

Leave of Absence

Friday, October 2, 1992

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 2, 1992

The House met at 1.35 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have granted leave of absence from today's sitting to the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West (Mr. Desmond Allum) and the Member for Oropouche (Mr. Trevor Sudama). Leave has also been granted to the Member for Tobago East (Mr. A.N.R. Robinson) from today to October 23, 1992, inclusive.

FIREARMS (AMDT.) BILL

Bill to amend the Firearms Act, Chap. 16:01, brought from the Senate [*The Minister of National Security*]; read the first time.

PAPERS LAID

1. Annual Report of the Law Commission for the period October 1, 1989 to September 30, 1990. [*The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley)*]
2. Report of the Auditor General on the Accounts of Trinidad and Tobago Free Zones Company Limited for the year ended December 31, 1991. [*Hon. K. Valley*]

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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The following question stood on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj (Couva South):

Unimplemented Legislation

2. (a) Would the Attorney General give a list of legislative measures (giving all necessary particulars) which have been passed by the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago but have not yet become effective as law?

- (b) Would the Attorney General indicate to this honourable House whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago intends to implement as law any or all of such legislative measures and, if so, give particulars of the measures it intends to implement and the proposed dates, if any, of such implementation?

The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, the Attorney General is not here at present. I know he will be here shortly and he will answer the question then, or it can be deferred to another day.

Question, by leave, deferred.

Finance Companies (Investigation of)

- 5. Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj** asked the hon. Minister of Finance:

Would the Minister state whether his Government intends to conduct any investigations into the operations of finance companies and insurance companies in Trinidad and Tobago which, in recent years, collapsed so that the Government can ascertain the whereabouts of their assets and/or trace their assets to see whether the directors and/or other officials of some or any of these companies or any other person has used them for their personal gain and/or benefit?

The Minister of Finance (Hon. Wendell Mottley): Madam Speaker, eight finance companies have ceased operations over the past six years. Six of these companies were licensed under the Financial Institutions (Non-Banking) Act. They were wound up by the court which appointed the Deposit Insurance Corporation (DIC) to act as liquidator. The DIC, pursuant to its statutory duty as liquidator, is making all efforts to identify and realize the assets of the companies.

The receiver of one of the other two companies that ceased operations has recently sought and obtained the approval of the High Court to make a final distribution of the assets of the company to its creditors. Thereafter, steps will be taken by the relevant authority to have that company wound up by the court and in which case the liquidator will have a statutory duty to identify and realize those assets, if any, of the company (for which no account has yet been given).

The eighth company that ceased operations is not licensed under the Financial Institutions (Non-Banking) Act and is not covered under the Act because it was unable to satisfy the requirements of the legislation; its depositors have persisted in their representations to the Government for some redress. The uniqueness of their claims is recognized by the authorities who are now looking into their case on humanitarian grounds.

The liquidator or receiver of the above-mentioned companies, as the case may be, is under the jurisdiction of the High Court. As such, he has certain statutory functions, including the identification, tracing and realization of assets, as well as reporting functions. In light of what I have mentioned, it is therefore unnecessary for the Government to intervene at this stage.

In respect of the insurance industry, eight companies ceased operations over the period 1985—1991. Three of these companies have been liquidated; one had its business transferred to another company and the remaining four companies are fully under the control of judicial managers.

Liquidators, as well as judicial managers, are appointed by the High Court of Justice and are required by law to report directly to the court on their functions. To date, it has not been necessary for Government to initiate action against directors and/or officials of insurance companies that ceased operations.

It should be noted, however, that provisions included in the draft legislation to amend the Insurance Act, 1980, will adequately address problems and improve the regulation of the industry. Such legislation will soon be brought to this honourable House.

Tax Appeal Board
(Filed and Determined Matters)

6. Mr. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj asked the hon. Minister of Finance:

Could the Minister state:

- (a) How many new matters were filed and how many of such matters were heard and determined in each of the ten years from January 1, 1982 to December 31, 1991, before the Tax Appeal Board?
- (b) How many appeals were pending before the Tax Appeal Board as at December 31, 1991?

The Minister of Finance (Hon. Wendell Mottley): Madam Speaker, I will list the year, the appeals filed, and next to that, the matters heard and determined.

Year	Appeals Filed	Matters heard and determined.
1982	129	69
1983	128	91
1984	88	65
1985	140	165
1986	142	145
1987	125	91
1988	205	110
1989	437	84
1990	402	90
1991	310	211

As at December 31, 1991, there were 1,263 appeals pending at the Tax Appeal Board.

**San Fernando General Hospital
(X-rays)**

14. Mr. Subhas Panday (*Naparima*) asked the hon. Minister of Health:

Is the Minister aware:

- (i) that X-ray room No. 3 at the San Fernando General Hospital is used as a junk room?
- (ii) that referrals for X-ray by private medical practitioners are not being entertained at the X-ray Department at the San Fernando General Hospital?
- (iii) that conditions of the X-ray department at the San Fernando General Hospital are dangerous and injurious to the health of X-ray workers?

If the Minister is so aware, can he state what steps are being taken to rectify these conditions?

The Minister of Health (Hon. John Eckstein): Madam Speaker, X-ray room No. 3 at the San Fernando General Hospital is used temporarily as a store room. Some items of supplies for use within the X-ray department are stored in the room. The X-ray unit in room No. 3 is unserviceable and obsolete. Equipment has already been purchased to replace the obsolete unit at room No. 3 and a contract for the pre-installation works is expected to be awarded shortly.

Referrals for X-ray by private practitioners are entertained at the San Fernando General Hospital. For the first nine months of 1992, X-rays on referrals from private practitioners averaged 10—12 per day.

On account of the heavy demand for X-ray services at the hospital itself, the X-ray department is unable to satisfy any further needs of the private medical practitioners.

Conditions in the X-ray department at the San Fernando General Hospital are not dangerous and injurious to the health of X-ray workers.

Radiation badges worn by all radiographers are checked monthly and to date no case of exposure beyond the accepted level of 400 millirem, as defined in the International Radiation Code, has been recorded.

Dr. Singh: Could the Minister state when these measures were instituted to stop X-raying people referred by private practitioners?

Hon. J. Eckstein: I do not know what gave the impression that I said it was stopped. I said that they are entertained at the rate of 10—12 per day, but on account of the workload within the hospitals, we cannot entertain demands in excess of the 10—12 per day, by private medical practitioners.

Dr. Singh: I have a card here. I referred a patient, myself, to this hospital; a 70-year old female patient and she was just sent away and not given a date to come back.

Mr. Breaux: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. The Member for Tabaquite is personally interested in that. *[Interruption]*

Madam Speaker: Gentlemen, why is the language of the House being reduced to such a level? Please, Members, I think both of you are quite experienced.

**San Fernando General Hospital
(Functioning Equipment)**

15. Mr. Subhas Panday asked the hon. Minister of Health:

Could the Minister state how many clocks, fans, escalators and air-conditioning units are functional at the San Fernando General Hospital?

The Minister of Health (Hon. John Eckstein): Madam Speaker, at the San Fernando General Hospital, the position with regard to these items is as follows:

Items	Functional	Non Functional	Total
Clocks	67	14	81
Fans (95 ceiling 65 standing)	160	-	160
Elevators	4	-	4
Air-conditioning units:			
Central A/C system	8	2 (standby)	10
Split type	14	-	14
Window units	81	5	86

**San Fernando General Hospital
(Nurses' Aides)**

16. Mr. Subhas Panday (*Naparima*) asked the hon. Minister of Health:

- (a) Is the Minister aware that Nurses Aides are put in charge of wards at the San Fernando General Hospital for the duration of complete shifts?
- (b) If he is so aware, can he state what steps are being taken to correct this alarming situation?

The Minister of Health (Hon. John Eckstein): Madam Speaker, the Minister is advised by the authority in charge of the San Fernando General Hospital that Nurses Aides are never permitted to be in charge of wards at the San Fernando General Hospital.

In the light of this answer at (a) above, (b) does not apply.

**Ministry of Health
(Ambulances)**

21. Dr. Carl Singh (*Tabaquite*) asked the hon. Minister of Health:

Could the Minister state:

- (a) How many ambulances are owned and operated by the Ministry of Health in Trinidad and Tobago?
- (b) Where are these units located on the basis of institution and counties?
- (c) How many are in working condition?

The Minister of Health (Hon. John Eckstein): Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Health owns and operates 42 ambulances in Trinidad. There are also eight ambulances owned and operated in Tobago by the Tobago House of Assembly. The location and status of the ambulances are as follows:

County	No. Assigned	No. Working
St. George West:		
POS Hospital	3	2
St. Ann's	4	4
St. James Infirmary	2	2
St. George Central	3	2
St. George East	6	3
St. Andrew/St David	4	4
Caroni	4	3
Victoria	8	4
St. Patrick	6	4
Nariva/Mayaro	2	2
Total	42	30
Tobago:		
County Hospital	2	1

County	No. Assigned	No. Working
Scarborough Health Centre	2	2
Castara Health Centre	1	1
Bloody Bay/L'Anse Fourmi Health Centre	1	-
Roxborough Health Centre	1	1
Charlotteville Health Centre	1	1
Total	8	6

Thirty of the ambulances owned and operated by the Ministry of Health and six of those owned and operated by the Tobago House of Assembly are in working condition.

**Guaracara—Tabaquite Road
(Resurfacing of)**

22. Dr. Carl Singh asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

Could the Minister state how soon his Ministry intends to repair depressions, landslides and potholes, and resurface the Guaracara-Tabaquite Road—from the Williamsville-Garth Junction to the Tabaquite Composite School—which is in a deplorable condition?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Madam Speaker, the Ministry has been conducting regular repairs to the section of the Guaracara-Tabaquite Road referred to. This will continue. Available funding does not at this time allow for complete resurfacing of the strip of roadway in question.

The repairs to the landslips on this road have to be considered together with repairs to the large number of other landslips occurring on roads all over the country, some of which are so critical that they threaten road closure. Notwithstanding the fact that the limited funding available to repair landslips throughout the country is a serious constraint, work on a major landslip on this road has begun and is now 50 per cent complete. Additionally, the Ministry of Works and Transport is in continual liaison with the Water and Sewerage Authority to repair damage done to the roadway as a result of WASA's operations.

1.55 p.m.

**Montrose Main Road
(Resurfacing of)**

23. Mr. Raymond Palackdharrysingh (*Caroni Central*) asked the hon. Minister of Works and Transport:

Is the Minister aware of the deplorable condition of:

- (a) the Montrose Main Road in Chaguanas, east of the Flyover up to the Longdenville Government School?
- (b) the Freeport Mission Road, east of the Flyover up to Three Roads Junction?
- (c) If the answer is in the affirmative, would the Minister state what plans he has for the resurfacing and maintenance of these roads and when would these plans be implemented?

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Colm Imbert): Madam Speaker, paving of the Montrose Main Road in Chaguanas, east of the flyover is now 80 per cent complete and is scheduled for completion by October 9, 1992.

In answer to part (b): The Freeport Mission Road is currently being repaired. This work is expected to be completed by October 16, 1992.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Madam Speaker, would the hon. Minister state who or what agency is currently repairing, the Freeport Mission Road?

Hon. C. Imbert: I am not in a position to give that information. However, I will make it available to the hon. Member in due course.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Nothing has been done, you know that.

**Agricultural Access Roads
(Caroni Central)**

24. Mr. Raymond Palackdharrysingh asked the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources:

- (a) Is the Minister aware that a number of agricultural access roads in the Carlsen Field, Caparo, Chickland, Arena, San Francique Indian Trail, Gran Couva, Flanagan Town and Tabaquite areas need upgrading?

- (b) If the answer is in the affirmative, would the Minister state what plans he has for upgrading such roads and when would they be implemented?

The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (Dr. The Hon. Keith Rowley): Madam Speaker, the Minister is aware that a number of agricultural access roads in many parts of the country need upgrading. Some of these roads are in the Carlsen Field, Caparo, Chickland, Arena, San Francique, Indian Trail, Gran Couva, Flanagin Town and Tabaquite areas. Some access roads in county Caroni have been included in the National Agricultural Access Roads Programme to be funded through the Inter-American Development Bank loan for 1993. These roads are Pantin Ascevero Road, La Gloria Estate and La Republica Road, all of which are major agricultural access roads in County Caroni.

Madam Speaker, the Minister also recognizes the need to upgrade other roads in the area and has earmarked La Quesa Road, Freeport; Todd's Road and Bancroft Road for attention when financial resources become available.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION (LEAVE)

Miss Pamela Nicholson (Tobago West): Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a very important definite matter of urgent public importance. It relates directly to Tobago. This deals with the sea transport situation between Trinidad and Tobago. There are two boats that should be functioning between these islands.

Madam Speaker: Before the hon. Member proceeds, I think what the hon. Member meant was Order 12, rather than Order 13, was it? In your letter?

Miss Nicholson: Thirteen.

Madam Speaker: I shall correct it to Order 12, rather than 13.

"I hereby crave your kind permission to raise a definite matter of urgent public importance under Standing Order 13."

I think what you meant was 12.

Miss Nicholson: Yes, Madam Speaker, it was under Order 12 that I really wanted to raise the question. Now, this situation is very, very urgent because the boat that is moving right now is barely functional and the business people of Tobago, that is, the people who bring food for the livelihood of the people of

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Tobago, the market vendors, in particular, are questioning what is happening with this boat and what is happening between Trinidad and Tobago. I am not here talking about all the people who travel between Trinidad and Tobago because, as you know, Madam Speaker, the Member for Diego Martin East said the people of Tobago travel only by boat. So if this boat goes down—

Mr. Imbert: On a point of order. Madam Speaker, I said no such thing.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: You cannot remember?

Miss Nicholson: Madam Speaker, I heard him in the House making that comment. The people of Tobago who are using the boat are crying out. If the Panorama goes down, which one feels can happen any time—because many times, if the boat is to leave at eleven o'clock, it sometimes leaves three hours later, with people tinkering with the engine of the boat and often that boat will drift; sometimes it will take 8 to 15 hours to come from Trinidad to Tobago. I am talking about Friday, September 11, 1992 and Friday, September 18, 1992. This is very critical.

As a responsible Parliament and as responsible representatives, it is very, very important for us to know whether there are alternative arrangements being made. One feels that the boat really should be taken off the run put on dry dock and repaired. I do not know, I am asking the Minister—if the boat is still insured, if there is an extension of the insurance. Some people are questioning whether Lloyd's would still have such a boat insured. The front of the boat is down and, as I said, the engine is always giving trouble.

If the boat goes down, the livelihood of the people of Tobago would really be at stake because the wholesalers come to Trinidad, purchase our foodstuff for the supermarkets and groceries, put them on that boat and take them to Tobago. And that is how we eat. We are not able to bring food on boats straight in and that kind of thing. All our food comes from Trinidad. The market vendors come down on a Thursday, and when the boat is late, it interferes with their operations because by the time they get in, the wholesalers at the market would have already functioned and the goods would be far more expensive; sometimes they are not even able to get them sold when they return.

Madam Speaker, delegations of market vendors and business people came to me stating that they think this is a very critical matter that must be raised in the

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national Parliament so that the people must know what the situation is with the boat and what is Government's alternative.

We cannot link anything with the airline because we do not travel by airline. It is \$200.00 to travel between Trinidad and Tobago—that would not really handle the food, even with the airline. It was said we would have improved services. They have deteriorated. People who are sick would get their moneys paid back to them. Up to now, not a single soul has been paid a cent and the Tobago House of Assembly knows nothing about any such thing. Statements were made in the House.

2.05 p.m.

Madam Speaker, Tobago would like to know what the situation is, in respect of sea communication between the two islands, what will be done about the boat and what is our alternative position? That is very important, critical and urgent to the people of Tobago.

Madam Speaker: From the tenor of the hon. Member's letter, I see that the matter concerns sea transport between Trinidad and Tobago, as it affects the livelihood and safety of the citizens, especially Tobagonians. The Member has been trying to make out a case for the matter under Standing Order No. 12.

I am of the view that the very nature of the matter is one that definitely ought to come within the ambit of Standing Order No. 11; but it does not satisfy the requirements of Standing Order No. 12, as definite and of urgent public importance. It might be a definite matter, it is a matter of public importance—the state of sea transport between Trinidad and Tobago—but I am afraid I do not see it as one being urgent, coming within the ambit of Standing Order No. 12. I would suggest to the hon. Member, that this matter be raised under Standing Order No. 11.

**PRINTING AND PACKAGING LIMITED
(PROPOSED SALE OF)**

The Minister of Local Government and Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Hon. Kenneth Valley): Madam Speaker, I am authorized by Cabinet to make the following statement.

At its regular weekly meeting held on September 25, 1992, Cabinet agreed to the recommendation of the board of directors of Trinidad and Tobago Printing and

Packaging Limited to accept an offer by Caribbean Flexographic and Foil Printers Limited, known in the trading world as Cariflex, to purchase the shares of Trinidad and Tobago Printing and Packaging Limited for \$12.5 million.

Cariflex has been in business for 18 years and is located in Kelly Village, Caroni. Also located there, is its sister company, Harricrete Limited. I understand that at present over 55 per cent of the sales of Cariflex is exported to countries within Caricom, Puerto Rico, Belize and the United States. It is expected that the integration of Trinidad and Tobago Printing and Packaging Limited into this group of companies will add significantly to their export capability. The resulting increase in employment levels would make its own contribution to a resumption of sustained growth in Trinidad and Tobago, not to mention the potential for foreign exchange earnings and savings in budget outlays.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago acquired Trinidad and Tobago Printing and Packaging Limited in 1971, following the voluntary liquidation of the enterprise by its former owners, the Booker Group. Despite its unprofitability, the Government acquired the company, principally, to preserve employment in Arima and its environs.

In the ensuing years the company consistently showed unsatisfactory financial results. Accumulated losses at December 31, 1987 amounted to almost \$28 million and were funded essentially by the state and bank loans guaranteed by Government. Subsequent efforts to put the company in an operational and financial condition were not entirely successful. In fact, the Government was unable to attract a serious investor when the company was put up for sale in 1991.

By every measure of viability, the company has been a financial failure. It was unable to make the adjustments required by the changing marketing conditions, and as at December 31, 1991 it had accumulated further losses amounting to approximately \$49.5 million.

It required unqualified shareholder support to meet its cash needs; and shareholders equity had been totally eroded and, in fact, had become negative;

The company's ability to function efficiently has depended, therefore, on continuing state support. This state of affairs could not be allowed to continue. Hon. Members would appreciate that this financial support is ultimately borne by the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago.

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[HON. K. VALLEY]

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The transfer of the Government shareholdings in Trinidad and Tobago Printing and Packaging Limited to Cariflex is the first divestment operation which has been effected under this Administration. For this reason the Government is of the view that in keeping with our commitment to accountability on all issues of public importance, a full accounting of this exercise should be provided to Parliament and be shared with the national community.

Immediately upon assuming office in December 1991, the Government began the process of putting in place the machinery for implementing the commitments which we made in our 1991 election manifesto. We regard these commitments as a covenant with the people of Trinidad and Tobago. In our manifesto we redefined the role of state enterprises in the transformation and development of the national economy. Hon. Members would recall that it was only recently I had the privilege, that is on September 11 and 18, 1992, to outline to this House, public policy on the role and accountability of state enterprises. As hon. Members are now aware, we envisage a continuing role for state enterprises in national development, but only in special circumstances. Those enterprises which do not meet our criteria for retention are to be disposed of through a programme of orderly divestment.

Accordingly, in the context of our divestment policy, the Government agreed in April 1992 to the immediate divestment of Trinidad and Tobago Printing and Packaging Limited and reconstituted the board of directors in July 1992 under the chairmanship of Mr. Jerry Hospedales, and including Miss Jacqueline Quamina and Mr. William Daniel. The board engaged the services of Ernst and Young, the auditors to the Directors of the company to act as its financial adviser with respect to the proposed sale of the company. In consultation with the financial adviser, the company circulated an Information Memorandum to potential purchasers on August 14, 1992 which invited interested parties to submit bids for the purchase of the company by August 21, 1992. On the request of a number of potential buyers, the board extended the closing date for the submission of bids to August 28, 1992,

I want to inform hon. Members that immediately upon the Government's decision to divest the company I held two meetings with the workers' representatives, the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union, and advised them on the broad policy aspects of the Government's decision on Trinidad and Tobago Printing and Packaging Limited. I put forward, for the union's consideration a proposal for the takeover of the company by the Union and employees of the

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company, and they were given up to July 31, 1992 to submit a bid. In fact, the union was given the right of first refusal.

The board of the company from the date of its appointment maintained communication links with the union both with regard to matters pertaining to the workers and the possible acquisition of the company by the union. This was in keeping with my directive. The union requested an extension of time to allow them to submit a bid. This was agreed. A copy of the Information Memorandum, prepared by the company, was sent to the union; but despite the additional time given to the union and the extension of the closing date, the union did not submit a bid.

Ernst and Young received five proposals for the purchase of the company. The board, after consultation with Ernst and Young, recommended that the Government should accept the bid from Cariflex for the purchase of the company in an amount of \$12.5 million.

The Government has been mindful of the need to minimize the hardship imposed by the dislocation of employees who had given loyal and faithful service for several years. To this end the Government has met, in full, all employees' entitlements including severance benefits and payments in lieu of annual leave entitlements, unutilized sick and casual leave. The Government has met the accumulated deficit of the company's pension fund and the arrears of national insurance contributions to allow all employees to receive their pensions and national insurance benefits as they fall due. It has also assumed the responsibility for meeting all other recorded liabilities of the company.

2.15 p.m.

The board has been authorized to commence negotiations with Cariflex with a view to ensuring that the transition to new ownership is effected as smoothly as possible, and that the company's many highly valued customers are not unnecessarily inconvenienced. The board expects that the execution of the sale agreement should be effected within one week so that Cariflex can take possession of the property, plant and equipment on the payment in full of the consideration and begin the process of rationalizing the operations thereby providing meaningful employment to the people of Arima and its environs.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. B. Panday: On a point of clarification, Madam Speaker. Would the hon. Minister state how much the Government paid for Trinidad Printing and Packaging when it acquired it originally?

Hon. K. Valley: I do not have that information at hand, therefore, I cannot supply that to the Member.

Mr. B. Panday: Would the Minister also supply the figure that states what has been the accumulated liability of the company?

Hon. K. Valley: The accumulated liability is around \$39 million.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

The Minister of Education (Hon. Augustus Ramrekersingh): Madam Speaker, I wish to make a statement during the course of the proceedings, and I crave the indulgence of this honourable House to have it deferred to a later stage of the proceedings, possibly just before the tea interval.

Assent indicated.

CARONI (1975) LIMITED

[SECOND DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question [September 18, 1992]:

Be it resolved:

That this House take note of the Report of the Cabinet appointed Tripartite Committee on Caroni (1975) Limited.

Question again proposed.

Mr. Jarrette Narine (Arouca North): Madam Speaker, I rise to support the motion before the House. It states simply:

“Be it resolved:

That this House take note of the Report of the Cabinet appointed Tripartite Committee on Caroni (1975) Limited.”

Before going into the document that has been circulated to us, I should like to congratulate that committee, and also the Minister responsible for having put that committee in place so that Caroni (1975) Limited, may take that quantum leap into the future.

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The terms of reference of the committee were to develop an agenda for action aimed at putting Caroni (1975) Limited on a viable footing over an agreed time frame. Going through the document one would see that the time-frame has been observed and an enormous number of facts have been placed into that document.

The Tripartite Committee has taken a major step. The achievement of consensus of the agreement this time, can be considered a quantum leap in my Government's tenacious efforts over the years towards making the industry a viable and profitable enterprise. The committee which comprised Government, the company, and the trade unions must be also complimented. It is fitting to commend all the representatives of the various stakeholders who served on that committee.

The consensus and the path of growth, development and profitability is itemized in this report as taking a step forward.

Madam Speaker, from the time of its involvement in Caroni (1975) Limited, as a major shareholder, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has not only expressed, but also demonstrated to all our citizens whose livelihood is sustained by that company, that it was mindful then, as is the case today, of the citizens and of the benefits that can accrue to the stakeholders and to the national community.

It is also fitting to note that the agro-industry of Caroni (1975) Limited now has an opportunity to develop itself into a viable one and redound to the success not only of the persons that are employed at Caroni (1975) Limited but also the nation as a whole. And as from this time, I hope that the confrontational approach from within the industry would not be raising its ugly head. I would think that all the problems created over the years—having consensus on this report, Government is taking note of it and it will be implemented as time goes by; even now, some of it has been implemented, and we would go forward.

The scenario then—and we must look back at history—is that the foreign-based company of Tate and Lyle of England at that time decided to discontinue operations in Trinidad, and this would have resulted in over 16,500 persons being out of direct employment. One can imagine the fallout on families concerned and the socio-economic implications for the country as a whole. Surely then the PNM Government were left with no option at that time, but that of assuming the mantle of major shareholder.

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Knowing full well that the industry needed intensive care—I should like to state that the declaration by the Prime Minister at that time, the late Dr. Eric Eustace Williams, was simply in one line: “Sugar proposes and oil disposes.” It was a clear indication of Government's intention to do what was necessary to sustain the industry. It needed intensive financial care which was done over the years, as stated by the Member for Diego Martin West in introducing the motion. I think that the sum of money which was spent on that until 1991 was in the vicinity of \$2.138 billion. The industry needed that financial help from the state so as to sustain the persons employed.

2.25 p.m.

In its early role, Government's approach was the application of the best technologies and procedures. One would understand that over the years equipment belonging to Caroni (1975) Limited became obsolete. Efforts were made to bring in harvesters and this created a lot of opposition within the industry because at that time the workers saw it as a loss of jobs. They were very adamant on new technology coming in then. To this present time, there is still that fear that if you go that way, the industry will create some problems for the socio-economic well-being of the workers employed in that industry.

The report clearly states that over a long period, approximately six to eight years, there will be a complete change around and that persons in the industry and their families will benefit from the long-term solution to this problem. As a matter of fact, the amount of documentation that this committee had and one report of the committee to consider the rationalization of the sugar industry, Volumes I and II (1978) had a lot of what had been taking place within the sugar industry, and that report was one which should have been gone into.

Again, there was consensus in that report but a number of persons who signed it actually did not live up to expectations in order to move the industry out of the doldrums. The Member for Couva South in his contribution stated that the Government was hoodwinking the population, but in 1978 the trade union represented by the Member for Couva North also signed that agreement. It is a pity that the people at Caroni were not sensitized to what was written in that report.

I hope that the Minister and the Member for Diego Martin West would not allow that to happen with this report. I hope that we would sensitize the people within the industry to what is taking place and what will take place over a period

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so as to bring them out of that dependency syndrome that they would have on any government which is to come in the future, or the Government that is at present trying to alleviate the situation.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: You are talking about LIDP. You made a mistake.

Mr. Narine: I will deal with that later.

One would remember that in 1985 the Government made an appeal. Of course, the Member for Couva South will know quite well, being a luminary in law, that it was a privilege which could have been taken by any side to appeal, and that in 1987 the appeal was withdrawn from the courts. I remember that in 1987 there was a situation like what happened about two weeks ago, where the same sugar industry and the union said that no money, no vote. At that time, after the elections, they made a promise to the people and they were paid only \$10 million.

As was indicated by the Member for Diego Martin West, we have a commitment to pay \$30 million and, we were not going to use that money before the local government elections to stir up and win support by giving out any bribes. One would know that on Monday that proved quite worthy because of the inroads which the party and the Government were able to make in that area. We had increases on Monday which we never expected and we did not pay the \$30 million.

The Member for Couva South, I think he said that it should be paid, I think on or before December 20. As was stated by the Member for Diego Martin West, we indicated on the Government side that the moneys will be paid before the next cane crop which will start on January 2, 1993. Definitely, December 20 was not too far away from then. I think that after the Member for Couva North actually completed his three-day march of approximately 40 miles, he did indicate that he is going to start from January 3, 1993. It was a complete contradiction as to what the Member for Couva South said after all this hullabaloo.

I should also like to indicate that the "public servants" of Caroni (1975) Limited, and the public servants in general did not get an increase; but the "public servants" of Caroni (1975) Limited got an increase in 1985; whilst the public servants did not get an increase since 1983. This year, in dealing with the public servants in the budget, there was a commitment which was made by the Government. It was left to the Government to put this right. As soon as we assumed office, we gave the public servants their just due. As I indicated, in 1985 the "public servants" of Caroni (1975) Limited got their increases.

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I shall start with the financial restructuring as indicated in this document. All the financial commitments that Caroni (1975) Limited has, it is proposed that the Government would clear those and would even assume the FINCOR loans and other commitments that this company has in this document. We have also seen in this document that there will be tax concessions in order to help the industry build itself over the years.

One would look at the 1992 Budget which shows that we further supported the industry by \$95 million, even more than what the LIDP got for the entire country. Caroni (1975) Limited got \$95 million. If I remember rightly, in the budget the unemployment levy programme got \$90 million for the entire country, Trinidad and Tobago. When you had to pay off \$32 million in debt for last year's unemployment programme, this is a significant amount of money that was given for employment at Caroni.

As I said, even the loans will be taken over by Government, and the committee also recommends that Government should provide the company with the proceeds from land sales, lands sold by Caroni (1975) Limited to Government over the years and for which the company has received no payment. So there is a commitment here to reimburse Caroni for the lands that they have sold to various agencies.

2.35 p.m.

I cannot profess that I am that close to the industry but, over the years I have had many friends living in the area who made it quite clear that we had inherited a system from Tate and Lyle, and carried it on because we could not have removed the entire managerial and organizational structure overnight. We had to go into it with all the big bungalows, and all the yardsmen, and all the maids and all the vehicles that they used in the industry.

I think that the committee is quite aware of all these implications and it is also aware of the diversification process that started since 1983. Even in the 1978 report we had that diversification which would have taken into consideration, at that time, the size and contribution to the domestic product. We also had the rationale for diversification and, based on sugar, there are the traditional products—refined sugar products, for example, white sugar, caster sugar, syrups; the non-conventional products, such as organic acids, antibiotics, sucro-chemicals, alcoholic beverages, stock-feed and sugar, charcoal, caramel and so on, all indicated here.

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Based on molasses, there was also room for diversification. There was also, based on bagasse, fuel, pulp paper, cellulose, board and building material, bagasse, molasses, animal feeds and so on; based on fly ash—building materials. On cane juice, much diversification could also have taken place; even the sugar cane tops for animals, which is normally used by persons who are in the livestock field. I spent much of my vacation in that area and I know that the best feed for animals at that time was cane tops.

We are mindful that all the research that went into Caroni (1975) Limited over the years was effectively used in this document.

It is also proposed that within the company the units will function like subsidiary companies which simply means that all its divestments will act as an entity. All will become one, but they will have their various functions in diversifying the company, so that they will be able, after a couple of years, to show to the national community that they are able to make a profit and go forward.

Under "Sugar Operations" we have here the production target of 125,000 tonnes of sugar annually. This is not an impossible task as we heard when the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources spoke. Over the years we have almost reached there and, with the advent of the farmers' using better varieties of sugar cane, this has increased. Also, there has been the achievement of the mix for farmers on a ratio of 60:40, so that farmers will also have an incentive to produce more sugar from which they will gain more. The increase of the percentage of mechanical harvesters for canes with the company's operations by 35 per cent by 1977—and we all remember that when the first set of harvesters came in, persons planted iron pickets in the field and damaged all the equipment for fear that they would lose their jobs. Those were the same jobs that were saved by the PNM when Tate and Lyle had decided to return to England. So that we are mindful of the situation at Caroni.

We are also reviewing the existing cane payment system as was recommended in the Seemungal Report—we know that it is outdated and should be changed. We also have in (d) here: "increasing farmers' direct delivery of canes to the company's milling facilities".

It is no secret that as from January there is much confusion and confrontation at the scales when the crop is on. In increasing farmers' direct delivery there will be increased productivity by the farmers; they will not have to line up at the

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weighing stations at all hours of the morning and wait—there will be an efficient way of taking in their canes.

Having the only refinery within the Caricom region, it is very important that we extend our hands to our Caricom neighbours and have the refinery fully operated.

There is also the recommendation that the domestic price of sugar should be increased by 15 per cent with effect from January 1993, that will also help to create the improvement in the sugar industry that needs to take place. Instead of increasing landholdings to the farmers, there will be increased productivity with improved varieties of canes. I believe several speakers have already spoken about that. With respect to the 40 per cent shares of the production which will fall to the company as grower, the proposal is that an increased part of this should be mechanically harvested. It is in the report here.

We also have a situation here, 911,848 tonnes which during the last 30 years was 1970s figure. We have seen, for the amount of land used, there has been a decrease in the output of sugar. It is only if new varieties and mechanisms are introduced among other things that we can create an increase. With these things in place, farmers' average yield should increase from 23 tonnes in 1992 to 25 tonnes per acre by 1995. The facts are there. Some of these measures will reflect in an improved tc-ts ratio and with the domestic price of sugar increased, we would be looking at quality instead of quantity. Because we know that mud and trash and all these things are brought into the factory even at the present time by the growers. A very poor quality comes in. *[Interruption]* Trinidad is such a small place, it is not funny.

2.45 p.m.

The quality of the cane will determine payments, so that quality will rise; also, the quality of the sugar. Some diversification started in 1983, and it is a continuing process which will continue after this document is supported.

Land development: Under land development, the Government was always lenient on squatters at Caroni and the largest squatting community would probably be in the Central area, where lands have been rented at \$70 per acre, and as fast as a family increases, they utilize the land for housing. Hence, the problems in the squatting areas. They have taken over a portion of land for planting and it is now being used for housing.

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Part 7, "Human Resources". I think that when this part of the document is gone through, instead of marching, the union should be smiling, because the proposals that are written here are:

- "1. discharging the arrears owing to workers;
2. introducing improved pension and retirement arrangements;
3. rationalizing the categories of the work force;
4. re-introducing an Apprenticeship Scheme and establishing appropriate training and work-study programmes;
5. undertaking a management audit of the company."

Now, the Member for Diego Martin Central stated a couple of weeks ago that Caroni and other state enterprises will be able to bring in their own auditors to have their books updated so that we do not continue to have the present situation where the Public Accounts Committee is now dealing with 1981 and 1982 financial reports from the Auditor General.

The measures advanced will even reduce the liabilities on the company. Another recommendation is full payment to employees who have retired, or to the estates of those who have died during the period 1983—1992. A total sum of approximately \$25 million will be required for both daily paid and the staff amounting to some 2,447 persons falling into this category. The first tranche of this payment will not be less than \$30 million and will be paid before the start of the next cane crop. We already have that.

Pension to workers: There will be increased pension. What I said before is that it should be made known to the workers what is taking place. The update of the pension plan, from 40-year service—to enjoy full benefits on retirement, you would need to have 33 1/3 years' services, which would be more attainable by the workers, and the changes will be brought forward.

One of my concerns, Madam Speaker, is the recruitment of labour by Caroni (1975) Limited—

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Like LIDP.

Mr. Narine: It is worse than LIDP. I should like to read here part of the document on the collective agreement for recruitment of labour:

- "(a) The union shall maintain a register of persons who are desirous of taking up employment with the company;

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- (b) When persons are required to fill vacancies the Industrial Relations Officer shall communicate in writing with the Union indicating number required, their classification and the location at which they should report;
- (c) As far as possible, the Industrial Relations Officer shall give at least two (2) weeks' notice to the Union to submit the names of candidates in each case of the Company's requirements of labour; and
- (d) The Company shall choose from the candidates submitted by the Union, provided they possess the necessary qualifications, preference being given to children of sugar workers."

I should like to refer to the Industrial Relations Act. One would understand, when speaking about alienation and discrimination, what is taking place within the industry; this is what I am about to speak on here. On page 23, subsection (5) (c) says:

"(5) The following terms in any collective agreement are void:

We go to (c):

“any clause specifying that the employer must employ only members of a particular union or must show any preference or favour regarding recruitment, offer of employment, retrenchment or termination of employment, only to members of a particular union.”

It is clear here.

Mr. B. Panday: Would the Member give way to a question? Would he say that that clause he has just read is in contravention of the Act and, if it is, how?

Mr. Narine: Madam Speaker, it must be in contravention of the Act. When you have a union or collective agreement and they come up with something like this and you have the Industrial Relations Act—

Mr. B. Panday: Does it say that Members of a union must be employed? Read it. Big fool! What an utter fool! Read the agreement.

Mr. Narine: You are disturbed by the facts; that is what happened to you.

I also have in my possession here two documents, one from the National Farmers' and Workers' Union, and I am going to read from them.

Mr. B. Panday: Read the agreement you just read.

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Mr. Narine: This was written on March 12, 1992, from the National Farmers' and Workers' Union to the Personnel Manager of Caroni (1975) Limited, Brechin Castle, Couva:

"NFWU: Employment for cane-farmers.

Dear Sir, the above named organization wishes to draw to your attention the rank discrimination against cane farmers, their children and families, whenever the Company is recruiting to fill vacant positions.

Complaints have been made to the Union and the matter was discussed at both the General Council and Central Committee Meetings. Some of the points raised are as follows:

- (1) Cane farmers supply about 50 per cent of the canes.
- (2) The canes are produced at a much lower cost than the Company.
- (3) Farmers are being paid way below the Cost of Production.
- (4) Cane farmers receive an income only when canes are sold."

that is five months in the harvesting time—

- "(5) Farmers labour in the field for seven months incurring expenses to maintain a certain amount of tonnage per acre. How will the farmer survive with such a low income (five months) and how can he maintain his family?
- (6) Overall expenses are deducted for the operation of factories, transport, CFD and many others, but the most important point is that the farmers play a very important part in the survival of the sugar industry, yet this is hardly recognized by those in authority.
- (7) There is no sick-leave for the farmer, no holidays, no free medical attention, no benefits whatsoever. Rain or shine the farmer labours in his fields only with the hope of a better crop the next year. Our members are deeply concerned and have expressed their dissatisfaction at the way in which Caroni Ltd., employs workers. It has been drawn to our attention that all applications must pass through and be recommended by one particular Trade Union; is not this discrimination against the suppliers?

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The National Farmers' and Workers' Union, one of the cane farming bodies and one which represents quite a large amount of cane farmers..."
[Interruption]

Dr. Rowley: Madam Speaker, I crave your indulgence here. I am responsible for responding to this motion and I should like to be able to hear what is happening so that I could respond appropriately when the times comes. Could you assist me. Please?

Mr. Narine: I continue:

"feels that it is unfair and unjust and that is our duty and our right to object to any kind of injustice to our members and their families.

Sir, you will agree that the cane-farmers have good reason for complaining, therefore, under the circumstances, the National Farmers' and Workers' Union is requesting that Caroni Ltd., revise its Rules or Agreement so that cane farmers could benefit and that the NFWU Employment Forms be recognized and accepted by the Company.

We would appreciate very much if this matter could be given urgent attention.

Please call the above office for further information if necessary.

Yours faithfully,

Doolin Nankisoor."

It is signed by him; he is the general secretary The President General is Mr. Raffique Shah, and the Treasurer is Mr. Randolph Chandrakate.

I also have the reply from Caroni (1975) Limited, Madam Speaker. And all the directors' names are here. I think the union is aware of all the persons that are there, because they have a majority on the board. It reads:

"Re: Employment of cane-farmers.

Dear Mr. Nankisoor: This is in reply to your letter dated the 12th of March, 1992. We note your deep concern about our present employment practice with regard to hourly daily-paid workers. We wish to advise, however, that the collective agreement with the representative Union contains a clause which gives the said Union absolute right to operate as an employment agency with respect to all employment within the particular bargaining unit."

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That is what is going on. I will read that again:

"We wish to advise, however, that the collective agreement with the representative Union contains a clause which gives the said Union absolute right to operate as an employment agency with respect to all employment within the particular bargaining unit."

It continues, Madam Speaker:

"This matter will have to be subject to negotiation and until we are able to obtain agreement on change, we will not be able to entertain any direct request or recommendation for employment."

This is worse than LIDP. This is what Mr. Morris Marshall spoke about, and twinning Couva is fooling anybody "Behind the Bridge" or "Over the Hills". They know that they have nothing to get.

Mr. Maharaj: Madam Speaker, if the hon. Member feels so strongly about what he has just read, would he indicate whether the Government would be prepared to set up an Equal Opportunities Commission and/or a Monopolies Commission?

Mr. Marshall: What we want, Madam Speaker, is a commitment on the part of those who now control the 10,000 jobs, to share that with the other people.

Mr. Panday: Madam Speaker, I went all over the place trying to get cane cutters from Laventille. I did not succeed.

Mr. Narine: Madam Speaker, instead of coming here—this should be corrected right where he is based, in Caroni. We have a majority Trade Union, not a minority one. We have certification and recognition. We do not have hoodwinking and under-the-table agreements with anybody.

When you speak about discrimination, here it is: 95 per cent of the people that are employed come from one ethnic community, but he talks about people from "Behind the Bridge". I should like to know whether the Member would bring a motion here to share with others the lands at Caroni that will be subdivided and give them the equal opportunity of being provided with lands at \$70 an acre.

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

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. K. Valley*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Narine: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I overheard Members on the other side asking for an hour more. I do not need an hour more.

But this discriminatory practice is not about people; it is about the trade unions that are involved in the industry. Do all the other unions as with a certain one have equal opportunity like one union? They, too, provide employment within the area. They provide 50 per cent of the canes that go for the same workers to manufacture in the factory and they get one single job out of it. It is only one particular trade union, but they come here and knock a Government because there are a few hundred jobs going in LIDP. There is a worse situation at Caroni; it is worse than LIDP.

Right now, they have the opportunity, as the Member for Caroni Central will know—he goes to the LIDP office every week and submits names and I never had the opportunity to do that. I have the records.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: I will bring the records to show you.

Mr. Narine: That stops you from sitting in drains *etc.* for so long.

Madam Speaker, I hope that the Tripartite Committee will sit down and review this and take this out of the doldrums that it has been in over the years—alienation, discrimination and racism going on in Central, left right and centre but they come here and talk about racism; 95 per cent of one kind of people working at the company. Nobody else can get employment. One has to go through the union and beg and have a godfather and all kinds of things to get a job at Caroni (1975) Limited.

It is the same leader, who is the Leader of the Opposition, that asked the 10,000 and the 14,000 to come out on the road and he only got about 400. The workers at Caroni are fed up with that type of leadership and the only thing that can change that is this committee. No wonder why people wanted to take their names off the report after they signed it. They realized what they signed. It is a sort of dictatorship—“I will sign, and then I will go to my union and the union say no, you should not sign, so now I want to take my name off”. *[Interruption]*

I have had the opportunity to represent workers in this country and could stand up and report to them at any given time. There are some trade union leaders in Trinidad who have to hide behind doors. If they ask people to come out, they would rather stay at home and watch television than to come on the streets and walk. Imagine the dictatorship. The Leader of the Opposition takes up a little child

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and says he is going to mind him from now on, he did not go to anyone, just on the streets that happened, that dictatorial kind of rule. He can do what he wants; he is lord and master of all he surveys. That is the type of thing we have.

Madam Speaker, I think I have stated in no uncertain terms—they talk about equity, alienation and all these things; the manipulative effect that the union has must go. I am appealing to the Minister and his committee to deal with this matter effectively during the next term of negotiation, because in this report it says that it is going to be ongoing; they will have further discussions. If we have to deal with this, we must look at the people who deal with Caroni.

Over the years, I have been a county councillor. Even the Washington Playground in Caroni, we have had problems maintaining it. There is a non-existence of facilities and this report is going to change that.

Madam Speaker, I feel quite confident that the members of this committee will continue their good work and will make sure that the type of discrimination and alienation that exists at Caroni will stop once and for all.

I thank you.

Mr. Mohammed Haniff (*Princes Town*): Madam Speaker, I sat and listened to accusations. The Member for Arouca North says that he represented people. I simply want to remind him that I am an official and financial member of NUGFW and he has never represented anybody. Not only has he not represented anyone, but he also hides behind the President General of NUGFW all the time, looking for ‘tag-along’. That is not all, Madam Speaker. [*Interruption*]

Madam Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr. Haniff: I have never contested a seat in the southern division. I have held any position I wanted.

Mr. Narine: I was the President of the Agricultural and Allied Workers' Union.

Madam Speaker: Would Members desist from their personal activities and continue with the debate.

Mr. Haniff: Madam Speaker, let me tell you and this nation what is worse—[*Interruption*—the daily-paid workers of this country, their patience has gone and they are ready to deal with NUGFW.

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Mr. B. Panday: We shall organize NUGFW now.

Mr. Haniff: We have not heard anything from NUGFW and we want to hear something from them. Do they still exist? Tell Mr. John that the people want to hear something. Mr. John must get up and say something, because the one who says he represents people cannot represent anybody.

Madam Speaker, I will get on with the topic. I want to remind that Member, who just spoke, who admitted that he knows nothing about the sugar industry, who just stood there and read a document which is in the possession of all MPs—we have read it.

I stand here to make my contribution on this motion. I want to admit that I have great difficulty in coming to terms with the expression "take note". I have difficulty with that and, you may agree, because I am new in this Parliament. To my mind taking note means taking note of what is written in this document, a lovely document signed by responsible people, a demonstration of commitment to the sugar industry in the interest of the people of this nation.

I admire the ability and the courage of the trade union leaders, one of the organizations to which I belong. I admire their courage in the circumstances to sit there and put together—the only thing I can agree on with the last speaker is that this document is, in fact, a good document. It was put together by people who work and live in the industry and who have protected it over the years in a situation where the governments of the past have consistently denied the sugar workers their rights and have failed to implement recommendations that have gone to them before.

Madam Speaker, those are some of the conditions. The hon. Minister, the Member for Diego Martin West, among other things, said:

"It is the hope and expectation of this Government, and I dare say the entire national community, that we will seize this window of opportunity now available to us to deal honourably, equitably and reasonably in the national interest with issues the resolution of which seems to have eluded us for so long."

Madam Speaker, I ask: What has been responsible for these issues not being resolved for so long? Where was the PNM? Are they really new? Are they not the ones who were in Government in 1975 when Caroni Limited was acquired? Are they not the ones who were in Government, in 1978, who entered that agreement, as is documented here? Page 30:

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"Mr. Speaker, hon. Members will recall too that since 1978 there has been a plethora of well-documented studies and initiatives aimed at resolving these seemingly intractable problems."

3.15 p.m.

I ask, Madam Speaker, where was the PNM in 1983? Were they in Trinidad, were they governing this country, were they seeing what was happening and, if so, what were their actions and reactions?

"These have all met with limited success, not so much as a result of any fundamental disagreement on goals and objectives, as much as lack of consensus..."

I ask, Madam Speaker, lack of consensus where. Within the ranks of the Government? There is where the lack of consensus was. Anyone understanding what has happened with the sugar industry in this country will know that the political football came from those in Government and they have always used it as they did in this very case. You see, Madam Speaker, this came just prior to another election.

The issue is implementation. We have heard it all before. We have heard all the promises, prior to now; about bringing the sugar industry alive and making it workable. Every single specialist, economist, everyone who understands what is at work will understand that Caroni (1975) Limited could be the backbone of this country in producing food and all that goes with it. There is no question about that. The question is whether there is the will, the courage, the commitment of those in Government. That is where the problem lies.

If Caroni (1975) Limited lose money—as they have done, I say to you, Madam Speaker, it is not the fault of the sugar workers.

In fact the sugar workers who go to the fields and the farmers—you see, the last speaker raised the issue of work and Caroni people. He spoke about ethnicity. Let me tell him that there are mixed people, all sorts of people cutting cane. But it is a way of life, Madam Speaker. Those who are not involved in sugar cannot produce in the sugar cane fields. That is natural. They cannot. To start with, it is a culture where they go to work with a flambeau and a cutlass at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

If you are not trained, if you did not grow up in that culture, you cannot produce in the sugar cane fields. It is not like going to a LID Project and waiting

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there until half past eight and running away with no production. It is not like that. It is a case where the sugar workers are very productive. If they cut the cane, they get paid; they get paid by the ton. It is not a matter of standing up there for an hour or two and going home and getting full pay. Not so at all.

Let me remind this House, Madam Speaker, yourself and this nation, that I know what I am talking about. I am a cane farmer. My contract number is 73280. I wonder if the Minister heard that. So, you see, I understand because I came from and belong to sugar workers and cane farmers, Madam Speaker. There is where I belong.

Then we come here to hear about the work ethic. If there is a case in this nation which can be sued as an example of the ability to produce, go to Caroni, to the sugar cane fields and the farmers. There is where you will see production, productivity and the work ethic. This speaker comes here to talk about confrontational approach. Where has been the confrontational approach? It came, if at all, when the government, throughout the years of Caroni (1975) Limited, failed to implement the recommendations of the committees that they themselves set up. You see, this thing about confrontational, the issue of Caroni (1975) Limited is a sensitive one, but quite naturally, the company will have to be the backbone of food production in this country, or otherwise—

You see the PNM over the years have spoken about agriculture, as they are doing today, but they have done nothing about it. They have done nothing to encourage agriculture in a way that this nation would benefit from it, but that will not last long. Our backbone has to be agriculture and the basis for it is the properties, the lands and the type of lifestyle that you find at Caroni (1975) Limited. We deal with the land.

Madam Speaker, let me quote again from page 32. When the hon. Minister speaks about "honourably, equitably and reasonably", I say to him without reserve that he and the PNM do not know the meaning of these words. For if they knew the meaning of the word 'equitably', the LID project and jobs would have been distributed equitably right across this nation. That is the point.

Mr. B. Panday: Bad conditions, as usual.

Mr. Bereaux: Ten thousand jobs.

Mr. Haniff: Ten thousand jobs? Come down and cut the canes and you will get the jobs. They would run.

Mr. B. Panday: You might get Bill Ramrattan to cut cane. You fired him.

Mr. Haniff: Madam Speaker, I quote from page 29, the statement made by the hon. Minister. Among other things, it says—

"For creating an environment in which agriculture can succeed this will require an appropriate combination of incentives, protection and infrastructure in support of agriculture..."

I say to you, Madam Speaker, that when we had money in this country the Government did not provide that infrastructure. As a result, even in the present circumstances, with the best intentions it will take too high a percentage of the resources of the day to provide the necessary infrastructure. Yet they talk about agriculture. I am happy to know that they understand what agriculture means—the role it must play in this country. I do not see, however, that they have any good intention to deal with the issue of agriculture.

Mr. Bereaux: Wait and see!

Mr. Haniff: Of course, I will wait and see. We have been waiting so long; we have heard that for many years.

Mr. B. Panday: Bill Ramrattan waiting too—waiting for his job!

Mr. Haniff: Madam Speaker, I quote again. You see, the necessary infrastructure has to do with markets. I came to this honourable House and asked about a market for Princes Town. The Minister of Local Government said that he was awaiting a reply from a committee that was established in Chaguanas. When he received that report I again enquired about a market. We are talking here about the established facilities and infrastructure. When I enquired about the report and the Government's policy and intention about a market for Princes Town, that Minister got up and said that \$60,000 is allocated to repair a market which is 100 years old and cannot be repaired; and when he sat down he started laughing, as if he had deceived anyone else. He deceived and exposed himself, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Valley: Madam Speaker, if the hon. Member would give way. Last week we heard from the Member for Chaguanas that the work on the Chaguanas market is continuing. The Chaguanas market report is being implemented. As I said at the time, we were waiting on the Chaguanas market report. That did not give us any guideline with respect to markets in total. However, the Princes Town market is under the Princes Town Corporation.

Mr. Haniff: Madam Speaker, I am sure you will agree that what was just said was not worth the time that I had to sit down here. The hon. Minister of Agriculture, the Member for Diego Martin West, went on to say—

"Given the expertise and other resources of Caroni Limited, the PNM sees the company to be of strategic importance and therefore it will be in a position to play a major role in the execution of national agricultural policy."

Mr. B. Panday: He discovered that last week.

Mr. Haniff: This document came from people who understand what Caroni (1975) Limited means and what agriculture means. I would want to give him the benefit of the doubt, but I have my doubts myself, Madam Speaker, like the majority of citizens of this country.

Dr. Rowley: On a point of clarification, Madam Speaker. That quotation came from the PNM manifesto.

Mr. Haniff: That makes it so much worse, Madam Speaker, because we have learned over the years not to trust anything that is in that manifesto.

3.25 p.m.

Madam Speaker, I ask the basic question: Where were they in 1978? I contributed recommendations on several occasions with honourable people from the university. As I stand here, I see one of those gentlemen who was responsible; who has worked very hard in the agricultural sector, and had made several recommendations. I repeat, the failure was not with the workers and those who made the recommendations; it was, as it still is, a matter of implementation. They do not have the courage, will or the intention to implement the recommendations made.

So, we are here today to take note of a document. I wish, however, to join with all those who recognize that the trade unions and the people who put together this document—the chairman himself, being very versed and knowledgeable in what Caroni requires. We are fortunate, just as they said, to have young people who have the ability and commitment to the survival and recovery of this nation. I compliment each person who is a part of this document. I ask again: Is there the will to really implement all the promises that they are making? We are accustomed to promises.

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This is not the first report, as I have said before. We have heard a lot about other reports. Like all other reports, I hope—just as the last speaker said he hopes—that this report will not just simply remain lying somewhere, but that the Government will, in fact, have the courage to implement it. Every time a report comes, it comes just prior to an election, in all sorts of fancy ways. Why? Because Caroni can be used as a political football.

This nation must emphasize the importance of agriculture, the diversification that is taking place at Caroni (1975) Limited. It must be done. What is really painful is that this report is giving us a guidance and this has been adopted. There have been other reports that have been adopted, but not implemented. They have not adopted a policy over the years, so we had been existing with Caroni (1975) Limited. Do you know what is the major problem? It is not those who drive the tractors, cut and load the cane and repair the factories. It is like WASA, BWIA and others; the Government of the day—and in this case the PNM—continuing to put square pegs in round holes, and putting them in top positions.

Let me give you an example. In the diversification project at La Gloria, a senior man went—I have evidence of it—and he advised the workers to put down the citrus plants with the plastic bags on them; naturally the plants died. That is the technology that they talk about. The workers told him that was the wrong way but he said, "Do it as I say because I am trained to do it". The man is not trained to do anything. He does not know anything, but he was sent in a senior position by the PNM Government. That is the kind of thing we have to endure when we talk about meaningful agriculture and diversification in this country, but they come to talk about jobs in LIDP. What has been the pattern?

Madam Speaker, I ask: Is it true that the pattern will change? *[Interruption]* I will tell you. As I was disturbed I remembered something. I am accustomed going through La Brea, and the mangoes—just out of the flowers—are for sale; the mango flowers are for sale. You cannot pass through La Brea without their running you down, begging and selling other people's fruits. Do you know why? It is not that the people of La Brea are bad, it is because they need jobs so that they can survive decently. If you go to the Pitch Lake, as a tourist, you are in trouble; everybody wants to take you across. It tells us about what has been the pattern—make promises, but break them, never keep them. They do not have the ability or the courage to keep them.

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This report speaks about diversification and reducing the staff in fancy words. I ask: What is the plan? Are we just simply going to send home workers or will there be the kind of consultation that is required, so that there will be peace in the country? I have fears, as we stand here now, that BWIA might close down, out of a lack of consultation with the representative union. That is my fear. We, over the years, have nurtured BWIA into a very reputable airline. What is happening in BWIA today, is that we shall lose our reputation if that consultative process does not continue. I ask, in the same breath: Will there be that kind of consultation at Caroni (1975) Limited?

Madam Speaker, do you know what I also know? I went to the WASA consultation. I have the document and we know that the conditionalities of the IMF say that WASA workers must go, and the criteria being used, is what has this country in this limbo today. We are wondering what is next, concerning our jobs. This report is crucial, not only to those who work in the industry, of course, but also to this nation. If I could send home that point. I know there are some who can listen, but far too many of them cannot understand what implementation means.

This report speaks about sending home workers; it speaks about land distribution. I quote from page 9 of the document—and I raise the issue of labour—

"that the labour force be reduced through enhanced pension and new retirement arrangements (explored in section 7)."

That sounds very nice indeed. Workers are to be sent home so that the labour force will be reduced. That is what it means. Workers will be sent home through enhanced pension and new retirement arrangements. Is it true that they are prepared to give an enhanced pension? Are they prepared to negotiate and set down a new retirement arrangement?

The sugar workers of this nation would like to believe the last item on page 9, but what we have a problem with is that we have heard statements of this nature over all the years of 'PNMization'. I ask: What are going to be the criteria and the formula, not forgetting that it can work if it is implemented with that process of consultation, so that no one would be alienated and we would all feel part of the process that we naturally belong to?

Madam Speaker, again I raise the point, coming from page 4, where the ratio of production of cane, 60:40 is highly recommended. I add however, having

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reached that point, it should go on to 100 per cent, farmers production, and let the sugar workers produce the sugar. Let them deal with the mills and that kind of thing. However, we agree with that 60:40 ratio.

We have heard much about distribution of land at Caroni (1975) Limited. It has been the biggest football over the years. If you drive through Princes Town, Tabaquite and other areas where there are under-utilized Caroni lands, the farmers who do not have land are presently occupying them. Some people get up here and refer to them as squatters. I will not do that, they are not squatters. They are landless people who are utilizing state land for the purpose of providing food. That is what is happening. Idle state lands, may I add and; I ask: Are we understanding what is needed in this country as far as those people who do not have lands are concerned? What are they doing? They are occupying Caroni's lands to produce food.

3.35 p.m.

Promoting the adoption of new varieties of cane: We all know the need for and the importance of producing new varieties of sugar cane. I commend the Minister for emphasizing that. I point out, however, that alone will not improve what happens at Caroni (1975) Limited, as far as the farmers are concerned, and as the last Member tried to tell this House. But of course we need good varieties and we are looking forward to getting those and seeing the plan implemented.

Payment to growers by quality: I look forward to the implementation of that project. It has been said that it was implemented in Jamaica. I hope we have a good pattern to follow. Quality is essential, but it must be done in such a way—and let me add, the cane farmers of this nation are ready, prepared and willing to take this country in that direction, not only in producing sugarcane. Let me make that clear. When Ministers visit the Valley Line of Princes Town and other areas, they are recorded as having, said “But look at this place, lovely houses and these people have cars”, and that kind of thing. “Are these the sugar workers and the cane farmers?” The answer to that is, ‘Yes.’ The only thing is their pattern of life. They plough the lands and plant the canes and in between that they plant the vegetables, the fruits, ground provisions and what have you. And everybody works.

When I rose on the first occasion, I referred to the Member for Diego Martin West and the Member for Arouca North as people who I thought, if given the opportunity, would do well in this country. The Member for Arouca North got up and said that cane tops are the best. I want to tell him that cane tops are the best if

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you do not have other things. They are not the best; other things need to be added to make good feed.

They are recommending a review of the existing Seemungal formula. Quite naturally. It is long overdue. I ask, however, how come we sit here up to this October month and we have not heard a word about when the cane farmers will be paid and how much they will be paid? Why do we have to wait until the year is ending to pay the cane farmers? I should like the Minister responsible in all honesty to tell us why. It is unreasonable. Give the farmers their money etc. so that they can plough it back into their lands and get better quality and more canes; and as a result that feeling of being needed will be there. Someone said they care. You have not demonstrated that you care. I urge you to demonstrate that.

Tell me, why do we have to wait until the end of the year for cane farmers to receive what is theirs? The Member who spoke before me said, it is not difficult to produce 125,000 tonnes of sugar. I want to assure him that this country has in the past produced 200,000 tonnes of sugar. I cannot be vexed with him because he publicly said that he does not know and he does not understand much about the industry. It is my duty to let him know.

The workers, the farmers and their families are a very sensitive issue. The cost of production in 1992—he was making the point but did not complete it—it cost Caroni \$251.25 to produce a ton of cane. Farmers get \$126.00. And before that they got \$102.00. Was not PNM in Government then? Let me emphasize the point—\$215.25—it is not because the sugar workers did not produce—he said part of it. The mill is not functioning properly because of outdated equipment generally, but most of all, mismanagement. Square pegs in round holes; people who do not know what it means and who do not understand the culture of Caroni, cane and sugar production and that kind of thing.

I am a proud farmer. I belong there. I am the proudest lorry driver in Trinidad and Tobago. Some people do not seem to understand that. You do not have to be a professional or pretend to be a professional or a trade unionist, as my friend tried to do. I am in trade union as much as he is and he respects me in everything. In local government I was his boss. And he knows that, and he is frank enough to admit it.

The issue of land distribution is very important—page 18.

“SILWC housing loans/arrears swap which will reduce the outstanding liabilities by a further \$12.3 mn.”

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Madam Speaker, I am happy that this document mentions something about the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee in which I have served for four years as a member, as chairman of the Lands Committee.

Let me tell this nation what has been our problem. The PNM were there during that time. They were out of it for a five-year period. For over 15 years a project known as Garth Road and Brothers Road—no money to develop it. It is for housing, and all sorts of recommendations have been made. The same thing is happening today with the SSU, that is, the Spontaneous Settlements Unit. You see how nicely they put it? They did not say squatters—Spontaneous Settlements Unit. Do you know why? These people have to live somewhere. They belong to Trinidad and Tobago. The lands belong to the state and, quite naturally, they have a right to use the lands. Where will they go if not on the lands? We need to regularize them.

But the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee—I love that organization because its records demonstrate production and a pattern of repayment which we have never heard of in other agencies. If you compare it with the NHA, its productivity, repayment and building of houses cannot be found in NHA, even in the best projects. The Minister might say that a new board has been appointed. But what have they been doing? Do you know what they are saying? They are saying that it is time to disband the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee and let those people go to the NHA.

I say to them, Madam Speaker, that it is time to give more autonomy to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee not only to deal with cane farmers and sugar workers but also with all workers associated with Caroni (1975) Limited, and also the authority to deal with spontaneous settlers. It is time. We have started it in the Sugar Welfare and the people are willing to participate in the programme. It is a lifestyle that many will not understand. Because of the culture, they go there and call their friends and relatives and they share up the land themselves and begin to build houses. In cases where they are not qualified to get a loan—we call it self-help within the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee—we get our officers to draw the plans and we start building a house for them providing the finances on a gradual basis, and we supervise the construction by all the friends and family of the workers. We have produced houses through that system for people who cannot otherwise qualify for loans and land.

Madam Speaker, it is there. The repayment pattern is not exactly 100 per cent, but the best you could find anywhere in the world. We can boast about that. Do

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you know why? It is a culture. They belong to it and as a result they will preserve it. They have been preserving it. When I met as a representative of that body I met the task force at the ministry on June 29, 1992, the hon. Minister was there. I must say, I am waiting patiently because one must give that opportunity to see implementation. I understand that the board has been appointed. I want to see the continued upliftment of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee, because it has to be a model in this nation. It already is, as a matter of fact.

3.45 p.m.

With due respect to those in NHA the pattern of productivity and the lack of payment never—Where else in the world would you find authorities that would provide a house, put people in it, send people to clean in and around the house and nobody pays? If they are paying, it is very little; they are damaging it and that responsibility is not there. It is a difference in culture. Some people say, "gimme, gimme". It is not so in the Sugar Welfare Committee. The culture there is to cherish it, because they know when they repay, their brother, sister, friend or neighbour would then get a loan.

We have submitted all sorts of recommendations. I am looking forward hopefully and patiently, not so much to the Government, but to the Minister. I get the feeling that he will do something positive. I have spoken with him and he said to me, "Haniff have some patience. I am working on it". I have some patience, but it is not unlimited, of course. I am looking forward to it. I had to emphasize at that meeting. It is documented here. I quote from the document dated June 29, 1992: The Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee met with the appointed task force at the Ministry.

"The Members of the task force enquired about the necessity to have a proliferation of similar organizations with duplicity of services."

I had to get up in defence. "Proliferation". It is not proliferation; it is one more, but you need to have several more.

As I just said, NHA has not produced and performed. The conditions are not the kind that the citizens of this country are really grasping for. The conditions in the Sugar Welfare and the culture are different. If I say that 99 times, please excuse me.

Madam Speaker: The Member is really repeating himself.

Mr. Haniff: Yes, but I will, because I want to drive it home.

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Madam Speaker: I do not see the need for that because you are making yourself quite clear.

Mr. Haniff: I feel it is necessary for me to emphasize, because it is a culture that we are talking about.

Madam Speaker: I think you know that there is a Standing Order which deals with repetition.

Mr. Haniff: Madam Speaker, if you tell me not to say it again, I would try.

I was trying to drive home the point that it is a way of life in the sugar industry, so that when the farmers and the sugar workers get the lands, they will benefit because they will produce. What I am saying is that we need to do that for other farmers and people throughout the country. Let them feel that part of involvement; that they are part of what is happening around them and let them be part of building their own houses.

For over 20 years they say that no funds are available to develop Brothers and Garth Roads. Well, we did a survey concerning the development of that road. What have we found? We found that the people are prepared to participate in the system popularly known as the Sou Sou Lands. Let me quote from this sample. We have hundreds of applications. We surveyed 25 applicants and the number that is still interested is 20. Four applicants are not interested and one died. What is important is that 20 out of these 25 are willing to pay money as much as \$6,000.00 towards the development of the project.

If the Government say that they do not have the funds, is it only the funds that are preventing them? Funds are not really preventing them because the people who do not have lands to build houses are willing to pay for those lands. The Government need to demonstrate that interest and intention, so that housing goes alongside what happens at Caroni (1975) Limited, according to this document, quite naturally.

We spoke about land distribution. If we go throughout this country in the sugar areas, what would we find? We would find a situation where on the agricultural lands which they are occupying for some time, they have built houses. They had the right to build houses. What would happen? They do not have lands. Their parents were the tenants and as a result children came up and there were no lands. They occupied some of those lands and built houses, but it was agricultural tenure. What happens in such a case?

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If you know that nobody is going to break down houses, then take the natural step that has to be taken—regularize the situation and bring those people into the system so that they would now start paying the rates, and benefiting from WASA and TTEC services etc. Put in the infrastructure; they are putting it in for themselves under the Self-Help Commission. The local government bodies are helping and the people are prepared to help but they need to be encouraged. What is happening? They are citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Some time ago, I was called into Kumar Village. There is a situation where a parcel of land was given to Government by the company to house sugar workers and cane farmers. They obtained loans from the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee. They paid for the lease of those lands; built their houses and developed the environment and infrastructure. They were paying a lease of between \$5.00 and \$7.00 depending on the size of their allotments. I say that in this day and age, quite naturally, that should be raised. However, is it right to raise it to the extent of \$1,575.00?

Most of them cannot pay because they are now pensioners. They have written to the parliamentary representative for the area. I have asked the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee to refer it to the Minister in the context of sugar workers and their involvement over the years. They have developed this country and have earned foreign exchange and all sorts of improvements for this country. Yet, they play political football with Caroni every time an election is coming.

The Minister knows that I am right. I am asking for his involvement in this issue because there has to be a pattern. If he knows what he is doing with state lands, then he should tell us. I feel that he does not know because all sorts of things are happening. People in this country need to know that they are needed, wanted, taken care of and are part of the society. They need to be taken care of in that context.

3.55 p.m.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member's speaking time has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Mr. R. Palackdharrysingh*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Haniff: Madam Speaker, I have great pleasure in being part of and supporting what is in this document "Report of the Government-Appointed

Tripartite Committee on Caroni (1975) Limited", by the Chairman, Dr. Kusha Haraksingh, and done in July 1992. I am happy to be a part of this debate on a matter which is a sensitive issue, with the hope that we could really encourage the Government to understand what is at work. Apart from the very few who might not have been involved in what happens at Caroni (1975) Limited, this nation—the Government and people—has a responsibility to protect Caroni (1975) Limited like the other state agencies and do what is necessary to encourage it.

I am not happy to hear the speaker before me talk about confrontation. Confrontation is a two-way thing: it does not happen with one. When you fail to carry out your commitment to the people, then quite naturally there will be confrontation; as is likely to happen with the daily-paid workers of this country in the very near future. They are coming, look out for them. I will be there too, as a worker. "Implementation" is the word.

The Member for Arouca North spoke about profitability. Of course, it has been demonstrated that it could be profitable. He spoke about discrimination. I say, 'yes', there has been discrimination against Caroni (1975) Limited. And when reports were made that there was discrimination by the PNM Government who were there and had not done what they ought to do to protect the people and the industry, what happened? Let us do it now before it is too late. *[Interruption]* Of course, the other agencies. The citizens of this country are not secure. Nobody is secure in this country presently, not even the businessmen, and the feeling of security needs to be put into the minds of the people.

Dependency syndrome. I have heard that kind of talk before. A dependency syndrome was created and planted in this country by the PNM of yesteryear. That is how it came about. What we have in Caroni is production and productivity. That is what we have down there and that is where we need to draw our references from. LIDP and other agencies are not producing—we need to have management. You talk about hoodwinking the nation. This nation was hoodwinked in December, 1991 and they got away with some of it last Monday. It will not last long because they can fool some of the people some of the time but they cannot fool all of the people all of the time.

I do not wish to dwell on LIDP, but since the last speaker, did so, I shall say a little on it. As the Member for Princes Town I have not gotten a single bit of co-operation from those involved in LIDP. I have made that clear to the extent that I am not sending recommendations again. What is worse is that a parent came to me

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and said that his house was destroyed in the heavy rains and winds, and asked what could be done for him in terms of employment. I wrote a letter to the LIDP people in San Fernando and that person, not being sure what would happen, also went to Ex-MP for Princes Town, who happened to be PNM, and she called me because, like good responsible citizens, we have a good working relationship when it comes to people suffering. I said to her: "I want to inform you that I have written on behalf of the people whose house was blown down and I am not receiving any co-operation from the Government". She said that it was very difficult for her to listen to that kind of thing because the Government should know that I am the representative for Princes Town, and she promised that she would deal with it within the ranks of the PNM. Whether she will or not, she said that. It is up to her.

What I am saying is that we have spoken with discrimination. If there is need to improve the system at Caroni as far as employment is concerned, then do that. But do not discriminate and say that you care. That is not how one deals with problems. One deals with problems by singling them out and dealing with them, but you say, "If you are Caroni, then I am LIDP". That is not how we are going to make progress. I will not delve into the LIDP thing, but I will say that this nation needs to feel as part of what is happening.

I have asked for certain LIDP Projects in places where school children cannot go to school. The Member for St. Joseph got up here and said that a certain school is not benefiting from the School Feeding Programme because the road is bad. What is happening? I asked for a LIDP project there—nothing.

So, being part of this debate, on Caroni (1975) Limited, where I was born, bred and grew, educated and suffered as a result of the system, I am proud to have the opportunity to stand up here today and say, with dignity, that the farmers and sugar workers are proud to be sugar workers and cane farmers. They are prepared to put their shoulders to the wheel as they have done in years gone by and are still willing—young, old, middle-aged—all—to continue that effort. Of course, it will better their lives, and this nation will benefit. There is no other agency or industry in this country—with due respect to what is happening in oil; as a matter of fact, the oil industry is now losing money. If we cannot import food then we must grow our food. We must diversify in a way that when we wake up in the morning we have yams, cassavas or eddoes to survive. In fact, it is better than what we import and we are going to save foreign currency. We are paying foreign debts through our noses. What must we do? We must produce to beat that. That is the only answer.

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So, I have the pleasure, I have the privilege to be associated with this report under my Political Leader who signed it in his capacity as leader of the All Trinidad Sugar and General Workers' Trade Union and other leaders. Do you know why? I admire them for the courage they mustered in presenting this hoping, despite the bad record of past governments, that this will in fact be implemented in the interest of this nation.

Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity, in closing, to also support the amendment proposed by the Member for Couva South and to state that all is not lost. Our hopes are still there. The people of this nation look forward to implementation, regardless of all the disappointments we have had in the past, and to setting the pace at Caroni (1975) Limited where all the other sectors would see what is happening, when courage is mustered. And as a nation we would start seeing the light of day—be it PNM, UNC, whoever. Our people belong to this country and when we come into this House we do not see people as PNM or other, we see them as citizens of this country prepared to do what we have to do because they are our brothers and sisters. I want to thank you as we look forward collectively to the implementation of these proposals.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Madam Speaker: At this point, we shall have the statement by the Minister of Education.

4.05 p.m.

Bulk Purchasing Agency

The Minister of Education (Hon. Augustus Ramrekersingh): Madam Speaker, hon. Members will recall that in April of this year I announced in this House the establishment of a task force to make recommendations for making school books more available and affordable. The detailed terms of reference are set out in Appendix I, page 41, of the report which I will soon lay before this House.

Hon. Members will also recall that on that same occasion, I announced several measures to lessen the financial burden on parents. Among those measures were:

- (a) A reduction in the number of books prescribed for students in primary and junior secondary schools. (This measure came into effect for the school year which started in September, 1992).
- (b) Restrictions on the frequency with which books may be changed.

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The task force submitted its report in a timely manner in August of this year. The report was considered by Cabinet and several decisions have been taken.

Before I get into those decisions, Madam Speaker, permit me to offer publicly the Government's most sincere thanks to Prof. Kenneth Ramchand and the members of that task force for their hard and dedicated work and for the enthusiasm with which they approached their assignment.

The recommendations of the task force fall under three headings:

- (1) Measures to render books more affordable.
- (2) Measures to make books more available.
- (3) Measures to reduce dependence upon text books and to facilitate teachers in the production of more appropriate teaching material.

The Cabinet, has taken a decision to move expeditiously to implement the following measures based on the recommendations of the report:

- (1) To establish a bulk purchasing agency for school books.

The report of the task force demonstrates clearly the benefits which can accrue from the establishment of such a facility; in particular a marked reduction in the price of school books resulting from purchasing in large volumes.

I merely wish at this point, Madam Speaker, to refer the attention of hon. Members to pages 17 to 20 of the report which will be given to them in a few minutes and which deals with the purchasing of books.

For the benefit of this honourable House, Madam Speaker, permit me to make one or two references to that page. I quote from page 18:

"The supply of books to schools is a lucrative business dominated by a small circle of large booksellers in collaboration with the suppliers. The market is a captive one in the sense that the consumer does not have to be induced: He is required to buy. To a large extent, monopolistic practices increase and conceal the profits of the sellers, and to some extent the establishment of a network of middle-men in a situation where middle-manning does not have a great deal to do increases unnecessary expenses.

For books published locally, the following factors are involved: Publishers' discount to bookseller; booksellers' expenses; booksellers' mark-up for profit.

There is no recommended retail price from the publisher. Different booksellers are able to negotiate different discounts, especially if the bookseller is a large bookseller or is part publisher of the book; and the bookseller's expenses are not documented in many cases. As for the figure of 15 per cent, which is usually declared as mark-up for profit, this is virtually meaningless since it is not known what figure it is that is being increased by the declared 15 per cent.

Where the publisher, the supplier and the bookseller are, in effect, one and the same, there are opportunities for profit-taking that increase the price of books to the consumer unnecessarily.

The Committee has received information about specific instances where the publisher's price for locally-produced books exceeds by two to three hundred per cent the actual cost of production.

It is a cause for serious concern. More than that, Madam Speaker, it cries out for corrective action.

I also wish to refer to page 29, in which examples are given of the price reductions which are possible through bulk purchasing. In October, 1991, the Ministry of Education made certain bulk purchases. I just state a few examples:

Name of Textbook	Quantity	Unit Price	Bookstore Price
Nelson's Dictionary	30,000	\$11.00	\$16.00
Macmillan Caribbean Junior Social Studies Atlas	30,000	12.00	20.00
Ladybird Dictionary	30,000	10.00	15.00

Let me just refer to page 19:

"The Committee is also aware that the discount to the supplier is sometimes greater than 25 per cent, and we have had replies from publishers overseas confirming that discounts of 40 per cent for orders of 10,000 copies, and 50 per cent for orders of 20,000 copies are available."

The following quotations were obtained from overseas publishers in June, 1992:

Name of Textbook	Quantity	Unit Price	Bookstore Price
New Oxford School Dictionary	10,000	\$19.00	\$36.00

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Name of Textbook	Quantity	Unit Price	Bookstore Price
New Oxford School Dictionary	20,000	\$16.00	\$36.00

Madam Speaker, the case for bulk purchasing is quite clear. However, the Government does not propose to establish a state-controlled agency. While the state must have an obvious interest, we prefer the initiative to be essentially a private sector one. As the first step in this direction, the Cabinet has instructed the Minister of Education and the Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism to meet with representatives of the following organizations:

- The Credit Union League
- The Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association
- The Booksellers' Association

to discuss the establishment of a bulk purchasing agency and their possible involvement in the venture.

Decision No. 2, Madam Speaker:

- (2) To appoint a sub-committee of the task force to prepare a detailed implementation plan for a school book rental system.
- (3) To take steps to expand the second-hand book trade at schools and selected book stores. It is hoped that the Parent-Teachers' Association will act as a catalyst to promote this activity. The Minister of Education will be meeting shortly with the National Parent-Teachers' Association, the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association and the Association of Principals to develop an implementation plan.
- (4) To publish in the newspapers by July/August of each year the scheduled list of prices for books being handled by the Bulk Book Purchasing Agency so that some comparisons can be made.
- (5) To incorporate into a co-ordinated programme of welfare services, assistance to needy students in respect of school books.
- (6) To upgrade, within the constraints of our financial resources, class and school libraries.
- (7) To improve the links between the schools and a reorganized Public Library system.

- (8) To establish a Text Book Development Committee to encourage and guide the production of textbooks and work books and to liaise with the Textbook Selection Committee.

Madam Speaker, the Rudrunath Capildeo Learning Resource Centre, at McBean, is now equipped with a state-of-the-art printing press. It is our intention to use this facility fully in the local production and publication of school textbooks.

- (9) To accelerate teacher training programmes aimed at assisting teachers to practise the skills and judgment to develop their own classroom materials.

It is amazing, Madam Speaker, to see the resourcefulness of many of our teachers in producing instructional materials at virtually no cost and, more often than not, with materials which would normally be discarded.

- (10) To discuss with the newspapers the question of producing a regular pull-out section containing classroom material to be prepared by subject teachers under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Faculty of Education.

This measure will increase newspaper readership and will have the additional benefits of encouraging students to read the newspaper and it will also help the newspapers to see themselves as part of the education system. The Minister of Education will be meeting with the relevant persons from the newspapers to work out the most effective way of implementing this recommendation.

Madam Speaker, while there are several other recommendations in the report which have been accepted, I have tried to indicate the measures which the Government will be pursuing with a sense of immediacy.

In conclusion, may I state that this Government will continue to implement policies designed to make equality of opportunity in education more meaningful. In this instance we are seeking to ease the financial burden on parents without sacrificing quality education.

I thank you.

Within a minute or so hon. Members will have a copy of that report.

Mr. B. Panday: On a point of clarification, Madam Speaker. Would the hon. Minister be able to state whether this purchasing agency is going to be a state-owned and state-controlled agency? I do not think that was made clear.

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: I think it is made it clear on page 3 that we do not propose to have a state-controlled agency and that it would be essentially a private sector initiative. The Government would have an interest.

This is why we will be approaching the Credit Union League, the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association and the booksellers.

Mr. B. Panday: They would be in control of the agency?

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: Yes, with a Government interest.

PAPER LAID

Report of the Cabinet appointed Committee for making school books affordable and available. [*The Minister of Education (Hon. A. Ramrekersingh)*]

4.23 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.05 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

CARONI (1975) LIMITED

Mr. Subhas Panday (*Naparima*): Madam Speaker, I sat and listened intently to the contribution of the Member for Arouca North and I want to reply to some of the points he raised. I think I can refer to his whole contribution as being that of a hatchetman, or a dirty-work specialist—doing the nasty jobs that his superiors cannot do, and which they ask him to do for them. That was the level of his contribution.

Dr. Griffith: Madam Speaker, I object to that language of the hon. Member for Arouca North, and I want to suggest that he withdraw that statement.

Madam Speaker: Very inelegant language. Would the Member confine himself to using the professional language he is used to?

Mr. S. Panday: As you please, Madam Speaker. As to the contribution of the Member for Princes Town, one can see that he understands the sugar industry and that his analysis was very painstaking.

As far as I am concerned, the presentation of this tripartite report on the sugar industry at this time is most disgraceful and a mere facade. It is a manifestation of the disdain and contempt which the PNM have for the sugar industry.

They have brought this motion, as the Member for Princes Town stated, merely to take note of the recommendation, and to have it debated at a time when

an election was in the offing. That was merely to try to hoodwink the population. I shall show that the laying of that report in this House lacks bona fides. What the PNM is trying to do, as I said, is to get some mileage. But I would expose their hypocrisy and show that they have already taken steps to undermine the tripartite report.

The Minister came to this House and said that the Cabinet has accepted the report, but that he has another report on his desk and that study was conducted by the Booker/Tate multinational. He never came to this House and said, "I have two reports; I am just laying one and the other will be thrown out the window". That, Madam Speaker, I shall go into a little later.

That report was commissioned one week after the tripartite report and was submitted to the Minister one week thereafter. We are asking why he hid from this House the other report in his possession—the Booker/Tate report—and we shall go into some detail on that report. It seems to me that the PNM has a hidden agenda for the destruction of the sugar industry and this tripartite report is merely a cover-up for that.

In order to understand the scenario at this point, one must look at the history of the PNM in relation to the implementation of reports and recommendations. The history of the sugar industry has always been one of plans being designed to undermine its successful operation.

The PNM came into sugar actively in 1968 with the acquisition of Forres Park and this culminated in the completion of the acquisition of Caroni Limited in 1975. Immediately on the acquisition of Caroni Limited, they commissioned a multi-disciplinary group encompassing a wide spectrum of professional disciplines. They enlisted many of the finest minds on a committee headed by Prof. John Spence—and we are happy to have him here today listening to this debate—and that was called the Sugar Rationalization Committee, the SRC.

The SRC was established with the following objectives which are basically the same as those of this committee. They were:

- “(i) the rationalization of the industry; to attempt to bring the cost and prices more into line with one another;
- (ii) existing work practices; operational methods and financial controls;
- (iii) alternatives to the existing sugar industry;

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- (iv) future development of products based upon sugar and/or its by-products;
- (v) the introduction of advance technologies;
- (vi) the size, organizational requirements and institutional framework of any future sugar industry taking into account economic and social considerations.”

And particularly to chart a developmental growth path thus defining the nature and scope of a range of diversified economic activities which will ensure the viability and success of the sugar industry.

The SRC worked assiduously and produced the SRC report which is a report of 305 pages and it went into a detailed analysis of the industry, and this has been the most comprehensive and enlightening report that has ever come out of the sugar industry. The recommendations which we find in this Tripartite Report can be found in the SRC report. This report was accepted by Cabinet. It was brought to Parliament and debated. Parliament accepted it and that was as far as this report went.

A few superficial things took place, but the main recommendation of this report never saw the light of day. My mission today is not to go into the pros and cons of the SRC report, as I said, but merely to inform this honourable House that a report like this one has been exhaustively debated and unanimously adopted.

5.15 p.m.

Madam Speaker, the joke about it is that the PNM, with their usual deception, intrigue and—I do not want to use the word 'vindictiveness'—did everything in its power to undermine that report and frustrate its implementation. They did not provide the support and dedication to ensure the successful implementation of that report. They dragged their feet, and when the Member for Arouca North said that other people objected, opposed the report, or tried to frustrate the report, I want to inform him that it was the PNM Government—1978 to 1981—that dragged their feet on the report and then, when the time came to implement it, they said they did not have the funds, and they threw the report by the wayside.

The time between the presentation of the report and the attempted implementation was so long that the circumstances had changed considerably. Do you know what they did instead? When Caroni (1975) Limited decided to implement this report, try as they may, the Government set up another committee, which was headed by the then chairman of Caroni (1975) Limited, Frank

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Rampersad. Frank Rampersad produced another report which was dubbed the "Rampersad Plan". The recommendations of the Rampersad Plan were diametrically opposed to those of the Sugar Rationalization Report which, as I said before, had showed tremendous potential in terms of transforming the sugar industry into a successful diversified one.

The PNM therefore had two reports co-existing, the SRC and the Rampersad Plan. That was in 1980/81. Eleven years after, same PNM. They have two plans in their hands, the tripartite report and the Booker/Tate report. *[Interruption]* The name of the Booker/Tate report is "Strategic Review and Outline Restructuring Proposals for Caroni Limited". The situation today is identical with 1981, with two reports *[Interruption]* You say three, well worse.

Madam Speaker, the Rampersad Plan indicates that the workforce should be reduced—close down one sugar factory—and the workers stood up and fought the Rampersad Plan; but in the process of fighting the Rampersad Plan, everything went haywire and the SRC report could not have been implemented. To date they have put the workers and the sugar industry on the same footing, where we shall have to take serious action against this Booker/Tate plan. In that process, this Tripartite Report will be thrown out the window. The PNM has a hidden agenda.

So the mere fact that they rushed into the Parliament hastily, merely to take note of a report and to say that we accept it, gives no guarantee for its implementation. That is why we have no alternative but to support the amendment as proposed by the hon. Member for Couva South.

The PNM political football game with the sugar industry continued. The workers in Caroni (1975) Limited put an end to the Rampersad Plan in 1982. By mid-1983, Caroni's operations were placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of State Enterprises, of which Ronnie Williams, the well-known Chinese Chopper, was in charge. In 1983 and they had a fight with it. The industry started to convulse once again. In 1984, the PNM inaugurated another study, under the chairmanship of Dr. Eric St. Cyr. That was the third report within five years in the sugar industry. Because of the convulsions with the Minister of State Enterprises, they said that the objective of the St. Cyr Report was to provide instant solutions to an industry which was plagued with a host of economic and non-economic problems. And of course these were caused by the lethargy of the PNM Government not implementing the SRC Report.

So in 1981 they were jumping up in Parliament saying they would adopt it, and by 1984 they threw it through the window and came with another report. That

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committee comprised people like the late Dr. D. Maharaj; the compatriot of the Member for Diego Martin West, the omnipresent Dr. Morgan Job. The committee put forward several recommendations, and the only thing that that committee saw was three or four of its members going to the great beyond without a single recommendation of the report being implemented.

That PNM Government, not only stalled the report, but in 1985—the same PNM Government which said that they accepted the SSC and the St. Cyr Reports—unleashed the most brutal, savage and cruel act on the sugar workers, by appealing the Industrial Court award.

That PNM Government—of which the Member for San Fernando East was a Member—made history, in that it was the first time that a Government had appealed an industrial award. That is what that Government did while they were accepting all those reports.

5.25 p.m.

When they say they would pay the \$30 million, one really has to ask, could we trust them? Having embraced all these reports, they say that they will pay the \$30 million. What schedule do they have for the payment of the rest, the \$153 million? What is the time-frame? They will never answer that question; ask the Minister. Do not hide behind a mere statement that you will negotiate that with the union and work it out. The Government must state its position now as to what timetable it has for the payment of the rest of the court award.

The 1981 to 1986 period did not see much change to it. There were the Caroni Action Plan and the Dookeran Plan in 1989, which reiterated the Rampersad Plan of the PNM. The company produced a 90 page report entitled "Implementation Programming and Logistics", and while the company was engaged in carrying out that plan, Dookeran came and pushed his sticks in the spokes. We are certain that this Tripartite Report, having regard to its nature, and to PNM's history with the SRC Report, will suffer the same fate as the SRC Report. As a matter of fact, before Caroni knew that the Minister had the Booker/Tate Report, they had indicated that they did not have any more space to store any more reports. They wanted action.

I come back now to the Booker/Tate Report which the Minister failed to inform the nation about. On April 13 the Government commissioned this Tripartite Committee and they were supposed to reply within 12 weeks. The committee presented its report in July 1992, and I as said, we subscribed to that report. The industry is a complex one and the Minister really did not intend to have a

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comprehensive report, because there already is a comprehensive report. I think he was shocked to see that the committee came up with such a report. I say even in those circumstances, the report is silent on some very important issues which prevents its implementation. For example, the report says on page one that they have not dealt with the question—it states:

“Furthermore, it was facilitated by a studied skirting of the quicksand in which the previous plans and proposals have been mired: the unimaginable implications ... there is no handing over of land to the workers.”

One of the major issues which the plans speak about, that is, bringing of idle lands under cultivation, the report is really silent on it.

The report is not as deep as the Spence Report. The reason why the report has skirted many fundamental problems is that we wanted to have consensus. That is why we signed that report. In the interest of consensus and the time constraint it is clear that some of the burning issues in the sugar industry, which are necessary to be addressed have not been addressed, and as such, the implementation of the plan will be difficult. In any event, having regard to the history of the PNM we think it will suffer the same fate of the previous reports.

I return to the question of the second report that the Minister has in his possession. The hon. Minister in the usual PNM style lacked the normal courtesy to inform this honourable House and the country at large of its behind-the-scenes moves with Booker/Tate. In April, 1992 after the commissioning of the Tripartite Committee, the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources visited the United Kingdom and under the cloak of the night, negotiated terms and conditions and the foundations for the re-entry of the Booker/Tate group to the life of the industry.

Dr. Rowley: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. The Member is being provocative and vexatious. He is misleading the House. I have had no negotiations or any such thing, with Booker/Tate. If he wants to talk about things he does not know about, he is free to do so, but he is misleading the House.

Mr. S. Panday: I do not know if the Minister would indicate whether he has a copy of the Booker/Tate Report. At page 27, of that report there are certain recommendations. I am certain the Minister would reply to that.

Dr. Rowley: Of course I will reply.

Mr. S. Panday: When the tripartite group was deliberating in good faith, unknown to this country Booker/Tate was invited to the country and Booker/Tate is the Booker's that was in Guyana, and the Tate and Lyle that was here. They came into Caroni. So while certain officials of Caroni were reporting to and assisting this tripartite committee, they were also being hounded by the—and I should like the Minister to say whether I am misleading the House in that he did not visit England and he did not speak to Booker/Tate and that they did not visit Trinidad and Tobago and submit a report to him.

My information is that on the instructions of the Minister of Agriculture they embarked upon a similar exercise to decide the future of the industry. That is why I say that the presentation of this report lacked bona fides. As a matter of fact, the Booker/Tate group submitted its report to the Ministry in the month of July, one week after the Tripartite Committee submitted its report. They tried to keep it such a secret that the report was typed at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Dr. Rowley: Madam Speaker, once again the Member is misleading the House. No Booker/Tate Report was typed at the office of the Ministry of Agriculture.

5.35 p.m.

Mr. S. Panday: Oh yeah! I will withdraw that statement. Where is the Booker/Tate Report? My information is that it contains detrimental and devastating recommendations similar to the Rampersad Plan. I ask them, if they have bona fides, lay the Booker/Tate Report in Parliament. Let the nation know what they have in their back pockets. One asks: Why do they bring us here to debate the Tripartite Report when they have the Booker/Tate Report in their hands, and they did not tell the nation? I think the nations need to know and confidence in the industry needs to be fortified, because if people believe that they are going to implement a tripartite report, and they are hearing that you have the Booker/Tate Report, because at page 27 it calls for the retrenchment of 3,200 workers from 5,700.

Mr. Valley: What did the Tripartite Committee recommend?

Mr. S. Panday: He did not read it, because if he did, he would not have asked such a silly question. It just goes to show the lack of commitment in bringing this to Parliament, that even the Leader of the House did not read it. I cannot tell

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you the number of the page now, but it says, the workforce will go by the natural attrition.

The report calls for a change in the method of harvesting cane from cutting and bundling. The workers now, cut and bundle and the day's work is two and a half tonnes per day. Do you know what the Booker/Tate Report says? It says that they must cut and "wing-row". That means, they must cut the cane and drop it in rows. They will get a harvester to lift the cane out and to increase the day's work from two and a half tonnes to eight tonnes daily. They call for the reduction in wages; privatization of the transport and harvesting activities; and the closure of the diversification programme. I do not know if the Government are hiding it and they sent it to Caroni and told them quietly to implement it.

Dr. Rowley: Madam Speaker, once again for the benefit of the House, I must say that the Member is misleading the House.

Mr. S. Panday: I do not know if the report has been sent to the officials of Caroni (1975) Limited with instructions to follow certain parts of the Tripartite Report, and work it with the Booker/Tate Report, so that they could hoodwink the people, so when you think they are implementing the Tripartite Report, it is the Booker/Tate Report. That is why we think that the Government should have been frank and told us that they have a report and "we are not taking the Booker/Tate Report at all, we have thrown it away".

The point I am making is that they call for the closure of the diversification programme. The Member for Diego Martin West was quoted as saying in the newspapers that CDC intended to invest, and if workers marched that might turn the CDC away. If he really was not speaking about the good work in the *Trinidad Guardian* dated Wednesday, September 16, 1992:

"Rowley revealed that within the next three months a high powered team from the Commonwealth Development Corporation will come to Trinidad to look at Caroni Limited and agriculture as a whole, and see what investment they can make."

I ask the question: How do you view that statement in relation to the Booker/Tate Report? Is not Booker/Tate a part of the CDC? What influence does Booker/Tate have upon the CDC? Is there any relationship with that statement of the Minister, with the recommendation of the Booker/Tate Report to go off diversification? We know that they have gone on trade liberalization. They have opened up the

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markets. We know as a fact, that Booker/Tate has citrus in Belize; they have diversified. In Africa and Zambia there is cocoa; in Ghana there is coffee. So they have diversified.

Miss Nicholson: What is the case in the Windward and Leeward Islands with bananas?

Mr. S. Panday: I am coming to that sister.

They are advising this Government to come out of diversification. Do you know why? They want to bring inferior goods into the country and they want to use this Government. That is why we ask: Can we really trust the bona fides? Could you really trust them, when at any given point from 1975 to 1992 the PNM always had two reports in their hands making conflicting recommendations and as a result, they never took action?

My view is that by this motion, the Government is really trying to give the impression that it will implement the Tripartite Report, but in truth and in fact it intends to implement the Booker/Tate recommendations. As a matter of fact, the Government has already indicated—

I led a delegation to the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and at that meeting with him, he said: "Let me tell you at once, we cannot implement all of that in the Tripartite Report."

Dr. Rowley: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. This Member is going out of his mind. I have had no meeting with him.

Mr. Mohammed: He did not say it was you.

Dr. Rowley: My apologies, I thought he said the Minister.

Mr. S. Panday: I said the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry.

Dr. Rowley: He will speak for himself.

Mr. S. Panday: He said that they cannot implement all the recommendations in the Tripartite Report. That was an official meeting I had with the Parliamentary Secretary.

Dr. Rowley: He will speak for himself. In his absence you will say that.

Mr. S. Panday: It is not my fault that he is absent.

Dr. Rowley: In his absence you will say that; you are a dangerous person.

Mr. S. Panday: If he said that they cannot implement all the recommendations in the Tripartite Report, we ask the question which ones do they intend to implement? We also ask them to indicate to this House the position with the Booker/Tate Report. If the presentation of this report is not *mamaguy*, then we ask, what is? As the Member for Couva South indicated, give us a time-frame for the implementation of the Tripartite Report, otherwise we would be unable to really have any faith in them.

This Government does not care about the sugar industry; it never cared and it never will. I shall show you how. For example, on September 2, reduction of sugar quota to the United States in which that report says, that the United States intends to cut Trinidad's quota on the US market. This Government has never made a statement on it; or made any representation to the United States Government.

5.45 p.m.

Look at what happened in the Leeward Islands. Bananas in the Windward Islands appear to be in trouble because of the influx of bananas from Latin America. The Prime Minister of Dominica started to lobby for the survival of the industry. The Prime Minister of Dominica, Eugenia Charles, flew to the EEC immediately, and started to lobby for the survival of the industry. But the US cuts the quota and this Government has never said a word. So, we ask the question, "how can you be saying that you want to increase sugar production to 125,000 tonnes and your market is diminishing and you are saying nothing? Tell us. How can you say that you are interested in the industry when your external market is dwindling and you have never made a statement on it? We know why. Because the Government wants to keep the industry in a state of uncertainty so that the people who live by the industry would not be able to plan their lives adequately and they would always be like second-class citizens.

It says that this reduced quota took effect on October 1. Therefore, when you produce the sugar, what will you do with it? Will you produce it and then say that you have no market for it, close the industry? What will you do? What is Government's role in acquiring and protecting the market? Bringing a report like this to Parliament and asking that it be adopted, we ask, can we really trust them?

We come to the part of the report that the Member for Diego Martin Central spoke about. When one looks at how this debate took place, one sees that the

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mover of the motion made statements but fundamental points were left out. After tea, he said that only yesterday Cabinet implemented certain parts of the report with the Fincor loan and the debentures etc. But that is not really positive action: it is passive action. What I am saying is that no positive action has been taken with regard to the report. It is merely saying they will release the debentures things like that. This report can never be implemented because there are certain pieces of legislation that have first to be put into place. If they were really serious, they would have cleared the legislation out of the way and having done that then say, "We want to adopt the report now".

I make mention now of the Production of Cane Ordinance, Chap. 23:12, as amended by Act No. 33 of 1977; the Canefarmers Rehabilitation Board Ordinance No. 19 of 1961, the Sugar Industry Special Funds Ordinance, Chap. 23:14; the Sugar Quotas Ordinance, Chap. 23:13; the Sugar Industry Control Board Act No. 14 of 1966; the Agricultural Small Holdings Act—all these Acts, unless they are amended, will hamstring the recommendations of the Tripartite Report.

The Member for Ortoire/Mayaro asked a question. Let us take the Agricultural Smallholdings Act Chap. 59:53—I believe it is section 2, the interpretation section—it says: *[Interruption]* I am not like you. I am not like Junior St. Clair. The Act covers from five to 50 acres. Because of that Caroni Limited cannot implement its land programme and has been begging the Government all the time to deal with that.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member's speaking time has expired.

Motion made, That the speaking time of the hon. Member be extended by 30 minutes. *[R. Palackdharrysingh]*

Question put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made, That the House do now adjourn to Friday, October 9, 1992 at 1.30 p.m. *[Hon. K. Valley]*

Madam Speaker: I wish to inform hon. Members that, by agreement, the reply to question No. 2 to the hon. Attorney General will now be circulated to all Members. However, if there are any supplemental questions arising out of the answers circulated, Members will be free to raise them at the start of question time on the next occasion.

**Students' Illness
(Caroni Central)**

Mr. Raymond Palackdharrysingh: Madam Speaker, I simply want to ask the question: How many more must be poisoned before this country is sensitized to the traumatic conditions that exist in our schools and the trauma being experienced by parents and guardians of the children of this nation.

It is a pity that on September 11, when I first raised this motion, it did not qualify as a definite matter of urgent public importance. However, I have persisted and it would seem that today is the time it has qualified for some measure of explanation. I want merely to read what I submitted to you for today, Madam Speaker:

"I wish to seek your leave to raise a matter on the Motion for the Adjournment of the House at the next sitting of the House of Representatives for which this matter qualifies—Standing Order 11(2).

The matter concerns the well-being and safety of our nation's school children especially as it relates to the poisoning of some of them. The matter is critical because of the breakdown and lack of security in many instances at our schools. This matter is of public importance because we parents are anxious to hear what safeguards would be instituted against the unwarranted attacks upon our children and teachers.

5.55 p.m.

Madam Speaker, we would see in the *Daily Express*, page 1, Tuesday, September 8, 1992:

"Six Trinity boys hospitalized, gramoxone in school water."

I believe a headline like this—it was also headlined in the *Trinidad Guardian* of Tuesday, September 8, 1992:

"Gramoxone in water at school."

Madam Speaker, I think that the nation was not satisfied with any sort of response which suggested that not all our school children were poisoned so it was not a definite matter of urgent public importance.

Madam Speaker: The Speaker has ruled, and I think the hon. Member knows that the Speaker's decision is final. Will the hon. Member proceed with presenting his case so that the hon. Minister can reply.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Madam Speaker, that is exactly what I am doing.

Madam Speaker, I have made a point that has been expressed to me by the public.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member knows that this Chair is not concerned with what the public thinks. This Chair has ruled that the matter was not, on that particular occasion, a definite matter of urgent public importance.

The hon. Member was advised to bring it under Order 11, which he has done. Please proceed.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Madam Speaker, since then, there was another incident and this time, on Tuesday, September 22, 1992:

"Fifty students and teacher rushed to the hospital; food poisoning suspected at the city school."

Madam Speaker, my perception of this matter is that it was grave enough at the time when I raised it and that is why it is headlined so much in the newspapers.

What I am saying today, is that the Government has not made a statement to clarify the circumstances surrounding the matter of poisoning at our schools. As a matter of fact, it would seem that there are no results of tests being done to tell this nation what actually happened at the schools. That has to be a great act of negligence and irresponsibility. Therefore, I want to know what the difficulties experienced by the Government are that prevented them from making a statement or explaining to the nation the circumstances surrounding the matters reported in the press.

Dr. Baboolal: Why are you whining?

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: You want me to wine? I would love to.

I want to indicate that there are several other matters affecting us with respect to the security of our schools. There have been attacks on the teachers and there are a number of schools whose conditions are unsafe. What is important is that the Government should say to this nation what the difficulties experienced are, because there is a perception of uncaring in this matter.

Is it a question of moneys that cannot be realized to meet some of the security needs of our schools? Is it that the Government and Cabinet have not deliberated on this matter and formulated a plan of action to bring relief to our schools? Is it a

problem in which the administration of schools is not fully controlled by the Government and, in the circumstances, their hands are tied? Is it a situation in which they are afraid to explain what has been happening for fear of condemnation by the Parent-Teachers' Association? is it that in this total scenario, the Government is without a direction?

This question is important enough because within the recent past several incidents have been taking place at our nation's schools which have not led to the creation of confidence in our institutions. One would appreciate that almost a quarter of our population is at school at any given point during the school day, and so that section of the population ought to be protected in a way that leaves no doubt in the minds of the people of this country.

I would again have to mention the fact that I read recently where a minister of religion was asking why nobody is caring, and none of us seems to be answering. It would seem that since there is no sensitivity in the Government or in this Parliament, the church is now prepared to be the conscience of this community. In this respect they are crying out for the type of action that must come. I have the clipping somewhere.

Mr. Valley: You are well prepared.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Here it is, the *Daily Express*, Wednesday, September 30, 1992, page 1, headlined:

“Why wasn't there public outcry over the Trinity College affair?—Priest:

Reverend Father Calvin Best, speaking at the ordination and consecration of The Very Reverend Rawle Douglin asked: ‘What was the general reaction to the depravity of adding a toxic substance to the water supply of Trinity College?’ ”

Again, Madam Speaker, in the *Express* of Thursday, October 1, 1992, the editorial, at page 8: "Stand up and be counted." stated:

"But the goodly father wants to know why people didn't march. Well, because it would have been inappropriate. Protest marches are carried out against a foe who is visible and who will be influenced either through embarrassment, concern or fear.

To march against the twisted but unknown person who poisoned the tank-water would not only be ineffective, but absurd. Yes Father Best has a point. it

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is not enough to be horrified over the incident. It is not enough to put locks on the tanks and more security in the schools."

So this is the extent of concern in the society. Madam Speaker, I do not believe we recognize the seriousness of this matter.

Today, I raise this matter so that the Government would explain that at least those in the public who believe that nothing is being done, would, when they look at the record, say that the United National Congress has raised this matter. We will continue to look after the interests of our citizens who have no recourse to the administration of the country.

In this respect, Madam Speaker, I await the response of the Minister.

Thank you very much.

The Minister of Education (Hon. Augustus Ramrekersingh): Madam Speaker, in order to respond to the hon. Member for Caroni Central, I have to transform his incoherence into coherence.

I want to deal with the hon. Member's point that we did not attempt to inform the public about the incidents at Trinity College and St. Ursula's. Madam Speaker, I held several press briefings on these matters, starting from Tuesday, September 8, 1992, when I visited the school. I outlined the course of action that we would be following and in a short while, I shall mention some of those things.

Additionally, on the overall question of security, not only was it raised at that time; sometime in May of this year I held a press conference on the whole question of school security and outlined the action that was taken.

Perhaps, on the question of school security, I should make a few points. In the first place, there are several types of schools in Trinidad and Tobago. There are private schools, government schools and assisted schools. In the private schools, security is the total responsibility of the school. In the Government schools, the Ministry has the direct responsibility for security. In the case of the assisted schools, the responsibility for security is that of the denominational boards. The Government makes grants to the boards and they have a responsibility for certain kinds of maintenance, for hiring their cleaners, the security guards and so on. That is the first thing about security.

The second thing, Madam Speaker. When I assumed office, I was quite concerned at development over the last few years in respect of security at schools.

In some cases we were able to take remedial action, but the more fundamental action was the establishment in the Ministry of Education, of a standing committee on security of schools.

In that standing committee, you have representatives of the Parent-Teachers' Association, the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association, the Maintenance Training and Security Company, the Police Service, Ministry officials and so on. As a result of the work of that committee, we were able to do certain things. In the first place, based on the historical experience and the evidence, a list of high risk schools was prepared and certain action was taken.

In some areas, we were able to enhance existing security, but when we looked at it—and it is a point I made in May—even though we do not have the full responsibility for security, nor of the schools, as a ministry, if we were to put 24-hour security at all the schools we have control over, this expenditure would be Between \$80 million and \$90 million a year.

Obviously, in spite of the great desire to have the schools highly secured, you have to look at the financial resources you have. What we did was to take these high risk schools and, in collaboration with the protective services, from May, we instituted a series of patrols, some in the day but largely in the night, consisting of members of the protective services. I do not want to go into the details for strategic reasons, but schools were identified and these patrols have been taking place since the beginning of May. It was done extremely quietly at the beginning of May and I must compliment the Ministry of National Security for agreeing so readily to assist.

I should say that the person who is now acting as Commissioner of Police is a member of this security in schools committee, in his capacity as Assistant Commissioner. We did it very quietly, Madam Speaker. We recognized there were limitations, we could not look at every school. It was several weeks later that people began to realize that these patrols were going on. They would call me and say they have noticed certain things. I have met these patrols many times.

The result of that, Madam Speaker—and the evidence is there—is that over the last three or four months the level of vandalism in schools has been reduced considerably. As I said, certain kinds of individual actions were taken with schools. I have recently mandated that committee on security in schools to undertake a range of things to see what further improvements we can make.

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I come now specifically to the question of Trinity College and perhaps I should say at the beginning that there were many premature conclusions on the part of many persons in trying to see a connection between the incident at St. Ursula's and the incident at Trinity College.

Let us deal with St. Ursula's EC. It is an assisted school. The responsibility for security is that of the board, but I do not want to belabour that particular point. When I learnt of the incident at St. Ursula's I went to the school and the hospital the very day. We put certain things into place. I made the point to the press that very afternoon that we should not seek to jump to conclusions and that certain tests would be carried out by the appropriate authorities, the Government Chemist, the forensic people, the Public Health and so on:

"Report of the Public Health on St. Ursula's:

- Tests on water, negative;
- tests on curried mango, negative;
- tests on red mango, negative;
- tests on plum, some organisms found, but not enough to cause distress.

Food and Drugs report:

- tests on water, negative;
- tests on food, negative;

Report form the Hospital authorities:

- All tests so far have revealed no causes for the symptoms".

There was nothing wrong with the water, nor by and large with what the vendors were selling. And perhaps I should inform this honourable House that the tanks at St. Ursula's are extremely well secured. the doctors have not been able to arrive at definite conclusions on the St. Ursula's situation, but it was definitely not the water nor the various foods that the children may have bought.

On Tuesday, September 8, 1992, it was brought to my attention that certain things had happened at Trinity College. I was on my way to the Learning Resource Centre at McBean. I immediately got in touch with my people at the Ministry. I said I would be returning very shortly to visit the school and to visit those children who may have been at the hospital.

As I neared Port of Spain, I was informed that the children had all been discharged from the hospital. Nevertheless, I visited the school, looked around, spoke to the Principal, the police and so on, got information. I spoke with members of staff, as well as the press afterwards and certain actions were taken: The school would remain closed until we did certain things; that we would await the results of certain tests but, in the meantime, we would attend to the plumbing system at Trinity College. I immediately called on the Minister of National Security and a 24-hour police patrol was put on Trinity College.

What happened on that day, September 7, is that a certain number of students drank water. In the early part of the day the water would have been coming from the overhead or reserve tanks. When that supply was exhausted, then the normal system of tanks came into play. Somewhere around the break period that morning, one student started to pick up a foreign scent and one or two people started to feel unwell. By and large, very few persons were detained at the hospital and those who were, were detained for not more than overnight.

As I said, I myself visited; on the second day everybody was out. Over the weekend, two students came in. I visited them and they were discharged. We have had all the tests done on the water, to be sure. In terms of the students, as I said at the press briefing, medical attention would be spread over a period of time, because several tests had to be done on the students and all students who said they drank water that morning, probably 80, some of them very early but it did not matter, all of them were sent for the tests.

I have some information here. A whole range of tests have been conducted so far, both at the Port of Spain General Hospital and at Mt. Hope and some of the tests are to continue. In fact, I should say, traces of gramoxone were found in the urine samples of 10 persons. Medical testing and treatment began on Monday, September 7, 1992. As recently as Wednesday, September 30, students were receiving further medical checks. Twenty-two students are scheduled to have additional tests on Monday, October 7, 1992. All students, whether they showed symptoms or not, over a period of time different tests are being carried out and we are monitoring those things very closely. I commend my colleague, the Minister of Health, for his co-operation in this matter.

While the physical damage may have been minimal, I was also concerned with the psychological damage. Together, the Guidance Unit of the Ministry of Education and the Guidance Clinic of the Ministry of Health have been

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collaborating on a programme of counselling for parents, teachers and students. Counselling sessions have been conducted so far on September 15, 18 and 25. Because it is very important that the psychological health of teachers, parents and students be handled, instead of rushing them back to school where more damage may be done and anything else, we have embarked on this counselling.

I should mention that I have also met with parents from the schools. I have listened to their concerns and we have been acting on them. Indeed, some of the parents have to take time off because they must go with their children for these tests and I have asked the parents who are in that position—a list is being compiled of where they work—and since we have a certain amount of control of things in the government service, we will be writing the individual ministries, asking them to be generous in time off for parents to go with their children to be attended to, and we shall also be writing private employers to assist them.

Immediately after the incident, as we found out the number of children who drank water that morning, not necessarily anything happening to them, I wrote to each parent personally, expressing our regret at the incident, our concern at the matter and our intention to do everything possible.

Mr. Valley: Caring PNM.

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: I come now to the plumbing. Madam Speaker, the entire plumbing system at Trinity College has almost been completely redone. Indeed, in the first place, all lines were disconnected—cut. All old tanks were removed. Fourteen new tanks, with locks, were put into the school and the new system is much more secure than it was and a whole range of new plumbing has been done. Again, I want to thank my colleague, the hon. Minister of Works and Transport, who very willingly collaborated. It was a question of teamwork: The Minister of Health, the Minister of National Security and the Minister of Works and Transport.

Madam Speaker, I did not adopt the attitude of wanting our pound of flesh, to argue whether this a state school or it is an assisted school, as Trinity College is. Immediately the incident was brought to my attention and I saw the implications, we at the ministry took personal control of that; we did the work and I am pleased that that work is more or less complete: New lines, new tanks and so on.

Tomorrow and Monday, the Chief Public Health Inspector will carry out his final inspections on the new system and once we get that clearance, schools will re-

start fully. I should say that with certain kinds of temporary work, we were able to bring back the fifth and sixth formers. But we ensured that there was a water system that was safe. Absolutely no existing lines are connected to taps with drinking water, or where water is used for washing hands.

6.25 p.m.

We have indicated to other schools—through the Director of Schools Supervision—where there are tanks that certain precautions should be taken. We have gone further than that, however. Our committee on security, as well as officials of the Ministry of Works, have been looking at the systems and are going to come up with recommendations to see how we can make things like water systems much safer.

Finally, I think it should be mentioned, Madam Speaker, and the press has been quite responsible on the whole in carrying this, that we tend to imitate. This has happened here at one school.

Mr. Mohammed: The mimic men.

Mr. Ramrekersingh: Others may want to do it. It may not even be true. In fact, we had a rumour. I think the newspapers told me they got some information that the carcass of a dog was deposited in the tank of a school. But when they got there, there was no such thing. So we need to be careful about these things, in particular, trying to make that connection between events at Trinity College and St. Ursula's.

I have adopted the position, firstly, that on certain things I will make no definitive statements until I get the evidence, such as the tests. Secondly, the police investigations into the matter are still going on. There are some things I cannot say at this stage. Thirdly, Madam Speaker, at an individual level being a parent myself, I took a very personal interest in these matters. We at the Ministry of Education and the other ministries, in fact, the Government adopted a very responsible and caring attitude in this whole thing. Critical to our handling of these problems was responsibility, not being sensational or attempting to arrive at premature conclusions which could lead us in certain directions.

So that, Madam Speaker, as I end, I just saw something in front of me from the Ministry of Health, to show you the level of collaboration—

"I would like to inform you that Mr. Steve Williams of the Guidance Unit of the Ministry of Education has already secured the services of Dr. Nelleen

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Baboolal, Acting Specialist Medical Officer and Dr. Steve Rollocks, Senior Psychologist of the Child Guidance Clinic at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex..."

They have started carrying out their counselling. So these things are going on.

Madam Speaker, I hope that I have been, in a responsible way, able to enlighten Members on the events that took place and the course of action which the Ministry of Education has been taking.

I thank you.

Mr. Palackdharrysingh: Would the Minister care to say whether there was dialogue with the denominational schools with respect to security; and what sort of consultation and agreements have been reached on this?

Hon. A. Ramrekersingh: The easy way to answer that is by simply pulling one of these documents that I have with me here and to which I did not refer. I will show you that it is written here so that I am not inventing it. It states:

"We are in the process of meeting with the Board of Management of Trinity College to review the incident of September 7, 1992 and its consequences. The outcome of this meeting will certainly have implications for the entire school system."

Yes, we have met. I had the police there, but ultimately we need to have some more permanent security there, which as I say, in the case of Trinity College, is a board responsibility. But we stand ready to assist in any way we can; and I probably should end by saying that Trinity College was never on the list of high risk schools. It never had that history or that experience.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.30 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

2. (a) Would the Attorney General give a list of legislative measures (giving all necessary particulars) which have been passed by the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago but have not yet become effective as law?

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- (b) Would the Attorney General indicate to this honourable House whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago intends to implement as law any or all of such legislative measures and, if so, give particulars of the measures it intends to implement and the proposed dates, if any, of such implementation?

The following reply was circulated to Members of the House:

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Hon. Keith Sobion):

- (a) 1. The Bahamas and Leeward Islands Light Dues Ordinance, 1934 Chap. 18 No. 7:
An Ordinance relating to the imposition of certain Lighthouse Dues.
2. The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1960 Chap. 88:06 (Part IV-(Occupational Diseases) and Part V (Compulsory Insurance unproclaimed):
An Act to provide for the payment of compensation to workmen for injuries suffered in the course of their employment.
3. The Investment Disputes Awards (Enforcement) Act, 1968:
An Act to make provisions in relation to the enforcement of awards in certain investment disputes.
4. The Plant Protection Act, 1975:
An Act to make better provision for the control of diseases and pests injurious to plant.
5. The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) (No. 4) Act, 1978 (Sections 3 and 4 unproclaimed):
An Act to amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, Chap. 48:50 (Section 3 states the conditions to be satisfied before issue or renewal of licences; Section 4 empowers the Licensing Authority to designate premises for the examination of motor vehicles).
6. The Civil Service (Amendment) Act, 1978:
An Act to amend the Civil Service Act, Chap. 23:01 (Establishment of Special Tribunal comprising the Chairman of the Essential Services Division of the Industrial Court and two other members).

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7. The Landlord and Tenant Act, 1981:
An Act to make provision as to the law of landlord and tenant.
8. The Land Law and Conveyancing Act, 1981:
An Act to reform land law and the law of conveyancing.
9. The Trustee Act, 1981:
An Act relating to trustees, the administration of trusts and the office of public trustee.
10. The Limitation Act, 1981:
An Act to make provision for the limitation of actions.
11. The Condominiums Act, 1981:
An Act to provide for the registration, management and control of condominiums.
12. The Land Registration Act, 1981:
An Act relating to the registration of land.
13. The Succession Act, 1981:
An Act relating to the law of succession.
14. The Publications (Legal Deposit) Act, 1985:
An Act to make provision for the designation of Legal Depositories in Trinidad and Tobago for the deposit therein of audio-visual, literary, musical and other works published in Trinidad and Tobago, in substitution for Part I of the Copyright Act and the West Indian Publications Regulations, 1958, and for matters incidental thereto.
15. The Professions Related to Medicine Act, 1985:
An Act to provide for the establishment of a council, boards and a disciplinary committee for certain professions related to medicine; and for purposes incidental thereto.
16. The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Act, 1986. Section 2(b) unproclaimed:
An Act to amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, Chap. 48:50. (Section 2(b) provides for the compulsory fitting of certain vehicles with seat belts and the compulsory wearing of seat belts).

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17. The Customs A.T.A. (Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission) Carnet System Act, 1986:

An Act to enable effect to be given to certain provisions of the Customs Convention regarding Carnet for commercial samples done at Brussels on March 1, 1956 and acceded to on January 5, 1981, the Customs Convention concerning facilities for the importation of goods for display or use at exhibitions, fairs, meetings or similar events done at Brussels on June 8, 1961, and acceded to on January 5, 1981, the Customs Convention on the temporary importation of professional equipment, done at Brussels on June 8, 1961, and acceded to on January 5, 1981, and the Customs Convention on the A.T.A. Carnet for the Temporary Admission of Goods (A.T.A. Convention) done at Brussels on December 6, 1961 and acceded to on March 13, 1981 and for matters connected with those purposes.

18. The Municipal Corporations Act, 1990:

An Act to provide for the continuation of the City and Borough Corporations for the creation of certain other Municipal Corporations and for the consolidation and reform of laws affecting local government.

The parts that are not yet proclaimed are:

- (1) Section 207 (which deals with the provision of slaughter houses and the slaughtering of animals)
- (2) These sections and schedules falling under or relating to Part III (which deals with house rates) and Part VIII (which deals with streets and buildings) insofar as they apply to the several new municipal corporations established under section 4 of the Act.

19. The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago Act, 1991:

An Act for the establishment and incorporation of the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago and for matters incidental thereto.

20. The Telecommunications Authority Act, 1991:

An Act to provide for the establishment and incorporation of the Trinidad and Tobago Telecommunications Authority and for the regulation of telecommunications services operating in Trinidad and Tobago or on any ship, aircraft, vessel or other contrivance registered in Trinidad and

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Tobago and for the regulation of the use of apparatus in telecommunications services and for related purposes.

21. The Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Duties Act, 1992:

An Act 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.

Name of Act	Remarks
1. The Bahamas and Leeward Islands Light Dues Ordinance, 1934 Chap. 18 No. 7:	The Government does not intend to proclaim this Ordinance.
2. The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1960 Chap. 88:06 (Only Part IV (Occupational Diseases) and Part V (Compulsory Insurance) unproclaimed:	On August 27, 1992 Cabinet agreed to the appointment of a Standing Tripartite Committee comprising Government, employers and labour to carry out a comprehensive review of labour legislation. The Workmen's Compensation Act 1960 Chap. 88:05 is one of the pieces of legislation to be reviewed.
3. The Investment Disputes Awards (Enforcement) Act, 1968:	The Investment Disputes Awards (Enforcement) Act 1968 was enacted to give domestic legal effect in Trinidad and Tobago to the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and nationals of Other States. That Convention establishes an International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) which provides facilities

for conciliation or arbitration of investment disputes between contracting states and foreign firms or corporations, their subsidiaries, branches, etc. resident in those states.

Trinidad and Tobago became a contracting party to this Convention in 1967 having signed it on October 5, 1966 and ratified same on January 3, 1967. The Convention entered into force for Trinidad and Tobago on February 2, 1967.

A Technical Inter-Ministerial Committee was subsequently appointed by the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Affairs in 1984 for the purpose of making a detailed examination of this Convention and the implications of its implementation in Trinidad and Tobago and to submit recommendations thereon to Government.

That Committee reported in late 1986. While it recommended the proclamation of the legislation, it was also of the opinion that prior to taking such action, further study needed to be done to determine whether in accordance with Article 25 of the Convention, Trinidad and Tobago should notify the Centre of the class or classes of disputes which

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it would or would not consider submitting to the jurisdiction of the Centre. That study has not yet been undertaken.

Consideration is being given by the relevant ministries to this aspect of the matter so that a decision can be taken by Government on bringing this legislation into effect.

4. The Plant Protection Act, 1975:

A more comprehensive piece of legislation, which is intended to repeal the Plant Protection Act, 1975, is at present being prepared. This proposed legislation has been considered by the Legislation Review Committee, a sub-committee of Cabinet and would shortly be laid before Parliament.

5. The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) (No. 4) Act, 1978 (Sections 3 and 4 unproclaimed):

Consideration is being given by the relevant ministry to determine whether the legislation should be proclaimed.

6. The Civil Service (Amendment) Act, 1978:

The Government does not intend to proclaim this Act. The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 1978, which contains a similar provision, was proclaimed on February 21, 1979.

7. The Landlord and Tenant Act, 1981:

The Government proposes to appoint a team comprising of attorneys in private practice together with law officers to review these Acts to determine whether or not they should be

8. The Land Law and Conveyancing Act, 1981:

9. The Trustee Act, 1981:

10. The Limitation Act, 1981:

11. The Condominiums Act, 1981:

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12. The Land Registration Act, 1981: implemented wholly or in part.
13. The Succession Act, 1981: The proposed terms of reference of the team are being developed.
14. The Publications (Legal Deposit) Act 1985: The Government intends to proclaim this Act.
15. The Professions Related to Medicine Act, 1985: The Government intends to proclaim this Act.
- In Order to bring the Act into effect there should be in place the following:
- (i) a Council; and
 - (ii) a Board for each of the six professions in the First Schedule to the Act.
- The Minister of Health is at present making arrangements to have the Council and Boards constituted before the Act is proclaimed.
16. The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Act, 1986 Section 2(b) unproclaimed): The Government intends to proclaim this legislative measure. The Chief Traffic Engineer, the Bureau of Standards and the University of the West Indies are holding discussions the design and construction of seat belts to be fitted to motor vehicles, after which appropriate regulations will be drafted. The provision will be proclaimed soon after the regulations are made.
17. The Customs A.T.A. (Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission) Carnet System Act, 1986: The Government does not intend to proclaim the Act in its present form. Section 8 of the Act

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requires the provision of security for import duties. However, efforts to have an appropriate body to be guarantor for the payment of duties and taxes in the event that the goods are not re-exported have been futile. The legislation can come into effect when a guarantor is obtained.

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| 18. The Municipal Corporations Act, 1990: | In early 1992 the Minister of Local Government appointed a team to review the Act. Consequently certain amendments were enacted. Further review is continuing with the intention of having it proclaimed in its entirety. |
| 19. The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago Act, 1991: | The Government is at present studying this legislative measure. |
| 20. The Telecommunications Authority Act, 1991: | The Government is at present studying this legislative measure with a view to having it proclaimed at the earliest time. |
| 21. The Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Duties Act, 1992: | Government intends to proclaim this Act. However, at present the Government is in the process of setting up the necessary infrastructure, including the making of relevant regulations, preparatory to proclaiming the Act. |