985 to 1991 (inclusive) the purposes for which such financial assistance was sought and the reason(s) for refusal, if any? [*Mr. R. L. Maharaj*]

**LIDP Projects**

78. Would the Minister of Works and Transport indicate the location of all LIDP projects in Trinidad, giving details as to the budgeted amounts, the number of persons employed, the region, the date of commencement and the planned date of completion of each project? [*Miss H. Bhaggan*]

*Vide end of sitting for written part of answer.*

**Bejucal Road  
(State of)**

79. (a) Would the Minister of Local Government state whether he is aware that Bejucal Road in the constituency of Chaguanas is in total disrepair, with dust causing a serious health hazard to residents?
- (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, would the Minister state what plans he has to deal with the situation and when he intends to implement these plans? [*Miss H. Bhaggan*]

**Oropouche River  
(Bridge)**

83. Would the Minister of Works and Transport state whether provision has been made in the 1992 Budget for recommencement of work on the construction of the bridge over the Oropouche River on the La Fortune/Pluck Road which was suspended in 1979? [*Mr. T. Sudama*]

**Knolly's Tunnel**

87. Could the Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs state to this honourable House the following:
- (a) The financial outlay involved in the development of Knolly's Tunnel in the Tabaquite constituency?
- (b) The recurrent expenditure in the maintenance of the said project?
- (c) How many tourists visited the project over the last six months? [*Mr. C. Singh*]

**ANTI-DUMPING AND COUNTERVAILING DUTIES BILL**

Bill to authorize the imposition of anti-dumping duties and countervailing duties where goods have been dumped or subsidized; to provide for an Anti-Dumping Authority to investigate dumping or subsidizing of goods; to repeal the Customs Duties (Dumping and Subsidies) Act, Chap 78:04; and for related purposes, [*The Minister of Finance*]; read the first time.



**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. K. Valley):** Madam Speaker, I beg leave of the House to take the bills for second reading under Private Business before moving onto public business.

*Leave granted.*

**RESCUE MISSION (INC'N) BILL**

*Question put and agreed to,* That a bill to provide for the incorporation of the Rescue Mission and for matters incidental thereto, be now read a second time.

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill referred to a special select committee of the House chosen by the Speaker as follows:* Mr. H. Bereaux (Chairman), Mr. J. Narine, Mr. C. Rajaram, and Mr. J. Humphrey.

**MAINGOT VILLAGE SUMATEE SABHA (INC'N) BILL**

*Question put and agreed to,* That a bill to provide for the incorporation of the Maingot Village Sumatee Sabha and for matters incidental thereto, be now read a second time.

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill referred to a special select committee of the House chosen by the Speaker as follows:* Mr. H. Bereaux (Chairman), Mr. E. Hart, Mr. C. Rajaram, Mr. S. Mohammed.

**ST. ANN'S SPIRITUAL BAPTIST CHURCH (INC'N) BILL**

*Question put and agreed to,* That a bill to provide for the incorporation of the St. Ann's Spiritual Baptist Church and for matter incidental thereto, be now read a second time.

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill referred to a special select committee of the House chosen by the Speaker as follows:* Mr. D. Allum (Chairman), Mr. A. Casimire, Mr. C. Rajaram, and Mr. S. Panday.

**2.55 p.m.**

**MAXI-TAXI REGULATIONS**

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Madam Speaker, I beg to move the motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

*Maxi-taxi Regulations*  
[HON. C. IMBERT]

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*Whereas* it is provided by section 13(1) of the Maxi-taxi Act, 1992 that the Authority may with the approval of the Minister make such regulations as it considers necessary for the operation of the Act;

*And whereas* it is provided by subsection (13) (2) of the Act that such regulations made under subsection (1) shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament;

*And whereas* on the 25th day of June, 1992 the Authority made such Regulations;

*And whereas* on the 25th day of June, 1992 the Minister approved the said Regulations;

*And whereas* it is expedient that Parliament approve the said regulations;

*Be it resolved* that the Maxi-taxi Regulations 1992 be approved.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Krish Jurai** (*Nariva*): Madam Speaker, I rise—

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Madam Speaker, not long ago the Maxi-taxi Act was passed in this honourable House—

**Mr. Panday:** That is not how it is done.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** In the spirit of the agreement reached at that time—

**Mr. Panday:** You are closing the debate now. Madam Speaker, the Member moved the motion and he starts to wind it up. I am a little confused and I want to be advised as to what are the rules. My impression was that when a motion was moved it was put to the House and was debated, and after that the mover of the motion wound it up. What I see here is, my friend moves the motion and then he is winding it up.

**Mr. Sudama:** He is a bit confused.

**Madam Speaker:** I think the hon. Member is experienced enough. The rule is that the mover of the motion, of course, presents his motion and then the debate begins. In this case the mover of the motion sat down unfortunately, I think. With the leave of the House I will give him the opportunity to present his argument—

**Mr. Panday:** I suppose he is tired, so he may have to put the motion to the House again.

**Hon. C. Imbert:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your indulgence. Madam Speaker, not long ago the Maxi-taxi Act 1992 was passed in this honourable House. In order to give effect to the full working of that Act, however, it was necessary to make regulations, lay them in this honourable House and have them approved. At this time there are no regulations in force for the Maxi-taxi Act. The Licensing Department has, therefore, been unable to process applications for permits and licensing operations for maxi-taxis. It is therefore of urgent public importance that these regulations be passed swiftly.

When the Maxi-taxi Act was passed recently, an agreement was reached in this House between the Members on this side and the Members of the Opposition. The agreement was that the original Act, subject to two modifications, would be laid and passed. It received the approval of all the Members on the other side. In the spirit of that agreement, the Government has decided that it would be proper to lay before this honourable House the original regulations to go with the original Act. These regulations before us, are therefore in every way identical with the original regulations of the Maxi-taxi Act. During the debate on that Act we on this side mentioned that we had completed our deliberations regarding new regulations for the Maxi-taxi system. My ministry has already passed our recommendations to the Attorney General's office for drafting and we expect that within a period of six weeks the new regulations will be presented for debate in this honourable House. Might I signal, however, to hon. Members that several of the points raised by Members on the other side during the debate have been addressed and I wish to take this opportunity just to point out some of the areas we will be addressing when we bring the new regulations to this House.

It is the Government's intention to look at the question of owner/operator and remove the ambiguity that exists there. We also intend to look at the question of conductors for maxi-taxis and whether they should be licensed. We also have examined whether there is need for a special driving test for maxi-taxi operators. We have also looked at questions of excessive volume of music, tinting and obscuring of windows, and several other issues that were raised by Members of this honourable House in general concern for the current state of the maxi-taxi system and the several violations of the public peace and public property. Madam Speaker, I have briefly outlined what the Government intends to do when it brings the new regulations to this House and I would ask the indulgence of Members on the other side that today we pass without excessive debate the original regulations

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to the original Maxi-Taxi Act as given in the spirit of the agreement reached in this honourable House on the previous occasion. I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**3.05 p.m.**

**Mr. Krish P. Jurai** (*Nariva*): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Works and Transport said that in six weeks time he would be bringing new regulations to this House, a comprehensive piece of legislation relating to maxi-taxis. I want to remind him that one month has passed since we sat on a Saturday in this House to pass the Maxi-taxi Act, and if he has any intention of bringing such a bill, now is the appropriate time. Hence, I cannot agree with him that we should pass these regulations here today in their original form.

Before I proceed, I want to say that the Maxi-taxi Act came about as a result of the breakdown in the public transport system. The PTSC has been struggling over the years to provide a bus system, but with total failure. When the Government could not provide a proper and effective system for the suffering public of this country, the Maxi-taxi Act was passed very hastily. Today, in 1992, we see the same repeating itself in the Maxi-taxi Act, which was passed quite recently, and today, we have the Government coming here again and asking us to hastily pass the regulations which were passed some time earlier. I do not see the hurry for this to be passed today, when the Government should have brought effective and proper legislation and regulations to handle the maxi-taxi system in this country.

Prior to the introduction of the Maxi-taxi Act, the PNM Government had boasted, time and again, that it would provide an effective system of transportation for the suffering public. To date, in spite of all the money which has been spent, we have not seen any relief for the travelling public. I want to quote some figures here. I do not want to go into all the details, but I shall give them in five-year periods. We can see here—and I am quoting from the ASD/CSO, 1990—that in the period 1968 to 1972, the PTSC ran at a loss of \$33,324,000—I am calling in round figures only. Between 1973 and 1977, it was \$115,611,000; the period 1974 to 1982, \$440,968,000; 1983 to 1987, \$810,294,000; 1988 to 1992, it is estimated that the loss will be \$634,537,000.

These are very frightening figures which the PTSC has been incurring year after year. I think something must be done immediately to stem the tide of loss. I

have some very interesting figures here, again from the CSO. They refer to the number of buses which were licensed. And here they are:

Period	Number of licensed buses	Available buses	Buses run out
1981	335	162	132
1982	466	230	
1983	437	250	
1984	481	265	
1985	472	308	
1986	409	270	
1987	409	265	
1988	372	209	
1989	297	127	
1990	232	94	

Madam Speaker, I am wondering what has become of all these buses which have been licensed.

**Mr. Valley:** Madam Speaker, perhaps the hon. Member does not understand. I think we are debating the Maxi-taxi regulations, rather than a motion on PTSC.

**Mr. Jurai:** I fully understand what I am talking about. I am supporting the maxi-taxis, and here we have a system where the Government has licensed 232 buses and only 94 were available for use, hence we need the maxi-taxis. That is why I am pointing out these figures. We also need the regulations but we have to amend them, certainly.

When the Maxi-taxi Act was passed in 1979, it was passed very hastily. It took 12 years before it was struck down by Justice Aeneas Wills. For 12 long years, the PNM did not see it fit to review the legislation in order to make it effective. They waited until it was struck down by Justice Wills. Today, they come again to Parliament and say, "We will be coming shortly with revised legislation".

I thought that the PNM Government would have included in the regulations the means whereby one can obtain redress when one has been rejected for a licence for

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a maxi-taxi. The regulations are totally silent on this. We thought we sat here on a Saturday, all day, having this redress introduced into the Act. But the regulations are totally silent. We have only 94 buses on the road, according to these figures. Where does the person who applies for a maxi-taxi licence and is turned down get his redress? I want the Minister of Works and Transport to tell us what redress a person has who has been refused a maxi-taxi licence. We, on this side, cannot support this motion until some form of redress is introduced into the regulations. It is only when some means of redress—

**3.15 p.m.**

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order. In the original Act an Appeals Tribunal was inserted to deal with that problem.

**Mr. Jurai:** Madam Speaker, as I was saying, we, on this side, would approve the regulations provided provision is made whereby a person whose application for a maxi-taxi is rejected, can appeal to the tribunal to have his case heard.

As I said, we, on this side of the House, are prepared to work for the benefit of the people of this country and we are prepared to support the regulations once that tribunal is included in the regulations.

I want to deal with the question of accidents. People seem to think that accidents are caused, to a great extent, by maxi-taxi drivers. I am not saying that there are no careless ones, but by and large maxi-taxi drivers are safe. It is the road conditions—and I see this daily when I travel on the roads; maxi-taxis, cars and other vehicles are seen bobbing, weaving and dodging the potholes—that causes accidents, to a great extent.

I had mentioned and made several appeals to the Minister of Works and Transport, to have the roads repaired in order that we may cut down on the number of accidents that take place. But, lo and behold, six months has gone and, to date, we have seen very little done with respect to repairs of our roads. I urge the Government, therefore, to embark immediately on a road building and resurfacing programme in order that we may cut down the number of accidents on the road.

Madam Speaker, the growth of maxi-taxis has led to the rise in what I would call conductors in maxi-taxis. Some people call them touts, hustlers, harassers, etc. Call them what you like, I refer to them as “conductors”. I refer to the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Chap. 48:50; Part IV section 21(1) states:

"A person shall not act as a conductor of a motor or omnibus unless he is the holder of a permit authorizing him for the purpose; and no person shall employ any person who is not so authorized to act as such."

Section 21(3) states:

"Every applicant for a permit as a conductor of a motor omnibus shall satisfy the Licensing Authority that—

- (a) he is above the age of eighteen years and is physically and mentally fit;
- (b) he is of good character;
- (c) he has sufficient knowledge of the rules of the road and of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Regulations."

Section 24 states:

"The Licensing Authority may cancel or suspend the permit of any conductor on any conviction or contravention of the Act or of these Regulations or on being satisfied that he is not a fit and proper person to hold a conductor's licence."

This is a very serious issue and we have been seeing, time and time again, the problems and difficulties that have arisen with respect to maxi-taxis. These conductors or "hustlers", as they are called, ought to be licensed, because if they are not, it means therefore, that the driver can take the easy way out if a criminal offence is committed, by saying he did not know who that person was. If it is a licensed conductor, certainly, the travelling public would feel safe and, more comfortable when travelling in maxi-taxis.

So, Madam Speaker, I again state that we will support the regulations, provided the tribunal is included in the regulations.

Thank you.

**Mr. Basdeo Panday** (*Couva North*): Madam Speaker, I rise for a very short moment, and only to reinforce the point made by my colleague the Member for Nariva; and it really has to do with the regulations themselves. These regulations, as I understand it, are made by the Authority with the approval of the Minister under section 13 of the Maxi-taxi Act, 1992 which is a power given to them to bring before this House, regulations for the implementation of the Act. That is the point I was going to make. The purpose of these regulations is to ensure that the Act can be implemented.

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Now, there was one change that was made in the old Act, as far as I recall. It had to do with the introduction of the tribunal, so that when someone applies for a permit to own and operate a maxi-taxi and he thinks he has been discriminated against—treated unfairly or whatever—he can go to the tribunal. These are regulations which come before you, but they omit, totally, any procedure on how to go to the tribunal. That is what is wrong with them. I am speaking because I do not want my friend to come into this argument for fear that he may raise a constitutional matter. I think it might be wrong in law to bring regulations which do not facilitate the implementation of the Act. Its power is to bring regulations to facilitate implementation; the regulations that you bring must facilitate implementation. If there is a provision that there is going to be a tribunal, then you cannot just take up the old regulations and drop them before the House. There is a new dimension of the Act.

**3.25 p.m.**

The old Act—the Member for Tobago East was arguing about whether we were introducing the old Act or the new one—can bring the old regulations. You did not really have the old Act at all. You had the old Act plus a new dimension, a tribunal. If you look at it, they made mention of it here. I should have thought that this would have come in clause 5 where it says:

- (5) An application for a permit to own and operate a maxi-taxi in any route area shall be made to the Authority in the form set out in the First Schedule and shall be accompanied by a certificate of good character.
- (6) The Authority shall not, except where the applicant is a society within the meaning of the Co-operative Societies Act, grant a permit to own and operate more than one maxi-taxi to a successful applicant.

Suppose someone is dissatisfied, what is the procedure for going to the tribunal? Does he look to find who are the members? Does he go to his house? Does he write him a letter? Is there a prescribed form in which he must make his complaint?

This is the purpose of regulations—to facilitate the implementation of the Act. How are we going to facilitate the implementation of the operations of the tribunal? That is the point I think my colleague, the Member for Nariva was making. I am not criticizing. I am simply asking the Government to acknowledge that regulations are missing, which will determine how the tribunal which was set up just over two weeks ago, will operate. It is extremely important to have



regulations to deal with things in this country. If we do not, then all kinds of things would happen.

It is well known in this country, that yesterday was my constituency day for the week. I went to my constituency office as usual, and listened to problems. A problem that came up—

**Mr. Valley:** Is that your function?

**Mr. Panday:** I am hoping that you will give it to me today. This is my function as a Member of Parliament, to bring those things to you in the hope that you, like God, would resolve all the problems for us.

This problem is that a man by the name of Saroop Seeteram—he told me I may use his name—is a taxi-driver. His taxi is HAM 7487. He installed the CNG mechanism within his car to use CNG, but he did not do it at Ross's. He did it somewhere in Chaguanas. I want to tell you what happened. He went to fill his vehicle at Natural Gas Systems at Sum Sum Hill Claxton Bay, which is run by Ross. He filled him up twice and on the third occasion—this man is living in Chase Village—he told him, "You did not come to me to fit in your kit, so no more gas for you". He now has to go to San Fernando—from Chaguanas—to buy gas, and by the time he reaches Chaguanas, the gas is finished and he has to go back for more; so, he is buying gas all day.

What I am trying to tell you is that corruption takes place when we do not have regulations. There should have been regulations to regulate the operation of these stations. That licence should have been taken away from that man, when it could have been proved that he was refusing to supply people with CNG.

You see what happens when you do not have regulations. That is why these regulations are important. When we do not have regulations what happens is this: There is one rule for one set of people, and another rule for another set of people. There is nothing in this rule that says you must go to Ross's to install your CNG kit. Ross told him that the Government has given only him the right. "I am the only person who has the right to install these kits. Any other kit which is installed is illegal. I cannot supply you with gas".

**Mr. Mottley:** Ross Perot?

**Mr. B. Panday:** No, Ross Manning, not Ross Perot at all. Everybody knows the connection. It is public information. Please look at this.

**Mr. Valley:** I should really like the hon. Member to clarify exactly what he is saying.

**Mr. B. Panday:** I will clarify it for you anytime you want.

**Mr. Valley:** I want him to do so now. Could he kindly do so now, please, or withdraw it?

**Mr. B. Panday:** I shall not withdraw it.

**Dr. Rowley:** On a point of order, the Member outlined a moment ago that what is happening at Ross's is in fact corruption. He has gone on to name the Member for San Fernando East—

**Mr. B. Panday:** No! I did not.

**Dr. Rowley:** You named him Ross Manning. The Member is imputing improper motives with respect to the character of the Member for San Fernando East and I ask him to withdraw it. Everybody knows the connection.

**Mr. B. Panday:** If the Member would recall, I was saying Ross. I did not say anything else and the Member for St. Ann's, East came in and asked if it is Ross Perot. I said no, it is Ross Manning. That is what I said. How is that imputing anything to anybody? Does he alone have that name? Suppose the man is named Ross Manning. Are you drawing this string and is the cap fitting? What is happening?

**Mr. Maharaj:** You are not referring to the Member.

**Mr. B. Panday:** I am not referring to the Member for San Fernando East. If I wanted to do that, I would say the Member for San Fernando East. That is how I do it. Now that we have done that, are you going to do something about Ross, whether it is Perot or not?

On one hand, you want to encourage people to equip their motor vehicles with CNG and on the other hand, you are taking no steps to prevent total violation of people's rights with respect to the filling of gasoline at this place which is named. I have the receipts here. I do not walk around, unless I have receipts.

Regulations are important for many things, for the issuing of the right to operate service stations. It does not matter who is behind them, whether it is a Member of Parliament, or the Senate, it is very important to issue regulations when you are giving licences like this. It does not matter which political party is behind

this. I would ask the hon. Member to indicate whether he intends to bring new regulations or amend these regulations; or if he intends to deal at all with the question of a procedure for going to the tribunal, which is embodied in the parent Act and gives birth to these regulations that are before the House. I await the hon. Member's response.

**The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert):** Madam Speaker, first let me deal with the point raised by both the Member for Couva North and the Member for Nariva. Let me give Members on the other side the assurance that when the amended regulations are laid in this honourable House, the regulations regarding the working, accessing and operating of the appeals tribunal referred to in section 8 of the Maxi-taxi Act, will be addressed. I give that assurance to the Members of the other side.

We seem to have the agreement of Members opposite Madam Speaker, I beg to move.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That the Maxi-taxi Regulations, 1992 be approved.

**3.35. p.m.**

#### **ORDER OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY**

*Order for second reading read.*

**The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Mr. Ralph Maraj):** Madam Speaker, I beg to move,

That a bill to give effect to the Agreement instituting the Order of the Caribbean Community, be now read a second time.

As you are aware, this matter of the Order of the Caribbean Community has come into focus recently during the Heads of Government Conference, when three distinguished Caricom citizens received this award. In seeking to pilot this bill, I want, very simply, to give the background to it and focus a little on what is needed to have it passed.

At the eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community held in St. Lucia from June 30 to July 3, 1987, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, under the prime ministership of the former

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Prime Minister and Member for Tobago East, proposed that an award for Caribbean citizenship be conferred on Caricom nationals, who had made an outstanding contribution to the development of the region, and that holders of the award would be given the right to live, work and own property in any Caricom member state. In essence, the purpose of this bill is to give effect to this intention.

The proposal was discussed in caucus, and the conference endorsed the principle of Caricom countries honouring Caricom nationals, who have made outstanding contributions to the development of the region. This was done collectively, in caucus, by the Heads, by granting them a special status within their borders, through, for instance, an appropriate form of honorary citizenship. The conference also noted that the award of such a status would carry with it certain rights and privileges as mentioned.

They also agreed that the Committee of Attorneys General be mandated to examine the concept and make recommendations to the conference. The Committee of Attorneys General did have their meeting and at the ninth meeting of the conference held from October 4—8, 1988, presented a list of nine recommendations to the conference. This list dealt with matters like the appropriate designated honour being conferred on Caricom nationals, who have made outstanding contributions; that there should be a ceiling on the number of living nationals who would have the award at any one time, and the decision, I think, was that no more than 20 living nationals would have it; that the honour would be ranked appropriately against national honours in the region and in terms of the order of preference and the whole question of their status in the society. For example, they should be seated appropriately with the diplomatic corps. In other words, the whole intention was to give them a certain status and recognition in the society. The selection of the persons on whom the award is to be conferred should be limited to two persons in any one year.

These are some of the recommendations being made by the Attorneys General. A committee of distinguished persons should be appointed to consider and make recommendations to the Heads of Government on nominations received. That the conferring of the honour would carry with it the present title, the Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC), and that the awardees would be addressed with the prefix “Honourable”, so that those three distinguished nationals, who received these awards are now like hon. Members of this House. It just seems that they would have the privilege of being addressed as “Honourable” for their entire life,

while some of us may not have that privilege bestowed upon us for our stay here might be very fleeting indeed.

The Committee of Attorneys General also decided that the award would carry with it the following rights and privileges:

- They would be issued a common Caricom travel document, which would be accepted by immigration authorities for purposes of travel within the Caricom Community, and which would be a signal for the awardees to be accorded courtesies in respect of government facilities at airports, etc.
- The right to reside, work and acquire property in any member state of the Community would be also given.

These privileges to be granted the awardees would also be extended to their spouses and children under 18 years of age.

- The awardees would also receive a tangible insignia in the form of an appropriate medal.

The meeting agreed to recommend that these arrangements be brought into force by a resolution of the Conference of Heads of Government in which it will be required that an inter-governmental agreement for the purpose be entered into by Caricom governments.

Most of the recommendations of the Attorneys General were eventually accepted by the conference, and I will give you again the exact decisions of the conference so that we become very clear as to the background of this award.

The conference agreed that an appropriately designated honour would be conferred on Caricom nationals to whom we have referred. The honour would be appropriately ranked in the Caricom region in the light of what I referred to. The selection of persons on whom this honour would be conferred would be done only at the Conference of Heads of Government. This is an additional decision that the Conference made in addition to what the Attorneys General had decided upon: That a committee nominated by member governments will be established to prepare the approval of member states, and for the selection of awardees, to make recommendations to the Conference of Heads of Government on nominations. That this committee which would select the awardees would comprise seven persons and these persons would be as follows:

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The Director General of the OECS or his nominee, on behalf of the OECS group of Member States.

One Member each representing the other Member States.

Five members would constitute a quorum for meetings of the committee which would be serviced by the Caribbean Community Secretariat.

**3.45 p.m.**

Madam Speaker, the conference also decided to accept the recommendations of the Attorneys General as far as privileges go and those same privileges that I referred to you:

- the right to live and work in any country of their choice;
- the right to own property, and so on.

The medal would be an appropriate medal struck in gold. By way of information the gold for this occasion was generously provided by the President of Guyana—I should just like to inform the House about that—for which he was highly praised.

**Mr. B. Panday:** Would you like to talk about free and fair elections in Guyana?

**Mr. Maraj:** We can talk about that at another time.

These arrangements would be brought into force by the signing of all member states of an instrument formally establishing the honour in time for the first award to be made at the tenth meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government.

So that is the background, as far as this matter is concerned.

**Mr. S. Panday:** I should like to ask the hon. Member for San Fernando West how this helps the deepening of the Caricom process.

**Mr. Maraj:** I was about to get into that. There is always the need—I am sure the hon. Member for Naparima recognizes—in any society or emerging civilization to recognize any outstanding contribution. Maybe, he might one day be recognized by Trinidad and Tobago. There is always the need, because outstanding achievement and individuals are really milestones.

**Mr. Sudama:** Would the Member give way to a question? If my hon. friend the Member for Naparima is given an award by the Trinidad and Tobago Government, is that furthering the process of integration in Trinidad and Tobago?

**Hon. R. Maraj:** I think the hon. Member for Oropouche is a bit too hasty. I was about to answer the question. He interrupted me in mid-stream. He broke my train of thought.

In response to the Member for Naparima, I was saying that when you recognize people of worth, who have achieved something, who are doing something for your society, they are a sign of inspiration and they are signs of standards to be achieved, and so on, when you do that for a region, when you recognize the people, collectively, it is a symbol of the region's achievement. It may not be tangible to you, but that furthers the whole process of integration. I have no doubt, in my mind, that it does.

It was also decided that the whole question of posthumous awards—whether these awards would also be given posthumously, as opposed to having an honour roll for distinguished and deceased Caricom nationals. At the last meeting, which just ended, it was decided that the awards would be given to living nationals only and that in order to record the achievements of people who have already passed away, there would be another mechanism put in place.

The committee that was put in place to look at the recommendations decided that the agreement would enter into force upon signature by all member states; and enactment of appropriate legislation, if necessary—and this is why we are here today, because there is a need for the enactment of legislation to bring all these decisions into play. The necessary steps should be taken to ensure that the agreement would be ready for signature.

There was the Heads of Government Inter-sessional Committee, in Port of Spain, as you remember, on February 26, 1991 and this particular agreement was signed by the Heads of Government of Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. It was subsequently signed by the remaining seven member states and came into force on May 28, 1991.

By way of further background, at the twelfth meeting of the Heads of Government in St. Kitts, July 2—4, 1991, a decision was taken to announce that the Order would be conferred on three distinguished West Indians. I am sure that we realize who they are by now:

- Sir Shridath Ramphal, who was the Chairman of the West Indian Commission;

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- Mr. William Demas, outstanding economist and Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago; and
- Derek Walcott, St. Lucian poet, who made a very valuable contribution to art and theatre in Trinidad and Tobago.

Did the Member for Caroni Central want to ask something?

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** I want to find out whether they have been honoured already and the bill is just being presented to Parliament.

**Hon. R. Maraj:** Yes, they have been honoured already.

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** So what you are doing, really, is closing the gates when the horses have already bolted.

**Hon. R. Maraj:** That may be one way of looking at it, but it is not really that. We have already presented them with the honour and the honour remains. We are seeking to enact the legislation to ensure that all the privileges, and so on, that go with the honour are accorded to them.

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** I had simply thought that you discussed matters like this first and then act afterwards.

**Hon. R. Maraj:** You see, several countries are involved in it. I knew that argument would come up. I have no problem facing it. It is a whole process. You have to get consensus, agreement and so on. We see it as part of the whole process for which we would need the—

**Mr. Palackdharrysingh:** Very trivial.

**Hon. R. Maraj:** Yes, I think the question so very trivial. A trivial question often receives a trivial answer.

The conference also noted that the advisory committee established under the agreement to invite and receive nominations for the award and make recommendations was preparing to commence its work.

Madam Speaker, at the last Heads of Government Conference, which ended only yesterday—the thirteenth meeting of the Heads of Government—it was agreed to request member states, which had not yet enacted the legislation—so that Trinidad and Tobago is not the only country in this position—required to give effect to the agreement, to do so as a matter of urgency. The meeting also agreed to request member states to determine the appropriate ranking for holders of the



Order vis-a-vis holders of their national honours and awards and advise the committee accordingly; that the OCC would not be awarded posthumously, that there should be 15 living holders of the award at one time, and that there would be no restriction as to how many awards could be made in any one year. The reason for that being that we felt that it is very possible that in any one year there could be outstanding achievement, and if you decided on a particular number for any one year, you could run into problems as a result of that.

A decision on the duration of the terms of office of the members of the Advisory Committee that chooses the awardees, will be taken at the Fourth Heads of Government Inter-sessional Committee meeting which will be held in Dominica in 1993. As you know, Madam Speaker, before each Heads of Government Conference, there is, indeed, an inter-sessional committee meeting, which is one of the latest mechanisms in Caricom. That, by way of background, is the situation as far as this award is concerned.

This honourable House has before it the Order of the Caribbean Community Bill and we are seeking the very simple co-operation, which I feel certain we shall be able to get of all Members of this House, to give effect to the agreement instituting the Order of the Caribbean Community.

I think I have gone into all of the details, which are also in the bill and Members would have had the bill before them, so that they will have had time to study it.

I think, Madam Speaker, through a question that was asked of me by the hon. Member for Naparima, I gave a kind of idea of the importance of the bill, what it will do for the community, the need to recognize contribution and achievement—that psychological coherence and that inspiration are needed.

I am firmly of the conviction that it will do very well in serving not only the Caricom cause, but also in serving as an inspiration to young people in the society and, really, to give a signal to them as to what constitutes high achievement, so that they might stretch their own talents and explore their own possibilities to achieve the heights that these honourable members of Caricom would have achieved.

Madam Speaker, I thank you very much and I now take my seat, encouraging this honourable House to accept this bill.

I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Miss Hulsie Bhaggan** (*Chaguanas*): Madam Speaker, when we look at the bill that we have before the House today, it is quite clear that the Government intends to deal with issues that are peripheral to the deeper issues of Caricom and Caribbean integration. We expected that Caribbean integration and the whole issue of Caricom would be dealt with in this manner. We know that the Member for San Fernando West is very much accustomed to the stage at the Naparima Bowl, also at Queen's Hall, but we were not sure whether he would be able to act on the world stage. From all indications, he needs to get some lessons with respect to this because I would have expected that whatever comes to this House with respect to Caricom would be substantive in issue.

We want to place on the agenda some very serious issues facing Caricom. You cannot deal with the Order of the Caribbean Community without dealing with the deeper issues facing the region. I am sure Members of this House are aware that we have recently hosted, what we call, the "Panday Initiative for Democracy and Development in the Region". That initiative was called solely to discuss issues facing the Caribbean region, especially Caricom, and was a forum of Opposition parties in the Caribbean. Coming out of that, we had to issue, what is called, the Port of Spain Declaration.

We have been examining the whole issue of Caricom and Caribbean integration and we are not happy with what we see. From the feedback we have received from other Caribbean islands and leaders, they, too, are unhappy with the pace of Caribbean integration and the whole performance of Caricom as a whole.

For the record, we should like to place some issues on the agenda and we do hope that the Member for San Fernando West would see it fit to also put these issues on the agenda of this Parliament so we can have discussions and debate on it, while, at the same time, mechanisms and machinery ought to be put in place to make sure that these things are taken into consideration. One of the chief things that emerged is the increasing disenchantment of Caricom as a credible vehicle for integration of the Caribbean.

We issued several calls to the Heads of Government, in particular. The first call we made is that:

"As a matter of urgency, the Caricom Heads of Government establish a machinery for a solid and unified regional approach to negotiations with external financial lending agencies and institutions in the formulation of

structural adjustment programmes, debt management programmes and in the development of relationships with emerging economic trading blocs."

That, we feel is a substantive issue.

"Secondly, we said that to mitigate the impact of structural adjustment a regional policy be immediately formulated and implemented to deal with unemployment as a top priority and to address the general deterioration of social services.

Thirdly, to broaden regional integration beyond a general economic conception and approach to integration and that a social charter be introduced to protect the disadvantaged and to promote and protect the fundamental rights of all citizens.

Fourthly ..."

This is one we felt ought to be brought to the Parliament.

"The West Indian Commission Report be urgently debated in all the national Parliaments and in public forums which include participation by Opposition parties and NGOs, with a view to arriving at national and regional consensus."

I saw that particular call being echoed in Jamaica by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Edward Seaga, in today's *Trinidad Guardian*. In fact, it is on the Table today and we want it to be debated in this House.

We are also saying that after that is done—if there is debate in Parliament—and we hope that the Government will bring that to this House:

"When a consensus is reached on the West Indian Commission Reprt that an action plan for the phased implementation of the various recommendations be urgently formulated and put into effect at the earliest opportunity."

We also said:

"Recognizing the growing cynicism of people concerning their leaders and institutions, that policies be developed to guarantee meaningful participation by Caribbean peoples in their national life and in the integration process.

That policies be implemented to ensure mobilization of our peoples in the regional integration process."

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Madam Speaker, all these points signify on one clear thing: Caribbean peoples are not involved in the institution of Caricom.

For instance, we are speaking about these awards. I want to ask the question: How many Caribbean persons were consulted as to whom those awards should be given? Secondly, we are speaking, for instance, about nominations. Who are the ones who are making the nominations? We have no information as to who is making the nominations. If Caricom continues to be privatized by Caricom Heads, the ruling parties will always promote people that they are familiar with and so the peoples of the Caribbean would not have a chance to participate in something called the Order of the Caribbean Community.

The next point, Madam Speaker—and this has more to do with democracy in the region:

"Having regard to the tradition of free and fair elections in the Caribbean, that the Caribbean Heads of Government take immediate steps to ensure the holding of free and fair elections in Guyana and, in particular, that the recommendations of the Guyana Independent Elections Commission be respected and implemented."

In my presentation this afternoon, I am going to speak about Guyana.

"That the Heads of Government Conference explore new avenues for the restoration of the democratically elected Government of Haiti."

The final recommendation:

"That Caricom be radically re-organized to facilitate access to the mechanisms of decision-making by Opposition parties and NGOs so as to ensure genuine consultation and continuity, both at the national and regional levels".

Madam Speaker, we on this side should like to formally place those topics and issues on the agenda of this Parliament and we are calling on the Member for San Fernando West, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to do that so we can discuss them.

We on this side resent very much the fact that our country is represented at Caricom Heads of Government meetings and our Government is speaking on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago but yet we are not aware of what is being discussed—we had no input in it. We have no kind of consultation, no mechanism to access that type of decision-making. We believe that the time has

come when we in this Parliament, representing the people of this country ought to have an input in what is discussed at Caricom.

The other point I should like to bring up—and it has to do with the whole question of human rights in the region—is the question of transforming formal democracy to real democracy and, more substantively the question of free and fair elections in Guyana.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier this year, on March 13, 1992, we, on this side, discussed a motion and sent it to the Clerk of the House, requesting that it be put on the Order Paper. The motion reads thus:

*"Whereas* the people and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago believe in democracy;

*And whereas* the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has been consistently silent on the issue of free and fair elections in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana;

*Be it resolved* that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago state its position on the Co-operative Republic of Guyana as it relates to the conduct of elections; and

*Be it further resolved* that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago take all steps to support free and fair elections in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I received a reply addressed to me from the Clerk of the House, dated April 8, 1992, which read as follows:

"Dear Member,

I have been directed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mrs. Occah Seapaul, to inform you that your motion filed on March 17, 1992, is out of order, in that it interferes with the internal affairs of a sovereign State which, in addition, is one that enjoys friendly relations with Trinidad and Tobago.

Please be advised accordingly."

While I appreciate that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question we have got to ask ourselves is: How do we reconcile the concept of a sovereign state when we are speaking of deepening Caribbean integration which, in fact, involves a cluster of sovereign states?

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The second question we have got to ask ourselves is: Should integration not be based on common principles and common values? If within Caricom we believe in democracy—as has been demonstrated over the years where, for instance, we have taken initiatives as far as Namibia to send missions, why is it that we cannot place Guyana on the agenda of the Caribbean?

We have rightfully placed South Africa and Haiti on the Caribbean agenda. Why are we not placing Guyana on the Caribbean agenda? Today we on this side should like to place Guyana on the agenda of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago.

In case we are saying, perhaps, people are not aware of Guyana, I am going to provide some information. But first, I want to suggest that there is a conspiracy of silence in the Caribbean as far as Guyana is concerned. I do not understand why, but there is a conspiracy of silence. I am quoting Rex Nettleford, a scholar within the Caribbean who said in 1988 that the Caribbean leaders are part of what is called a "conspiracy of silence".

In 1990, I presented a document to the Mini Caricom Summit which was held in Tobago. Our former Prime Minister got a copy of it. It was called: "Guyana, a case for free and fair elections". I, personally, made presentations to the Prime Ministers of St. Vincent, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados. Not a word was said about Guyana.

Today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak about Guyana and I want to give you some very basic facts. First, I want to point out, what we call, rigged elections in Guyana and begin by saying that:

"In the entire period of political independence, the Guyanese people did not enjoy the rights of citizenship, because there has been subversion of democracy in that country and it started in 1968, when Sir Shridath Surendranath Ramphal was the Attorney General in Guyana."

This is one of the persons who received an award. This gentleman who is now going to be called "Honourable" for the rest of his life, was the person who drafted and introduced two pieces of legislation: The National Registration Act of 1967, and the Representation of the People Modification Act of 1968. What essentially these Acts did was:

"(1) Remove the powers of the elections Commission to independently direct, organize and supervise elections and place this authority in the hands of a Government Minister ..."

This is one of the persons who received the Order of the Caribbean Community.

- (2) These two Acts allowed the National Register to be used to compile the voters list;
- (3) Overseas voting was introduced; and,
- (4) Proxy voting was expanded."

These changes by these two pieces of legislation allowed the People's National Congress to rig elections in 1968. In effect, the Government's machinery was so organized—and these pieces of legislation gave them the power to organize rigged elections.

The electoral lists at that time were heavily padded with the names of the dead, the under age and fictitious persons. The overseas vote was another fiasco—and again I am going to read from the case—in fact, Grenada Television of the United Kingdom produced two documentaries on the 1968 general elections entitled, "The trail of the vanishing votes", and "The making of a Prime Minister". This exposed the fraud in the overseas voting list.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in an exercise to verify registered voters in the United Kingdom, the producers of these documentaries discovered that at one registered address, the houses no longer existed and that two horses had since moved in, and at another address the house had been demolished since 1864. So you had a voter registered with an address, you go there and the house no longer exists, but there are two horses grazing there.

**4.15 p.m.**

Secondly, the Opinion Research Centre, which carried out an independent survey, declared that no more than 10,000 of the 44,300 names listed were actually genuine. In New York, the same tale was there. In fact, a new dimension in New York revealed that while there was a higher proportion in Britain of real people living at the addresses shown on the registration list, they were not Guyanese. Many of them were American citizens.

The proxy system, was also greatly abused. The procedures for proxy voting were set out in the Registration of the People Act—the same Act which was drafted and passed by the Honourable Shridath Ramphal. Those entitled to vote by proxy were restricted by law to the Police Force, the Special Service Unit, rural constables, elections officers and staff, transport and harbour personnel manning vehicles, the disabled and the blind.

**Mr. Valley:** On a point of order. The Member appears to be irrelevant. We are debating an order to help the community. Now, I think what she is saying is quite important and we need to look at that. Perhaps she can file a motion.

**Mr. S. Panday:** The Speaker says no.

**Mr. Valley:** If the Speaker says no, then she cannot attempt to get via the back door what she could not get via the front door, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I ask for your ruling, please.

**Mr. Sudama:** We are talking about a man who was awarded an honour under this.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Could we have some order in the House, please! Continue?

**Miss Bhaggan:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate that, because my substantive opening was, basically that we cannot speak about this bill without speaking about the principles upon which Caricom was founded. For instance, if there is a country within the bosom of Caricom in which we do not have free and fair elections we, as Caribbean people, have a right to stand in our national Parliament and talk about it. It is in that context I am speaking about it. This is 1992 and still we do not have free and fair elections in Guyana. Secondly, there has been total silence on the part of Caricom leaders. I want to make it clear that that particular country is part and parcel of Caricom. Not only that, the Caricom Secretariat is located in Georgetown, Guyana.

In addition to all those discrepancies what the Granada Television crew also discovered was that a hanged man voted in the Guyana General Elections, and so did children. The point I want to make is that those two pieces of legislation gave powers which undermined democracy in Guyana and which allowed for the rigging of elections there. This is why I am asking: On what basis is this individual being nominated and awarded Caricom's highest award? I believe that we as Caribbean people ought to have a say as to who should get these awards.

I should also like to inform this House that in 1973 the same things were repeated. I will not repeat myself. The other documentary at that time was "Burnham did it again". In fact, *Caribbean Contact*, through the Caribbean Conference of Churches, also expressed their views against the elections in Guyana. As a matter of fact at that time, in 1973, appeals to the Privy Council



were also abolished. In 1978, again, elections were postponed. They were constitutionally due in 1978, but were postponed to 1980.

What happened was that in actually postponing the elections, the Government held a referendum in which they asked the population to determine changes in the Constitution. It was supposed to give the Government the power to make changes that are supposed to be done to the Constitution and vested in a two-thirds majority of the Parliament. You have to go to Parliament to make changes to the Constitution, but what really happened there was that since you already had a majority Government which was also PNC controlled, which was a rigged Government, you found that they had all the powers and so each year, deeper and deeper, the Guyanese people were faced with a crisis where they could no longer exercise their franchise. In 1980, the same situation again. This time things went worse.

In fact, Dr. Walter Rodney was killed. There are many questions still surrounding his death Dr. Walter Rodney who was a leader—an Opposition person in Guyana who stood up for the people. I have a photograph of him dead on a slab with his body all in pieces. I do believe that the time has come when someone like him ought to be looked at in this Caribbean. He was killed because he was someone who spoke out for the peoples of his country and was fighting for democracy and the rights of his people. Those questions are still hanging.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to suggest to this House that when we look at persons getting awards, we have got to trace their roots and history to see what kind of skeletons they have in their cupboards. This is why, again, I want to stress that this bill is very relevant to my discussion here this afternoon. Fr. Bernard Dark was also stabbed in broad daylight in front of a magistrates' court by a group of people who belonged to a group headed by Rabbi Washington, who was a refugee from the United States of America. We have to understand, too, that in Guyana there was Jim Jones, who caused the death of hundreds of people who were being harboured in a part of Guyana with full rights and privileges. So we have to ensure that those things are not repeated in the Caribbean.

**Mr. B. Panday:** Next thing we shall have Hoyte getting one of these awards.

**Miss Bhaggan:** Exactly! Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will make this document available to Members of the House because in it there is a detailed account of all the problems associated with free and fair elections in Guyana. But, in particular I want to suggest that not only did we have problems with respect to rigging of

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elections at the level of the voters list, but we also had violence. People died! There are accounts in this document of ballot boxes being seized and taken away from polling stations. There are accounts of guns being pointed by the army at the heads of polling agents and their eviction from the polling stations.

There is a lawyer in Guyana whom I had some discussions with on this whole question. He told me that he was in the interior on the day of elections, returning to Georgetown, and the army vehicle which was transporting the ballot boxes broke down and they asked him for a lift in his vehicle. Two other lawyers were with him and they are willing to testify. He said that while they were in the vehicle, the radio was on and the results were being announced for the various areas—including the region for which they still had ballot boxes in their car. That person is willing to swear to an affidavit. Not only this lawyer but his legal colleagues as well.

Elections were also rigged under the successor to Burnham, the gentleman we had to sit in the audience and listen to speak to us at the Caricom conference. In fact the international team of observers, the UK Parliamentary Group, in their report mentioned:

"...polling day, we took up our position outside a sort of large polling station at a school at about ten to six ... at about five to six Minister Hoyte turned up, presumably to check the arrangements, insulted us fairly cheerfully, but then proceeded on his way..."

In another entry they said—

"We were now approaching 6 p.m. and we did have another last tour round to see if there was any evidence of last minute surge to the polls. There wasn't. But it is important to remember that polling was extended for this extra hour and we had to leave Georgetown at 6 p.m. So I cannot swear that something quite extraordinary did not happen in the last hour, but if it did it was entirely at variance with everything we have seen during the day. Yet, you will find that Area 10 polled 23,000 votes (exactly 23,000) and I am sure that I did not see 23,000 people go to the poll.

They have recorded something akin to 80 per cent poll, and I just do not think that is what we saw. Minister Hoyte had said to us the day before that at the referendum, Area 10 had polled a 98.6 per cent and that it was his intention to beat that this time."

**4.25 p.m.**

Apart from all of that, in 1985, under the present President of Guyana, more things happened. This time you had persecution of Opposition candidates. You had the control and manipulation of the media, where, for instance, the radio stations were controlled as to what was said; the newspapers; police permission—when you applied for permission to hold public meetings, you were turned down, or you were given permission a day before or the morning of the meeting. You had orchestrated electricity blackouts. As a matter of fact, whenever an Opposition party was having its meeting, suddenly that area would have a blackout. So most times you were speaking and you were not sure to whom you were speaking. In fact, for the ruling party, whenever they had meetings, there was so much electricity, that a phrase was coined for the ruling party, which was, "Light up you light with Desmond Hoyte."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many more things I can tell you. There is a British journalist, Anthony Jenkins, who was actually beaten by the PNC forces. In fact, what I did not remember a while ago was that the two people who were shot and killed, actually held the ballot boxes to their bodies to protect democracy—as far as their conception was concerned—and they were shot at point-blank range killed right there on the floor. They were two supporters of the People's Progressive Party.

I want to suggest to this honourable House that when we come to this Parliament here, if the other parliaments in the region are not prepared to discuss it, I believe the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago has got to be consistent as far as democracy in the region is concerned. We are calling on this Parliament to establish a joint parliamentary team so that we may go to Guyana to observe their coming elections.

We have been receiving information where it is said that our Parliament and Caricom are going to be part of the Commonwealth team. I had a discussion with Sir Anthony Seeagru, who is the Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, who told me that, maybe, about three or four people from Caricom will be part of that. You are speaking about hundreds of polling stations, about a country which is close to our heart, a country with which the Member for San Fernando East would like to form his own little integration grouping, so we, therefore, have a responsibility, as people who believe in democracy and free and fair elections in the Caribbean, to ensure that we take a keen interest in Guyana. If

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the other parliamentary groupings do not want to talk about it, we have got to talk about it.

I also want to say to you, that at our conference of Opposition parties in the Caribbean, we are quite willing to mount our own parliamentary observer mission to Guyana to observe the elections. If the Government cannot do it, the Opposition parties of the Caribbean will do it.

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

**5.05 p.m.:** *Sitting resumed.*

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**Miss H. Bhaggan:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my contribution prior to the teabreak, I had been discussing the whole issue of free and fair elections in Guyana and had been calling for Caricom governments, in particular, to take a stand as far as elections there are concerned. I had mentioned that I am calling upon this Parliament to establish a joint parliamentary group to observe elections in Guyana.

There are several reasons why we ought to do this. In the first place, after so many years—1968 to 1991, I believe—the President of Guyana, and his government, had no intentions of actually pursuing electoral reforms. Then, one day the former President of the United States of America, Jimmy Carter, came into Guyana, upon the invitation of the opposition parties, to look at the whole process.

Within 24 hours, after a meeting with the President of Guyana, the President announced that he was willing to conduct some electoral reforms. I find that an affront to the Caricom. It is an affront to Caribbean peoples—as it is an affront to the people of Guyana—to suggest that after all these years, this Government did not accede to a simple request of restoring the fundamental right to vote. I do believe that we cannot allow external governments to take an interest in this region to protect democracy. We, as a people, ought to do that for ourselves.

Secondly, in Guyana, there are many problems today and we are to be concerned about them because if we are speaking about integration we cannot have the other countries growing and developing to some extent and this country continue to become worse, and worse, as far as economic and social conditions are concerned.

Since 1968 migration intensified to the extent where, today, close to 500,000 people have migrated from Guyana—whether through what is called the “back

track” or through legal means. Quite often, I meet individuals from that country who went through what is called the “back track”. They paid US \$10,000 to some person somewhere and got a pass to go to the United States of America but when they reached there, something happened and so they had to be deported back to Guyana.

I want to explain why that is so hurtful to Guyanese people. One Guyana dollar today fluctuates between \$100 and \$125—in fact the Member for St. Augustine just came back. I do not know whether he changed any money on the market there—but US \$1 is equivalent of...

**Mr. Humphrey:** One US cent is worth a Guyanese dollar.

**Miss Bhaggan:** ... approximately \$125 Guyanese. So, if someone is to raise US \$10,000 to get a visa to go abroad, can you imagine the kind of work that person has to put in to raise that kind of money? It is their whole life savings. So we ought to help these people.

In fact, in our country when you go to the airport, almost on a daily basis you would see people who are coming in on Guyanese flights being interrogated—I will use that word—by immigration and many of them are deported back to Guyana.

As Caribbean people we have got to ensure that we have credibility when we speak about democracy and free and fair elections. So, if we continue to maintain that contradiction with respect to free and fair elections in Guyana, what we are clearly saying is that we are maintaining double standards.

There is another point, and maybe the Member for St. Ann's East would appreciate this point. That point is, Guyana owes us close to US \$400 million. I know there are talks now about some kind of arrangement between this country and Guyana with respect to settling that debt. But you are not going to have development unless there is democracy. They are two sides of the same coin. So, if we the people of Trinidad and Tobago are interested in having that debt settled, in whatever form, we have got to be interested in democracy. This is another reason why we ought to take an interest in elections in Guyana.

Unfortunately, in the PNM's unbroken period of 30 years, they were very silent on the issue. We had the NAR Government, and I made my own presentations to the former Prime Minister. He, too, and his Government, were silent on the issue. I am surprised that at the last Caricom Heads of Governments Conference, nothing

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was said by our Government with respect to elections. We cannot hold any other Caribbean governments responsible, we can only hold our own Government responsible. I am surprised that this Government did not bring it up on the agenda.

I am now suggesting to this Government, to create history by breaking that conspiracy of silence and, once and for all, let somebody in the Caribbean speak about free and fair elections in Guyana. If this Government wants to create history, it can do so by placing the question of democracy in Guyana as an issue for Caricom to deal with.

I want to move on next to this question of the Order of the Caribbean Community. I may look at it and say many things about the privileges and all the things that the Member for San Fernando West brought up, but I want to first deal with the persons who are nominated and received these awards. As I mentioned before, it was clearly established that one of the recipients of this award was someone who was part and parcel of that whole system which undermines democracy in Guyana. I make no bones about it—I speak very clearly about the Honourable Sir Shridath Surendranath Ramphal, OCC. This gentleman is going to be called honourable for the rest of his life. I am going to make a case, and I hope that at the end of it, we reconsider whether he should remain honourable or be called by some other name.

This gentleman upon whom we have bestowed the highest honour in this region, is someone who was involved—apart from the two Acts which undermine elections—in something called the National Security Act, 1966 which gave the security forces of Guyana uncontrolled power to go into someone's home, arrest without warrant, lock up people, in fact, to terrorize the people of Guyana. The National Security Act of 1966—which was introduced by the Attorney General, and the late Forbes Burnham—gave the security forces the powers to terrorize the people of Guyana. Apart from the absence of free and fair elections, that was one of the issues why people started to leave Guyana in droves.

On this “*Programme for the Opening Ceremony and First Conferment of the Order of the Caribbean Community*”, in talking about this gentleman, it was mentioned that this act was going to be given—it spoke about Sir Shridath Surendranath Ramphal's outstanding contribution to regional development which began with the establishment of the West Indies Federation where he served as assistant Attorney General and legal draftsman—

"It is in his capacity of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice in Guyana that the quality of his leadership, particularly within the non-aligned movement, carved for him a prominent position in international affairs."

What development, Mr. Deputy speaker? This gentleman was part of a system that not only oppressed Guyanese people but also undermined the development of Guyana, a country, today, which is rich in natural resources. In fact, if you were to take all the natural resources in the whole Caribbean, and put these together, they cannot match the resources of Guyana. Today, through Mr. Ramphal that country is termed the poorest in the western hemisphere—poorer than Haiti. In 1991 that was the status given to Guyana. This gentleman has been awarded for development in the region.

Another point I want to make is the fact that he wrote a book *Our Country, the Planet*. As far as I am concerned, he should have written a book entitled *Guyana, the Caribbean South Africa*.

**5.15 p.m.**

In case you think I am referring only to the oppression of Indo-Guyanese, I want to inform this honourable House that when I speak about apartheid existing in the Caribbean, I am speaking about Guyana with respect to the indigenous peoples of Guyana and of the Caribbean and this region. The Amerindian people are actually placed and preserved almost in the jungles of Guyana. You cannot enter those reservations without a pass, and when you go to obtain one, you are terrorized, because as far as the Guyanese Government is concerned, you are going to create some insurrection among these poor people. If you were to read the story about what those people are going through in the interior, you would be amazed to know that in this century in the Caribbean, such a situation is existing.

For instance, there are no health services in the interior, except a very minor, rudiment any kind of thing. When the women are about to deliver babies, they have to get into canoes and their husbands or male counterparts have to travel 40 miles before they end up at some place where they can get some attention. Quite often, these women deliver their babies on the bank of the Essequibo River. People die while trying to get medical attention.

People are virtually starving in the interior. There are what are called captains who are controlled by the ruling party's forces. They are paid, manipulated and controlled. These captains are not there to look after the interest of the Amerindian

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people; they are there to spy on who is going in and coming out and what activities are taking place within the interior.

What did Sir Shridath Surendranath Ramphal do about this? He speaks most glibly about South Africa. I put it to this House, that the reason he is speaking about South Africa is not that he really cares about democracy or the rights of the people of South Africa; he wants to appeal to the sentiments of Afro-Caribbean people. I am suggesting to this House that if he wanted to be consistent, and if he really was consistent, he would have had the same message for all peoples who are oppressed. I believe that the Amerindian Guyanese are people who deserve to be placed on the agenda of the Caribbean, so we can discuss their status in Guyana.

This is a gentleman who apart from being involved in so many discrepancies in his own country is now silent on apartheid in his own country. Next, this gentleman, despite the oppression of the indigenous peoples, is now awarded all these privileges. He can buy property anywhere; he can travel anywhere; he has diplomatic status and all kinds of privileges.

Did we get a chance in the Caribbean to examine the status, the CVs and history of these people before they were awarded the OCC? I cannot imagine that we could take anybody from within the Caribbean; give them the highest award and have no say in it. We are saying that these are citizens from other countries. We do not know them. We can only know the people within our country in any real intimate sense.

So, before these people are given these awards, the nominations, apart from the committee that is being set up, there must be a list of finalists which ought to come to the local parliaments for examination, so the various national parliaments will have a chance to make an input in respect of who are going to receive the highest honour, because when governments change in a region, those OCCs still have to be honoured. It is only fair that there must be consensus at all levels and that the persons who are elected to this office for life, be examined and scrutinized.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The speaking time of the hon. member has expired.

*Motion made,* That the speaking time of the hon. Member be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mr. S. Mohammed*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Miss Bhaggan:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and Members of the House.



Another point which I find almost vulgar is the fact that the insignia of the OCC is made of Guyana gold. The Member for San Fernando West took great pride in informing this House that the President of Guyana was congratulated because he donated this piece of gold to the OCC. Do you know what is ironic about that? Here is a man who, at least, is perceived as having betrayed his people, in fact, based on the discussions we had with people from Guyana, the Guyanese themselves feel betrayed—

**Mr. Bereaux:** Would the Member give way please? I really like to hear her and she raised the point on the Guyanese election which I think is quite valid to some extent, but Sir Shridath Ramphal, whatever we may think about him is not present in this House and cannot defend himself here. I think that the hon. Member should observe the courtesies and leave him alone.

**Miss Bhaggan:** I thank the hon. Member for La Brea. The point that I am making and I wish to reiterate, is that I hope that never again, would we confer these awards on the people without proper scrutiny, because we could be highly embarrassed as Caribbean people.

The second point I should like to make is on the question of the award itself, where we believe, and as I mentioned before, there must be consultation, but we also perceive that something is happening. What we are basically doing is creating a new grouping of elitist people, with many privileges; the right to own property in other member states. The various countries still maintain their sovereignty, yet there is the right to own property.

So what happens eventually when these persons pass away, these properties are then vested in their families. It becomes almost a great aristocracy within the Caribbean region. I believe we ought to review that whole question of privileges to ensure that we do not recreate a colonial type of development, where we can have an aristocracy once more being developed.

The next point I should like to make relates to this issue of the West Indian Commission. I do hope as I mentioned before, that this Government will actually see it fit to bring that report to this House, so we can discuss it, because I suspect very strongly that with the proposal of a West Indian Commission comprising a President and two commissioners, I believe—I have not seen the Report as yet, but from what I have read in the newspapers I have a strange feeling that there is great lobbying going on in the Caribbean among Caribbean heads to ensure that certain

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individuals get these prestigious positions. On the one hand you will have these prestigious awards, and on the other you will have some commissioners.

I want to state that in giving these awards we ought not to have them conferred only on men. I am saying that there ought to be an amendment, where at least one woman would be honoured, because there are women in the Caribbean who have also made contributions. I also believe that we ought not to confer this award only on geriatrics. I am not referring to any person in particular, lest the Member for La Brea object once more.

**Hon. Member:** Why? He has an interest in geriatrics?

**Miss Bhaggan:** I suggest that we make sure that the criteria be such, that they do not have all these privileges, and all these new positions, if they are accepted, be given only to persons who have always held the Caribbean stage, and so when you look at the persons receiving these awards—and I suspect the persons who are lobbying now to be the West Indian Commissioners—they would most likely be persons whose names you have been hearing since the 1960s.

I believe the time has come for new blood to be introduced in the Caribbean integration movement, because what we need now is a new perspective, new dynamism and a new vision of where the Caribbean ought to go. Sometimes we ought to examine those persons to see whether they have not been part and parcel of what I term, the almost failure of Caricom to move and to forge ahead as a fully integrated body.

**5.25 p.m.**

Basically, the Member for San Fernando West explained why they are setting up this award and he made several comments. He spoke, for instance, about the Committee of Seven, where the Director General of the OECS would be a member and there would be a member from each member state. I hope this member is not only a member of the Government. I really believe it should be someone who is non-political and independent and who would really scrutinize the nominations, regardless of which government is in power, to ensure that there is an equal chance of people being given awards.

I want to continue to press the point that I hope that in future when bills are being brought to this House, with respect to international relations in particular, one, they would be more substantive. I believe that there are more substantive

issues to be discussed now, with all the developments in the world. The Members on the other side themselves take pride in talking about those issues.

Secondly, I do not believe that we should have this bill coming now, when the people have already received their awards. There has to be some mechanism where these things are dealt with nationally, first, and consensus achieved. In fact, what it amounts to, almost, is disrespect for the Parliament.

I thank the Members of the House for listening to me with such patience. I make an appeal, once more, that when we look at Caribbean integration and Caricom that, as Members of this House, we are not Trinidadians and Tobagonians—we on this side have a similar interest as those on the other side, so we also want to see the Caribbean move forward. This is why when we bring up these points, they are not in any way to embarrass any individual, but to ensure that as a national Parliament we do not make the mistakes of the past and that we move forward in a way that we could look back at our history with pride and say that as a people we have stood up on a point of principle and for the things in which we believe.

I do thank you.

**The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Ralph Maraj):** Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased that I have the opportunity to respond to the hon. Member for Chaguanas.

She started off by promising to give me some lessons in acting on the world's stage. I always suspected that once I entered Parliament I would be assailed with trivial and pedestrian comments about my former career.

Notwithstanding that, I am willing to take any lessons, in acting, the hon. Member might want to give me, if she would only agree to take reciprocal lessons in debating. I realize we must be gentle with the lady, but I cannot help describing her contribution as wayward and bordering on irrelevance at most times. She is an intelligent debater, in a sense.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Would the hon. Member for San Fernando West please, refer to the Member as the Member for Chaguanas.

**Hon. R. Maraj:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to congratulate her on taking the opportunity of this debate to put into the record what she has referred to as the "Panday Declaration" or some such weird concoction.

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The Member spent much time talking about Guyana, and used the opportunity as well to give much information about Guyana, Rodney and Hoyte. I suppose we must thank her for reminding us about some of the things we are already aware of. Much of it, in my view, was very subjective and I do not want to get into any debate on the opinions of the hon. Member for Chaguanas.

As was suggested by the Leader of the House, if matters in Guyana concern her, there are ways by which we can do it. I do not think that this debate is the place to go into certain aspects of the situation in Guyana, into which the Member went in detail. Let it be said that we ourselves are very concerned about developments, not only in Guyana, but throughout the region and the world. So, there is not much to respond to in that regard.

Towards the end of her argument, the Member said that I mentioned with pride the fact of the President of Guyana providing the gold for the insignia. I want to assure her that I mentioned it neither with pride, nor shame. It was just by way of information that I was bringing this matter to you.

The question of elitism is an interesting point but, again, it is not really applicable. In any society, however it is arranged, there are going to be people who will emerge in terms of their achievements, whether it be in politics, business, sport, culture or in religion, and it is the responsibility of any civilized society to recognize achievement and the emergence of individuals who have used their skills and talents, to advance not only themselves, but also to advance their society. And to term that recognition the creation of an elite section, is really to see it with very distorted eyes. The point is not worth commenting on any further. We, in government, intend to lay the report in the House.

As the hon. Member came towards the end of her argument, certain fledgling ideas, which were pertinent and germane to the debate, began to emerge—after the long dissertation on Guyana.

The hon. Member brought in the question of women. That is a very ordinary and narrow-minded perspective on the matter. You do not recognize achievements based on gender, race or religion. If there are people in a society who have achieved, whether they be red, yellow, black or white; Muslim, Christian, whatever, the fact is that you are looking at achievement. Once you are going to set up all kinds of conditions for determining achievement, then you are looking to set up a democracy of mediocrity.

So that whilst I recognize the need to ensure that women have a place in society and that there is equality of opportunity and so on, to stretch it to that extreme, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is really going to the absurd.

**5.35 p.m.**

**Mr. Mohammed:** She was speaking about women of achievement.

**Hon. R. Maraj:** If the Member for Caroni East wishes to make a contribution, he may.

**Mr. Mohammed:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, my friend the Member for San Fernando West has graciously allowed me to make a point. I do believe he is misrepresenting what the Member for Chaguanas has said. I think that the answer he is giving to the Member for Chaguanas suggests that she was asking for something too special. She was not inferring that women without achievement must be recognized. What she was seeking to do, as the world is doing now, is to secure equality for women in our society.

**Hon. R. Maraj:** The Member for Caroni East has made a very unsuccessful attempt to defend the indefensible. The fact of the matter is, the Member for Chaguanas stated very clearly that it is her view that a woman should be included in the list. She made that point.

**Miss Bhaggan:** On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hon. Member for San Fernando West is misrepresenting what I said to the House. I did not say a woman ought to be given the Order because she is a woman; I asked the question whether there are women in the Caribbean who have also achieved and ought to be recognized as such.

**Hon. R. Maraj:** Well, I am glad that the Member for Chaguanas used the opportunity to extricate herself from a very narrow perspective.

The other point, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I said when she gets towards the tail-end of her contribution—certain things began to emerge. A kind of quality—if one was perceptive enough one could see it—she spoke about elitism and had this narrow perspective on women. Then she made a very unkind and almost senseless statement about geriatrics.

**Miss Bhaggan:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I said I hoped that these awards would not be reserved for people who are geriatrics. I did not say it is being done on that basis. I am just cautioning the House and Caricom that we

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ought to ensure—I called for the setting of criteria, to ensure that there is equality, whether it is women, or older people. In fact, I also spoke about young people and it was a question of achievement by various groupings in the Caribbean society.

**Hon. R. Maraj:** Again, the hon. Member wishes to extricate herself from what I consider to be a very insensitive statement. She will try to do it, but the fact remains that there was the suggestion and the intention. She talked about youth and dynamism and new perspectives and so on, as though she did not want to recognize the old and those who have contributed to society. That is what was being suggested. So that when the hon. Member, Mr. Deputy Speaker—*[Interruption]* you are hearing a kind of canine noise coming from the other side.

**Mr. Mohammed:** That will continue.

**Hon. R. Maraj:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, if people want to talk, they have the opportunity to talk. I am willing to sit to let them talk. But I am saying that when you come down to the substance of that part of her contribution that was relevant to the debate, you found, only narrow perspectives, narrow-mindedness and really pedestrian qualities. So that there is no foundation at all. *[Interruption]* You are hearing all kinds of weird noises because some people in this House feel that they are the only ones who can give fire and thunder and jam.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have no other course of action in this honourable House but to support this bill and I therefore call on hon. Members for their support. I beg to move.

**Mr. S. Panday:** Shame, waste, rubbish.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Would the hon. Members contain themselves, please.

*Question put.*

*The House divided:*           Ayes 17           Noes 7

AYES

Valley, Hon. K.

Sobion, Hon, K.

Mottley, Hon. W.

Ramrekersingh, Hon. A.

Rowley, Dr. The Hon. K.

Marshall, Hon. M.

Maraj, Hon. R.

Collis, Hon. K.

Imbert, Hon. C.

Lasse, Dr. the Hon. V.

Pierre, Hon. J.

Casimire, Mr. A.

Narine, Mr. J.

Hart, Mr. E.

Allum, Mr. D.

Bereaux, Mr. H.

Rajaram, Mr. C.

**NOES**

Bhaggan, Miss H.

Mohammed, S.

Singh, Dr. C.

Panday, S.

Jurai, K.

Haniff, M.

Hosein, S.

*Bill accordingly read a second time.*

*Bill committed to a committee of the whole House.*

*House in committee.*

*Clauses 1 to 5 ordered to stand part of the bill.*

*Schedule ordered to stand part of the bill.*

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

*House resumed.*

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

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Friday, July 10, 1992 at 1.30 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before we adjourn, I should just like to inform Members that the funeral of Sen. Draper's mother will be held tomorrow at 10.00 a.m.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Before the House adjourns there is a motion on the adjournment.

#### **Water Shortage (Princes Town)**

**Mr. Mohammed Haniff (Princes Town):** Sir, I wrote to the Speaker on June 1, 1992, but because I was not present—for the very first time since I became a Member—when this motion was due, I had to re-apply. The second application came on June 24. The motion deals with the problem of acute water shortages in the constituency of Princes Town and other parts of the country.

I want to point out that I recognize very clearly that while we have very acute water shortages in this country, it is more so during the dry season. Not that there is more water available in the pipes in the villages which are hard hit, but mainly because those citizens find it convenient to set up their barrels and their tanks during the rainy season. So the complaints are not as many during the wet season.

I had occasion to visit the San Fernando WASA office just a few days ago. Waiting on what I would term the resolution of some situations that the officers should be able to handle very easily, during that period when there seemed to be no attention paid to members of the public, I read a notice which was placed on that building and I wish to quote that notice, Sir. It reads as follows:

"Corporate mission:

- (1) to provide an adequate, reliable and potable water supply;
- (2) to effectively collect, treat and dispose of waste water;
- (3) to promote conservation and effectively manage the country's water resources, all at reasonable cost."



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I thought that was a very interesting statement and I am sure that members of the public who go to WASA San Fernando, having read this, would want to raise several questions as to how well WASA has managed to provide an adequate reliable supply of potable water supply.

Sir I have been around with complaints to the authorities concerning the lack of an adequate water supply in many areas which I have had the opportunity to represent, both at the local level and now at this senior level. As a result, what I have found is that the problem continues and too regularly those complaints are not dealt with. They are not even listened to.

In my own area, along the Naparima/Mayaro Road, in the villages—Roberts Village and George Village, in particular—and coming all along that Naparima/Mayaro Road, straight into Princes Town, there are certain areas which are extremely hard-hit. We had to make representations to WASA. As a result of my continued meetings with them and working with them over a period of years, I have managed to establish a very good working relationship with them.

The hon. Member for La Brea is suggesting that I should get them to work. I stand here as the MP for Princes Town and I am the shadow Minister of Public Utilities. When this alternative Government, the party to which I belong, have taken the responsibility and the reins of Government definitely we shall get them to work.

I want to submit to you, Sir, that employees are, in fact, working. It is not that we do not have those who are working well, it is not a case of WASA personnel not working, it is a case where the required tools, the machinery and the finances, etc., are unavailable. I submit to you, Sir, that it is at the top level, where the management are not doing what they ought to be doing so that you could get productivity at the bottom level.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this part of the country, along the Naparima/Mayaro Road, I have had complaints and I continue to have complaints and I thought that I will raise them in this honourable House. Areas along the Naparima/Mayaro Road, coming down the Tableland Local Road and other areas are similarly affected. I have had complaints from them. There is the Mantacool Road, the Warwell Road, the Hindustan Estate Road, the Ant's Nest Road. I must let you know, Sir, that some of these areas fall into the constituency of Ortoire/Mayaro.

I have received on a regular basis—up to two days ago—reports from the citizens of Hindustan Estate Road, that they are not receiving a supply, and that

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they are finding it difficult to meet with their parliamentary representative. But that is not why I am raising the problem. I am informing the hon. Minister and this honourable House because of circumstances in my past and present situation. Reports of this nature come to me, not only from Princes Town and Ortoire/Mayaro, indeed from Naparima and other parts of the country.

As a result, I see it as my bounden duty to raise the issue of shortage and scarcity of water. The officers at WASA have told me—and I know for a fact that they are not happy about this situation—that it is their intention to replace the mains along the Naparima/Mayaro Road—and this has been their intention for years now. They still intend to do so, pending the availability of funds and the necessary materials. Which tells me, Sir, that I can continue to go to WASA and they will continue to tell me of their good intentions, but that several things are preventing them from being able to do what they wish to enable that part of the country to receive a better water supply. I hope that the hon. Minister will respond to the cries from that part of the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in that area at the present time, while it has somewhat improved, it has been reported that in 25 years, this year, 1992, has been the worst year. I am not here to exaggerate, I am not here to add anything, except to say what I have been told. In 25 years, this year, 1992 has been the worst. I raise the question, therefore, that if it is as bad as that, is there going to be any action? Is the ministry going to take any steps to prevent that situation from recurring? Although we are already in the wet season and the complaints are not as many as they were during the dry season that just went by, I believe the best time to raise those issues is this time, so that work could be done to prevent the same thing from recurring year after year, especially in the dry season.

During that period and even at this point where they cannot fetch enough water from the rainfall, they have to pay for water, they have to pay private transportation or find themselves somewhere down the road where they can bring it in their own vehicles, et cetera. As a result, they continue, of course, to get their bills. We ask what the situation is? What is going to happen?

I have in my possession several complaints which I should like to go into before we adjourn. People are transporting water all over the place to take care of themselves and their families. All sorts of questions are being raised in this country as to when, if at all, we are going to get a proper water supply. The questions are being raised all over. I ask in all humility: Is it that we are going to continue in this

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country to try to supply water to those who can afford to pay and those who cannot afford to pay; what happens to them? Is there any system where these people will be supplied? Because I am pin-pointing, Sir, that on those occasions that just went by, those who could have afforded would hire trucks and transport water for themselves. Never did WASA turn up with trucks to send water to those who could not afford. As a result, our problems continue. Who is going to take care of these citizens who cannot manage for themselves?

Bordering on those areas, Sir, are roads like Realize Road, Cunjal Road, Cumuto Road and other roads. While that is happening and the transportation, in particular, is taking place with some very heavy vehicles, not the normal 800 gallon tanks and the 1,200 gallon tanks, some very massive tanks are going to a farm in the Cumuto Valley area, the trucks have totally destroyed the roads and no one can be against the farmers, because they must supply themselves with water. Meanwhile, what is happening to the road system, those roads are traditionally bad but they become even worse when this heavy equipment has to run on them.

At this moment, as a result of that kind of situation, I have been and continue to be involved in getting WASA and the National Self-help Commission to complete certain projects in that area. But the frustration is eating away at the system, that continued frustration of, when will it come, if at all?

I am in the midst of the process of trying to get self-help projects started in the following areas. While I was a representative at the other level, I was making contributions for Cunjal Road which, of course, falls in the constituency of Naparima.

Sir, I must draw to your attention and to the Minister's attention, in all humility—because we are talking here about the need to provide water—that there are some areas where there is a pipe system, but the water does not reach to those points. But I raise here now the areas where there are no pipes. This year, 1992, is the worst year in the history of this country in terms of truck-borne water by the local government bodies. It started in April of this year. Never in history did that happen at the local government level.

The roads on which I am involved in trying to get self-help projects going are Ridge Road and Branch, Sookdeo Trace, Mohan Road, St. Julien Road, McSween Road, Gangaram Road, Unis Road, Matilda Trace, St. Cross Branch Road, School Trace, Farmers Trace, Titus Road, Cumuto Road and Tableland Local Road. These are some of the areas where I am at present involved in trying to get self-

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help projects started, hoping that if those projects were to be done during this time of the year, before the dry season were to meet us, we would not have to go and complain about truck-borne water.

I want to point out to you, Sir, because of my experience—and I have not met anyone who has been involved and has knowledge about the problems and the cost involved in truck-borne water who does not agree—that truck-borne water is a waste of funds and it is not fit for human consumption in many cases; it is not appropriate. But when it is bad and we have nothing else to use, then we must.

**6.05 p.m.**

But if steps were to be taken for these and other self-help projects throughout the country—let me take the opportunity to point out to you, Sir, and to this honourable House the reason for self-help. You see, when we make representations to WASA, they tell us point blank that they are not in a position to undertake any extensions. We continue to be told that and as a result we must find a way out. I have therefore started these self-help projects and many people throughout are involved in self-help projects.

I am wondering now, whether we are not handing to the people an additional burden. In fact, I am submitting that that is what we are doing, and if and when they get the connection, and the water, they must pay like any other citizen who would have gotten the lines in their communities free of charge, which ought to be the way that it should be. Nevertheless, when a community does not have a water supply they prefer to put their hands in their pockets, and bring out their friends and family to make a contribution in that direction and I want to make an appeal to this honourable House and to the Minister in particular and the Minister concerned with the National Commission for Self-help.

I understand that that Commission has very little resources and they are running out at a fast rate. Today, while I was listening to the answers to the questions given by the hon. Member for Diego Martin East concerning LIDP, it crossed my mind that we could have considered the possibility of doing some WASA projects under the LIDP expenditure. I think it is worth considering, because it is a beauty to go in the villages and see how people respond when they glimpse that there is the possibility of getting water in that area. *[Interruption]* I was going to respond to that but I will not.

What I am saying is that there is money in LIDP, wherever it comes from, and water has to do with money, financing. In most of these areas that do not have

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water the Government and WASA have not supplied it and the people cannot afford it. I want, however, to point out that apart from these 13 areas where I have started to do self-help projects, there are some 30 areas in the constituency of Princes Town where truck-borne water has to be supplied during the dry season and I have the will, the spirit and the co-operation of the people concerned. We need resources and we need some attention.

Princes Town is no different from other parts of the country, although I know for a fact there are many different parts of the country where there is need to do similar projects. I must say for the record and for the benefit of the hon. Minister, that in some of those 30 areas where money is being utilized to transport water under the truck system, because of what the local government has been reduced to in terms of funding, materials and transportation, etc., some of these roads that I am going to mention are inaccessible by truck, because of broken bridges, etc. They are: Nuckchaddy Road, Arch Road, Eccles Village Road, Bhagwantee Road, Piparo Junction Road, Stafford Road, Pascall Road, Burial Ground Road, St. Julien Road, Dharamdass Road.

You see I, in all humility, having come to this honourable House, have invited the hon. Minister of Local Government to visit Princes Town and he went, albeit that the visit was not all that is required because we need to go back and look at further problems. But I must give him the credit for having responded. I want, however, to point out that similarly I invited—and I am the first Member of Parliament to have done so—the Minister of Works and Transport, the Member for Diego Martin East, who is not here at this time, to visit Princes Town but to date he has not done so. I have invited the hon. Minister of Public Utilities, the Member for Laventille West. I must however, Sir, in all fairness to him point out that, unlike the Member for Diego Martin East, he continues to indicate to me that because of this or that constraint he is unable to do so, but he is willing to come and I must tell him publicly that I appreciate the sentiments expressed in that context and I am looking forward to his visit. People are dreaming about water in certain parts of Princes Town and as a result I am looking forward to the co-operation and assistance of the Minister of Public Utilities.

Other areas are Fifth Company and Branch Road, Matilda Trace, John Lendor Road, Sahadath Road, Diamond Road, Watts Road, Eunice Road, Junior Trace. I have mentioned a few of those. So, the point I am making is that these areas are suffering immensely and I am appealing for whatever assistance that can be given. The situation at the Local Government is that the equipment there is no longer

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usable, so they cannot lend it to the self-help project. We have a situation, therefore, where something is definitely wrong. Many things are wrong in this country concerning the water situation. For example, the workers attached to WASA are crying out and wondering in the wilderness what is next for them. Prior to going into that, Sir, I have a number of clippings from the *Express*. I will not burden this House by going into the details but it was my intention, because in every corner of this country people are calling for help as regards water. All sorts of headlines—let me quote only one—June 18, 1992. "Fed up with WASA"—someone from Petit Valley. Let me not quote the person's name although it is public information. All sorts of documents—"Plans to file injunction." The one that I wish to quote, however, is Sunday June 28, *Express*. It says: "July, hottest month of the year" and it continues—

"In the final structural adjustment act, next month, meaning this month, WASA jobs must go."

**6.15 p.m.**

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I submit to you that is the kind of situation partly responsible for a number of problems at WASA today. On Monday, April 13, I participated in a forum organized by the people involved in WASA and at that forum I listened to discussions and presentations by the workers of this country who are employed by WASA. That was a forum where very meaningful discussions took place and among those who were there were Dr. Millette, Water Consultant; Dr. Carl Theodore, Economist; a representative of NATUC; a representative of the business sector. My party was represented. Invited and expected was a representative of the Government—who did not turn up. I paid particular attention to that. Because what is needed in this country, among other things, is the kind of honest discussion and dialogue with workers and their trade unions and, indeed, the Ministers and the authorities concerned. But they did not turn up. As a result of that, one could have recognized that there was disappointment among the rank and file. Very meaningful discussions continued, but the question continues to hang in the air.

I hope and plead with those in authority to clarify whether, in fact, the conditionalities handed down to the Government and people of this country—I am not too sure what they are, but from documents and talk about the place, it appears as though WASA workers will have to go home. We are saying that, definitely, retrenchment cannot be the answer. If we have a situation in this country

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where the water supply is bad and it needs to be handled properly, to be extended and developed, and we have a certain number of workers at present employed, of course, their productivity is affected when their jobs are threatened. Can we imagine what could happen if, at all, these workers, were to be got rid of? It is frightening to imagine what could possibly happen. I say to the authorities concerned, retrenchment cannot be the answer. What ought to happen is this. Take the administrative and managerial levels at WASA, draw up plans and get them implemented in the interest of this country. Utilize the staff which is there; provide them with the necessary equipment and machinery. Until such time that someone else takes over the responsibility of getting the production done, let those in authority undertake to get it done. It is their responsibility.

On some of the issues which were raised, I have not heard a good explanation as yet: The cost of the rental of the vehicles which WASA has rented and they have on the road, but they have parked up on their compound a number of vehicles which could be repaired. Which one is cheaper? What is it costing us? Who benefits from it? Was it completely necessary? Could it not be done the other way around?

The main issue being raised is whether WASA could be self-sufficient. I repeat the questions I asked a while ago. To some extent WASA could be self-sufficient, in that you have large corporations and state agencies being subsidized while the poor man is being threatened that his property will be sold. In fact, what is happening at present is that, they are disconnecting people who have a connection from WASA, saying that they owe money. In certain cases, they are disconnecting people without notice being served on them.

I have had complaints from people. I have had a complaint, in particular, from a contractor with WASA, to whom WASA owes a large sum of money, and without a notice they went and cut off his connection to his house. His wife, child and himself, came to me and asked what I could do. Of course, not being a legal person and having read in the daily newspapers where there is likely to be an action somewhere in the Couva area against WASA for similar activities, I advised them accordingly. At this discussion, the workers were also asking: "How come you could disconnect a worker to whom WASA owes large sums of money, but who owes WASA only a small sum?" They are saying that should not happen, because WASA workers in this country, together with other daily paid people—the local government, the Ministry of Works and Transport, the Ministry of Agriculture, etc—have not got an increase since 1983 while other sectors have, in fact, got increases.

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I submit to you that WASA and other daily paid people attached to government services in this country, if they are not the lowest paid, they are nearing the lowest paid in this country. There is the high cost of living; since 1983 they have not got an increase and you are going to disconnect their water supply while owing them large sums of money. It is unfair and unreasonable and with the trend today of what is constitutional and what it not, I can well imagine seeing groups of people taking action against WASA as a result of that kind of action.

They are talking about autonomy in pricing, but I ask again: We are subsidizing certain areas, but what is the position of the poor man who cannot pay? Is he going to be without a water supply? Are we a nation who can stand and bear the burdens of no water, to see children, their families, their homes, their clothing and their environment in an untidy state, because people cannot afford to pay water bills? We must find ways of dealing with that situation. WASA and the Government have a responsibility to deal with that situation. I submit to you, workers cannot produce if they expect to be retrenched.

I expect, in the circumstances, therefore, that those in authority—if the Minister of Public Utilities is not in a position to answer, then perhaps the Prime Minister will take the responsible position of saying what is going to be the fate of the WASA people in this country. They cannot produce under those conditions. Naturally, we can see around us that it is getting worse day by day.

In response to the Member for Caroni East, the hon. Minister of Public Utilities made some points which I wish to touch on. He stated that people have a right to complain. He also made the point that in Trinidad and Tobago we have a situation where 45 per cent of the population receives a 24-hour supply. He did not say this, but what I am saying is—

**Mr. Valley:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Member seems to be referring to a debate which took place in this House in this session and I am seeking your direction as to whether that is allowed.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member would be advised that a debate which took place in this present session cannot be referred to, so I would suggest he restrain himself to the matter at hand.

**Mr. Haniff:** I have no problem with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. However, we have a situation in this country where a high percentage of people do not have a water supply. About 19 per cent of the people have a very small supply and a very



high percentage, nearly 10 per cent, have none at all. I am saying that these people need to be taken care of.

**Mr. Marshall:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did not get that last point he made—the percentages. Could he kindly repeat that, please?

**Mr. Haniff:** I am saying my information is, by moving around the place, around 19 per cent of the people get a very small supply of water, perhaps two hours a day; sometimes none at all. Sometimes in total for the week, they get a few hours. There is a situation where almost 10 per cent of the people in this country do not get any supply at all.

As I said, I would not bother him with all the complaints, but this is a situation which this country must address. When I leave here this evening, based on the response I expect from the hon. Minister of Public Utilities, I am going to go back in those areas—it is my responsibility—and tell the people that I have raised the matter here and that the Minister and the Government have taken note of the difficulties in their areas and, as a result, they can expect help. That is what I hope to be able to do after this debate is concluded.

### **6.25 p.m.**

Having touched on some of the problems, but not wishing to go into detail in other areas, I want to point out a few of the other main problems. It is a disgrace, I have had cause to go to the agencies—the Ministry of Works and Transport, the regional corporations and WASA—to enquire what steps are being taken to repair the roadways where certain development projects took place. In Lothians Road—I have had to come to this Parliament; I think the reply to my question is still pending—the Naparima/Mayaro Road, the Manahambre Road, the Guaracara/Tabaquite Road. When work is done, there seems to be no arrangement to restore the condition of the roadway. That is a major problem.

Now, if I may address this to the hon. Ministers concerned—the Minister of Local Government, the Minister of Works and Transport and the Minister of Public Utilities—if that is what it is. You are seeing it before your eyes every day. If there is a crossing or patch put down by WASA, every single person must recognize that, because you have to stop and cross in mud in many areas, and if it is not mud, it is extremely bad. I want to raise that as an issue.

I am saying that, at present, there is chaos with people who do not own property or have connections getting bills. People are wondering what the situation

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is and they are running helter-skelter, because the threat of their property being sold is in the air. I ask the question: What is the present position? Are we going to disconnect? Are we going to sell properties? Are we going to hold our hands, as was said by the hon. Minister? Are we going to get tough? If we are going to get tough, with whom are we going to get tough? Are we going to get tough with the workers or the supervisory staff of WASA? Are we going to get tough with the Minister of Finance, so that the finances will be provided and that, in fact, while we get tough at that level, water will be produced at the other level? These are some of the questions that I wish to raise.

I have been informed that approximately 50,000 citizens of this country are spontaneous settlers on state or Caroni lands. There is a suggestion that has come, and I want to offer it so that it could be considered. We are in the process of regularization so I submit, to this House, that those 50,000 citizens should be given connection. They should be allowed to get connections from WASA, bearing in mind that there is the possibility that they will have to remove their homes, they will be taking that decision once they have been there before that Act of 1981. Firstly, they are entitled to water, and secondly, revenue will be earned. If they do not have it in their homes, naturally, they must go get it somewhere. So, they are not paying but they are using, and some of them will be willing to pay and get a connection.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are some of the issues that I wish to raise. I want to point out that I will await a response very patiently. I want to emphasize that water be supplied to those who are in need and do not have water; those who are paying rates and are not getting a supply; those who are being disconnected and they are owed large sums of money and those who wish to get a supply like those whom I have referred to. Indeed, the workers attached to WASA, like all other workers in this country, need to know what their position is. We are satisfied that their productivity can be improved. The general water and WASA situation could be much improved even with the present resources, but that hammer which is hanging over the heads of the workers must be removed. Someone who claims to be responsible and caring must get up in this nation and clarify that issue to the nation.

These are some of the points I wished to make and I hope that relief will come in that steps and action will be taken during this current wet season, before the dry season emerges once more. The whole country, needs to be attended to because they are our people, the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you.

**The Minister of Public Utilities (Hon. Morris Marshall):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, at one time I got a little scared; I wondered whether I would have had any time, at all, to respond to some of the concerns that the shadow Minister of Public Utilities raised this evening. I want to thank him very much for giving me the opportunity—shadow minister who would remain shadow minister for quite some time.

More seriously, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would talk a little about the Princes Town situation and then, generally, about the water situation on a national level. I have raised several of these points in this honourable House before, and I have also raised them publicly, but I shall do so again.

It is my information that the constituency of Princes Town receives its water supply from the Navet Waterworks, which is at present, operating at optimum production of approximately 82,000 cubic metres per day. The Princes Town constituency is traversed by the Navet Transmission Trunk main and is supplied by three off-takes at different points in the constituency. This is just to provide you with some background and basic information—if not for the Member for Princes Town but for Members of the House, so that the House may be informed.

A 12-inch diameter transmission pipeline from the Magretoute booster which services the town centre, also serves areas such as St. Croix Road, Papourie Road, Jailpaulsingh Road and environs. It is also serviced by a 16 inch transmission pipeline which services tanks of .5 million gallons, and which provides a service along Moruga Road up to Mandingo and Realize Roads. It is also serviced by a 10-inch diameter cement transmission pipeline at Arch Trace, Piparo, which services Pascall/Torrib/Tabaquite Roads, Hindustan, George Village, Tableland and Poole, along the Naparima Mayaro Road.

During the months of April and May—this is the information I have—a series of breaks occurred along this 10-inch cement transmission pipeline at Arch Trace, thus affecting the service to customers. These breaks were attributed to the fragile nature of the pipe material, a situation exacerbated by the high pressures that were necessary to service the extremities of the system. Again, I am just providing this House with the information I have from WASA.

In order to improve the reliability of the level of service to the areas affected, specifically, Pascall/Torrib/Tabaquite, Hindustan, George Village, Tableland and Poole, the following measures have been taken: The system was adjusted in order to reduce the pressure along the transmission pipeline, as an interim measure. The

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Water and Sewerage Authority has decided to replace the 10-inch cement pipeline along Arch Trace with a 12-inch diameter ductile at an estimated cost of about \$3.5 million. Work on the first phase of approximately two kilometres was started two weeks ago, and this is expected to be completed by the end of 1992.

**6.35 p.m.**

I understand that WASA officials met with the Member for Princes Town and they provided him with most of the details. At the time when they met—I think it was on June 4—he himself advised WASA that many of the complaints have subsided and that there was some sort of improvement. It was suggested to him, as he pointed out, that some of the problems could be solved by meeting with the Self-help Commission and doing some of the projects on a self-help basis, because the money is simply not there. Yes, there are some problems at Princes Town and in fact, WASA is making a serious effort to deal with them in the context of the financial constraints that WASA is experiencing today, as there are problems in central and north Trinidad and Point Fortin. We are seeking to deal with those matters as best as we possibly can.

I want to take a little time to talk more about the national situation, which is very important, in responding to some of the concerns raised by the Member for Princes Town, because he spent a considerable amount of time dealing with that. I said before that WASA produces about seven million gallons of water daily. The reality is that about 45 per cent of the customers receive a 24 hour supply. Yes, I agree that WASA has its weaknesses and problems. There is no doubt about that. Yes, I agree that there are levels of inefficiency, but you will not hear at any time any of the voices of those persons from the 45 per cent who receive a 24-hour supply being raised. The voices that you hear will be of those persons—and rightly so—who are having problems.

All things being considered, things are not as critical as some make them out to be. Yes, there are problems and we are addressing those problems. I have said before in this House, that I am not satisfied with the situation at WASA and that those persons who have not been receiving the kind of supply that they need are entitled and have a right to complain; make noise and to take whatever action that is legally possible, to improve the service that they would like to get for themselves, their families and communities.

It is important however to understand the reality, that there are deep rooted problems at WASA. The financial situation is extremely critical. When I took over

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as Minister, it took me some time as well to really understand some of those problems. When we took office there was in excess of \$220 million in deferred payments, for critical things. This is in addition to the shortfall on recurrent expenses. In fact when we took over there was a deficit of \$20 million insofar as recurrent expenditure was concerned.

WASA on a daily basis would have problems meeting with its daily requirements. You are talking about the question of salaries; some of the commitments that were agreed to with workers and the management; requirement for basic needs. I mentioned that in this House before. You are talking about chlorine and repairs to pumps. The point is that we are taking the necessary action to address those problems and let us not fool ourselves that we are going to solve those problems overnight. We shall have to accept and acknowledge that as we take the types of decisions that are necessary to deal with those deep-rooted problems, we have to continue to manage the sort of crisis situation that we are facing. That is the reality.

As Minister, I am prepared to accept the responsibility for WASA's failure or success. I am not passing the buck. There is a problem. I am prepared to accept the responsibility and I am confronting the challenges. We are meeting with WASA almost on a daily basis to deal with those problems. I have not taken a hands-off approach, hence the reason that I went to central Trinidad and Point Fortin to see the problems there. As soon as I can find the time, I will go to Princes Town to even talk to the people about what we are seeking to do there, and to explain to them why it is that they are experiencing some of those problems.

So, what have we done? We appointed a new board. I have confidence in the chairman of the board and they are working assiduously to address those problems. We have also re-installed the Executive Director of WASA. There was a problem there with respect to the Executive Director when we came in. We have told him in no uncertain terms that he is accountable, and responsible for the management of WASA and we expect certain things from him. I have made it quite clear that the days for slackness and nonsense at WASA have gone, and while we would not get rid of it immediately, we are going to look for those persons who are not prepared to live up to their responsibilities and we are going to deal with them accordingly, because that is part of the problem.

There are many workers at WASA who are efficient, responsible and who are prepared to give effective service. We will seek wherever possible and necessary to

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deal with those who are not living up to their responsibilities. I have made that very clear to the workers at WASA. As I have said before, there are many who have been making a sacrifice and who are working very hard. I want to thank them for that, but we are seeking in the context of the situation at WASA to improve the image, and to get people to have confidence once more in that particular utility. I know that with the kind of work we are seeking to do in the not too distant future, we will begin to see some sort of progress at the Water and Sewerage Authority.

We are not sitting back and allowing that to continue. The Minister and Cabinet are extremely serious about the situation there. We know that, not only as it relates to WASA, but that the success of several other institutions will depend to a large extent on what happens at the Water and Sewerage Authority. Hence the reason for a short-term plan that we have put in place, a key committee headed by the Chairman and Executive Director of WASA will meet with the Finance and general Purpose Committee of Cabinet on Monday, to explain what we are seeking to do. We are seeking to get Cabinet to understand that we are serious about it. They who are responsible must go before the sub-committee of Cabinet and explain what they are proposing to do, if Cabinet is going to give the kind of financial support that is necessary to get WASA moving.

We are not joking about it, but let us not fool ourselves. You cannot take a utility like WASA, that we found almost in a crisis situation and expect that we are going to turn it around overnight. We are seeking to streamline the operations to ensure that WASA performs its core functions of providing effective water and waste-water services. In doing so as well, we are meeting with the workers and their representatives to let them know the score.

I personally want to say publicly, that I have a very good relationship in my view, with the leadership of the union. We are dealing with them honestly and sincerely. We are not hiding anything from them. We are letting them know what we intend to do and how we are going to do it. I meet with them as often as I possibly can to keep them informed and to deal with the issues honestly and sincerely, because I know that we cannot solve the problems at WASA, unless we have the workers themselves involved in what is taking place there.

While we deal with the chronic problems and we put the systems and measures in place to deal with those things, we are seeking to put into place short-term measures to deal with some of the types of concerns that the Member for Princes Town raised. In Point Fortin for example, we have been meeting with the officials

at Trintopec and Trintoc and they are giving us some assistance with respect to the refurbishing of pumps, so that in the near future you can see some improvement in the system at Point Fortin. The representative for La Brea is very much involved in that and we have taken immediate action to deal with the problems in the Point Fortin constituency.

In the northern areas of Belmont and Laventille, some work has started there and we have installed a new booster at Valsayn waterworks, at an estimated cost of \$3 million and we have seen some improvement in those areas. In central Trinidad, we have taken some short-term approaches, again refurbishing some pumps and adjustment of the distribution system. We are seeing some improvement in those areas as well.

**6.45 p.m.**

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is what we are seeking to do. I have no illusions about the problems at WASA. I know that it is a serious and critical situation. We are doing as much as we can. I am on top of it, virtually on a daily basis. I am not taking a hands-off approach. We are meeting closely with the management team. There is also a key, full-time team appointed by Cabinet, not only to look at WASA, but also at all the utilities, and that team will report between now and September. At the appropriate time I am prepared to come before the Parliament and have an extensive debate on the whole situation of WASA because we cannot solve the problems alone. We need the co-operation and understanding of those on the other side, but let us not allow this to degenerate into party politics. The money will not come from the sky. If we can get someone to give us \$400 million, we can solve all WASA's problems overnight, but the money just is not there.

In the context of the critical economic situation in the country, we are not seeking to blame anybody. It does not matter to me whether those problems were there for the last three, five or 20 years. The fact is that there are problems, and as the Minister responsible, I wish to inform you that we are taking the kind of decisions that are necessary. As I said before, I am not holding anyone responsible, I am holding myself responsible, as Minister. If we succeed, fine; if we fail, I am prepared to accept the responsibility.

We have been taking the criticisms that have been coming our way. No day passes without a criticism of WASA or an attack on the Minister. In fact, when I get home at nights and no crisis has developed, I feel very happy and I say some extra prayers. We are seeking to manage a crisis situation and it is because we are

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on top of it and taking some of the decisions we are taking, that the utility has not collapsed. Notwithstanding all that, I feel confident that in the final analysis, given another year or so, we shall see significant improvements in the Water and Sewerage Authority.

As I understand it, the point about increased salaries for daily-paid workers has been settled. I do not think that the information given by the Member for Princes Town is correct. We have certain commitments to the workers. Some time ago, when they were very annoyed, it was because WASA just did not have the money to meet the commitment the management had agreed to, in terms of those salaries. We are seeking to honour all commitments to the workers: in terms of salaries and in terms of the collections that they are involved in. There is a collecting programme in place involving the workers and there is an agreement in terms of the percentage they must receive, and we are seeking to honour all those commitments so that workers, management and the ministry can work together to ensure that the country, eventually, gets the kind of service to which it is entitled.

So, my friend the Member for Princes Town, will see me there in due course and together we shall talk to the people and explain in more detail some of the things that WASA is doing; probably talk about some of the concerns that he has expressed and see how best we can address them. I am sorry I have not been able to go there as yet.

I want to thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity you have given to me.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 6.50 p.m.*